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The Search for a Chinese Way in the Modern World: From the Rise of Evidential Learning to the Birth of Chinese Cultural Identity

A dissertation presented

by

Wen Yu

to

The Department of History

in partial fulfillment of the requirments
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of
History

Harvard University
Cambridge, Masschusetts

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The Search for a Chinese Way in the Modern World: From the Rise of Evidential Learning to the Birth of Chinese Cultural Identity

Abstract

This dissertation explains how the search for a Chinese cultural identity became central to China's debates over shared values in the twentieth century. Challenging the mainstream view that the rise of modern Chinese national thought was a product of Western-style modernization, I argue that proposals to construct a Chinese cultural identity in the early twentieth century were first and foremost concerned with the sources of elite values and the role of elite culture. Key to this historiographical revision is the excavation of the link between twentieth century nationalist thinkers and seventeenth century Evidential Learning. Nationalist thinkers were the intellectual descendants of Evidential Learning and adopted its conviction that China's own cumulative cultural traditions, rather than the universal moral principles of the Neo-Confucians, should be the basis for the values of the intellectual-political elite. They aimed to restore the Qing Evidential Learning tradition as the basis for China's new post-imperial civic and moral life, and they believed that the Evidential Learning tradition's historical approach to the definition of values would allow scholars to engage with new concepts from abroad while preserving the authority of their own cultural traditions that was fundamental to intellectual elites' cultural and political agency in China's new post-imperial society.

This dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of the ideological foundations of modern China, by showing how debates within Confucian literati learning

traditions played a significant role in China's modern transition. Reconstructing the intellectual history from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century and examining the key corpus of major thinkers in context, I unearth a profound but largely neglected ideological debate between the Evidential Learning conception of shared values as a historical product of a "Chinese" cultural community and the imperial Neo-Confucian conception of values as universalistic and predetermined moral doctrines. Uncovering how modern Chinese nationalist thinkers were both historically and philosophically connected to this debate, I disclose the historical meanings of modern Chinese nationalism, reveal alternative political models that were not chosen, and contribute to the ongoing discussions over China's modern condition and the future of China's political identity.

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Introduction

During Donald Trump's State visit to China in November of 2017, a short video of his tour of the Forbidden City with Xi Jinping circulated widely. It captured the following exchange:

Trump: "So Chinese culture goes back to five thousand years ago, or even earlier?"

Xi: "The history with a written record is about three thousand years. "

Trump: "I guess the oldest culture is Egypt, eight thousand years."

Xi nodded, "Yes. Egypt is a bit older," and quickly followed up: "But China is the only ancient civilization whose culture has never been disconnected from its origins."(文化没有断过流的，始终传承下来的，只有中国。)

Trump gestured to their surroundings, and said, "So these are all the original [forms of culture] from the past."

Xi responded, "Yes," and pointed to himself: "Hence, our people are also this way. Black hair, yellow skin: the people descended from the dragon." (所以，我们的人也是这样。黑头发，黄皮肤，龙的传人。)[1]

CCTV News entitled this video clip, "This is how President Xi explains the meaning of 'the people descended from the dragon' (习近平主席这样诠释龙的传人)." But why is such an "explanation" important and worth knowing? The Chinese

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpW83h_kc2E "Xi Jinping zhuxi zheyang jieshi longde chuanren" (习近平主席这样诠释龙的传人), CCTV Chinese International News, Nov. 9, 2017.

Communist Party's enthusiastic celebration of traditional culture in recent years, particularly the Confucian learning tradition, is no longer news. Among other manifestations of this trend, the Confucian Classics have been taught at the Central School of the Chinese Communist Party, "National Learning" (*guoxue* 国学) textbooks have been compiled for schools, a monumental research center dedicated to traditional culture and scholarship has been built in the capital, and an eight-year government plan has been announced for building an infrastructure for promoting traditional culture.[2] The conversation in this video, however, is particularly noteworthy because it reveals a key aspect of what the government wants the public to see about its role. On various occasions in recent years, the government has claimed that the Chinese Communist Party was determined to become the protector and inheritor of China's cultural tradition, and would link its own values to this cultural tradition. [3] In his conversation with Trump in

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[2] "Why China is turning back to Confucius," *Wall Street Journal*, September 20, 2015. For a Chinese report about the teaching of Confucian texts at the Central School of the Chinese Communist Party, see "Dang Ruxue zoujin Zhongyang dangxiao: Rujia xue zhe ruhe jiedu?" (当儒学走进中央党校：儒家学者如何解读？) September 25, 2015 http://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1378746 For a Chinese report about the center, see "Zhongguo guoxue zhongxin zai beijing jiancheng, lishu guowuyuan canshishi" (中国国学中心在北京建成，隶属国务院参事室), September 3, 2016. http://www.rujiazg.com/article/id/8966/. For a Chinese introduction to the Ministry of Educations' programs for promoting traditional culture education and the catalogues of textbooks for schools and government officials, see the webpage about the project, "Traditional Culture and the Cultivation of the Characters of the Middle School Students and Elementary School Students" (传统文化与中小学生人格培养研究), which is listed as a part of "The Twelfth Five-year Plan of the Ministry of Education" ("十二五"教育部规划课题) http://www.chn5000.org/nd/BTMDYgBg. The official document announcing the government's eight-year plan is called, "Guamyu shishi zhonghua youxiu chuantong wenhua chuancheng fazhan gongcheng de yijian" (关于实施中华优秀传统文化传承发展工程的意见), announced by the General Office of the Communist Party of China and the State Council in January, 2017. http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-01/25/c_1120383155.htm

[3] For a recent government definition of the role of the Communist party as responsible for inheriting traditional culture, see, "Guamyu shishi zhonghua youxiu chuantong wenhua chuancheng fazhan gongcheng de yijian." For a recent speech where Xi stressed the uniqueness of the Chinese national cultural tradition, see "Zai jinian kongzi danchen liangqian wubai

the video, Xi stresses the concept of a "Chinese culture" as a continuous, cumulative entity, which, through history, has nourished and sustained a people. The connotation of this message is simple: If the historical development of the Chinese nation has been dependent on its unbroken cultural identity, then, by identifying with "Chinese culture," the Party demonstrates itself as the means by which the culture and its people endure in the present.

This nationalistic turn in the government's approach to legitimacy has much to do with the government's need to maintain power. In a remark about the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in October 2017, the political scientist Anthony Saich acutely noted that, under the Party's increasing effort to equate itself with the nation, criticism of policies favored by the government could now be defined as unpatriotic.[4] But why should representing the "Chinese cultural tradition" carry such a moral meaning? Why did the Party need to validate itself based on a Chinese cultural identity?

One way of interpreting the Party's turn to Chinese exceptionalism and its self-reinvention as the leader of the "renewal" of the Chinese cultural tradition is to see these agendas as an effort to eliminate the influence of Western political ideals in China and to

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liushiwu zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui ji guoji ruxue lianhehui diwujie huiyuan dahui kaimuhui shang de jianghua" (在纪念孔子诞辰 2565 周年国际学术研讨会暨国际儒学联合会第五届会员大会开幕会上的讲话), *People's Daily,* September 24 (2014), page 2. Also see a speech delivered by Xi at a symposium organized by Confucius Institute, recorded and edited by *Ta kung pao*. http://bodhi.takungpao.com/topnews/2014-02/2272840.html

[4] Anthony Saich's comment was delivered at the symposium, "China's Future Leadership: An Instant Analysis of the 19th Party Congress," organized by the Fairbank Center, October 23, 2017. http://fairbank.fas.harvard.edu/events/reflections-on-the-19th-party-congress/

compete with the U.S. in international politics.[5] But if we shift the focus from the government to a broader intellectual-historical context, we can see that the Party has also been trying to appeal to an intellectual discourse. The search for a Chinese cultural identity in debates over values has been an influential aspect of the modern intellectual-political agenda: it was born in the early twentieth century, suppressed during the Maoist era, and has experienced a dramatic revival since the 1990s. Contemporary intellectuals and scholars who promote "National Learning" in the humanities[6] and who aim to construct a "China Model" in political theory[7] argue from various perspectives that the

[5] For instance, see Jeremy Page's comments in his widely circulated article, "Why China is turning back to Confucius."

[6] For a summary of the "National Learning" movement up to the late 2000s, see John Makeham, "The Revival of Guoxue: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Aspirations", *China Perspectives* 1 (2011). Also, Makeham, *Lost Soul: "Confucianism" in Contemporary Chinese Academic Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008.) For a survey of the revival of Confucianism in education and culture, see Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval, *The Sage and the People: The Confucian Revival in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). For a few representative Chinese discussions on the importance of the past for China today, see Wu Fei 吴飞, "Zhongguo de xiangdai chujing yu gudai ziyuan" (中国的现代处境与古代资源), in *Kongzi yu dangdai zhongguo* (孔子与当代中國) edited by Chen Lai 陈来 and Gan Yang 甘阳 (Beijing: Sanlian Press, 2008.) Chen Lai 陈来, *Chuantong yu xiandai : ren wenzhuyi de shijie* (传统与现代：人文主义的视界), (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2009); Liu Dong 刘东 "Guoxue: Liuzhong shijiao yu liuzhong dingyi," (国学：六种视角与六种定义) in *Shenwen yu mingbian: Wanqing minguo de guoxue lunzheng* (审问与明辨：晚清民国的"国学"论争) (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2012); Peng Guoxiang 彭国祥 *Chongjian siwen: Ruxue yu dangjin shijie* (重建斯文：儒学与当今世界) (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2013). For an anthology of the debates over the meaning of "National Learning" in contemporary China, see Liang Tao 梁涛 and Gu Jianing 顾家宁, eds., *Guoxue wenti zhengming ji, 1990-2010* (国学问题争鸣集, 1990-2010) (Guilin: Guangxi shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2010).

[7] The notion of a "China Model" is loosely used to refer to a wide range of positions on how to engage China's traditions of political thinking and historical experiences in creating new understandings of social and political systems and defining political values. One common goal is to provide a new political thinking that goes beyond the ideas of Western liberal democracy. For a few representative discussions, see Gan Chunsong 干春松, *Zhidu ruxue* (制度儒学) (Shanghai: Shanhai ren min chu ban she, 2006); Jiang Qing 蒋庆, *Zhengzhi ruxue : dangdai ruxue de zhuanxiang, tezhi yu fazhan* (政治儒学：当代儒学的转向、特质与发展), (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2003); 康曉光, *Ren zheng : Zhongguo zhengzhi fazhan de*

construction of China's future ought to be based on values true to China's own civilizational experiences. They have drawn heavily on early twentieth century debates over the role of China's intellectual-cultural traditions in building a modern world, seeing themselves as responding to a deeply rooted, ongoing historical endeavor to connect modern China with its own civilizational traditions, an endeavor that they believe to be key to the wellbeing of the Chinese community, but one that has not yet seen completion.[8]

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disantiao daolu （仁政: 中國政治發展的第三條道路） (Singapore: Bafang wenhua chuangzuo shi, 2005); Gan Yang 甘阳, *Tong san tong* (通三统) (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2007); Pan Wei 潘维, ed. *Zhongguo moshi*: *jiedu Renmin Gongheguo de 60 nian* (中国模式：解读人民共和国的 60 年), (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2009. 11-140, "Zonglun" (总论); Bai Tongdong 白彤东, *Jiubang xinming : gujin zhongxi canzhao xia de gudian rujia zhengzhi zhexue* (旧邦新命：古今中西参照下的古典儒家政治哲学) *(*Beijing: Beijing chu ban she, 2009*)*; Kang Xiaoguang Wang Shaoguang 王绍光, "Zhengti yu zhengdao: zhongxi zhengzhi fenxi de yitong (政体与政道: 中西政治分析的异同), "Lixiang zhengzhi zhidu: Zhong Xi gu jin de tanqiu"（理想政治制度:中西古今的探求), ed., Wang Shaoguang. (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Co., 2012.) 75-146.

8 Here are a few examples. Liu Dong discussed the importance of early twentieth century debates over "National Learning" for contemporary China and created a two-volume anthology on the debates, see Liu Dong "Guoxue: Liuzhong shijiao yu liuzhong dingyi" (国学： 六种视角与六种定义). The anthropologist Wang Mingming 王铭铭 has argued for a return to Liang Qichao's 梁启超 cultural history paradigm in today's search for the meaning of "China;" see "Wenhuashi: cong Liang Qichao nail zaichufa" (文化史： 从梁启超那里再出发), *Zhonghua dushubao* (中华读书报) April, 23, 2010. He has also engaged with other early twentieth-century theories of Chinese nationalism by Chinese thinkers in proposing new approaches to understanding the relationship between ethnic Chinese and other ethnic groups in history and present. See Wang Mingming, *Wang Mingming du Wu Wenzao yu Fei Xiaotong: Zhonghua min zu li lun zhi jie du* (王銘銘讀吳文藻與費孝通: 中華民族理論之解讀) (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 2015). Wang Hui 汪晖 does not focus on the late Qing debate over cultural identity and "National Learning," but he stresses that the ideas of these thinkers provide a critical source for today's China to reflect on the model of Western modernity and to find its own path to modern life. He particularly identifies with Zhang Taiyan's celebration of cultural agency. See *Xiandai Zhongguo sixinag de xingqi* (现代中国思想的兴起), volume 2. (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004.) For a few representative comments that argue for the urgent need to rebuild China's common cultural identity, see Wu Fei, "Zhongguo de xiangdai chujing yu gudai ziyuan"; Li Xiangping 李向平 and Guo Cheng 郭珵, "Mianmu mohu de 'Zhongguoren', Dangdai zhongguo de wenhua xinyang yu guojia rentong" (面目模糊的"中国人":当代中国的文化信仰与国家认同 *Wenhua zongheng*) *Wenhua zongheng* (文化纵横), 2016, issue 3. Ding Yun 丁耘

The contemporary revival of this intellectual pursuit of a Chinese cultural identity has been independent of, but parallel to, the government's recent ideological turn. It has provided a theoretical and historiographical source for the government to legitimize its rule in the age of globalization, but it has also made the government recognize the authority of intellectuals, leading to a complex dynamic between public intellectual discourse and politics. During the past decades, discussions of what a "Chinese identity" means has grown into an intellectual-ideological battlefield, one on which leading historically minded public intellectuals fought for their positions.[9] But what does this mean for China going forward?

To respond to this contemporary trend requires a thorough understanding of both the historical roots and the philosophical meanings of the debates over a Chinese cultural identity in the twentieth century, taking seriously the moral claims attached to the discussions of China's historical legacy. However, this has not been done adequately in our current scholarship, which has often interpreted the twentieth-century shaping of a Chinese national culture as the consequence of Western-style modernization.

"Women xianzai ruhe zuo yige Zhongguoren: Zhongxi wenming zhong de jingshi wenti"(我们现在如何做一个中国人－中西文明中的经史问题), Speech at Fudan University, 2016, April,28. Available at http://www.guancha.cn/DingYun/2014_01_17_200424.shtml

[9] Apart from political theorists trying to define a "China Model" or a Chinese tradition of political thinking, the question of "what is China" has also captured the attention of leading historians and anthropologists, who often seen themselves to be responsible for revealing the true picture of China's past and legacy. For a few examples, see Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Zhaizi zhongguo: Chongjian youguan "Zhongguo" de lishi lunshu*. (宅兹中国－重建有关"中国"的历史论述) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011). Wang Hui, *Xiandai Zhongguo sixinag de xingqi* (现代中国思想的兴起), Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004; Wang Mingming, "Zhongguo – Minzuti haishi wenmingti" (中国－民族体还是文明体) *Wenhua zongheng,* December, 2008. Li Ling 李零, *Women de zhongguo* (我们的中国) (Beijing: shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian 2016).

Accordingly, China's national thought from the beginning of the twentieth century has been understood as a fundamental break from China's past. This assumption has made it difficult to make sense of the moral and political claims behind the search for a Chinese cultural identity. Thus, this search has been often reduced to an emotional attachment to the past, and/or an instrument for strengthening the state.

As historians, whether in China or the West, we have become accustomed to treating the nationalist discourse of the twentieth century in China as one of the products of Western-style modernization. However, if we look more deeply into the assumptions behind this historiography we will find them problematic enough to warrant seeking an alternative. In this dissertation, I revisit the emergence of the search for a cultural identity in the making of modern China, showing how debates over national culture have been key to the intellectual struggle over values in modern China. I hope that this dissertation can provide an alternative account for China's modern ideological transition, helping to lay the historical ground for a better understanding of the debate over values and legitimacy in contemporary China.

Is Nationalistic Discourse in Modern China a Product of Western-Style Modernization?

The study of modern Chinese thought that has developed in the United States in the post-war era has shaped mainstream interpretations in both contemporary Western and Chinese academia. The tradition of the modern European classical social thought, particularly Marxist and Weberian theories of modernization and modernity, inspired some of the most influential scholars, such as Joseph Levenson and Benjamin Schwartz.

For these two talented intellectual historians and commentators on modern China, this theoretical framework helped bring Chinese history to speak to modern world history in the context of the Cold War. Through these scholars' works, however, these theories also shaped some highly influential yet questionable assumptions about modern China's political and cultural construction in current historiography. A brief discussion of the arguments of these two scholars in light of their intellectual interests will help us better reflect on these assumptions and their influence.

The Levensonian Thesis: "From Culturalism to Nationalism"

In a 1953 review of Max Weber's influential work, *The Religion of China*, Joseph Levenson critiqued Weber's famous argument that Confucian ethics had hindered the development of the Western-style capitalism in China. Levenson agreed with Weber that the Confucian values that produced the Chinese "gentleman" would never produce the Protestant man of "vocation," but Levenson emphasized that it was the *agrarian bureaucracy* in imperial China that prevented the sort of social-economic changes that could give rise to industrial capitalism. "Confucianism" could sustain its power in China's imperial history precisely because it was endorsed and needed by the "landlord bureaucracy," but it "broke down" after the arrival of the industrial West brought in new social values and norms starting in the mid-nineteenth century. [10]

[10] Joseph Levenson reviews Max Weber, *The Religion of China*. *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter, 1953), 127-128.

In his first book, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*,[11] which was published in the same year as his review of Weber, Levenson applied this view to his interpretation of Liang Qichao's (梁启超) national thought. He saw Liang as an example of this "break-down" of "Confucianism." Levenson argued that Liang embraced Western nationalism as a consequence of the intrusion of Western industrial capitalism and its corresponding ideologies. The new Western industrial-capitalist worldview challenged the "culturalism" of the Chinese concept of "universal kingship," which shook the foundation of "Confucianism." Liang's embrace of nationalism, in Levenson's view, suggested that Liang had accepted the idea that the material progress of the nation state was the ultimate measure of values, which fit together with scientism, social Darwinism, and industrial capitalism. Given this, Levenson lamented that Liang's attempt to celebrate China's past civilization in his nationalistic discourse was in fact of a sign of his break from the "true" tradition of "Confucianism." The past was relativized and became an emotional attachment. Thus, Levenson generalized that the "break-down" of "Confucianism" for modern Chinese thinkers led to a perplexing struggle between "history" and "value," with the former referring to a psychological and emotional attachment to their own civilization, and the latter referring to their rational decision to imitate the modern West in order to achieve wealth and power.

Levenson later elaborated this thesis into a definition of China's modern transition, in *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*.[12] As his famous thesis goes, China's

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[11] Joseph Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.)

[12] Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

modernization could be understood as its painful rebirth from a Confucian empire, or, "All Under Heaven" (*tianxia* 天下), into a modern nation-state (*guo* 國). Along with this process the Confucian view of universality had to be abolished in order for China to successfully identify itself as a part of a world now defined by Western nationalism. While the Chinese empire identified itself as a model for universal moral values, the new Western idea of a nation state was a value-neutral political unit. In modern China, "Confucianism" was transformed into a subjective cultural relic, an object of pure historical curiosity in a museum that was no longer capable of making claims on truth and values. The psychological trauma this inflicted upon Chinese intellectuals, who faced a great cultural loss, led to a paradoxical condition. The more the Chinese had to search for a Chinese cultural identity, the more they were tied to universals defined by the West.

The influence of the Levensonian formulation on the study of modern China cannot be overstated. "Modernization" in China was westernization; the rise of nationalistic discourse in modern China was proof of this turn. Writing in the 1950s, Levenson saw that the ongoing Communist movement in China could be traced to this transition of the late Qing. In his view, Liang Qichao's citizen state and the Communist state were the same product of the Western worldview. While Levenson's ability to go beyond cold war ideologies to determine deeper historical roots were laudable, he has been critiqued for Western-centrism. Paul Cohen, for example, has questioned Levenson' assumptions about the scale of the impact of Western industrial values in late Qing China. He traces Levenson's views to nineteenth-century Victorian narratives about world history and non-industrial societies, in which non-Western histories were characterized as

stagnant and unchanging because they had not industrialized on their own.[13] In Levenson's account of China, Cohen notices, there is rarely any doubt about the homogenizing power of industrialism and science. Cohen particularly points out how this teleology overlapped to a great extent with the Marxist determinism that saw industrialism and capitalism as inevitably transforming the rest of the world into modern societies on the Western model.

However, it would be unfair to call Levenson a celebrator of "westernization." Behind his formulation was a deep concern about the fate of various cultural and spiritual legacies that faced what he saw as the inevitable homogenizing effect of Western "modernity." As scholars have shown, Levenson's focus on Chinese thinkers at the turn of the century reflected his concern with his own Jewish tradition and identity.[14] The conflict that he projected onto Liang Qichao between "history" and "value" was also his own. Even though his theory of "modernization" was more Marxist than Weberian, his concern about the consequence of "modernization" was similar to the Weberian notion of "disenchantment." In a post-War American academic context that was heavily focused on social science, Benjamin Schwartz has commented, Levenson was unusually concerned with the fate of human thinking and values. His pathos about the destiny of the "Confucian" tradition, in Schwartz's view, was compassionate.[15]

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[13] "Moving Beyond 'Tradition and Modernity," in Paul A Cohen, *Discovering History in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 57-96.

[14] Madeleine Yue Dong and Ping Zhang, 'Joseph Levenson and the Possibility for a Dialogic History', *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, 8.1 (2014), 1–24. Also, Benjamin Schwartz, "History and Culture in the Thought of Levenson," in *The Mozartian Historian: Essays on the Works of Joseph R*, *Levenson,* eds. Maurice Meisner and Rhoads Murphy, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 101, 106.

[15] Benjamin Schwartz, "History and Culture in the Thought of Joseph Levenson," 103.

But the impact of Levenson's West-centric definition of China's modern transition has been significant. From the 1960s on, the interpretation of modern China as a consequence of the shift from the Chinese "Culturalism" to Western "Nationalism" would come to see broad application in cultural, social, and intellectual histories. His simplistic and negative characterization of imperial China might be criticized, but his definition of the historical meaning of "Confucianism" and the "West" for the Chinese have often been taken as a meta-narrative.[16] If some of the May Fourth leaders and their descendants tried to propose a total break from the "Chinese" tradition, the Levensonian thesis has turned it into a given.

The Schwartzian Explanation: National Thought as Instrumentalizaiton of Values

Benjamin Schwartz appreciated Levenson's keen observation of Chinese intellectuals' concern with their own cultural heritage in the modern age. He found it difficult to argue against Levenson's claim about the power and universality of Western "modernity."[17] "The dilemmas of displacement of culture," namely, what happens if what is "ours" is no longer what is "true," indeed have an existential meaning.[18] But must this dilemma lead to the conclusion of a fundamental disconnect between China's traditions

[16] James Townsend has briefly listed representative studies, both in Sinology and in comparative theoretical studies, that take the "Culturalism to Nationalism" thesis as a basic historical assumption. Townsend, "Chinese Nationalism," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 27 (1992), 97–102.

[17] "History and Culture in the Thought of Joseph Levenson," in *The Mozartian Historian: Essays on the Works of Joseph R*, *Levenson*, eds. Maurice Meisner and Rhoads Murphy, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 102-3.

[18] Benjamin Schwartz, "History and Culture in the Thought of Joseph Levenson," 103.

and its modern culture? Did this "displacement of culture" play a fundamental role in China's modern thought? Schwartz' answer was no.

Schwartz doubted Levenson's radical binary between tradition and modernity, pointing out the problematic tendency of historicism in Levenson's approach. On the one hand, Levenson treated the Modern West as a "consistent whole," and on the other hand, he interpreted China as another "holistic whole," namely, a "culturalistic whole."[19] On the contrary, Schwartz argued, people's interests in the past do not always have to be a romantic attachment; parts of the cultural past can be genuinely meaningful to the present. Also, some past culture will remain as a habit shaping later people's views and behaviors. Thus, Schwartz believed, instead of imagining the cultural past as a "museum," focusing on material and technological aspects of tradition with little value for the present day, we should use the metaphor of a "library," a place where people placed their writings in hope that their ideas would transcend their time. Interestingly, if Levenson's totalistic understanding of values as something fundamentally embodied in the material-technological culture sounds Hegelian, then Schwartz's focus on the mind as a relatively free entity that can transcend historical time sounds much more Kantian. The latter rejected totalisim and determinism, stressing the possibility of understanding across boundaries.

Schwartz's critique needs to be understood in light of his own agenda as a scholar in post-war American academia, seeking to break down boundaries: ideological, cultural, and disciplinary.[20] "Tradition versus Modernity" was a major analytical hindrance that

[19] Ibid., 105

[20] "Introduction," Benjamin Schwartz, *China and Other Matters* (Harvard University Press, 1996), 1-2.

gave substance to many of these boundaries. He believed that the case of Chinese tradition could speak to common questions in the humanities. In a way, this agenda explains why Schwartz was not so much interested in exploring the question of "cultural identity." Rather, he was much more interested in understanding the world through the lens of Chinese intellectual traditions. If, then, the Confucian tradition should not be seen as a "museum" but as a "library," what is the structure of this "library," and what range of ideas does it offer?

Instead of treating Confucianism as a static and unchanging sociological-anthropological model, dependent on the imperial political structure and on a social order based on family, Schwartz went down to the individual level, considering Confucianism as something that, on the one hand, concerns the inner pursuit of self-cultivation, and on the other hand, searches for appropriate ways to relate the self to the external sociopolitical realm.[21] To pursue Confucianism seriously would mean to face the tensions between the ideal and the real, politics and morality, knowledge and ethics, and so on. For Schwartz, these were truly universal questions that spoke to people across cultures and societies. [22] Also, instead of following the nineteenth-century Marxist argument of "modernization" as a homogenizing process that transforms non-Western societies based on the Western model, Schwartz worked with Max Weber's theory of modernization –

[21] Schwartz, "The Limits of 'Tradition versus Modernity' as Categories of Explanation: The Case of the Chinese Intellectuals," *Daedalus*, Vol. 101, No. 2 (Spring, 1972), 75. Also see his discussion in "Some Polarities in Confucian Thought," in David Nivison and Arthur Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), 51-62.

[22] Schwartz, "The Limits of 'Tradition versus Modernity' as Categories of Explanation: The Case of the Chinese Intellectuals," 75.

the ”rationalization” of the world— in assuming a more neutral, common, and ongoing process of “modernization.”[23]

Schwartz’ historical agenda demonstrated his alternative view of the Confucian tradition and the meaning of modernization through concrete historical arguments, which would influence the scholarly landscape in modern Chinese studies for subsequent decades. He engaged with Karl Jaspers’ “Axial Age” theory, which contributed to his work on ancient Chinese thought and his interpretation of “Confucianism.” [24] Karl Jaspers, a Weimar thinker who once studied with Weber, became popular in the US in the 70s, and Schwartz was a proponent of his theory of the “Axial Age.” By “Axial Age,” or the “age of transcendence,” which is normally considered to be from 800 BC to 200 BC in major higher civilizations, Schwartz meant “a kind of standing back and looking beyond – a kind of critical reflective questioning of the actual and a new vision of what lies beyond.”[25] It was a moment of breakthrough in what he called the “conscious life,” the rise of “wisdom and doubt” in philosophy, and the emergence of “revelation” in religion. In the Chinese case, he referred to Confucius’ turning to the search for *ren* and Laozi’s quest for *dao*.[26] He thought this breakthrough happened after higher civilizations experienced a broad development of material and social technology, or the first kind of

[23] Schwartz’s interests in Weber can be seen in various places of his writing. He thought that although Confucianism as a system might not spur modernization, once modernization began, many habits and attitudes from that tradition would be helpful for modernization. See *China and Other Matters*, 136. Moreover, he thought Weber’s comparative works, although they had limitations, represented respect for area studies.

[24] See Schwartz, “The Age of Transcendence.” *Daedalus*, 104, no. 2 (Spring 1975): 1-7. Also see Chang Hao, “Chang Hao jiaoshou fangtanlu” 张灏教授访谈录, *Shuwu* 书屋, 2008, 10, 18.

[25] Schwartz, “The Age of Transcendence,” 3.

[26] Ibid.

"rationalization" of society. "These civilizations had reached a stage of crisis, which called fourth new spiritual, intellectual, and ethical responses among certain groups and individuals." [27]

In line with this outlook on "Confucianism" and China's "traditional society," Schwartz's study of late Qing nationalism and China-West intellectual interactions also provided an explanation for China's modern transition that was an alternative to the Levensonian thesis of a shift from Culturalism to Nationalism. Discussing Yan Fu, a figure who cared less about cultural identity than Liang Qichao did, Schwartz gave an influential explanation of the late Qing intellectual transformation, focusing on the rise of national thought and the reception of Western ideas. It was not concern about cultural identity that spurred nationalism, but the instrumentalization of values to save the state and search for "wealth and power." In his view, Chinese intellectuals' openness to the new ideas from the West and the rise of their national thought were two sides of the same coin. Schwartz argued that when Yan Fu turned to take the West seriously and introduced Social Darwinism and Western scientific thinking, nationalism came into being, because Yan had chosen "preserving the state" over "preserving the Way."[28] This made him, and his generation, entirely different from the earlier generation, for whom the two goals were inseparable. Although Yan found some elements meaningful from the past, if they were upheld for the sake of the state, then this was already different from an authentic commitment to the values of antiquity.

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[27] Ibid., 2.

[28] Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Harvard University Press, 1964).

> Once the question has been posed in this form one finds oneself on the watershed which divides what we now call nationalism from any authentic, inner commitment to the traditional values. Where the commitment to the preservation and advancement of the societal entity known as the nation takes priority over commitment to all other values and beliefs, where other values and beliefs are judged in terms of their relevance to this end rather than vice versa, nationalism in a precise sense is already on the scene. … A commitment to the "national past" as a storehouse of good things from which one can pick and choose at will from outside the tradition, as it were, is a vastly different thing from the commitment to specific values conceived of as universally true.[29]

In a later article, Schwartz expanded this judgment about Yan Fu to his understanding of other major late Qing intellectuals, such as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Zhang Taiyan, "which moved well beyond the available range of Chinese thought and which was to prove eminently receptive to ideas from the West."[30] In Schwartz's view, this kind of nationalist goal, that is, saving the "sociopolitical entity," was broader than "nationalism" defined by Levenson as romantic attachment to traditions.[31] Underlying their prescriptions, Schwartz found a Weberian idea of "rationalization." As Schwarz put it, their thought suggested "nothing less than a positive orientation to modernization and the Faustian-Promethean values underlying modernization... Whatever their differences, they are all concerned with the rationalization of the economic, bureaucratic, military, and legal spheres of life."[32] Suffice it to say, it was the instrumentalization or rationalization of ideas that marked the rise of the absolute commitment to the state at the expense of loyalty to traditional "faith."

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[29] Ibid., 19.

[30] Schwartz, "The Limits of 'Tradition Versus Modernity' as Categories for Explanation: the Case of the Chinese Intellectuals," 81.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 82.

Overall, while Schwartz criticized Levenson's totalism and teleology, he and Levenson were both using Chinese studies to respond to the broader process of "modernization" that they saw in post-War Western societies and cultures as well as in many non-Western societies that had only recently joined in the process. Schwartz shared the Weberian concern with "modernization" as a process that led to an all-encompassing, dominant force of instrumentalization, which eventually led to a deprivation of critical judgment and an "irrational" control over human life.[33] Like Weber, Schwartz stressed the responsibility of the scholarly enterprise based on empathic understanding of the value-spheres of human culture, or the "ethos" of a society.

Both Schwartz and Levenson were amazed by China's modern transformation, captured by the striking rise of national thought. Although Schwartz did not believe in categorical discontinuities between tradition and modernity, and might even think that China's modern nationalism and modernization represented another stage of "rationalization" of society, which might be someday replaced by another "Axial Age," he did reach an agreement with Levenson that nationalism in modern China constituted an alienation from the authentic commitment to Confucian moral values. (We may formulate Schwartz's thesis as "From Moral Cultivation to Nationalism.")

Levenson and Schwartz's studies do not seem to be motivated by the need to offer prescriptions for modern China.[34] Rather, they were both interested in reflecting on the

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[33] Max Weber's specific discussions can be found in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and "Science as a Vocation."

[34] Thomas Mezger elaborated on Schwartz's many interests, from defining China's Axial Age spirit as "Epistemological Optimism" to using the Weberian idea of moral tensions to explain China's modernization. See Mezger, *Escape from Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.)

consequences of "modernization" as they defined it. Levenson was more concerned with its global influence on other cultures, while Schwartz was more concerned with changing attitudes about values, but their historical arguments were often used compatibly. The younger generations of philosophically minded scholars, especially those who came from abroad to study in the US (or wrote in their native lands) with a commitment to changing China and/or other non-Western societies, were not often observers, but critics and reformers. Both Levenson and Schwartz' historiographical frameworks and problemetiques would be further enriched or used by different groups as the basis for their critical scholarly agendas.

How China's Modernization Went Wrong: Chinese National Thought as Leading to Statism and Totalitarianism

Two examples of this interpretation are Chang Hao (張灝) and Lin Yu-sheng (林毓生). Both of them were scholars, but at the same time served as leading liberal public intellectuals and polemicists in the Chinese world. Before coming to the United States, Chang and Lin had studied with Yin Haiguang (殷海光 1919-1969), the most renowned liberal thinker and philosopher in Taiwan during the period of Martial Law. Yin was committed to reflecting on twentieth-century Chinese totalitarianism, which appeared both in the Kuomintang's nationalistic state ideology and in Chinese Communism. Yin traced it to Chinese intellectuals' initial plans for Westernization, believing that these Chinese thinkers had followed a kind of romanticist, revolutionary style of positive liberalism from Continental Europe that paved the road to totalitarianism in modern China. Yin promoted British empiricism as an alternative, and later, at Lin Yu-sheng's

recommendation, translated F.A. Hayek's classic, *The Road to Serfdom*.[35] Chang Hao carried on Yin's commitment throughout his entire scholarly life. He recalled that although in his earlier years at Harvard he had been excited to be exposed to writings by leftist thinkers such as Lu Xun and Chen Duxiu, and was inspired by Mao's nationalistic sentiment upon the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Cultural Revolution had pushed him to reflect, again, on the disastrous totalism of China's modern "political religions," and he thus returned to his earlier position of Classical liberalism.

As a student of Schwartz, Chang Hao shared many ideas with him, particularly Schwartz's interests in the Weberian critique of instrumentalization of values in modernization and the potential for authoritarianism that was embedded in instrumentalization. But Chang transformed this concern in his reflections on China's "modernization" in the twentieth century, asking why the late Qing transitional thinkers came to embrace statism and what went wrong in their learning of modern Western liberal values. This question pushed him to explore how Chinese traditions might have played an underlying role in the Westernization of China's political values. In his first book, *Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907,* Chang applied the Schwartzian judgment of China's modern national thought as a form of instrumentalization of values to Liang Qichao's construction of the idea of citizen state

[35] See "Chang Hao jiaoshou fangtanlu" 张灏教授访谈录, *Shuwu* 书屋, no. 10 (2008), 17. For Yin and Lin's intellectual interactions after Lin and Chang came to study in the United States, see Yin Haiguang and Lin Yu-sheng, *Yin Haiguang Lin Yusheng shuxin lu* (殷海光林毓生书信录) (Changchun: Jilin chuban jituan youxian gongsi, 2008).

(*guojia* 國家) and citizenship (*guomin* 國民), providing an alternative to Levenson's interpretation of Liang's national thought.[36]

Building on Levenson's definition of the Confucian "universal kingship" system, he argued that at the level of institution and state ideology, there was a "Confucian" centralized bureaucracy that focused on maintaining a unified empire (*dayitong* 大一统), in which the basic political principle rarely changed. The ideas of city-state or nation-state, he claimed, never existed. The goal of this "Confucian state," he emphasized, was to preserve the "Confucian" moral doctrine, rather than pursuing political expansion or economic development for the collective.[37] At the same time, Chang also took account of the tradition of Confucian self-cultivation, which Schwartz was interested in. He argued there was a statecraft tradition that was rooted in Neo-Confucian self-cultivation,[38] and he saw this Neo-Confucian statecraft ideal as a natural extension of self-cultivation: being moral would lead to an ordered world, an elitist view that fit the hierarchical ideal of the "Confucian state."[39] After laying out this premise, Chang argued that Liang Qichao's

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[36] Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907.* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1971). Chang believed that Levenson's assumption about Liang was colored by the total anti-traditionalism of the May Fourth generation. See pp. 2-4, and 9. Chang agreed with Levenson that Liang's connection with tradition might have something to do with emotional attachment, but he thought Levenson's belief in the total break of Chinese thinking from the past had made it impossible to examine the habits and influence of the past in leading to China's modern political ideologies. Thus, Chang revisited the late Qing context to explore the rise of Confucian statecraft thought.

[37] *Ibid.,* 27-28.

[38] Chang Hao, "On the Ching-shih Ideal in Neo-Confucianism," *Chi'ing-shih wen-t'I* (Vol.3, No.1, November 1975), 36-61. Also, see the first chapter of Chang's *Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907.*

[39] Another important source for Chang is Benjamin Schwartz' article, "Some Polarities in Confucian Thought." But it seems to me that while Schwartz stressed the tensions between self-cultivation and ordering of the world, Chang focused on them as a coherent system.

doctrine of the "New Citizen" (*xinmin* 新民) replaced the hierarchical Confucian monarchy with an egalitarian citizen state that considered the goal of the state to be the pursuit of the collective development of the nation. However, Liang applied the tradition of the Confucian state's "*dayitong*" moral commitment to the making of the new citizen state, seeing reformation of moral spirit as the basic approach to national restoration. The moral goal of the traditional Confucian state was transformed into a state-centric belief that held the state to be the highest achievement of the collective. Thus, Chang concluded, in Liang's view of citizenship, there was no tension between the public self and the private self. Liang's collectivism enabled the public self to entirely overshadow the private self.[40] Liang understood democratization from the perspective of achieving the "wealth and power" of the West, which eventually led to statism.[41] Chang believed that Liang's nationalism resonated with China's twentieth-century intellectuals across the camps of "Liberalism," "Neo-Traditionalism," and "Communism."[42]

Chang Hao continued this line of inquiry in his influential 1987 book, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning, 1890-1911,* in which he focused on four more metaphysically minded thinkers: Kang Youwei, Tan Sitong, Liu Shipei, and Zhang Taiyan.[43] Engaging with the theory of an "Axial Age," Chang wanted to show how the "Axial Age" moral traditions from ancient China and India shaped the way that

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[40] *Ibid.,* 218.

[41] *Ibid.,* 298. "Without the governance of traditional moral values and without the control of Western liberal values, concern only with the state and its rationalization always carried the possibility of political authoritarianism."

[42] *Ibid.,* 305-7.

[43] Chang Hao, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning, 1890-1911* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

late Qing intellectuals adopted the Western worldview, which also contributed to the contemporary intellectual predicaments in Mainland China and Taiwan. Chang argued that the arrival of new Western knowledge about the world, science, Christianity, and political values all contributed to the collapse of the "the Chinese universe of meanings as a whole,"[44] a total crisis of foundational meaning for late Qing intellectuals, but that they also stimulated a renaissance of the pursuits of transcendental moral values from the "Axial Age." This legacy was reflected in the revival a universalistic vision of the human community as either searching for moral fulfillment or a certain kind of spiritual oneness with the world. [45] Under the impact of Western political models, their "universalistic" tendency and the critical thought promised by China's own "Axial Age" traditions led to a radical break from the conventionally institutionalized Confucian political hierarchy and its language of cosmology.[46] At the same time, these intellectuals' expectations for any new political system in China would be a totalistic modern "political religion."[47] This also explained why nationalism became appealing; it was an answer to the search for totalistic beliefs.

In his later Chinese writings in the 1990s, Chang integrated his historical studies into a critical theory about China's "Axial Age" legacy – particularly about the

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[44] He saw that this system included the "mystique of the Son of Heaven," the cosmological discourse based on the Five Phases, the hierarchical order based on the "Three Bands (*sangang*)," and "cultural particularism of the Confucian values." *Ibid.,* 186.

[45] In Chang's view, the revival of the "Axial Age" legacy was reflected in the revival of the Confucian notion of *ren* as a transcendental spiritual purpose of the universe, Mahayana Buddhism, and philosophical Daoism in the thinking of these four thinkers. *Ibid.,* 183.

[46] *Ibid.,* 186.

[47] *Ibid.,* 190. Chang believed that the fact that contemporary China and Taiwan had witnessed the decline of ideological enthusiasm suggested a profound vacuum of values.

Confucian traditions – and a plea for liberal values. [48] In his view, although both China and the West experienced the rise of transcendental and critical thought during the "Axial Age," only the West had developed a kind of "dark consciousness" (*you'an yishi* 幽暗意识) about the evil potentials in human nature. This consciousness, mostly spelled out by the Christian tradition, played a significant role in helping the West to develop checks and balances in government, which was key to the success of liberal democracy.[49] The Confucian ideal of moral cultivation could generate criticism toward government, but would not promise a system of checks and balances. China's national thought emerged during the transition, and therefore was a source of China's modern destructive totalitarianism.[50]

Another disciple of Yin Haiguang, Lin Yusheng, studied with F.A. Hayek at Chicago University, but was also intellectually close to Schwartz. His influential work on the "total anti-traditionalism" of the May Fourth era has also been influential among historians and intellectuals. In a vein similar to the inquiries of Chang Hao, Lin traced the totalistic iconoclasm of the May Fourth era to a pervasive "traditional mode of thinking," which emphasized installing the correct moral and cultural values to transform people. This had the potential to lead to an "organismic unity" coming out of fundamental ideas.

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[48] Chang Hao, *You'an yishi yu minzhu chauntong* (幽暗意識與民主傳統) (Taibei Shi: Lian jing chuban shiye gongsi, 1990).

[49] Here Chang also engaged with Metzger's interpretation of China's "Axial Age" legacy as the emergence of a kind of "epistemological optimism." For Metzger's argument, see Metzger, "Some Ancient Roots of Modern Chinese Thought: This-Worldliness, Epistemological Optimism, Doctrinality, and the Emergence of Reflexivity in the Eastern Chou" *Early China*. Vol. 11/12 (1985–1987), 61-117.

[50] This thesis has been controversial in Mainland China and Taiwan. Confucian thinkers, including Li Minghui 李明辉 and Bai Tongdong 白彤东 have criticized it.

[51] Lin later worked on creating a method to "creatively transform Chinese traditional culture (中國傳統的創造性轉化)" in order for China to embrace liberalism.[52]

Both Chang and Lin participated in the debates of the late 1980s and early 1990s regarding why China's modernization failed to develop liberal democracy in the twentieth century. Entering the 1990s, however, there was a change in the questions that were asked about the source of China's national thought.[53]

Chinese National Thought as the Consequence of the Hegemony of Western "Modernity"

Both the Western and Chinese academic worlds have experienced tremendous shifts since the 1990s under a new wave of globalization. One of the greatest consequences is the questioning and historicization of developmental liberalism. In this context, several mutually related neo-Marxist intellectual movements of the twentieth century became major inspirations for the study of modern Chinese thought and political discourse: the Frankfurt School's critique of scientific and technological domination and mass capitalist cultural production, the post-structural critique of modern Western

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[51] Lin Yu-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

[52] Lin Yu-sheng, *Zhongguo chuantong de chuangzaoxing zhuanhua* (中国传统的创造性转化) (Beijing : Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian: Xin hua shu dian jing xiao, 1988). Chang and Lin's studies of twentieth-century Chinese thought played an influential role in the debate in the late 80s and 90s over China's twentieth-century ideological "radicalism." For a few representative discussions in this debate, see Ying-shih Yu, "The Radicalization of China in the Twentieth Century," *Daedalus*, 122.2 (1993), 125–50. Li Zehou 李澤厚 Liu Zaifu 劉再復, *Gaobie geming: huiwang ershishiji zhongguo* (告別革命: 回望二十世紀中國) (Xianggang: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi, 1995).

[53] Later in this introduction I will turn to Peter Zarrow's work, which inherited and deepened Chang Hao's historical arguments almost three decades later.

knowledge and its representational system as power construction, and the critical study of the rise of Western liberal developmentalism as inherent to the making of world capitalism in the scholarship of "world-system" analysis and "dependency theory." Among these trends, post-structuralism in particular inspired by post-colonialism. One of its goals, as far as Michel Foucault was concerned, was to reveal the politics behind the making of modern Western "self" in the production of knowledge about "others," which directly inspired Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). As Said argued, the "Orient" was an imperialist-discursive object, thus the modern identity of non-Western societies could not be fully authentic, but always existed within the imposed discourse of the West, reinforced through the West's cultural hegemony. [54]

These theories aim to critique the European Enlightenment tradition and have provided powerful tools for scholars in Chinese studies to de-center the Western narrative of "modernity." In the study of modern China, however, although scholars inspired by these new theoretical directions have argued for decentering the West in order to restore the historical agency of non-Western societies, they have continued to reflect on modern Chinese nationalistic discourse as a path to achieving Western-style modernization. Much reflection remains devoted to critiquing national thought as the root of twentieth-century Chinese statism. This continuity is understandable given that Frankfurt School Critical Theory, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism have greatly built on the criticism of "modernization/modernity" in the tradition of classical European sociology. The Frankfurt School inherited Weber's critique of instrumentalization of reason as an undesired consequence of modernity, and transformed it into a cultural critique of the

[54] Another influential work theorizing the "hybrid" nature of the "postcolonial subject" is Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. (1994)

entire Enlightenment tradition as the source of the dominance of modern science and technology in capitalist society.[55] Post-structuralism expanded this critique to view the making of modern everyday knowledge, social norms, and the entire representational system in the modern West as operations of political power. Deconstruction was seen as the only effective tool to challenge authoritarianism. From Weber to post-structuralism, methods of criticism and solutions changed; the theoretical commitment to reflecting on how the ideal of Western Enlightenment led to more "dominance" and "totalitarianism" in modern Western culture and politics remains unchanged. Looking at modern Chinese nationalistic discourse as a way to critique China's modernization is also one of the new trends of scholarship since the 1990s, defining the agenda of research.

What has changed in the study of modern China after the neo-Marxist intellectual movement, however, is that the target of critique has shifted from China itself to the roots of Western "modernity." In this shift, the Levensonian historical formulation has experienced a resurgence. While Levenson's oversimplified characterization of "Confucianism" and his negative evaluation of the imperial system have been abandoned, his emphasis on the overwhelming homogenizing power of Western industrial modernity and its absolute cultural impact on non-Western societies and traditions has received attention from scholars inspired by neo-Marxist critical scholarship who are committed to exposing Western hegemony in the non-Western world's modern identity-making. The belief that nationalistic discourse in modern China was a consequence of modeling on Western modernity, and that the search for a Chinese cultural identity is a categorical

[55] The landmark work that defines the direction of Critical Theory is Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: *Philosophical Fragments*, ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr; translated by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 2002) (original.1947)

break from a genuine link to "Confucianism," have been important historical assumptions for the new scholarship after the post-structural/post-colonial turn.

In *Rescuing History from the Nation,* Prasenjit Duara contributed arguably the most influential and sophisticated English-language critique of modern Chinese national thought from the perspective of post-structuralism and post-colonialism.[56] Inspired by the critique of modern nationalism and national history in Indian studies, Duara sought to reveal how the politics of colonialism that he saw as embedded in an Enlightenment mode of world history continue to operate in the new context of independent nation states, and how national history, in the post-colonial societies that reproduce these societies' self-understanding in a global context, is the representational system that perpetuates the old hierarchical order and power relationship of colonialism.[57] He thus analyzed the structure of the Hegelian notion of world history, in which a unitary national identity was philosophized as the collective historical subject of progress. This mode of representation, in his view, prepared the way for Social Darwinism, which linked the evolution of a race with the realization of a nation.[58] Duara argued that China's national history derives from this linear, progressive, and teleological model of Enlightenment History.[59] He argued that such a narrative of "History" came with a new vocabulary that formed an unprecedented self-consciousness of China as a historical subject. The post-imperial Chinese state that justified itself based on the notion of the nation pushed cultural

[56] Prasenjit Duara, Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995).

[57] *Ibid.,* 6-7

[58] *Ibid.,* Chapter 1.

[59] Ibid., 3

hegemony, sanctioning voices that did not fit in.[60] He agreed with Levenson that the Chinese had to "speak of a separate but superior or equivalent traditional culture or history" in the face of the West, but he traced the roots of this expression back to the Hegelian mode of world History itself. It was not so much a psychological comfort, but "a product of the affiliation with the new model of History." [61]

Duara disagrees with Ernest Gallener and Benedict Anderson that national consciousness was only to be found in the modern West. In societies such as China and India, there were historical discourses about race and culture as the basis of group identity. However, he stressed that the rise of modern national discourse in China, especially the writing of national history, was a consequent of the influence of the Hegelian conception of History, supported by the discourse about race in Social Darwinism, and institutionalized by the West-centered international order.[62] Moreover, agreeing with Immanuel Wallerstein that the rise of the nation-state in Europe was largely "tied to the imperatives of the global, capitalist division of labor,"[63] he saw that the progressive national history justified the intrusion of capitalism into China.[64] He thus stressed that our existing knowledge about China's self-understanding of its history was already a product of the Enlightenment model.[65] Duara recognized that many nationalist thinkers, such as Zhang Taiyan, were interested in ancient Chinese discourses about

[60] Ibid., 4

[61] *Ibid.,* 30.

[62] *Ibid.,* 8

[63] *Ibid*.

[64] *Ibid.,* 9

[65] *Ibid.,* 26

racial identity. Nonetheless, the fact that Zhang engaged with Social Darwinism and other Western discourses and learning that had contributed to nineteenth-century Western knowledge-building from the perspective of a national subject made Duara think that Zhang's nationalism was a consequence of his embracing of Enlightenment world history. The traditional Chinese discourse about identity was thus revived to fill in the new historical consciousness as its source of content.[66] On the other hand, Duara questioned why Chinese nationalistic thinkers seemed to be uncritical of the Enlightenment model, but he did not investigate why these thinkers thought that a Chinese national identity was important, and what they discovered in the Enlightenment tradition from their own perspective.

Almost at the same time, Lydia Liu published *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity--China, 1900-1930*,[67] in which she adopted a more sympathetic view of Chinese nationalist thinkers and cultural actors. She took the Levensonian assumption as her starting point: Chinese nationalism since Liang Qichao aimed to incorporate the model of the modern West and launch a fundamental break with the past. But she criticized Levenson for not taking seriously the power struggle between the Chinese and the West in their "translating" of the West into China.[68] Drawing on post-colonial thinker Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous comment on how to engage textual deconstruction to restore the agency of colonized subjects, Liu proposed to see

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[66] *Ibid.,* 71.

[67] Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity--China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1995).

[68] *Ibid.,* 30, and 39.

China's modern change as "confrontations" between Chinese cultural elites and the West,[69] and she believed that it was "translation" that constituted a major terrain for these "confrontations." Since the late Qing, Liu argued, in China's translation of new Western theories and terms, Chinese intellectuals had been struggling to search for equal standing between the Chinese and the West, in order to overcome the hegemony of Western imperialism. New Western terms that came to China had to face the fate of being manipulated and recreated by Chinese elites to meet the need of nation building. In her book Liu explored some scenarios in which she believed that Chinese cultural elites internalized the Western discourse of "modernity" and transformed it into their own effort at nation building and cultural construction.

Liu stressed in various parts of the book that her goal was to rescue the agency of the non-Western language and to reveal the Chinese "confrontation" with the West. But did this mean exploring the local intellectual traditions that Chinese cultural elites might have used to re-interpret the West? Her answer was no. Liu emphasized that China's modern condition is a predicament between the effort to find its own agency and the effort to imagine and justify this agency according to Western modernity. For instance, Liu saw that the "National Essence" (*Guocui* 國粹) movement was in this predicament from the very beginning, which reminds us a kind of "self-orientalization." [70] By celebrating China's own glorious past as the basis for its modern identity, the Chinese elites re-endorsed the Western view of nationalism.[71] This view, expressed in post-

[69] *Ibid.,* 30-31.

[70] Also see Arif Dirlik's discussion on the matter of self-orientalization:,"Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism," *History and Theory* 35.4 (December 1996): 96-118.

[71] *Ibid.,* 246

colonial language, is the same as the Levensonian thesis. Liu admitted that much of Levenson's account of "Confucianism" and traditional China had become questionable, but held that his question about how the imperialist West left Chinese cultural elites with a traumatic cultural memory was still a significant issue. She was not sure "whether one can still talk about change and transaction between East and West in twentieth-century China without privileging the West, modernity, progress, or other post-Enlightenment notions on the one hand and without holding on to a reified idea of indigenous China on the other."[72] Thus, Liu did not trust the possibility of any innocent China-centered approach as proposed by Paul Cohen in *Discovering History in China*. For her, Cohen's advice to find a "China-centered" approach, which came from Western academia, probably represented just another attempt to equalize the Chinese and the Western, which would reinforce the hegemony of the Western discourse of knowledge.[73] Liu hoped that her book could remind readers of the responsibility to challenge any potential for naturalizing and reinforcing Western hegemony. She believed that revealing the complex predicament of the Chinese elites in "confronting" the Western cultural and political hegemony provided a locus for the criticism of Western imperialism, and, for her, it is the history of "translation" and language making that provides a necessary strategic battlefield.[74]

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[72] *Ibid.,* 30.

[73] *Ibid.,* 29.

[74] Liu's second project, *The Clash of Empires*, *The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002) continues this agenda.

The works of Duara and Liu represent the broad trend of the "cultural turn" or "post-structural turn" in the study of late Qing and modern China since the 1990s.[75] But the most formidable intellectual historical work along similar lines of criticism appeared in the early 2000s. Wang Hui's *magnum opus, The Rise of Modern Chinese Thought* (现代中国思想的兴起) (2004-2008),[76] was a major event in China's public debates. Wang's critique did not just stop at the representational impact of the Western "modernity." Deeply influenced by Foucault in his method, Wang sought to reveal the complex relationship between the impact of the modern Western knowledge system and modern Western institutional designs. The book represented the most comprehensive and original attempt to define China's modern transition by engaging with neo-Marxist criticism and historical scholarship. A short account of the work here does not do justice to its theoretical richness and its role in China's modern thought, but my goal here is not to look at Wang in the context of modern Chinese thought; rather, given the influence of the book, I shall reconstruct the book's main arguments in light of Wang's critical-theoretical commitment.

This work can be read as a response to the liberal's question of why China's modernization failed to develop liberal values. From the beginning of his research for this book in the early 1990s, Wang was equally concerned with the roots of China's

[75] For a few representative edited volumes and monographs, see Yeh Wen-hsin ed, *Becoming Chinese: Passage to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Peter Zarrow ed, *Creating Chinese Modernity: Knowledge and Everyday Life, 1900-1940* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006); Kai-wing Chou, et.al. eds, *Beyond the May Fourth Paradigm: In Search of Chinese Modernity* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008); John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (LIT Verlag Münster, 1996).

[76] Wang Hui. *Xiandai zhongguo sixiang de xingqi* (*The Rise of Modern Chinese Thought* 现代中国思想的兴起) (4 volumes). (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 2004-2008.)

twentieth-century nationalism, statism and totalitarianism, seeing that from beginning of the May Fourth movement, there already many "anti-Enlightenment" elements in Chinese thought, which anticipated the state's total control in the Communist era.[77] But although he admitted that there were some influences from Chinese traditions, he saw the roots of these problems in the Western "modernity" itself. In 1997 and 2001 Wang published two influential manifestos reflecting on the mission of China's public intellectual debates since the 1980s, in which he critiqued China's contemporary followers of liberalism, or *ziyou zhuyi* (自由主义), which he referred to in the second article as China's "neo-liberalism," or *xin ziyou zhuyi* 新自由主义. He saw that these Chinese liberals in the 1990s, especially the proponents for the British Classical liberal thought, had naturalized Western "modernity" – capitalism, free market, liberal democracy – as a universal path for humanity. This belief had not only misled the Chinese in interpreting the problem of China's twentieth-century political experience as a lack of liberal values, but had also legitimized contemporary capital, both domestic and global, to work with the centralized state to take advantage of society, producing greater inequality. Equally important, he saw that China's state-let marketization since the 1980s and the rise of "new authoritarianism" in the 1990s supported by neo-liberal ideology, had deprived Chinese public intellectuals of their critical spirit against power, leading to the collapse of a common ground of values. Thus, he proposed a new wave of critical thinking focusing on the hegemony of Western modern knowledge and political ideals.

[77] "Yuyan yu weiji: Zhongguo xiandai lishi zhong de "wusi" qimeng yundong"(预言与危机：中国现代历史中的"五四"启蒙运动) (*Wenxue pinglun*, 1989. 3 and 4).

To that purpose, he celebrated neo-Marxist scholarship and questioned the validity of Western "modernity."[78]

The Rise of Modern Chinese Thought, published in 2004 and 2008, can be read as a comprehensive historical work that responds to the need to decentralize Western "modernity" and re-understand the nature of China's twentieth-century political experience.[79] What is Western "modernity"? Wang interpreted it as an ideology and a set of institutional designs and corresponding knowledge that was spread to the non-Western world through imperialism.[80] It contains the following elements: nationalism/nation state, capitalism, an international order based on state sovereignty, and modern science. They are connected through the following mechanism: nation building disconnects individuals from their conventional social ties and turns them into free and legally equal industrial laborers.[81] The construction of a national cultural identity is a process of cultural

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[78] See Wang's 1997 article, "Dangdai zhongguo de sixiang zhuangkuang yu xiandaixing wenti (当代中国的思想状况与现代性问题)" and his 2001 article, "Zhongguo xin ziyou zhuyi de lishi genyuan (中国新自由主义的历史根源：再论当代中国的思想状况与现代性问题)."

[79] Wang discusses at length A.F. Hayek's argument that the twentieth-century socialist state-planned economy was rooted in an abuse of "science." The original argument is to be found in Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason* (1952). Wang saw that by blaming socialism for the "abuse of reason," liberal thinkers had reinforced the hegemony of science and the corresponding beliefs in liberal values. *Ibid.,* 1434.

[80] It is important to see that, although Wang did claim to restore the intellectual agency of the Chinese traditions, he was not promoting historicism or relativism. He did not suggest that "modernity" was valid for the West because it grew out of the history of the West, but invalid for the Chinese because it was foreign. Rather, I think he is in agreement with many scholars from the Frankfurt School and French structuralism that the "modern" project has fundamental flaws for humanity. It seems to me that for Wang, the historical method is a critical tool for reflecting on the contingency, the arbitrariness, and, especially, the power-relationship behind the ideal of "modernity."

[81] *Ibid.,* 1398-9. This account is similar to Ernest Gellner's account on the origins of nationalism in his influential study, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca; London : Cornell University Press, 1983.)

homogenization, which served the purpose of subjecting individuals to the developmental goal of the state.[82] The nation-state, born from a Europe-made world market system, served as a component of global capitalism. The international order based on the participation of sovereign states is not just a political arrangement, but also a relationship of economic interests.[83] The global expansion of trade and military and economic competition contributes to the centralization of state power and the homogenization of bureaucratic systems in each country as it is absorbed into the world system.[84] However, the element that Wang was mostly concerned with was the role of modern science, the knowledge foundation of "modernity."[85] Inspired by the Frankfurt School's critique of science and technology as leading to the mentality of domination and exploitation, and by the Foucauldian interpretation of science as a form of normalization and social control, Wang held that science has constituted, legitimized, and universalized Western "modernity."[86] The scientific ontology encourages an "axiomatic worldview," corresponding with an individual-centric ethics and a political-legal order stressing individual obligation and rights.[87] The modern disciplines of knowledge justify the division of labor, and the capitalist expansion requires the continued advancement of technological power. Also, the expansion of capitalism spreads a design of society

[82] Ibid., 22

[83] *Ibid.,* 1477

[84] Ibid., 96.

[85] *Ibid.,* 46.

[86] For Wang's account on his approach of analyzing the role of science, see, *Ibid.,* 70.

[87] *Ibid.,* 66

justified by science and technology, which, in turn, contributes to the universalization of science and technology in non-Western societies.[88]

In line with Durara, Wang aimed to critique the "Enlightenment" model of world history as a self-serving construction inherent to the discourse of Western "modernity," and particularly, to save China from this model of history that measures China's experience against Western "modernity." Hence, Wang devoted himself to a reconceptualization of the historical and philosophical legacy of China's dynastic empires (*wangchao* 王朝) by engaging a "Confucian" internal perspective. Wang found this internal perspective in the Neo-Confucian notion of "Heavenly Principle" (*tianli* 天理), which, in his view, shaped the literati's moral and political consciousness from the Song until the arrival of the West. What Wang saw as key to the concept of "Heavenly Principle" was a unique historical consciousness and a non-positivist concept of knowledge. Wang argued that the idea of "Heavenly Principle" assumed, on the one hand, the existence of transcendental and universal values embodied in the practices of antiquity and, on the other hand, required realizing those universals in the historical and the everyday, rather than producing "abstract" and "ahistorical" knowledge about the world.[89] He believed that this consciousness allowed groups with different identities to find themselves a place in a "naturally unfolding" history, thus enabling the historical

[88] Wang ends the book with this message as his response to Foucault's question regarding the motivation behind the spread of science and its consequence. *Ibid.,* 1491.

[89] The logic was this: for Confucian scholars, Wang argued, identifying one's learning with the pursuit of "Heavenly Principle" entailed that there was a fundamental break between them and the history of the sage kings. But, at the same time, it also indicated a desire to reconnect with the history of the sage kings and bring a better order to the contemporary world. How to do so? Since the break from antiquity was understood as a post-antiquity separation between the "music and rituals" (*liyue* 礼乐) and the institutions (*zhidu* 制度), to reconnect with the sage kings thus meant to reunite "music and rituals" and government institutions in one's *everyday* practice. *Ibid.,* 54.

subject to experience an "infinite transformation" without breaking its connection with the past. Wang saw that this "embracing" and "flexible" attitude about the identity of the historical subject had made it possible for China to endure all kinds of discontinuities – ethnic, dynastic, social, and cultural-linguistic – in history, while including different forms of historical subjects into one broad concept of "China."[90] The Neo-Confucian consciousness defined as such, he believed, constituted the main feature of Confucian learning.[91]All the other major schools could be seen as a part of Neo-Confucianism, developing it with different focuses. Accordingly, the "flexible" and "inclusive" identity of "China" before the arrival of the Western model of the nation-state allowed different ethnic groups to transform themselves into legitimate "Chinese" dynasties.[92] There were nationalistic tendencies embedded in the discourse of the "Chinese versus the Barbarian," particularly evident in such early Qing evidential scholars such as Gu Yanwu and Wang Fuzhi, but because this discourse was not adopted by the Qing government and because it has often been used by modern scholars to symbolize China's closed-mindedness, Wang decided to downplay this tradition in his analysis.[93] By and large, Wang aimed to show that China's imperial political identity in the past was a "plural" and "flexible" conception.

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[90] The original phrase of this key point is to be found in *Ibid.,* 59.

[91] Ibid., 56

[92] *Ibid.,* 83 Correspondingly, Wang argued, there had been a common discourse of "Confucian ritualism" to legitimize dynastic rulers which had been maintaining the continuity of identity despite all kind of historical changes. The Qing revival of the New-Text Classical Scholarship, in Wang's view, was an example of the deep presence of this universal ritualism.

[93] *Ibid.,* 83-84.

Hence, the rise of China's modern thought in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, as defined by Wang, was a consequence of accepting the imposed package of Western "modernity" under the pressure of surviving contact with imperialism and world capitalism. This led to the creation of a common national identity and citizenship, and the formation of state centralization. In order to justify Western "modernity," the late Qing thinkers had to embrace the scientific "axiomatic" worldview, rejecting what Wang saw as the traditional form of the social-political system, and embracing a republican order that was key to the realization of a sovereign industrial state.[94] To replace the "Heavenly Principle" worldview, late Qing thinkers such as Yan Fu, Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan constructed a new perspective, which Wang called the "Public Principle (*gongli*)" worldview, and which he argued aimed to justify the new social-political systems and the development of a capitalist economy.[95] Wang also believed, however, that the late Qing thinkers, influenced by their tradition, had from the beginning embedded in their discourses the possibility to criticize Western "modernity," and added a moral strain to it. Thus these figures remained a critical source for China today to critique the hegemony of the West.[96] In particular, Wang believed that Zhang Taiyan, who shared the "axiomatic" worldview to save China, remained highly skeptical about the hegemony of Western "modernity." Zhang believed that equality and freedom

[94] *Ibid.*, 1398-9

[95] *Ibid*., 1429

[96] Wang believed that the construction of the "Public Principle" worldview by the transitional thinkers also largely transformed "value-free" science into a worldview that spoke to moral values. This is a legacy from the traditional logic of "Heavenly Principle." It helped the transitional thinkers to legitimize science, not just as a tool, but also as a value-laden principle. *Ibid.,* 50; 1494.

only existed in a world where identities of different individuals and groups were respected and celebrated.

By and large, the package of "modernity" overwhelmingly succeeded at shaping China. Intellectuals' embrace of the modern state and knowledge stimulated the spread of nationalism and a bottom-up nationalist movement. Meanwhile, after the transitional moment, twentieth century China witnessed the increasing dominance of science as a growing and a self-justifying system, and accordingly, Wang argued by referring to Weber, its meaning became instrumentalized and its worldview function was "disenchanted."[97] In agreement with Levenson and Liu, Wang saw that the twentieth-century search for a "Chinese national culture" appealed to particularism, which took Western "nationalism" as its premise and only reinforced the hegemony of Western "modernity." [98]

On the whole, in Wang's view, from the late Qing onward, Western imperialist power had made it impossible for late Qing thinkers to reject the need to transform China into a nation state. The birth of modern China was rooted in the need to make use of the power of the state to plan and institutionalize a market society in order to strengthen itself for modern capitalist competition.[99] Wang argued that "statism" was precisely rooted in the logic of Western modernity. Herein contained the potential for totalitarianism.[100] A centralized modern nation state contains a deep crisis because it presumes a highly

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[97] *Ibid.,* 1410-1411

[98] Ibid.

[99] *Ibid.,* 1479

[100] *Ibid.,* 1484.

homogenized cultural identity and unified political structure. Importantly, throughout the book, Wang engaged with the notion of "freedom" but gave it an alternative interpretation from classical liberals such as Chang Hao. Wang's "freedom" would be compromised in a Western liberal citizen state, and he suggested that perhaps China's traditional dynastic empire based on a more "open" and "inclusive" political identity and structure could "provide people today a critical perspective and a more democratic proposal that tolerates differences" and better ensures equality. [101] Wang's account of China's modern transition has influenced like-minded neo-Marxist scholars. In Viren Murthy's book on Zhang Taiyan's political thought, Murthy saw Zhang Taiyan, Lu Xun, and Wang Hui as belonging to the same "anti-modern" modernist camp, and interpreted them as a part of the global rise of a "leftist" critical philosophy.[102]

Did the West only play a negative role in the making of modern China? Were there any positive elements in Western political modernity that appealed to Chinese thinkers? Peter Zarrow's recent study, *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885-1924* (2012), provides an account of China's "political modernization," an interpretation different from the narratives focusing on critiquing Western "modernity." Zarrow's study revives many judgments of Chang Hao.[103] He inherits Chang's theory about how the transcendental Confucian "Axial Age" legacy stimulated late Qing radical thinkers' utopianism and totalism, which contributed to modern China's statism and totalitarianism in the process of modernization and the quest

[101] Ibid., 22.

[102] Viren Murthy, The Political Philosophy of Zhang Taiyan (Leidon: Brill, 2011)

[103] Peter Zarrow, *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885-1924* (2012) (Stanford University Press, 2012).

for "political religions." But, writing in a new context, Zarrow's work offers a more positive narrative. Rather than questioning why the Chinese nationalistic thinkers failed to understand the significance of "individuals" in Western liberal values, Zarrow's study focuses on Chinese thinkers' interest in the Western idea of "popular sovereignty." In his view, there was an increasing popularity around the globe of Enlightenment discourse about "egalitarianism" and "anti-authoritarianism"." The Chinese thinkers who had sought more bottom-up political participation since the mid-ninetieth century appealed to that trend, and were inspired to push for radical reforms to the hierarchical order of the traditional "Confucian" state. They eventually adopted a new model of the state drawing on European political philosophy and legal thought. Zarrow considers the embrace of "egalitarianism" to be the defining characteristic of China's political modernization, a consequence of an intended radical ideological break from the hierarchy-centered "Confucianism." The making of a Chinese cultural identity as the basis for the new citizen state, thus, was a necessary step for adopting and institutionalizing the "translated" modern citizen state.

Understanding Modern Chinese Nationalistic Discourse beyond the Perspective of "Modernization/Modernity"

Since the postwar era, China's nationalistic discourse and thought have been studied as products of Western-style modernization. In the context of the Cold War period, this perspective helped scholars to transcend ideological barriers and let Chinese history speak to the West. For Levenson and Schwartz, the Chinese case provided a window to reflect on the meaning and consequences of "modernization/modernity" that

they understood as a significant ongoing phenomenon in the world. But in doing so, they also applied theoretically laden assumptions about "modernization/ modernity" to interpret Chinese intellectuals' self-understanding and actions during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Levenson and Schwartz's assumptions about the meaning of "modernization/ modernity" were primarily derived from modern European social thought. This tradition, developed through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, is rooted in reflection on the problems of modern Western industrial-capitalist society, and the goal of theorizing "modernization/modernity" had much to do with the European thinkers' need to create a shared understanding of intellectual and political responsibility. The Marxist and the Weberian sociologies remain highly inspiring in analyzing general social-economic behavior, but their assumptions about the ideological meaning of "modernization/modernity" – for instance, the dominance of an industrial-capitalist mentality, the instrumentalization of moral values, "disenchantment," etc. – are shaped by a Western tradition of moral/philosophical thinking, which is entirely different from the milieu of Chinese intellectuals during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is problematic to carry these assumptions into an analysis of Chinese reformist intellectuals and their thought.

One consequence of this baggage was a tendency for scholars to define a coherent, ahistorical concept of "Confucianism" in opposition to their understandings of the meaning of "modernization/ modernity." "Confucianism" is culturalism, not pragmatic or progressive; "Confucianism" is an "Axial Age" product concerned with transcendental moral values, not concerned with wealth and power, for instance. Having assumed that

the modern Chinese nationalist discourse was one of the products of Western-style modernization, and since they believed that discourse about "renewing" the past must be an "inauthentic" expression, it was not seen as necessary to ask why cultural identity was important and valuable from the perspective of the Chinese nationalist thinkers and their learning tradition.

The problematiques of Levenson and Schwartz defined later scholars' assessments of the "Chinese modern." These later scholars continued engaging with modern Western social theories, generally building on the insights of Marx and Weber. They also carried on Levensonian and Schwartzian assumptions about the roots of Chinese national thought. Chang Hao examined Chinese national thought to diagnose China's failure to develop liberal values in the process of learning from the West. Duara, Lydia Liu and Wang Hui reflected on it to critique the perpetuation of Western political and cultural hegemony. None of them have viewed nationalistic discourse from the perspective of Chinese intellectual debates over the importance of "restoring" China's cultural identity.

Without understanding the internal conceptual and historical dimensions of China's modern transition, our scholarly debates often turn into argumentation over the fate of "modernization" or "modernity." What has made China fail? What disasters did Western modernity bring to China? West-centrism continues to loom large in the scholarship even after the post-structural turn. Lydia Liu argued for the political importance of translation and language, but she did not ask how Chinese intellectuals themselves theorized the importance of language during that period based on the literati tradition. Duara questioned why Chinese thinkers embraced "Enlightenment" knowledge,

but did not explain how Chinese read the West and what resources they used.[104] Wang Hui has delivered so far the most sophisticated and nuanced interpretation of the "Confucian" learning tradition, but, again, he stressed the link between the "Confucian" legacy and the multi-ethnic and ritualistic model of the "imperial dynasty," and he deliberately downplayed the tradition of nationalistic discourse in the "Confucian" tradition and minimized the internal criticisms of the imperial model.

But how did Chinese nationalist thinkers understand their choices and the meaning of nationalistic discourse? For people such as Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan, who all had deep scholarly training in the Classical and historical learning traditions, why was cultural identity important? Were there other contesting positions? Who won and who lost? If we look at the rise of China's national thought in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century as a rupture from literati cultural traditions, we might tend to believe that it is unnecessary to examine such literati debates. But if we look at the transition as a cumulative process with different positions and claims layering up to create new contexts to which later generations responded, then we must pay attention to the literati traditions that Chinese intellectual elites had at hand to inform their choices and self-understanding. An adequate critical-historical engagement with China's modern national thought requires understanding the role of the literati's own ideological and conceptual traditions in shaping Chinese discourses and choices.

The Revival of Evidential Learning and the Context of Literati Debates over Values

[104] In his work on Yan Fu, Benjamin Schwartz reflected that when scholars tried to understand modern Chinese thinkers' thinking as a response to the West, they often forgot that the West in itself was unknown. What I want to add is that, this is not just about the state of the West, but about Chinese thinkers' interpretations about the West.

Going beyond the existing "modernization/modernity" historiography, this study explores the making of Chinese cultural identity by situating it in a highly important but often-neglected context of literati ideological and scholarly debate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Examining the writings and debates of the leading nationalistic thinkers – Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan – from the early 1890s, when they joined Kang Youwei's "New Learning" movement to push political reforms, to the middle of the first decade of the 1900s, when they each formulated their nationalist views and mobilized scholars to devote themselves to the construction of a "Chinese" national history, we see two interlocking discourses developing together. One was an increasing embracement of "nationalism" or *minzu zhuyi* (民族主義) as a political ideology, while the other was a revival of the Qing Evidential Learning tradition in debates over the source of shared values. In the late nineteen century, there was a turning back to seventeenth-century politically minded Evidential Learning scholars such as Huang Zongxi (黃宗羲 1610-1695), Gu Yanwu (顧炎武 1613-1682) and Wang Fuzhi (王夫之 1619-1692) as models of political thinking and scholarship. This revival continued to include many more eighteenth-century textual scholars, such as Dai Zhen (戴震 1724-1777), as models for a vision of scholarly culture. Although they engaged with different trends in the Evidential Learning tradition, Liang and Zhang both saw their nationalistic movements as fulfilling the mission of the Evidential Learning tradition in a new context. They critiqued Neo-Confucianism and its Manchu supporters as corrupting of "true" Chinese culture traditions, and instead committed themselves to constructing a trans-dynastic, bottom-up national cultural history, reaching back to antiquity and a common Chinese identity, as

the basis for a self-governing society in a post-imperial China. Their anti-Neo-Confucian discourse continued strongly into the May Fourth generation, for whom Neo-Confucianism became a symbol of a total "Confucian authoritarianism."

In current historiography, there has been some attention to the revival of the discourse of the Evidential Learning tradition during this period, but it is often interpreted as intellectual leaders' post-facto rationalization of their adoption of Western nationalism and science, and their justification for overthrowing the Manchus.[105] However, to explore the deeper historical connections between modern nationalist thinkers and the Evidential Learning tradition, and to make sense of the moral and political meaning of the Evidential Learning tradition in the larger ideological discourse of the late Qing, I trace the roots and influence of the Evidential Learning tradition from the seventeenth century onward (Chapters 1-3). I reconstruct a three-century-long intellectual-historical process from the Ming-Qing transition to the rise of nationalistic discourse in the early twentieth century, and examine the major literati ideological debates in this process. This scope helps me to revisit the late Qing transformation from a non-retrospective perspective, explaining how the intellectuals of the late Qing understood China's modern condition and the world, why the making of a Chinese nation state was understood as a meaningful solution, and what alternatives were bypassed or surrendered (Chapters 4-5). In my analysis, I do not use the term "Confucianism" to generalize literati learning, because there was no one position that scholars agreed upon. Adopting that term would only

[105] Wang Hui suggests that the revival of the seventeenth century Evidential thinkers and their critiques of Neo-Confucianism represented the need of Chinese thinkers to incorporate the Western models of the modern citizen state and market society. Duara saw that modern scholars used the content of earlier historical works from the tradition of Evidential Learning to substantiate the new Enlightenment model of "History."

obscure the importance of the debates over the meanings of the literati learning tradition, which, as I shall show, played an essential role in China's modern ideological transition.

Argument and Structure

My dissertation argues that, proposals to construct a Chinese cultural identity in the early twentieth century were not a product of the process of "Westernization" or "modernization," but were first and foremost concerned with the sources of elite values and the role of elite culture. This concern was integral to the literati traditions of Classical and historical learning. In particular, I show that intellectuals who proposed the pursuit of a Chinese cultural identity aimed to restore the Qing Evidential Learning tradition as the basis for China's new post-imperial civic and moral life. These intellectuals shared with the Evidential Learning tradition the view that, in order to restore responsible elite learning, scholars ought to commit themselves to the interest of the community by identifying with China's cumulative civilization as the source of knowledge and values. Meanwhile, they believed that the Evidential Learning tradition's historical approach to the definition of values would allow scholars to engage with new concepts from abroad in order to initiate progressive intellectual-political developments while preserving the authority of their own cultural traditions that was fundamental to intellectual elites' cultural and political agency.

To show how this process took place, in the first half of the dissertation (Chapters 1-3) I provide a new, in-depth explanation of the roots and the historical significance of the Evidential Learning tradition. Different from Benjamin Elman's argument that

Evidential Learning represented a Chinese example of early modern philology,[106] I show that it grew out of a need to redefine literati leadership in public life in response to the crisis of literati identity in early seventeenth century. This crisis was caused by the collapse of the common ground of elite culture based on Neo-Confucianism in the late sixteenth century, a collapse that was strengthened by the dramatic fall of Ming to the Manchus (Chapter 1). I demonstrate that Evidential Learning scholars in the seventeenth century redefined the role of the intellectual elite from serving as exemplars of personal moral cultivation to acting as politically minded scholars who were concerned with defining the foundations of government and the interests of the national community. Turning away from the Neo-Confucian conception of values as universalistic and predetermined moral doctrines, they worked out a new understanding of knowledge as the product of human culture, and of values as constructed through community's civilized life over time. In particularly, I show that the legacies of the Evidential Learning had two main aspects. The first is a new literati ideology emerged in the seventeenth century, which claimed that elite learning ought to be committed to the bottom-up, cumulative cultural constructions of the "Chinese" historical community (Chapter 2). The second is a powerful collective textual-cultural scholarly enterprise rose in the eighteenth century, which saw the textual method of reconstructing China's cultural legacies in antiquity as the only valid path to learning (Chapter 3). The Evidential Learning position regarding values generated a new and powerful competing discourse on the agency of elite culture relative to political power, posing challenges to the unity of the literati world in which

[106] Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*. (Cambridge, Mass. : Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984. First edition. Los Angeles : UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2001. Revised edition.)

those gaining positions in government offices were expected to follow a state ideology that effectively subordinated Neo-Confucian learning to the Manchu court.

In the second half of my dissertation (Chapters 4-6), I show how nationalist thinkers represented by Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century identified themselves with the Qing Evidential Learning tradition as the basis of elite learning for the new order of "China/*Zhongguo*," and how the tensions within the Evidential Learning tradition shaped the terms of the debates over values and elite culture through the first half of the twentieth century. Situating Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan in my reconstruction of the debates over elite learning from the mid to the late nineteenth century, I demonstrate that they participated in the debate over how to transform existing institutional and ideological structures with the goal of securing the leadership of an accountable and cosmopolitan-minded learning tradition, an agenda lunched by Kang Youwei's "New Learning" movement in the 1890s. In order to maintain the leadership of literati community in the face of the Western cultural impact, the leaders of the state-led Self-Strengthening movement followed ideologies that saw learning as cultivation based on existing moral or cultural values, and believed that reform should strengthen the existing dynastic institutional structure. Kang and his followers, however, rose to search for new ideologies that would transform literati scholarship into progressive political theorizations, promote open-ended Classical and historical learning, integrate studies of new theories from the West, and endorse a more direct and critical participation of literati scholars in government (Chapter 4).

Kang's vision was based on a combination between political Neo-Confucianism and the esoteric Gongyang New-Tex Commentary tradition, in which literati scholars

would guide society and government through a mode of learning meant to indoctrinate universal moral principles, and his definition of the source of values was radically reductionist. By treating Confucian learning as a religion, however, Kang provoked resistance from the literati world, for his model jeopardized the authority of the cumulative cultural traditions that defined the literati elite (Chapter 4). In opposition to Kang, Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan revived the seventeenth century Evidential Learning traditions as their ideological foundation. They inherited the Evidential Learning scholars' view that to achieve a prosperous and good civil order, political life should be rooted in a community's self-understanding and shared cultural meanings. Against Kang's interest in adopting ahistorical values and didactic knowledge to guide public life, they argued that scholars ought to turn to China's own civilizing legacy, which since antiquity had shaped the community's cultural values and enabled the community to exist and grow. On this basis, they mobilized scholars in the early twentieth century to conduct comparative historical studies of world civilizations as the basis for their theorization and looked at values from the West and China as historical products. Their anti-essentialist perspective of the Evidential Learning tradition promised the literati community a path to being cosmopolitan without endangering the authority of the literati tradition (Chapter 5).

I show how Liang and Zhang embraced and reinterpreted the idea of "nationalism," how they created the paradigm of national history to explain its origins and history of "China" as a trans-dynastic community, and how they proposed the establishment of a Chinese national identity as the foundation of a self-governing polity. They interpreted these endeavors as fulfilling the mission of Evidential Learning tradition

in a new historical context, in an effort to build the leadership of a responsible and autonomous cultural elite. In particular, I show Liang and Zhang adopted two intellectual-political assumptions from Evidential Learning. Liang promoted Huang Zongxi's constitutionalist model, which celebrated culture as the expression of individual agency and inspired Liang's national history as the progress of the community's political thinking and law-building, whereas Zhang inherited Wang Fuzhi's model of identity politics, which celebrated culture as a collective symbolic force essential for a community's material survival, inspiring Zhang's national history as cultural-institutional continuities. These two positions became two competing models for China's new order, two understandings of Chinese cultural identity, and two claims on what it meant to be fully identified with the common interest. Both of them generated major influence among the younger generation (Chapter 5).

I end the dissertation by showing how their nationalist visions, particularly the one by Zhang Taiyan, provided Sun Yat-sen (孫中山) the key language for defining the ideological basis of a new China and the necessary cultural resources to mobilize the broad intellectual-political community in the early twentieth century to push a bottom-up revolutionary agenda (Chapter 5).

Chapter 1. Seeking a New Role for Literati Scholars: The Demise of Neo-Confucianism and the Emergence of New Intellectual Values during the Ming-Qing Transition

Introduction

How do we account for the changes in intellectual history that are evident from the late Ming to the early Qing? Why was the dominant role of Neo-Confucianism in intellectual culture replaced by Evidential Learning by the end of the seventeenth century? The empirical richness and the interpretative complexity of the intellectual changes during this period have never failed to catch the interest of historians. This major shift in the predominant schools of learning was associated with many different levels of social, political, cultural, and philosophical change: the rise of a market-driven economy and merchant class, the growth of statecraft learning and political activism in the late Ming, the appearance of increasingly secularized urban cultural production, the shift from idealism to materialism in philosophical worldviews, and so on.

Rather than attempting to account for these changes, this chapter instead aims to explore the shift as a change of values, driven and influenced by the questions and concerns of literati scholars who lived in this changing world and who reflected on the cultural environment and their roles in this environment. Specifically, in this chapter I am interested in why and how the values and beliefs of Neo-Confucianism declined in the early seventeenth century, even though the teaching of the late Ming Neo-Confucian

Master Wang Yangming (王陽明 1472-1529) had achieved great success in the sixteenth century. While many intellectual historical works have taken a retrospective stance to interpret the continuity and discontinuity from Neo-Confucianism to Evidential Learning, this chapter focuses on the coexistence of different positions in the changing context of the early seventeenth century, during which new values became appealing while old ones were challenged. In this process, leading thinkers and literati groups did not foresee the results of such changes, but, they made choices and value judgments about learning in their own context, choices that when taken together made possible the demise of Neo-Confucianism as an intellectual-cultural-political force. This chapter seeks to account for the early seventeenth century shift in intellectual values by conceptualizing these contexts, choices, and processes from a historical point of view, in order to understand what the intellectual movements aimed to accomplish and how these movements created new contexts for later generations.

Few have attempted to historicize the demise of Neo-Confucian learning as an intellectual-cultural-political force by situating it in a dynamic intellectual context with tensional values and different positions about learning in the seventeenth century. This is partly because for many twentieth century scholars, interpreting the meaning of the Ming-Qing intellectual transition and defining the philosophical and moral nature of this intellectual transition are profoundly relevant to the understanding and interpretation of the modern condition of "Chinese culture." For instance, while "Confucian" (*Rujia* 儒家) scholars in the twentieth century tried to synthesize a tradition of "Confucianism" to account for this shift of learning, in order to provide coherent language and categories to

make sense of their own role in modern China,[107] others have attempted to theorize this transition as being comparable to the rise of the Western discourse of intellectual and political modernity, so as to work out a foundation for modern Chinese and East Asian values. [108] The conceptual frameworks used in modern scholarship have helped to shape our current understanding of the Ming-Qing intellectual transition.

Liang Qichao and Hu Shi, two representative "liberal" thinkers of early twentieth century China, were among the earliest figures interested in the meaning of the experience of this intellectual transition. Seeing the philosophical and political contribution of Renaissance humanism to Western modernity, with modern science as its

[107] Many scholars in the late nineteenth and twentieth century found themselves responsible for solving the controversy between two traditions, the "Han learning" tradition of Classical commentaries and the "Song learning" tradition of mind-nature moral cultivation. This question was already a key issue in the early nineteenth century, addressing the lack of common values among intellectuals. This issue directly resulted from the publication of Jiang Fan's (江藩) *Guochao hanxue shicheng ji* (國朝漢學師承記) and Fang Dongshu's (方東樹) criticism entitled *Hanxue shanggui* (漢學商兌) in the early nineteenth century. Through the twentieth century, Classicists and historians including Liu Shipei (劉師培), Zhang Taiyan (章太炎), Meng Wentong (蒙文通), and New Confucian philosophers Xiong Shili (熊十力), Mou Zongsan (牟宗三), Xu Fuguan (徐復觀) tried to find ways of defining a shared "Confucianism" tradition in order to overcome this controversy. This dichotomy also served as one important interpretative category for contemporary thinkers, historians, and classicists to ask empirical questions in their historical research, such as *Qianjia xuezhe de yilixue* (乾嘉學者的義理學) edited by Lin Ching-Chang (林慶彰) and Chang So-an (張壽安) (Academia Sinica, Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Taibei, 2003). I will historicize and explain this dichotomy in Chapter 3.

[108] This position and interest include a wide range of scholars who do not use the language and categories of Confucian learning, but interested in the new political and social thought developed from the statecraft (*jingshi* 經世) and practical learning (*shixue* 實學) scholars since the sixteenth and seventeenth century. They want to see how this trend of thought shaped the way in which Chinese leaders and thinkers responded to Western political thought. A representative work is titled *Jinshi zhongguo jingshi sixiang yantaohui lunwen ji* (近世中國經世思想研討會論文集), edited by Liu Guangjing (劉廣京) and Lu Baoqian (陸寶千) (Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica of Taiwan, Taibei: 1983). See Liu Guangjing's preface, Thomas A. Metzger's paper "Ching-shih Thought and the Societal Changes of the Late Ming and Early Ch'ing Periods: Some Preliminary Considerations," and Chang Hao's (張灝) paper "An Interpretation of the Confucian Statecraft Thought since Song and Ming"(宋明以來儒家經世思想試釋).

outgrowth, they were glad to find something similar in eighteenth century Evidential Learning: empiricism, a critical spirit, and scholarly professionalism. After medieval scholastic Neo-Confucianism, Evidential Learning appeared to them to resemble a modern intellectual revolution. Liang's *Intellectual Trends in the Qing Period* (Qing dai xueshu gailun 清代學術概論) (1920), originally written as a preface for a book introducing the European Renaissance, marks the first modern scholarly attention to this issue. Two of Hu Shi's articles from the 1920s, "On the Method of Scholarship of Qing Scholars" (Qingdai xuezhe de zhixue fangfa 清代學者的治學方法) and "Some Anti-Neo-Confucian Thinkers" (Jige fan lixue de sixaingjia 幾個反理學的思想家),[109] continued this trend, in which these authors posited themselves as followers of this early-modern intellectual school in establishing modern scholarship for China.

Setting aside the agendas behind their identification with the Evidential Learning tradition, there is empirical support for Liang and Hu's characterization of the Evidential Learning scholars' rigorous Classical and historical scholarship as discontinuous with the Neo-Confucian commentary tradition. Some eighteenth century thinkers had posited a dichotomy between Neo-Confucian moral learning and Evidential Learning, namely, "morality (義理) versus evidence (考證)." Liang also understood the rise of Evidential Learning as a cultural and social phenomenon. Benjamin Elman later built on Liang's thesis to demonstrate in detail the social and institutional context of the eighteenth century in which Evidential Learning arose as a professional philological research

[109] These two articles were included in *Hushi wencun* (胡適文存) (Shanghai: Yadong Tushuguan Press, 1929).

community in the lower Yangzi region.[110] To define the nature of the shift from Neo-Confucianism to Evidential Learning, Elman also translated the dichotomy of "morality versus evidence" as "value versus fact," based on the language of the Western positivist tradition.[111] Focusing on the shift in the scholarly paradigm inspired by Thomas Kuhn, Elman's thesis contributed to a valuable analysis of the social and institutional aspects of the success of Evidential Learning. However, this approach hardly offers any explanation of the seventeenth century, or how transitional intellectuals conceived of the larger cultural and political meanings of their agendas. In addition, applying the clear-cut epistemological distinction between "fact and value" to generalize the difference between the agendas of Neo-Confucianism and Evidential Learning is not historically faithful to the propositional meaning of the dichotomy between "morality (*yili*) versus evidence (*kaozheng*)" as understood by the eighteenth century scholars themselves. (This point will be further discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.)

A position contrasting with that of Liang Qichao was proposed by the modern Confucian historian Qian Mu (錢穆 1895-1990) in 1937, and was further developed by his student Yu Ying-shih (余英時) in 1975. In Qian's *History of Scholarship in the Last Three Hundred Years* (Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu shi 中國近三百年學術史), an influential book published as a critical response to Liang Qichao's work, Qian constructed a genealogy of a category of people defined as statecraft, or *jingshi* (經世)

[110] Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1984. First edition. Los Angeles : UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2001. Revised edition.)

[111] For instance, see Elman, "From Value to Fact: The Emergence of Phonology as a Precise Discipline in Late Imperial China." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102, no. 3 (1982): 493-500.

scholars, emerging from the late Ming Neo-Confucian movement of the Donglin (東林) Academy to the early Qing Evidential scholars. He attempted to show that early Qing Evidential Learning scholarship, particularly the ideas of Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi, and Wang Fuzhi, had origins in the Donglin Neo-Confucian thinkers. [112] The evidence that Qian drew upon includes 1) these scholars' shared intellectual commitment to ordering society through learning, 2) their consensus on the independence of scholars from the government and the power of academies, schools, and intellectual communities to challenge the state and 3) their rejection of the moral relativism of late Ming culture.[113] Ascribing all these virtues to Song Neo-Confucianism, Qian believed that the history of Qing scholarship was essentially a continuation and further development of Neo-Confucianism. The only significant difference that arose between the Donglin scholars and the Evidential scholars was the shift in interest from what he called "substantial practices" (實行) toward "substantial studies" (實學), which in his view demonstrated the development of the Neo-Confucian tradition in a new context. The so-called controversy between "Song learning" and "Han learning" in the mid-eighteenth century, namely, "morality (*yili*) versus evidence (*kaozheng*)," resulted from the literati's loss of intellectual independence due to the Qing court's policy of collaborating with scholars. Therefore, he argued that this controversy served as a good example to show how badly

[112] Qian did not consider the eighteenth century Evidential scholars during the Qianlong (乾隆) and Jiaqing (嘉慶) periods as belonging to this line, because Qian believed that this line of scholars were more politically "independent" and "critical," a spirit that he particularly attributed to the Neo-Confucian tradition. See Qian, *Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshushi* (中國近三百年學術史) (Shangwu yinshuguan Press, Shanghai, 1937), 18-20

[113] Ibid.

Qing political power had harmed the tradition of Neo-Confucian learning during the eighteenth century.[114]

The context in which Qian Mu wrote this book could help to account for his polemic. Rejecting the suggestion of some of his contemporaries that China should reconstruct its culture, politics, and institutions by opening up to foreign thought, Qian considered himself to be responsible for perpetuating Neo-Confucian learning as the moral and cultural source of modern Chinese life.[115] Therefore, he could not accept historicizing the condition of Neo-Confucian learning in early Qing as a failure, nor could he focus on the differences between Neo-Confucianism and Evidential Learning. Although his analysis is useful in highlighting certain commonalities between the Donglin scholars and the early Qing Evidential Learning thinkers, especially in their shared criticisms of late Ming intellectual culture, [116] Qian over-generalized the nature of Neo-Confucianism as a trans-contextual moral source in order to justify his values within the context of his own time.

Qian's student Yu Ying-shih published an article in 1975, "Some Preliminary Reflections on the Rise of Ch'ing Intellectualism," that extended Qian Mu's position into

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[114] Ibid.

[115] Yu Ying-shih also admitted that Qian Mu was concerned with the relevance of the Neo-Confucianism as a living source of China's intellectual values at his time. See Yu, "Some Preliminary Reflections on the Rise of Ch'ing Intellectualism." *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies 11* (1975), 112.

[116] Qian Mu's interpretations have also been influential in Japan. For instance, Yamanoi Yū's (山井湧) periodization of the Ming-Qing intellectual transition as three stages, namely, the late Ming Wang Yangming school, the seventeenth-century generation of the statecraft-oriented practical learning (經世實學) , and the eighteenth-century philologists, was inspired by Qian. See Yamanoi, *Min Shin shisōshi no kenkyū* (明清思想史の研究). (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai Press, 1980),250-2.

an extremely influential claim about what he called "the inner-logic of the Neo-Confucianism" to argue against such thinkers as Liang Qichao and Hu Shi. [117] Comparing the Neo-Confucian tradition to the Christian theological tradition, Yu argued that in Neo-Confucianism there was a similar distinction between "knowledge" and "faith," that is, between what he called the Zhu Xi (朱熹 1130-1200) branch of "intellectualism" stressing "inquiry and study as a starting point for the quest for the Confucian Tao" (*daowenxue* 道問學) and Wang Yangming's branch of "anti-intellectualism," stressing a straightforward identification with the Way through moral faith (*zundexing* 尊德性). He thus argued that the unfolding of Qing intellectual history under the influence of Evidential Learning should be seen as nothing more than the manifestation of Zhu Xi's branch of "intellectualism," because of Evidential Learning scholars' deep interest in accumulating knowledge. The kind of Neo-Confucian learning that Evidential Learning scholars attacked was essentially the Wang Yangming branch of Neo-Confucianism, concerned primarily with how to reach moral faith through metaphysical speculation. For Yu, the Qing Evidential Learning scholars were unaware of their intellectual-historical identity as a part of the broader agenda and system of Neo-Confucianism that had begun with the rise of the *guwen* (古文), or ancient prose, ideology at the time of Han Yu (韓愈 768-824). This broader agenda and system should be understood as a comprehensive learning of the "Way" since the Song dynasty, which can be divided into three domains: literary creation (*wen* 文), metaphysical construction (*ti* 體), and application in statecraft (*yong* 用). The expression of the "Way" evolved from the Northern Song to the end of the

[117] Yu, "Some Preliminary Reflections on the Rise of Ch'ing Intellectualism." *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 11 (1975),105-43.

Qing following the sequence of *wen, ti,* and *yong*. Within these three major domains through history, the trajectory of Neo-Confucianism followed an "inner logic," shifting between the orientations of "intellectualism" and "anti-intellectualism." [118]

It seems that Yu's interpretation of Neo-Confucianism aimed to construct a trans-contextual historical identity of the "Way" as it manifested through time. This interpretation may reveal more about Yu's own philosophical and moral commitment than it reveals about the historical evolution of intellectual values.[119] He expanded Qian Mu's intellectual genealogy, developing it into a discourse about the logic of the entire literati learning tradition from Song to Qing. One of his purposes was to resolve the tension between the eighteenth-century Qing scholars and the Neo-Confucians, which Qian Mu had not been able to reconcile. Yu considered his own learning to be a part of this tradition of the "Way," identifying with the side of "intellectualism." Significantly, Yu's thesis has greatly influenced intellectual circles in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong-Kong.[120] For many, Yu's analysis of Evidential learning based on his thesis of "inner logic" can fit with Elman's social-institutional account of Evidential Learning scholars.[121] For them, the social-institutional changes in Qing academic life provided an

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[118] Ibid., 116-26

[119] It seems to me that when Yu tried to reconstruct the history of the "Way" he was mostly interested in connecting various textual expressions about the "Way" rather than taking into account the social-political context in which those expressions were made and the intentions behind the expressions.

[120] See Liu Guangjing's preface to *Jinshi zhongguo jingshi sixiang yantaohui wenji* （近世中國經世思想研討會論文集).

[121] For one synthetic review of these two perspectives, see Huang Ko-wu (黃克武), "Qingdai kaozhengxue de yuanyuan – Minchu yilai yanjiu chengguo zhi pingjia "(清代考證學的淵源──民初以來研究成果之評介) *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica* (近代中國史研究通訊), vol. 11 (1991), 140-154.

environment in which the broader Neo-Confucian agenda could manifest its "intellectualism."

The third position sees Qing scholarship as a continuation of Wang Yangming's doctrine, especially of the left-wing interpreters of the Taizhou School (泰州學派). This position was shared by the Marxist historian Hou Wailu (侯外廬),[122] the Japanese post-war sinologists Shimada Kenji (島田虔次) and Mizoguchi Yūzō (溝口雄三), and the American sinologist William Theodore de Bary. For these scholars, the new intellectual movements since the sixteenth century had much to do with the changing social-economic structure of the late Ming due to the emergence of a market economy and the expansion of the class of commoners. The Learning of the Mind (*Xinxue* 心學), the Donglin movement, and the Evidential Learning scholars shared commonalities in their social and political thought because they more or less reflected this trend. More people from the newly emergent social class became cultural elites, and their thought could be seen as trying to address the interests of this new class. Chinese thinkers at this time showed similarities with their European counterparts, the Enlightenment thinkers. They gave up the metaphysical theory of *li* (理) to embrace the materialistic theory of *qi* (氣) as

[122] A good example is Hou Wailu (侯外庐) et.al., *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* (中国思想通史) (Beijing: Beijing Renmin chubanshe Press, 1957-1963). After the ideology of "struggle of classes" became eroded from the mainstream historical and social explanations in scholarship in Mainland China after the 1980s, this work was thoroughly revised into a new version entitled *Zhongguo sixiang shigang* (中国思想史纲) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chuba nshe Press, 1980-1981). But the assumption that Evidential scholars, Donglin thinkers, and Taizhou schools were representatives of the early capitalist Enlightenment thinkers in China remained unchanged in the new version.

their worldview,[123] recognized the role of human desire, acknowledged the materiality of human nature (*qizhi zhixing* 氣質之性), criticized dogmas, and challenged the rulers' abuse of power. For instance, Hou Wailu saw the grand social and political movements under the Taizhou and Donglin figures as expressions of the economic and political autonomy of a new urban class of commoners, tenant farmers, and new commercial landlords.[124] Shimada's research on Li Zhi (李贄 1527-1602) argued that Li's learning represented new political and moral claims arising from the social power of commoners, thus revealing the beginning of political modernization in China.[125] Inspired by Shimada, De Bary's study of Huang Zongxi also argues that Huang's political thought, such as his criticism of "autocracy" and his "constitutionalist" vision of power, continued the process of "Chinese Enlightenment" that began with the rise of late Ming Neo-Confucianism.[126] Furthermore, De Bary argued that characteristics Shimada discovered in sixteenth-century thinkers, such as a growing discourse celebrating the self or the individual, were already present at the beginning of the Neo-Confucian tradition. In his view, these

[123] For one representative discussion, see Yamanoi Yū, "Min Shin jidai ni okeru 'ki' no tetsugaku" (明清時代における「気」の哲學) , *Tetsugaku zasshi* (哲學雜誌) 66, no.711 (1951): 82-103.

[124] Hou, Zhongguo sixiang tongshi, vol 5.

[125] This is a key argument in Shimada Kenji's *Chūgoku ni okeru kindai shii no zasetsu* (中國に於ける近代思惟の挫折) (Tōkyō : Chikuma Shobō Press, 1949).

[126] See Wm. Theodore de Bary, "Chinese Despotism and the Confucian Ideal: A Seventeenth-century View," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1957), 163-203. For his view on the commonality between Ming thinkers and Evidential scholars, see "Introduction" and "Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought," in *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 1-27, 145-248.

discourses would provide an inseparable source for the development of Chinese individualism and liberalism.[127]

In another development of this third position, Mizoguchi tried to explain the criticisms of the Taizhou School made by the Donglin thinkers and the Evidential Learning thinkers. He noticed that the discourses of Donglin thinkers and Evidential Learning scholars were more concerned with public interest and with the commonwealth. He grouped the early seventeenth century Donglin figures, the mid-seventeenth century and the late seventeenth century thinkers Huang Zongxi, Gu Yanwu, Wang Fuzhi, Yan Yuan (顏元 1635-1704), and the eighteenth century thinker Dai Zhen into one intellectual lineage, naming them China's "early modern" thinkers. He claimed that these thinkers in fact reconstructed the humanist values derived from the worldview of the lower class of commoners in the late Ming and transformed this worldview into a new elite discourse on human nature and social order. They saw the literati elite as responsible for realizing the public interest (*gong* 公) of a society based on their sympathetic understanding of the pursuit of private interest (*si* 私) by individuals. This discourse of public interest provided a new philosophical and moral foundation for creating an ideal world. This foundation was often referred to by scholars as the "common principle" or "public principle" (*gongli* 公理) that they ought to identify with in their learning of the Classics. For Mizoguchi, this mode of thought potentially supported the social policy of Qing rulers. Qing social policy acknowledged the economic and social autonomy of the new social elite in order to effectively manage society. He saw that it was the idea of

[127] For instance, De Bary elaborated this argument in his work, entitled *The Liberal Tradition in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.)

"common principle" or "public principle" shared by the Donglin thinkers and the Evidential scholars that gave birth to the well-known utopian ideology of *datong* (大同), or the "Grand Unity" in the late Qing, which was central to the political and intellectual agendas of many influential reformist and revolutionary thinkers in the early twentieth century. To construct a society of *datong*, a society of great unity and peace, was to construct a society in which each citizen's personal needs and interests would be satisfied through a unified public institutional arrangement and cultural practice. For Mizoguchi, the ideology of *datong* should be seen as the unique Chinese model underlying China's modernity. The Donglin and Evidential Learning scholars of the early seventeenth century, who prepared the theoretical foundation for this model, should be considered to be the founders of Chinese modernity.[128]

The third position, which emphasized the commonalities between the Evidential Learning and late Ming Learning of the Mind in terms of their social and political discourses, has been very appealing for its attempt to connect the changes of seventeenth-century thought with corresponding historical changes. It also makes it possible to define a Chinese, or East Asian, early-modern political philosophy based on a coherent tradition of Ming-Qing practical learning (*shixue* 實學) or statecraft learning (*jingshi* 經世), which was derived from the unique experience of Chinese social-structural change since the seventeenth century.[129]

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[128] See Mizoguchi Yūzō, *Chūgoku zen kindai shisō no kussetsu to tenkai* (中国前近代思想の屈折と展開) (Tōkyō : Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai Press, 1980).

[129] For instance, since the 1980s, in Mainland China and Taiwan, many scholars appealed to the notion of "*shixue*" as a way to define the modernity of "Chinese culture." They held conferences and compiled books under the umbrella terms "*shixue*" and "*jingshi*" (sometimes these two terms were exchangeable.) However, scholars who take this position have never fully agreed on what

However, this position problematically assumes that changing literati intellectual values were necessarily a reflection of the changes in their social-economic interests. The Taizhou scholars, the Donglin scholars, and the Evidential Learning scholars might share similar social-economic values, but this does not guarantee that they agreed on the values and meaning of literati culture or the goals of learning. Social-historical changes are a significant factor in the evolution of intellectual values, but if we do not take into account what the changes meant for their culture in their own terms, we will not understand the motivations behind these intellectual movements, and we will tend to impose theoretical frameworks to explain their choices that would not ring true to these thinkers themselves. Why did these scholars identify with different kinds of learning? What did they disagree about? Only by understanding the shift in the claims of the meaning of literati learning during this period can we better explain what these intellectual movements and debates aimed to achieve.[130]

In this chapter, I will focus on the changing and competing arguments about literati learning, namely, *xue* (學) in the early seventeenth century. In particular, I will examine how these arguments were interrelated with the self-conception of scholars, and with their practices as social and cultural leaders, through a period of historical change.

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defines "*shixue*" and "*jingshi*." To find the right boundary and definition of "*shixue*" has been the center of their theoretical and empirical inquiries. For one example, see Chen Guying (陈鼓应), Xin Guanjie (辛冠洁) and Ge Rongjin (葛荣晋), *Ming Qing shixue sichao shi* (明清實學思潮史) (Jinan: Qilu shushe Press, 1989).

[130] My own position, as I will explain in the following sections, is influenced by the approaches of and discoveries made by Willard Peterson, Peter Bol, and Wang Fan-sen (王汎森) in their respective discussions on the Ming and Qing intellectual cultures and movements.

Focusing on the period from the late sixteenth century through the Ming-Qing transition, I explain why Neo-Confucianism declined from its earlier dominant role as a social-intellectual-cultural force, how different positions regarding the meaning of learning and the role of literati scholars emerged, and why some positions became compelling choices while others did not. By situating debates over intellectual values in the context of a competitive intellectual culture, I show how the compelling position provided the ideological roots for the rise of Evidential Learning in late seventeenth century.

In particular, I will begin by showing how the overwhelming success of Wang Yangming's Learning of Mind in the late sixteenth century led to an unintended collapse of the common culture based on Neo-Confucianism, and how this collapse resulted in a profound crisis of literati identity, heightened by the dynasty's decline and the invasion of the Manchus. In the second part of this chapter I will show that the literati world, believing that the dynastic crisis was due to the lack of a meaningful common learning that could hold literati accountable, began a profound self-reflection on their tradition. This led to the search for a new common culture, a new way to justify the values of learning, and a new ground for the literati's public leadership. The Donglin Neo-Confucian thinkers' movement of discoursing on learning (*jiangxue* 講學), which tried to transformed moral cultivation into a political force through criticizing the moral qualities of officials, and the Fushe (復社) political thinkers' movement of organizing writing and learning societies (*wenshe* 文社), which conducted collective statecraft learning and argumentative political writing based on cumulative studies of the Classics and history, represented two leading intellectual-political movements during the transition. Comparing their claims about intellectual values, their practice of learning, and their

agendas of guiding public life, I will demonstrate how they developed two different models of literati learning and identity. I will show how Donglin's attempt to transforming the Neo-Confucian discoursing on learning into a new public leadership failed along with the decline of the Ming and the fall of late Ming literati political activism, while Fushe scholars developed a new justification for the *Ru* (儒) learning tradition, offering a meaningful choice to the younger generations in the early seventeenth century.

Shifting to the early Qing, I will look at a few representative post-Donglin thinkers to show how Neo-Confucian discourse became apologist and intellectually and politically conservative. The new interpretation of Neo-Confucianism provided the necessary theoretical discourse and cultural capital for the Manchu rulers to build an ideology for Qing imperial rulership, downplaying the moral agency of literati scholars. The consequence was that this state-centered Neo-Confucianism made its central claim of learning almost unrecognizable to the intellectual world. Meanwhile, the Fushe protégées expanded their network and started to develop a critical and politically minded Classical and historical scholarship. Some younger but talented participants would become the first generation of Evidential Learning scholars in the late seventeenth century. But, we may ask, why was it the Fushe model that became successful rather than others? Had there been other possibilities for a new literati learning?

I analyze Yan Yuan's criticism of the Neo-Confucian tradition and his proposal for a new literati learning in the late seventeenth century. Yan Yuan's case can provide us a different perspective on the problem of Neo-Confucian culture for the literati world. Moreover, by understanding why Yan's model was not successful, we can better

understand why the legacy of the Fushe model spoke to the literati world as a better choice.

The Collapse of the Neo-Confucian Consensus and the Crisis of Literati Identity

It has often been observed that, since the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the claim had reverberated through the literati world that the current literati culture had become corrupted, and a responsible scholar should conduct more "real," "substantive," "meaningful," or "consequential" learning. The term that was used in this claim was *shixue* (實學), but there was no unified definition of what kind of practice it should be.[131] It was largely used as a label to criticize the left-wing doctrine of Wang Yangming's Learning of the Mind as *xu* (虛), namely, "lofty," "empty," "speculative," and "useless."[132] The urge to search for a better culture emerged during the Wanli (萬曆 1573-1620) reign, and became politically significant under Donglin leadership during a series of social and political crises. This stimulated the agenda of the Fushe movement when social and political crises gradually pushed the Ming dynasty into decline. Originally used to criticize the left-wing of Wang Yangming learning,[133] however, the

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[131] Ge Rongjin, Chen Guying, and Xin Guanjie's *Ming Qing shixue sichaoshi* (明清實學思潮史) offers a compilation of excerpts of the expressions about "*shixue*" since the mid-sixteenth century until the end of Qing.

[132] For a general documentation of this phenomenon, see Zhang Xianqing (张显清), "Wan Ming xinxue de moluo yu shixue sichao de xingqi" (晚明心学的没落与实学思潮的兴起) *Mingshi yanjiu luncong* (明史研究论丛)1 (1982): 307-338.

[133] A vivid example showing the meaning of this discursive dichotomy can be seen from a story about Gu Zaizhan (顧在瞻), in which Gu explained why he decided to study with Huang. "I had little knowledge about the real world before. I was careless, only interested in criticizing previous scholars. It was only after I started to study with Mr. Huang that I realized my life in the past was in a dream." Gu described how regretful he felt and began to study Classics and histories in order

dichotomy between "*xu*" and "*shi*" continued to serve as a pair of compelling labels for intellectual values through the Qing dynasty.

I will demonstrate that the major late Ming intellectual-political movements, Donglin and Fushe, resulted from a profound crisis of learning caused by the overwhelming success of Wang Yangming's doctrine in the sixteenth century. To elucidate this point, I will explore the roots of this urge for a better culture. Instead of taking the label "*shixue*" as a description of the substantive quality of this school, I take it as a sign of intellectual anxiety, and explore what problems the left-wing of the Wang Yangming School had brought to the world of literati leaders. Then we can better understand what the new enterprises led by Donglin and Fushe meant to achieve, and how they later shaped the course of intellectual history.

The Success of the Learning of the Mind and Its Consequence

To understand the intentional meaning behind the claim that scholars ought to search for a more "substantive," "real," "meaningful," and "consequential" learning to rebuild their culture, we need to look at the intellectual and cultural context from which the label was derived. Peter Bol argues that the fifteenth-century and the sixteenth-century acceleration of Ming commercialization and a market economy provided great wealth and power to local literati families who sought to find their voice by promoting

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to seek *shixue*. Seeing this, as the story goes, many young scholars around him came to follow him. "顧在瞻，名諶，與楊禹江同為黃梨洲之弟子。少時著《陸學傳習錄》，頗謗陸、王。及自甬上歸，語門人云：'吾向日一知半解，心粗膽大，妄議先儒。今從黃先生游，乃知半生全在夢中。"遍索所鈔《傳習錄》焚之。與禹江訂讀經史法，求實學，戒空談，後生翕然從之。" "Gu Zaizhan jie kongtan" (顧在瞻戒空談) Xu Ke (徐珂) comp., *Qing bai lei chao* (清稗類鈔) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 1984).

the social good based on Neo-Confucian voluntarism. [134] And, it was Wang Yangming's interpretation of Neo-Confucian moral cultivation, namely, the theory of innate knowledge of the good (*liangzhi* 良知) that offered a significant justification and source of energy for the actions of voluntarism. Wang's theory argued that the *li* (理), or the Coherence, was not something external to the individual mind, but was the mind itself. Many embraced the theory of innate knowledge of the good as an exceptionally liberating idea. If the mind contains moral knowledge on its own, then the practice of sagehood would be just a matter of trusting one's inborn unity with the moral mind of nature, materializing one's Coherence through social and cultural actions.[135] Wang's interpretation opened the door of learning to people who did not come from literati families, attracting mass participation into *jiangxue* (講學), namely, discourses on the learning of becoming a sage.

For instance, in a case discussed by Peterson, Wang Gen (王艮 1483-1541), originally a salt merchant with very little formal education, was recognized as a master of the learning of sagehood. Another example can be seen in the broad success of the Taizhou School's agenda of spreading discourse on learning in local society. Under Ouyang De (歐陽德 1496-1554), Luo Rufang (羅汝芳 1515-1588), He Xinyin (何心隱 1517-1579), and Zhou Rudeng (周汝登 1547-1629), and others, the Taizhou school evolved into a grand social movement of discourse on learning. It stressed "effectuating

[134] See Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 261-7.

[135] Ibid.,184-93

sagehood in one's own person and presenting that model to a wider literati audience."[136] Emphasizing the moral activity innate in everyone's mind and the importance of expressing one's unrestrained sentiments, the Taizhou school showed "the newly enhanced possibilities of using discourses on moral philosophy as a means of systematically mobilizing literati opinion on a nonlocal basis against government leaders."[137] Consequently, this flourishing movement of discourse on learning was gradually seen as a challenge to the power of the central government. Since the time of Zhang Juzheng (張居正 1525-1582), high officials had tried many times to close local academies and to stop the expansion of local literati's intellectual challenge to the state.[138]

Significantly, the overwhelming success of the left-wing interpreters of Wang's teaching led to an unintended and troubling consequence for the literati world: the erosion of a clearly defined consensus of elite learning based on conventional Neo-Confucian terms. This consequence can be seen from two changes. First, Wang's left-wing interpreters such as Wang Ji (王畿 1498-1583), Wang Gen, Jiao Hong (焦竑 1540-1620) and Li Zhi (李贄 1527-1602) led an existential turn in Neo-Confucian theory. They shifted the goal of Neo-Confucian moral learning from the pursuit of an objective moral principle through self-cultivation to an agenda of searching for, protecting, and expressing the values of one's selfhood. The effort of moral cultivation became less

[136] Willard Peterson, "Chapter 11, Confucian Learning in Late Ming Thought," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume. 8, The Ming Dynasty, Part 2, 1368-1644* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 723.

[137] Ibid., 738.

[138] Ibid.

important than taking care of the self, believing in the goodness that already existed in one's mind before acquiring any external knowledge of morality, and rediscovering the true feelings that embodied this original goodness. Interpreting the mind as a transcendent and quiescent being, Wang Ji defined the goal of learning as to uncover the goodness of the mind in its original condition before the mind set forth to gain knowledge in the world. [139] Wang Gen further emphasized the material aspect of this new idea, telling students that the process of cultivating one's mind had no essential difference from protecting one's *shen* (身), or physical well-being. A direct consequence of this theoretical shift was that, for many literati scholars, the Learning of the Mind gradually became essentially the same as the teaching of Buddhism and Daoism, as these three teachings fundamentally aimed for the same end. As Jiao Hong famously claims, the honest scholar would stop imposing the image of a strict moral doctrine on *Ru* learning, instead acknowledging that it is fundamentally concerned with the same existential questions about life and death as Buddhism. Scholars who insisted on a radical difference between Confucianism and Buddhism were simply hiding their true feelings.[140] Agreeing with Jiao Hong that the distinctions imposed by scholars between the three teachings were arbitrary and harmful, Li Zhi tried to convince people that the real aim of life should be about finding the true self that had been suppressed by social conventions and the

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[139] Ibid.

[140] "……儒者或謂出離生死為利心，豈其絕無生死之念耶？抑未隱諸心而漫言此以相欺耶？使果毫無悅生惡死之念，則釋氏之書，正可束之高閣，第恐未悟生死，終不能不為生所動。雖曰不動，直強言耳，豈其情乎？……" "…… 乃以自私自利譏釋氏，何其不自反也？" Jiao Hong, "Da youren wen Shishi" (答友人問釋氏), Huang Zongxi, *Mingru xue'an* (明儒學案), *juan* 35, included in *Huang Zongxi quanji* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe Press, 1992),Vol.8, 88, 89.

dogmatic teachings of the day. To justify his own belief, Li Zhi controversially dressed in the robes of a monk.

The second major change resulting from the success of Wang's left-wing interpreters was that, as Wang Yangming's teaching motivated broad social forces to commit to the social good, it also allowed people to discover their own reasons for doing so and to develop approaches that went beyond the Confucian pale. It contributed to a social climate in which the rising class of merchants and commoners came to support cultural productions, religious activities, and charities, considered to be important paths to responsibility and morality.[141] Book learning became less relevant to the cultivation of sagehood, which now depended on one's beliefs and actions. Scholars still read and wrote, but the bond loosened between textual learning of the Classics and the goal of obtaining sagehood. Temples and religious lectures now played an important role in leading people to conduct moral deeds.

There is no better evidence of this than the popularity of Yuan Huang's (袁黃 1533-1606) moral ledgers. According to Yuan, a Buddhist monk taught him that if he wanted to pass the civil service exam and achieve success, he would need to commit himself to doing good deeds. He followed this advice and indeed realized his ambitions. For Yuan, this experience showed that commitment to good behavior promised good payoffs while satisfying one's personal interests.[142] In his influential essay, entitled

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[141] See Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 261-266. For more detailed discussions about the cultural and social climate in the sixteenth century under the Wang Yangming school, see De Bary ed, *Self and Thought in Late Ming Society.*

[142] For two detailed studies of the late Ming moral ledgers, see Tadao Sakai (酒井忠夫), "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," in *Self and Society in Ming Thought,* 331-366, and Cynthia Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1991).

"Establishing Destiny"(Liming pian 立命篇), Yuan drew on Mencius' teaching about the importance of cultivating one' moral nature to "establish one's destiny" (*liming* 立命), but he gave Mencius's message an egoistic interpretation, believing that the passage encouraged people to learn to control their own lives and achieve success. He further claimed that Mencius' doctrine was in fact the same as the Buddhist theory of karma.[143]

The Crisis of Intellectual Culture in the Early Seventeenth Century

Entering the seventeenth century, younger scholars became increasingly skeptical of the direction of learning set by the Taizhou School and by Wang Ji's followers. The appeals to the merchant mentality, and the preoccupation with the self, appeared to many scholars to be harmful to the real learning tradition.

This concern is evidenced by the responses of leading scholars in the early seventeenth century to the popularity of Yuan Huang's argument. In "A Critique of Yuan's Doctrine on Establishing Destiny" (Yuanshi liming shuo bian 袁氏立命說辯), Zhang Erqi (張爾岐 1612-1678), a leading Evidential scholar of the early seventeenth century, claimed that although both Yuan Huang and Li Zhi should be denounced as heterodox (*yiduan* 異端) scholars who did not base their learning on the Classics, Li Zhi, who "loved taking the extreme positions" and whose controversial ideas had proven "to

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[143] "孟子論立命之學，而曰：'夭壽不貳。'夫夭壽，至貳者也。當其不動念時，孰為夭，孰為壽？細分之，豐歉不貳，然後可立貧富之命；窮通不貳，然後可立貴賤之命；夭壽不貳，然後可立生死之命。人生世間，惟死生為重，曰夭壽，則一切順逆皆該之矣。至修身以俟之，乃積德祈天之事。曰修，則身有過惡，皆當治而去之；曰俟，則一毫覬覦，一毫將迎，皆當斬絕之矣。" Yuan Huan, "Liming zhi xue" (立命之學), *Liaofan si un* (了凡四訓) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju chubanshe Press, 2008)

be easily disliked by most scholars," was less dangerous than Yuan Huang. Yuan's harm was not as easy to discover, and his ideas appealed to common people. The idea that performing good deeds would help people reach success, which drew on the Buddhist theory of karma (因果報應) to interpret the goal of moral cultivation, was welcome to those who sought wealth and power. This was entirely contradictory to the public-minded sages who conducted good deeds because it was commanded by principle. As Zhang stressed: "Ministers who contribute to the rule of the country with the goal of gaining profit and affection from the ruler cannot be called loyal, and sons taking good care of their fathers with the aim of receiving rewards cannot be considered filial." For a real scholar, the motivation toward moral deeds should derive only from appreciation of the importance of moral principles for the common good. Therefore, those who embraced Yuan Huang's method had abandoned the learning for the common good that was taught by the Classics and had become selfish. Zhang thus questioned, "How can those who discourse on the learning of the Classics only for the purpose of passing the civil service exam even consider bringing their moral cultivation into actual practice?" He was further concerned that it would be a serious problem if Yuan Huang's doctrine influenced the principles of government, family, and society. In the end, Zhang argued against those who saw Yuan Huang's doctrine as a contribution to cultivating the common people. In Zhang's view, literati learning involved studying the Classics and establishing a responsible self for the common good. Literati learning should not lower itself to the satisfaction of common people's self-seeking.[144]

[144] "予讀袁氏立命說，而心非之曰：「立命誠是也，不曰天壽不貳，修身以俟之乎？乃繅繅責效如此!」近日其說大行，上自朝紳，下及士庶，尊信奉行，所在皆然。予大懼其陷溺人心，賊害儒道，不舉六經、語、孟，先圣微言盡廢之不止，於是為數言以告吾党曰：

Yuan Huang's method also troubled Neo-Confucian scholars in the early seventeenth century. Liu Zongzhou (劉宗周 1578-1645), one of the most renowned and influential Neo-Confucians of the late Ming, was bothered by the fact that for many people the questions posed by *Ru*, such as the meaning of human nature and destiny (*xingming* 性命) and the search for the Way, issues regarding human agency, were considered to be the same as Buddhist and Daoist existential questions about life and death. This fact, according to him, indicated that people in his contemporary world were selfish and pragmatic, primarily interested in results and profit (*gongli* 功利). Any teachings that aimed to prioritize personal questions about life and death were selfish in nature, and the teaching of *Ru* was by no means a part of these teachings. The popularity of Yuan Huang's moral ledgers resulted in the loss of the correct understanding of categories of *Ru* learning such as nature (*xing*), destiny (*ming*), and the Way (*dao*). Liu

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此異端邪說也！文士之公為异端者，自昔有之，近代則李贄、袁黃為最著。 李之書好為激論，輕儁者多好之。既為當時朝論所斥，人頗覺其非是。至袁氏立命運說，則取二氏因果報應之言，以附吾儒「惠迪吉，從逆凶，積善餘慶，積不善餘殃」之旨，好誕者樂言之，急富貴，嗜功利者更樂言之，遞相煽誘，附益流通，莫知其大悖於先聖，而陰為之害也。夫大禹、孔子所言，蓋以理勢之自然為天，非以紀公錄過銖銖而較者為天也。蓋言天之可畏，非畏天之可邀也。為臣者，矜功伐以邀君寵利不可謂忠，為子者鬻勤勞以邀父厚分不可謂孝，況日以小惠微勤，而邀天之福報，將得為善人乎？以天為可邀，將得畏天乎？不畏天而邀天，其不獲罪乎？豈特人不能教之以善，迴視六經、語、孟且如嚼蠟，其所誦習講說之者，直以發題應科，不得不然而已，豈有一潛思身踐之耶？不知六經、語、孟何語不教人為善？何語不堪立命？何語如袁氏之所謂善？如袁氏之所謂立命，人捨六經、語、孟所教之公善成善，而學為善以自私，不可謂非袁氏之陷溺之也。六經語孟以至誠至公立教，而袁氏以私偽亂之，士人乃陽守六經、語、孟，而陰奉袁氏，勢必將以所學於袁氏者，施之家國天下之際，其害可勝言耶？「予何敢非人之濟物，予病夫濟物而不本于六經、語、孟者也。」曰「袁氏之說，人方信向不疑，而子非之，子言出，必得罪於人。且袁氏為中下設也，夫何病？」曰：「此又其弊也。君子之教人也，中道而立，能者從之，烏有揣人之不足以為善，而姑以私且偽者誘之，使苟不致於殺人害物而已者耶？人苟自進於善，何論中下。苟不自進於善，徒日習其私者偽者，乃適成其為中下耳！士人讀書立身，將以中下自域耶？君子教人，將盡天下之人驅之中下耶？信然，予獲罪多矣！” from Zhang Erqi, "Yuanshi 'Liming shuo' bian" (袁氏立命說辯), in *Qingru xue'an* (清儒學案) Vol, 1., comp. Xu Shichang (徐世昌) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 2008) 714-16.

distinguished between two ways of understanding these concepts. Whereas Yuan Huang's and the Buddhists' interpretations of these concepts were amoral, the *Ru* scholars' understanding of them were moral and would guide people to the correct path for establishing a life and becoming a real person. Motivated to reverse the cultural damage caused by Yuan's ledgers, Liu drew a diagram to visualize the metaphysical grounding of humans as moral beings, entitled *The Illustrated Discourse on the Great Ultimate of Human beings* (Renji tushuo 人極圖說). He expanded it into a work entitled *Human Schemata* (Ren pu 人譜) (1634), a book similar to Yuan Huang's ledgers in format, but only allowing readers to write down their demerits in daily behavior, inspiring reflection on their moral errors. Liu believed that only in this way could people learn to cultivate themselves for the sake of moral learning.[145]

Scholars like Zhang Erqi and Liu Zongzhou believed that they ought to transform their contemporary culture of scholarship to contribute to a more "substantive," "authentic," "public-minded" and "useful" learning. These values were captured in the word *shi* (實). In their view, the popularity of the "empty" (虛空) and "profit-driven" (功

[145] "友人有示予以袁了凡《功過格》者，予讀而疑之。了凡自言嘗授旨雲谷老人，及其一生轉移果報，皆取之功過，鑿鑿不爽。信有之乎？予竊以為病於道也。子曰：'道不遠人。人之為道而遠人，不可以為道。'今之言道者，高之或淪於虛無，以為語性，而非性也。卑之或出於功利，以為語命，而非命也。非性非命，非人也，則皆遠人以為道者也。然二者同出異名，而功利之惑人為甚。老氏以虛言道，佛氏以無言道，其說最高妙，雖吾儒亦視以為不及。乃其意主於了生死，其要歸之自私。故太上有《感應篇》，佛氏亦多言因果。大抵從生死起見，而動援虛無以設教，猥雲功行，實恣邪妄，與吾儒惠迪從逆之旨霄壤。是虛無之說，正功利之尤者也。了凡學儒者也，而篤信因果，輒以身示法，亦不必實有是事。傳染至今，遂為度世津梁，則所關於道術晦明之故，有非淺鮮者。予因之有感，特本證人之意，著《人極圖說》，以示學者。繼之以六事功課，而記過格終焉。言過不言功，以遠利也。總題之曰《人譜》。以為譜人者，莫近於是。學者誠知人之所以為人，而於道亦思過半矣。將馴是而至於聖人之域，功崇業廣，又何疑乎？友人聞之，亟許可，遂序而傳之。" Liu Zongzhou, preface to *Ren pu* (人譜), *Liuzi quanshu* (劉子全書) *juan* 1? (Taibei: Huawen shuju Press, 1968)

利) learning promoted by Wang Yangming's left-wing followers pointed to a corrupt intellectual culture in which scholars had forgotten their responsibility of "ordering the world" (*jingshi*) and their mission of "nourishing the well-being of the people" (*shengmin* 生民). The urgency of re-establishing a more "substantive," "authentic," "public-minded" and "useful" learning for a better civil world and a better literati community brought different scholars together, although their solutions ended up diverging.

This shared urgency is apparent in many contemporary writings. Zhang Erqi's essay "On Will" (Bian zhi 辨志), later included in a few influential Qing anthologies on the responsibilities of literati learning, serves as a good example.[146] The essay argues that what most distinguishes scholars from common people is their will to become responsible human beings whose learning is devoted to the search for righteous principle rather than their personal interests. In particular, the best kinds of scholars would "establish their words as the standard for the rule," "demonstrate their actions as the model for the people," "define their achievements of learning based on the results of improving the people's well-being," and "create grand enterprises for the commonwealth. " [147]

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[146] This essay was listed as the first piece both in Lu Yao's (陸耀) *Anthology of Qiewenzhai* (Qiwenzhai wenchao 切問齋文鈔) (1745) and Wei Yuan (魏源) and He Changling's (賀長齡) *Collected Essays about Statecraft of the Qing* (Huangchao jingshi wenbian 皇朝經世文編) (1826).

[147] "人之生也，未始有異也，而卒至於大異也，習為之也。人之有習，初不知其何以異也，而遂至於日異者，志為之也。志異而習以異，習異而人以異。志也者，學術之樞機，適善適惡之轅楫也。樞機正，則莫不正也；樞機不正，亦莫之或正矣. 今夫人生而呱呱以啼，啞啞以笑，蜎蜎以動，惕惕以息，無以異也。出而就傅，朝授之讀，暮課之義，同一聖人之易，書，詩，禮，春秋也，及其既成，或為百世之人焉，或為天下之人焉，或為一國一鄉之人焉；其劣者，為一室之人，七尺之人焉；至其最劣，則為不具之人，異類之人焉。言為世法，動為世表，存則儀其人，沒則傳其書，流風餘澤，久而愈新者，百世之人也。功在生民，業隆匡濟，身存則天下賴之以安，身亡則天下莫知所恃者，天下之人也。 恩施沾乎一域， 行能表乎一方，業未大光，立身無負者，一國一鄉之人也。若夫智慮不離乎

Similar warnings that contemporary literati had alienated themselves from real learning came from a wide range of post-Wang Yangming literati-scholars who found it necessary to remind their communities of what ought to make a scholar. In other words, the younger generations were determined to regain their self-esteem by redefining what learning meant. Suffice it to say that behind the anxious assertion that a real scholar ought to pursue "substantive learning," there lay a profound intellectual crisis due to the great success of Wang Yangming's doctrine. On the one hand, younger generations claimed that the popular methods of learning were no longer adequate, or even corrupt, therefore a decisive change was needed. On the other hand, this change had to begin with the reconstruction of the intellectual culture as a necessary step to order the bigger world. The fact that scholars started to worry about the worth of their learning shows that an increasing crisis of identity began to surface. The revival of Neo-Confucianism in the sixteenth century under Wang Yangming's doctrine reached its height at the cost of both the social and cultural value of being a literatus. Many scholars looked for evidence from social-cultural phenomena to support their belief that the value of learning had been diminished. For instance, Zhang Pu

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鍾釜，慈愛不外乎妻子，則一室之人而已。耽口體之養，徇耳目之娛，膜外視置不痛疴癢者，則七尺之人。篤於所嗜，督亂荒遺，則不具之人。因而敗度滅義，為民毒害者，則為異類之人也。豈有生之始，遽不同如此哉？抑豈有驅迫限制為之區別致然哉？習為之耳。習之不同如此，志為之耳。子曰：「苟志于仁矣，無惡也。」言志之不可不定也。故志乎道義，未有入於貨利者也；志乎貨利，未有幸而為道義者也. 人之所以孳孳終其身不已者，志在故耳。志之為物，往而必達，圖而必成。以志在貨利之人，而乘富貴之資，制斯人之命，吾悲民生之日蹙也……嗚呼！學者一日之志，天下治亂之原，聖人憂樂之本矣。孟子曰「士」何事？曰：「尚志。」學紀曰「凡學，官先事，士先志。」張子曰「未官者使正其志。」教而不知先志，學而不知尚志，慫天下治隆而俗美，何繇得哉！" Zhang Erqi, "Bian zhi" (辨志) *Qingru xue'an,* 703-5.

(張溥 1602-1641), the leader of the Fushe movement, lamented that the world was declining because "farmers are dressed like royalty," and "scholars have become too poor to sustain their livelihood while powerful families have become overwhelmingly rich."[148] For Zhang, these phenomena suggested that the appropriate social order was collapsing in a world where literati learning was worthless.

In 1602, Zhang Wenda (張問達), a scholar-official in the Donglin community, advocated the imprisonment of Li Zhi because Li represented the most controversial voice among Wang Yangming's left-wing followers. Li's death in the prison served as a symbolic case to show the crisis resulted from a culture in which Li's views were valuated. Redrawing the boundaries between literati learning and other teachings in order to remind scholars of their responsibility to the common good, literati started various enterprises to change the intellectual culture and to regain their authority and leadership.

Regaining Literati Leadership and Redefining Elite Learning

The call for bringing public responsibility back to the literati world and reclaiming the role of social leadership for the literati based on clearly defined grounds became especially urgent in the wake of a series of political crises. The eunuchs' rising influence in court politics, and local peasant rebellions in the last decades of Ming struck scholars as reflections of the abuse of power at the inner court and a lack of effective local governance. On top of these was the escalating threat from the Manchus. All of

[148] "南畝之民而王者之飾，庶人之妾而帝後之服，昔人之所太息而傷自已甚也。雖然，此猶其小者也。歌娼舞女擬佩狄於夫人……士人不飽稻粱，而巨室之有餘者……尤昔人所以悼衰世之無可如何，而今重不反者也。" Zhang Pu, "Zheng fengsu yi" (正風俗議), in Zhang's *Qiluzhai shiwen heji* (七錄齋詩文合集), included in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* (續修四庫全書), 1387 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe Press, 1995-1999).

these problems led to critical reflections on learning, especially targeting the left-wing interpretations of Wang Yangming's doctrine. Some believed that the self-absorbed culture and moral relativism that they found in these interpretations were incapable of holding the literati world accountable. As Zhang Pu put it, political chaos exposed the alienation of scholars from the "Way of Confucius and Duke Zhou."[149] But what should scholars do to get back to the Way?

First, the pursuit of a more "substantive" and "authentic" learning required scholars to channel their learning to serve the public interest. As Gu Yanwu put it, "the learning of the gentleman has to be public." (廓然大公) [150] Zhang Pu stressed that only when one's mind was set to search for the public interest (純心在公者) and to illustrate the righteous principle between the ruler and the ministers could one's learning be called "correct" (正), and only when one's learning became "correct" could it be used to teach others.[151] Second, this public mindset also required that the knowledge scholars wanted to pursue had to come from common ground. In other words, the standard of knowledge and the approach for reaching knowledge had to be shareable. They could not be purely relative or subjective. Third, a real "substantive learning" would orient scholars as leaders

[149] "風俗之不古也，士子為甚。逆譴之亂獻, 諂造祠者倡羽松江，奴酉之橫，開城乞降見於永平。於是天下爭言士子之變，淪胥已極，幾甚於堯時之洪水，周初之猛獸。要之此其人不足以謂之士子也。其人雖含氣之屬，久絕於生民之理，名之以人而人不予，歸之其地而地不受，苟猶列而謂之士子，則天下之為士自者懼矣，天下之為士子者懼，則周公孔子之道殆將絕矣。故亂賊子僅見，愚不忍係於學校之辱，而深為風俗之憂。" Zhang Pu, "Zheng fengsu yi," Ibid.

[150] "君子之學不然，廓然而大公，物來而順應，故聞一善言，見一善行，若決江河，沛然莫之能禦，而無熏心之厲矣。" Gu Yanwu, Ri zhi lu, juan 1

[151] "純心在公者，方懼君臣之義不明，無以教世，又何忍於身蹈之此武穆之奉命而歸，所以為正也。" "He ke zhuge zhongwu lu yue zhongwu jintuo cuibian xu"(合刻諸葛忠武錄岳忠武金陀粹編序), *Qiluzhai shiwen heji, Xuxiu siku quanshu,1387.*

in the world, and such leadership now meant that scholars ought to be able to *jingshi*, to order the world by engaging in politics and guiding the government. To do so, scholars needed to know how to obtain relevant knowledge from the Classics, histories, and other necessary textual materials. Gaining these abilities would help literati communities to exclude "vulgar *Ru*"(*suru* 俗儒) as well as to distinguish the real *Ru* from those who pretend to be *Ru* but had no real learning.[152]

But how would the literati world find a new consensus based on a valid and objective foundation of learning? In what way should the learning community guide the social-political order? To rebuild a common ground would involve thinking through the meaning of learning and the role of the *Ru* tradition. It is not surprising to see that the newer generations, who criticized the left-wing followers of Wang Yangming for their lack of responsibility and substance, revived the importance of Classical and historical learning. But, what kind of Classical and historical learning would help the literati world restore a meaningful purist of knowledge and regain its moral and cultural leadership in guiding the world? What was the real model of the sage kings? The answers to these questions gradually evolved through the seventeenth century, but the questions themselves remained.

Literati Political Activism under the Call for the Restoration of Learning: From the Donglin Model to the Fushe Model

[152] "時風愈下，兔園稱儒，實老生之變相；坊人詭計，借名母以行書。誰立廟庭之中正？九品參差，大類釋氏之源流；五宗水火，遂使杏壇塊土為一閧之市，可哀也夫！"Huang Zongxi, preface to *Mingru xue'an* (明儒學案), *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.7, 3.

The two most influential intellectual-political movements in late Ming that aimed to answer these questions were the Donglin (東林 1570s-1620s) and the Fushe (復社 1620s-1640s). In this section, I discuss how they put their agendas into action in the last years of the Ming and how their experiences shaped the intellectual culture of the early Qing. Both the Donglin and the Fushe exemplify how major literati groups tried to redefine literati leadership in the post-Wang Yangming world. Having generated great national influence through organized networks, publications, and active engagement with politics, both movements could be seen as representing new literati forces confronting the state power and striving to generate influence on public life.

The Donglin group used the term "*our party"* (吾黨) to consolidate its members' identification with their enterprise, seeing themselves as the spokesmen for justice between the power of the state and the common people. Their protest against government surcharging of the mining tax in 1574, their establishment of the Donglin Academy in 1604 for criticizing officials and discussing policies, and their campaign accusing Li Zhi of corrupting the moral order of society were telling examples. The Fushe activists, usually considered as followers of the Donglin community, originally came together to organize regional peer-review communities for exchanging and polishing their writings in preparation for the civil service exam, including interpretative essays on passages selected from the Classics (制義, hereafter *zhiyi*) and analytical essays on contemporary government policy (策論, hereafter *celun*). But very soon, the Fushe grew into a group of clearly defined scholarly communities highly interested in generating statecraft knowledge through rigorous study of the Classics and historical sources. It drew the attention of a nation-wide stratum of young scholars who wanted to demonstrate their

rigor and confidence. The power that the Fushe group accumulated under the leadership of Zhang Pu and Chen Zilong (陳子龍 1608-1647) gave it political weight, particularly in the Chongzhen court, and also made its members more self-conscious about their influence on government. [153]

These two groups represented very different solutions, with different assumptions of knowledge, different claims on sagehood, and different interpretations of the shared literati cultural tradition. Accordingly, they developed distinctive forms of intellectual communities to act on their respective agendas. Notably, these differences contributed to a major shift in the intellectual culture from Neo-Confucianism to Evidential Learning through the seventeenth century.[154] When the Fushe became more influential by the 1630s, both the court and the Fushe members realized that they had marched on a path to intellectual leadership that was different from the Donglin. The court was nervous about Fushe's turn to "the learning of the antiquity"(*guxue* 古學), namely, the learning of the Classics and history, as a new direction to motivate young people.[155] Zhou Zhong (周鐘),

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[153] For data about the literati communities, see Xie Gouzhen (謝國楨) Mingqing dangshe yundong kao (明清黨社運動考) (Taibei: Hanyuan chubanshe Press, 1975) and Guo Shaoyu (郭紹虞) "Mingdai wenren jieshe nianbiao" (明代文人結社年表) and "Mingdai de wenren jietuan" (明代的文人集團), in Guo Shaoyu, Zhaoyushi gudian wenxue lunji (照隅室古典文學論集) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983).

[154] In current scholarship, how and why this shift took place has not been adequately studied. In my view, modern scholars have not paid enough attention to the differences between Donglin and Fushe. Mizoguchi Yūzō, Lu Baoqian, and Qian Mu all shared the view that Evidential Learning came from the Donglin scholarship because of their shared *shixue* and *jingshi* orientation. For Lu Baoqian's view, see *Qingdai sixiang shi* (清代思想史), (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe Press, 2009),163－90.

[155] "溥采以古學相互砥礪，天下靡然鄉風。不為政府所悅，故朝論多苛及之。" Jiang Pingjie (蔣平階) *Donglin shimo* (東林始末)（Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguang she Press, 1957; republished by Shanghai Shudian Press in 1982), 45

a student of Zhang Pu, pointed out in his preface to Zhang Pu's collections of writings that "The writing (*wenzhang* 文章) of [the historians] Sima Qian (司馬遷) and Ban Gu (班固)does not contain the learning of Coherence of the Cheng-Zhu (程朱) [Neo-Confucians], and vise versa, the learning of Coherence of the Cheng-Zhu [Neo-Confucians] does not contain the writing of [the historians] Sima Qian and Ban Gu." But in Zhou's view, the Fushe leader Zhang Pu was able to combine these two schools in a way entirely different from the Donglin Neo-Confucian system of learning.[156] This observation shows that the Fushe model began to be seen as laying a new foundation of elite learning, which would not simply be a supplement to or a fix for Neo-Confucian practice, but would be an alternative approach to shared learning.

The social and political aspects of these two intellectual movements have been well documented.[157] In the following section, I will focus on how these two groups developed new discourses on a common culture, new approaches to learning, and new ways of self-identification. In doing so, I will point out how the rise of the Fushe model became a coherent and appealing position to the younger generations, and how the Neo-Confucian movement of discoursing on learning (*jiangxue* or *jiangshuo*) saw new challenges during the decline of the Ming.

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[156] "遷固之文章無程朱之理學，程朱之理學無遷固之文章。茲事難兼，亦天所限。"Zhou Zhong, preface to *Qiluzhai shiwen heji* (七錄齋詩文合集) , *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, 1387, 251.

[157] In English scholarship, particularly see, Williams S. Atwell, "From Education to Politics: The Fu She," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York, Columbia University Press, 1975), 333–367. Charles O. Hucker, "The Tung-lin Movement of the Late Ming Period," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions,* 132-62.

Moral Cultivation's Relevance to Ordering the World: The Dilemma of Donglin's Turn to National Politics

Scholars who founded the Donglin Academy in 1604 belonged to a group of new Neo-Confucian moral thinkers in the last years of Ming who aimed to save Neo-Confucian learning from its radical left-wing interpretations. Apart from fighting with the Taizhou School, they also tried to modify the aspects of Wang Yangming's teaching that had opened the door to more radical interpretations. But, as historians have largely agreed, these scholars still belonged to the school of the Learning of the Mind. They insisted that the key to activating the moral agency of the individual lay in stressing the role of the individual mind, and they did not think the true Neo-Confucian tradition would encourage scholars to simply comply with external rules and conventions. In other words, they were committed to the idea of "innate knowledge of the good," arguing that the source of knowing had to be inborn. But an immediate problem they needed to solve was how they could save the insights of the Learning of Mind tradition while maintaining the literati culture of learning –denounced by more radical interpreters as the basis of external rules and conventions – as a necessary path.

The Donglin Academy was one group among many that tried to answer this question in the late Ming. Another was the Yuelu Academy (岳麓書院) in Changsha, restored under Zhang Yuanbian (張元忭 1538-1588) in 1582. Zhang originally studied with Wang Ji but later became critical of Wang. The academy was further developed by Zhang's follower Wu Daoxing (吴道行 1560-1644), who was a good friend of Gu Xiancheng (顧憲成 1550-1612) and Gao Panlong (高攀龍 1562-1626), two of the main leaders of the Donglin Academy founded in 1604. Liu Zongzhou, who also taught at the

Donglin Academy for some time, founded his Zhengren Academy (證人書院) in 1631, where he organized debates with Tao Shiling (陶奭齡 1571-1640), a third-generation Wang Yangming student who had integrated Zen Buddhism into his interpretation of innate knowing and encouraged his followers to detach themselves from public life for the sake of fulfilling their cultivation.[158]

These scholars tried in their own ways to argue why celebrating the innate knowledge of the good would, in fact, require the effort of learning. Seeing that the roots of the problem lay in Wang Yangming's teaching, they went back to Wang's message, which was best represented in his famous "Doctrine of the Four Axioms" (Si ju jiao 四句教):

> Having no good and no evil is mind-in-itself. Having good and having evil is the activity of the will. Innate knowing is knowing the good and evil [in the activity of the will]. Performing good and getting rid of evil is the rectification of actions.[159]
>
> 無善無惡心之體，有善有惡意之動，知善知惡是良知，為善去惡是格物

As has been discussed by many modern scholars, Wang's message departs from the controversial claim that the mind-in-itself (*xinti* 心體) does not contain the concepts of good and evil. The distinction between good and evil, instead, is a phenomenon related to the function of human will. Innate knowledge of the good is nothing other than the ability to make the right judgments at every moment when human will functions. Wang

[158] For an introduction of the debates between Liu and Tao, see Wang Fan-sen (王汎森), "Qingchu de jiang jing hui" (清初的講經會), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* (中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊) 68. 3 (1997): 515-18.

[159] Translation of the sentence is from Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*.

reinterpreted Zhu Xi's "*gewu"* (格物) from the "investigation of external things" to the "rectification of actions." Behind his seemingly controversial claim, Wang intended to elevate the mind-in-itself (*xinti*) above the influence of any dogmatic or conventional knowledge, leaving the agency of making judgments entirely to the individual. Meanwhile, he intended to problematize the unchallenged reliance on the pedantic practice of learning in moral practice. As he explained to students, "As one starts to acquire knowledge, one's mind [begins to be] contaminated by conventional customs. Given this, if [we] do not ask this person to practice the conducting of good and removal of evil based on his innate knowledge of the good, but merely [let him] imagine the foundation, everything [that person] does will be solid."[160] But Wang did not specify how one could reach the innate knowledge of the good in action and whether such knowing was reachable through language-based learning.

His left-wing interpreters, as we have said, went to extremes to argue that good and evil were entirely relative, seeing self-cultivation as returning to the mind-in-itself, thus fully embracing intuitive feelings as the expression of innate knowledge of the good. Their assumption was that since the mind-in-itself is beyond the conventional knowledge of good and evil, the Coherence of things is already innate within the mind. Each time people generated feelings in response to things, they ought to trust that they were in tune with the real status of "how things are of themselves" (*ziran* 自然). To engage oneself in extensive learning would only harm the mind-in-itself.

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[160] "人心自有知識以來，已為習俗所染，今不教他在良知上實用為善去惡功夫，只去懸空想個本體，一切事為，俱不著實。此病痛不是小小，不可不早說破。" *Zhongguo sixiangshi cankao ziliaoji: Suirang zhi qing juan* (中国思想史参考资料集：隋唐至清卷), eds. Liu Guozhong (刘国忠) and Huang Zhenping(黄振平) (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe Press, 2004), 205.

The Neo-Confucian critics of the left-wing interpreters attacked this direction. Zhang Yuanbian, who was a generation older and studied with Wang Ji, questioned the conclusions of his teacher. He claimed that it was problematic when Wang's left-wing followers equated the notion of "how things are of themselves," *ziran*, with "perception," *zhijue* (知覺). *Zhijue* could help to reach *zhi* (知), that is, knowing. But knowing should not be equated with knowledge of the good, which has to be realized through the effort of learning. "The purpose of learning is to be aware of the moral nature of the mind and to learn how to distinguish the right from the wrong. This is the only approach leading to substantive learning. Today, people regard various ungrounded thoughts as innate knowledge of the good, and this is the result of the idea that there is no right and wrong."[161]

Gu Xiancheng tried to turn the left-wing scholars' subjectivism on its head. Huang Zongxi later paraphrased him as arguing that "The modern scholars like following what is convenient, hastily accepting what they experience as how things are of themselves (*ziran*), therefore they devote no thought or effort, recognizing (what they feel as right) from their most immediate experience."[162]Although it was right that people

[161] "人有知觉，禽兽亦有知觉，人之知觉命於理，禽兽之知觉命於气。今但以知觉言良知，而曰良知不分善恶，不将混人性物性而无别耶？夫所谓良者，自然而然，纯粹至善者也。参之以人为，蔽之以私欲，则可以言知，而不得谓之良知矣。谓良知有善无恶，则可；谓良知无善无恶，则不可。致知之功，全在察其善恶之端，方是实学。今人於种种妄念，俱认为良知，则不分善恶之言误之也。"Zhang, "Buer zhai lun xue shu" (不二齋論學書), from "Zhezhong wanmen xue'an 5" (浙中王門學案五), *Mingru xue'an, juan* 15, *Huang Zongxi quanji* Vol.7, 370.

[162]"先生深慮近世學者，樂趨便易，冒認自然，故於不思不勉，當下即是，皆令究其源頭，果是性命上透得來否？勘其關頭, 果是境界上打得過否？而於陽明無善無惡一語，辨難不遺餘力，以為壞天下教法，自斯言始。" "Donglin xue'an" (東林學案一), in *Mingru xue'an, juan* 58, *Huang Zongxi quanji* Vol.7, 732.

should trust their innate knowledge of the good, in reality people are often confused and find it difficult to stay honest to their true mind. The practical choices made in everyday life would gradually alter people's original understanding about right and wrong. Therefore, Gu argued that it was necessary to make an effort to cultivate oneself through learning, for only in doing so could people keep their honesty.[163] Drawing on this line of reasoning, in a debate with the Taizhou scholar Li Jianluo (李見羅) Gu challenged Wang Yangming's famous claim on the importance of trusting one's own judgment. Wang's claim, paraphrased by Gu, says

> When one has learned an insight based on one's own judgment, even if the insight does not literarily come from Confucius' words, one should not consider the insight to be wrong; but when one is not able to see the insight based on one's own judgment, even if the insight directly comes from Confucius' words, one should not accept the insight as true.
> 求諸心而得，雖其言之非出於孔子者，亦不敢以為非也；求諸心而不得，雖其言之出於孔子者，亦不敢以為是也。[164]

Gu argued that, normatively, since the mind is the Coherence of the heaven, it indeed contains the ability to tell right and wrong, but one should not assume that everyone is ready to use their mind independently. Only the sages could do so. Thus, when they reflect on their own mind, students should not forget about learning from past scholars who had completed their learning (*xianjue* 先覺) and from the ancient doctrines (*guxun*

[163] "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。"Ibid., 737.

[164] Wang Yangming's original phrase is, "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？" Wang Yangming, "Da Luo Zheng'an shaozhai shu," (答羅整庵少宰書), *Chuanxilu* (傳習錄). For English translation, see *Instruction for Practical Living, and Other Neo-Confucian Writings,* trans. Wing-tsit Chan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963)

古訓). Merely believing in his immediate judgments would only make the student preoccupied with his own opinions. Such a mind would be just like a scale without an indicator, and like a ruler without a standard of measurement (無星之秤，無寸之尺).[165]

Liu Zongzhou also tried to avoid reducing the innate knowledge of the good into a matter of opinion, and argued for the importance of learning. He was arguably the most creative and nuanced theorist trying to save the celebration of individual agency in the Learning of the Mind. Much scholarship has focused on his interpretation of the Learning of Mind through his life; my goal here is to briefly demonstrate how he tried to overcome the tension between the celebration of moral agency and the necessity of learning. Instead of trying to define what ought to be the correct state of mind, he changed the whole discourse of mind from a *prescriptive* doctrine on how to restore the mind into a *descriptive* theory on how the mind works to explain the foundation of morality. In his theory, the innate knowledge of the good is not something that mirrors the Coherence of the universe, rather, it is the foundational faculty of the mind that makes moral concepts, *ming* (名), exist in the first place.

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[165]“陽明先生曰：‘求諸心而得，雖其言之非出於孔子者，亦不敢以為非也；求諸心而不得，雖其言之出於孔子者，亦不敢以為是也。’此兩言者，某竊疑之。夫人之一心，渾然天理，其是天下之真是也，其非天下"之真非也，然而能全之者幾何？惟聖人而已矣。自此以下，或偏或駁，遂乃各是其是，各非其非，欲一一而得其真，吾見其難也。故此兩言者，其為聖人設乎？則聖人之心，雖千百載而上下冥合符契，可以考不謬，俟不惑，無有求之而不得者。其為學者設乎？則學者之去聖人遠矣，其求之或得或不得，宜也。於此正應沉潛玩味，虛衷以俟，更為質諸先覺，考諸古訓，退而益加培養，洗心宥密，俾其渾然者，果無媿於聖人。如是而猶不得，然後徐斷其是非，未晚也。苟不能然，而徒以兩言橫於胸中，得則是，不得則非，其勢必至自專自用，憑恃聰明，輕侮先聖，註腳《六經》，無複忌憚，不亦誤乎？陽明嘗曰：‘心即理也。’某何敢非之？然而言何容易！孔子七十從心不踰矩，始可以言心即理。七十以前，尚不知如何也！顏子其心三月不違仁，始可以言心即理。三月以後，尚不知如何也！若漫曰心即理也，吾問其心之得不得而已。此乃無星之秤，無寸之尺，其於輕重長短，幾何不顛倒而失措哉！” Gu, “Lunxue shu” (論學書), from “Donglin xue’an 1,” *Mingru xue’an*, *juan* 58, *Huang Zongxi quanji* Vol.8, 750-1.

> [Some people] ask, "Do the three teachings [of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism] share the same origins?" [Liu] answers: "[One] shall not compare these three teachings in an empty way. We can immediately tell the difference between humans and animals [in a concrete way]. Abstract names are from concrete forms [of activities]. You said that humaneness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*) and trust (*xin*) are all abstract concepts. But the mind must first exist and then the name of [good] nature is born. There must be son and father first, then the name of humaneness is born. There must be ruler and minister first, then the name of righteousness is born. The [birth of the names of] ritual, wisdom, and trust all follow the same [mechanism]. Therefore, [Mencius says], the concrete forms are given by Heaven. [But,] only the sages can act them out.
>
> 問"三教同源否？"曰"莫懸虛勘三教異同，且當下辨人禽兩路。無形之名，從有形而起，汝曰仁義禮智信，皆無形之名也。然必有心，而後有性之名也。有父子而後有仁之名，有君臣而後有義之名，推之禮智信皆然。故曰：形色，天性也。惟聖人然後可以踐形。[166]

It is important to keep in mind that, although Liu saw moral concepts as products of the human mind, he did not say morality *per se* is culturally constructed. Instead, his purpose was to shift the focus from monitoring the content or the state of the mind to maintaining the faculty of the mind. The faculty of forming moral concepts is innate to everyone. How so?

According to his theory, the mind does not contain any static substance, rather, it is empty inside, and it is free to move in different directions, resembling the cosmos. Because it is empty and not blocked, it gives birth to spirit, *ling* (靈), which generates consciousness, *jue* (覺). But consciousness is not generated randomly; it is formed under

[166] "Hui yu," (會語) from "Jishan xue'an," (蕺山學庵) *Mingru xue'an*, *juan* 62, Huang Zongxi quanji, Vol.8, 923.

an agency, *zhu* (主), which is called will, *yi* (意).[167] What is will, the agency of the consciousness? The will makes the command to form moral concepts to guide one's consciousness. Here, Liu takes an important step. As we have said, Wang Yangming imagined the mind-in-itself, *xinti*, as something beyond the conventional knowledge of good and evil. He primarily emphasized the ultimate good nature of the human mind as the basis for moral agency. However, he still considered the will, *yi*, to be a potential generator of evil that scholars had to monitor in order to prevent the mind from becoming obscured. However, Liu did not choose to center on the mind as the direct goal of cultivation. Instead, he took the mind as a given reality, not something to be measured or defined, and he centered on the will, the faculty of mind, as the primary object to be worked on.[168] He held that the human will is absolutely good-oriented, which can be seen from the existence of moral concepts. Sages are those who are able to keep the will fresh and maintain its function, thus the sages stay morally self-conscious.[169] Liu saw the function of the will as fundamental to everything. It gives rise to the order of things (*tianming zhi ti* 天命之體), thus it ought to serve as the source of the definition of human

[167] "人心徑寸耳，而空中四達，有太虛之象。虛故生靈，靈生覺，覺有主，是曰意。此天命之體，而性道教所從出也。" "Yu lu," (語錄) from "Jishan xue'an," (蕺山學案), in *Mingru xue'an*, *juan* 62, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.8, 900.

[168] For a helpful explanation of Liu's different take on the mind, see Wang Fansen, "Qingchu de jiangjinhui," 523-8.

[169] Tang Chun-I, "Liu Tsung-chou's Doctrine of Moral Mind and Practice and His Critique of Wang Yang-ming," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, 330. For a more recent work on how Liu Zongzhou's turn transformed the Neo-Confucian discourse, see Zheng Zongyi (鄭宗義), *Mingqing ruxue zhuanxing tanxi, cong Liu Jishan dao Dai Dongyuan* (明清儒學轉型探析：從劉蕺山到戴東元) (Hong Kong: Zhong wen daxue chubanshe Press, 2009.)

nature, the way of learning, and the content of teaching. In 1636, Liu published his own four-sentence axioms in his work *Speeches about Learning* (Xue Yan 學言):

> Sometimes good and sometimes evil is where the mind moves. Liking the good and disliking the evil is where the will rests. Knowing good and evil is innate knowledge of the good. Good without evil is the heavenly order of things.
>
> 有善有惡心者之動，好善惡惡者意之靜，知善知惡者是良知，為善去惡是物則。[170]

In this sense, in order to cultivate oneself, one ought to keep the will authentic and allow the will to fulfill its job by generating moral concepts to guide consciousness. One cannot do this without rigorous learning using the instructions of the sages in the Classics.[171] In the same work, he reinterpreted the sequence of the Great Learning, reconnecting the mind and the natural order of things based on a cognitive process.

> The mind does not have a basis in itself; it takes the will as its basis. The will does not have a basis in itself; it takes knowing as its basis; knowing does not have a basis in itself; it takes things as its basis. Things do not have any application in and of themselves; they take knowing as their application. Knowing does not have any application in and of itself; it takes the will as its application. The will does not have any application; it takes the mind as its application.
>
> 以物為體。物無用，以知為用；知無用，以意為用，意無用，以心為用。物無用，以知為用；知無用，以意為用，意無用，以心為用。[172]

In this way, learning would not simply mean imposing on oneself a set of definite doctrines, but being provided with the essential materials and exemplars to allow the will to function. The will can then recognize the Heavenly Principle behind the moral

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[170] *Liu Zongzhou quanji* (劉宗周全集) Vol 2 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe Press, 2007), 391

[171] Wang Fansen, "Qingchu de jiangjinghui," 528-33.

[172] Liu Zongzhou, *Xue yan* (學言)（下）

concepts left by the sages in the Classics, enabling it to guide the consciousness.[173] And the mind is maintained through the function of the will. In this schema, Liu managed to celebrate innate moral agency without undermining the role of learning. One key procedure of cultivation in the process of learning was to practice *shendu* (慎獨), taking care of the will in solitude, so that scholars would remember to stay honest and sincere. Liu Zongzou's philosophization of the cognitive mind in the process of moral learning would eventually inspire Huang Zongxi to create a new path to knowledge that was *not* based on Neo-Confucianism. I will come back to this point in next chapter, but it is important to see that Liu himself was still a Neo-Confucian. He treated self-transformation as the central goal of *Ru* learning, and never argued that the purpose of study was to accumulate and generate understanding about the world. Moreover, although he recognized that morality is a product of the human mind, he did not seem to see the moral concepts of the *Ru* tradition as historical products, and he believed that the domains of morality within the *Ru* tradition, such as filial piety (*fu zi* 父子) and political commitment (*jun chen* 君臣), were universally true and rooted in the natural order of things. This is largely because, for Liu, it was still the unity between *Ru* values and the natural order of things that justified the authority of the literati learning tradition.

For all of these critics, despite their differences, their shared goal was to search for a way to redefine the foundation of moral agency and to overcome the anti-learning argument, which they believed to underlie the troubles of their time. But what did their efforts mean in practice? How should scholars act to overcome doubt about the value of

[173] Liu explains the mechanism in a metaphor of lost child who suddenly recognize the parents on the road. Wang Fansen, "Qingchu de jiangjinghui," 533.

their role and the learning upon which their position was built? The national movement of the Donglin Academy provided a concrete model, by gradually shifting the locus of literati influence from everyday local practices to national politics.

In conversations, Gu expressed disappointment that the real *Ru* learning was losing its appeal. Seeing lines of people going to pray at Buddhist temples to seek good fortune, he could not help reflecting: Why was no one coming to *Ru* scholars to learn how to master their own destiny and pursue a better life? What had made people choose Buddhism when they needed guidance?[174] Gu explained the phenomenon as a result of the decline of real Neo-Confucian learning. Scholars had given up their role of transforming people and society. One sign of this was that the tasks of officials had become separated from the cultivation of scholars, and the scholarly community forgot about its transformative role in improving social-political life. Gu once claimed:

> [There are] officials [who] run their daily errands without concern for their ethical responsibilities towards their ruler and father; [there are] officials [who] conquer territories for the state without caring about the interests of people. [They would] gather in the wilderness to study human nature and destiny and to discuss morality and justice, without bothering about social customs; even if [they have] some other merits, a gentleman would still despise [these practices].
> 官輦轂，念頭不在君父上，官封疆，念頭不在百姓上。至於水間林下，三三兩兩相與講求性命，切磨德義，念頭不在世道上，即有他美，君子不齒也。[175]

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[174] "一日遊觀音寺，見男女載道，余謂季時曰：'即此可以辯佛儒已。凡諸所以為此者，一片禍福心而耳。未見有為禍福而求諸吾聖人者也。佛氏何嘗邀之使來？吾聖人何嘗拒之使去？佛氏何嘗專言禍福？吾聖人何嘗諱言禍福？就中體堪，其間必有一段真精神，迥然不同處。'季時曰，'此特愚夫愚婦之所為耳，有識者必不然'。曰：'感至于愚夫愚婦，而後其為感也真；應至於愚夫愚婦，而後其為應也真。真之為言也，純乎天而人不與焉者也。研究到此，一絲莫循矣。" Gu, "Xiaoxinzhai zhaji" (小心齋札記), from "Donglin xue'an 1," in *Mingru xue'an*, *juan* 58, *Huang Zongxi quanji,* Vol.8, 737.

[175] This quote was paraphrased by Huang Zongxi. Ibid., 731

For Gu, uniting self-cultivation and national political responsibility now became key to the restoration of literati leadership. The Donglin Academy was largely founded on this goal. Apart from trying to create local charitable communities through mobilizing literati families,[176] the Donglin scholars extended their activities into national politics, which they often called *jingshi*, or ordering the world. They politicized their movement of discoursing on learning (*jiangxue*) by connecting academic activities with political criticism, integrating political engagement as a coherent part of learning. As Huang Zongxi characterized it, the Donglin scholars tried to "base [their learning] on the [order] of the world (與世為體)," and they were considered by the literati world to be the leaders of political criticism (*qingyi* 清議).[177] The movement drew attention from those who already obtained the *jinshi* (進士) degree or had become officials, rather than from those who did not have much academic background. It appeared as a national force, not a local or regional power; its members were distributed in proportion to the population of provinces.[178] As the *Donglin Assembly Agreement* (Donglin huiyue 東林會約) proposed, large-scale assemblies or meetings should be held every year for three days, and lesser assemblies every month. They also shared reports from other meetings.[179] In meetings, Gu instructed the members to reflect on the passages of the Classics to search for

[176] Bol has shown in his discussion on Gao Panlong, this motivation also resulted in the competition of the Donglin figures to re-construct the locality by creating charitable communities that were different from the ones built by religious groups and government communities. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 267

[177] "Donglin xue'an 1," *Mingru xue'an, juan* 58, *Huang Zongxi quanji,* Vol.8, 731.

[178] Hucker, "The Tung-lin Movement of the Late Ming Period," 160-2.

[179] Ibid., 147.

coherence, and encouraged members to use what they had learned to evaluate contemporary politics. The Donglin's political criticisms largely focused on moral behavior at the court, which was an essential part of their learning activities. This kind of activity in turn helped to ensure a shared and cohesive understanding of the doctrines of the Classics for self-cultivation.

The combination of discoursing on the Classics and conducting political criticism soon enabled the Donglin group to win national fame, and their influence in turn became concrete proof of the power of their learning. It seems that their influence derived from several factors. One was that they apparently had found an approach to literati leadership that no other social groups or teachings could offer. In terms of ideological building, the fact that the Donglin movement attracted many like-minded scholars, such as Liu Zongzhou, had much to do with their ability to show that the *Ru* belief in moral agency was necessary for generating worldly influence. The textual traditions were not merely a set of top-down doctrines that curbed individual agency in their everyday social practice, but the basis for public impact and the mission of transforming the world.

In particular, the *Assembly Agreement* makes the innateness of moral knowledge the central premise to boost students' sense of responsibility.

> The original substance of the mind is bound up inseparably with the application of the mind. If the original substance of the mind (i.e. man's nature) is characterized by absence of good and evil, then how can one apply it so as to do good and remove evil? If the doctrine that the human nature is neither good nor evil prevails, then inevitably the necessity of doing good and removing evil must give way, and if this gives way, then inevitably contempt of proper human relationships and of proper procedures of study and practice must increase. How can it be otherwise? The doctrine that man's nature is good is the great wellspring of *Ru* learning, whereas the doctrine that man's nature is neither good nor evil is the source of Buddhism and Taoism. When these doctrines are blended together in an unnatural compromise into the concept that the absence of both good and evil is the supreme good, though it may be argued that this new "supreme good"

> is merely an extension and clarification of Mencius' "good," the fact remains that the similar-seeming nomenclature conceals a vastly altered reality, and what Mencius called 'good' has been lost. Specious sycophancy and heterodox hermitry both result.[180]

At the same time, the leaders restored the guiding role of the Neo-Confucian textual tradition and its intellectual lineage to mold members into a disciplined and learned national force. Gu Xiancheng drew on Zhu Xi's regulations for the Academy at the White Deer Grotto (Bailudong 白鹿洞) when designing the regulations for the Donglin Academy, but his goal was not to appeal to Zhu's interpretation of the tradition. He meant to show that the textual tradition spoke to worldly needs. Gu remained the master of the Donglin movement until his death in 1612. He lectured in many places, persuading many nearby academies to join in his program.

What does the Donglin movement tell us about the condition of Neo-Confucianism in late Ming? Suffice it to say that since the Southern Song, regardless of internal differences, the Neo-Confucian tradition had largely defined the goal of learning as the cultivation of moral exemplars in everyday social life. Self-cultivation would lead to a better world because it could create learned and moral people whose behaviors and judgments would stay in tune with the Coherence of the Heaven-and-Earth.

Corresponding to this logic was a commitment to bottom-up enterprises to achieve social cohesion and moral order based on the leadership of literati families at the local level, whose discourse of moral cultivation played a crucial role in shaping personal and social behavior and whose sponsorship of local charitable communities served as a significant venue for maintaining status. The new liberating discourse of the Learning of

[180] The translation is based on Hucker's translation with some modifications. For Hucker's translation, see "The Tung-lin Movement of the Late Ming Period," 146.

the Mind justified the revival of the leadership of literati families in the late Ming, but it also stimulated and buttressed the participation of non-literati groups in the construction of local charities based on doctrines outside of *Ru* endorsement. In such a context, shifting attention to national politics at this critical moment and trying to unify moral cultivation with governance became a path for scholars to justify literati learning. The Donglin model in the late sixteenth century, and again in the early twentieth century, turned national politics into an essential realm for scholars to practice self-cultivation.

However, once engagement with national politics became an alternative path to justify literati leadership, Donglin members and supporters faced several questions. On what grounds could self-cultivation, which was based on a family-centered moral doctrine, lead to a better and more responsible commonwealth? Was it sufficient to make statecraft decisions based on essentialized moral insights? It is not difficult to see that the ultimate goal of their engagement was self-referential and fundamentalist. Based on this framework, justifying the connection between cultivating oneself and improving national life remained a problem. Anxiety about how to overcome this problem would consume the Neo-Confucians in the following decades. We can already see it in the writings of Donglin scholars near the end of the Ming.

For instance, Chen Longzheng (陳龍正 1585-1645) tried hard to claim that the responsibility of *shengmin* (生民), that is, regenerating and nourishing the people, ought to be united with the merit of self-cultivation.

> Emphasizing the principle of regeneration can [allow one] to [be connected with] the supreme state of the grand empty universe, but emphasizing the need for connecting with the supreme state of the grand empty universe will, instead, conceal [the principle of] regeneration. Those people who only focus on their mental peace do not care about people's livelihood. Moreover, [merely focusing on their mental peace will] also prevent others [from caring about people's

livelihood]. Perhaps it is because, in the pursuit of a peaceful mental state, one is entirely isolated from concerns about the world. How could one know that [being connected with the] so-called supreme state of the grand empty universe means [that one is able to make use of the] difficult moments to identity how everything is a coherent whole? However, if we isolate ourselves from society, our practice of quietness and cultivation, in turn, would only give rise to a deconstructive sentiment. Today when we talk about learning, we should only begin from the notion of regeneration.

言生生，可以該（通"賅"）沖漠無朕，言沖漠無朕，或反以晦生生。儘有恬靜之士，談及民生利病，即悄然不顧，非惟不顧，且將阻人。蓋其恬靜中，與世間痛癢全相隔斷。豈知所謂沖漠無朕，正慾于一相不利之處，體認出萬物一體端倪耶！若人我隔絕，則其養高習靜，反隱隱養成一段殺機。古來哪有此秦、越學問？今日言學，只提個生字。

Scholars should create peace and harmony for the world, [and in this way they become] unified [with the world]… Only focusing on perfecting one's personal virtue, one will feel isolated from the world. [One] should understand that the pursuit of cultivation has in itself an enterprise of helping others. But one cannot see it clearly at that moment. Just to envision the future after hundreds of generations, what [we] follow and what [we] pass down will eventually match the intentions of Yao, Shun, and Confucius. Progress and setbacks may look very different for [one's] enterprise at the moment [when they happen], but [if we look at what we do] from a long-term perspective, the difference is not going to be important…[One ought to] begin by seeing [oneself] united with the tens of thousands of things, and the effort of learning only consists in self-cultivation.

學者須得為萬物開太平意思，方是一體…… 但云獨善其身，亦覺與世隔絕。須識獨善終，原有兼善事業，但目前不甚著明，只觀百世而下，所法所傳，總是堯舜，仲尼意思。大行窮局，當時事業，略有分別，久久決無分別。…… 念頭從萬物一體處起，工夫只在修身。

For literati [aiming to] improve themselves, there are none who can simply achieve good results in seclusion. Regarding [one's role] in the world, the virtues [I acquire] are not just about myself; there must be someone who can respond to me. The good behaviors [that I cultivate] are not simply for myself, I must have things that I can [offer to] help others**.**

士善其身，未有以獨善終者也。對天下云耳，德不孤，人必有以應我，善無獨，我必有以成人。[181]

[181] Chen Longzheng, "Donglin xue'an 4," *Mingru xue'an, juan* 61, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.8, 880

Chen tried to assure scholars that, as long as they could set their minds on serving the livelihood of the public, and as long as they could see this public-minded intention as the source of the meaning of their self-cultivation, the values of their tradition would be self-evident. Suffice it to say that Chen was caught up in a desire to reconcile the tensions between cultivating oneself and directly changing the world. He sought to convince his audience that these were essentially the same. In terms of the overall *Ru* enterprise, stressing the nature of self-cultivation as being connected with worldly people and affairs. His effort to stress this point, however, demonstrates his salient anxiety that it might not be so. The result was that he effectively put this message forth as an article of faith to the scholarly world. Chen told his readers that, "The reason for the sages' endurance in people's minds is that they diligently thought about the future world." Following the sages, "We scholars ought to maintain a meaningful connection with the world and the future," such that "We will not be like common people who live like the grass and trees, that will die one day without making a difference." [182]

It is important to see that the agenda of "ordering the world" proposed by the Donglin scholars and like-minded Neo-Confucian activists in the last years of the Ming did not mean to create a different form of knowledge. Engaging in political criticism was seen as a part of discoursing on learning for self-cultivation. However, this is not the only early seventeenth century approach to regaining social leadership and finding common ground for *Ru* learning. A new approach was under formation, launched by a younger

[182] "我與天下後事之感通，猶兩人相覿爾。我愛彼，彼亦愛我否？即覿面交流，我惟見有身。天下亦鳥知有我？鄉人之所以草木同腐也。我孜孜為後世計，後世孰能忘之？聖賢所以長生于人心也。" "Donglin xue'an 4," *Mingru xue'an, juan* 61, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.8, 879.

generation of political activists who decided to turn away from Neo-Confucian assumptions, and it began to catch the attention of the literati world.

Fushe's Enterprise of Wen: Political Writing based on a New Approach to Classical and Historical Learning

1. A Proposal for New Intellectual Values

The Fushe movement under the leadership of Zhang Pu was similar to the Donglin in its claim to bring scholars back to a mission of ordering the world. However, Zhang Pu and his colleagues did not believe that this agenda should rely on setting a unified goal of moral learning about the mind and nature (*xinxing* 心性). Neither did they follow the approach of discoursing on passages from the Classics for gaining a coherent moral understanding. Instead, one of their most direct contributions involved compiling statecraft writings to let scholars see how policies were made (*guo zhi daji* 國之大計) and to show how knowledge about statecraft, namely, *jingji* (經濟), influenced government and society. In doing so, as one Fushe scholar hoped, it might be possible to change the impression that the literati of the day lacked knowledge about how their world was organized and governed.[183] The most representative work produced at the height of the Fushe movement was the *Imperial Ming Compendium of Writings on Statecraft* (Huangming jingshi wenbian 皇明經世文編), a formidable project published in 1643 with the contributions of 142 Fushe members, incorporating 508 volumes containing

[183] "洗士大夫經濟闊疎之舊恥", Xu Yuqing (許譽卿), preface to *Ming jingshi wenbian* (明經世文編) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 1962), 29.

more than 3000 historical and contemporary essays on government by Ming officials.[184] As the main compiler Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608-1647) claimed in his preface, the fact that the Ming government had been established and continued to function successfully under the efforts of officials was a guarantee of the value of their experience.[185]

It is worth noticing that the compilers felt it necessary to clarify in the editorial guidelines that the criteria for selecting these essays lay not in the moral quality of the writers, but only their solutions to statecraft matters. One reason was that the *Compendium* was not "compiled for benefiting the moral teaching (*mingjiao* 明教), but for addressing the issue of governance (*zhiluan* 治亂). If someone's words were worthy of preservation, they should not be wasted because of his behavior (若乃其言足存，不以人廢)."[186] But there was also another reason. In the *Compendium*, writings were not categorized by institution or type of affairs discussed, but by individual author, listed in chronological order. In the view of the compilers, this format allowed the documentation of various ideas from different people (*cun yitong* 存異同). Some of these people were historical figures, and some were Fushe's contemporaries.[187]

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[184] "Introduction," *Ming jingshi wenbian*, 3.

[185] "論形勢，國之大計何以示人，予曰不然，祖宗立國規模宏遠，先朝大臣學術醇正，非有縱橫奇詭之論也，夫王業之深淺觀於人才之盛衰。"Chen Zilong, "Preface," *Ming jingshi wenbian,* 42

[186] "此書非名教所裨，即治亂攸關，若乃其言足存，不以人廢，分宜（嚴嵩）老奸，秩宗之文，採其數篇。" "Fanli"(凡例), *Ming jingshi wenbian*, 53.

[187] Zhang Pu's preface, *Ming jingshi wenbian,* 42

The *Compendium* also tried to exemplify the "history of words" genre (*jiyan zhi shi* 紀言之史), a different genre from the "history of events."[188] This genre would not only teach people how institutions changed, but also explain how these changes were understood by the people who implemented them. Thus, using the form of the *Compendium* to study the history of statecraft, scholars would also see how the authors were agents in creating that history. The Fushe scholars took account of the interaction between the judgments of the authors and their contexts as an integrated part of statecraft learning. In doing so, they could identify themselves with these historical figures. The merit of this form was well understood and appreciated by Fushe's supporters. As one official named Fang Yuegong 方岳貢 (?-1644) commented in his preface to the *Compendium*,

> Since writing is the product of one particular person, and the person is the product of a particular time, learning about people's ideas and plans is more than sufficient for improving our own wisdom; listening to their policy proposals is more than sufficient for motivating our own loyal mission to the country; and thoroughly investigating the context of their issues and words will be more than sufficient for our understanding of the changes.
> 文從其人，人從其代，覽其規畫足以益才智，聽其敷奏足以壯忠懷，考其始終足以識時變。[189]

In fact, Zhang Pu, the soul of Fushe's scholarship, had already proposed this rationale of learning about statecraft in earlier works, including the *Chongzhen Compendium of Writings* (Chongzhen wendian 崇禎文典), *Song Compendium of Writings* (Song wenjian 宋文鑒), and other essays on government "for the practical needs

[188] Chen Zilong's preface, *Ming jingshi wenbia*, 38.

[189] Fang Yuegong's preface, *Ming jingshi wenbian,* 4.

of his own time."[190] Following Zhang, the Fushe scholars shared the position that the guidance of statecraft learning could come from people who might not exemplify perfect morality. Individuals could realize their learning by understanding the world in their context and making decisions that would influence that world. The goal would not be trying to respond to the world in a "correct" way, but in a wise and effective way.

Importantly, behind the *Compendium* was a broad intellectual-cultural movement, led by the Fushe community, that promoted an alternative self-identification for the literati. One essential goal of the Fushe movement was to shape young scholars into people like the authors represented in the *Compendium*. To understand this, one has to take into account the main goal of the Fushe community at its earlier stage. The Fushe cohort was never a Neo-Confucian cohort; its leaders came from a different intellectual culture. They shared an interest in book learning, including institutional history and statecraft affairs, and they had a penchant for cultivating writing.[191] They started by organizing communities that practiced exam writing. This goal was similar to many literary communities (文社 hereafter *wenshe*) in their time. In the exam, the section of *zhiyi* asked candidates to write an interpretative essay on passages selected from the Classics, and the *celun* asked candidates to apply doctrines learned from the Classics to

[190] Mo Zhenbao (莫真寶), "Zhong Pu wenxue sixiang yanjiu" (张溥文学思想研究) (Dissertation, The Normal University of Capital , China, 2008), 2.

[191] For an account of the emergence of such new intellectual interests in late Ming, see Peter Bol, "Looking to Wang Shizhen: Hu Yinglin (1551-1602) and Late Ming Alternatives to Neo-Confucian Learning." *Ming Studies* (2006, 53): 99-137.

respond to a contemporary statecraft issue. Collecting and publishing selections of these model essays with support from publishing houses, the Fushe became famous.[192]

However, the success of Fushe's training was not just because it helped people pass the exam, but also because the leaders endowed the practice of exam writing with much larger meaning, bringing intellectual rigor into it. They encouraged followers to become leaders of public life by fixing the government based on their expert knowledge and their commitment to the national interest. Zhang Pu denounced the mainstream examination writings (*shiwen* 時文) at his time as empty and corrupted, failing to cultivate any real learning for the literati. Instead of arguing that examination writing should be discarded, he advocated renovation of the practice, especially *zhiyi* writing. Since the ancient prose (*guwen* 古文) movement in Northern Song, the ideal of the *zhiyi* writing had been to test scholars' ability to express their insights by interpreting a Classical passage to apply their insights to contemporary statecraft issue. If designed properly, Zhang argued, training in this form of writing could motivate young people to become responsible and confident. [193] It had the potential to motivate young scholars to

[192] For an analysis of the success of the Fushe's examination training program during the Chongzhen period, see Zhu Ziyan (朱子彦), "Lun Fushe yu wanming keju" (论复社与晚明科举) *Shehui kexue* (社会科学) no.3 (2009):141-7.

[193] One example is Zhang Pu's preface to Liu Kesheng's writings, entitled "Liu Kesheng gaoxu" (劉客生稿序), included in *Qiluzhai shiwen heji: jingao juan* (七錄齋詩文合集: 近稿) *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, 1387, 338. In this preface, Zhang argued against Yan Zhitui's (顏之推 531-591) view that writing good essays would easily lead to arrogance and the lack of ethical concerns about people. Zhang believed these two problems were not the consequences of writing. Those who suffered from arrogance were mostly people who were born like that way. Zhang pointed out that Yan himself did not have many grand achievements and merely cared about ethical behaviors. But not all people should be afraid of gaining success by writing good essays. He thus praised that Liu Kesheng set a good example that scholars should not avoid pursing the learning of writing essays and reaching success through the civil service examinations.

dare to make their cases on government issues, eventually cultivating a new generation of intelligent and accountable scholars.

Almost thirty percent of Zhang's extant writings are prefaces that he wrote for selections of model essays by younger scholars. Zhang's purpose in these prefaces was twofold. The first was to acknowledge these young scholars' talents and efforts, and the second was to suggest that there was nothing wrong with being recognized for their essays and gaining success through the exams. Their effort should be celebrated because it was crucial for scholars to achieve higher worldly goals. In making this point, Zhang intended to transform the meaning of examination success from "social climbing" into an enterprise of seeking public leadership based on deploying words and knowledge. He selected exemplary essays that effectively demonstrated the knowledge and insights of the authors, compiling them into selections entitled "Models for the nation" (*guobiao* 國表) that were published as an annual series.[194] Followers strove to have their essays included in these selections, craving Zhang Pu's comments.[195]

The Fushe leaders were aware that their program was making a claim on intellectual values. Zhang identified this training as a new wave of the ancient prose (*guwen* 古文) movement.[196] They were different from the Neo-Confucian moralists who did not put much weight on writing as a medium for transforming oneself into a moral

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[194] Zhang Pu, "Guobiao xu" (國表序) *Qiluzhai shiwen heji: cungao* juan 1, (七錄齋詩文合集 存稿) *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1387*,* 413.

[195] For instance, Fang Yuegong's preface to the *Imperial Ming Compendium of Writings on Statecraft* opens itself by saying that "there is no better literary writing than for the purpose of statecraft." (文章莫尚乎經濟), *Ming jingshi wenbian*, 4

[196] Mo Zhenbao, "Zhang Pu wenxue sixiang yanjiu," 212.

being, and who argued that writing was often a process fostering individual views rather than realizing a unified moral mind. Neither, on the other hand, was the Fushe movement about literary culture. The leaders were not concerned with issues of style or literary theory that captivated many of their contemporaries. Style, as Zhang Pu explained, was always easy to imitate, and debates in literary theory were useless when they had no bearing on one's "substantial learning" (*shixue*). Instead, the Fushe training program aimed to produce scholars whose learning would meet the needs of the real world (*jizi shiyong* 急資世用).[197] How, then, would *zhiyi* writing help to improve scholars' "substance" and make their actions relevant to real-world needs? In one comment on a follower's essay, Zhang claimed that *zhiyi* practice would be most valuable when the essays were useful for fixing statecraft matters, and it would be most substantial when the authors respected the commentaries of the Classics.[198] By learning to write good *zhiyi* essays, Zhang explained in a different comment, scholars would be able to cultivate their judgment and use that judgment to order the world.[199] Importantly, Zhang's discourses were based on the assumption that the Classics were valuable not because they were necessary for cultivating oneself into a moral agent, but because they were the basis for developing ideas about government and cultivating public responsibility. In order words,

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[197] Zhang Pu, "Guwen wushan xu"(古文五刪序), *Qiluzhai jinji* (七錄齋近集), in *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1387*,* 608.

[198] "夫制義莫大於有用，莫實於尊注。" Zhang Pu, "Chen Dashi *Yijing* huigao xu" (陳大士易經會稿序), *Qiluzhai shiwen heji: jingao* (七錄齋詩文合集: 近稿)*, Xuxiu siku quanshu,*1387*,* 404.

[199] "示士夫權量在心，然後可以權量天下。文如青來，此長短輕重人者也，世何得長短輕重之然, 有石友在一家諷詠已足。" Zhang Pu, "Li Qinglai Hengyan xiaoyin" (李青來衡言小引） *Qiluzhai shiwen heji: jingao* (七錄齋詩文合集: 近稿) *juan* 5, *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, 1387, 377.

the Fushe found themselves making use of the practice of *zhiyi* to realize an alternative understanding of the role of literati textual traditions.

Zhang's own experience was often used by his colleagues as an inspiring example of how *zhiyi* writing could stimulate broad and rigorous learning of the textual traditions. Zhang was known to have had tremendous difficulties in writing when he was younger, making him unable to pass the exams. He was remembered to have been incredibly well read, but poor at forming sentences. Moreover, he had a penchant for using difficult characters in his writing. It is said that Zhang accepted a life-changing suggestion from Yang Yi (楊彝), who believed that Zhang should learn to generalize ideas by engaging in "comprehensive studies of the Classics" (*tongjing* 通經).[200] Then, everyone in the community started to do so. Inspired by this suggestion, Zhang Pu started to change his style. Zhang's writings soon brimmed allusions to the Classics and history. He frequently cited the *Book of Changes* and the *Book of Odes* (especially the "Da ya" 大雅 and "Xiao ya" 小雅 sections which are often quoted for information about the laws of the Zhou dynasty and the rules of the various states), as well as *Xunzi* (荀子), *Mencius* (孟子), *Zhuangzi* (庄子), and so on, demonstrating a wide repertoire of knowledge about antiquity and historical change. Without committing to any single school of thought, he demonstrated a strong synthetic ability, using allusions to justify his own views about the contemporary world. He expected to convince his readers, not by appealing to the

[200] According to Yang Yi, "天如博極，文不能句，又好寫難字。余不許，約以通經，諸子即無不經學。二張子才敏，文為一變。時去立社未三月，聲譽鵲起。天如試輒冠軍，受先亦前茅。考德問藝人士踵至." Quoted from Mo Zhenbao, "Zhang Pu wenxue sixiang yanjiu," 20. Original reference: Yang Yi, "Fengji huiye xu" (鳳基會業序), from *Guyuan ji wen,* juan 1 (谷园集文). (谭天成家抄本, 1882) (National Library of China, Rare Book Collection.)

authority of Classical texts, but by showing connections between his references and the modern situation based on the grounds of common humanity. What gave his arguments cogency, as his writings often suggest, was the presumption that one can find general principles about how the civil word is organized from the Classics and history, and that the authenticity of these principles can be verified by the realities of modern civil life. Accordingly, the past is comprehensible because historical actors such as the sages share ground with contemporary actors based on these common principles. This kind of writing not only required students to master the Classics and the histories, but it also asked them to reason out how modern situations articulated with the Classics and historical texts.

To account for the complexities of worldly reality through writing was considered extraordinarily difficult by some, but they also saw it as valuable. As Chen Zilong commented about Zhang's talent, "Shouldn't the literati (*shi* 士) respect themselves? True, things in the world are more than one, but those who can discuss them are always too few. There is a reason for that! The ability to connect words and compare things (*shuci bishi* 屬辭比事) is just too difficult!"[201] In the eyes of Zhang's colleagues and students, his writings appeared to be a refreshing model for literati culture. Both Chen Zilong and Zhou Zhong saw that Zhang Pu's writings addressed some problematic tensions prevailing in their contemporary culture. In Chen Zilong's view, the mainstream style of writing in his time had been corrupted. Scholars who pursued the learning of writing had lost the ability to integrate the values of idiosyncrasy and the broader meaning of discourse for public life. Because of this gap, they were not respected.

[201] "士顧不當自重乎？ 天下事固非一，而能言之家恆絀，有以也夫！方其屬辭比事，嘎嘎乎難之矣。" Cheng Zilong, "Qiluzhai jixu"(七錄齋集序), *Cheng Zilong wenji* (陈子龙文集) Part 1, *juan* 7 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue Press, 1988), 363.

However, Zhang Pu, like Zuo Qiuming (左丘明), Sima Qian (司馬遷), and Han Yu (韓愈) was one of those whose learning had allowed him to effectively combine these two aspects. They were able to integrate their public-minded perspectives and their grand ideas into powerful writing to generate a great impact, carrying the cultural legacy of great antiquity and revealing the intentions of the ancients. Chen believed that Zhang was able to remind the contemporary literati scholars, the *shi,* that they should not be ashamed to identify themselves as *wenshi* (文士), literary men. Zhang had finally established the right model. [202] In Zhou Zhong's view, Zhang Pu was able to integrate the different domains of *Ru* learning. Particularly, he was able to combine two seemingly contradictory abilities – the ability to interpret the meaning of the Classics and the ability

[202] "士顧不當自重乎？天下事固非一，而能言之家恆絀，有以也夫！方其屬辭比事，嘎嘎乎難之矣。而奮功之士則非之，是賢於博弈耳，何益，壯夫不為也。儒者猶以其辭傷補破道，烏用是洋洋者。二者交譏，蓋其深哉。要之以甚，然亦作者之過也。夫七十子之倫，獨游、夏為文學，然皆篤實裒雅，不背於大道，夫子稱之不衰。繇此觀之，不可以一二論也。魯有左丘明，漢有司馬遷，唐有韓愈，三子者，所謂能言之家非耶？然左氏所序論必自豪君子，遷書比《春秋》，愈曰我孟軻耶，豈真許之哉，要其志不苟矣。其他委靡不振，或失名虧身。當塗之士程其功實， 儒者訾不純備不為，求全之事也。然文辭亦略可槩見，慾繩諸無倍要難。嗚呼，世無聖人，遂難折衷乎？余不敏，然有友數人皆天下賢士，有張天如溥者，其一也。夫天如之文章，天下莫不知其能，余獨疑其所繇者異。觀夫文貴不羈之體，而道符和平之旨，故文之工者，比振盪咤嗟，挾其不平之心，而窮於所往，然必以為違棄精神，觀其要眇憔悴，未嘗不謂離道也。及夫心安意馳，愷悌仁人之言，發而條直淡薄，難為工美，修辭者所不道。是二體者立，故文士則騁其放佚，薦紳則樂其便近，文章日衰，而道亦以散。今觀天如之書，正不掩文，逸不逾道，彬彬乎釋爭午之論，取則當世，不其然乎？彼其命志良不虛者，要亦乘時鼓運之事也。國家景命累葉，文且三盛：敬皇帝時，李獻吉起北地為盛；肅皇帝時，王元美起吳又盛；今五六十年矣， 有能繼大雅修微言紹明古緒意在斯乎？天如勉乎哉？我聞獻吉陵厲近傲，元美博泛近通，然要皆賢者。天如處二者之間，以投世用，自為過之，免於交譏。……天如雖賢，得位而名益彰。夫士伏處下賤，修行不出於家，折枝之功，其道無繇，為此慾為名聲，而又不屑以文士自見，不可得也。世有奇偉之士，而僅號曰文士者，豈獨古人之不幸乎？"Ibid.

to conduct literary composition. Thus, he recalled the sages who had imparted the Way in their writings.[203]

2. Toward a New Program of Learning and a New Logic of Classical Scholarship

As Fushe's enterprise of writing became a self-conscious claim for reforming intellectual values, its leaders also started to systematically conceptualize an alternative program of learning that would foster their envisioned intellectual values. Zhang passed the civil service exam and became a presented scholar, *jinshi* (進士) in 1631. Afterward, he shifted his focus from training in written composition to the building of a new culture of learning. Lamenting that his contemporary scholars were greatly limited in their

[203] "立言之道未有勝於此者，天下義理歸於文字，文字歸於六經，自六經以降，作者言人，人殊，然其大旨不謬於聖人，莫不足以匡風俗正人心宣王教，故垂之千數百年其說可與天地終始而不廢，及道風彫喪大義漸湮，士多泛濫辭章、罕究實用，有誤述雖廣，號為雅贍，而無一言之幾於道，若士有志通經，固守章句，而文采不振，以至兩家之士交譏揆其所至，個守偏曲，未為通論也，夫姚宋不著於文章，劉柳無稱於事業，自昔所嘆予亦以為遷固之文章無程朱之理學，程朱之理學無遷固之文章。茲事難兼，亦天所限，求其並至實待曠才。""天如……夫古今論文岐指殊趨，溯闕源流兩言可盡，成法在古，變化繇心而已，故捨去古法，亂泥古法亡繇左國而有史漢繇史，繇史漢而有韓歐諸家，其法未嘗不相貫而神明之能個有獨至，不可相襲。天如所謂詩文上自秦漢，下至唐宋諸家，時狎出御至不名一端，其所本者六經也，所明者道也，所用者史漢韓歐諸家之氣而非區區規格與其詞采也。今讀集中所載大者，懷當代之深憂，明萬古之裡亂，可以利社稷福蒼生，而其小者雖弁詞短簡偶爾酬贈之文，而仁義之旨忠孝之思汲汲然以天下人才為己任而成之，唯恐不至有令人誦之，而頑者興儒者立貪者廉砥行立節之士歡欣鼓舞而不能自已者，此尤其性情所形非徒工於文者所能至也。夫聖賢之言見於詩書禮樂語孟之書者，皆其跡也。而所存於中則惟是望天下以孝友忠恕之道仁人君子之行使感之，有以通觸之，有以悟，故教化因是而行，人心因是而正，昔人有讀集至百於卷不見一闡明理學之言，以為世道大憂，天如之文其原本在明理盡倫。予故曰，立言之道莫盛於此，豈後世能言之士可得而相絜哉？……天如將益肆力經史之學以補前賢未及求之古人未知，誰匹要哉昭代則北地瑯琊之間非所以相處也。" See Zhou Zhong's preface to Zhang Pu's *Qiluzhai Collection of Writings* (七錄齋集), *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1387, 251.

knowledge, vision, and ambition,[204] Zhang came up with a taxonomy of four complimentary sections. The first section was the learning of the "Classics" (經), the purpose of which was to collate the textual sources of the *Ru* (讀經者輯儒家). The second was the learning of "history" (史), the purpose of which was to discern the changes of things through time (讀史者辨世代). The third was the learning of "antiquity" (古), the purpose of which was to master the institutions and events of the antiquity (讀古者通典實). The fourth section was the learning of the "present" (今), the purpose of which was to focus on the affairs of the current dynasty (讀今者專本朝).[205] Assumptions about literati statecraft education differed from those of the Neo-Confucian program. The Classics define a general textual ground for the identity of the *Ru*. Learning is historically minded; literati ought to share a historical perspective. Antiquity serves as guidance to the designs of civilized life.

If the cultivation of statecraft scholars rejected discourse on the Four Books and Classics as the media for self-cultivation, how should the Classics be studied? Zhang lamented that his contemporaries largely lacking the knowledge and the understanding of the sages because they read the Classics either for moral cultivation or for passing exams.[206] Thus, he proposed a new kind of Classical scholarship, which he called

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[204] "當夫時文一趨，士人之志日以荒下，諸子之說，耳目不近，未知天下之有其書，作書之有其人，況乎五經之極深也。" Zhang Pu, "Fanggao biao jing xu" (房稿表經序), *Qiluzhai ji, juan* 2 (七錄齋集) . http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:17948422 seq.124.

[205] "余間語同志，讀書大事當分經史古今為四部：讀經者輯儒家，讀史者辨世代，讀古者通典實，讀今者專本朝。"Zhang Pu's preface to *Imperial Ming Compendium of Writings on Statecraft, Ming jingshi wenbian,* 42

[206] "上者專門談論義理心性之學，以禪學佛學亂之，下者儘視之為科舉之書，" Zhang Pu, "Lunyu zhushu daquan hezuan xu" (論語注疏大全合纂序), *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1387*,* 400.

"Classical interpretation" (經解), defined as a kind of "synthetic explanation" (通斷) of the Classical texts. He laid out an ambitious method. First, he proposed to create a general catalogue to cover all the available books that one could find, including old and new, picking out the Classics and putting them into one category. Second, scholars should read historical texts extensively, including the writings of various schools of thinkers, and whenever they find a point from these historical writings that matches the Classics, they should collect it for compilation. These points should then be collected into volumes. In his blueprint of the agenda, he suggested that these historical illustrations should be chronologically divided into three sections: the one that included writings from Zhou to Tang should be named the *Ancient Commentaries* (古解)*,* the one covering the period from Song to Yuan should be named the *Thorough Commentaries* (通解), and the one for Ming should be named *The Contemporary Dynasty's Commentaries* (國朝經解). "Once these three sections are completed," he believed, "the true and the false will be clear."

This was just the beginning, however. Once scholars had compiled these volumes as their common basis, they would be able to formulate and exchange with one other their synthetic reflections (*tonglun* 通論) on *The Book of Changes, The Book of Documents, The Book of Odes, The Spring and Autumn Annuals, The Book of Rites* and *The Classic of Filial Piety*.[207]

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[207] "竊取古今書目考之，以經為一類，按其書名或存或亡，次第採購，又遍覽史乘，旁及百家與名人藏集，其中有一言合經者，剟取簡首，久而成卷。私先命名。分為三集，自周迄唐曰《古解》，宋元曰《通解》，今則曰《國朝經解》……三集即陳，是非備見，然後探賾遠近，通懷彼我，私出擬議，為《易》《書》《詩》《春秋》《三禮》《孝經》通論，以寓己志，庶幾微言獲明，千人不泯。" Zhang Pu, "Wujing zhushu daquan hezuan xu" (五經注疏大全合纂序), *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1387, 287.

Zhang's methodology had significant implications. The Classics could provide lessons for literati scholars to organize civil life. But the only way to obtain such lessons was to connect the Classics with history, that is, to make sense of the teachings of the Classics based on historical experience. What was Zhang's logic behind this argument? The Classics offered scholars the promise of enduring wisdom left by the sages, the founders who created civilization based on their available resources, tools, and knowledge about the world and humanity. Zhang's approach required students to break the self-referential hermeneutic circle of the Neo-Confucian reading of the Classics. The goal was no longer to use the texts to reflect scholars' awareness of the Coherence of the universe, but to study the teachings in the Classics that have a real foundation in the community's political life. In this model, the fact that the Classics hold value is precisely because the sages were real historical actors who shaped history, The Classics are a historical product.

Zhang's model simultaneously suggested two things. First, in the pursuit of the teachings of the sages, history is inseparable, because it serves as the ground of human experience to verify the principles discovered in the Classics. Zhang proposed a different hermeneutic practice, in which the interpretation of the Classics and the study of history would shed light on each other. The Classics provide scholars with perspectives and conceptual tools to reconstruct historical contexts in order to make sense of the teachings of the Classics through concrete instances. History, with its broad variety of texts, offers evidence and references for the teachings of the Classics. Furthermore, since the Classical teachings were no longer seen as being about the ultimate timeless Coherence of the universe, but rather about the foundations of civilized life, the study of the Classics has to

take into account the historicity of human practice. The proposed periodization of the compilations into three volumes seemed to suggest this point.

Secondly, Zhang's model of a mutually illustrative relationship between the Classics and history also suggested that antiquity was essentially a part of the historical process of community life. Such a perspective would open the door for scholars to study antiquity as the foundation of the formation of the community's social-political order. Antiquity is meaningful without having to be the ultimate realization of moral truth. Zhang did not further specify how his envisioned scholarship should be done, but it is clear to see that now the Classics could provide literati scholars both the *theoretical source* and the *historical basis* to guide civilized life. Couldn't such a historicized and open-ended approach undermine the authority of the Classics in literati learning? Isn't there a tension between the search for the enduring values of the Classics and the necessity of understanding the Classics through history? How is this approach justified? In Zhang's program, after compiling the Classical teachings based on historical inquiries, the next step would be to generate one's own synthetic reflections, or *tonglun*, on the Classics and sharing these with one another. The goal, as he explained, was to "place one's own ideal" (以寓己志) in one's discussions, which would "illustrate the sublime words of [the sages], not letting [the meanings of the words] perish [even when they are interpreted by] thousands of people."[208] Importantly, Zhang did not think scholars' individual reflections on the Classics would undermine the authority and the continuity of Classical learning. In fact, historically based scholarship on the Classics would make it possible to understand the teachings of the Classics with concrete historical references,

[208] Ibid.

helping scholars to find their own role in the historical process. Then, they could express the subtle meanings of the sages' words by generating their reflections in their own historical context. Zhang highlighted this kind of use of the Classics in another preface: "When speaking of the Classics for the contemporary world (以今日而言經), one's [speeches (言)] would be about today. When speaking of the Classics for the [need of] people (言經而底於為人), [one's speeches] would be entirely committed to today."[209] Zhang stressed that reflective political writing was the essential practice to embrace the messages of the sages. Such reflective writing was in fact what Fushe hoped to achieve with its training in writing *zhiyi* essays. Importantly, the reason that those individual reflections could pass on the messages of the sages was precisely that they were written to respond to nation's needs in their own time. Thus, individual reflective political writing guaranteed the continuity of the sagely learning tradition.

Significantly, by acting on a different understanding of the nature of the Classics and the role of the sages, the Fushe leaders solved a major conundrum of the Donglin scholars. Since the goal of Classical learning was not about cultivating a moral self, to maintain a common ground of learning did not have to be based on a unified moral reflection on the Classics. Literati could actively engage with developing social-political arguments over institutions and policies while remaining identified with Classical teachings. Since their identification with the tradition was expressed in a historical model, not in a fundamentalist fashion, the Fushe ideal need not be caught up in the tension

[209] "人之為言，命意在彼，則盡於是彼，命意在此，則盡於是此，以今日而言經，所謂在此者也。言經而底於為人，所謂盡此者也。" Zhang Pu, "Fanggao biaojing xu,"(房稿表經序), *Qiluzhai ji, juan* 2 (七錄齋集), http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:17948422 seq.124.

between self-cultivation and commitment to learning for national interests. For them, it was devotion to the national interest through fixing government institutions that defined literati goals, and it was political thinking, rather than moral transformation, that defined literati scholars' pursuit of self-realization.

3. Beyond Neo-Confucian Values: the Enterprise of *Wen* as a Political Force

Such an effort by the Fushe leaders to re-conceptualize the logic of Classical learning had significant intellectual-political implications. In what follows, I will show that as they were working out their learning program, Zhang Pu became increasingly aware that they were offering an alternative approach to the formation of literati political forces. Both their method of learning and their organizational structure suggested a new possibility to conceive of the role of learning, setting forth the search for a different understanding of the moral-political foundation of the *Ru* cultural tradition.

The effort to promote a new Classical and historical learning was already a part of Zhang Pu's agenda beginning in the late 1620s. Along with the publication of exemplary *zhiyi* essays, Zhang also worked to compile and publish comprehensive collections of Classical studies in history, including Han and Song authors, to encourage followers to identify their own role in this tradition. He also mobilized many young scholars and local officials to collect all kinds of studies on the Classics from different provinces, publishing them in volumes named after each of the Classics. A specialist in the *Book of Changes* himself, Zhang also collaborated with other colleagues to lecture on specific titles of the Classics.

Zhang Pu's enterprise, which combined a collective pursuit of knowledge from Classical and historical learning, the practice of individual political reflection, and the

celebration of a historical approach to self-identification, helped him develop a motivating structure for the scholarly community. In setting up the regulations for Yingshe (應社), the former body of the Fushe, in Loudong (婁東) around 1624, he told members that, because learning had to be based on language, it would never be practiced unanimously. Scholars' insights about the world would change when time passed and the context altered. They should not expect themselves to know everything at once, for learning should be seen as a process of accumulation. "The insights of the scholar are renewed day by day without limitation." Therefore, scholars should not judge others by their current performance alone. Only by keeping in mind the cumulative nature of learning could the *wenshe* (文社), or the writing community reach its goal of improving learning.[210]

At the same time, in Zhang's view, this form of learning would foster a much-needed social ethics for the literati world, enabling literati to bond with one other and unite into a socio-political force. Zhang told his followers that their scholarly community, *she* (社), contained significant social meaning. Scholars would develop real friendship and connections through learning, and the *she* would be an essential part of civilized life. He stressed the importance of the *she* by comparing its values to those of the lineage, the Neo-Confucian model of organization for literati families leading local life. Zhang tried to convince people that, although the *she* and the lineage were constructed in very

[210] 文字之出，勢不一轍，要取同原而止，或昔之所造而今以為非，或今之所造，遇時而即悔其失，學人之見日新無疆，安在其有定旨乎？時進時退者賢人也，無進無退聖人也。今天下安有無進無退之人哉！亦於時進時退之間慎其所造而已矣，是故朋友之道出相揚美，入相削行，苟有過而不告，是諂友也，不面告而退有後言，是危友也，諂與危俱無所用之，且貶人以自高，陰陽其言以取容於人也，使見君子，能危於意乎？"Zhang Pu, "Loudong yingshe xu" (婁東應社序), Qiluzhai xuke, *juan* 1 (七錄齋續刻)

different contexts, the *she* embodied the same belief in the importance of "the way of *qinqin"* (親親之道), a principle of ethical relationship defined in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* that mainly referred to the relationship between family members. How could the *she*, the learning community of scholars whose group identity had nothing to do with the organization of family unions, embody "the way of *qinqin*?"

In his prefaces written for Yingshe and Expanded Yingshe (廣應社), Zhang proposed that friendship between scholars should be seen as something beyond the five basic ethical ties (五倫) in human society. "Friendship, as an ethical value, contains/prepares the way for the five ethical ties." For Zhang Pu, scholars who contributed to their *wenshe* would develop a kind of friendship based on their virtues, talents, and shared identity as *shi* 士*,* literati, who came together from different places to fulfill their responsibilities and give each other communal assistance. "Although the connections in the *wenshe* derive from the social needs, judging from its morale, one cannot deny that it is an outcome from nature (天)." Thus, "The bond between *wenshe* scholars is no less strong than the one between members of a lineage." [211]

Importantly, Zhang's discourse indicates that for Fushe's followers, the process of forming their national community and carrying out their mission of learning could be

[211]"友之為義，備五倫之道焉。"Zhang Pu, "Guang yingshe xu" (廣應社序), *Qiluzhai ji, juan* 1, http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:17948422, seq. 61. Also, "夫朋友之義與宗族之情，其本粲殊，比而同說，則案稱焉？然而有其一者，所謂亲亲之道，彼此之通也。且十五國之人，各方峻阻，一旦而道姓氏，稱兄弟，雖人事之應求，原其聲氣，不可謂非天也。天之所與，德者上也，才者次也，再況其下，則無之矣。是以社名之立，義本周官，而今之文士，取以為號。擇而後交，在久不渝，四海之大有同井之風焉。斯又王道之所存也。夫觀其由來，朋友之戚，系於人倫，而士與士言，是歸之為本業，出入進退不能離，窮愁禍患不能捨，若是而比於宗族，非過也。" Zhang Pu, "Guang Yingshe zaixu"(廣應社再序) *Qilizhai ji, juan* 1*,* http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:17948422, seq.63.

considered as fulfilling a higher principle of human relations in a civilized society. This may remind us of the ideas of the Taizhou scholar He Xinyin (何心隱 1517-1519) on friendship, developed amid the wave of activism of the Learning of the Mind in the sixteenth century.[212] However, despite the similar intention in constructing a social force based on learning, the goal and justification for the Fushe scholars was different. While He's goal had been to promote a broader and more egalitarian participation in the construction of local charitable communities, the Fushe had entirely shifted away from Neo-Confucian moral voluntarism to emphasize participation in government and engagement with critical political learning. Under the impulse to demarcate the foundation of their movement, Zhang proposed to re-interpret the cultural tradition that scholars ought to identify with. In one preface to a selection of model essays, Zhang wrote:

> Isn't it *wen* that could be cultivated from the obscure, and flourish? When we study the fall and rise of the states, it seems that the experiences of states contain virtues that are accumulated over generations. Why is it so? The achievements of *wen* rely on its context, and the source of talent varies. If we force the unification of *wen*, it will not illuminate for generations. [But] if we apply it to some good end, it will become the instrument for realizing a prosperous learning. Only when *wen* is [understood to be] related to individuals, and the individuals are [understood to be] situated within their times, could the previous generation carry on [the tradition], and the following generation inherit it. [In this way,] there will be no single piece of *wen* that does not illuminate the current of virtue and the root of the skills and art of learning. To infer [the reason for] prosperity in antiquity based on this [feature of *wen*], [the inference will be very easy to understand], just like seeing things at one's home in daily life, [the inference] will not be obscure.
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> 天下有修之於闇而可得而舉者，其文之謂乎？及考其廢興，則王國之事，若有世德焉。何則？文之成就，因乎其時，材分所出，有變有正。強而同之，累代而不喻，要於齊（濟）用，則皆顯榮之具也。惟以文系於人，以人系於

[212] See Bol's discussion on He Xinyin, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 265.

> 世，前之發揚不輕，而後之承受有敘。篇文之出，莫不明德行之流，道藝之本，以之推於古者隆盛之驗，如家至而日見，未或隱焉。[213]

It seems that a central message in this passage is that scholars' cultural tradition is the continuous enterprise of *wen*, carried out since the beginning of the antiquity by generations of individuals who were learned and who aimed to fathom the foundations of civilization. This *wen* is identifiable from the body of sources in the history of government. As a scholar who identified himself with this cultural tradition, Zhang assumed that this *wen* was a real moral-political force that shaped the history of civilized life, and he believed that it ought to be the source of literati scholars' shared values. It is important not to read Zhang's claim as descriptive; instead, it was an attempt to construct a new literati ideology. Zhang's critical scholarship did not go so far as to make the claim that scholars should see *wen* as an entirely historicized intellectual activity whose meaning was determined by context. Rather, he tried to convince people that such an enterprise of *wen* was a real and meaningful force, and that the operation of *wen* itself had shaped the history of civilized life from the beginning as the people engaging in *wen* shared the values of their tradition in their independent contexts. An historical perspective provides a necessary retrospective standing point to identify and embrace this tradition. I do not suggest that Zhang's method suffered from an empirical fallacy. Rather, I see him trying to work out an alternative to the Neo-Confucian claim of the *Ru* tradition, offering a new ground of power relations in the contemporary order that could legitimate the authority of learning in national politics. In this new idea of cultural

[213] "Longhu gaoxu" (龍壺稿序) *Qiluzhai wenji, juan* 3, http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:17948422, seq.178

tradition, the *shi* have given themselves a different role and a different reason to serve the political power.

One important essay by Zhang Pu, entitled "On the Mind-Heart Method Transmitted through the Hundreds of Sages" (Bisheng xiangchuan xinfa lun 百聖相傳心法論), explains his doubts about the Neo-Confucian way of conceptualizing the shared cultural tradition for literati scholars. Zhang argues that contemporary Neo-Confucian scholars seemed to believe that there had been one ultimate method for cultivating one's mind to reach the state of reverence (*jing* 敬), shared by all the sages of the past as the path to sagehood. They also seemed to believe that all the sages intended to pass this ultimate method down to those who wanted to become sages in later generations. As Zhang writes, "Scholars think that once they know about reverence, they will understand how to become a sage. I have heard that scholars like talking about sages, but how can we generalize [the experience of the mind-and-heart of] the hundred sages in this same way?" Then, Zhang turns in a different direction to offer common ground that could justify the cultural tradition for literati scholars. He claims that if we seek one shared characteristic of all sages throughout history, this characteristic must be their capacity to civilize the world, a capacity that would not require scholars to follow a single way. Each generation learned lessons, sometimes critically, from those who came before, and in turn bequeathed guidance to newcomers. For Zhang, the Neo-Confucian idea of taking an almost transcendent mental state of reverence as the common source of learning for literati scholars was unreasonably difficult and obscure. In fact, it would be very easy for people to appear to be "reverent," with this appearance having little to do with their quality of learning. Thus, Zhang expanded his position further, if people sought one

common source that justified the shared cultural tradition of learning, then this common source had to come from the unalterable socio-political reality that a civilization required civil offices for rulers and civil offices for ministers. [214] In other words, for Zhang, the common source for the tradition of literati learning was the trust (信) between the ruler and the minister in their collaborative civil obligations to serve the world. Zhang claimed that what truly grounded their identity was the obligation to become a capable and loyal official when the time permitted, based on their learning and skills, or to serve as a scholar to offer their learning and culture as contributions to civilization. To strengthen his rhetoric, Zhang added that this ground was not just historically justified; rather, it went beyond history and was as solid as the existence of the natural world.

Skepticism about Neo-Confucian Discourse on Learning amid the Decline of the Ming

The intellectual movements of the Donglin and the Fushe emerged in a period when the Ming underwent serious social and political crises, including peasant rebellions, Manchu military threats, and power struggles at court. Due to their different assumptions about learning, the Donglin and the Fushe scholars also had different understandings

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[214] "……聖人之敬其天乎，中庸之純亦不已也，君子之敬其人而天乎，大《易》之自強不息也。雖然聖人君子有異人歟，其所謂人，吾不知其異也，無所以異其人，則無所以殊其敬，強而別之，是日月有兩名、太山有二號也。此之說，宋之真西氏其知之，知之若何，以敬繫聖以敬相傳，繫之百聖，若以為知敬矣，則若以為知聖矣。吾聞學者好言聖人，然則百聖其可以盡言歟？ 王充云今之水火古之水火，今之聲色古之聲色，夫心法之同不止水火聲色也，而人視之常，不如水火聲色，亦何以坐進大道乎？禹之征苗也，以昏迷不恭侮慢自賢啓之，伐有扈也，以威侮五行怠棄三正武王之責紂也，以狎侮五常荒怠弗敬古聖人之代天討凡以惡人之不敬借亡王之事，鑑修士之身前代之得失，固後學之元龜也。是故觀梅枝而知乾坤，觀草木而識恕心，善悟者之所獨有也，程子以敬為涵養，張子以心為嚴師，非身盡不能言也，而學者執之不堅，則異端之說誤之也。…… 是故百聖相傳之心法非獨引往斷，來學者所奉追之上古號得道柄者, 君有五期、輔有三名，弗能易也。" Zhang Pu, "Baisheng xiangchuan xinfa lun," (百聖相傳心法論) *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, 1387*,* 537-9.

about what was going wrong in learning and how a better learning should be constructed. The Donglin scholars extended the practice of discoursing on learning to restore an ideological unity for politics and society based on moral cultivation. While the Fushe agreed with the Donglin on the problem of the corruption of learning, the Fushe placed greater importance on restoring society and government by producing statecraft knowledge and capable scholar-officials. However, it is clear that Donglin proposals for rebuilding the Neo-Confucian theory of moral learning became less and less appealing after Gu Xiancheng died in 1621. After Donglin's political movement suffered tragic setbacks, there were no longer clear expressions from its followers stressing the active power of moral learning. At the same time, from the 1620s on, the Fushe attracted more young scholars who wanted to save society by turning themselves into successful and responsible officials through their learning in Fushe's *wenshe* community.

As we have seen, while Donglin members and other like-minded Neo-Confucian scholar-officials were deeply concerned with the troubles of their time, their solutions were usually theoretically self-referential and practically deconstructive. Many Donglin leaders were persecuted after they lost their political battles. Some members chose to commit suicide to demonstrate their faith upon the fall of the Ming, as a dramatic illustration of their moral learning. All of these marked the end of Neo-Confucian political activism based on discoursing on learning.[215]

Much of Zhang Pu's reputation as a writer for a broader audience comes from a piece entitled "The Epitaph for Five Men" (Wuren mubei ji 五人墓碑記), in which he

[215] As Peterson has shown, Liu Zongzhou's suicide also marked a turning point, as his students either turned to other approaches to learning or were absorbed in the metaphysics of Chan Buddhism. Peterson, "Chapter 11: Confucian Learning in Late Ming Thought," 769.

celebrated the courage of five Donglin figures who sacrificed their lives in the battle with the eunuch Wei Zhongxian in 1628. Zhang used this event to motivate students at Yingshe. In calling for political and social responsibility to "correct social customs" (正風俗), Zhang and his community shared the position of the Donglin figures. However, he did not share the assumption that the problem of learning was the lack of a new discourse on morality or the lack of voluntarism. Rather, it was the approach of *jiangshuo,* or discourse on learning that distracted people from studying the Classics in a more substantive and rigorous way. "As this discourse on learning thrives, the learning of the Classics becomes obsolete. Discourse on learning is the opposite of learning the Classics."[216]

At the same time, Fushe's importance and success became increasingly clear. As Huang Zongxi commented, in the wake of the Fushe even young scholars of low rank learned to punctuate and understand difficult Classical texts, and this effect brought more and more people to follow them.[217] It seems that the Fushe gave scholars a feeling of self-worth and mental rigor. The studies of Xie Guozhen (謝國禎), Guo Shaoyu (郭紹虞), and Wang Fansen(王汎森) have shown the influential of Fushe's model of scholarly communities of Classical and historical learning from the 1620s to the end of the Ming. These communities gave Fushe followers a reputation as people who pursued "Classical

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[216] "夫講說日盛，經學乃絕。講說者，經學之反也。" Zhang Pu, "Wujing zhushu daquan hezuan xu,"(五經注疏大全合纂序) *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1387*,* 287.

[217] "崇禎間吳中倡為復社以網絡天下之士，高才宿學多出其間……皆喜容接後進，標榜聲價，人士奔走，輻輳其門。蓬華小生，苟能分句讀習字義者，挾行卷，西棹婁江，東放慈水，則其名成矣。" Huang Zongxi, "Liu Dangrui xiansheng muzhiming," (劉瑞當先生墓誌銘), *Nanlei ji* (南雷集) *juan* 7. (Shanghai : Shang wu yin shu guan, 1922).

reading" (讀經), "Historical reading" (讀史), "book-reading" (讀書), "Evidential Learning " (考據), and "statecraft" (經濟).[218] These new types of literati communities were usually supported by publishers, local officials and private libraries. In contrast to the Neo-Confucian academies that were usually supported by important local families and lineages, these communities had more ties with officialdom, and some of them were even established by officials.[219] A large proportion of Zhang's collected writings were devoted to reporting and commenting on the learning of officials and their sons and brothers, and Zhang's own writings were also considered by officials to be good models of learning. There are many written records of officials asking Zhang Pu for advice on choosing teachers for their families to study difficult Classical texts and commentaries.[220] Zhang Pu passed the *jinshi* exam and became an official in the capital in 1631.[221] Due to political struggles and his personal connections with Donglin figures, however, Zhang soon fell from his post and left the capital. After he came back home, Zhang concentrated on developing Classical-learning communities and organizing meetings.

Suffice it to say, in turning his learning agenda into a movement, Zhang Pu had began to realize that his intellectual values suggested a set of social-political values and a

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[218] Wang Fansen, "Qingchu de jiangjinghui" (清初的講經會) 508-16.

[219] Bol also expresses this observation, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 267.

[220] The following quote is a good example showing how this network formed. "徐子質可偕其弟文可、忠可入婁与予談春秋通疑難，既引怀勝友酌酒起言門度諷詠，兄弟所私然一家之辭，恨無折衷，願得賢者游，繼以朝夕。予舉管子君售，相見甚。權時，監官陳子靈茂亦為其家子弟擇師，婁東彦張子孺高稱莫逆質可兄弟，又與靈茂中表契、善兩家文學並興，益以良友，古人云，二梁環綺兩到凌寒似不如也。錢子爾，信亦其地雋傑，與君售連舍修研北之業，遂以五子名益。" Zhang Pu, "Wuzi jinye xu"(五子近业序) *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1387, 409.

[221] Jiang Yixue (蒋逸雪), *Zhang Pu Nianpu* (张溥年谱)*,* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1982), 24-25.

new identity separate from the Neo-Confucians. However, I would like to suggest that Zhang Pu and his Fushe friends did not yet entirely challenge the validity of the Neo-Confucian interest in self-cultivation. In Zhang's writings we find praise of scholars who showed profound mastery of the learning of mind-nature (*xinxing*). Fushe's criticisms of the mainstream Neo-Confucian approach of learning, it seems, came from Fushe scholars' belief that there should be new ways of studying the Classics in order to gain knowledge about government. Moreover, since the Fushe scholars' conception of intellectual culture enabled them to look at the values of *Ru* learning historically, they could appreciate the contributions of the Neo-Confucian tradition without having to identify with Neo-Confucian theory. The doubt about the validity of the Neo-Confucian question of mind-nature would only become stronger in the early Qing.

What Next for the Neo-Confucians?: The Predicament of Statecraft Neo-Confucianism and Increasing Criticism of Neo-Confucian Culture in the Early Qing

The fall of the Ming dynasty had a traumatic impact on the grand intellectual movements of the late Ming. For many scholars who lived into the early Qing, the sense of a crisis in intellectual culture was compounded by a sense of guilt, a belief that the literati ought to take responsibility for the collapse of the dynasty because their lack of a substantive common learning had failed to hold the literati world accountable. In this context, the search for a sharable, intellectually meaningful, and publically committed elite learning that would hold the literati accountable became more urgent than ever.[222]

[222] See Wang Fansen, "Qingchu shiren de huizui xintai yu xiaoji xingwei – bu rucheng, bu fu jianghui, bu jieshe," (清初士人的悔罪心態與消極行為──不入城、不赴講會、不結社), in

What did this mean for the world of literati leaders? In the Neo-Confucian camp, the post-Donglin Neo-Confucians took an apologist and conservative turn. They largely downplayed the concept of innate goodness, trying to find new ways to embed self-cultivation into the fostering of a loyal and down-to-earth commitment to the government's statecraft needs. At the same time, they also tried to protect their tradition in the face of the momentum of Fushe-type scholarship. Groups that were skeptical of Neo-Confucian culture engaged with criticisms of the entire tradition, but built their criticisms on varying arguments and with different goals. Yan Yuan (顏元 1635-1740) and his followers represented one direction of this critique. The network of Classical and historical scholars associated with or influenced by the Fushe movement and its statecraft learning represented another. These Classical and historical scholars have usually been regarded as the first generation of Qing Evidential scholars.

In following pages, I will reconstruct the differences between these three representative groups. What role was left for Neo-Confucian learning after the fall of the late Ming literati activism and the rise of new ideas of Classical and historical learning that traced their legacy to Fushe? What problems did other schools find in Neo-Confucian culture? Our goal is to understand the concerns and choices of the intellectual world in the early Qing that helped shape the course of intellectual history through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Wanming Qingchu sixiang shilun (晚明清初思想十論)（Shanghai: Fudan University Press 2004.)

***Post-Donglin Statecraft Neo-Confucianism: The Cases of Sun Qifeng* (孫奇逢)*, Lu Shiyi* (陸世儀) *and Li Yong* (李顒)**

As historians have noticed, a network of early Qing Neo-Confucian officials played an important role in working with the early Qing Manchu rulers to build an imperial ideology based on Neo-Confucianism. This network consisted of scholars such as Wei Yijie (魏裔介 1616-1686), Wei Xiangshu (魏象樞 1617-1687), Lu Longqi (陸隴其 1630-1693), Xiong Cilü (熊賜履 1635-1709), Li Gaungdi (李光地 1642-1718), and Zhang Boxing (張伯行 1651-1725). I will look into this official network in the next chapter, but here, I want to focus on an older generation of Neo-Confucian masters who survived the Ming-Qing transition but did not choose to serve the Qing. They were the mentors, colleagues, or friends of the above-mentioned Neo-Confucian officials, and their strategy of interpreting the Neo-Confucian tradition provided the necessary theoretical discourse and interpretative strategy for these officials to convince the Shunzhi (順治) emperor, and especially the Kangxi emperor, to transform Neo-Confucianism into a government ideology. They were Sun Qifeng (孫奇逢 1585-1675), Lu Shiyi (陸世儀 1611-1672), and Li Yong (李顒 1627-1705).

Sun and Li were associated with the late Ming intellectual movements in their early years, and came to be seen in the late seventeenth century as the leading "Statecraft Neo-Confucian (經世理學)" masters. Li was a friend of Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi, and some other early Evidential Learning scholars who were linked with the Fushe cohort. In the following pages we will examine how these post-Donglin Neo-Confucians tried to maintain the validity of their tradition when the political activism of Donglin was no

longer possible under the new regime, and after the Fushe approach had built a very different model of statecraft learning based on empirically oriented studies of the Classics and histories and the collective compilation of policy proposals, such as the *Imperial Ming Compendium of Writings on Statecraft*.

Significantly, the leading statecraft Neo-Confucians followed the theoretical insights of the Donglin and its like-minded scholars of the early seventeenth century, who had aimed to revise the negative connotations of Wang Yangming's theory of innate knowledge by re-popularizing the effort of cultivation. However, these scholars of the early Qing were no longer confident about discoursing on the innate and almost metaphysical goodness of the individual mind as the basis for learning and action. They shifted their focus from political criticism to admitting the moral importance of devoted statecraft practice.

Sun Qifeng (孫奇逢 1585-1675) was generally considered to be the most renowned and influential post-Donglin figure of Statecraft Neo-Confucianism. He obtained a reputation for his association with Donglin's political movements and was regarded as a loyal young man who appreciated the virtue of the Donglin heroes' martyrdom. Many literati first heard his name after he found the bodies of some Donglin officials who had battled the eunuchs. After the fall of the Donglin, he refused to join the government despite being offered good opportunities.[223] He led his lineage members and other villagers in flight to avoid predation by the Manchu army during the fall of the

[223] For these records about Sun's life, one can read Fang Bao's (方苞) *Biography of Sun Zhengjun* (Sun Zhengjun zhuan 孫征君傳), included in *Fang Bao ji* (方苞集), *juan* 8.

Ming.[224] For the rest of his life, until 1675, he lived in the countryside of Henan province as a teacher, and it was said that he attracted students from far and wide. Most of his writings were published during this time.

In the first chapter of his *Immediate Reference for the Four Books* (Sishu jinzhi 四書近指)," Sun interpreted the character "*xue,*" namely, "learning" as follows (emphasis in italics is mine),

> This word, "learning," is exactly the same as the word "learning" in Confucius' saying, "Learn, and practice often [what you have learned]." Sage kings through thousands of years focused solely on this thing: [learning]. [They] live on it and it is never exhausted. So *the great Way is to situate virtue in [caring about] people* (合德與民), and to return to the ultimate goodness. Virtue is actually the individual "[bodily] self" (身); it is illustrated through investigation into things, achieving knowledge about things, making one's intention sincere, and setting one's mind on righteousness. The people (民) are [what is meant by] under the heaven; *to renew the people is to establish harmony in the households reasonably and to govern the country fairly. [There should be] no single thought of virtue that remains un-illustrated, and [there should be] no single person that remains un-renewed*, only in this way could one's bodily self reach the purest state, which is what "resting in the perfect goodness" means. To use one point to generalize the meaning of the Great Learning, everything has to be based on the cultivation of the [bodily] self, and the entire effort of cultivation is to know where to come to rest. Not knowing where to come to rest would lead to the trivial and the complicated, and the state of confusion is the hardest thing to dissect. [To understand] anything, one has to start from seeing its most general principle, and then one is able to fathom the subtlest part. Being steadfast, finding peace of one's mind, reaching serenity, and making reflections are the substantial efforts in one's own experiences [that allow one] to know where to come to rest. When there is the fundamental and the incidental, there is the beginning and the end. What comes before does not omit the incidental, and the incidental is in the fundamental. *Likewise, illustrating virtue has to be based on [ordering the] people, because, if we are not able to aid and to cultivate people, we cannot say that we have illustrated virtue. Similarly, cultivating the [bodily] self has to be based on [the ordering of the] families, the state, and society, because if we cannot make the patriarchal groups live in harmony and the people settled, we cannot say we have cultivated ourselves from the world. There is no incidental parting away from the fundamental, so is there any fundamental existing without*

[224] Tang Bin (湯斌), "Sun Xiafeng xiansheng nianpu" (孫夏峯先生年譜) (Taibei : Guangwen shuju, 1971)

the incidental? All in all, one situates oneself in the society and state and is corresponding to things. Losing the principles of things is leaving the self un-cultivated, and any effort of correcting one's mind and making one's intention sincere is futile.

此個學字即夫子學而時習之學字。合千古帝王賢聖做此一件，生活不盡，所以為大道在合德與民，而歸於至善之地。蓋德即身也，格致誠正乃所以明之也。民即天下也，齊治均平乃所以新之也。德無一念之不明，民無一人之不新，身方底於粹精之域，所謂止至善也。通篇總括於壹是皆以修身為本，一句功夫全在知止，不知止則毫芒，疑似之界，最難剖析。凡事必先見其大體之所極，而後可以深求其精微之所至。定靜安慮皆知止中歷閱實功也。有本末自有終始，先非遺末，而末卽在本中。如明德也須在民上，明不能振民育德而謂之明德乎。修身也須在家國天下上修，不能親九族安百姓而謂之修身乎天下。無離本之末，豈有遺末之本哉。總之身處天下國家之中，與物相感應物者，失其理便是身不修，而正心誠意之功俱屬惘然。[225]

In contrast to Gu Xiancheng and Liu Zongzhou, two representative Neo-Confucian activists of the Donglin movement, Sun's approach was not based on discourse about the ultimate moral mind which could be obtained by distinguishing right from wrong. Rather, he was concerned with how to legitimate the commitment of moral cultivation on the grounds of statecraft practice. He did not try to philosophize the process of learning about things that are necessary to the practice of the reflection of one's moral attitude. As he explained, "The achievement of knowledge should not be understood as something mainly aiming for the goal of 'sincerity'; but since it has made a coherent process for the correcting of the mind, cultivating of the [bodily] self, ordering of the world, even if it does not explicitly say so, makes 'sincerity' (誠意) possible."[226]

What did self-cultivation based on statecraft practice mean for Neo-Confucian learning? It is important to see that in Sun's discourse the moral nature of the mind was

[225] Sun Qifeng, "Sishu jinzhi" (四書近指), from *Qingru xue'an,* Vol.1, 3.

[226] "大學致知一義，不專為誠意發，貫通于正心修身及齊治平之間，故不明言，以起誠意之端。" Ibid.

downplayed. This is evident from his painstaking effort to work out how Zhu Xi's investigation of things and Wang Yangming's innate knowing could be reconciled as leading to the same result of the state of knowing:

> [The idea of] innate knowledge of the good of Wencheng [i.e. Wang Yangming] and [the idea] of investigation of things of Ziyang [i.e. Zhu Xi] actually do not differ.
>
> 文成之良知，紫陽之格物，原非有異。
>
> If one follows Wencheng's idea, then one would see that there is nothing in the world existing external to the mind, neither is there any mind independent of things. For all the pieces of wood, gravel, tiles, and stones, [one can] perceive them quickly, because [knowledge about] these things is already contained in one's mind. [Hence,] whenever one comes up with an idea about serving the parents, then the idea of "parents" is (such) a thing, and whenever one comes up with an idea about serving the rulers, then the idea of "ruler" is a thing; our knowledge is not separated from things [that we ought to investigate into].
>
> 如主文成，則天下無心外之物，無物外之心；一切木礫瓦石，一覽即見，皆因吾心原有此物。起一念事親，則親即是物；起一念事君，則君即是物。知與物不相離者也。
>
> If one follows Ziyang [Zhu Xi], [that is to say,] one investigates into a thing today, and then investigates into a thing another day. The languages of poetry and books are thousands and ten thousands, [by investigating into them] they would demonstrate us our mind-nature (心性). [But] if there is no innate knowledge of the good (靈知), how could we get the point of the text and comprehend its meaning? Once suddenly enlightened, one's investigation of things becomes [reaching the status of] knowing. …One thus will not distinguish the difference between the process of investigation and the result of reaching the knowing, which also suggests that *knowing and things are not separated*.
>
> 如主紫陽，則今日格一物，明日格一物；詩書文字，千言萬語，只是說明心性。不是靈知原在吾心，如何能會文切理，通曉意義？且一旦豁然，則格物即是知。……不復辨別格之與致矣。此亦知與物不相離者也。
>
> Once one understands that knowing and things are not separated, then, one would know that "reaching the knowing" has its good effect, which let one forget about the distinction of inner and outer world. "Investigating the things" also has its good effect, which allows one to be clear and sharp in daily life to observe and to be conscious about everything, to grasp phenomena by their categories, to understand the contemporary world from the mirror of the past, and to adjust to

> the new situations and accommodating to the change of world. Yet, we cannot say which one of them should come to first; it is at the moment when knowing is reached that the principle of things has been already investigated, and it is at the moment when investigation begins that we could see our own innate knowing.
>
> 識得知與物原不相離，則致知有致知之工夫：虛中澄湛，不染一塵，內外皆忘，物我並照。格物有格物之工夫：隨事察識，因類旁通，鏡古知今，達權通變。然而終不得言先後者，致時已涵物之理，格時適見吾固有之靈而已。[227]

As we can see, Sun's interpretation of Wang Yangming's message was that it explained human epistemology as a phenomenon integrating the knower and the known, and Zhu Xi's "investigation of learning" was about showing this epistemological process starting from knowledge about the external world. His synthesis as such entirely excluded the connotation of Wang's innate knowledge of the good as the source of moral power in each individual, enabling the individual to become a sage by directly acting on his intuition. We may say that Sun's lack of interest in moral terms when he talked about the mechanism of human cognition sounds similar to the Fushe scholars' view of the human mind as a neutral faculty, but Sun did not share the Fushe scholars' interest in encouraging people to externally accumulate knowledge about the world. Rather, for Sun, statecraft practice became a necessary path to moral cultivation, such that the goal was not to discover anything new about statecraft matters. His focus on Wang Yangming was mostly an effort to better theorize why statecraft practice was central to the process of reaching a clear understanding of the concepts of moral things, because acting and knowing ought to be the same.

Sun Qifeng did not produce studies on statecraft issues or metaphysical discussions on moral philosophy. His works mainly consisted of commentaries. He was

[227] Ibid., 5.

mostly interested in how to explain the principle meaning of Classics by contextualizing them into the experience of daily life, such as the *Main points in the Book of Changes* (Duyi dazhi 讀易大旨, 5 *juan*), the *Immediate Reference for the Book of Documents* (Shujing jinzhi 書經近指, 6 *juan*), and the longest one, the *Immediate Reference for the Four Books* (Sishu jinzhi 四書近指, 20 *juan*). He also wrote internal histories of Neo-Confucian learning, such as his *Transmission of Lixue* (Lixue zongchuan 理學宗傳) and *The Record of the Sacred Learning* (Shengxue lu 聖學錄), and a commentary on Zhu Xi's family ritual (i.e. Jiali zhuo 家禮酌) and he drafted regulations for his lineage (i.e. Xiaoyou tang jiagui 孝友堂家規).[228]

A similar case was Lu Shiyi (陸世儀 1611-1672). He became interested in how statecraft knowledge should be related to self-cultivation through practice, having realized that the knowledge required by a scholar was not necessarily conditioned by his subjective moral experience. For instance, in a collection of essays on learning entitled *Record of Speculations* (Sibian lu 思辨錄), he paid much attention to the question of what the "investigation of things" should mean for a responsible *Ru*, a question that he believed was puzzling many young scholars of his time. The issue that he most wanted to explain was the connection between knowing about things and knowing about morality. On the one hand, he stressed that knowing about one's moral mind as reflected by things should not be considered as the only kind of knowledge. For instance, knowing about astronomy, geography, engineering, and so on required scholars to study with empirical rigor in order to master knowledge. Only a "vulgar Confucian" would talk about these

[228] Qingru xue'an, 2.

subjects without conducting any real study.[229] But when it came to knowledge about human affairs, he turned in a different direction. For him, knowing about human ethics had to be rooted in the doctrine of the Great Learning, which explained the foundation and rationale for self-cultivation. When a student asked Lu if one could have any knowledge about loyalty or filial piety in the absence of subjective ethical experience about ruler-minister and parent-child relationships, Lu answered that subjective ethical experience was indeed necessary for understanding human ethics, because investigating human ethics required one to cultivate oneself. If one's selfish desires were not tamed, then knowledge about human ethics would be impossible to grasp. [230] Well aware that there was a distinction between investigating the principles of human affairs and investigation of the physical world (*wuli* 物理), he noted that "It is much easier to start from investigating the principles of human affairs." Once one was clear about the principles of human affairs, it would be easier to continue investigating the principles of physical things. Starting with the investigation of physical things would be a dead end, and only the extremely talented could make it from investigating the physical world.[231]

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[229] "六藝古法雖不傳，然今人所當學者不止六藝。河渠兵法之類皆切於用世不可不講，俗儒不知內聖外王之學，徒高談性命無補於事。" Lu Shiyi, *Sibianlu jiyao* (思辨錄輯要), comp. Zhang Boxing (Taibei: Guangwen shuju, 1977), 26

[230] "亦史問，溫公扞禦外物之說朱子非之，以為外物而可禦，則是絕父子而後可知孝慈，离君臣而后可知仁敬，又曰閉口枵腹然後可得飲食之正，絕滅种類然後可知全夫婦之別，是否？曰，溫公扞禦外物之說固非，文公駁之亦過。溫公之意不過謂扞禦物欲，既去則知見自能通明耳。此言於學者亦大有益，但格物二字是大學入門最初工夫。古者十五入大學十五之時尚屬幼小於物慾未必深染且知識尚未開，不教之以如何為理如何為慾，彼安知所謂物慾者而去之。況物欲既去，則直可謂之修身矣，如何纔能致知。故扞禦外物之訓於耽染物慾之人言未必無補，而實非大學格物之正訓，故不可據以為說耳。" Ibid., 69

[231]"格事理易格物理難，然慾格物理卻只在事理上猛下功夫，事理透則物理易透矣。先儒有做格物工夫卻先於一草一木上用力，只起念便與身心隔涉。" Ibid., 63

He suggested that the rationale of learning should start from human affairs along, with one's growth in life, in order "to accord to one's body and mind," continuing by reflecting upon the principles of things in order to let oneself "accord with the heavens and the earth."[232] As we can see, Lu Shiyi was concerned with the distinctions between two kinds of things in the process of knowing, and felt it necessary to justify the inseparable connections between these two realms in one's learning.

Lu was also critical of the preoccupation with innate goodness as the basis for individual agency. This made him skeptical about the late Ming movement of discoursing on learning, and critical of the political engagement that consumed the energy of late Ming scholars and disturbed the social order.[233] He wanted to count on the program of the *Great Learning* as a balance between the investigation of two kinds of things, seeking to offer a true unifying theory that could settle the conflicts in values and principle (*zongzhi* 宗旨) between scholars, and provide literati with a common standing point. As his famous doctrine says, "The real Confucians in the world would never claim different principles."[234] For many of his contemporaries, his eclectic attitude shown in this quote became a symbol for his identity as a pragmatic statecraft Neo-Confucian scholar in the early Qing context, who encouraged scholars to cautiously cultivate themselves through devotion to daily practice in local affairs, rather than discoursing on learning or

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[232] "始从事理入则切乎身心，继从物理观则察乎天地。要之物理既得，則事理愈精，其功實相交養互相發，不得強分先後也。" Ibid.

[233] In his account for the Fushe movement, Lu expressed his skeptical attitude toward the grand scale literati assemblies in late Ming and their intention to intervene politics by influencing the standard of the civil service exam. Lu Shiyi, *Fushe jilue* (復社紀略) (Shanghai : Shen zhou guo guang she, 1936).

[234] "世有大儒，決不別立宗旨。" Quoted from *Qingshi gao* (清史稿), Liezhuan 267 (列傳), "Rulin 1" (儒林) .

motivating scholars to intervene in the government by defining right and wrong.[235] I think this partly explains why he emphasized "the investigation of things" as the key to learning; in this way later scholars would not easily fall into conflict over principles. Younger than Sun Qifeng and Lu Shiyi, Li Yong (李顒 1627-1705) was famous for his emphasis on the discourse of "reflecting on oneself and practicing" (*fanshen shijian* 反身實踐). Like Sun and Lu, he earned his reputation from teaching. He never served as an official or participating in any scholarly project on behalf of the state. He also communicated with other statecraft-learning scholars in the early Qing, especially Gu Yanwu. Sensing that the rise of other approaches to learning might pose a challenge to the Neo-Confucian tradition, he found it important to redefine the program of the "Great Learning" and its meaning for the Neo-Confucian culture of his own time. He was already aware that statecraft learning might ask scholars to devote themselves to other kinds of textual studies than the Neo-Confucian program centering on the Four Books. Therefore, he tried to find a way to integrate the pursuit of statecraft knowledge and Neo-Confucian moral cultivation, forming a common ground of Neo-Confucian culture.

In his *Record of Reflections on the Four Books* (Sishu fanshen lu 四書反身錄), Li claimed that "The ultimate purpose of the Great Learning is to 'rest in the perfect goodness', therefore the goal of investigating things is to illustrate this goodness. This goodness is what the heavens endow me with. It is the principle based upon which I cultivate myself, correct my mind, make my intention sincere, and reach my knowing." Importantly, he emphasized that "It was because of this goodness that the country and the

[235] "若非格致則行不著，習不察，安知此語之可以入門，安知此語便可以為宗旨。後來諸儒紛紛淡入談宗旨而不知格致二字為宗貫入門也." *Sibianlu jiyao*, 58

household need to be ordered." [236] For Li, individual cultivation had to contain a meaning in connection with the needs of the civil order. Without this connection, the studies of individual things would be no more than broad learning (*boxue* 博學). However, perhaps due to his familiarity with Gu Yanwu's studies of the Classics, history, geography, and social institutions, he was conscious of the literati responsibility to understand the empirical world from other scholarly sources. He thus proposed the paradigm of "illuminating the substance and fulfilling the applications" (*mingti dayong* 明體達用) to structure the curricula for these two parts of learning. First, for learning about the substance, scholars should follow the textual tradition and sequence of Neo-Confucian

[236] "格物乃聖學入門第一義，入門一差則無所不差，毫釐千里，不可以不慎。物即身心意知家國，天下之物，格者格其誠正脩齊治平之則。大學本文分明說物有本末，事有終始，其用工先後之序，層次原自井然，古之欲明明德於天下，與物有本末是一滾說。後儒不察遂昧，却物有本末之物，將格物物字另認另解，紛若射覆，爭若聚訟，竟成古今未了公案。今只遵聖經依本文，認定為身心意知家國天下之物從而格之，循序漸進，方獲近道。格物二字，即中庸之擇善，論語之博文，虞廷之惟精，博文原以約禮，惟精原以執中，格物原以明善。大人之學，原在止至善，故先格物以明善，善非他，乃天之所以與我者，即身心意知之則，而家國天下之所以待理者也。本純粹中正，本廣大高明，涵涌為四德，發而為四端，達而為五常，見之於日用，則忠信篤敬，九思九容，以至三千三百莫非則也。如此是善，不如此是惡，明乎此便是知致，知致則本心之明，皎如白日，善惡所在，自不能掩。為善去惡，自然不肯姑息，此便是意誠，以此正心則心正，以此脩身則身脩，以此治國則國治，以此平天下則天下平，即此便是止至，善便是明明德於天下，若舍却至善之善，不格身心意知家國天下之理、不窮而冒昧從事欲、物物而究之，入門之初紛紜轇轕、墮於支離，此是博物，非是格物，即以身心意知家國天下言之，亦自有序，不先究其身心意知，而驟及於家國天下之理，猶是緩本急末、昧其先後、尚不能近道，況外此乎？今須反其所習、舍去舊見、除四書五經之外再勿泛涉，惟取近思錄、讀書錄、高景逸節要、王門宗旨、近溪語要，沉潛涵泳，久自有得，方悟天之所以與我者。止此一知，知之所以為則者，止此至善，虛靈不昧，日用云為之際，逐事精察，研是非之機，晰義利之介。在在處處體認天理，則誠正之本立矣。夫然後由內而外，遞及於脩齊之法，治平之略，如衍義、衍義補、文獻考、經濟類書、呂氏實政錄、及會典律令、凡經世大猷時務要着、一一深究鉤考，酌古準今，務盡機宜，可措諸行。庶有體有用，天德王道，一以貫之矣！夫是之謂大人之學，夫是之謂格物，否則誤以博物為格物，縱博盡羲皇以來所有之書，格盡宇宙以內所有之物，總之是騖外逐末，昔人謂，自笑從前顛倒，見枝枝葉葉外頭尋此類是也。喪志愈甚，去道愈遠，亦祇見其可哀也已。" Li Yong, "Sishu fanshen lu" (四書反身錄). *Qingru xue'an,* Vol.2, 1097-8.

study. While studying the Four Books and Five Classics, scholars should include in their program Zhu Xi's *Reflections on Things at Hand* (Jin si lu 近思錄), Xue Xuan's (薛暄 1389-1464) *Records from Book Reading* (Du shu lu 讀書錄), Gao Panlong's (高攀龍 1562-1626) *Excerpts from Zhu Xi's Work* (Jie Yao 節要), Zhou Rudeng's (周汝登 1547-1629) *The Principles of the Wang Yangming School* (Wangmen zongzhi 王門宗旨), and Luo Rufang's (羅汝芳 1515-1588) *Important Quotes from Jinxi* (Jinxi yuyao 近溪語要), an inclusive and elective selection of Neo-Confucian works. As they read these books, scholars should focus on their daily practice of cultivation.

After this first step, scholars could expand their learning to "method and strategy," how to order institutional life. Books they should focus on included Zhen Dexiu's (真德秀 1178 -1235) *Abundant Meanings of the Great Learning* (Daxue yanyi 大學衍義), Qiu Jun's (丘濬 1421-1495) *Supplement to the Abundant Meanings of the Great Learning* (Daxue yanyi bu 大學衍義補), Ma Duanlin's (馬端臨 1254-1323) *Comprehensive Investigations Based on Literary and Documentary Sources* (Wenxian tongkao 文獻通考), some "jingji leishu (經濟類書)," namely, statecraft encyclopedias, and other compendia of laws and regulations. After this, one could say that he had finished the program of Great Learning. In a letter to Gu Yanwu, Li wrote that he agreed with Gu about the emptiness of the learning of some Neo-Confucians in the past, but in defense of a Neo-Confucian view of knowledge, Li argued that it was the only learning that could take care of both "substance"(*ti*) and "application"(*yong*).[237] For Li, Gu's Classical learning was useful because it completed the statecraft part (*jingshi*) of Neo-

[237] Li Yong, "Da Gu Ningren shu"(答顧寧人書) Ibid., 1111.

Confucian learning, and only when both the "substance" and the "application" were fulfilled could the literati's statecraft agenda function well.

However, Li Yong's followers were less interested in the part he defined as "application." He was appreciated as a moralist scholar who discoursed on how to fully realize the meaning of the Four Books through reflective practice (*fanshen shijian*). He was also seen as a theorist who helped young Neo-Confucians to conceptualize the meaning of *jingshi*, the ordering of the world, as an organic part of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation. His followers commented that Li Yong really motivated them to follow the sages by teaching them how to read the Four Books and how to reflect on themselves in practice, with the belief that if each individual could do so, the world would be ordered.[238] Accordingly, Li's followers considered his commentaries to be an essential part of the Neo-Confucian doctrine. A student commented that as the social order relied on the doctrines of the Four Books to save people's consciences, the Four Books relied on Zhu Xi's commentaries to explain their doubts, and Zhu Xi's commentaries relied on

238 For instance, this quote, which is from a preface to Li Yong's collection of writings, exemplifies how he was read by his followers. "吾人於四書，童而習之，白首不廢，讀則讀矣，只是上口不上身。誠反而上身，使身為仁義道德之身，聖賢君子之身，何快如之！呂新吾云：「聖賢千言萬語，說的是我心頭佳話，立的是我身上妙方，不必另竭心思，舉而措之，無往不效。而今把一部經書當作聖賢遺留下富貴的本子，矻矻終日，講讀惓惓，只為身家，譬如僧道替人念消災禳禍的經懺一般，念的絕不與我相干，只是賺些經錢食米來養活此身，把聖賢垂世立教之意辜負盡了。有道之士仔細思量，笑死！愧死！」斯言切中吾人通病，吾人所宜猛省。...然則吾曹日讀四書，而不能惟其言之是踐，雖欲不謂之孔曾思孟之罪人不可也。昔有一士千里從師，師悉出經書，期在盡授，甫講一語，其士即稽首請退，浹月弗至。問之，對曰：「未盡行初句，弗敢至也。」必如此，始可謂善讀，始可謂實踐。一人肯反身實踐，則人欲化為天理，身心平康；人人肯反身實踐，則人人皆為君子，世可唐虞，此致治之本也。區區於讀四書者，不能不拭目以望。" "Erqu xiansheng du Si Shu shuo," (二曲先生讀四書說), *Erqu ji* (二曲集) *juan* 29 (Shiquan Pengshi, 1877)

Li Yong's *Reflections* to illustrate it and to save the faith of people in the contemporary era.[239]

All of these three leading post-Donglin Neo-Confucian scholars gained reputations as *jingshi* Neo-Confucian thinkers, or statecraft Neo-Confucians (經世理學) in the early Qing. While acknowledging the responsibility of scholars to help their generation to engage with statecraft issues and to be concerned with the public needs, they chose to work on annotating the Four Books and teaching moral philosophy, with the goal of defining a unified literati moral value and practice. However, in contrast to the Donglin generation, which demonstrated its agenda of defining the moral faith of the world by cultivating the moral agency of the mind to make judgments about politics and society, they no longer had confidence in the innate goodness of the mind either as something to be cultivated or as a basis for action. They were mostly concerned with how to back up the *Great Learning*'s program of cultivation with the rigor of statecraft *practice*, and how to defend the basis of moral cultivation as an essential aspect of statecraft learning, as well as how to theorize the philosophical importance of daily statecraft practice as inseparable from a true understanding of the message of the Four Books. From Sun Qifeng to Li Yong, I believe we can find three main factors in this new strategy of Neo-Confucianism. The first is the attitude of Neo-Confucian thinkers that

[239] "四書之在天下，猶日月之經天，而陸沉於讀者之口耳，其來久矣。二曲先生起而拯之，力掃道聽塗說之陋，以實反諸身為天下後世倡。其反身錄一書，凡進修之要、性命之微、明體適用之大全、內聖外王之實際，靡不一一開關啟鑰，合盤托出，蓋欲讀者深體力踐，為一己樹真品，為國家樹真才，為千秋扶綱常，翊世運。識者謂有天地則不可無四書，以葆天下之人心．有四書則不可無朱註，以釋四書之疑義；有朱註則不可無斯錄，以挽天下之人心。斯錄未出，四書雖家傳戶誦，無異『告朔之羊』，名存而實亡；斯錄一出，則四書誦不徒誦，人知所奮，可謂取日虞淵，揭之中天，中興四書之功埒於始初表章，夫固有不可得而誣者矣。" "*Sishu fanshenlu* yin," (四書反身錄引) Ibid.

blamed Donglin's political activism, that is, the factional fights based on its core ideology of the learning of mind, for the weakness and the fall of the Ming. A second factor was the lack of necessity for Neo-Confucians to engage in similar political activism in the early Qing, when the new court fully supported their learning and even claimed to be share their values. Third, the apparent success of evidential studies of the Classics and histories had provided a more effective and constructive approach to accumulate statecraft knowledge, and their new model was not necessarily built on a Neo-Confucian theory of the human mind.

The problems that the new strategy brought to Neo-Confucian learning are worth noting. First, the Neo-Confucian group now appeared to collaborate with the court, because its ideology allowed the new Manchu ruler to justify himself on the grounds of the moral nature of Heaven-and-Earth, and because its negative attitude toward the theory of innate knowledge of the good led it to oppose active political criticism by scholars. Moreover, the eclectic and pragmatically oriented Neo-Confucian position of the early Qing had made its central claims about learning almost unrecognizable to the intellectual world. Its self-referential discourse on statecraft had not materialized into any cumulative learning project on statecraft studies, and its proposal for book learning that focused on moral unity for the intellectual world contradicted the open-ended nature of an empirically oriented approach to the Classics and histories for studying statecraft issues. The challengers of Neo-Confucianism in the early Qing pointed out these problems, and proposed their own paths toward an autonomous and common intellectual culture.

Unified Doctrines without a Moral Mind: Yan Yuan's Criticism of Neo-Confucian Learning and his Attempt to Redefine Literati Ideology

The influence of Yan Yuan (顏元 1635-1704) in his own time was very limited, but, his attack on the Neo-Confucian tradition in early Qing offers a useful scenario to understand the seventeenth-century transformation of the intellectual landscape. Without trying to fully reconstruct his life and ideas, I am interested here in the logic of his criticism of Neo-Confucianism and the alternative literati cultural model that he wanted to offer.[240]

Yan Yuan was born in 1635. It was said that his father was adopted by a local family in Hebei province and became a clerk in local government. His father left the family and his mother remarried, so Yan's adoptive grandparents brought him up. After the death of his adoptive grandmother, Yan expressed a strong desire to fulfill the mourning rituals that would have been the responsibility of his father. He strictly followed Zhu Xi's family ritual to show his filial piety, and it is said that he almost died from fasting. While intending to fulfill his filial duties as an honorable man, however, Yan later described this experience as marking the beginning of his doubt about Zhu Xi's doctrine.[241] Although for a while he became interested in Wang Yangming's doctrine that "action and knowledge ought to be united" (*zhixing heyi* 知行合一), he soon came to believe that Zhu and Wang were essentially the same. Yan never passed the provincial exam, and made his living mostly as a doctor. In his later years, Yan established the Zhangnan Academy (彰南書院). To raise funds, he offered occasional lectures on how to write exam essays, but his real goal was to carry out his own curriculum of learning,

[240] A recent monograph is Yang Jui-sung's (楊瑞松) Body, Ritual, and Identity: a New Interpretation of the Early Qing Confucian Yan Yuan (1637-1704) (Leiden; Boston: Brill 2016).

[241] See *Qingshi gao* (清史稿), Liezhuan 267 (列傳), "Rulin 1" (儒林) .

which he called "Studying and Practicing Statecraft Issues (*xixing jingji* 習行經濟)."

Yan's criticism of Neo-Confucianism, which was related to his unfulfilling experience, has a personal touch. Having believed that the formulas of both Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming were deceptive, Yan began to reflect on the entire tradition and tried to promote his own interpretation of *Ru* learning. Around the year 1671, Yan composed two letters addressed respectively to Sun Qifeng and Lu Shiyi. These two letters were later published in an edition of his *Compilation of Essays on Preserving Learning* (Cun xue bian 存學編), one of his major public statements about learning. In his letter to Sun Qifeng, Yan first explained his disagreement with the Song Neo-Confucian assumption that an individual's born disposition, *qizhi zhi xing* (氣質之性), is evil, and that one needs to overcome this inborn disposition to realize the Heavenly Way. He argued that Neo-Confucian scholars had digressed from Mencius' doctrine that individuals ought to fulfill their innate goodness. In Yan's view, the Song Neo-Confucians' negative assumption had made people dissatisfied with who they were. Moreover, it had prevented some, who lacked a will strong enough to discipline themselves in the way that the Neo-Confucian had required, from trying to fulfill their innate goodness.[242] Yan went on to argue that the real tradition of the sages was a set of techniques and crafts developed in the context of ancient governance, such as rituals, music, law making, and military skills. The sages did not speculate on matters of human nature and the Heavenly Way. The Neo-Confucians, even those who engaged in statecraft learning, had eventually turned their

[242] "某靜中猛思，宋儒發明氣質之性，似不及孟子之言性善最真。變化氣質之惡，三代聖人全未道及。將天生一副作聖全體，參雜以習染，謂之有惡，未免不使人去其本無而使人憎其本有，蒙晦先聖盡性之旨而授世間無志人一口柄。" "Shang Zhengjun Sun Zhongyuan Xiansheng shu"(上征君孫鍾元先生書), *Yanyuan ji* (顏元集) Vol.1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 1987), 46.

practice into discourses on learning that had no bearing on practice.[243] Accordingly, Sun's effort to reconcile the Zhu Xi School and the Wang Yangming School was meaningless and even harmful, only leading to the perpetuation of unnecessary disputes. These internal disputes had no connection with the needs of the world, and only distracted scholars from nourishing the people and ordering public life.[244]

In his letter to Lu Shiyi, Yan laid out his fundamental reasons for calling Neo-Confucian learning harmful, and depicted his understanding of the true legacy of the sages as the path to the realization of a better world. Believing that Lu Shiyi held a more down-to-earth understanding of human nature than other Neo-Confucians, and was more interested in statecraft practice, Yan explained his own agenda to Lu and expressed hope that Lu would appreciate his perspective.[245]

Yan opened the letter by explaining the fundamental relationship between the function of Heaven-and-Earth and human life, and the essential role that the sages had played in this relationship.

> I have heard that the rise-and-fall (消長) and the good-and-bad (否泰) of the *qi* (氣) are not fully controlled by the Heaven-and-Earth, and [this situation is] determined by the natural order of things (理數); to let the *qi* rise again after it has fallen to the

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[243]"又想周公、孔子教人以禮、樂、射、禦、書、數，故曰'以三物教萬民而賓興之'；故曰'身通六藝者七十二'。故性道不可聞，而某長治賦、某長禮樂、某長足民，一如唐、虞之廷某農、某刑、某禮、某樂之舊，未之有爽也。近世言學者，心性之外無餘理，靜敬之外無餘功。細考其氣象，疑與孔門若不相似然。即有談經濟者，亦不過說場話、著種書而已。" Ibid.

[244] "論今天下朱、陸兩派互相爭辯，先生高見，平和勸解之不暇，豈可又增一爭端也！但某殊切杞人之憂，以為雖使朱學勝陸而獨行於天下，或陸學勝朱而獨行於天下，或和解成功，朱、陸合一，同行于天下；則終此乾坤亦只為當時兩宋之世，終此儒運亦只如說話著書之道學而已，豈不堪為聖道生民長歎息乎！粗陳一二，望先生靜眼一辨，及時發明前二千年之故道，以易後二千年之新轍，則斯道幸甚，斯民幸甚！" Ibid., 47.

[245] "Shang taicang Lu Futing xiansheng shu (上太倉陸桴亭先生書)," Ibid., 49.

bottom and [to let the *qi*] turn good after it has entirely reached the bad [condition], the Heaven-and-Earth must give birth to a leader to guide [the *qi*], and this [principle] is also determined by the natural order of things. However, when investigating the time before Confucius and Mencius, [we can see that] the people that Heaven-and-Earth chose to guide the *qi* all [wrote] substantive/concrete writings (實文), [conducted] substantive/concrete actions (實行), [searched for] substantive/concrete foundations (實體), and [generated] substantive/concrete applications (實用), [and they] eventually created substantive/concrete accomplishments (實績) on behalf of Heaven-and-Earth. [As a result] the populace was ordered, and material goods proliferated. Even for those who had unfortunately fallen from [the positions of] rulers and ministers and had become common people, [they] still committed themselves to the [pursuit of the] substantive/concrete writings, actions, [the search for] foundations and applications. They would never dare not to follow Yao (堯), Shun (舜), Yu (禹) and Gao (皋); [they would never dare to] indulge themselves in the trap of emptiness and engage in grandiose speeches without taking responsibility, [because doing so would result in] forgetting about the order of the *qi* (氣數)*,* stopping [taking care of the] populace [and the production of] material goods, and leaving the [purpose of the] Heaven-and-Earth unknown. [Instead,] they would focus their entire lives on the [pursuit of] substantive/concrete writings, actions, [the search for] foundations and applications. They would never dare to speak irresponsibly in the midst of hundreds of contesting discourses, or write books or establish doctrines based on [ideas that] were misled by heresy and violated the ancient thinkers, [which would result in] disturbing the order of the *qi,* destroying the populace and material goods, and letting down Heaven-and-Earth.

某聞氣機消長否泰，天地有不能自主，理數使然也；方其消極而長，否極而泰，天地必生一人以主之，亦理數使然也。然粵稽孔、孟以前，天地所生以主此氣機者，率皆實文、實行、實體、實用，卒為天地造實績，而民以安，物以阜。雖不幸而君相之人竟為布衣，亦必終身盡力于文、行、體、用之實，斷不敢以不堯、舜不禹、皋者苟且于一時虛浮之局，高談袖手，而委此氣數，置此民物，聽此天地於不可知也；亦必終身窮究於文、行、體、用之實，斷不敢以惑異端、背先哲者肆口於百喙爭鳴之日，著書立說，而誤此氣數，壞此民物，負此天地於不可為也。[246]

Like many critics of Neo-Confucianism during the Ming-Qing transition, Yan drew on the value-laden trope of *shi* (實) to depict the literati culture that he had in mind, implying that Neo-Confucian learning was not grounded in substance but was empty, *xu* (

[246] Ibid., 47.

虛). His new learning would focus on constructing the external order, and would try to make a direct impact on public life. However, his conceptual framework was not that different from that of the Neo-Confucians. Like them, Yan believed that wrong learning would result in disturbing the function of *qi* and the realization of the purpose of Heaven-and-Earth. For the Neo-Confucians, to stay in tune with Heaven-and-Earth and improve the function of the *qi* meant to practice self-reflection; for Yan, antiquity had thrived because the sages' statecraft designs and actions functioned correctly and the sages fulfilled the role that Heaven-and-Earth expected them to play. They knew the mechanism of Heaven-and-Earth but restrained themselves from elaborating on or reflecting on values or meanings.

Based on this logic, Yan extended his diagnosis of the problems of Neo-Confucianism to the entire culture of elite learning since the Han. He argued that Neo-Confucianism was a representation of a more profound problem that had existed in the past two thousand years. The rise of Classical exegesis in the Han and the popularity of pure talks in the Jin demonstrated that scholars had long disconnected themselves from the real needs of the world, leaving the "concrete" and "substantial" virtues, practices, and skills of the sages untaught.[247] Therefore, what was needed for today was to restore the real messages of the sages. Yan explained to Lu that he had completed two books dedicated to this purpose: *Compilation of Essays on Preserving Learning* (Cun xue bian) and *Compilation of Essays on Preserving Nature* (Cun xing bian 存性編). In the first

[247]"自漢、晉氾濫於章句，不知章句所以傳聖賢之道而非聖賢之道也；競尚乎清談，不知清談所以闡聖賢之學而非聖賢之學也。因之虛浮日盛，而堯、舜三事、六府之道，周公、孔子六德、六行、六藝之學，所以實位天地，實育萬物者，幾不見於乾坤中矣……故仆妄論宋儒，謂是集漢、晉、釋、老之大成者則可，謂是堯、舜、周、孔之正派則不可。" Ibid., 47-8.

book, Yan tried to draw attention to what he described as the real legacy of the sage kings, their statecraft efforts as recorded in the Classics . Citing the *Book of Documents*, he listed the following doctrines:

1. The "three agendas (*sanshi* 三事)," namely, the agendas of "rectifying virtues (*zhengde* 正德)," "making use of resources (*liyong* 利用)," and "improving living conditions (*housheng* 厚生)"
2. The "six material elements (*liufu* 六府)," namely, "water," "fire," "metal," "wood," "earth," "grain."

Citing from *The Rites of Zhou,* he outlined the following doctrines:

1. The "six virtues (*liude* 六德)," namely, "wisdom (*zhi* 智)," "humaneness (*ren* 仁)," "sagehood (*sheng* 聖)," "righteousness (*yi*義)," "loyalty (*zhong* 忠)," and "harmony (*he* 和),"
2. The "six deeds (*liuxing* 六行)," namely, "filial piety (*xiao* 孝)," "friendship (*you* 友)," "living in harmony (*mu* 睦)," "marriage (*yin* 姻)" "duty (*ren* 任)," "sympathy (*xu* 恤),"
3. The "six techniques/arts (六藝)," namely, "ritual (*li* 禮)," "music (*yue* 樂)," "shooting (*she* 射), "riding (*yu* 御)," "calligraphy (*shu* 書)" and "calculation (*shu* 數)."[248]

Since Yan believed that the Neo-Confucian program was built upon a harmful

[248] "著《存學》一編，申明堯、舜、周、孔三事、六府、六德、六行、六藝之道，大旨明道不在詩書章句，學不在穎悟誦讀，而期如孔門博文、約禮、身實學之，身實習之，終身不懈者。" Ibid., 48.

assumption about the human condition, in his *Compilation of Essays on Preserving Nature* he aimed to lay out his criticism and his own interpretation. As he summarized in the letter to Lu, he tried to remove what he saw as binaries that the Neo-Confucians had created between coherence (*li* 理) and energy-matter (*qi* 气) and between nature (*xing* 性) and form (*xing* 形). It seems Yan's assumption was that, Neo-Confucians used "coherence (*li*)" and "nature (*xing* 性)" to refer to the ultimate order of things and humans, while seeing the specific movements of energy-matter (*qi*) and the specific forms (*xing* 形) as belonging to the realm that need to be ordered and unified. He tried to argue that the movement of energy-matter (*qi*) and form (*xing* 形) are just a part of Heaven-and-Earth. As he stated, coherence (*li*) and energy-matter (*qi*) both show the Heavenly Way (*tiandao* 天道), while nature (*xing*) and form (*xing*) both demonstrate the Heavenly Destiny (*tianming* 天命). Although each individual's born character and destiny (*xingming* 性命) and disposition (*qizhi*), are different, they are all good (*shan*), as they are a part of Heaven-and-Earth. One's disposition cannot be said to be evil (*e* 惡); it is the function of one's natural character and destiny. The so-called "evilness [of the dispositions]," as Yan argued, is just an inadequacy of personality resulting from long-term bad habits initially caused by external temptations. Thus, instead of seeking to transform their minds to reach ultimate order, people should trust that their particular material forms represent their perfect original foundation (*benti* 本體). To get rid of so-called evil is to maximally fulfill the potential of their particular material forms (始自充其固有之形骸).[249] To make the point, however, Yan critiqued Song Neo-Confucian

[249] "著存性一編，大旨明理、氣俱是天道，性、形俱是天命，人之性命、氣質雖各有差等

interpretations of human nature and the notion of goodness. In particular, he drew a new metaphysical diagram to show the mechanism of human nature and to illustrate the relationship between human nature and moral concepts (*xing tu* 性图), identifying his goal as preserving the real understanding of human nature. [250]

Suffice it to say, although his overall purpose was to go beyond the Neo-Confucian program of learning, Yan nonetheless found himself wrestling with Neo-Confucian language and textual traditions in order to define his own program of learning. The best examples of this are two ideological chapters in his *Compilation of Essays on Preserving Learning*. In the opening chapter, "Obeying the Way" (*You dao* 由道), Yan argues that "For the sages, learning, teaching and governing were the same. 'People can be made to obey [the Way] but cannot be made to know [the Way.]' This is the established method (*chengfa* 成法) of thousands of sages and hundreds of kings clearly articulated by Confucius."[251] The sages knew and perceived the Way. But what their practice of teaching and governance engaged in was nothing more than the specific design of institutional practices and other forms of culture necessary for government.[252] Words about the Way from the individual mind only obscured the Way. Confucius's students

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，而俱是此善；氣質正性命之作用，而不可謂有惡，其所謂惡者，乃由「引、蔽、習、染」四字為之崇也。期使人知為絲毫之惡，皆自玷其光瑩之本體，極神聖之善，始自充其固有之形骸。" Ibid., 48-9.

[250] See chapter "Xin tu," (性圖) *Ibid.,* 19-33.

[251] "聖人學、教、治，皆一致也。'民可使由之，不可使知之'，是孔子明言千聖百王持世成法，守之則易簡而有功，失之徒繁難而寡效。" "You dao," (由道) *Yanyuan ji,* 39.

[252] "何不觀精一之旨，惟堯、禹得聞，天下所可見者，命九官、十二牧所為而已。陰陽秘旨，文、周寄之于易；天下所可見者，王政、制禮、作樂而已。一貫之道，惟曾、賜得聞；及門與天下所可見者，詩、書、六藝而已。烏得以天道性命常舉諸口而人人語之哉？" Ibid., 39-40.

knew this principle well. Zisi (子思) wrote the *Mean* (Zhong yong 中庸), a work that revealed the highest and most subtle sagely understanding of Heaven-and-Earth, but Zisi did not write it because he was eager to reveal the ultimate Way. He saw that he was living at a time when wrong opinions and discourses were about to flourish, and he worried that the decline of *qi* would make Heaven-and-Earth unable to give birth to anyone like Confucius. In order to maintain the essence of the tradition on issues about "human nature (*xing*), learning, and governing," Zisi had to write the *Mean.* After this, Mencius was born to carry the message on. He taught people how to behave, and he paid his respects to the established governing method of the sage kings, instead of returning to discourse about the nature and destiny of Heaven-and-Earth.[253] Centuries later, however, the Cheng Brothers and Zhu Xi actively engaged with empty discourses about nature and destiny (*xingming* 性命), searching for ideas that they assumed earlier *Ru* scholars had failed to see. But, unable to make any new contributions beyond the discourse of the *Mean*, they led to fragmentation and division and they blended Buddhist and Daoist teachings into *Ru* learning. The *Ru* tradition thus became less respected, for it had forgotten its own valuable role in cultivating leaders who knew how to govern.[254]

To provide an alternative doctrine, Yan went back to redefining the central message of the *Great Learning* (Da xue). According to Yan, the notions of *ming* (明), namely,

[253] "道不可以言傳也，言傳者有先於言者也，顏、曾守此不失。子思時，異端將盛，或亦逆知天地氣薄，自此將不生孔子其人，勢必失性、學、治本旨，不得已而作中庸，直指性天，已近太瀉。故孟子承之，教人必以規矩，引而不發，斷不為拙工改廢繩墨。離婁方員、深造諸章，尤于先王成法致意焉。" Ibid., 39.

[254] "至宋而程、朱出，乃動談性命，相推發先儒所未發。以仆觀之，何曾出中庸分毫！但見支離分裂，參雜於釋、老，徒令異端輕視吾道耳。若是者何也？以程、朱失堯、舜以來學、教之成法也……朝廷大政，天下所不能辦，吾門人皆辦之；險重繁難，天下所不敢任，吾門人皆任之，吾道自尊顯，釋、老自消亡矣。" Ibid.

"illustration [of the luminous virtue]," and *qin* (親), namely, "loving [the people]," in the first lines of the *Great Learning*, were the true goals of the *Ru* tradition. Based on these two goals, he divided influential scholars and rulers from history into three groups. For those who were versed in literary culture and ideas, he categorized them as being able to "illustrate luminous virtues;" while for those who were committed to the public interest he categorized as being capable of "loving the people."[255] Based on the definition of the *Great Learning*, however, the true *Ru* were those who succeeded at both; they were able to "combine achievements in government and achievements in the study of culture" (政事文學同歸). They were also able to fully "integrate their learning with the interests of people and the needs of the world" (人己事物一致).[256]

But was it not the case that many of the Neo-Confucian leaders had also made influential impact in ordering the world? Yan turned to questioning the sincerity of the Neo-Confucian interpretation of the *Great Learning*. He argued that their self-cultivation focusing on reaching enlightenment in their mind made it hard to believe that they could

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[255] "大學首四句，吾奉為古聖真傳。所學無二理，亦無二事，只此仁義禮智之德，子臣弟友之行，詩書禮樂之文，以之修身則為明德，以之齊治則為親民。明矣而未親，親矣而未止至善，吾不敢謂之道也；親矣而未明，明矣而未止至善，吾亦不敢謂之道也。親而未明者，即謂之親，非大學之親也；然既用其功於民，皆可曰親。其親而未明者，漢高帝與唐太宗之類也；其親且明而未止至善者，漢之孝文、光武之流也。凡如此者，皆宋明以來儒者所共見，皆謂之非道者也。其明而未親，明且親而未止至善者，則儒者未之言也。非不肯言也，非不敢言也，堯、舜不作，孔、孟不生，人無從證其為道者。" "Ming Qin" (明親), Ibid., 42.

[256] "他不具論，即如朱、陸兩先生，倘有一人守孔子下學之成法，而身習夫禮、樂、射、禦、書、數以及兵農、錢谷、水火、工虞之屬而精之。凡弟子從游者，則令某也學禮，某也學樂，某也兵農，某也水火，某也兼數藝，某也尤精幾藝，則及門皆通儒，進退周旋無非性命也，聲音度數無非涵養也，政事文學同歸也，人己事物一致也，所謂下學而上達也，合內外之道也。如此，不惟必有一人虛心以相下，而且君相必實得其用，天下必實被其澤，人才既興，王道次舉，異端可靖，太平可期。正書所謂府修事和，為吾儒致中和之實地，位育之功，出處皆得致者也；是謂明親一理，大學之道也。" Ibid., 44-45.

be fully committed to the interests of the public. He thus believed the tradition was disconnected and arrogant. Their learning was too clever for the needs of statecraft, and their ultimate goal was higher than statecraft. He also pointed out that the unrealistic goal of moral cultivation for each common man also made it impossible for a wider group of people to join in the *Ru* tradition, such as men of humble origins such as himself. Instead, without being concerned about questions of mind and nature, he showed care about the public interest.[257]

It is not difficult to notice the incoherence in Yan's overall proposal of learning. He criticize the Neo-Confucian belief in moral unity as the ideal order of the world, and resisted the Neo-Confucian interest in discoursing on learning, yet he left a new doctrine to follow that claimed to be loyal to the *Great Learning* and the messages of Mencius and Zisi. But Yan's case offers an illuminating case for understanding the intellectual conditions of this transitional moment of literati culture, and the decline of Neo-Confucianism.

The model of Neo-Confucianism, which believed that in order to achieve a better world the literati elite ought to transform themselves into moral exemplars by pursuing the coherence of the order of things, had encountered great skepticism through the dynastic transition and had been largely delegitimized. Neo-Confucian learning now appeared to be self-obsessed, lacking in substance, and even morally corrupt. The task for the literati world was to find a new model of shared learning that would encourage scholars to focus on government while maintaining a common cultural pursuit of values.

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[257]"或曰：諸儒勿論，陽明破賊建功，可謂體用兼全，又何弊乎？餘曰：不但陽明，朱門不有蔡氏言樂乎？朱子常平倉制與在朝風度，不皆有可觀乎？但是天資高，隨事就功，非全副力量，如周公、孔子專以是學，專以是教，專以是治也。" Ibid., 45.

The Yan Yuan school did not succeed at this, however. Why?

It might be said that the key ideological structure of Neo-Confucianism as a sharable model of literati culture from the eleventh century to the sixteenth century had much to do with the combination of two elements. On the one hand, the founders of the tradition developed a coherent theory about Heaven-and-Earth and the human condition. By doing so, they provided the literati community a common ground of learning based on a fundamental definition of knowledge and values. On the other hand, they encouraged scholars to cultivate their individual moral judgments by studying the Classics and reflecting on the coherence of the world. Doing so could activate the moral agency in each individual. Yan Yuan, however, not believing in the meaningfulness of personal moral cultivation, was largely troubled by the politics of the Neo-Confucian tradition. In various places he stressed his identity as a humble man and lamented the lack of connection between the elite learning and the real interests of the people. He argued for abandoning the approach of individual moral reflection, believing that the Classics ought to offer different kinds of knowledge to the literati world. But, in conceptualizing the foundation of the *Ru* tradition, he shared a fundamentalist definition of knowledge and values much like the Neo-Confucians. He depicted sagehood as something defined by the transcultural mechanism of Heaven-and-Earth; he believed that the success of the sages' learning in antiquity had much to do with the fact that their practice *revealed* the fundamental values of Heaven-and-Earth and stayed in tune with the movement of Heaven-and-Earth. He thus still embraced the Four Books as the defining doctrines for scholars to understand the Way of Heaven-and-Earth. However, Yan's combination of a fundamentalist definition of knowledge and values and his rejection of individual

reflection made Yan's ambition for a new shared learning hard to achieve. It led to an ideal perspective of social-political life situated in an agrarian environment guided by didactic indoctrination, and it ended up suggesting a dogmatic reading of the Classics as literati learning. In his *Compilation of Essays on Preserving Governance* (Cun zhi bian 存治編), one of Yan's very few political writings, he emphasized the model of the sage kings' rule as an integrated system of teaching and governance based on the well-field system in an agrarian society. Schools led by local officials combined indoctrination of rituals and teaching of farming skills with military training, and villages not only served as farming units but also as military units.[258] Meanwhile, Yan's interests in the cultural practices, rituals and institutions recorded in the Classics also seemed to focus largely on laying out doctrines and material facts. Although he considered himself to be searching for the essence of the Kingly Way (*wangdao* 王道), he did not define an intellectual agenda in exploring the meanings behind the institutions to be realized reflectively in the contemporary context, and he seemed to be caught up in the need of deliberately reducing interpretations of values into reconstructing physical facts. For some later commentators, he appeared to have an obstinate belief in antiquity without any flexibility (*nigu* 泥古).

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[258] "七制而後，古法漸淹，至於宋、明，徒文具而，一切教養之政不幾古帝王。而其最堪搤腕者，尤在於兵專而弱，士腐而靡……三代田賦出甲，民皆習兵." "Cunzhi bian xu" (存治編序) *Ibid.,* 101. "間論王道，見古聖人之精意良法，萬善皆備。一學校也，教文即以教武；一井田也，治農即以治兵。故井取乎八而陳亦取乎八。考之他書，類謂其法創自黃帝，備于成周，而以孔明之八陳實祖之。但帝王之成法既不可見，武侯之遺意又不得其傳，後世亦焉得享其用哉！""一曰素練。隴畝皆陳法，民恒習之，不待教而知矣。一曰親卒。同鄉之人，童友日處，聲氣相喻，情義相結，可共生死。一曰忠上。邑宰、千百長，無事則教農、教禮、教藝，為之父母；有事則執旗、執鼓、執劍，為之將帥。其孰不親上死長！一曰無兵耗。有事則兵，無事則民，月糧不之費矣。一曰應卒難。突然有事，隨地即兵，無征救求援之待。一曰安業。無逃亡反散之虞。一曰齊勇。無老弱頂替之弊。一曰靖奸。無招募異域無憑之疑。一曰輯侯。無專擁重兵要上之患。九者，治賦之便也。" "Zhifu" (治賦) Ibid., 107-108.

The conundrum of Yan Yuan was that the fundamentalist understanding of the knowledge and values that he inherited from Neo-Confucianism made it unlikely for him to *historicize* the Classics as sources of theories and historical examples about government. Unlike the Fushe figures who looked at the sage kings as historical-political actors whose purpose was to build a civilized common life and whose knowledge and values came from an open-ended theorization based on a historical understanding of the world, Yan still perceived the source of learning for ordering the world as rooted in an ultimate cosmic principle. Accordingly, his polemics and alternative view of learning still followed the assumption that the goal of Classical textual scholarship was to generate an essentialist and ahistorical interpretation of the true Way of the sages. Yan and his followers such as Li Gong (李塨 1659-1733) did not offer a concrete example of how their practice of culture would work as a shareable learning community that individual scholars might be motivated to join. Yan left few written works, his major writings being polemics against the Neo-Confucianism. But his case demonstrated the continuing crisis of literati identity in the late seventeenth century, reflecting the struggle to find a new role for literati scholars after the Neo-Confucian vision had been suffered delegitimization. Moreover, it helped to explain why the Fushe model of open-ended Classical and historical learning could offer an appealing choice in the early Qing.

A Common Ground without a Unified Doctrine: Seventeenth-Century Evidential Scholars' Criticism of the Dogmatism of Neo-Confucianism

The early Qing Evidential scholars conceived of learning differently. As we have discussed, the Fushe and their like-minded *wenshe* communities motivated young scholars to conduct statecraft studies to improve government. The Classics offered them

both theoretical perspectives and an historical basis for government; the histories showed the development of statecraft and personal influence; the practice of explanatory and argumentative political writing cultivated their independent judgment and confidence. As Gu Yanwu (顧炎武 1613-1682) commented on the virtue of written scholarship,

> The writings (*wen*) that [contain enduring value and] will not be extinguished from the world are those that illustrate the Way, document the government, explore the condition of people's lives, and celebrate people's virtues. For writings (*wen*) [as such] that benefit society and the future, the more we have the better.
>
> 文之不可絕於天地間者，曰明道也，紀政事也，察民隱也，樂道人之善也。若此者有益於天下，有益於將來，多一篇，多一篇之益矣。[259]

From the 1640s until the 1700s, young scholars who participated in the cohort of Fushe and other like-minded communities were growing into intellectually mature thinkers. At the same time, they extended their earlier networks, and they promoted their understanding of scholarship into the Qing. Gu Yanwu, who in the 1650s was already known for his book *Strengths and Weaknesses of the Various Regions of the Realm* (Tianxia junguo libingshu 天下郡國利病書), decided to further pursue his studies of historical geography and institutional history by visiting the north. About twenty people close to the old Fushe network, including Yang Yi and Gu Menglin, former colleagues of Zhang Pu from the time of his *zhiyi* training programs, collectively composed a letter to introduce Gu to the scholarly community in the north. In this letter they asked scholars to help Gu collect books and other materials. More research is needed to better understand the condition of this Fushe-related network of scholars during the transitional period, but

[259] Gu Yanwu, "Wen xu youyiyu tianxia,"（文須有益於天下) in *Rizhilu* (日知錄) *juan*, 19. *Gu Yanqu quanji* (顧炎武全集) Vol.739 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe Press, 2011), 739.

it is safe to say that these people endorsed the Fushe-style study of statecraft and endeavored to spread it. Their intellectual values were consistent with the Fushe program and entirely different from the Neo-Confucians. In their introductory letter, these scholars praised Gu for his sense of public responsibility and for his intellectual ambition. Gu lamented that the mainstream exam learning, which asked scholars to study just one Classic through their lives, had largely limited scholars' knowledge about government institutions and the problems of government and the people. When these scholars became officials they would fail due to these limitations. Instead, Gu decided to pursue scholarship and provide knowledge. They believed that Gu's ability, ambition and creativity were already demonstrated in his *Strengths and Weaknesses of the Various Regions of the Realm.* First, Gu engaged with a rich collection of sources including gazetteers, government memorials, individual writings, etc. Second, he used the dynastic histories and the *Veritable Records of the Ming Court* (Shilu 實錄) to verify his findings and to select information of contemporary relevance. Hence, the authors of the letter hoped that scholars in the North could "read [Gu's] writings" (觀其文) to "understand his will" (察其志), and "help him expand his knowledge" (助之以闻见) , in order to assist Gu to accomplish his statecraft research. To contribute to his work, these scholars claimed in the letter, "would not only help [Gu] to establish [his] own words," rather, it would contribute to scholarship "on which future livelihoods would rely."[260]

[260] "東吳顧寧人炎武…… 年十四為諸生，屢試不遇，繇貢士兩薦授樞曹，不就。自嘆士人窮年株守一經，不復知國典朝章官方民隱，以致試之行事而敗績失據。於是盡棄所習帖括，讀書山中八九年，取天下府、州志書及一代奏疏、文集遍閱之，凡一萬二千餘卷。復取《二十一史》並《實錄》一一考證，擇其宜於今者，手錄數十帙，名曰《天下郡國利病書》。遂遊覽天下山川風土，以質之當世之大人先生。昔司馬子長遍游四方，乃成《史記》，而範文正自秀才時以天下為己任，若寧人者，其殆兼之。今且北學於中國，而同方之士

Apart from Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi (黃宗羲 1610-1695) restored Liu Zongzhou's Zhengren Society of discoursing on learning (證人講會) in Ningbo a bit later and turned it into a Classical and historical learning group for developing political learning, as discussed in Wang Fansen's study on the Classical and historical learning groups in the early Qing. Soon, Wan Sitong (萬斯同 1638－1702) and his policy writing, namely, *celun,* community joined in Huang's group. After Huang passed away, Wan took up his agenda and organized meetings in Beijing to study the Classics and histories.[261] Huang's interests in the Classics and histories under the influences of the late Ming *wenshe* contributed to his re-interpretation of Liu Zongzhou's cultivation of mind as a process of searching the principle of sagehood by means of concrete Classical and historical studies. This network lasted from 1668 to 1670, training a new generation of Evidential scholars such as the Wan brothers, and created a rigorous agenda of statecraft learning that greatly influenced Evidential learning in the following century.[262] Wang Fansen argues that one important attraction for young scholars to join Classical and historical learning groups was the belief that they had found a steady and concrete way to become sage. Their evidence-based interpretation of the meaning of the Classics not only allowed them develop mental rigor, but also offered them a sense of reaching objectivity through

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知寧人者敬為先之以言，冀當世之大人先生觀寧人之文，以察其志，而助之以聞見，以成其書，匪直一家者言異同，天下生民之福其必由之矣。同學王潢、陸圻、吳任臣、王錫闡、顧有孝、顧夢麟、黃師正、王猷定、歸莊、潘檉章、楊彝、楊瑀、方文、張慤、吳炎、湯護、萬壽祺、丁雄飛、毛黻、陳濟生啟。 "Yang Yi Wan Shouqi deng wei Gu Ningren zheng tianxia shuji qishu hou" (楊彝萬壽祺等為顧寧人徵天下書籍啓書後), *Gu Yanwu quanji*. Vol.21, 275.

[261] Wang Fan-sen, "Qingchu de jiangjinghui," 536

[262] Ibid., 520.

learning, which successfully overcame the influence of the moral relativism of Chan Buddhism on Confucian learning.[263] For many participants, this new method solved the tension between the cultivation of the self and the ordering of the external world.[264] Circles of scholars who had conducted historically minded scholarship had never focused on the *Great Learning* as their central target for discussion or commentary. They rarely used the metaphysical dichotomy between "substance" (*ti*) and "application" (*yong*) to generalize the nature of knowledge. Instead, their knowledge building was accumulative and worldly oriented. They often expressed criticism of the dogmatic tendency in previous literati culture fostered by Neo-Confucian foundationalism. Wang Fuzhi (王夫之 1619－1692), in his famous *After Reading the Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* (Du tongjian lun 讀通鑑論) claimed that, "Every age has its own tensions (rhythm); every affair has its contractions (contingent circumstance). It is better therefore to have no inflexible judgment, lest one should, by clinging to a single idea, do violence to the Way… One should not try to force the world to follow his own particular views."[265] The fact that historical contexts change was a primary reason for Wang Fuzhi to remain skeptical about any attempts to reach a unified view of human values. Chen Qianhe (陳遷鶴 1639-1714) saw that "Knowing their responsibility for ordering society is what the Confucians use to correct themselves, therefore they should solidify their position, guarding humaneness, and embody their faith." "However," Chen continued,

[263] Ibid., 530-5.

[264] Ibid., 538.

[265] Translation is drawn on Étienne Balázs's translation, in his *Political Theory and Administrative Reality in Traditional China*. (London: School of Oriental and African Studies University of London. 1965), 42-3.

"the past and the present are different, the changes of time are complicated, different places of China vary in their local customs, and people's habits (*renqing* 人情) are disparate. Sticking to one's own opinion and contradicting the principle of things in the world will end up harming the people and breaking the commonwealth." Thus, "Wise people will change with time and context, only the stupid and ignorant don't know how to change. Those who can follow the changes of time and context will really put their heart into the ordering of the world, therefore their way of studying and exploration can count as complete and thorough."[266] Similarly, Gu Yanwu pointed out that, "The biggest harm to scholars must be their obstinate insistence on one principle, trying to apply it to everything." In Gu's view, this tendency was not really different from those common people who did not have any principles to follow.[267] Huang Zongxi, in his famous preface to *The Record of Ming Scholars* (Mingru xue'an 明儒學案), claimed that "The human mind that situates in the world keeps changing, full of contingency." For him, probing into these changes and their contexts allowed him to explore and understand many principle of human society. He thus criticized those at his time who were "Always trying

[266] "其知治天下乎，儒者之正己也。固已守仁體信，無殘人之事矣，然而古今異宜。時變多歧，九州殊俗，人情相遠，執一人之意見，扞天下之物理，傷民戕物……智士與時推移，愚人泥不知變，夫其能與時移者楚心於經世，而講求之道詳也。夫其泥而違時者自用乃師心，而講求之道闕也。" Chen Qianhe, Chu Gongpian Part 2" (儲功篇下), *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (皇朝經世文編), *juan* 1.

[267] "學者之患，莫甚乎執一而不化。及其施之於事，有扞格而不通，則忿懥生，而五情瞀亂，與眾人之滑性而焚和者，相去蓋無幾也。" Gu Yanwu, *Rizhilu*, *juan* 1, title 29, "Gen qixian" (艮其限)

to unify the mind into one path and destroy its beautiful and clever roots into futile ends."[268]

This anti-dogmatist and anti-fundamentalist tendency had much to do with the early Evidential Learning scholars' focus on the objective understanding of political, social, and cultural mechanisms in their pursuit of statecraft learning. Their attention to the historicity of things and their interest in the contextual experience of humanity contributed to a ground of knowledge about how civilization came into being and evolved. This level of knowledge could be explored collectively only after many scholars have given up self-cultivation as the process of knowing, and when they tried to reveal the principle of civilization from the perspective of human psychology rather than from moral philosophy. In fact, they did not need Neo-Confucian interpretations of the Four Books to offer them a moral philosophical premise in order to understand the Classics coherently.

If Yan Yuan criticized Neo-Confucian learning because he believed that its focus on the cultivation of the moral mind would lead scholars to digress from the real purpose of Heaven-and-Earth, early Evidential Learning scholars believed that such cultivation would prevent scholars from knowing about the world and human society. For instance, Chen Qianhe reflected that those who usually talked about nature and destiny (性命) did not know how to deal with pragmatic problems or how to comprehend statecraft matters. Scholars should fully understand the human conditions in the world (周知天下之人情)

[268] "盈天地皆心也，變化不測，不能不萬殊。心無本體，功力所至，即其本體，故窮理者，窮此心之萬殊，非窮萬物之萬殊也。窮心則物莫能循，窮物則心滯一隅，是以古之君子寧鑿五丁之間道，不假邯鄲之野馬，故其途亦不得不殊。奈何今之君子必欲出於一途，使美厥靈根者化為焦芽絕港。" Huang Zongxi, preface to *Mingru xue'an, Huang Zongxi quanji,* Vol.7, 3.

in order to know how to conduct statecraft learning, not just to follow the skills and avoid becoming ignorant. "If literati scholars (*shi*) hope to be responsible for the order of the world, they have to start from diligent exploration of knowledge about that world, and their explorations have to start right away, even before they have problems to solve." [269] For Chen, what was missing from Neo-Confucian learning was an understanding of the general principles of human culture. Explorations of this knowledge should become a daily intellectual habit.

The fact that these scholars denounced Neo-Confucians' moral cultivation as the basis for shared learning does not mean these scholars did not care about the ethics of their scholarship. In fact, Gu Yanwu was fully aware of the distinction between the extended knowledge of things and scholarly ethics. Yet, as he explained in his famous letter to Zhang Erqi, scholarly ethics did not require scholars to participate in the practice of moral cultivation as the focus of their learning. In fact, scholarly ethics would see overall improvement if scholars all stopped pursing irresponsible empty learning.[270]
In 1660, the Qing government banned the organization of *wenshe* communities. In the view of the Qing ruler, these communities were a legacy inherited from late Ming literati

[269] "有平居高言性命，臨事茫無措手者，彼徒求空虛之理。而於當世之事未嘗親歷而明試之，經濟之不行。……凡所以周知天下之人情，使不至於迂而鮮通疏而貽陋耳。……夫士欲任天下，必自勤訪問始，其勤訪問，必自無事之日始。" Chen Qianhe, "Chugong pian Part 2," (儲功篇下) *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (皇朝經世文編), *juan* 1.

[270] "愚所謂聖人之道者如文何？曰博學於文，曰行已有恥。自一身以至於天下國家皆學之事也，自子臣弟友以至出入往來辭受取與之間皆有恥之事也。恥之於人大矣。不恥惡衣惡食而恥匹夫匹婦之不被其澤。故曰萬物皆備於我矣。反身而誠。嗚呼！士而不先言恥則為無本之人。非好古而多聞則為空虛之學。以無本之人而講空虛之學，吾見其日從事於圣人而去之彌遠也。" Gu Yanwu, "Yu youren lunxue shu" (與友人論學書) *Qingru xue'an,* Vol.1 331.

activism.[271] But the Classical and historical learning networks, originally having arisen in the 1630s and 1640s, had by this time turned into thriving scholarly communities like those envisioned by Zhang Pu. The model of such scholarly communities developed under the support of local officials, publishers, and individual libraries into the later period of Qing. Meanwhile, as I will discuss in detail in the following chapter, the early Qing Evidential scholars downplayed the role of scholars as candidates for officialdom, but actively engaged with historically minded theorizations of social-political life, believing the *Ru* values were justified by the tradition's contribution to a virtuous and successful community life. In a context where the Qing ruler, Kangxi, was constructing a state ideology based on Neo-Confucian doctrines, these Classical and historical scholars identified themselves with the cumulative civilizing process of the political community that had endured since antiquity. In so doing, they transformed the intellectual values associated with the Fushe model into a new literati ideology that justified the burgeoning textual scholarship on the Classics and history as an intellectually valuable and politically critical elite culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Neo-Confucianism, the major force defining the center of intellectual culture since the Southern Song, declined along with the fall of Ming, while a new intellectual culture appeared during the transition to redefine the *Ru* tradition and the public role of literati scholars.

[271] Wang Fan-sen, "Qingchu de jiangjing hui," 536.

I have first shown how the movement of Wang Yangming's Learning of the Mind and the expansion of local charitable enterprises led to an unintended consequence, the collapse of the common literati culture based on Neo-Confucianism. Specifically, the left-wing followers of Wang Yangming promoted a radically existential and anti-intellectual interpretation of Neo-Confucian learning, claiming that it was problematic and even harmful to rely on textual learning to find one's innate goodness. Instead, many of them encouraged a synchronism of *Ru* teachings with Buddhist teachings, shifting the goal of learning from the cultivation of a moral self to the search for the true existential self. Meanwhile, people started to draw on religious language beyond the *Ru* tradition to justify the importance of conducting social good. In this context, the literati world started a profound self-reflection on its traditions, which led to the search for a justification of the values of learning and the search for a new ground for their public leadership.

The dynastic decline and the invasion of the Manchus heightened this self-reflection and turned it to a profound identity crisis. Believing that the social and political crises of the late Ming were caused by the lack of a responsible and public-minded common learning, and by a self-centered culture that appealed to religious discourse, many groups tried to restore elite learning by shifting away from the fight for leadership of local charities. Instead they formed political societies in an effort to engage national politics and represent national interests. The Donglin and the Fushe, two literati political movements from the late sixteenth century to the early seventeenth century, were the most impactful of these movements. I have reconstructed each movement in terms of its perspective on literati leadership and its assumptions about intellectual values, and I have

explained why Donglin's model failed while Fushe's model succeeded and expanded through the Ming-Qing transition.

In particular, I have shown how the Donglin leaders tried to maintain the positive contribution of Wang Yangming's Learning of Mind, namely, Wang's liberating interpretation of innate goodness, with the hope of restoring agency to scholars. On the other hand, they wanted to transform the Neo-Confucian activity of discoursing on learning into an ideological force to critically intervene in court politics. In setting up the Donglin Academy, they tried to make the effort of self-cultivation and literati cultural identity meaningful again by directly connecting self-cultivation with political criticism, seeing themselves as advocates of the ultimate moral good in society. They not only added moralized political criticisms of the central government to their daily learning curriculum, but also engaged in political battles with eunuchs at court to demonstrate the significance of moral faith, battles that ended in tragedy for the Donglin. Although the Donglin Academy became a symbol of literati political activism, it collapsed with the decline of the Ming, and many of its figures chose to embrace martyrdom. Their model was not followed by the younger generations, and they left some Neo-Confucian predicaments unresolved. For instance, how could the fundamentalist view of values in their learning be reconciled with the cumulative, pragmatic nature of political knowledge? How could self-cultivation (*xiushen*) be integrated meaningfully with ordering the world (*jingshi*)? How could the *Ru* doctrines be maintained as the only valid textual basis for moral cultivation?

Instead, the Fushe, under the leadership of people such as Zhang Pu, mobilized a younger generation of scholars to engage in collective statecraft studies and

argumentative political writing. These scholars did not begin their studies by conducting Neo-Confucian moral cultivation, but came from a culture of historical and literary learning. They worked out a compelling model of literati learning based on a set of new intellectual values and argued for a new perspective to justify the values of the *Ru* learning tradition.

The Fushe leaders looked at the sages of antiquity as the historical founders of civilized life, who acquired knowledge about the world and humans and made use of the resources available to them to build a just and strong polity. While the Neo-Confucians had conceived of themselves first of all as moral exemplars who generated influence through family-centered charitable organizations in their localities, the Fushe scholars considered themselves to be specialists on government, and they saw participation in and repair of the government as their main responsibility. Meanwhile, they claimed that solidarity among scholars across the nation, bound together by a common commitment to the nation's interests, was more important than family-based ethics.

Furthermore, Fushe scholars proposed a set of intellectual values that differed from the Neo-Confucian agenda, and they aimed to achieve different intellectual enterprises. They engaged with extensive studies of the Classics and histories, shifting the goal of textual learning from reaching moral Coherence to pursuing an open-ended and cumulative agenda of knowledge. They argued that good judgments were not necessarily moral judgments, and they were critical of the moral foundationalism of the Neo-Confucian tradition as a hindrance for scholars to gain perspective about the world. They trained scholars to write argumentative political essays based on their Classical and historical learning, believing this enterprise of "*wen*" would influence their world. They

studied a wide range of historical texts and writings in history to understand the community's life and institutional history. They treated the Classics as the source for understanding the principles of government as well as the community's historical foundation. Most importantly, because the principles that scholars ought to look for in the Classics would now be about the foundation of the community's civilized life, they argued for including all the historical texts from past to present as the basic reference for scholars to draw on when they searched for principles in the Classics, because the real principles ought to be substantiated by human experience. In other words, scholars should explore historical texts, and reason through historical writings to make sense of the realities of political and institutional life in order to understand the general teachings of the Classics about how to build and maintain a great civilization.

Fushe scholars developed a new discourse to justify the meaning of *Ru* tradition. The tradition of *Ru* learning ought to hold authority, they believed because it contributed to the community's civilized life. Based on this belief, not only could they give the study of the Classics meaning for contemporary life, but they themselves could become a part of the civilizing tradition. Learning was supposed to be responsible for the community's political well-being. Scholars ought to commit themselves to the government, but the rulers and the scholar-ministers would maintain an equal relationship based on the mutual trust they shared with each other for the sake of the community.

The Neo-Confucian practice of discoursing on learning was challenged as the Ming careened from crisis to crisis. While Donglin members and other like-minded Neo-Confucian scholar-officials were deeply concerned with the troubles of their time, their intellectual solutions were usually seen to be theoretically self-referential and practically

deconstructive. The end of the Ming also marked the end of literati political activism. Against this backdrop, Fushe's approach appeared to be more theoretically satisfying and institutionally constructive, promising a more successful solution to public needs and individual motivation. Fushe's community gained much success under the support of local officials and young scholars, and later generations would extend its networks and influence into the Qing, creating a social and cultural model for the incoming Classical learning communities that would transform the intellectual culture in the following period.

This chapter has also demonstrated that in the context of early Qing, when late Ming literati political activism had left the stage, Neo-Confucian learning gradually turned into something almost theoretically unrecognizable and politically problematic to many literati. Focusing on other two different schools' criticisms of the Neo-Confucian learning program, the Yan Yuan school and the early Evidential Learning school, this chapter has also examined different perspectives on the future of literati learning in the context of the early Qing, explaining why the position of the Evidential Learning scholars found broader appeal.

In particular, we have seen how leading Neo-Confucians in the early Qing, known as the Statecraft Neo-Confucians, attempted to work out new approaches to moral cultivation that could meaningfully integrate the pursuit of statecraft knowledge with the cultivation of the individual moral mind. Their theorizations used strategies different from their Donglin predecessors, at a time when Fushe's influence on statecraft scholarship had expanded. Specifically, these early Qing statecraft Neo-Confucians shared an apologist attitude, believing that literati political activism was an important

factor leading to the fall of Ming. They no longer had confidence in the innate goodness of the mind either as something to be cultivated or as a basis for action. They were mostly concerned with how to back up the *Great Learning*'s program of cultivation with devotion to statecraft practice, how to defend the basis of moral cultivation as an essential aspect of statecraft learning, and how to theorize the philosophical importance of daily statecraft practice as inseparable from a true understanding of the message of the Four Books. In other words, the discourse on the importance of statecraft practice in daily life became a new way to find a unified moral ground for learning. However, with such a strategy the Neo-Confucian group now appeared to collaborate with the court, which chose to build its imperial ideology on Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian doctrine. The ideology of these Neo-Confucians, as I will show in next chapter, allowed the new Manchu rulers to justify themselves on the grounds of the moral nature of Heaven-and-Earth, and their negative attitude toward the theory of the innate knowledge of the good put them in opposition to political criticism by other scholars. Also, their eclectic discourse on moral learning had made its central claims about learning almost unrecognizable.

Contemporaries of these Neo-Confucians expressed their skepticism toward the validity of the Neo-Confucian program of moral cultivation and its value for intellectual culture. Starting out from reflections on his unfulfilling experience trying to follow Song Neo-Confucian discourse, Yan Yuan developed a powerful criticism against Neo-Confucian ideology as a whole and tried to offer an alternative interpretation of the *Ru* learning tradition that would shift literati learning from self-cultivation to statecraft learning. Although Yan did not believe in moral reflection, he nonetheless shared the Neo-Confucians' fundamentalist definition of knowledge and values. Defining the source

of statecraft learning in a transcultural force of the Heaven-and-Earth, he still embraced the Four Books as defining doctrines for a common literati learning. The combination of his fundamentalist definition of knowledge/values and his rejection of conceptual reflection contributed to a rigid and unrealistic perspective of social-political life and a dogmatic reading of the Classics. Unlike the Fushe figures, whose model of learning was based on historicizing the Classics as examples of government in practice, Yan was not able to provide a sustainable and sharable scholarly agenda for the literati world. Meanwhile, the early Evidential Learning scholars developed the interests and networks left by the Fushe in the early Qing, continued to foster their success through groups devoted to Classical and historical study, and developed a new view about the power relationship between the literati and the ruler. This new power relationship was justified by the idea that the new Classical scholarship could provide authoritative knowledge about the foundations of the civil order. Choosing not to serve in government, they formulated independent scholarly communities to pursue their study. Significantly, their criticism of the dogmatism Neo-Confucian learning and its self-absorbed ignorance in the face of the complexities of civil life, eventually convinced many people that the Neo-Confucian program of personal cultivation was irrelevant and even harmful. In the next chapter I will turn to an exploration of the rise of the major Evidential Learning scholars in the late seventeenth century, demonstrating how they created a new ideological framework to interpret the foundations of *Ru* tradition.

Chapter 2. Constructing a New Ideology through Political Theorization: Reinterpreting *Ru* Tradition and the Rise of Evidential Learning in the Late Seventeenth Century

Introduction

Through the Ming-Qing transition, Neo-Confucian moral learning had become less and less convincing as the source for the literati world to define its cultural and political agency. However, the new role that the Fushe leaders had defined for literati scholars, as specialists on government representing the national interest, was not institutionalized under the new Qing regime. Fushe-style literati political activism would not return until the late Qing. Instead, as I shall show, the literati world of the late seventeenth century witnessed the rise of a government ideology based on a conservative interpretation of Neo-Confucianism, the enactment of a court-sponsored Neo-Confucian textual learning program through the curricula of official academies and the civil service examination, and the celebration of a moralized social order at the local level, to be realized by literati families/lineages and local officials.

What did this trend mean for the leading intellectuals of the time? In this context, I turn to the scholars whom we often call the founders of Evidential Learning: Huang Zongxi (黃宗羲), Gu Yanwu (顧炎武), and Wang Fuzhi (王夫之), three descendants of the new culture that had been represented by the Fushe. They could be described as the most talented Classical and historical scholars and devoted political activists that the Fushe leaders might have hoped to produce. When the political activism of the late Ming

ceased to be a possibility in the early Qing, and early Qing Neo-Confucians helped the Manchu court to legitimize its rulership, each of these three leading scholars endeavored to create an alternative literati ideology by transforming the Fushe's practice of statecraft studies and argumentative writing into a thorough social and political theorization. This ideological effort motivated them to reinterpret the foundation of the values of *Ru* learning and the model of antiquity based on their formidable Classical and historical scholarship, contributing to their remarkable legacy in social and political thought. Moreover, by offering a new compelling understanding of the goals of literati culture, they succeeded in persuading the next generation to devote itself to what they believed to be the meaningful practice of Classical and historical scholarship.

To explain this process, I will situate the structure of these three figures' intellectual agendas in the context of the early Qing. I will show how their choices of extensive, cumulative, and critically engaged Classical and historical scholarship were intrinsically linked to their views about what kind of elite culture was needed and what role literati scholars ought to play in guiding public life. To answer these questions, each of them reflected on such fundamental issues as the basis of civilization, the foundation of government, the source of moral values, and the basis of knowledge.

First, I will draw on current scholarship to explain how the early Qing statecraft Neo-Confucians helped the Manchu court to construct a government ideology. I will reconstruct the structure and logic of this ideology, showing what it meant to the larger literati world. Second, I will turn to the specific agendas of Huang Zongxi, Gu Yanwu, and Wang Fuzhi, focusing on how these leading thinkers positioned the role of elite

learning in the context of the formation of Qing government ideology. In the end, I will compare them and assess their shared legacy and their individual positions.

The Qing Construction of Imperial Ideology: Combining Government and Moral Learning

The Early Qing Policy on Learning

After the Qing established its central government in 1644, the court carried out a set of policies under the Shunzhi emperor including restoring the offices of learning and schools at the prefectural, sub-prefectural, and county levels, supporting students from poor families, and exempting the candidates in the Imperial College from tuition as well as otherwise helping with their finances. Accordingly, starting from the mid-1650s, the literati world witnessed the Qing court increasingly stressing the importance of *Ru* learning to the construction of state civil policy. The court also restored the Imperial College and the ritual of *piyong* (辟雍), lectures for the emperor at the Imperial College. From 1652 to 1657, Shunzhi informed the Department of Rites that the court would promote the *Ru* and emphasize their pursuit of values (崇儒重道), ordered local officials to establish schools in order to encourage the teaching of culture and to support the study of Classical knowledge (興文教崇經術), and organized the first ceremonial imperial lecture.[272] At the Confucian Temple nearby, Shunzhi's court erected a stele to explain that the state had restored the learning of the Confucian Classics in hopes of bringing

[272] Yang Jing (楊菁), *Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu* (清初理學思想研究) (Taibei: Liren shuju, 2008), 3.

literati-scholars into service for the country.[273] Afterwards, the emperor also announced through the Bureau of Rites,

> Emperors govern the country. Therefore, they ought to support civil education. Officials assist the emperors. Therefore, they ought to treat the study of the Classics as their fundamental commitment. Since the Ming fell into chaos, there has been constant warfare. Consequently, discussion of the Way of learning has not been carried out. From now on, because the country is returning to order, I will celebrate civil teaching and encourage the studies of the Classics so that peace will arrive. Your Bureau office should pass the edict to the education officials of each province so that the officials will supervise the students and make sure they are all well versed in the books for the learning of principle, moral behavior, statecraft, and institutions. Understanding the fundamentals of the Classics will lead a scholar to become a real *Ru*; fulfilling the applications of the Classics will lead a scholar to become a good official. I promise to promote those [of lower rank], as long as they obtain substantive learning (*shixue*). I will appoint them with significant missions.
>
> 帝王敷治，文教為先。臣子致君，經術為本。自明末擾亂，日尋干戈，學問之道，闕焉未講。今天下漸定，朕將興文教，崇經術，以開太平。爾部傳諭直省學臣，訓督士子，凡理學、道德、經濟、典故諸書，務研求淹貫。明體則為真儒，達用則為良吏。果有實學，朕必不次簡拔，重加任用。[274]

The new court claimed that it was ready to offer scholars the chance to serve the government, assuring the literati that the new regime, just like its predecessor the Ming, would rely on their erudition. The criteria of learning that the early Qing court identified were inclusive, without a clearly defined ideological focus. Such a stance might have allowed the early Qing court to invite scholars from many different regions of the country to serve the government. In the following years under the Shunzhi reign, debates about the focus and subjects of the civil service exam continued, but the general sense was that they should follow what was considered to be a more "substantive" program, namely, one that would help to select capable candidates for officialdom. For instance, proposals for

[273] "Xuexiao 1" (學校一), *Qing shi gao* (清史稿) *juan* 106, *zhi* 81.

[274] Ibid.

adding poetry to the exam were declined, and the *zhiyi* exam, which had been dominated by Neo-Confucian discourse and focused on interpreting passages from the Four Books and Classics rather than testing statecraft skills, was also brought up for discussion.[275] By and large, guided by a general principle of being inclusive rather than exclusive, the court chose to safely follow the old structure of the Ming civil service exam, which was based on a Neo-Confucian curriculum centering on Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's commentaries.[276] This strategy was important at this moment of the early Qing because it allowed scholars to continue their educational traditions through the course of the dynastic transition, avoiding unnecessary upset. The metropolitan exams under the Shunzhi reign from 1646 to 1661 produced almost two thousand *jinshi* degree holders for the court.[277] In the second and the fourth years of the Kangxi reign, when the metropolitan exams of 1664 and 1667 suddenly dropped the *zhiyi* exam and moved the *celun* exam to the beginning, an official observed that many provincial candidates chose not to attend the metropolitan exams due to the change.[278] If this official's interpretation is correct, the sudden decrease

[275] In 1645, Gong Dingzi (龔鼎孳 1615－1673) proposed the addition of a poetry test and the replacement of policy essays (*celun*) with a memorial composition. This suggestion was not accepted by the emperor. "Xuanju 3," (選舉三) *Qing shi gao, juan* 108, *zhi* 83.

[276] "首場四書三題，五經各四題，士子各占一經。四書主朱子集註，易主程傳、朱子本義，書主蔡傳，詩主朱子集傳，春秋主胡安國傳，禮記主陳澔集說。其後春秋不用胡傳，以左傳本事為文，參用公羊、穀梁。二場論一道，判五道，詔、誥、表內科一道，三場經史時務策五道。" Ibid.

[277] The data is from Jiang Qingbo's (江慶柏), *Qingchao jinshi timinglu* (清朝進士題名錄) Vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 2007.)

[278] "(康熙)三年甲辰會試。初廢八股取士，專用策論，改試二場。取中二百五十人，比前科人數頓減，蓋士子習於八比，苦於遷業，應試者甚少。" Fuge (福格) "Xiang hui shi zhanggu 1," (鄉會試掌故一), *Tingyu congtan* (聽雨叢談) *juan* 9. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 1959), 168.

of examination candidates might have hinted to the court what an important role the practice of the *zhiyi* essay had played for the local literati in their exam preparation. This change also led to criticism from some other officials. As Huang Ji (黃機) argued, "The use of the *zhiyi* to test students at the beginning will require them to illustrate the subtle meaning of the sages, and will demonstrate the moral quality of their mind (*xinshu* 心術). Then the use of the *celun* will ask them to comprehend the changes of things from the past to the present, and will manifest their talents and strategic abilities." If the court dropped the *zhiyi*, candidates would "forget about the importance of the learning of the sages and consider the exams to be too simple."[279] Accepting this suggestion, the *zhiyi* writing exam was restored in 1668.

By the beginning of the Kangxi reign, more and more scholars had entered the government with a background of Neo-Confucianism-centered examination learning. It was only from the late 1660s, however, that these cultural policies started to become institutionalized. Not only did the Kangxi emperor make moves to actively patronize *Ru* learning, reaching out to the local literati communities to acknowledge their culture as an indispensable factor for maintaining civil order, but also he devoted himself to learning. In 1669, he organized a *piyong* (辟雍) ceremony, visited the imperial college, and

[279] "鄉、會試首場試八股文，康熙二年，廢制義，以三場策五道移第一場，二場增論一篇，表、判如故。行止兩科而罷。四年，禮部侍郎黃機言：“制科向系三場，先用經書，使闡發聖賢之微旨，以觀其心術。次用策論，使通達古今之事變，以察其才猷。今止用策論，減去一場，似太簡易。且不用經書為文，人將置聖賢之學於不講，請復三場舊制。”報可。七年，復初制，仍用八股文。二十四年，用給事中楊爾淑請，禮闈及順天試四書題俱欽命。時詔、誥題士子例不作，文、論、表、判、 策率多雷同剿襲，名為三場並試，實則首場為重。首場又四書藝為重。二十六年廢詔、誥，既而令五經卷兼作。論題舊出孝經，康熙二十九年，兼用性理、太極圖說、通書、西銘、正蒙。五十七年，論題專用性理。世宗初元，詔孝經與五經並重，為化民成俗之本。宋儒書雖足羽翼經傳，未若聖言之廣大，論題仍用孝經。” "Xuanju 3," (選舉三) *Qing shi gao, juan* 108, *zhi* 83.

worshiped Confucius in the college. Later he also worshipped Duke Zhou, Confucius, and other sage kings in his residence. In 1670, he restored the Hanlin Academy, promulgated a *Sacred Edict* (Sheng Yu 聖諭) to the local officials announcing his determination to follow the model of the sage kings of antiquity, and asking the officials to work with local families to be responsible for the moral cultivation of society. In the same year, he resumed the daily routine of learning Confucian texts that Shunzhi had been unable to continue. In 1671, he resumed the ceremony of Classical lectures, and committed to organizing the lectures twice a year.[280] In 1678, he organized the *Boxue hongru* exam (博學鴻儒), a special literary exam, inviting officials to recommend local scholars to serve the government without going through the regular civil service exams. In the following year, he opened the Compilation Office for Ming Dynastic History and appointed fifty scholars selected by that special exam to take charge of the compilation of a history of the preceding dynasty. This was another way of engaging people who were still reluctant to join in cultural and scholarly activities organized by the Manchu court. In 1684, he bowed down to the statue of the Confucius at the Confucian Temple in Shandong and claimed himself to be a student of the Master.[281] In his later years he showed a strong penchant for Zhu Xi's learning by supporting the publication of many imperial editions of commentaries on Zhu Xi (1715-1718) and elevating the level of worship of Zhu Xi (1718). He also ordered the use of the *Complete Collection on Nature and Coherence* (Xingli daquan 性理大全), a major Ming compilation interpreting Song Neo-Confucian writings, for formulating the standard pool of questions to be asked in the

[280] Yang Jing, Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu

[281] Ibid.,4.

civil service exams.[282] He followed a life-long routine of attending lectures given by Neo-Confucian teachers from the Imperial College who taught Zhu Xi's commentaries and discussions. Often times he gave better interpretations than his Han officials and teachers, therefore he would turn to leading the lectures himself, questioning the officials about their own cultivation.[283] He also ordered scholars and officials in the court to compile *Moral Essence of Nature and Coherence* (Xingli jingyi 性理精義) and *Comprehensive Interpretation on Zhuzi* (Zhuzi quanshu 朱子全書) to document his own interpretations. Eventually, he also came to formulate essay questions for the *zhiyi* exam.[284]

Persuading the Ruler: The Early Qing Neo-Confucian Officials

It would be wrong to assume that this process was an automatic outcome. In fact, it was a result of persuasion as well as collaboration between the rulers and the early Qing Neo-Confucian officials, who entered the new government through civil service exams together with mutual recommendations in the first three decades.[285] Some of them

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[282] Ibid.,15.

[283] Yang Nianqun (楊念群), *Hechu shi jiannan*? *Qingchao zhengtongguan de queli he shilin jingshen shijie de bianyi* (何处是江南？清朝正统观的确立和士林精神世界的变异) (Beijing: Sheng huo, du shu, xin zhi san lian shu dian, 2010), 80-91.

[284] "Xuanju 3," (選舉三) *Qing shi gao, juan* 108, *zhi* 83.

[285] For a discussion on the early Qing Zhu Xi learning under the support of the court, see Wing-Tsit Chan, "The Hsing-li ching-I and the Ch'eng-Chu School of the Seventeenth Century," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, 543-80. For Kangxi's commitments in Zhu Xi's learning and his politics, see Huang Chin-Shing's (黃進興) "The Price of Having a Sage Emperor", in *Philosophy, Philology, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century China, Li Fu and the Lu-Wang School under the Ch'ing* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 148-68. For a focused study of Qing's cultural policy in early Qing, see Ye Gaoshu (葉高樹), *Qingchao qianqi de wenhua zhengce* (清朝前期的文化政策) (Taibei: Daoxiang Press, 2009). For a focused study of early Qing Neo-Confucian figures, see Yang Jing, *Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu*. A more recent study discussing the impact of Qing rulers' imperial ideology on literati mentality is Yang

became Shunzhi and Kangxi's policy consultants and/or teachers, and others became exemplary officials at different levels of government. By convincing the Manchu emperors of the importance of *Ru* learning, they succeeded in persuading the emperors to value literati officials and their teachings and rituals in court, making a challenge to other Manchu nobles. They also pushed the emperors to bind with the literati world.

Wei Yijie (魏裔介 1616-1686), a northerner from north Zhili, a close friend of Sun Qifeng and one of the early influential literati officials under Shunzhi's reign, proposed in 1648 to the court, which was then under the control of Dorgon, that the Shunzhi emperor needed to participate in regular Classical learning lectures given by Han literati teachers in order to learn how to govern the country.[286] He recommended Zhu Xi's *Outlines and Details of the Comprehensive Mirror* (Tongjian gangmu 通鑑綱目) and other major statecraft writings in the tradition of Neo-Confucianism, namely, Zhen Dexiu's *Abundant Meanings of the Great Learning* (Daxue yanyi 大學衍義) Qiu Jun's *Supplement to Abundant Meanings of the Great Learning* (Daxue yanyi bu 大學衍義補), and *Essentials about Politics from the Zhenguan reign (627-649)* (Zhenguan zhengyao 貞觀政要). Wei argued that as an emperor, Shunzhi had the responsibility to cultivate people and to let them restore their good nature (*fu xing* 復性). All the sages had

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Nianqun, *Hechu shi "jiangnan"*? *Qingchao zhengtongguan de queli he shilin jingshen shijie de bianyi.* For a discussion on early Qing scholars' return to Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, see Wang Fan-sen, "Qingchu sixiang quxiang yu *Liuzi jieyao* - jianlun qingchu jishan xuepai de fenlie" (清初思想趨向與《劉子節要》－兼論清初蕺山學派的分裂), (*Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan*) (中研研究院歷史語言研究所集刊) 68.2. (1997): 417-48.

285 Huang Chin-Shing, Philosophy, Philology, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century China, 158.

286 Yang Jing, *Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu,* 51. His memorial is called "Yangqi jishi jiangxue yi long wanshi zhiben shu" (仰乞及時講學以隆萬世治本疏)

devoted themselves to this goal, including the sage kings of antiquity and Confucius and Mencius, who had not acquired rulership.[287] Only if Shunzhi could correct his own mind and cultivate himself into a moral leader would the world be governed.[288] Wei's legacy also included the recruitment of a group of men such as Li Guangdi (李光地 1642-1718) and Lu Longqi (陸隴其 1630-1693), who would become famous Neo-Confucian officials during the Kangxi reign.

Xiong Cilü (熊賜履 1635-1709), from Hubei, was Kangxi's mentor and introduced him to study Zhu Xi's works. He also recommended other influential Neo-Confucian officials such as Wei Xiangshu (魏象樞 1617-1687) and Li Guangdi to the emperor. In 1667, in his *Thousand Word Memorial* (Wanyan Shu 萬言書), he claimed that he intended to target the inappropriate behavior of many powerful Manchu nobles who were dominating the court, seeing them as elements that disturbed the morality of the government in front of the world.[289] In order to cultivate the morality of the government, he emphasized the importance of selecting *Ru* officials. Meanwhile, he asked Kangxi to institutionalize the regular Classical learning lectures that Shunzhi had wanted to attend but could not due to Dorgon's control. He also suggested appointing officials to keep an Imperial Diary (起居注官) to note down Kangxi's everyday life and

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[287] "三皇五帝之治天下，神而化之，使下各復其性。皇上仁覆萬物，以是為化導助，故亦使天下之人，同歸於本性之善而已。"

[288] "人君有志於二帝、三王之道，則必先端其本，以定其所向，而後可得其樞紐之所存。蓋聖人之治，聖人之學為之；聖人之學，聖人之心為之" Yang Jing, *Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu, ?* "唐、虞授受之際，言精言一，然後命岳命官，平章協和；禹、湯、文、武之王，皆以一中心法口授耳傳。" "Jingshi dafa zai fangce lun," (經世大法在方策論) *Jianjitang wenji* (兼濟堂文集) *juan* 14 *Yingyin wenyuange siku quanshu*, Vol. 1312

[289] "內臣者外臣之表也，本原之地則在朝廷 其大者尤在立綱紀、用人行政之間 "

learning in hopes that the emperor could discipline himself every day.[290] Furthermore, he proposed to Kangxi that it was important to have frequent discussions and consultations with a group of close *Ru* officials on issues such as morality, government, history and even topics such as cosmology and humanity.[291] Xiong argued that, by truly cultivating himself through reading books and reflecting on his intentions, the emperor would connect his mind to the minds of the sage kings of antiquity, and would accordingly lead a peaceful and prosperous world.[292] Xiong also stressed that it was important to set up local schools and academies,[293] proposing that these schools should follow Zhu Xi's *Statutes of the White Deer Cave Academy* (Bailudong xuegui 白鹿洞學規) and *Elementary Learning* (Xiao Xue 小學).[294]

Apart from these two representative figures who directly proposed the institutionalization of *Ru* learning to the emperor as the basis for a successful government, Wei Xiangshu (魏象樞 1617-1687) , Tang Bin (湯斌 1627-1687), Lu

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[290] Yang Jing, Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu, 332, 334.

[291] "天人理欲之分，危微操守之界，道術是非之辨，政事得失之由，古今治亂安慰之關，國運隆替盛衰之故，以及人才消長、民生休戚，天命去留、生靈向背，一一明晰而討究之。或引證經史，或指切時務，務期表裡精粗洞徹融貫。"

[292] "由是直接二帝、三王之心法，自足措斯世於唐虞三代之聖，又何吏治之不清，民生之不遂哉？"

[293] "學校之設，專以明倫。蓋倫理所關甚矩，上以是教，下以是學，舉夫訓俗興行，育賢造士人，悉於是乎在。" He noted that the functions of the schools and academies must be compatible and mutually supportive. The academies should have officials to promote the local literati scholars to focus on practice as a way to devote themselves to learning, rather than generating critical opinions. For instance, "則願吾當有志之士，以嘿（默）識為真修，以篤行為至教，勿口舌軋擊以矜能，勿意見紛挐以長傲……" *Huang Qing wenying* (皇清文穎) *juan* 18. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:12248183 Seq: 1548

[294] Yang Jing, Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu, 340

Longqi (陸隴其), and Zhang Boxing (張伯行 1651-1725) were also key figures in reaffirming and spreading the imperial teaching. They wrote about the importance of self-cultivation for the emperor and the broader government, celebrated Kangxi's decision to patronize Neo-Confucian learning and to devote himself to becoming a sage. They praised Kangxi for recruiting responsible officials devoted to Neo-Confucian learning, and for sincerely working with the literati on the agenda of cultivating the world (*jiaohua* 教化).

Wei Xiangshu, a northerner from Hebei and a good friend of Sun Qifeng and Li Yong, proposed to the court that the state should compile a *Selection of Important Ritual Institutions* (Lizhi jiyao 禮制集要) and *Instructions to the People* (Jiaomin bangwen 教民榜文), and local officials should devote themselves to promoting these teachings to the common people.[295] In this process, local literati-scholars would be expected to help the government to reach its goal. He explained to the court that in order to let everyone follow the emperor's Sacred Edict, local officials, regardless of their ethnic identities, ought to cultivate themselves according to the moral doctrines specified in the *Edict*.[296] Wei also proposed to the emperor that, in order to have officials and literati elites fully devote themselves to him, the emperor ought to devote himself to becoming a sage first. Wei believed that Neo-Confucian learning would help to achieve a bond of mutual trust

[295] Ibid..

[296] His original explanation is illustrating: "教化係國家根本之圖，僅臣愚見，以佐大政事。臣家居時，曾經抄讀上諭，謂至治之世，不專以法令為務，而以教化為先。……竊思朝廷之教化，安能家喻而戶曉，惟共分朝廷之教化以為教化，自能端本以澄源，是在滿漢諸臣之為父兄者，家自為教，身自為教也。" Wei Xiangshu, "Zoushu" (奏疏), *Hansongtang quanji* (寒松堂全集) *juan* 12, *Sikuquanshu congmu congshu* 213 (四庫全書存目叢書) 610

between the emperors and his officials.

Lu Longqi, arguably the most conservative Neo-Confucian official in the early Qing, strongly proposed to the court that it should require literati scholars to follow the Cheng-Zhu tradition as the only correct version of *Ru* learning.[297] Local schools should only teach works by Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤), Zhang Zai (張載), Shao Yong (邵庸), Cheng Yi (程頤), Cheng Hao (程顥), and Zhu Xi. Only the Cheng-Zhu tradition could ensure that the identity of literatus-scholar (*Ru*) and the identity of official (*xunli* 循吏), could be meaningfully combined. Only by doing so could society be unified in morality and custom. Moreover, he proposed to the court that the state ought to carry out a strict system of patronizing *Ru* teachings in order to maintain a successful government, including promoting learning and establishing mandatory rituals for common people, and setting up punishment for those who did not follow.[298]

The Structure of the Government Ideology

To understand why the Qing rulers, especially Kangxi, would patronize *Ru* learning and devote themselves to self-cultivation in order to acquire the Learning of the Emperor (帝王之學 or 為君之學) as defined by the Neo-Confucian scholars, it is important to see that the theories of governmentality (治道) and emperorship (帝王之道

[297] The most representative discourse of Lu is his essay "The Tradition of the Moral Authority" (Dao tong 道統), in *Sanyu tang waiji* (三魚堂外集) *juan* 4, *Yingyin wenyuange siku quanshu*, Vol. 1325, 241.

[298] "竊惟帝王圖治，必以尊儒重道為先；國家化民，尤以勸學崇儒為務……"; "帝王所以化導天下，而使之各得其性者，惟中；所以範圍天下，而使之不戾中者，惟禮；所以整齊天下，而使之不達於禮者，惟刑。故禮也者，所以納民於中者也；刑也者，所以納民於禮者也。"

or 君道) propounded by these Neo-Confucian officials provided an important source of authority for the Qing rulers. For the officials mentioned above, in an ideal world everyone is cultivated morally and behaves like a sage. In this world, each individual can fulfill his or her good nature and live a moral and peaceful life together. This is an ideal world because it matches the mind, or the purpose, of Heaven. But importantly, unlike the Song and Ming Neo-Confucian thinkers who saw this world as being realized in a bottom-up fashion by individuals cultivating themselves as moral beings, the Qing government ideology stressed that this ideal world could be realized only through the effort of the governing power. It is the task of this power to know how to institutionalize the teachings of Heaven into its policies and doctrines. The key role in such a governing power is the emperor. In order to let everyone behave morally, it is first of all the emperor' obligation to transform himself. A morally cultivated emperor concerns himself only with the interest and order of the public. Rectifying his mind allows the emperor to base his rulership on the Way, which is the constant principle that everything everywhere is led by. If the emperor can rectify his mind, he is able to stay in tune with this Way and implement effective policies, rituals, and laws to fulfill the purpose of Heaven. In achieving his responsibility as a ruler, or *jun*, a cultivated emperor becomes the teacher, or *shi* (師) who instructs people how to live.

Thus, the role of a moral emperor is the key to good government. In a good government, the way of the ruler and the way of the teacher unite (君道師道合一), and thus the ideal order of society is achieved. According to Xiong Cilü, this is why Heaven created the role of the emperor in the first place. Moral cultivation is the job of the emperor; it gives him the agency to further rectify the court, individual officials, and the

ordinary people. Xiong also stressed that "the [rectified] mind of the ruler is the key to solving tens of thousands of things and is the measure of all changes, thus, the Way of the [sage] king (*wangdao* 王道) is rooted in rectifying the ruler's mind."[299] To govern with such a corrected mind would make the emperor a sage, authorized by Heaven to order the world. He would stay impartial and rational in his governance.[300]

To emphasize both the power and the responsibility that would come with moral cultivation, Wei Xiangshu claimed that policies and institutions, such as music, rituals, politics, and punishments, are essentially shaped by an emperor' emotional responses to the world. These policies and institutions would influence social life profoundly. Only by cultivating himself to be totally unselfish can an emperor respond to the world correctly.[301] Wei stated, "The basic [tools] for governing the world, namely, rules and laws, and the basic [tools] for teaching the world, namely, rituals, principles, and sense of shame, are unified and mutually supported."[302]

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[299] "君心者，萬機之樞要，而變化之權輿也，故王道必以正心為本……"Xiong Cilü, *Xiandaolu* (閑道錄), *Sikuquanshu cunmu congshu, zi bu* 22 (四庫全書存目叢書 子部 22) 44. "帝王治本於道，道本於心，惟君心正，斯內外小大無有不正，此虞廷授受，所以開萬事聖學之源也。" quoted from Yang Jing, 337

[300] "天理本有善而無惡，唯有善無惡，故好善惡惡。好惡，情也；好善惡惡，性也。聖人代天理物，經世宜民，是是非非，善善惡惡，辨之井然而不淆，處之秩然而各當，賞罰以持一時之平，褒貶以維萬世之公，皆由此道也。"

[301] The logic is explained in this message. "人君之喜怒哀樂，即禮樂政刑之所從出；人君之禮樂政刑，又即雨暘燠寒之所由見。中節則一人無偏倚之私，天下自協好惡之公，生所當生，生固生也；殺所當殺，殺亦生也。予所當予，予固予也；奪所當奪，奪亦予也。推之而田疇以治，學校以興，諸侯用命，臣工修職，徭役均平，盜賊屏息，範圍天地而不過，曲成萬物而不遺，天道下濟，地道上行，則位之象也，人無夭札，物無疵厲，則位育之象也。" "Zhonghe weiyu shuo" (中和位育說) , Hansongtang quanji, *juan* 12，553.

[302] "臣聞自古帝王，有治天下之本，曰綱紀法度；有教天下之本，曰禮義廉恥，所以相統相維，不至生悖生亂。" Wei Xiangshu, (Zhi chen getian zhi tu qiding liguo zhiben dengshi shu" (直陳格天之圖祈定立國之本等事疏), *Hansongtang quanji* (寒松堂全集) *juan* 1.

Where did literati officials learn about governmentality and emperorship, and how should the emperor acquire a moral mind? Literati officials took these lessons from their learning tradition, and the emperor should devote himself to studying the books of the sages and practicing their learning in his everyday governance. Wei Yijie claimed that the true learning of the emperor was not about studying broadly (*boxue* 博學),[303] but about truly cultivating himself and connecting with the tradition of moral authority (*daotong* 道統) left by the sage kings of antiquity and transmitted by later sages such as Confucius, Mencius, Zisi, the Cheng Brothers, and Zhu Xi, a lineage consisting of both morally cultivated rulers and teachers. This method of cultivating one's mind was the learning that allowed the emperor to save the world. To make this discourse work, early Qing Neo-Confucian officials argued that the tradition of political authority (*zhengtong* 政統) and the tradition of moral authority (*daotong* 道統) were supposed to be inseparable, and that the emperor should aim at bringing the political authority and the moral authority together through his cultivation. For this purpose, Wei Yijie compiled two books to demonstrate that unified tradition, entitled *A Record of the Authority of the Learning of Sages* (Shengxue zhitong lu 聖學知統錄) and *An Extended Record of the Authority of the Learning of the Sages* (Shengxue zhitong jilu 聖學知統翼錄). He wrote to Sun Qingfeng, the statecraft Neo-Confucian master, and explained that the way of the kings and the way

[303] "況天子之學，豈在乎縱橫藝圃，馳騁瑤林，多聞強記，以矜博學之名乎？故正心以正朝廷，正朝廷以正百官，正百官以正萬民，一正君而國定，正其心之謂也。夫正者無偏無倚之謂，蓋不待已發而後制之也。古聖之相授學也以中，中則無不正矣，主敬者，誠正心之第一義也，故曰慎獨可以行王道。" Wei Yijie, "Mingji libi lun" (明季利弊論), *Jianjitang wenji* (兼濟堂文集) *juan* 14, *Yingyin wenyuange siku quanshu*, Vol. 1312

of the teachers are derived from the same source of values.[304] For similar reasons, Xiong Cilü compiled a work entitled The *Tradition of the Authority of Learning* (Xuetong 學統) to reconstruct an intellectual lineage for Neo-Confucian learning. Zhang Boxing also compiled a *Record of the Tradition of the Authority of Morality* (Daotong lu 道統錄). He stated that, "Since imperial antiquity, it was the sage kings and their administrators that transmitted the tradition of the moral authority; but after Confucius [who did not acquire rulership], such a tradition has been transmitted through the *Ru* as teachers." However, he continued, it was Kangxi's devotion to Neo-Confucian learning that allowed these two groups to reunite. This reunion resumed the tradition. By building institutions and creating rules (*jianji* 建極) as a moral ruler, Kangxi based his governance on the method of mind-heart cultivation (本心法為治法), united the Way, and combined the legacies of the sages kings and the sages.[305]

What, then, should be the role of officials? How should they conduct learning? Xiong Cilü stressed that "While the rulers ought to think about why Heaven creates the position of ruler, the ministers ought to think about why rulers create the position of minister. If the ruler bases his mind on the mind of Heaven, then, all the ministers ought to base their mind on the ruler's mind, which simply means to focus on loving the people,

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[304] "明道之出於天，惟天降衷下民，厥有恆性，性無不善，明此善者，可以淑躬，可以治世，君道以此行，師道以此立，無二理也。" "Ji Sun Zhengyuanjun zhongyuan shu" (寄孫徵君種元書), *Jianjitang wenji, juan* 9, 806.

[305] For instance, Zhang explained the logic as such, " 溯自皇古以來，道統相承在君相；而迄素王以降，心傳代嬗於師儒，何幸天運循環，睹聖皇建極，由洛閩而溯鄒魯，遠接千餘年未續之傳；自宋代以至今茲，正際五百歲昌期之會，我皇上應允而興，承乾以馭，本心法為治法，統古今天地之道而咸宜，以作君兼作師，合帝王聖賢之傳而為一。" Zhang Boxing, "Gongjin lianluo guanmin shu biao" (恭進濂洛關閩書表) *Zhengyitang xuji* (正誼堂續集) *juan* 1.

[the subjects] of the ruler."[306] In other words, loving people and devoting oneself to the cultivated ruler are the same thing, because a learned ruler already represents the interests of the people. Wei Yijie turned to antiquity to illustrate. Ministers of the sage kings followed the heavenly principle by devoting themselves to serving the kings and the kings' people.[307] Wei Xiangshu claimed that for a literatus, learning was no more than trying to understand the heart of the ruler – the heart that cared deeply about people – and assisting with managing the state. By fully committing themselves to statecraft, ministers and rulers would both identify themselves with the learning of the Way.[308]

The Practical Logic behind the Making of the Ideology: What did the Ruler and the Neo-Confucian Scholars Want to Achieve?

It may seem absurd that the imperial version of Neo-Confucian learning in the early Qing had lost the sense of literati independence from imperial power, which used to characterize the tradition in the Song and Ming. All of these scholars seemed to believe that as long as the rulers agreed to practice self-cultivation according to the Neo-Confucian tradition, the rulers would represent the moral and social needs of society.

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[306] "為君者，當思天所以立君之意；為臣者，當思君所以任臣之意。君以天之心為心，百執事以君之心為心，期於仁愛斯民而已."

[307] "蓋其樂堯、舜之道，析危微之旨，得執中之用，故伐夏之舉、桐宮之放，皆權之於道義，而以不得已之心行之，其奉天救民，忠君愛國，純乎天理，無一毫私慾之偽託焉。" Wei Yijie "Yi yin" (伊尹), *Shengxue zhi tong lu* (聖學知統錄), *juan* 1, *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu,* shibu 120 (四库全书存目丛书 史部 120) (Jinan: Qilu shushe Press 1997).

[308] "今既在仕路中，不過以仕為學，求所以體聖主視民如傷之心，而又佐國家量入為出之計，事事為能，所學何為耶？" "Da Wang Jundong buyishu," (答王君棟布衣書), *Hansong tang qunji* (寒松堂全集), *juan* 9, 447. And, "以言道學，則躬行實踐，真道學也；以言經濟，則建功立業，真經濟也……上下交而志同有如此，君臣並美，泰運重新。" "Baotai shierce ba" (保泰十二策跋) *Hansongtang quanji*, juan 12, 570

However, it is important to see that the new imperial ideology would give many literati scholars a morally justified and theoretically coherent reason to seek social status by serving the new Manchu government, while making the court feature *Ru* learning in its political discourse and policies.

In the context of literati politics, scholars who chose to serve the invading state would not be accused of collaboration if the foreign rulers' valuation of literati learning was seen as a transformation achieved by *Ru* culture. Moreover, the leading Neo-Confucian officials also found a way to demonstrate to the literati world that the Neo-Confucian tradition was still relevant to the worldly order and statecraft matters. What could manifest the political contribution of Neo-Confucianism better than persuading a powerful ruler to come to terms with the language of moral learning and the ideas of government defined by the *Ru* tradition? Thus, in reconstructing Neo-Confucian theory as an imperial ideology, the early Qing Neo-Confucian scholars also sought to overcome the criticism that their school had received since the late Ming intellectual crisis. By introducing a powerful external agent, namely, the imperial ruler and his government, into Neo-Confucian theory, these officials hoped to make Neo-Confucianism an appealing option for the literati world again.

As I have discussed earlier, the literati world came to attribute the dynastic crisis at the end of the Ming to the moral relativism and self-indulgence of literati culture. They saw these problems as caused by the left-wing interpretation of the doctrine of Wang Yangming's Learning of the Mind, calling for a shift in literati culture toward achieving political roles. Therefore, for Neo-Confucians who believed that *Ru* learning ought to contribute to statecraft in order to regain its social leadership, they focused on developing

new approaches to moral learning that could meaningfully integrate statecraft practice into self-cultivation. The leading statecraft Neo-Confucian masters in early Qing – Sun Qifeng, Lu Shiyi, and Li Yong – were concerned with how to defend moral cultivation as an essential part of statecraft learning, and how to theorize everyday statecraft learning as the necessary locus for self-cultivation. At the same time, they also introduced into their interpretations an apologist attitude, suggesting that the late Ming political activism based on discoursing on learning was largely responsible for the splintering of late Ming intellectual-political forces, which only contributed to the fall of Ming. Thus, their theories no longer had the confidence to argue for locating the source of moral agency in individuals as a positive basis for knowing or action.

As students and friends of Sun Qinfeng, Lu Shiyi, and Li Yong, the early Qing Neo-Confucian minister-scholars followed the theoretical shift we have seen in the writings of those three masters. Out of this theoretical shift, however, they managed to develop a strong discourse about government power. They emphasized the existence of the "mind of Heaven" (*tianxin* 天心) as something external to human judgment, arguing that *Ru* learning ought to base its values on the force of Heaven-and-Earth. Importantly, for Song and Ming Neo-Confucian leaders, emphasizing that the source of values lay in Heaven-and-Earth was meant to recognize the innate moral agency in individuals as the basis of knowledge and action. However, in the context of the early Qing, emphasizing the existence of the "mind of Heaven" was meant instead to downgrade the agency of moral judgment in individuals.[309]

[309] Among these minister-scholars, while those who claimed to identify with Zhu Xi would focus on institutional power as representing the force of Heaven-and-Earth, those who were sympathetic to Wang Yangming would propose to reconcile these two schools and stress the importance of self-reflection and practice.

Importantly, in a world where bottom-up voluntarism at the local level became less convincing as an expression of literati leadership, these minister-scholars' new moral discourse also shifted the principal responsibility for saving the world from the shoulders of literati families to the ruler.[310] As Wei Yijie claimed, "[The purpose of] rectifying the Mind is to rectify the court; [the purpose of] rectifying the court is to rectify the entire official bureaucracy; [the purpose of] rectifying the entire official bureaucracy is to rectify the population. Once the ruler is rectified, the entire country would be rectified. This is what is meant by 'rectifying the Mind'." By shifting the moral agent from common individuals to the ruler, they tried to justify the worth of Neo-Confucianism on the function of imperial government. All of these minister-officials, such as Wei Yijie, Wei Xiangshu, and Xiong Cilü, came to claim that, since they had found a sage ruler devoted to learning, their own agenda of learning was no longer about creating their own opinions or interpretations of learning, but about maintaining the authority of the Neo-Confucian tradition in government and teaching.[311] Their core agenda became the effort to unite governing and learning in one (政學合一).

When Kangxi accepted Li Guangdi's suggestion in 1686 to claim that he was the contemporary sage king who had united the traditions of moral and political authority,[312] all the influential Neo-Confucian officials I have discussed above worked to prepare for the announcement of this claim. Kangxi, as a "foreign" ruler, did not miss the chance to

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[310] "正心以正朝廷，正朝廷以正百官，正百官以正萬民，一正君而國定，正心之謂也。" Wei Yijie, "Shengxue yi zhengxin weiyao lun" (聖學以正心為要論), *Jianjitang quanji,* juan 14, *Yingyin wenyuange siku quanshu*, Vol. 1312

[311] Yang Jing, Qingchu de lixue sixiang yanjiu, 310

[312] Ibid., 453.

utilize such a universal and ruler-centered discourse to legitimize the Qing. For instance, Kangxi appreciated Li Guangdi's assessment of the Yuan dynasty as one of the imperial dynasties that had acquired a legitimate position in the tradition of the moral authority (*daotong*). It is clear that starting from the late 1670s Kangxi began to actively promote this ideology. In 1677, he ordered scholars to compile a set of lectures that he selected from his learning sessions on the Four Books with minister-scholars. These selections were published as educational material for his subjects. In the preface, Kangxi confirmed the key elements of the Neo-Confucian imperial ideology. First, he saw himself as the one who had united the way of the ruler and the way of teacher into the true Way of the sages, and saw the messages in the Four Books as combining the tradition of moral authority with the tradition of political authority. Second, he claimed that the Neo-Confucian tradition was ultimately concerned with "*zhi*" (治), or "rule." Third, he claimed that he was obliged to carry out the enterprise created by earlier worthy rulers who had devoted themselves to the Way of the sages. Fourth, he ordered the publication of the lectures that he used in his studies, because he expected the literati and the people to join him to achieve the ideal worldly order.

> I am the sage and worthy born from heaven. [I] serve as the ruler and the teacher. The transmission of the tradition of moral authority through the myriad generations is what the tradition of the authority of politics through myriad years is tied to. After Yao, Shun, Yü, Tang, [King] Wen, and [King] Wu, there emerged Confucius, Zengzi, Zisi, and Mencius. Aside from Classic of Change, Classic of Documents, Classic of Odes, Classic of Rites, and the Spring and Autumn Annals, there are the Analects, the Great Learning, the Mean, and Mencius. [These books] are like the light of sun and moon that illuminates the sky, mountains that stand on the earth, and rivers that flow across the earth. How magnificent! Because of the four Masters, the Way of the two Di and three Kings has been transmitted. Because of the books of these four Masters, the Way of the Five Classics has been prepared. The books of the four masters were written based on the essential meaning of the five Classics. …… The tradition of moral authority is here, and the tradition of political authority is also here. The worthy and wise rulers through the

generations have created enterprises and preserved the established accomplishments. None of them failed to respect and celebrate [the Four Books of the masters] and explain their Way. I shall follow this great enterprise, diligently seeking to govern well, paying attention to asking and learning. I have thus appointed the minister-scholars to compile their lectures, which must elucidate the moral principles [in the Four Books] to benefit my rule. These will be given together with [lectures] on the Classics and history…. I hope everyone, from ministers to the people, can join together to achieve perfect rule. Therefore, I have particularly ordered [these lectures] to be edited and published, to be used and transmitted forever…. [I] always dwell on [the idea] that to improve social customs it is required to first correct people's minds; to correct people's minds it is required to first understand learning. The general meaning of this compilation is to inquire into the subtle speeches of those earlier sages, thus, this [compilation] is to be used for cultivating people and transforming customs. … [I expect] to achieve the [ideal] rule under which morality and customs are unified. [We shall] make progress toward the magnificent civilized culture of Tang [Yao], Yu [Shun], and Three Dynasties!

朕惟天生聖賢作君作師，萬世道統之所傳，即萬世治統之所繫也。自堯、舜、禹、湯、文、武之後，而有孔子、曾子、子思、孟子，自《易》、《書》、《詩》、《禮》、《春秋》而外，而有《論語》、《大學》、《中庸》、《孟子》之書，如日月之光昭於天，岳瀆之流峙於地，猗歟盛哉！蓋有四子，而後二帝三王之道傳。有四子之書，而後五經之道備。四子之書得五經之精義而為言者也。…… 道統在是，治統亦在是矣。歷代賢哲之君，創業守成，莫不尊崇表章，講明斯道。朕紹祖宗丕基，孳孳求治，留心問學，命儒臣撰為講義，務使闡發義理，裨益政治，同諸經史進講。…… 思與海內臣民共臻至治，特命校刊，用垂永久。……每念厚風俗必先正人心，正人心必先明學術。誠因此編之大義，究先聖之微言，則以此為化民成俗之方用。期夫一道同風之治，庶幾進於唐虞三代文明之盛也夫！[313]

What did it mean for Kangxi's rule that he accepted the Neo-Confucian minister-scholars' proposals? On the one hand, he constantly addressed the values of Neo-Confucian learning as inseparable from rulership. On the other hand, he did not miss the chance to politicize the apologist discourse of the statecraft Neo-Confucian interpretation. He claimed that, as a cultivated and industrious ruler, he gained more statecraft

[313] "Rijiang sishu jiangyi xu" (日講四書講義序), *Kangxi qiju zhu* (康熙起居註) "16 年丁巳 12 月 339-340.

achievements than did the literati world. Thus his cultivation was superior, and more authentic than the learning of normal literati scholars. As he said, "Throughout my life I have been learning for ordering the world, unlike the [bookish] scholars who just sit, watch, and talk."[314] He was also known to judge and criticize Han officials as hypocritical and inconsistent.

At the end of the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century, the older Kangxi became increasingly devoted to Zhu Xi's learning, along the lines developed by his minister scholars. In Kangxi's preface to the imperial edition of a full collection of Zhu Xi's writings (Zhuzi quanshu xu 朱子全書序), he claimed that it was Zhu Xi's learning that enabled him to easily govern the state, to always follow a humane mind and implement humane policies, and to unite everyone as a big family. Zhu was the most accomplished sage because he was able to follow the learning of the sage kings in antiquity and apply it to establish rules. By teaching people to follow the rules, he realized the goal of cultivating the people. Moreover, Kangxi claimed, Zhu was loyal to the ruler and faithful to the state, which corresponded to the fact that his learning manifested the Way of the universe.[315]

What did this mean for local scholars? Neo-Confucian literati elites at the local level were expected to work on behalf of the state and the emperor to fulfill the responsibility of cultivating the people. They were responsible for helping local officials to carry out rituals following state instructions. For local officials, apart from building

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[314] "朕一生所學者為治天下，非書生坐觀立論之易。"Kangxi, preface to *Zhuzi Quanshu*, (Zhuzi *quanshu* xu" (朱子全書序), *Shengzu ren Huangdi yuzhi wen* (聖祖仁皇帝御製文 第四集) *juan* 21， *Yingyin wenyuange sikuquanshu*, Vol.1298-1299, 535.

[315] Ibid.

schools to implement a curriculum centering on Zhu Xi's teaching to educate young people, they were responsible for establishing state-sponsored academies (官方書院), which would gather literati scholars to conduct statecraft learning and moral instruction defined by the statecraft Neo-Confucian approach. The goal was to cultivate young talent to become committed moral officials.[316] At these state-sponsored academies, local officials usually served as the central supervisors of the lectures, assisted by invited guest scholars. Moreover, local officials were responsible for organizing public ceremonies in which local elites led the people in worship of Heaven, the ruler, and their parents.

Xu Sanli's (許三禮 1625-1691) case offers a good example of these three aspects of the local elites' public role. Xu was from Henan. A student of Sun Qifeng, he was known in his time as a devoted and successful Neo-Confucian statecraft leader, who was more concerned with the interests of the people than his own career. Xu passed the civil service exam and became a presented scholar in 1661. He then came to the capital for further appointment. During his stay in the capital he became connected with the network of Wei Yijie, Wei Xiangshu, and their colleagues. Beginning in 1673, he served as the magistrate of Haining for eight years. Apart from improving the local irrigation system, he devoted himself to building academies and spent much of his time leading lectures, in order to "encourage learning" and "improve the local customs" of Haichang. His

[316] Zhang Boxing was one example of the local officials who motivated literati scholars to join the official academies. He was not just known as an exemplary local official, but also known as a leader appointed by the government to built schools and academies to teach local people. During his service in Fujian as the governor, he built Aofeng Academy (鰲峰書院) to invite scholars to join in the activity of discoursing on learning based on the textual tradition of Cheng Brothers and Zhu Xi. Later he sponsored publications of sixty-three kinds of books from the Cheng-Zhu tradition and fifty-five kinds of books on learning and statecraft matters written by famous contemporary Neo-Confucian officials. Yang Jing, *Qingchulixue sixiang yanjiu*, 400-02.

Academy of Correct Learning (Zhengxue shuyuan 正學書院) and Haichang Lectures (Haichang jianghui 海昌講會) are two examples. The Haichang Lectures were organized from 1673 to 1678, during which he invited many well-known literati scholars to discourse with him on *Ru* learning in general and on the issues of statecraft learning in particular. Guests included some of the most famous Neo-Confucians of the time, such as Sun Qifeng and Wei Xiangshu. In 1676, a lecture compilation was published with the support of the local government, entitled *A Compilation on How Government and Learning are United in One* (Zhengxue heyi ji 政學合一集). It was meant to show other local officials how to combine their roles as supervisors of learning and leaders of local government. It also sought to demonstrate that statecraft and self-cultivation could be integrated.

Xu Sanli and his supporters also hoped to demonstrate that statecraft Neo-Confucianism was a meaningful and influential idea in local life. In his preface to Xu's lecture compilation, Xu Bingyi (徐秉義 1633-1711) made the point that Xu Sanli had enabled the literati world to see that the learning of the Way would not prevent the world from being governed (學道亦何負於治哉). Furthermore, he argued, after the court had acknowledged the significance of the skills of the *Ru* (*rushu* 儒術), Xu Sanli emerged as a timely exemplar to show how to be an official. If other people could learn his model, then the world would be ordered easily.[317] In a second preface, another local official

[317]"……縉紳先生咸曰：許酉山先生以天下才倡理學，其措諸治也一，以孔孟為師，以故律己治人皆卓卓可傳，乃益信都門所推第一，誠不虛……仁聲義問道路成碑大，江南郡邑，不下千百無不以先生道學之治為振古，僅見。嗚呼！學道愛人昔訓彰彰，顧漢唐以降，幾如廣陵散不可復彈矣。間幾之必曰此迂闊不近事情。先生以名進士毅然力行其學，不三年海國大治。謳頌之聲遍中外矣。學道亦何負於治哉？今天子崇儒術名公卿澄清吏道如先生

named Gu Wenbao (顧文豹) also emphasized that Xu Sanli's success demonstrated to the literati world that the so-called statecraft learning based on Neo-Confucianism (理學經濟) was effective, and his approach - indoctrinating the common people - had established a model for others.[318]

Building a New Literati Ideology: Social-Political Theory, Progressive Scholarship, and Cultural Construction of Values

It is with this context in mind that I turn to Huang Zongxi (1610-1695), Gu Yanwu (1613-1682), and Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692), who developed their models of learning at the same time the Qing court was gradually becoming a patron of Neo-Confucianism. They could be seen as the best examples of the new men that the Fushe-style *wenshe* (文社) communities aimed to create.[319] Born into families with fathers

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者吾知不以百, 里老而海內良有司奉而師之，亦何患治不蒸然古也？跲余望之。" Xu Bingyi, preface to Zhengxue heyiji, Tian zhong Xuzi zhengxue heyi ji (天中許子政學合一集) (Jinan : Qilu shu she chubanshe Press, 1997.)

[318] "古理學大率皆以經濟為己任，伊川考亭平居窮理格物直接聖賢之傳用能出其緒餘以嘉惠斯民，即康節隱居不仕而河洛淵源勒成經世一書。此三人者固不以出處異。嗚呼！……先生出其學與斯民休息，教養動以三人為則。朔望進諸生講學身自表師耆宿大儒不憚屈己禮不數年，利盡興弊盡革，彰彰美政，皆古循良吏所未見，以故士歌於庠農歌于畝，百工商賈歌於市化性俗美咸相頌曰：真吾父母夫人疾痛則呼父母即父母亦無有不愛其子者然而今之父？則有難子驕而悍無大小輒怨幾父母。先生嚴以教之，寬以督之，去其所甚苦而予以所甚適。詩曰:'豈弟君子民之父母'，視先生無愧色。先生積學如康節致知格物，齊主程餘忝世？之。先生久，先生政成, 敬與天下正告之，理學經濟其效如此，以為民父母法石為序。"Gu Zaizhan, second preface.

[319] Hung Zongxi was a good friend with Zhang Pu and was a member of Wenchangshe (文昌社) and Dushushe (讀書社). The latter was a Fushe branch in eastern Zhejiang. See Fang Zuyou (方祖猷), *Huang Zongxi changzhuan* (黃宗羲长传) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe Press, 2011) 24, 30. Gu Yanwu joined in Fushe in Jiangsu when he prepared for the civil exam, and later became good friends with Gu Menglin (顧夢麟) et.al who were important intellectual contributors to the development of Fushe. See Zhou Kezhen (周可真), *Gu Yanwu nianpu* (顾炎

and/or grandfathers as officials with civil and/or military achievements,[320] they studied subjects related to statecraft affairs in their youth, including institutional history, geography, military logistics, calendar making, and calculation. They continued pursuing these interests at the *wenshe*, and brought these interests into their scholarship in early Qing.[321] They also shared Fushe's emphasis on argumentative writing as the means to deliver ideas about government. None of them gained an official position through participation in the civil service exams during the Ming. They were exceptionally committed to the Ming, devoting themselves to helping sustain the Southern Ming, and expressing unwillingness to serve the Qing. It is said that Huang Zongxi traveled through Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Fujian, and Japan to organize military defenses from the mid-1640s to the early 1660s. He was appointed the Left Assistant Censor-in-Chief (Zuo Jian Duyushi 左僉都御史) and Left Vice Censor-in-Chief (Zuo Fu Duyushi 左副都御史) by King Lu (

武年谱) (Suzhou: Suzhou Daxue Press, 1998).Also, for a specific discussion addresing Gu's participation in Fushe, see Zhou Kezhen, "Gu Yanwu yu Fushe," (顾炎武与复社) *Suzhou daxue xuebao* (苏州大学学报) no.3 (1992): 110-114. Wang Fuzhi was a good friend with Fang Yizhi (方以智 1611-1671), who was a Fushe member. In 1638, Wang Fuzhi organized Kuangshe (匡社) with friends in Hunan to discuss politics and to practice writing. Kuangshe saw its goal as "saving"(*kuang* 匡) the country, which imitated the model of Fushe. See Liu Chunjian (刘春建), *Wang Fuzhi xuexing xinian* (王夫之学行系年) (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chunbanshe Press 1989). For a succinct introduction to their life experiences and political thought, see Étienne Balázs, *Political Theory and Administrative Reality in Traditional China,* (London: University of London Press, 1965.)

[320] Huang Zongxi's father was Huang Zunsu (黃尊素), a famous Donglin scholar and official, who died in the political struggles between Donglin and the eunuch Wei Zhongxian. Gu Yanwu acquired his statecraft knowledge and institutional history from his grandfather. Willard Peterson, "The Life of Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 28 (1968): 118, 124; Wang Fuzhi also came from a family with military achievements. See *Wang Fuzhi xuexing xinian*.

[321] Dai Wenhe (戴文和) has noted the topical continuity between the statecraft writings in the *Late Ming Compendium of the Statecraft Writings* compiled by Fushe and the scholarship of these early Evidential Learning scholars. Dai Wenhe, *Huangchao jingshi wenbian jiqi xiangguan wenti yanjiu* (《皇明經世文編》及其相關問題研究) (Taibei: Wenshizhe Press, 2012).

魯王).[322] Gu Yanwu was appointed to take charge of general affairs in the Southern Ming's Bureau of Military Affairs (*Bingbu siwu* 兵部司務) from 1645 till the early 1650s. He also contributed to the discussion on temple names for the Southern Ming rulers and was appointed to compile the state's historical record. Several famous essays by Gu on economic and military subjects are believed to have been written during this period as proposals for government reforms. Wang Fuzhi earned a provincial degree in 1644, just when the Ming was about to fall. He served the Southern Ming court until 1653 and compiled a history of the Yongli (永歷) reign later in life.

Their disappointment with missing the chance to make a difference as statesmen is evident in many of their poems written during the dynastic transition. But refusing to serve the Qing did not suggest by any means that they had given up their ambitions to shape literati learning and to save the world. They did not stop their descendants or students from participating in the civil service examinations under the Qing. They believed that literati communities should be responsible for checking the central government's use of power and should take care of public life. If the goal of the Fushe was to cultivate opinion leaders and policy experts, then in a post-conquest world in which the Manchu court collaborated with Neo-Confucians to build an overarching ideology to shape cultural and political life, scholars from the *wenshe* communities with a background in politically minded Classical and historical learning shifted their focus from direct political engagement to the ideological building of a new way of learning.

Huang Zongxi: Ru Learning as the Foundation for a "Constitutional" Government

[322] Fang Zuyou, *Huang Zongxi changzhuan*, 60-69.

Beginning from the 1660s, after spending fifteen years traveling and organizing military defenses in an effort to restore the Ming, Huang Zongxi decided to end his career as a "knight errant" (*youxia* 遊俠) and to become a *Ru*. By that time Huang was already renowned for his knowledge of the Classics and histories. He also engaged with a wide range of practical topics, pursuing broad interests in the political, cultural, and institutional aspects of the Classics and historical texts. [323] He was particularly known for his studies of calendar making.[324]

Behind this self-conscious transition in identity was Huang's aspiration to reinterpret the foundation of the *Ru* tradition and to shape the literati culture. Compared to Gu Yanwu and Wang Fuzhi, Huang had a much larger reputation in the early Qing intellectual world. This was because, apart from conducting scholarship, he actively organized learning communities, trained students, and engaged in debates with government officials. In the following section, I will draw on existing scholarship to outline his main actions in the early Qing context of ideological debate. Then we shall move on to interpret his actions in light of his larger views about government and the meaning of the *Ru* tradition.

1. The Mind as the Creator of Political Norms: Pursuit of *Jingshu* (經術) as the

[323] For instance, he recalled later in his life, "余初讀《十三經》，字比句櫛，《三禮》之升降拜跪，宮室器服之微細，《三傳》之同異，義例、氏族，時日之襍亂，鉤稽考索，亦謂不遺餘力…… 冥搜博覽，天官、地誌、金石、算數、卦影、革軌、藝術、雜學，蓋無勿與予同者。"Qian xiangjinshi Zewang Huang jun kuangzhi (前鄉進士澤望黃君壙誌)" *Huang Zongxi quanji* vol.10 (黃宗羲全集) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe Press, 1993), 293. I originally saw this quote in Wang Fansen, "Qingchu de jiangjinghui," 514.

[324] Until 1657, Wang wrote more than ten works on calendar. Fang Zuyou, *Huang Zongxi changzhuan*, 79.

Foundation of an Autonomous Literati Culture

To understand Huang Zongxi's agenda we need to briefly explain his relationship with the Donglin movement and particularly with Liu Zongzhou. Huang's father Huang Zunsu (黃尊素 1584-1626), a statesman sympathetic to the Donglin scholars, was involved in a struggle with the eunuchs during the Tianqi reign and was later persecuted for protecting the Donglin scholars. Huang Zunsu's close friend Liu Zongzhou became Huang's teacher. While actively engaging in various *wenshe* activities, he also studied with Liu. Huang deeply admired the Donglin scholars for their determination and sense of righteousness, and he especially respected Liu, seeing that Liu's interpretation of the Learning of the Mind effectively challenged the prevailing left-wing scholars who were believed to have followed Zen Buddhism.[325]

In the early 1660s, Huang found himself in a fight over the interpretation of Liu Zongzhou's legacy. Due to political pressure, some previous students of Liu, such as Zhang Lüxiang (張履祥 1611-1674) and Yun Zhongsheng (惲仲昇), together with Liu's son Liu Zhuo (劉汋), tried to edit Liu's writings to make his discourse more similar to the official version of Neo-Confucianism. They removed the passages in Liu's works that claimed that the source of moral authority lie in the positive faculty of the human mind, so that they could argue that Liu's revision of the Learning of the Mind meant to bring Neo-Confucianism back to the tradition of Zhu Xi.[326] In 1665, Huang wrote a biography

[325] For a detailed account on Huang Zongxi's effort to preserve Liu's legacy in the context of early Qing, see Wang Fan-sen, "Qingchu sixiang quxiang yu *Liuzi jieyao*—Jianlun qingchu jishan xuepai de fenlie."

[326] When reading Liu Zonghzou's past works compiled by Liu Zhuo (劉汋), Zhang Lüxiang (張履祥) and Yun Zhongsheng (惲仲昇) , Huang realized that the *Extracted Gist of Mr Liu* (Liuzi

of Liu and compiled Liu's teachings and writings in an effort to rectify this misrepresentation of Liu's theory by Zhang Lüxiang et al. In 1667, Huang organized the Yuezhong Zhengren Meeting (越中證人講會) in Shaoxing to restore Liu's discourse on learning (*jiangxue* 講學).

However, the character of this meeting soon changed. Several colleagues of Huang's from the Wenchang Society (文昌社), a *wenshe* community in Ningbo, brought their sons and friends to join him in Shaoxing. [327] These people were not Neo-Confucians. Before the Qing officially banned literary societies in 1660, many younger students in this cohort were organizing their own writing societies and actively practicing policy essays (*celun*).[328] Through Huang, they learned that Liu was an insightful master of topics related to the mind, with admirable integrity and a strong sense of responsibility.[329] Huang moved the Zhengren Meeting to Ningbo in 1668. Together with this cohort, Huang transformed the Meeting into a "*jiangjing hui* ," (講經會) or, a

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jieyao 劉子節要) was a misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Liu's theory. Liu stressed the positive faculty of will as the faculty that shapes human mind (意為心之所存), but this message was replaced with Zhu Xi's explanation, which believed that human faculty of intention is what the mind sets forth because the mind needs to use it to reflect on itself and thereby to rectify itself (意為心之所發). Zhang Lüxiang, a representative statecraft Neo-Confucian scholar in the early Qing, played an important role in reinterpreting Liu along the line of Zhu Xi. See Wang Fan-sen, "Qingchu sixiang quxiang yu *Liuzi jieyao*—Jianlun qingchu jishan xuepai de fenlie." Also see Fang Zuyou's detailed account on the same events, *Huang Zongxi Changzhuan,* 151-9.

[327] These people included Wan Sitong (萬斯同 1638-1702), Wan Sida (萬斯大 1633-1683), Wan Sixuan (萬斯選 1629-1694), Chen Chizhong (陳赤衷 1627-1687), Chen Xigu (陳錫嘏 1634-1687), Fan Guangyang (范光陽 1630-1705), Dong Yunlin (董允璘). As Fang Zuyou has shown, these scholars were mostly from a few influential local families in Ningbo who joined the Wenchang Society during the Ming-Qing transition. See Fang Zuyou, *Huang Zongxi changzhuan,* 168). For another detailed account of the members and the process, see Wang Fan-sen, "Qingchu de jiangjinghui," 540-3.

[328] Wang Fan-sen, "Qingchu de jiangjinghui," 535.

[329] Ibid., 537-8

Classical Learning Society. Based on Huang's design, members all began their studies with discussion of Liu Zongzhou's discourse on learning and mind.[330] As Wang Fan-sen shows, this was treated as a necessary theoretical preparation for students to embark on the studies of the Classics. Their program also included histories, ancient prose,[331] and other practical learning subjects such as calendrical studies, geography, calculation, and measurement.[332]

To understand the role of Liu Zongzhou's theory in Huang's program, I shall briefly revisit my discussion on Liu's learning in Chapter 1. Generally speaking, one of Liu's innovations in the Learning of the Mind was that he changed the concept of the "innate good knowing" (*liangzhi* 良知) from something in the human mind that mirrors the Coherence of Heaven-and-Earth, into a fundamental knowing faculty of the mind-in-itself. This "innate good knowing" is what makes moral concepts exist. Particularly, the will (*yi* 意) gives human consciousness agency (*zhu* 主), commanding the consciousness to form moral concepts so that the movement of consciousness is guided. The will is good and it fulfills the function of the mind. As we have said, Wang Yangming defined the mind-in-itself (*xinti* 心體) as something that exists beyond the conventional norms of good and evil. In doing so he meant to emphasize that the human mind is ultimately good, and this good nature provides individuals with a basis for activating their moral agency. But, since Wang still followed the conventional Neo-Confucian view that the

[330] Accordingly to Wang, they were likely to have read Liu's "Zhengxue zajie (證學雜解)" and "Dushu ji," (讀書紀) *Xue Yan* (學言) and so on.

[331] Ibid., 540.

[332] Ibid., 560.

will is what the mind sets forth to interact with the world, rather than what fulfills the function of the mind, he considered the will to be the potential evil-maker that may obscure the "innate good knowing" of the mind. Thus, one must closely monitor the movement of the will to exclude any selfishness. However, Liu did not center on rectifying the will as the path to self-cultivation. Instead, he took it as the knowing faculty of the mind. In order to cultivate oneself, one ought to keep the will authentic and allow it to fulfill its job, that is, to generate moral concepts to guide consciousness. To do this, it is necessary to study the Classics, repositories of the sages' moral knowledge, which embodied the Heavenly Principle. Through studying the Classics, one's will can finally recognize the Heavenly Principle. As a devoted follower of the tradition of the Learning of the Mind, Liu saw the Heavenly Principle as already existing in one's mind, but learning the Classics made it possible for the mind to recognize and re-understand the Heavenly Principle. In this way, the mind was restored. Liu's theory found a way to overcome the moral relativism of his time and made literati culture of book learning relevant again, without compromising the existence of "innate good knowing" in each person. Moreover, as Wang Fan-sen and Fang Zuyou show, it was Liu's interpretation of the will that most worried his early Qing conservative interpreters. This had much to do with the fact that Liu's discourse stressed the potential of moral autonomy in each individual.

In an insightful and informative study about the Ningbo Classical Learning Society, Wang Fan-sen thoroughly documents how Huang introduced Liu's Learning of the Mind to the Society and illuminates the conceptual connections between Liu's movement and Huang's society. He shows that Zhang's followers were inspired by Liu's

discourse about the active role of the mind, and many of them realized for the first time that the Classics were valuable. Wang's main argument is that Liu's reinterpretation enabled these students to find a concrete way to cultivate themselves and achieve sagehood by studying the Classics.[333]

Drawing on Wang Fan-sen's insights, we shall ask what Huang wanted to achieve by introducing Liu's legacy to students. Wang recognizes a clear discrepancy between Huang's Classical Learning Society and Liu's Zhengren Meeting regarding their specific approaches to learning. Huang was not particularly interested in self-rectification (*gaiguo* 改過), a practice that was highly crucial to Liu's program of moral cultivation. Neither did he ask students to focus on discoursing on well-known passages or cases in the Classics that Neo-Confucians often reflected upon to discuss morality. Instead, the Ningbo Classical Learning Society was interested in the political, institutional, and cultural topics in the Classics and histories, and to study these topics, they also sought to figure out the textual meanings of the texts. This focus was not so different from Huang's own studies at the Reading Society (Dushu She 讀書社) in 1630s. He encouraged students to search for different commentaries and compare different interpretations, so as to come to a fair judgment on their own.[334] Wang's research does not explain, however, why students could follow this program that was so different from Liu's discourse on learning, and still see their learning as fulfilling sagehood in the sense promoted by Liu Zonghzou. What messages did Huang convey to students by introducing Liu's learning? How did Huang explain the goal of their learning society? Drawing on existing

[333] Ibid., 515-32.

[334] Ibid., 547

scholarship, I shall explore what values Huang discovered in Liu's teaching and how Huang interpreted the purpose of learning.

As I have discussed in Chapter 1, the Donglin cohort by and large considered political criticism as a necessary form of moral action, and interpreted the nature of political conflict as a moral battle. In contrast, Huang shared the interests of the Fushe generation who were devoted to understanding political institutions, social-historical context, and the consequences of policy making. Moreover, he stressed the importance of writing as an expression of individual opinions about the world. Reflecting on those late Ming Fushe-type *wenshe* societies in the context of the early Qing, however, Huang was not satisfied. He believed they were often weak and unfocused. Thus, they showed few long-term achievements. Compared to Donglin and to Liu Zonghou's Zhengren Meeting, these *wenshe* societies lacked a solid compass of values to constitute a powerful intellectual-political force. In other words, they had not been able to work out a deeper understanding of their mission. Although they claimed to focus on the Classics, they had not turned their learning into a standard of values for the rest of the world. Thus, they were not able to hold on to their identity as scholars to define right and wrong in the face of opponents. Some of them, for example, were eventually overtaken by Buddhism, and some were defeated by corrupt political power.[335] Liu Zongzhou's legacy, however, allowed Huang to transform what he saw as the sporadic and fragile practice of Classical

[335] "逮陽明之徒，講會且遍天下，其衰也，猶吳有東林，越有證人，古今人才，大略多出於是。然士子之為經義者，亦依倣之而立社，余自涉事至今，目之所睹，其最著者，雲間之幾社，有才如何剛，陳子龍，徐孚遠，而不能充其所至。武林之讀書社，徒為釋氏之所網羅。婁東之復社，徒為姦相之所訾聱。此無他，本領脆薄，學術龐雜，終不能有所成就。丁未、戊申間，甬上陳夔獻創為講徑會，搜故家經學之書，與同志討論得失。" Huang Zongxi, "Chen Xiexian muzhiming,"(陳夔獻墓誌銘), *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol. 10, 439-440.

learning in late Ming *wenshe* communities into a self-conscious intellectual-cultural force.

How, then, did Huang renew this practice? The concept of the practice of learning consisted of two inseparable parts. In Huang's term, the foundation of *Ru* learning ought to be Classical learning (*jingshu* 經術), which gave literati culture its substance. And, to make sure one's knowledge could be used to cope with real social-political needs, one's conclusions must be supported by historical records (*shiji* 史籍), so that the conclusions have a real foundation in historical experience.[336] What, for Huang, was to be found in the Classics that also needed to be verifiable through history? Huang explained, "The Six Classics are the institutions of the early kings (六經皆先王之法)." [337] But reconstructing the historical reality of these institutions would not be enough. To truly embody the "intentions of the sage kings" (*shengren zhi yi* 聖人之意), scholars ought to be able to comprehend the principles (*yi* 義 and *li* 理) that the sage kings were drawing on when designing institutions. To acquire the knowledge for ordering the world meant to firstly discover the underlying principles by making sense of those institutions.

Accordingly, the style of Classical learning at the Ningbo society was open-ended and research-oriented. As scholars have documented, students came to listen to Huang's

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[336] "自明中業以後，講學之風已為極敝，高談性命，直入禪障, 束書不觀，其稍平者皆為學究，皆無根之徒耳。先生始謂，學必原本於經術，而後不為蹈虛，必證明於史籍，而後足以應務，元元本本，可據可依，此講堂固疾為之一變。" Quan Zuwang (全祖望), "Yongshang Zhengren shuyuanji " (甬上證人書院記) *Jieqiting ji waibian*, *jun* 16 (鮚埼亭集外編) (Yaojiang: Jie shu shanfang, 1804), 23a-23b.

[337] "六經皆先王之法也。其垂世者，非一聖人之心思，亦非一聖人之竭也。"Huang Zongxi's commentary on the "Li lou" chapter (離婁章), from *Mengzi shishuo, juan* 4 (孟子師說), in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.1, 87.

lectures on the Classics first. Then, they studied on their own. They were asked to consult past commentaries at nearby libraries and use their common judgment to choose the "most self-evident" (自然的當不可易的) explanations. After research, they then came back together to discuss, comparing their understanding and discoveries.

Huang envisioned that after students had entered an advanced level they could follow their interests to choose a direction among the major branches of literati learning at the time, namely, learning of Classics (*jingxue*), history (*shixue*), philosophy (*lixue*), or writing (*wenzhang*). But each student was required to study all the Classics following the above-mentioned approach as their most basic and comprehensive training. By conducting research on the Classics as such, students would learn how to think with the sage kings as the founders of civilization, how to obtain knowledge from the Classics, how to test their conclusions based on history, how to identify the problems of contemporary world, and how to work on improving the future.[338]

By introducing Liu Zongzhou's discourse into his training program, it appears that Huang was able to activate his students' sense of cultural authority and public responsibility. Huang emphasized in many places that Wang Yangming's focus on the "innate good knowing" was a laudable contribution to the literati world, because it "enabled everyone to reflect on themselves and attain learning by thinking on their own (*zide* 自得)."[339] In contrast, he argued against Zhu Xi's duality between the "Human

[338] "其无关于天下者,乃其有关于后世者" Huang, "Shou Xuyeqing liushi xu" 寿徐掖青六十序

[339] "自姚江指點出'良知人人現在，一反觀而自得'，便人人有個作聖之路。故無姚江，則古來之學脈絕矣。" Huang Zongxi, "Yaojiang xue'an" (姚江學案), *Mingru xue'an, juan* 10, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.7 197. Huang also had many passages in *Menzi shishuo* (孟子師說) commenting on this point.

Mind (*renxin*)" and the "Mind of the Way (*daoxin*)," because this duality did not emphasize the agency of learning in the individual. Liu Zongzhou, instead, developed Wang's doctrine but followed a much more constructive line by returning to textual learning.[340] Implementing this line of discourse within a framework of evidentially based political-theoretical learning, Huang was able to motivate his students to sense that Classical learning could and ought to cultivate their judgment about the external order and the norms of socio-political life. Huang explained to his students that citing Classical passages in their writings would not lead to *jingshu,* the learning of the Classics. Instead, once they could integrate the intention of the sages into their thinking, their writing would necessarily contain *jingshu*.[341] On the other hand, students ought to trust that knowledge could be attained only if they learned to think for themselves. Huang emphasized, "Without thoroughly studying the Classics (*tongjing* 通經), one cannot establish oneself as a gentleman; without thoroughly studying the Classics, one cannot establish one's words for the public (*dajia* 大家)."[342]

It is important to see that by bringing Liu's theory into the framework of political-

[340] As Huang stressed in the preface to *Biography of Master Liu* (Zi Liuzi xingzhuang 子劉子行狀) (1665), "百年以來，儒者以心體自然，不假修為，所言皆生知也。古今生知者唯堯，至舜之好問好察，舍己從人，已是學知，禹便口口說艱說難，所謂困而學之者也。豈今之儒者，過於堯舜乎？先生之學，一變再變，不言妙用，不落想像，從嚴毅清苦之中，而得自然，明示一困學之的。" *Huang Zongxi quanji,* Vol.1.

[341] "近見巨子，動將經文填塞以希經術，去之遠矣……融聖人之意而出之，不必用經，自然經術之文也。" "Lunwen guanjian" (論文管見), *Huang Zongxi quanji, Vol.*10.

[342] One of Huang's student Li Siye (李鄴嗣 1622-1680) recalled, "黃先生教人必先通經，使學者從六藝以聞道。嘗曰：'人不通經，則立身不能爲君子，不通經，則立言不能爲大家。'於是充宗兄弟與里中諸賢共立為五經之集。" Li Siye, "Song Wan Chongzong shoujing xiling xu" (宋萬充宗授經西陵序), from *Gaotang wenchao, juan* 3 (杲堂文鈔) (Huang shi: 1678) 14a-14b, Harvard-Yenching Library Rare Book Collection http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:19702594 Seq. 130-131.

theoretical learning, Huang also rewrote the meaning of "mind." Specifically, based on Liu's moralist discourse, the goal of Classical learning was to rectify oneself into a moral being, and to do so, scholars ought to reactivate the faculty of their moral mind in creating moral norms or concepts. Although these norms or concepts are generated by the mind, the substance that these norms or concepts are based on are nonetheless determined by the Heavenly Principle and already exist in the human mind. Thus, they would not change over time.

However, although Huang celebrated Liu's interpretation of the mind as an active faculty in the making of norms, he held that to understand why the sage kings created certain norms meant understanding why those norms were important for the community to maintain a civilized life. In other words, the norms that Liu believed to be informed by the Heavenly Principle were largely historicized as a product of human culture in Huang's framework.[343] To understand how norms were built and why they were built in light of the historical context was exactly the purpose of the new collective and research-oriented Classical learning project.

Thus, the "mind" that students ought to cultivate would have to be able to define the basis of the socio-political order for the community. It was a project of learning that not only required students to understand the cultural, social, and political historical origins of norms in the Classics but also asked students to reflect on their own context. To understand the principles that the sages drew on in making norms would be a constant theorizing process based on historical learning. In this sense, Huang did not ask students

[343] Mizoguchi's study on Huang Zongxi noticed that Huang used the notion of *li* (理) to refer to certain civic principle rather than natural principle. Mizoguchi Yūzō, *The Setbacks and Development of Chinese Early Modern Thought* (中国前近代思想の屈折と展開) (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1980.)

to search for an ahistorical and fundamental conception of Heavenly Principle. Rather, he asked students to become capable of seeing a history of principles from antiquity to the present. In other words, principles are only knowable to scholars through history as they manifest in very different contexts under different expressions. It was in this sense that Huang emphasized that in order to witness principles through their changes and transformations, students had to be exposed to as many books as possible. The eventual goal was to learn to use one's own mind to understand the principles and use them on one's own terms.[344]

Huang's reinterpretation of the faculty of mind and the nature of the principles of the sages gave students a way to define their agency and authority in non-moralist terms. If Liu still needed to argue that the moral norms of *Ru* tradition were fundament ally rooted in the natural order of the universe in order to defend scholars' leadership in public life, Huang was able to justify the leadership of the *Ru* based on a reconstruction of the historical process of the community's civilized life, in which *Ru* culture was understood as the main shaping factor.

In this sense, we can understand why Huang's Ningbo Classical Learning Society considered its goal to be the conduct of studies that would assist the kingly rule (*zuowang zhixue* 佐王之學). This goal ought to buttress all the existing branches of literati culture. For instance, they believed that without prioritizing the pursuit of Classical learning (*jingshu*), literary writing (*wenzhang*) would become derivative, and philosophy (*lixue*)

[344] Quan Zuwang recalled, "公謂明人講學襲語錄之糟粕，不以六經為根柢，束書而從事於遊談，故授業者必先窮經，經術所以經世，方不為迂儒之學，故兼令讀史，又謂讀書不多，無以證斯理之變化，多而不求於心，則為俗學。" Quan Zuwang, "Lizhou xiansheng shendaobei wen,"(黎洲先生神道碑文) *Jieqiting ji, juan* 11 (Yaojiang : jie shu shanfang, 1872), 9a-b.

would merely take Zhu Xi's commentaries on the *Four Books* as secret manuals.[345] Guided by the common goal of restoring kingly rule, scholars from different realms of literati intellectual practice would form a cultural force to guide the values of public life. Not only were students expected to make substantive achievements in all the different areas of learning, but they should particularly overcome the prevailing habits and attitudes of public life that had been harmed by narrow-minded and dogmatized literati learning. Scholarship focusing only on the *Four Books* and the recorded sayings of Neo-Confucian masters contributed to an attitude of perfunctoriness and ignorance. "They called themselves as *Ru*, but in fact they just borrowed the name of *Ru* to fool the world." How so? "Those who deal with finance and taxation only aim to amass wealth for themselves; those who defend the frontier of the country are uneducated; those who read and write only are obsessed with their trivial hobbies and sap their will; those who pay attention to government become shallow clerks, only using lofty speech such as 'establishing orders for people, establishing mind for Heaven and Earth, enabling peace for the tens of thousands of generations' to control the world."[346] Moreover, because of

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[345] "始陳子夔獻與同里十餘人，然約為友，俱務佐王之學。以為文章不本之經術，學王、李者為剿，學歐、曾者為鄙；理學不本之經術，非矜《集注》為祕錄，則授作用為軻傳。高張簧舌，大抵為原伯魯地也。於是為講經會，窮搜宋、元來之傳注，得百數十家，分頭誦習。每月二會，各取其長，以相會通，數年之間，畢《易》、《詩》、《三禮》。方會之初立，聞見之徒，吏口靳故，鴟鼓害翼，犬牙毒啄，會者不懈益虔。里中有以罵坐自喜，勝流多為所絀，間出違言，夔獻大聲呵之，揎袖將搏，其人沮喪避去。故凡僻經怪說撼其會人者，夔獻必析義秋毫，愍痛以折其角。" Huang Zongxi, "Chen Xiexian wushi shouxu" (陳夔獻五十壽序), *Huang Zongxi quanji* Vol.10.

[346] "儒者之學，經緯天地，而後世乃以語錄為究竟，僅附答問一二條於伊洛門下，便廁儒者之列，假其名以欺世。治財賦者則目為聚斂，開閫捍邊者則目為竁材，讀書作文者則目為玩物喪志，留心政事者則目為俗吏，徒以"生民立極，天地立心，萬世開太平"之闊論，鈐束天下。一旦有大夫之憂，當報國之日，則蒙然張開，如坐雲霧。世道以是潦倒泥腐。遂使尚論者以為立功建業，別是法門，而非儒者之所與也。" Zen Bianxiu Bian Yu Wujun muzhiming" 贈編修弁玉吳君墓誌銘, *Wending houji* 文定後集, *juan* 3.

the corruption of learning, he considered his contemporary culture to be hypocritical (*xiangyuan* 鄉愿). This culture lacked people who could make original and informed judgments, but was filled with those who only followed prevailing cultural and political dogmas to appeal to popular views.[347]

2. Confronting the Statecraft Neo-Confucian Position: Debates over the Identity of *Ru*

Huang Zongxi's efforts beginning in the 1660s to rebuild literati culture and cultivate the attitudes of public life put him in opposition to the official claims and institutions of *Ru* learning that were emerging from conservative Neo-Confucian statecraft discourse.

Famous as a teacher because of his Shaoxing Zhengren Meeting and Ningbo Classical Learning Society, Huang was invited to lecture at Xu Sanli's official Haichang Meeting in 1676. However, Huang came away feeling that Xu's academy could not compete with the Ningbo Classical Learning Society, because he believed Xu's students were not interested in coming up with their own ideas. They seemed to be more interested in imitating the words of their teachers and passing the civil service exam. "Thus," Huang recalled, "I told them, 'You should consider whatever you find useful for yourself to be

[347] "世道交喪，聖王不作，天下之人，兆民之眾，要不能空然無所挾以行世，則遂以舉世之習尚，成為學術。但論其可以通行，不必原其心術。揣摩事態，陪奉人情，在世路則為好人，在朝廷則為鄙夫。凡朝廷之資格，官府之舊規，往來之情面，胥吏之成例，彌縫周至，無有罅漏。千百年來，糜爛於文網世法之中，皆鄉愿之薪傳也。即有賢者，頭出頭沒，不能決其範圍，苟欲有所振動，則舉世目為怪魁矣。以是詩文有詩文之鄉愿，漢筆唐詩，襲其膚廓；讀書有讀書之鄉愿，成敗是非，講貫紀聞，皆有成說；道學有道學之鄉愿，所讀者止於四書、通書、太極圖說、近思錄、東西銘、語類，建立書院、刊註四書、衍輯語錄，天崩地坼，無落吾事。夫子之惡之，亦逆料其禍必至於是也。「狂狷」是不安於流俗者，免為鄉人，方有作聖之路。" Huang Zongxi, commentary on chapter, "Kongzi zai chen" (孔子在陳), *Mengzi shishuo*, *juan* 7 in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.1, 164-5.

learning (*xuewen* 學問). If you read the words of Classical passages only to force your interpretation to follow your teacher, then all the Classics and the commentaries would do nothing more than block your mind.'"[348] In a letter Huang wrote to the Haichang students before he left, he suggested that they ought to stop labeling themselves as members of certain schools of the tradition of the Learning of the Way (*daoxue* 道學). Instead, Huang suggested that they ought to forget about those labels and absorb their learning to form their own foundation of thinking. Then their writings would carry meaning, and their interpretations of the Classics would lead to the production of Classical scholarship (*jingshu*). In doing so, they would also restore the common ground of the *Ru* culture.[349]

Meanwhile, Huang sought to prevent his own students from being influenced by the statecraft Neo-Confucian discourse that was becoming state orthodoxy. For instance, Pan Pingge (潘平格 1600-1677), a Neo-Confucian who believed that moral learning

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[348] "余講學海昌，每拈《四書》或《五經》作講義，令司講宣讀，讀畢，辯難蜂起，大底場屋之論，與世抹殺。余曰: '個人自用得著的，方是學問。尋行數墨，以附會一先生之言，則聖經賢傳皆是糊心之具。' " Huang, "Chen shuda *Sishu shu* xu" (陳叔大四書述序) *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10 .42.

[349] "歲丙辰二月，余至海昌，酉山許父母以余曾主教於越中、甬上也，戒邑中之士大夫胥會於北寺，余留者兩月余，已而省覲將歸，同學諸子皆眷眷然有離別可憐之色。余南雷之野人也，氣質魯莽，諸子風華掩映千人，多廊廟之器，余何以得此於諸子乎？嘗謂學問之事，析之者愈精，而逃之者愈巧，三代以上，祇有儒之名而已，司馬子長因之而傳儒林。漢之衰也，始有彫蟲壯夫不為之技。於是分文苑於外，不以亂儒。宋之為儒者，有事功經制改頭換面之異，《宋史》立道學一門以別之，所以坊其流也。蓋未幾而道學之中又有異同。鄧潛谷又分理學、心學為二。夫一儒也，裂而為文苑、為儒林、為理學、為心學，豈非析之慾其極精乎？奈何今之言心學者，則無事乎讀書窮理；言理學者，其所讀之書不過經生之章句，其所窮之理不過字義之從違。薄文苑為詞章，惜儒林於皓首，封己守殘，摘索不出一卷之內，其規為措注，與纖兒細士不見短長。天崩地解，落然無與吾事，猶且說同道異，自附於所謂道學者，豈非逃之者之愈巧乎？吾觀諸子之在今日，舉寶為秋，摘藻為春，將以抵夫文苑也。鑽研服鄭，函雅故，通古今，將以造夫儒林也。由是而斂於身心之際，不塞其自然流行之體，則發之為文章皆載道也，垂之為傳注皆經術也。將見裂之為四者，不自諸子復之而為一乎？" Huang, "Liubie Haichang tongxue xu"(留別海昌同學序), *Nanlei wending qianji* 南雷文定前集 *juan* 1

should be realized through reflective practice in everyday statecraft matters (躬親實踐), approached Huang's students in Ningbo. Pan almost convinced some of them.[350] However, Huang immediately stopped Pan's contact with his students, warning his students that Pan's theory was not only superficial but also damaging. He saw Pan as denying the role of individual agency in making judgments about the world, reducing learning into something that followed conventional moral and political discourses.[351] Overall, he believed that Pan's position would render the pursuit of Classical knowledge meaningless.[352] Moreover, Huang did not support Pan's idea that scholars ought to consider their ultimate goal as cultivating a virtuous ruler to realize a stable and strong world.[353]

Eventually, Huang found himself in a battle with the court's official discourse of *Ru* identity in the early 1680s, when the State History Office decided to group Ming Neo-Confucians into a separate biographical section in the *Ming Dynastic History* under the title of "Dao Xue" (道學), or "Learning of the Way," in order to promote the Neo-

[350] As Wan Sitong commented, Pan's learning seemed to coherently linked the end of cultivation and the end of ordering the world Fang Zuyou, *Huang Zongxi chuangzhuan,* 206-16.

[351] For Huang's detailed criticism, see "Yu youren lunxue shu"（與友人論學書）*Huang Zongxi Quanji,* Vol. 10, 144-51.

[352] "且諸儒之書，繭絲牛毛，自六經以外，不比史傳之粗心易讀。學者窮年於此，便如鼠入牛角，橫身苦趣。今日皆邪說也，竟可廢置不道，省卻多少氣力，而又有不讀非賢之書而言，可以自文，奈何不樂從之乎？" Huang Zongxi, "Yu youren lunxue shu," Ibid.

[353] "孔孟之周流歷說，欲以德君行道，亦是經生私意以窺聖人，孟子之言可證也。……孟子曰：中天下而立，定四海之民，君子樂之，所性不存焉，則復性之功，其不在家國天下亦明矣。" Ibid.

Confucian scholars who identified with the Cheng-Zhu line of interpretation.[354] In a public letter to the Office, Huang wrote,

> ……Since the beginning of the writing of the Seventeen Dynastic Histories, there has been only one category [for identifying literati scholars], that is, the "Community of Ru" (Ru Lin 儒林). …The purpose of creating one group identity under the "Community of Ru" was to transmit the [learning of the] Classics. For those who did not study with Confucius personally, they could still be counted as Confucius' disciples. The following generations followed [such a paradigm] with exactly this intention. As for thinkers who were as moral as Zhou Dunyi and the Cheng Brothers, they were still identified as Confucius' disciples. Categorizing them within the "Community of Ru" is appropriate. Today, [if these figures] are listed in a separate group of the "Learning of the Way" without good reason, then perhaps for these two figures [this honorable treatment does not look too] inappropriate, but it would hurt the principle of [maintaining] a grand unified tradition [of Ru learning].
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> ……夫《十七史》以來，止有儒林。……儒林亦為傳經而設，以處夫不及為弟子者，猶之傳孔子之弟子也。歷代因之，亦是此意。周、程諸子，道德雖盛，以視孔子，則猶然在弟子之列，入之儒林，正為允當。今無故出之為道學，在周、程未必加重，而於大一統之義乖矣。
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> [For Sima Qian,] Ru were supposed to be the people who connected the [learning of the] heavens, the earth, and human beings. In the Duke-State of Lu [where scholars were many], there was only one [title] Ru. The original meaning of the title of Ru was not light. Ru is a title [for those who] have realized virtues, like the notions of Worthy (xian) and Sage (sheng). [However], the "Learning of the Way," [which] takes the "Way" as the [subject of] learning, is not a name; it just sounds like a person who is determined to the pursuit of the Way. But, [is it meaningful to] create a name for those who are determined to pursue the Way? Instead of emphasizing the virtues of these people, [it would] belittle them, and by claiming the name [of the "Learning of the Way"], the principle [behind the category "Community of Ru"] would be violated. This was [originally] a shallow mistake of the Yuan people [who compiled the Song Dynastic History]. … Should [you], the prestigious scholars of the royal court responsible for compiling [the Ming Dynastic History], follow the shallow mistakes of the Yuan, rather than follow the [sagely] figures of the Three Dynasties?
>
> 統天地人曰儒，以魯國而止儒一人，儒之名目，原自不輕。儒者，成德之名，猶之曰賢、曰聖也。道學者，以道為學，未成乎名也，猶之曰志於道。志道可以為名乎？欲重而反輕，稱名而背義，此元人之陋也。……聖朝秉筆諸

[354] Fang Zuyou, Huangzongxi Changzhuan, 318.

公，不自居三代以上人物，而師法元人之陋，可乎?

I personally suggest removing the category of the "Learning of the Way" and classifying [all scholars] under the category of the "Community of Ru." In this way, there would be no need to dispute over the commonalities or the differences between different approaches to learning, and it would be up to later scholars to choose [what approaches they would like to follow]. … The goal of the sacred learning is not to seek recognition [from others]. Praising it or criticizing it [should] have no impact on the [agenda of] Ru. Meanwhile, if the written works of each Ru are spread in the world and transmitted to future generations, [there will be] perceptive [people] to deepen and advance [them]. How could it be true that there would be no followers?

某竊謂道學一門所當去也，一切總歸儒林，則學術之異同皆可無論，以待後學之學者擇而取之。……聖學不求人知，優之劣之，於諸儒無所損益；而諸儒之著譔，傳之天下後世，明眼深造，豈緊無人。[355]

First, Huang argued that *Ru*'s values were evident because they had played a historical role as the transmitters of Classical learning. For him, the notion of the "Way" could not be used as a label for this historical identity. Saying that someone was following the "Way" simply meant that the person was committed to pursuing the "Way," and this attitude alone should not be seen as the basis of the *Ru* tradition. Calling literati scholars the followers of the "Way" did not recognize the significance of the *Ru*'s real contributions. Correspondingly, how the "Way" was interpreted was irrelevant, in the sense that it should not be taken as an ideological standard. Otherwise, it would lead to meaningless disputes harming the common ground of the *Ru* tradition. Instead, to make the tradition last, later followers should be allowed to make use of a range of resources from the various aspects of *Ru* culture to seek their own roles.

Based on a post-fundamentalist conception of the *Ru* identity, Huang disagreed

[355] Huang Zongxi, "Yi shiguan lun buyi li lixue zhuan shu"(移史館論不宜立理學傳書) *Huang Zongxi quanji*,Vol.10, 214-5,

that the foundation of the *Ru* tradition should be seen as the realization of an ultimate moral "Way" in cultivating oneself or ordering the world. With what, then, should the tradition identify itself?

3. Reinterpreting Antiquity and the Learning of the Sages

When Huang began to voice his view about the shared culture of literati scholars and demonstrated a new agenda against the trend of early Qing official learning in the late 1660s, he had already embarked on a new interpretation of the foundation of *Ru* values by reinterpreting the model of antiquity and the legacy of the sages.

Advancing Civilization for People in the Central Country (中國之人)

In Huang's important earlier work entitled *The Book to Be Left to the Future* (Liu Shu 留書) (1653), a chapter entitled "Cultural Achievements and Plainness" (Wen Zhi 文質) situated the legacy of the sages in a broad framework of the advancement of human culture. To explain the meaning of the contributions of the sages, he began by setting up his view as a counter-argument to the middle period scholar Ouyang Xun (欧阳洵 557-641). According to Huang, Ouyang had argued that, in human history, cultural achievements come and go as a natural phenomenon. However, Huang thought Ouyang was wrong. The reality was that people did not usually voluntarily seek to live a sophisticated civilized life; culture and civilized life could perish without the effort of leaders to maintain them. "[Just looking at the] rituals today," Huang claimed, "[they] are all perfunctorily made. Thus, [tools that today's] artisans build, [goods that today's] merchants sell, and [clothes that today's] gentlemen and ladies wear are becoming

narrower and simpler day by day. I have never seen a trend that does not shift from cultural sophistication to plainness."

Huang's stressed that antiquity was in fact a successive civilization realized through the non-stop, cumulative efforts of sages. Huang argued that sage kings created culture to save the world (*jiushi* 救世) and transformed people to let them embrace the civilized order. Thus, if the people of the Central Country (*Zhong guo zhi ren* 中國之人) did not have sage kings, then they might not have embraced culture. If remote uncivilized peoples (*yaohuang zhiren* 要荒之人) had had sage kings, then they would also have known the importance of culture. Therefore, given how difficult it is to convince people to embrace culture in their everyday life, one should be able to understand the hardship of the sage kings and appreciate their achievements. Hang claimed, "Seeing the fact that the sage kings through the Three Dynasties governed successively and cumulatively (*xiangxu erzhi* 相續而治), we have to admit that their achievements were profound."[356]

The achievements of the sage kings were a civilizing legacy that should be carried forward. In other words, literati culture ought to identify itself with this legacy and consider itself as the guiding force of the civilizational process. Building culture and

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[356] "其自忠而之於文者，聖王救世之事也；喜質而惡文者，凡人之情也。逮其相驅而之於質，雖聖賢亦莫如之何矣！……凡禮之存於今者，皆苟然而已。是故百工之所造，商賈之所鬻，士女之所服者日益狹陋。吾見世運未有不自文而趨夫質也。當周之盛時，要荒之人，其文盡革旁行，未嘗有詩、書、易、春秋也；其法鬥殺，未嘗有禮、樂、刑、政也；其民射獵禽獸為生業，未嘗有士、農、工、賈也；其居住隨畜牧轉移，未嘗有宮室也，其形科頭露紒，未嘗有冕服也；其食汙尊抔飲，未嘗有俎豆也；其居處若鳥獸，未嘗有長幼男女之別也。然則同是時也，中國之人既喜文而質與忠，彼要荒之人何獨不然與？是故中國而無後聖之作，雖周之盛時，亦未必不如要荒；要荒之人而後聖有作，亦未必不如魯、衛之士也。其謂喜文而惡質與忠者，然乎否耶？以三代聖人相續而治，其功不可謂不久矣。其末王不能守其教者，彼帝辛使男女裸逐，厲王發龍漦而使婦人裸而譟之，夫非喜質之過乎？然則先王使忠之變而為質，質之變而為文，其勢若此之難也。 "Wen zhi," (文質), *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.1, 416-7.

convincing people to live a civilized life is an effortful agenda that requires cumulative effort from the *Ru* community. How, then, were the sage kings able to succeed even though people tended not to perceive the values of cultural achievements?

Common Good (公) and the Institutions of Three Dynasties (三代之法)

In his most famous work, *Waiting for the Down: A Plan for the Prince* (Mingyi dai fang lu 明夷待訪錄) (1663), which elaborated on his discussions in *The Book to Be Left to the Future*, Huang reconstructed what he saw as the fundamental principle and political design that allowed the sage kings to start a thriving civilization in antiquity.

The reason why sage kings could build a civilized life was that the political order in antiquity was built on the goal of serving the *common good* of the community. Within this order, the rulers considered their own power to be legitimized by their commitment to the community's common interest. As he argues in his famous opening chapter "On the Origins of Rulership" (Yuan Jun 原君), the legitimacy of ancient rulers derived from their giving up their own private interests (*sili* 私利) for the sake of the common interest (*gongli* 公利). Meanwhile, in a chapter "On the Origins of Ministership (Yuan Chen 原臣)" Huang defined the source of ministership as responsibility for the common good, stressing the equal relationship between ministers and rulers on this ground.

What fully embodied this somewhat "constitutionalist" principle in antiquity was, however, the making of "*fa*" (法). Theodore De Bary has translated "*fa*" as "law," but "institutions" may better capture Huang's original message. In his chapter "On the Origins of Institutions," (Yuan Fa 原法) Huang explained,

Until the end of the Three Dynasties there was [the establishment of] Institutions (*fa*). Since the Three Dynasties there has been no [establishment of] Institutions. Why do I say this? Because the Two Emperors and Three Kings knew that all-under-Heaven could not do without sustenance and therefore gave them fields to cultivate. They knew that all-under-Heaven could not go without clothes and therefore gave them land on which to grow mulberry and hemp. They know also that all-under-Heaven could not go untaught, so they set up schools, established the marriage ceremony to guard against promiscuity, and instituted military service to guard against disorders. These constituted the Institutions until the end of the Three Dynasties. They were never laid down solely for the benefit of the ruler himself.

三代以上有法，三代以下無法。何以言之？二帝、三王知天下之不可無養也，為之授田以耕之；知天下之不可無衣也，為之授地以桑麻之：知天下之不可無教也，為之學校以興之；為之婚姻之禮以防其淫；為之卒乘之賦以防其亂；此三代以上之法也，固未嘗為一己而立也。

Later rulers, having won the world, feared only that their dynasty's lifespan might not be long and that their descendants would be unable to preserve it. They set up institutions in fear of what might happen, to prevent its coming to pass. However, what they called "institutions" represented institutions for the sake of one family, rather than for the sake of all-under-Heaven. Thus the Qin abolished feudal fiefs and set up commanderies (郡) and prefectures (縣) with the thought that this system would better serve their own interests. The Han gave domains to members of the royal house, thinking to have them stand as buffers around their empire. The Song abolished the regional commanderies because they were not to the dynasty's advantage. Such being their institutions and systems, how could they have manifested the slightest trace of consideration for all-under-Heaven? Indeed, could we call these "institutions" at all?

後之人主，既得天下，唯恐其祚命之不長也，子孫之不能保有也，思患於未然以為之法。然則其所謂法者，一家之法而非天下之法也。是故秦變封建而為郡縣，以郡縣得私於我也；漢建庶孽，以其可以藩屏於我也；宋解方鎮之兵，以方鎮之不利於我也。此其法何曾有一毫為天下之心哉，而亦可謂之法乎？

"The Institutions of the Three Dynasties safeguarded the world for the sake of all-under-Heaven." The prince did not try to seize all the wealth of the land, high or low, nor was he fearful that the power to punish and reward might fall into others' hands. High esteem was not reserved for those at court; nor were those in the countryside necessarily held in low esteem. ..... The institutions of later times have "safeguarded the world as if there were something in the [prince's] treasure-chest." It is not desired that anything beneficial should be left to those below, but

> rather that all blessings be gathered up for those on high. If [the prince] employs a man, he is immediately afraid that the man will act in his own interest, and so another man is employed to keep a check on the other's selfishness. If one measure is adopted, there are immediate fears of its being abused or evaded, and so another measure must be adopted to guard against abuses or evasions. All men know where the treasure-chest lies, and so the prince is constantly fretting and fidgeting out of anxiety for its security. Consequently, the institutions have to be made tight, and as they become tighter they become the very source of disorder. These are what one calls "institutions that cannot count as the [real] Institutions (非法之法)."
>
> 三代之法，藏天下於天下者也，山澤之利不必其盡取，刑賞之權不疑其旁落，貴不在朝廷也，賤不在草莽也。……後世之法，藏天下於筐篋者也，利不欲其遺於下，福必欲其斂於上。用一人焉則疑其自私，而又用一人以制其私；行一事焉則慮其可欺，而又設一事以防其欺。天下之人共和其筐篋之所在，吾亦鰓鰓然日唯筐篋之是虞，故其法不得不密，法愈密而天下之亂即生於法之中，所謂非法之法也。[357]

By redefining antiquity, Huang argued for a basic principle behind government institution building, which was to take the community's common interest as its sole purpose. The later dynastic rulers, however, prioritized their own interests (*si* 私) over the common interest. They created institutions to prevent other people from weakening their powers, only to create trouble and chaos. This was the root of problems; the lack of a publically minded government led to major upheavals in later history.

But why were institutions so important? According to the conventional discourse about leadership, should not the key to a good government be a moral ruling elite? Huang realized that his emphasis on institutional foundations might sound controversial, thus, he explained:

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[357] Huang Zongxi, "Yuan Fa," (原法) *Mingyi dai fang lu* (明夷待訪錄), in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.1 6-7. Translation here draws on Theodore de Bary's translation with my modifications. See De Bary, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince : Huang Tsung-Hsi's Ming-i Tai-Fang Lu*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

> Should it be said that "There is only governance by man, not governance by institutions," my reply is that only if there is governance by institutions can there be governance by men. Since those "institutions that cannot count as the [real] Institutions"(非法之法) fetter men hand and foot, even a man capable of governing cannot overcome inhibiting restraints and suspicions. … If the Institutions of the early kings were still in effect, there would be a spirit among men that went beyond the letter of the institutional requirement. … Therefore, I say that only when we have governance by institutions can we have governance by men.
>
> 即論者謂有治人無治法，吾以謂有治法而後有治人。自非法之法桎梏天下人之手足，即有能治之人，終不勝其牽挽嫌疑之顧盼。……使先王之法而在，莫不有法外之意存乎其間。……故曰有治法而後有治人。[358]

Against the view that good government ought to be based on the role of good leaders, Huang argued that a good ruling elite is the product of the right institutional design, not the other way around. Thus, in antiquity, the *shi* (士), namely, the educated elite participating in government, represented the products of this envisioned institutional building.

School (學校) and the Common Good

School (*xuexiao* 學校) was a key component of the sage kings' institutional design. The sage kings used it to maintain a community of learned, publicly-minded, and autonomous *shi* who were responsible for offering their opinions to represent the interests of the public and to work for the common good.

> School is where literati are educated. However, what the sage kings in the past wanted to achieve was more than this. Only when [people ensure] what are used to govern all-under-the-heaven all come from School would [the sage kings'] intention behind their setting up of School begin to become complete. …… What the son-of-heaven believes to be right is not necessarily right, and what the son-of-heaven believes to be wrong is not necessarily wrong. The son-of-heaven also

[358] Huang Zongxi, "Yuan Fa." Ibid.,7.

> dares not to publically force what he personally believes to be right and wrong on School. Therefore, educating literati scholars is one task of School, but School is not simply set up for educating literati scholars.
>
> 學校，所以養士也。然古之聖王，其意不僅此也，必使治天下之具皆出於學校，而後設學校之意始備。……天子之所是未必是，天子之所非未必非，天子亦遂不敢自為非是而公其非是於學校。是故養士為學校之一事，而學校不僅為養士而設也。[359]

The cultivation of an educated elite for the government is significant not only because it cultivates talent, but more importantly, because it embodies the premise of the government as an institution legitimated by its service to the community. *Shi* ought to represent the community and consider their responsibilities to include checking the ruler and keeping the government accountable.

Overall, Huang interpreted the model of antiquity as a somewhat "constitutional," not in the sense that the community would vote to select its representatives, but, as Huang assumed, the common interest would be represented by elite learning. Scholars are responsible for defining public needs as the basis for "institution-making," that is, the building of common good. It was this model in antiquity that advanced the community's development.

How is the Common Good Possible? Re-interpreting Mencius

But what was the foundation of the model of antiquity? How did the sage kings get it right? In a commentary on Mencius, Huang addressed these questions.

Although Huang titled this commentary as "Mengzi shi shuo"(孟子师说), which might literally be translated *Mencius as Explained by My Teacher* [i.e. Liu Zongzhou],

[359] Huang, "Xuexiao," Ibid., 10.

Huang's interpretation was mainly focused on exploring the basis of the sage kings' institutional building, not on the individual moral mind or actions. What he did take from Liu was a rejection of Zhu Xi's duality between the "Mind of the Way "and the "Human Mind," which was also reflected in his duality between "Principle (*li*)" and "Materiality (*qi*)."

In Huang's view, Zhu Xi's duality assumed that the desires of human beings were obstacles to the realization of goodness, so that achieving morality would require removing desires. For Liu Zonghzou and other scholars of the Learning of the Mind, their rejection of such duality shifted the source of morality from outside the human mind to within it. But for Huang, rejecting this duality made the point that morality is not something to be achieved by deliberately removing one's human desire; instead, it is the basic human intuition. This conclusion was crucial for Huang, because, it was in the basic, almost instinctive moral intuition of every person that he discovered the possibility of concern for *gong* (公), or the common good.

For instance, in Huang's commentary on Mencius' interpretation of the concepts of humanness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual (*li*), and wisdom (*zhi*), Huang explained that people called these moral norms (綱常倫物之則) "the public principle (*li*) of the myriad things in Heaven-and-Earth (天地萬物公共之理), for the purpose of using them to define common teachings."[360] Thus, Huang continued, in order to understand these norms, one ought to explore commonly shared experiences (*gonggong chu* 公共處), instead of

[360] The original passage of Mencius is "Kou zhi yu wei" (口之於味) from the "Jin Xin II" (盡心下).

returning to one's personal experience.[361] In other words, these ethical norms were for people to commonly draw upon to regulate their lives, rather than something to be cultivated in each person.

But what is the source of these ethical norms? In commenting on a passage where Mencius discusses the content of the moral concepts of humanness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual (*li*), and wisdom (*zhi*), Huang argues that these moral concepts were man-made.[362] They were names, or *ming* (名), created by humans to explain or represent people's instinctive emotional, intellectual and social needs, such as their loving feelings toward family members, and their need for intellectual understanding. It would miss the point to devote oneself to seeking these names as "Heavenly Principle" with the belief that people ought to overcome their desires in order to realize them. Instead, the common emotional, intellectual and social tendencies that people create these concepts to represent are basic human moral senses possessed by all, almost instinctive. [363] Hence, human

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[361] "綱常倫物之則，世人以此謂天地萬物公共之理，用之範圍世教，故曰命也。所以後之儒者窮裡之學，必從公共處窮之。" "Kou zhi yu wei" (口之於味) chapter, *Mengzi shishuo, juan* 7. *Huang Zongxi quanji,* Vol.1, Ibid., 161.

[362] The passage of Mencius is "Ren zhi shi" (仁之實) from "Li Lou I"（離婁上）.

[363] "仁義理智樂，俱是虛名。人生墮地，只有父母兄弟，此一段不可解之情，與生俱來，此之謂實，於是而始有仁義之名。「知斯二者而弗去」，所謂知及仁守實有諸己，於是而始有智之名。當其事親從兄之際，自有調理委曲，見之行事之實，於是而始有禮之名，不待於勉強作為，如此而安，不如此則不安，於是而始有樂之名。到得生之之後，無非是孝弟之洋溢，而乾父坤母，總不離此不可解之一念也。先儒多以為性中曷嘗有孝弟來，於是先有仁義而後有孝弟，故孝弟為為仁之本，無乃先名而後實歟？即如陽明言「以此純乎天理之心，發之事父便是孝，發之事君便是忠」，「只在此心去人慾、存天理上用功便是」，亦與孟子之言不相似。蓋赤字之心，見父自然知愛，見心自然知敬，此是天理源頭，何消去存天理而後發之為事父母！如王心齋見父赴役，天寒起盥冷水，見之痛苦曰：「為人子而令親如此，尚得為人乎！」於是有事則身代之。此痛苦一念，不是工夫所到。當此處而求之，則天理不可勝用矣。先儒往往倒說了，理氣所以為二也。Huang Zongxi, "Ren zhi shi", (仁之實) chapter, *Mengzi shishuo, juan* 4. *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.1, 107-102.

beings create moral norms to articulate their basic sense of goodness and to meet their needs for living an ordered social life.

In this sense, Huang's commentary on *Mencius* can be read as a work explaining the foundation of his broad institutional design in *Waiting for the Dawn*. The realization of common good is possible as long as the system identifies with human beings' common moral sense and their need for a good community life.

4. The Modern Condition of Scholars: Institutional Legacy and Cultural Identity

But what should scholars do today? What was the contemporary situation of their civilization? In "On the Origins of Institutions" Huang wrote,

> It has been argued that order and disorder in the world are unrelated to the maintenance or absence of Institutions [of Three Dynasties]. Now as to this, among the major changes from the past to the present are one complete upheaval, which came with the Qin dynasty, and another with the Yuan dynasty. Following these two upheavals nothing at all survived of the sympathetic, benevolent, and constructive government of the early sage-kings. So, unless we take a long-range view and look deep into the matter, restore the [ideas of the] original land system, enfeoffment system, school, and military service systems through carefully adapting and accommodating [them to the changing world.] Even though some minor changes are made, there will never be an end to the misery of the common people.
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> 即論者謂天下之治亂不繫於法之存亡，夫古今之變，至秦而一盡，至元而又一盡，經此二盡之後，古聖王之所惻隱愛人而經營者蕩然無具。苟非為之遠思深覽，一一通變，以復井田、封建、學校、卒乘之舊，雖小小更革，生民之戚戚終無已時也。[364]

In Huang's view, the Qin and Yuan represented two major historical breaks from the

[364] This English translation is generally drawing on Wm. Theodore de Bary's translation. See De bary, *Waiting for the Dawn*, 99. But my understanding of "一一通變，以復井田、封建、學校、卒乘之舊" is different. According to De Bary, "一一通變" means "trace back through each of these changes," but I think by "一一通變", Huang suggests the need to accommodate new conditions.

legacy of the sage kings. The Qin's abolishment of feudal fiefs and establishment of the prefectural system represented the beginning of the dynastic rulers trying to use the system to serve their own interest.

Why did the Yuan represent another break? For Huang, the problem of the loss of the Central Country to the Mongols was not so much about the loss of its superior culture, but rather the rule of its people by a foreign conqueror who did not treat them fairly because of their identity. As he argued in the essay "History" (Shi 史), which was included as one chapter in his *Book to be Left to the Future,* a foreign conqueror that came to rule the people of the Central Country would not be fully committed to taking care of the people. For instance, Huang argued that the Yuan rulers applied laws based on double standards, treating the people of the Central Country unjustly and cruelly. "Did they ever treat people from the Central Country as people (何嘗以中國之民為民乎)?"[365]

The conquest of the Qing repeated the same break from the sage kings' legacy. Huang claimed that once the people of the Central Country were ruled by men who did not identify with the cultural identity of the community, the successive tradition (*tong* 統) of the sage kings was interrupted. The Yuan had interrupted this tradition, but the Ming restored it. "The founder of [the Ming] chased away [those wearing] leather clothes full of mutton odor and returned to the original clothing [of the Central Country]."[366] Based on the same nationalistic logic that he used in the case of Yuan's conquest, Huang

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[365] "曰：元之法律曰："蒙古人毆漢人，漢人勿得還報，蒙古人歐死漢人者，斷罰出征。" 彼方以禽獸加之人類之上，何嘗以中國之民為民乎？顧中國之人反群焉而奉之。 "Shi"(史), *Liushu*, *Huang Zongxi quanji* Vol.11 (Hang Zhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe Press, 2nd edition, 2005), 12.

[366] "堯、舜相傳之統，至元而絕，高皇帝驅膻裘之屬，還衣裳之舊，是百王之嫡嗣也"。 Ibid 12.

believed that losing the Ming to the Manchus was much worse than losing to the Han Chinese rebels.[367] In his view, the fact that many people at his time acknowledged the Mongols and the Manchus as legitimate rulers had much to do with the prevailing genre of Dynastic Histories. He targeted it as a politically harmfully institution because it only followed the successions of imperial dynasties, even though some were ruled by foreigners promoting different cultural customs. The genre justified such rulers, making people indifferent about unjustified foreign conquest and even encouraging the to serve the interests of foreign dynasties.[368]

Living in this historical moment, facing a deeply self-interested model of government and a foreign ruler who did not represent the culture of the community, what should literati scholars do? Since the Classics demonstrated the cumulative cultural and institutional creations of the sage kings which were developed for the common good, they also provided the basic sources for the history of the community of the Central Country. Open-ended, continuous, and critically minded Classical and historical study would help contemporary scholars to restore the ideas of the original institutional designs and make sense of them in a changing world. This scholarly effort would lay the foundation for concrete reforms when opportunities arose. It would also remind people of the legacy of schools in antiquity, celebrating the values of the autonomous and public-minded community of *shi*.

By the late 1670s, Huang was proud of the Ningbo Classical Learning Society,

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[367] Ibid.

[368] "……則夫史臣之帝元者，何以異於是！嗟乎！為史而使亂臣賊子得志於天下，其不如無史之為愈也。" Ibid., 12-13.

believing it had nurtured a generation of exemplary *shi* (魯衛之士). They were "well versed in the studies of the Classics, able to traverse among the writings of hundreds of writers in history." They also held on to their integrity and were critical toward the government.[369] Huang's own work, *Waiting for the Dawn* (1662), was a good example of what Huang meant by the product of learning. The book was not a Classical exegesis or historical work, but a set of analyses based on Huang's own discoveries of the political principles in antiquity, integrated with historical explanations and information, and followed by proposed solutions to many problems that he discovered in his world. In producing such writings, he hoped to leave a lasting legacy upon which future followers could act.[370]

Many of Huang's Ningbo students came to see their Classical learning program as an important preparation for them to record their own discoveries for the future, discoveries that could stand the test of time. Huang's model enabled them to connect their learning to the rebuilding of an ideal government even if it could not be realized in contemporary life, and endowed them with a kind of progressive reformist mentality. In a letter that Wan Sitong (萬斯同 1638-1702) wrote to his friend, he explained that Huang's model enabled him to understand his own potential and obligation as a *Ru*. Therefore,

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[369] "今海內皆知甬上，精綜六籍，翱翔百氏，危儒行，標清議，一切誇誕骫骳之習擊去之。……蓋十年以來，所稱魯衛之士人，必在甬上也。嗟乎！亦知其所以至此乎？" Huang Zongxi, "Chen Xiexian wushi shouxu" (陳夔獻五十壽序), *Huang Zongxi quanji* Vol.10, 661.

[370] It is said that the basis of this book (1657) was entitled *A Book to be Left to the Future* (留書). His preface says, "古之君子著書，不惟其言之也，惟其行之也。仆生塵冥之中，治亂之故，觀之也熟。農瑣余隙，條其大者，為書八篇。仰瞻宇宙，抱策焉往？則亦留之空言而已。自有宇宙以來，著書者何限？或以私意攙入其間，其留亦為無用。吾之言非一人之私意也，后之人苟有因吾人而行之者，又何異乎吾人自行其言乎？是故其書不可不留也。" Huang Zongxi, preface to *Liushu,* from *Huang Zongxi quanji* (全集) vol.11

Wan tried to convince his friend to concern himself more with leaving a lasting legacy for the future betterment of the world, rather than studying for the civil service exam.

Wan Sitong was one of Huang's notable students from the Ningbo community, and he became a leading institutional historian by the early eighteenth century. He claimed that what he meant by "ordering the world" (經世) was by no means simply fixing the day-to-day problems of statecraft (因時補救). Instead, he wanted to thoroughly understand the past and make a broad, structural contribution.[371] Such study would be much more meaningful than exam essays. But he also emphasized that the ambition to create an enduring legacy was not in conflict with specific knowledge production. One could also choose to make a contribution by focusing on a smaller subject.[372] The idea that their approach to learning could promise something long-lasting was also understood by some students in terms of the meaning of literati writing. Li Yesi (李鄴嗣1622-1680) took Huang's model to mean that if the ideal of writing was to be meaningful for the future, then writing had to carry values (*dao* 道) and contain understanding about human affairs (*shi* 事). The first was to be realized through studying

[371] "夫吾之所爲經世者，非因時補救，如今所謂經濟云爾也。將盡取古今經國之大猷而一一詳究其始末，斟酌其確，當定爲一代之規模。使今日坐而言者，他日可以作而行耳……願暫綴古文之學，而專意從事於此，使古今之典章法制，爛然於胸中而經緯條貫，實可建萬世之長策，他日用則為帝王師，不用則著書名山為後世法，始為儒者之實學，而吾亦俯仰於天地間無愧矣。苟徒竭一生之精力，於古文以蘄不朽於後世，縱使文實可傳，亦無益於天地生民之數，又何論其未必可傳者。" Wan Sitong, "Yu cong zi zhen yi shu," (與從子貞一書), *Shiyuanwenji*, *juan* 7(石園文集), *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* 1415.

[372] "……蓋千古與一時不同軌也，由是以言，非果能盡讀天下之書，竭一生之精力，而自信其必傳者，亦可擇術而從事矣。今之操筆爲詩古文辭，不過僅賢於專工舉藝者耳，其於古人立言之旨，概未有當也。……今同志之中固有不專於古文而講求經學者，將來諸經之學，不患乎無傳人，惟史學則願與吾兄共任之，。誠留意於此，不但可以通史，并一代之制度、一朝之建置、名公卿之嘉謨嘉猷，與夫賢士大夫之所經營樹立，莫不概見於斯，又可以備他日經濟之用，則是一舉而兼得之也。" "Ji Fan Bishan shu,"(寄范筆山書), Ibid.,

the Classics and the latter through history.[373] Overall, Huang's model inspired many of his followers to find their own worth through the process of Classical and historical learning, which enabled them to reflect on the existing culture and try to make a difference through learning.

Gu Yanwu's Ru Learning from the Perspective of the State-Society Relationship

1. Searching for the Principles of Government and Understanding the Life of the Community through Classical and Historical Scholarship

Gu Yanwu and Huang Zongxi never met. In 1676, Gu encountered two of Huang's students in Beijing, through whom Gu learned about Huang's *Waiting for the Dawn*.[374] After reading the book, he decided to send Huang something he had been working on, an early printed edition of a book he had named *Knowledge Gained Day by Day* (Rizhi lu 日知錄), and an essay on taxation. In the letter sent with his writings, Gu wrote:

> To my own way of thinking I have, since middle age, done nothing else but following in the path of earlier scholars, "making notes on textual matters" and composing verse on the breeze and moonlight. As the years and months have gone by, I have delved into the secrets of the past and present. Only so have I learned that "the sea comes last, and the river first"; that to make a mountain requires many baskets of earth. Gradually, too, I have glimpsed the meaning of the Sages' Six Classics, the causes of order and disorder in the nation, and the basic factors in the livelihood of the people. Yet, I regret that I have not had the

[373] "堯舜三代以來，君臣盛德大業，俱載之於言，得以垂教於萬世。後起者將從事於斯文，必本諸於六藝，折衷於夫子，而始得與於文章之事。故必先之以經學，是為載道之言；次之以史學，是為載事之言。夫道與事皆得藉吾言而得傳，則惟其辭之修，言之有文，若云漢昭回，燦然可見，而後足傳於後世。" Li Siye, "Shang Lizhou xiansheng shu" (上黎洲先生書), from *Gaotang wenchao, juan* 4 (杲堂文鈔), 5a-b. Harvard-Yenching Library Rare Book Collection http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:19702594 Seq. 162-3.

[374] Fang Zuyou, Huang Zongxi changzhuan, 296.

benefit of your criticism…I have read your masterpiece *Daifang lu* (待訪録) several times and realized, as a result, that the world is never without true men, that the evils of a hundred kings can be repaired and the glories of the Three Dynasties in time revived. In the affairs of the world, the right man to deal with a situation may never be faced with it, and yet when the situation arises the right man of old wrote with a view to posterity, so that when a worthy king appeared in later times he could learn from it. Thus, "when a series of changes has run its course, another change ensues. When it obtains free course, it will continue long." "When sages rise up again, they will not change my words." Of this I can feel confident now.

伏念炎武中年以前，不過從諸文士之後，注蟲魚、吟風月而已。積以歲月，窮探古今，然後知後海先河，為山覆簣，而於聖賢六經之指，國家治亂之源、生民根本之計漸有所窺，未得就正有道。……因出大著《待訪録》讀之再三，於是知天下之未嘗無人，百王之敝可以復起，而三代之盛可以徐還也。天下之事，有其識者未必遭其時，而當其時者，或無其識。古之君子所以著書待後，有王者起，得而師之。[375]

After reading Huang's book, Gu was inspired that he had found a like-minded scholar, who was also searching for understanding the basis of the sage kings' rule in antiquity for improving the life of contemporary society. Gu considered *Knowledge Gained Day by Day* to be his most important legacy, "his life-long aspiration and achievement."[376] The version of the book that Gu sent to Huang was compiled and printed in 1670. It only contained eight *juan* at that time.[377] However, it would grow into 32 *juan* by the time he passed away, and the final version would be published by a

[375] Gu Yanwu, "Yu Huang Taichong shu" (與黃太衝書), *Gu Yanwu quanji* (顧炎武全集) Vol. 21 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe Press, 2011), 298. This English translation draws on William Theodore de Bary's translation. See *Waiting for the dawn: a plan for the prince : Huang Tsung-hsi's Ming-i tai-fang lu*, 170-171.

[376] "惟是斯道之在天下，必有時而興，而君子之教人，有私淑艾者，雖去之百世而猶若同堂也。所著《日知錄》三十餘卷，平生之志與業皆在其中，惟多寫數本以貽之同好，庶不為惡其害己者之所去，而有王者起，得以酌取焉，其亦可以畢區區之願矣。" "Yu Youren lun menren shu,"（與友人論門人書） *Gu Yanwu Quanji,* Vol. 21. 100.

[377] Gu Yanwu started to work on compiling his encyclopedic notes and comments into a structural work no earlier than the 1660s. That draft was entitled *The First Edition of the Learning Gained Day by Day* (Chuke rizhilu 初刻日知錄), *Gu Yanwu quanji,* Vol.18, 3.

student in 1695. The final version contains about a thousand entries. Each entry is usually a short reading note, a comment on a historical figure's speech, or an explanation of the changes of certain historical institutions. Like Huang's *Waiting for the Dawn*, Gu's book is not a collection of Classical exegeses or historical records. On one hand, it shows Gu's observations of trends in politics, society, and culture based on the Classics and historical sources, while on the other hand, it contains Gu's judgments on principles of government and his comments on valuable and successful methods developed through time that echoed the principles of the Classics.[378]

Gu considered his book to contain three categories of knowledge. The first was *jingshu* (經術), the knowledge of the Classics, including discussions on the Five Classics, the *Analects*, and the *Mencius*. In this category, Gu was mostly interested in how early sages' documents and writings can shed light on the principles of government and illustrate *Ru*'s cultural tradition, how some ancient institutions were created, changed, and disappeared through history, how the Classics had been studied and commented on by later people, and so on. The second category was "*zhidao*" (治道), or, the way of government. It included Gu's criticisms and discussions on various economic and social policies in history, as well as studies of the origins and changes of political institutions and laws over time. The third category was "*bowen*" (博聞), or broad knowledge, which

[378] He Yousen (何佑森) argued that Gu chose what he considered to be important principles in the Classics to discuss in the *jingshu* section and that he put historical examples in the section of *zhidao* to prove his explanation of the Classics. "Gu Tinglin de jingxue" (顧亭林的經學), *Qingdai xueshu sichao: He Yousen xiansheng xueshu lunwen ji, Part 2* (清代學術思潮：何佑森先生學術論文集 下冊) (Taibei: Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2009), 252. I do not think Gu did so intentionally, but He Yousen's observation fits the fact that the *jingshu* section indeed contains some central themes of political ideas that Gu was interested in, and these themes also appear in various entries from other sections. I think this suggests that when Gu collected information and developed analyses he had some constant questions and interests.

included topical discussions on a wide array of cultural, political and social issues and institutions through history.[379]

At a deeper level, Gu shared Huang's intellectual values and understanding of knowledge. First, Gu saw his learning as pursuing the principles, the *li,* of civilized life through analyzing social, cultural and institutional changes. When Gu started compiling his notes and discussions into the first version of the book in the late 1660s, he argued that "Principles (*li*) under Heaven are infinite; gentlemen who are determined to pursue the Way will not be able to explain [these principles] without the articulating them through writing."[380] Moreover, Gu also set his goal as taking "China's" antiquity (*fagu yongxia* 法古用夏) as an model in order to "overcome the chaos and clarify the wrongdoings" in his contemporary world.[381] Like Huang, Gu expected that his book would inspire progressive scholarship in the future and invite later kings to support reforms. Furthermore, like Huang, Gu hoped that his book could be a model of *Ru* culture for his own times, which could also teach future students who did not have a chance to learn from him in person.[382]

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[379] In the final edition, the *jingshu* section includes seven *juan*, the *zhidao* section five *juan*, and the *bowen* section twenty *juan*.

[380] "蓋天下之理無窮，而君子之志於道也，不成章不達。故昔日之得，不足以為矜，後日之成，不容以自限。若其所欲明學術正人心，撥亂世，以興太平之事，則有不盡於是刻者。須絕筆之後，藏之名山，以世宰物者之求。" Gu, "Chuke Rizhilu zixu," (初刻日知錄自序), *Gu Yanqu quanji*, Vol.21, 75.

[381] "向者日知錄之刻，謬承許可。比來學業稍進，亦多刊改，意在撥亂滌汙，法古用夏。啟多聞於來學，待一治於後王。自信其書之必傳，而未敢以示人也。" Gu, "Yu Yang Xuecheng" (1670)(與楊雪臣), Ibid., 202.

[382] "惟是斯道之在天下，必有時而興，而君子之教人，有私淑艾者，雖去之百世而猶若同堂也。所著《日知錄》三十餘卷，平生之志與業皆在其中，惟多寫數本以貽之同好，庶不

Gu also hoped that scholars would situate themselves amid the complex historical trends through their scholarship and reflect on their own conditions. His book covers a wide range of analyses of institutions and related economic, administrative, social, and cultural aspects, concerned with how government interacted with these themes through history, how these interactions led to successes and failures, and how the consequences of these historical changes had contributed to the problems of the contemporary world. These aspects can be best described with Gu's own term, *shi* (勢), namely, the tendency or momentum of human affairs taking place in certain historical contexts. Like Huang, he believed that being capable of understanding such trends would help students to become publically minded and find their role in making a difference. "Gentlemen pursuing learning are not just trying to benefit themselves. … When they know how the general tendencies of affairs in society came into being, then when they want to stand up they will have the means to save it."[383]

The values of Gu's program were obvious to his friends. Cheng Xianzhen (程先貞1607-1673), who helped Gu print the first edition of the book, commented that Gu had "investigated into the past and commented on the world (考古論世之學) " with a

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為惡其害己者之所去，而有王者起，得以酌取焉，其亦可以畢區區之願矣。"Gu, "Yu youren lun menren shu"(與友人論門人書), *Gu Yanwu quanji,* Vol.21, 100.

[383] "……君子之為學也，非利己而已也，有明道淑人之心，有撥亂反正之事，知天下之勢之何以流極而至於此，則思起而有以救之。" And in what follows he downplayed the Song-Yuan Neo-Confucian learning tradition and celebrated people such as Wang Tong (王通 584-617), a Classical scholar and policy maker. "不敢上援孔、孟，且六代之末，猶有一文中子者，讀聖人之書，而惓惓以世之不治，民之無聊為亟。沒身之後，唐太宗用其言以成貞觀之治，而房、杜諸公皆出於文中子之門。雖其學未粹於程、朱，要豈今人之可望哉。仰惟來旨，有不安於今人之為學者，故先告之志以立其本。惟願刻意自厲，身處於宋元以上之人與為師友，而無狗乎耳目 之所濡染者焉，則可必其有成矣。" Gu,"Yu Pan Cigeng,"(1668) (與潘次耕札), Ibid., 229.

"general purpose of illustrating the methods of the Classics and determining the Kingly way (大旨在于明經術、抉王道)." In Cheng's view, Gu's discourses, which grew out of his Classical and historical scholarship, were original and creative. "[Gu's book] is rooted in the Classics but it does not stick to conventional views; it is grounded in history but it is not limited by established discourse. There are many [things] that have not been explained by worthies in the past but are illustrated by [Gu] on his own." For Cheng, Gu's original discoveries showed that he had engaged with exploring the deeper principles or mechanism of things (深造理窟), in contrast to mainstream scholars who conducted trivial and derivative learning. It was because of this broad and conceptual ability that Gu was truly connected to the grand legacy of government in antiquity (力追大雅) and was able to carry out the cultural tradition (斯文) of the sage kings.[384]

2. From Investigating Local Government to Reflecting on the Role of Literati Learning

Although he shared Huang's attitude and approach to learning, Gu's specific depiction of the ideal government in antiquity and his corresponding judgment about

[384] "……亭林先生，今之大儒，於書無所不讀，習熟國家典制，以至人情物理，淹灌會通，折衷而守之，卓乎為經濟之學者也。……為餘談說經史……因見其著述之富，汗牛充棟，要皆崇正黜邪，一軌於聖賢之微旨。抽關啓匙，盡見其全。其辯詳以何，其論典以要，其思平寔以遠，其義純粹以精。本於經而不泥於昔問，源於史而不拘於成說。多前賢所未明，一旦自我發之者。自漢唐以來，諸儒林立，觀其意思，略於鄭康成、王文忠輩相仿佛，皆能深造理窟，力追大雅，以斯文為己任者也。以視今之作者，不啻奏黃鐘大呂於秋蟲響達之前，其巨細不侔矣。假使先生得時，而駕為當代柱石，功業所至，不過封喉而止；其於闡顯聖之道，以津逮將來，為天下後世之利，且孰得孰失乎？今年結夏如此，與二三人同講易。復得發其《日知錄》一書觀之，多考古論世之學，而其大旨在于明經術、抉王道，為止三歎服膺，勸其出以惠學者，此自亭林支鋒蔓壑。餘老病荒忽，書數語其後，附以不朽，必欲東觀大海，盡十洲三島之奇，則有先生所著之書在，非一朝一夕所得而卒業者矣。余不佞，徜如豫之五爻，疾而不死，請得讀書養氣，十年以後，文思少進，為先生細論之。" Cheng Xianzhen "贈顧徵君亭林序," Ibid.

contemporary problems were not the same. As Gu wrote to Huang, he shared about six- to seven-tenths of Huang's arguments in *Waiting for the Dawn*.

Particularly, Huang found the government of antiquity to possess a "constitutional" principle, which was clearly embodied in the understanding of the responsibilities and authority of the rulers and ministers, the making of institutions, and the function of schools as society's legislative representatives. However, although Gu insisted that it was the political and cultural elite's responsibility to devote itself to the common interest of society, he did not try to argue that the source of political power lies in the common good. As we shall see, based on his different intellectual trajectory through the dynastic transition, Gu developed a keen perception of how state-society relations played a fundamental role in determining the interest of society. This understanding advanced his interpretation of the model of antiquity and the *Ru* tradition. Specifically, Gu came to a conclusion similar to what we may call a bottom-up "Republican" vision.

In the 1640s, the young Gu Yanwu was interested in finding ways to improve people's livelihood as well as strengthen the state. Having just given up studying for the civil service examination, he "turned to extensively reading dynastic histories, gazetteers from prefectures and counties, and literary collections and memorials of Ming figures."[385] By the early 1650s, he already started working on *The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Commanderies and States of the Empire* (Tianxia junguo libing shu 天下郡國利病書

[385] "崇禎己卯，秋闈被擯，退而讀書。感四國之多虞，恥經生之寡術，於是歷覽二十一史以及天下郡縣志書，一代明公文集及章奏文冊之類，有得即錄，共成四十餘帙。一為輿地之紀，一為利病之書。……" Gu, "Tianxia junguo libingshu xu" (天下郡國利病書序), *Gu Yanwu quanji*, Vol.21, 193.

), an analysis of the history and the contemporary conditions of local administrative units in the Ming, which made his initial reputation as a "modern Sima Qian" among Fushe scholars.[386] In this most representative work of his early years, Gu looked at social and economic issues with a focus on such aspects as revenues, fiscal policies, taxation, official administration, infrastructure, agriculture, social policies, and strategic geography. Corresponding to this interest, in several essays that are believed to have been written during the same time, Gu prepared a series of decentralized reform proposals to encourage private initiative, increase economic stability, and improve administrative efficiency, which, in his view, would in turn support the well-being of the entire nation and the power of the state.[387]

Beginning from the late 1660s and early 1670s, Gu started to go beyond the topics of local economy and administration, looking at the relationship between localities and central government in a broader perspective. Meanwhile, he began to publicly identify the goal of his scholarship as understanding and spreading the vision of the *Ru* tradition about public life. He started to see himself as responsible for "exhaust[ing] the Classics for the future kings" (窮經待后王) for the purpose of "illuminat[ing] the Way [of the

[386] "Zhengshu qilu hou" (徵書啟錄後), *Tinglin xiansheng buyi shizhong: Tongzhi zengyan* (亭林先生補遺十種: 同志贈言) (Shanghai Saoye Shanfang Press, Shanghai: 1885)

[387] There are three representative essays, "Tiangong lun" (田功論), "Junzhi lun" (軍制論), "Qianfa lun" (錢法論). His proposals was to improve economy and strengthen the country by having the state encourage local private initiatives to build long-term economic development, allowing the farmers to migrate to the border to consolidate defense, minimizing the fiscal burden on society, unrestricting circulation of the standard medium of fiscal exchange, and so on. See Thomas Bartlett's discussion on these essays in *Ku Yen-wu's Response to "the Demise of Human Society"* (Dissertation, Princeton University, 1985), 110-2.

sages] to save humanity" (明道救人).[388] Particularly, he believed his enterprise was the same as the enterprise of Confucius, who, by editing and transmitting the Classics, also tried to save people from disasters.[389] To do so, scholars ought to translate the ideas of ancient institutions (古制之意) into something viable for the present.[390]

In two famous essays, "On the Prefectural System" (Junxian lun 郡縣論) and "On the Licentiates*"* (Shengyuan lun 生員論), Gu articulated in great detail his ideas about how a good model of politics and teaching could be realized, and how to remove the most problematic wrongdoings of his time.[391] These essays synthesized different aspects of government and offered a vision of state-society relations that transcended the rise and fall of dynasties. In this vision, *Ru* learning played an important role in defining that relationship.

In Gu's view, the enfeoffment system guaranteed social-moral order and economic and military stability. The well-being of the central state was supported by the local rulers. The fall of the enfeoffment system and the rise of the prefectural system were an unavoidable result of cumulative historical change. It was not necessary for the

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[388] He Yousen noticed that Gu's thought shifted during this period, from focusing on the contemporary world to focusing on finding the principles of antiquity and methods developed from history. "Gu Tinglin de jingxue," 253. This observation agrees with Thomas Bartlett's conclusion that, beginning from around 1662, Gu saw himself as responsible mainly for developing general principles of government to save society. Gu stated that his plans would not be known to, nor adopted by the contemporary ruler. See Bartlett, *Ku Yen-wu's Response to the Demise of Human Society*, 112.

[389] "孔子之刪述《六經》，既伊尹、太公救民於水火之心，而今之注蟲魚、命草木者，皆不足以語此也。故曰："載之空言，不如見諸行事。" Gu, "Yu ren shu 3" (與人書三), *Gu Yanwu quanji*, Vol.21, 139.

[390] "Yurenshu 8" (與人書八), Ibid., 141.

[391] For an English translations of these two essays, see Bartlett, *Ku Yen-wu's Response to the Demise of Human Society*, 173-202.

modern world to go back to the old system, nor would it be possible to do so. However, the drawbacks of the centralized prefectural system had become the major causes of poverty and the deterioration of the country.

> The ancient sages treated men of the whole world with a sense of public concern, rewarding [the worthy] with lands and enfeoffing them in states. [But] today, the lord of men takes over all territories within the four seas as his private prefectures, and is still unsatisfied. He suspects every person, and controls every affair; regulations and files multiply daily; moreover, he further establishes provincial intendants, governors and viceroys, supposing that the prefects and magistrates would thus be prevented from oppressing the common people under their [jurisdiction]. But he does not know that responsible [local] officials are [thereby made] fearful of being unable to save themselves from [being accused of] having committed mistakes, and consider it their good fortune to be relieved by a successor [eventfully and in due term, so] there are non who desire to promote [even] one day's benefit for the common people [under] their [jurisdiction. Thus as regards] the common people, how can they not be impoverished, and [as regards] the dynasty, how can it not be enfeebled?
>
> 古之聖人，以公心待天下之人，胙之土而分之國；今之君人者，盡四海之內為我郡縣猶不足也，人人而疑之，事事而制之，科條文簿日多於一日，而又設之監司，設之督撫，以為如此，守令不得以殘害其民矣。不知有司之官，凜凜焉救過之不給，以得代為幸，而無肯為其民興一日之利者，民烏得而不窮，國烏得而不弱？[392]

To overcome these social and political ills, the modern rulers could implement the underlying idea of the ancient enfeoffment system within the present prefectural system (寓封建之意於郡縣之中).[393] This would require a series of reforms. In Gu's proposal, the

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[392] Gu, "Junxian lun 1," (郡縣論一), *Gu Yanwu quanji*, Vol. 21,57. This translation is from Bartlett with my slight revisions, see Bartlett, *Ku Yen-wu's Response to the Demise of Human Society*, 176-7.

[393] "知封建之所以變而為郡縣，則知郡縣之敝而將復變。然則將復變而為封建乎？曰，不能，有聖人起，寓封建之意於郡縣之中，而天下治矣。蓋自漢以下之人，莫不謂秦以孤立而亡。不知秦之亡，不封建亡，封建亦亡；而封建之廢，固自周衰之日而不自於秦也。封建之廢，非一日之故也，雖聖人起，亦將變而為郡縣。方今郡縣之敝已極，而無聖人出焉，尚一一仍其故事，此民生之所以日貧，中國之所以日弱而益趨於亂也。何則？封建之失，其專在下；郡縣之失，其專在上。" Gu, "Junxian lun," *Gu Yanwu quanji*, Vol. 21, 57

provincial level of government would be removed entirely, and county magistrates (*zhixian* 知縣) would be given much more independent power. The candidates for county magistrate would recommended locally. After their governing performance had been tested for a certain number of years, the candidates would be able to obtain lifetime appointments. They could also decide whether to leave their positions to their descendants, or recommend others to take their positions.

In another major reform, provincial officials such as provincial intendants (*jiansi* 監司), governors, and viceroys (*dufu* 督撫) would be removed, and the county magistrates would not need to report to any higher officials appointed by the central government to oversee their performance. County magistrates would have the right to appoint most of their subordinate officials. In this way, the county magistrates would take on greater responsibilities.[394] This would theoretically tie their interests closely to the interests of the areas where they serve, so that they would be more likely to take good care of the local people.[395]

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[394] "其說曰：改知縣為五品官，正其名曰縣令。任是職者，必用千里以內習其風土之人。其初曰試令，三年，稱職，為真；又三年，稱職，封父母；又三年，稱職，璽書勞問；又三年，稱職，進階益祿，任之終身。其老疾乞休者，舉子若弟代；不舉子若弟，舉他人者聽；既代去，處其縣為祭酒，祿之終身。所舉之人復為試令。三年稱職為真，如上法。每三四縣若五六縣為郡，郡設一太守，太守三年一代。詔遣御史巡方，一年一代。其督撫司道悉罷。令以下設一丞，吏部選授。丞任九年以上得補令。丞以下曰簿、曰尉、曰博士、曰驛丞、曰司倉、曰游徼、曰嗇夫之屬，備設之，毋裁。其人聽令自擇，報名於吏部；簿以下得用本邑人為之。令有得罪於民者，小則流，大則殺；其稱職者，既家於縣，則除其本籍。夫使天下之為縣令者，不得遷又不得歸，其身與縣終，而子孫世世處焉。不職者流，貪以敗官者殺。夫居則為縣宰，去則為流人，賞則為世官，罰則為斬絞，豈有不勉而為良吏者哉！" Gu, "Junxian lun 2"(郡縣論二), Ibid., 58.

[395] "天下之人各懷其家，各私其子，其常情也。為天子為百姓之心，必不如其自為，此在三代以上已然矣。聖人者因而用之，用天下之私，以成一人之公而天下治。夫使縣令得私其百里之地，則縣之人民皆其子姓，縣之土地皆其田疇，縣之城郭皆其藩垣，縣之倉廩皆其囷窌。為子姓，則必愛之而勿傷；為田疇，則必治之而勿棄；為藩垣囷窌，則必繕之而

Importantly, this idea of reforming local government also suggested a radical revision of the system for selecting officials and providing education. Rather than relying on a centralized civil service exam based on general learning of the Classics and *Four Books*, Gu proposed a solution combining recommendations and professional testing. Meanwhile, he suggested separating *Ru* learning from the selection of officials, calling for the construction of local county schools to educate talented young men who were truly concerned with learning and with the interest of community life, rather than the pursuit of exam degrees. The selection of teachers would have nothing to do with the selection of officials. It would be the magistrate's responsibility to hire teachers, and the responsibility of the Department of Officials to select officials. The goal of local schools would be to create *shi,* literati scholars, who would become local cultural leaders. If some of them wanted to serve the local or central government, they would be recommended and, if necessary, tested.[396] They might also have the opportunity to become county magistrates.

This proposal touches upon another important issue, that is, the formation of

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勿損。自令言之，私也，自天子言之，所求乎治天下者，如是焉止矣。一旦有不虞之變，必不如劉淵、石勒、王仙芝、黃巢之輩，橫行千里，如入無人之境也。於是有效死勿去之守，於是有合從締交之拒，非為天子也，為其私也。為其私，所以為天子也。故天下之私，天子之公也。公則說，信則人任焉。此三代之治可以庶幾，而況乎漢、唐之盛，不難致也。"Gu, "Junxian lun 5" (郡縣論五), Ibid., 60.

[396] "取士之制，其薦之也，略用古人鄉舉里選之意；其試之也，略用唐人身言書判之法。縣舉賢能之士，間歲一人試於部。上者為郎，無定員，郎之高第得出而補令；次者為丞，於其近郡用之；又次者歸其本縣，署為簿尉之屬。而學校之設，聽令與其邑之士自聘之，謂之師不謂之官，不隸名於吏部。而在京，則公卿以上倣漢人三府辟召之法，參而用之。夫天下之士，有道德而不願仕者，則為人師；有學術才能而思自見於世者，其縣令得而舉之，三府得而辟之，其亦可以無失士矣。或曰：間歲一人，功名之路無乃狹乎？化天下之士使之不競於功名，王治之大者也。且顏淵不仕，閔子辭官，漆雕未能，曾晳異撰，亦何必於功名哉！" Gu, "Junxian lun 9"(郡縣論九), Ibid., 63.

social elites. One significant cause of social ills of his time, in Gu's view, was the group of licentiates (*shengyuan* 生員). Although the state's original goal in implementing the civil service exams was to select learned and virtuous people, the growing crowd of licentiates abused the exam system simply to gain social status, to be classified as "gentry." As gentry, they were exempted from the liabilities of the commoners, protected their families' interests, cultivated a meritorious social image, and were treated with respect by local clerks and officials. This corrupted the civil service in several ways. On the one hand, the exam system failed to select talent. A large percentage of the licentiates had no real learning; they often gained their status by bribing officials or by memorizing exam essays. On the other hand, being litigious and irresponsible, they caused distress to community life.

As a remedy, Gu proposed to entirely separate the recognition of social elites from the selection of talent for aiding the ruler or teaching at schools. Acknowledging the hope of licentiates to protect their families' interest and to gain social respect, Gu proposed to establish a purchased, non-academic rank that would allow prominent local people to gain legal exemption from the liabilities of commoners, such as labor service. In doing so, it seems, Gu meant to help cultivate a group of prestigious local social and economic elites who could foster a bottom-up economic and social force. At the same time, Gu proposed to dramatically narrow the selection system at school so that only those who are seriously committed to learning, and who want to work for the betterment of the world, would be supported. This goal would be addressed in the context of the new school system briefly discussed above. The county magistrates could select a limited number of talented young people to attend the local school, where they would thoroughly study the

five Classics, histories, and contemporary affairs, without the goal of gaining degrees. In other words, the value of learning should not be measured by social, economic or political prestige. Rather, this small number of scholars should be supported only for their merits and talent. The county magistrates could then promote those who would like to serve locally or nationally.[397] For Gu, the key point behind this design was to disconnect literati learning from official selection and from the formation of social prestige. "It is key to the restoration of the kingly rule." (化天下之士使之不競於功名，王治之大者也)

Overall, these two proposals captured the key aspects of Gu's political vision after his thinking matured. First, non-academic paths ought to be open to families with private wealth so that they could generate influence in society. Second, official selection and literati scholarship ought to be separated, in order to fundamentally transform literati culture from its current corrupted and empty practice into something more substantive and publically minded. Third, literati scholars could serve the government, but their main identity would not be defined by their role in government. Rather, they ought to

[397] "國家之所以設生員者何哉？蓋以收天下之才俊子弟，養之於庠序之中，使之成德達材，明先王之道，通當世之務，出為公頃大夫，與天子分猷共治者也。今則不然，合天下之生員，縣以三百計，不下五十萬人，而所以教之者，僅場屋之文。然求其成文者，數十人不得一，通經知今古，可為天子用者，數千人不得一也……故今之願為生員者非必慕功名也，保身家而已。請一切罷之，而別為其制。必選夫五經兼通者而後充之，又課之以二十一史與當世之務而後升之。仍分為秀才、明經二科，二養之於學者，不得過二十人之數，無則闕之。為之師者，州縣以禮聘焉，勿令部選。如此而國有實用之人， 邑有通經之人，其人才必盛於今日也。" Gu, "Shenyuan lun 1," (生員論上) Ibid., 68. Also see, "……而學校之設，聽令與其邑之士自聘之，謂之師不謂之官，不隸名於吏部。而在京，則公卿以上倣漢人三 府辟召之法，參而用之。夫天下之士，有道德而不願仕者，則為人師；有學術才能而思自見於世者，其縣令得而舉之，三府得而辟之，其亦可以無失士矣。或曰：間 歲一人，功名之路無乃狹乎？化天下之士使之不競於功名，王治之大者也。且顏淵不仕，閔子辭官，漆雕未能，曾晳異撰，亦何必於功名哉！" Gu "Junxian lun 9" (郡縣論九), Ibid., 63.

contribute to the cultivation of a general cultural education through scholarship and teaching, based on their extensive and cumulative learning of the Classics and history.

But, what if these plans were not to be realized in the contemporary dynasty? Situating these two essays in the early Qing context, Gu's vision appeared at odds with the path that the new Manchu rulers had taken to solidify their rulership. What should the literati scholars do to realize the intention of the sage kings?

3. An Ideology of *Ru* Learning against the Government Ideology

In the 1670s Gu Yanwu became increasingly interested in understanding the ethical and cultural foundations of community life, and turned to reflect on the meaning and role of the *Ru* tradition through history. In 1679, his close friend Li Yindu (李因篤 1632-1692) noticed that the updated version of Gu's *Knowledge Gained Day by Day* reflected a growing interest in talking about the meaning of "learning" (*lunxue* 論學).[398]

In Gu's later years, he wrote a few prefaces to celebrate the importance of lineages and genealogy, and in these writings Gu systematically explained what he saw as the key moral meaning that was embodied by the model of antiquity and was represented by the *Ru* tradition through history.[399] The most representative such piece was written in 1677 for the building of an ancestral hall for the Wang lineage in Huayin (華陰):

> What Confucius used to teach people was nothing other than establishing ethical [values] under Heaven, and filial piety is the basis of ethical values. Paying careful attention to performing the funeral rites to parents and letting them be

[398] After Lu Longqi discussed with Li Yindu about Gu's work, Lu noted down Li's comment: "顧寧人…… 近日所續日知錄，多論學之言，又與前刻不同。" Lu Longqi, *Sanyutang riji* (三魚堂日記) 戊午年十月二十八日 (1679).

[399] For instance, "Huayin Wang shi zongci ji" (華陰王氏宗祠記), "Laizhou Ren shi zupu xu"(萊州任氏族譜序), "Yangshi citang ji" (楊氏祠堂記), "Peicun ji" (裴村紀).

followed when long gone with the ceremonies of sacrifice is the substance of filial piety. … Therefore, after an ethical order is put into place, social customs would be established. After social customs are established, politics would function properly. After politics function properly, the country would exist.

夫子所以教人者，無非以立天下之人倫，而孝弟，人倫之本也；慎終追遠，孝弟之實也。……是故有人倫，然後有風俗，有風俗，然後有政事，有政事，然後有國家。

The early Kings treated people [as follows]. When [people] were born, [the early kings] put them in the disciplines of the kinship of the nine generations, connecting them with the big and small clans. When [people] died, [the early kings] made for them mourning clothing differentiated by distance, and standards for mourning to see the dead off; for those who are most distant, there was the institution of the ancestral temple, the ceremonies of Di (禘) and Chang(嘗),[400] and sacrificial objects such as Dingzu (鼎俎) and Biandou (籩豆). What was applied at court, what was employed in the villages, and what was taught at school were nothing other than these. Therefore, the virtues of people were pure and the habits of following rituals were formed; order was maintained and violence and evil were avoided. Since the Three Dynasties, rulers have only tried to tax people and use them as servants. They have ignored everything [that the early kings did for people] to nourish life and correct morality, simply leaving those issues to the people themselves to take care of. Thus, [after the Three Dynasties] the power of teaching and cultivation (教化之權) have been often controlled from below.

先王之於民，其生也，為之九族之紀，大宗小宗之屬以聯之；其死也，為之疏衰之服，哭泣殯葬虞附之節以送之；其遠也，為之廟室之制，禘嘗之禮，鼎俎籩豆之物以薦之；其施之朝廷，用之鄉黨，講之庠序，無非此之為務也。故民德厚而禮俗成，上下安而暴慝不作。自三代以下，人主之於民，賦斂之而已爾，役使之而已爾，凡所以為厚生正德之事，一切置之不理，而聽民之所自為，於是乎教化之權常不在上而在下。

Since the Eastern and Western Han, the effect of *Ru* [in society] is evident. Since Dai De (戴德) and Dai Sheng (戴聖) wrote commentaries [on the *Book of Rite*s] and Zheng Zhong (鄭眾) and Zheng Xing (鄭興) wrote commentaries [on the *Rites of Zhou*], specialized learning (專門之學) has focused on the study of rituals. [This tradition] continued through the times of division– the Three Kingdoms, Western and Eastern Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, and Five

[400] Di refers to the sacrifice to the ancestors in summer time, and Chang refers to the sacrifice to the ancestors in autumn time. See "Royal institutions" *of Book of Rites* (禮記·王制): "天子諸侯宗廟之祭，春曰礿，夏曰禘，秋曰嘗，冬曰烝。"

Dynasties [and Ten Kingdoms] – but was never extinguished. Since the Song, masters such as the Cheng [Brothers] and Zhu Xi have advanced outstanding understanding of the remaining ancient Classics. And, during Jin and Yuan, many thoughtful people sought to study their discourses in the South in order to teach other scholars. Until the beginning of the Ming, social customs were pure and kind, and the practices of loving family and respecting seniors were performed everywhere under Heaven. [It was often seen that some of them] were able to educate their family members through practicing the patriarchal clan system (宗法). [They] built ancestor halls to organize ceremonies of sacrifice, or gathered generations of family members to live together, which were called "righteous households (義門)." [For instance,] ten loyal and trustworthy families stood with each other. Even when the government was disunited, retaining control over only a part of the country, these families would still remain unchanged. Would they do this because of others' persuasion? When the central state was chaotic, teaching was still well-practiced at the local level. The *Book of Changes* says, "[They] change the town, but [they] leave the well in it,"[which means local life does not change with administrative alternations.] This says that the way of being constant is dependent on the gentlemen. Alas! Until today, that which the early kings used as their teaching, and that which the worthies considered to be good customs, have all perished without a trace! … Therefore, deceitfulness increases, while the way of integrity is reaching its end. … What, then, is the point of speaking of governing?

兩漢以來，儒者之效亦可得而攷矣。自二戴之傳，二鄭之注，專門之學以禮為宗，歷三國、兩晉、南北、五季干戈分裂之際而未嘗絕也。至宋程、朱諸子卓然有見於遺經，而金元之代，有志者多求其說於南方以授學者。及乎有明之初，風俗淳厚，而愛親敬長之道達諸天下。其能以宗法訓其家人，而立廟以祀，或累世同居，稱之為義門者，亦往往而有。十室之忠信，比肩而接踵，夫其處乎雜亂偏方閏位之日，而守之不變，孰勸帥之而然哉？國亂於上而教明於下。易曰：「改邑不改井。」言經常之道，賴君子而存也。嗚呼！至於今日而先王之所以為教，賢者之所以為俗，殆澌滅而無餘矣！ ……於是機詐之變日深，而廉耻道盡…… 又何言政事哉！

My friend Wang Hongzhuan…travelled to Wuzhou. After two years, he returned home, and began to build an ancestral hall to worship his ancestors. He gathered people who shared the same surname and told them the importance of venerating their ancestors and respecting their lineages. The seniors from the villages sighed, saying, "[We] have not seen this ritual for a long time. Would it work to start it now?" Mencius said, "Sympathy is the beginning of humaneness." The way of practicing filial piety is to move and inspire the hearts of people under Heaven, making them cautious and self-reflective. [Once] they see what is happening today and feel shamed, then those accumulated corrupted customs can be renewed, and the teachings of the early kings can become popular again.

> 吾友華陰王君弘撰…… 遊婺州，二年而歸，乃作祠堂以奉其始祖，聚其子姓而告之以尊祖敬宗之道。其鄉之老者喟然言曰：不見此禮久矣，為之兆也，其足以行乎？孟子有言：「惻隱之心，仁之端也。」夫躬行孝弟之道，以感發天下之人心，使之惕然有省，而觀今世之事若無以自容，然後積污之俗可得而新，先王之教可得而興也。[401]

In this essay, as I read it, Gu was not simply stating historical facts; rather, he was expressing an ideological claim about what the *Ru* tradition ought to be. In particular, he emphasized the civilizing legacy of the sage kings and how the *Ru* tradition in later time had identified with that legacy to help China's society maintain a continuous, trans-dynastic civilized life. This legacy was the sage kings' creation of an integrated cultural institution to take care of society's need for an ethical life. The lineage system was key to China's high antiquity, because its focus on ethical life played a fundamental role in cultivating people's civic virtues, which in turn sustained a thriving community life. The scholars of *Ru* learning in later history continued this civilizing legacy by turning the sage kings' historical heritage into their own values and culture, and their contribution in history was obvious from the fact that China had survived so many periods of political chaos while preserving a long-lasting community.

Based on this view, Gu synthesized various scholarly traditions from history into a coherent culture, with a common view of the model of political life and the role of literati learning: the government ought to be concerned with the commonwealth of the people; people ought to live in small but uniform communities, and they should learn to behave virtuously and ethically in society, so that a solid national community would be sustained in a bottom-up fashion. The teaching and cultural-institutional building of the *Ru* ought to play an essential role in this system. It would be the responsibility of scholars

[401] Gu Yanwu, "Huayin Wangshi zongci ji,"(華陰王氏宗祠記), Ibid., 167-8.

to embody the commitment of the sage kings by studying their heritage and integrating their legacy into their own cultural and institutional creations. The Han scholarly tradition of Classical commentaries and Song and Ming Neo-Confucian scholarship were examples of this shared *Ru* learning.

Situating Gu's claim in the late 1670s, when the Manchu court had already established its ideological foundation based on collaboration with the Neo-Confucians, it is not difficult to sense the political tension in the preface. As Gu argued, even when the government was in chaos, retaining control over only a part of the country (雜亂偏方閏位之日), society could still maintain its order because of *Ru* leadership. Gu's lament at the deterioration of the ethical and social order in local communities in his day can be read as an effort to activate the sense of agency of the literati scholars, in a world ruled by an alien ruling house based on an already degenerate model of government.

Later scholars have been tempted to characterize Gu's political vision along the same lines as the late imperial Neo-Confucian statecraft tradition. Chang Hao (張灝), for example, sees that Gu on the one hand stressed "exemplary leadership and the transforming power of moral custom" and on the other hand had "a deep awareness of the significance of the utilitarian and coercive dimensions of politics." Therefore, Gu's "combination of moral and pragmatic approaches to statecraft …bulked large in the bureaucratic ethos that permeated much of Neo-Confucianism."[402] However, I think this characterization ignores the key tensions between Gu's political ideals and the statecraft

[402] Chang Hao, "On the Ching-shih Ideal in Neo-Confucianism," *Chi'ing-shih wen-t'i* , vol. 3, no.1, (1975), 50.

Neo-Confucianism that had become a dominant ideological choice of the Qing government.

Both Gu Yanwu and Neo-Confucian statecraft thinkers paid attention to how "*xiaodi*," filial piety, is related to social customs and government, serving as the basis for cultivating responsible and diligent social actors. However, they had differing interpretations of how filial piety works in contributing to this betterment.

In the framework of Neo-Confucian moral discourse, filial piety is understood as leading to the cultivation of personal morality, as filial piety enables the individual to attain the universally Heavenly Principle rooted in the order of things. Building on this view, the Neo-Confucian discourse of government stressed that the political and cultural elites played the role of moral exemplars. Gu understood family ethics with respect to the interest of the public, however, reinterpreting the practice of filial piety in the context of the building of common life. His focus was not so much on personal morality, as on how local communities ought to be built by drawing on the basic moral sense of individuals and their ethical needs in social life.

This difference reveals an important tension between Gu's vision and the statecraft Neo-Confucian ideology of the early Qing. In the late 1670s, Gu had already written "On the Prefecture" and "On the Licentiate," which, as we have seen, proposed a set of radical changes. His proposals included removing the provincial level of government and appointing officials whose own interests are rooted in the localities to long terms, allowing local families with private wealth to gain social-political prestige through a non-academic path. He had suggested discontinuing the civil service exam and selecting officials through professional exams and recommendations, celebrating study of

the Classics and history but disconnecting education from the quest for social status, giving scholars the right to choose whether they would like to serve the government or teach. However, in the ideological context of the early Qing, Gu's "republican" vision could hardly be realized. Instead, the new political power justified its rulership with a top-down universal moral doctrine, rather than the community's common interest and civilizing history. The new state ideology was buttressed by a civil service exam centering on the moral discourse of the Four Books. Officials established state-supported academies to cultivate talent that could be selected through the exam system. Literati families and lineages were implored to assist officials in indoctrinating their communities to behave morally.

In Gu's later writings on the role of clans, lineages, and families in maintaining society, he seems to try to activate the agency of the literati world by stressing that the model defined by the sage kings had been maintained by *Ru* families through history. The literati had committed themselves to the public interest, based on their learning tradition, and they ought to provide the source of knowledge about how to build local and national life. To create a system in which big families and clans could grow and perpetuate their economic, social, and cultural connections with local community life would be key to the well being of society. Gu commented in a preface to the Ren family genealogy that, in a world of declining social customs and political order, it was the major clans that were able to maintain a steady means of livelihood, continue the cultural tradition, and thus perpetuate the civilizing means to maintain the good values necessary for common welfare.

> After I had just arrived at Donglai, my hosts were the Zhao family and the Ren family. Entering the gates [of their houses], [I saw] that [the style of] their main

hall, their balcony, their table, and their couch had remained the same as in the past; talking with them [I realized that] their initial mind [cultivated by their tradition of] Classical learning and integrity (出於經術節義者) had never changed; inquiring about their steady means of livelihood (恆產), [I learned that they] had been also sustaining [those means] so that [their livelihood] had not entirely deteriorated. Therefore, I felt delighted as if I had reunited with old friends. I acclaimed that those literati (士) capable of establishing themselves were not influenced by the [deteriorating] habits and customs [of their day].

乃余頃至東萊，主趙氏、任氏，入其門，而堂軒几榻無改於其舊；與之言，而出於經術節義者，無變其初心；問其恆產，而亦皆支撐以不至於頹落。余於是欣然有見故人之樂，而歎夫士之能自樹立者，固不為習俗之所移。[403]

If the key to a peaceful and strong public life was in the hand of the literati clans, then the rulers ought to trust and rely on these local families, whose role derived from the model of antiquity. Good social customs and political stability were supposed to be the outcome of deeply rooted local power that sustained society's economic, social, and ethical order over the course of generations. These local actors made sure that "tributes of grain were delivered to the ruler and labor service is rendered him." Because of their role, "fields and dwellings can be [kept] perpetually. What is not one's own is not to be consumed; this is how goods and wealth can be [maintained] perpetually. Subordinates will not be rebellious; when there are bad feelings they will not be contentious; they will not turn against their own kin, and will not insult the worthy." [404] Thus, rulers who are wise should not disturb this order; they should let the clans and families maintain their authority and take care of the local community. The great clans of the Tang exemplified

[403] Gu, "Laizhou Renshi zupu xu" (萊州任氏族譜序) Gu Yanwu quanji, Vol.21, 87.

[404] "……其文自尊祖睦族以至於急賦稅，均力役，諄諄言之，豈不超出於山東之敝俗者乎？子不云乎：'得見有恆者，斯可矣。'恆者久也，天下之久而不變者，莫若君臣父子，故為之賦稅以輸之，力役以奉之，此田宅之所以可久也。非其有不取，非其力不食，此貨財之所以可久也。為下不亂，在醜不爭，不叛親，不侮賢，此鄰里宗族之所以可久也。" Ibid. Translation of this quote is from Thomas Bartlett's *Ku Yen-wu's Response to the Demise of Human Society*.

such a bottom-up force. In an essay about one such clan, the Pei, Gu argued that the ruler could maintain the state because he relied on the power (*shi* 勢) of the clans, which was the key to Tang's prosperity.

Importantly, in taking responsibility for maintaining the livelihood of society and for securing the stability of the government, these clans and families would nourish men with true virtues and learning. "Therefore," Gu stressed, "integrity is established, learning is realized, and men with uprightness and Classical knowledge are born."[405] For Gu, learning is not to be realized through the central government's top-down moral indoctrination; rather, it represents the culture and well-being of the life of the local and national community.

It is in this context that we can better understand why Gu considered his *Knowledge Gained Day by Day* to be a model of learning that "invites later followers" (*yidai laizhe* 以待來者) to continue the agenda. In a nutshell, by leaving the book as his legacy, he saw himself as facilitating the revival of the "greatness of the Three Dynasties" by restoring the real *Ru* tradition. Based on Gu's "republican" vision of antiquity, literati learning would not identify its goal as attaining *tianli,* the unchanging Heavenly Principle, which, at his time was used to justify the power of the Manchu rulers. Rather, scholars ought to commit themselves to the common interest of the community, by

[405] "夫然，故名節以之而立，學問以之而成，忠義之人、經術之士出乎其中矣。不明乎此，於是乎飲食之事也而至於訟，訟不已而至於師，小而舞文，大而弄兵，豈非今日山東之大戒？而若任君者，為之深憂過計，而欲倡其教於一族之人，即亦不敢諱其從前之失，而為之丁寧以著於譜。昔召穆公思周德之不類，故糾合宗族於成周而作詩曰：「凡今之人，莫如兄弟。」任君其師此意矣。余行天下，見好逋者必貧，好訟者必負，少陵長，小加大，則不旋踵而禍隨之，故推任君之意，以告山東之人，使有警焉，或可以止橫流而息燎原也." Ibid.

understanding its origins and transformation through open-ended and cumulative scholarship, and by theorizing *li,* namely, principles about the human world for a better society and government. These agendas required scholars to identify themselves with the goal of the sage kings and develop comprehensive judgments about contemporary socio-political conditions.[406] This rationale of learning based on the Classics and history would give the literati world agency in guiding public life. Institutionally speaking, it would be up to the scholars to decide if they chose to conduct scholarship, teach, or serve the government, but their study would have its own foundation that would be independent of their particular socio-political achievements and status. Politically speaking, scholars would acquire informed and independent judgments, inheriting the tradition of the sage kings as the founders of civilized life for the community. They would help the rulers to govern, but they would do it because of their responsibility for the community, not because of their responsibility for the government, as the statecraft Neo-Confucian ideologues argued. *Knowledge Gained Day by Day*, as its name suggests, was not intended to be an ultimate solution; rather, it was only the beginning of a progressive search.[407] In this latter regard, later history proved that Gu was right.

Wang Fuzhi's Redefinition of the Foundation of Public Order and the Role of Literati Learning: Identity Politics and Cultural Continuities

Wang Fuzhi served the Southern Ming as a minor official until 1653. After the

[406] "明六經之旨，通當世之務" Gu, "Shengyuan lun 2" (生員論中), Ibid., 71.

[407] As Gu emphasized, "蓋天下之理無窮，而君子之志於道也，不成章不達。故昔日之得，不足以為矜，後日之成，不容以自限。若其所欲明學術正人心，撥亂世，以興太平之事，則有不盡於是刻者。須絕筆之後，藏之名山，以世宰物者之求。" Gu, "Chuke Rizhilu zixu," Ibid., 75.

fall of the government, he went into exile until the end of the 1650s. He then returned to Hengyang (衡陽), Hunan to conduct scholarship and teaching. Wang produced a formidable amount of Classical and political-historical scholarship, leaving a set of original interpretations of the foundation of antiquity and the learning of the sages. Like Huang Zongxi and Gu Yanwu, Wang studied the Classics systematically as both historical materials and sources of theoretical inspiration, believing that he was responsible for rejuvenating the messages of the Classics for his time (六經責我開生面). For most of these texts, he first conducted a detailed philological investigation into the use of language, the names of institutions, the historical and geographical contexts, and other features that helped to understand the sages' cultural-institutional building.[408] This type of investigation was often titled "*baishu* (稗疏)" or *"kaoyi* (考異)." After that, he produced philosophical interpretations for each Classic, often titled "*waizhuan* 外傳 (external commentaries)," "*jie* 解 (interpretations)," "*yinyi* 引義 (further inferences)," "*lun* 論 (arguments)," or "*shuo* 說 (theories)." This type of interpretation explores how each Classical text shows the sages' understanding of the world, and what they wanted to achieve by producing these texts. (I shall elaborate on this point in a later section.)

Despite Wang's similarities in scholarly approach with Gu and Huang, his interpretations demonstrate a different perspective on how civilization develops and what constitutes good public order. To grasp the structure of Wang's ideas, we shall begin with one of his early writings, a political treatise entitled *The Yellow Book* (Huang shu 黃書) finished in 1656. In this book, Wang laid out a political-ideological framework that he

[408] One exception is the *Book of Rites.* He compiled his lecture notes on this book as a commentary under the title *Liji zhangju* (禮記章句).

would continue to elaborate in future writings. We shall see how Wang developed his political ideology into new theories about knowledge and socio-political values, and how he criticized contemporary literati culture.

1. *The Yellow Book*: Identity as the Basis of Political Order

At the beginning of the first chapter of *The Yellow Book*, "Tracing Back to the Inception (Yuan ji 原極)," Wang sketched the following scene:

> Look at the beginning of Heaven-and-Earth: isn't it magnificent? Metal is used to carve, wood is used to support, earth is used to hold, fire burns, wind blows, and water soaks and melts, nourishing and breeding [lives] of various kinds, sometimes scattering and sometimes uniting. Therefore the grand virtue [of Heaven-and-Earth] applies boundlessly without knowing where the limits are.
> 夫觀初始於天地者，豈不大哉！洋洋乎金以銑之，木以幹之，土以敦之，火烜、風撓、水裹以烝化之，彼滋此孕以繁之，脈脈門門，泮渙搏翕以離合之，故盛德行於無疆而不知其屆也。
>
> However, [the fact that Heaven-and-Earth also] purifies the ethnic groups, strictly sets up [their] boundaries, establishes [their appropriate] orders, and makes them stay within their regions [shows] that Heaven-and-Earth makes sure to prevent [conflict between them] and protect [their safety]. This is why mountain creatures have cloven hoofs while those in the marshes have webbed feet; why the strengths of animals used for riding while animals used for ploughing lie in different directions; why [water birds] are proper to the south while [cold-weather birds] to the north. It is because [Heaven-and-Earth] cannot bear that [living beings] are scattered, thus it classifies them into big categories. It is also because, [since different living beings] are not determined to help each other, [Heaven-and-Earth separates them] in order to avoid conflict.
> 然而清其族，絕其畛，建其位，各歸其屏者，則函輿之功所以為慮至防以切。是故山禽趾疏，澤禽趾冪，乘禽力橫，耕禽力樅，水耕宜南，霜耕宜北，是非忍於其泮散而使析其大宗也，亦勢之不能相救而絕其禍也。[409]

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[409] Wang Fuzhi, "Yuan ji," (原極) *Huangshu* (黃書), *Chuanshan quanshu*, *juan* 12 (船山全書), (Changsha: Yuelu shushe Press, 1988,) 501. My translation of the text of *The Yellow Book* partly draws on Ian MacMorran's translation of the passages of the book, included in *Sources of Chinese Tradition,* vol.2, comp. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 2nd edition, 34. I have modified the translations in places where I disagree with him.

Wang opened the book with a unique functionalist perspective. There are two basic natural processes. The first involves the production and reproduction of the material world. Living beings use all kinds of natural resources to create a prolific and thriving environment, and there is no discrimination in this process. The second involves grouping living beings and keeping them from each other out of the need of self-protection. Staying in their own places, reproducing without mixing with others, living beings develop unique identities based on their different skills and behaviors that match their environment. While Heaven-and-Earth offers resources to benefit all, it also makes group identities a necessity for the existence of living beings.

What do the two processes mean for man? Wang continued, the sages observed the way of the Heaven-and-Earth to come up with the way of organizing human life.

> Finding that such [processes] were true for all living beings, the sages, therefore, separated their own group (*lei* 類) from others and made sacrifices to all-under-Heaven and acted as the ruler. [They] separated the clever and the stupid, clarified cases where there was doubt, overcame the vicious and evil, and established defensive barriers [between the groups] in order to ward off disaster and enable self-protection. This is why the saying – "the virtues of the sages match the ones of the Heaven-and-Earth" – is not groundless!
>
> 是故聖人審物之皆然而自畛其類，屍天下而為之君長。區其靈冥，湔其疑似，乘其蠱壞，峻其墉廓，所以絕其禍而使之相救，故曰"聖人與天地合德"者，豈虛構哉！[410]

First, the sages became aware of the different identity of their own group based on their way of life, and then they committed to protecting their group and building an order. Second, they followed the naturally differentiated order of things to organize social life. In doing so, they managed to make use of the resources of the Heaven-and-Earth to benefit their community.

[410] Wang, "Yuan ji," *Huangshu*, *Chuanshan quanshu*, *juan* 12, 501

Wang's view about the foundation of a social-political order suggests the following conclusions. He wrote that although man and animals share common biological needs, it is essential for men to cherish and hold onto the differences that set them apart from animals; although the *huaxia* (華夏), namely, the Han Chinese, and the *yidi* (夷狄), namely, the non-Han surrounding tribal groups (and sedentary states), share basic physical features, it is essential for the *huaxia* people to identify with their different way of life. Moreover, Wang argued, since it is determined that men protect their own groups (天地制人以畛), it is essential to protect the interests of the group and to prohibit factions (*dang* 黨), otherwise the order of man would collapse.[411]

Following this logic, Wang argued that the ancient civilization in the Central Territory (Zhong qu 中區), namely, the civilization of the *huaxia* people, was founded exactly on these essentials. Those who used their intelligence and strength to "protect their kind" (保其類者) and "guard their group" (衛其群者) became rulers.[412] The sages, particularly the Yellow Emperor (Xuan Yuan 軒轅), considered the group's identity to be the foundation of country building. He stressed, "[for the sages, political power could be] passed down to non-hereditary successors; [it could also be] passed down to hereditary successors; [it could even be] overturned [by people]. However, [it could never be] be

[411] "夫人之於物，陰陽均也，食息均也，而不能絕乎物。華夏之於夷狄，骸竅均也，聚析均也，而不能絕乎夷狄。所以然者何也？人不自畛以絕物，則天維裂矣。華夏不自畛以絕夷，則地維裂矣。天地制人以畛，人不能自畛以絕其黨，則人維裂矣。是故三維者，三極之大司也。" Ibid., 501-2

[412] "夫奠三極，長中區，智周乎四皇，心盡乎來許……智小一身，力舉天下，保其類者為之長，衛其群者為之邱。Ibid., 503

given to *yidi."* [413] Group identity, thus, ought to serve as a meta-principle.

According to Wang, the way of the sages consisted in their ability to protect and advance the life of their people through interacting with their historical environment. They led a prosperous civilization that had left an advantageous cultural legacy. However, Wang lamented, the way of the sages had been forgotten. The leaders in later times had weakened the Central Territory, forgotten the threats from outside, and failed to protect their population.[414] In the rest of the book, he analyzes the roots of that decline and proposes solutions to restoring the way of the sages.[415] In the following chapter, "Ancient Ceremonies" (Guyi 古儀), Wang argues that while the Yellow Emperor used resources for the benefit of the public,[416] later dynasties starting with the Qin had been self-interested, concerned only with maintaining the power of the dynastic families. They were unwilling to trust others but took advantage of public resources to perpetuate their

[413] 故聖人先號萬姓而示之以獨貴，保其所貴，匡其終亂，施於孫子，須於後聖，可禪可繼可革而不可使夷類間之。然後植其弱，掖其僵，揚其潔，傾其滓，冠昏飲射以文之，哭踊虞祔以哀之，堂廉級次以序之，刑殺征伐以整之，清氣疏曜，血脈強固，物不幹人，疹不侵祥；黃鐘以節之，唱歎以瀏之，故禮樂興，神人和，四靈集，而朱草、醴泉相踵而奔其靈也。" Ibid., 503-4

[414] 今夫玄駒之右君也，長其穴壤，而赤蚍、飛蚹之窺其門者，必部其族以噬殺之，終遠其垤，無相干雜，則役眾蠢者，必有以護之也。若夫無百祀之憂，鮮九垓之辨，尊以其身於天下，憤盈儔侶，畛畔同氣，猜割牽役，弱靡中區，乃霍霍然保尊貴，偷豫屍功，患至而無以敌，物逼而無以固，子孫之所不能私，種類之所不能覆，蓋王道泯絕而春秋之所大憾也。" Ibid., 504.

[415] "矯其所自失，以返軒轅之區畫。" Wang, "Hou xu," (后序), Ibid.

[416] "自昔炎裔德衰，軒轅肇紀，閔阽危，鑄五兵，誅銅額，滌飛沙，弭刃於涿鹿之野，垂文鼓弦，巡瑞定鼎，來鵬夢弼，建屏萬邦，而神明之胄駢武以登天位者，迄於劉漢五姓百十有七後，豈不偉與！是豈有私神器以貽曾玄之心哉！" Wang, "Guyi," (古儀) Ibid., 504

rule.[417] By the Song, the centralization of power became most serious, leading to that dynasty's losses to the northern tribal people.[418] In the following chapters, Wang explains how the government had gone wrong and what he meant by a public-oriented system. He focuses on self-defense and political economy, the selection of a political elite, official appointments, political corruption, and how the threat from other ethnic groups became a structural problem.[419] Without going into detail, I shall review three main arguments.

First, Wang advocated a decentralized administrative and military system supported by an economy based on interdependent regional production. Wang claimed that for the sages, government had served as an instrument to foster the development and the self-defense of the community. They saw resources as assets owned by society. By satisfying the needs of society, the government could also consolidate the country (公天

[417] "迄於孤秦，家法淪墜，膠膠然固天下於攬握，顧盼驚猜，恐彊有力者旦夕崛起，效己而劫其藏。故翼者翦之，機者撞之，腴者割之，貳人主者不能藉尺土，長亭邑者不能橐寸金。欲以凝固鴻業，長久一姓，而僨敗旋趾。由此言之，詹詹鑿陋，未嘗迴軫神區而援立靈族，豈不左與！" Ibid.

[418] "宋以藩臣暴興鼎昨，意表所授，不寐而驚。趙普斗筲菲姿，負乘鉉器，貢謀苟且，肘枕生猜。於是假杯酒以固歡，託孔雲而媚下，削節鎮，領宿衛，改易藩武，建置文弱，收總禁軍，衰老填籍，孤立於彊虜之側，亭亭然無十世之謀。樅佚文吏，拘法牽執，一傳而弱，再傳而靡。趙保吉之去來，劉六符之恫喝，玩在廷於偶線之中而莫之或省。城下受盟，金繒歲盆，偷息視肉，崇以將階，推轂建牙，遺風漸滅。狄青以樞副之任，稍自掀舉，苟異一切，而密席未溫，嫌疑指斥，是以英流屏足，巨室寒心。降及南渡，猶祖前謀，蘄、循僅存於貨酒，岳氏遽隕於風波，撓棟觸藩，莫斯為甚！夫無為與者，傷之致也；交自疑者，殊俗之聽乘也。卒使中區趨靡，形勢解散，一折而入於女直，再折而入於韃靼，以三、五、漢、唐之區宇，盡辮髮負笠，漸喪殘剔，以潰無窮之防，生民以來未有之禍，秦開之而宋成之也。是故秦私天下而力克舉，宋私天下而力自詘。禍速者絕其胄，禍畏者喪其維，非獨自喪也，抑喪天地分建之極。" Ibid., 506-7

[419] The chapters focusing on these specific topics are entitled: "Zaizhi," (宰制) "Shenxuan,"(慎选) "Renguan," (任官) "Dazheng," (大正) and "Lihe (離合)."

下而私存，因天下用而用天下).[420] In contrast, later rulers' obsession with power resulted in the weakening of the country. To build a safe and prosperous order, the government ought to develop the economies of different regions based on their specialties, facilitating their connections, and use the profits to finance the military from the bottom up. He urged the agricultural minister to investigate the resources and products of each region, preventing them from being seized by opportunistic families and clerks.[421] This did not mean Wang sought to diminish the role of the rich, however. In a later chapter he stresses the important role of the well-to-dos (*fumin* 富民) when the government lacked resources to help people survive famine.[422]

Wang cites the peasant militia system, which he referred to as "*fubing*" (府兵), as

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[420] "聖人堅攬定趾以救天地之禍，非大反孤秦、陋宋之為不得延，固以天下為神器，毋凝滯而盡私之。……天地之產，聰明材勇，物力豐犀，勢足資中區而給其衛。聖人官府之，公天下而私存，因天下用而用天下。故曰「天無私覆，地無私載，王者無私以一人治天下」，此之謂也。" Wang, "Zaizhi," *Chuanshan quanshu,* Vol.12, 508.

[421] "中區之地，四鄙用文，河山用武，沙衍ｓ耐騎，菁峒耐步，江海耐舟，麥食耐勇，稻食耐智，雜食耐勞，廣土墳爭，崟崎壁守，鹵國給鹺，澤國給積，澇鄉給魚，赭山給鑄，林阜給薪，邊徼互馬，殷道課關；其它連錫、絲枲、筋鰾、皮革、蒲條、硝黃、翎毛、杉楠、岡桐、栟櫚、漆林、蓼絮之所產者，可相輸而各奏其利。大司農不登之書，非中監漁採，則豪猾墨吏兼併閭右之所攘也，一切取足，其瘠疲不耐給者，百之四五。故曰利資可假，勁銳可僇，厄塞可制也。"Ibid., 509-10.

[422]"天地之奧區，田蠶所宜，流肥瀦聚，江海陸會所湊。河北之滑、濬，山東之青、濟，晉之平陽，秦之涇陽、三原，河南大梁、陳、睢、太康，東傳於潁，江北淮、揚、通、泰，江南三吳濱海之區，歙，休良賈移於衣冠，福、廣番舶之居儥，蜀都鹽、錦，建昌番布，麗江氂密企碧所自氈金碧所自產，邕管、容、貴稻畜滯積，其他千戶之邑，極於瘠薄，亦莫不有素封巨族冠其鄉焉。此蓋以流金粟，通貧弱之有無，田夫畦叟，鹽鮭布褐，伏臘酒漿所自給也。卒有旱澇，長史請蠲賑，卒不得報，稍需日月，道殣相望。而懷百錢，挾空券，要豪右之門，則晨戶叩而夕炊舉矣。故大賈富民者，國之司命也。今吏極亡賴，然朘刻單貧，卒無厚實，抑棄而不屑，乃藉鋤豪右，文致貪婪，則顯名厚實之都矣。以故粟貨凝滯，根柢淺薄，騰湧焦澀，貧弱孤寡傭作稱貸之塗窒，而流死道左相望也。漢法：積粟多者得拜爵免罪，比文學孝秀，今縱鷹鸇攫獵之，曾不得比於偷惰苟且之遊民，欲國無貧困，以折入於口口，勢不得已。故懲墨吏，紓富民，而後國可得而息也。" Wang, "Dazheng," Ibid.

an institution that must be removed.[423] In his view, the system had forced people with different strengths to do the same tasks. If everyone had to participate in both farming and military training, neither task could maintain its quality. Leaders lacked understanding of the real conditions of self-defense under the surface. Most harmfully, the system was a hypocritical system; it was designed to help the central government to control military power.[424] What he meant by this latter statement, I think, was that the system claimed to reduce the burden of raising soldiers, but in reality it tried to centralize power.

Wang argued that local government must be given a high degree of financial and military independence.[425] For instance, he proposed to remove the censorate offices (*fensi* 分司) appointed by the central government, which in his view were a redundancy that had limited local government.[426] More importantly, he proposed a level of powerful

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[423] "今慫宰制之，莫若分兵民而專其治，散列藩輔而制其用。" Wang, "Zaizhi," Ibid., 508.

[424] "是故天下之勢，有合者，有分者，有張者，有翕者，有縱而隨者，彊彼而固此者。故曰「大制不割」，樂天下之成而成之，選天下之利而利之。今夫柔鷙擊，輯縱橫，驅合于農則實去。要愿樸，建脆弱，驅合於兵則名存。名存實去，則自忘其弱而喪其畛。方且割萬有，專己私，侈身臂，矜總持，不縱以權，不強其輔，則所以善役天下而救其禍者，蕩然無所利賴。此仁者之悲膚疾頸，而俗儒之利以為名也。唐無三代牧伯帥長之援，無深仁大計，建民、固本、清族類、拒外侮之謀。竊尸寓農之遺號，強合兵農，分制府兵，徵發宿戎，壹聽於京師。" Wang,"Guyi," Ibid. Also, "自郡上之，為民之治者受於司，為兵之治者請仍巡撫使之任，而去其京銜，定其鎮地，制其厄塞，重其威令，僉其勁銳，閒其文武，假其利資。七者具修以置藩輔，各戰其境，互戰其邊，行之百年，以意消息，中國可反漢，唐之疆，而絕孤秦、陋宋之豐禍也。" Ibid..

[425] "今慫宰制之，莫若分兵民而專其治，散列藩輔而制其用。" Wang, "Zaizhi," Ibid., 508.

[426] "今之自縣以上，三進而及市政使司，凡以治民者，自秦而下不能易也。縣隸府，府隸司，司受命於天子，足以呼響，無關格之疢矣。府治其屬，既不能專，其有事，旁撓于同、判、推官，而巡守兵備安坐其上以扼郡邑之呼吸，則分司之建可革也。山東府六而分司者十六，山西府五而分司者十三，陝西府八而分司者二十四，四川府九而分司者十七，或倍之，或參倍之。其佐倅遇府設焉，或稍浮于府，未有一道而兼制數府者也。所以束濕纏繫於知府者，可謂急矣。而一郡數邑，不得以制其短長之命，旦夕不測，其民視牧長，如逸

regional government, which he referred to as the *xingtai (*行臺), between the prefectures and the central government. He laid out a detailed analysis of the national geography and the appropriate governing seats in each region for these *xingtai*. The commissioners would facilitate production and trade, create revenue, and direct regional military forces. They would stay largely independent from the central government, but would be connected with other regions, creating multiple defense barriers for the country.[427] Ultimately, Wang believed, this would prevent the country from suffering just because the rulers were paranoid or wanted to exploit society to satisfy their private interests (不以一人疑天下，不以天下私一人). "The Central Country (*zhong guo* 中國)" would be fully self-sufficient. It would "control much wealth based on its own assets, strengthen its power based on its own military force, and establish an order based on its own intelligence." "The group (*zu*) would be consolidated and the worries of foreign invasion would be gone."[428]

Furthermore, Wang argued for a differentiated social order based on a fair-minded recognition of merit. To make this point, he returned to the starting point of his philosophy. His logic goes as follows. On one hand, it is important to recognize the

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免之於驚麚也。況其為天子守疆圉，取必而與城共命乎！魏尚之於雲中，李廣之於隴西，以一郡捍匈奴之名王者，事權重而戰守專也。故革分司，重府權，盡治其郡，設推官以贊其吏治，立武監以簡其兵賦，兵賦所講，受成於府，有所徵發，府受臺計而遣之。刑名、錢穀、驛置、屯田、水利，奏最於兩司足矣。" Ibid., 508-9

[427]"使台使諸得自領，會出其餘，以佐他鎮之歉迫，臺無上計，部無授程，悉俟九載以奏其出納，而納其奇羨。于是因贏餘，飭六師，精器備，廣城堡，溢賞格，走死智勇於邊徼殺戮之地，為天子使。" Ibid., 519

[428]"是故中國財足自億也，兵足自強也，智足自名也。不以一人疑天下，不以天下私一人，休養厲精，土佻粟積，取威萬方，濯秦愚，刷宋恥，此以保延千祀，博衣、弁帶、仁育、義植之士氓，足以固其族而無憂矣。" Ibid., 519

biology that all lives have in common, because it is necessary to sustain life in the world. On the other hand, it is equally important to recognize the categorical uniqueness of human culture in making Heaven-and-Earth a better place. This divides man from things, and separates talented sages from common people, making the populace aware of what is valuable and what is not. Now, taking care of these two equally real conditions – the common biological basis and the differentiation in cultural abilities – would be the key to realizing a righteous and harmonious society. For instance, to satisfy the first aspect, sages provided material support to nourish lives (養); they also taught man what to value and what to respect (教). It was in managing *yang* and *jiao* that the sages realized an ordered world. To translate this principle into practice meant to form a fair-minded understanding of the world and to accordingly distribute wealth and status to form a differentiated order. In this order, everyone would find a satisfying place and society as a whole would benefit. [429]

Concretely, to reach this goal, the government ought to build an effective system to select an intellectual-political elite and maintain a meaningful political ranking system. In Wang's view, the weakening of the country had much to do with corruption in official selections and appointments. Since the Song, rulers had expanded the civil service

[429] My summary of this point is based on the following paragraph, especially the underlined sections. "萬族蒸蒸，各保其命，各正其性，所以為之者，豈非天哉！飲食而有血氣，陰陽而有生死，天之同人于物也。出塵舒光，漂輕存重，變不變以為信智，敢不敢以為仁勇，拔萬類而授之人，拔人族而授之聖賢之族，天之異人于物、異聖賢於人也。同者為賤，異者為貴，以有尤貴滋性而統君之。無同則害命，無異則淪性。故聖王齊物以為養，從天之同也；別物以為教，寵天之異也。從者差養，寵者辨教，澈汰滓魄，濯洗清明，分萬命，理萬性，揀其粹白以珍之萬族之上，所以助天而保合太和者，始于大公而終于至正也…天下之大，萬民之眾，審其所撰，忖其所藏，由臣之不虛貴也，知主之不虛王也…故同、異、貴、賤、差、辨，此六數者，聖王所以正天下之性，效陰陽之位也，而一以胥天下之和平。尚其所尊而鼓鐘以樂之，則和矣。量其不能而桑畝以安之，則平矣。故怨讟不起，而姦究息也。" "Shenxuan," Ibid., 519-20

examination and related paths too widely, allowing large numbers of people to enter the system without effective selection. By appealing to people's interest in social climbing, the rulers had turned the selection system into a favor that they manipulated to draw people over into support for their ruling power. This had lead to delusion and hypocrisy. The rulers "took the resources of Heaven-and-Earth [as their own] to buy people over; imposed their own interests on society but expected [society] to return [the favor] with a public-serving [mindset] (而竊天地之恩以鬻販人民而膠飴其心，施天下以私而責其公報)." They had prevented the government from serving as a public instrument to order society fairly, leading to the collapse of trust and endless conflicts.[430] At the same time, the rulers had irresponsibly given the power to control common people's lives to meritless people.[431] Moreover, because the system had created official redundancy, the government could only afford to give meager income and thin benefits to official families, which in turn encouraged these people at the local level to take advantage of

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[430] "三代以降，漢之選舉以郡邑州將，曹魏六代以大小中正。始於揚汰，終於浮濫，褻薄天寵，流觴媮競者，往往弊自上開。而當其嚴整，猶有差別之足紀焉。隋承陳、梁之末造，宮體先吹，文爭實長，其曼聲、曳趾、挑綺、拾英之流習，濫於崇朝。科目之興，尋遠古則然，世會所爭，不能逆流而泝之上矣。 因緣其軌，欲以稍靜天下者，固當心載大公，較隆天秩，則異非所異而寵殊所寵，猶可以徐俟和平，來附人心，而明貴賤之級。流及於宋，竊竊然唯恐天下之異心也，師武嬰之智，開籠絡之術，廣進士，明經、學究之科，下逮七科、乙等之目，推郊祀、任子、異姓甥壻、門客之恩，搖蕩誘餌天下於堂陛嫌微之際。…其君臣之間，猶發篋行儈之相為禁持，故和平去心，而粹白失性，胥中區而淪虐老獸心之俗者，非無所自開其源也。近世之思政者，踵而用之，增文學，益解額，倍制科，升乙榜，推恩鄉貢，職名不足，綴冗員、速資格以濟之，而天下之怨亦由是而興。夫天下，恩之不勝恩也，怨之不勝怨也，恩之所止，怨之所流。故曰「和大怨者必有餘怨」。而竊天地之恩以鬻販人民而膠飴其心，施天下以私而責其公報，猶假敵戈鋌，望其稽伏，其不傷脰陷胸於彼者，蓋亦鮮矣，詩曰：「尸鳩在桑，其子七兮。」淑人君子，均平專一，而風流雛鵲，無私之謂也。" Ibid.

[431] "……博泛叢闥，登進苟且，其一切所為，卒無以異於闌闡拚除卒伍之行。籍起上流，屍避徭役，公私謁請，流連嬉燕，以操細民之生命。" Ibid.

commoners.[432] Unjustified inequality between the descendants of official families and commoners who struggled to make a living was not acceptable.[433]

On the whole, Wang proposed dramatically reducing the quotas of the civil service examinations and raising the selection standards. Arguing from a functionalist point of view, Wang saw that in a fairly maintained social hierarchy, different social groups would be satisfied with their roles, being connected without being indebted to each other. Such a world would be the most natural arrangement.[434] Scholars ought to learn to understand how to differentiate social orders and investigate how to better realize

[432] "徒廣其科目，易其升擢，博置員額，以誘其仕心。祿入已菲，米鈔又折減其什五，率天下養百官而不足，縱百官食天下而有餘，此何異饑鷹以攫雉兔乎！請罷勸貪之的，革饒瘠之目。除授之別，以輕、重、邊、腹差等其資色，而祿石、傔從、薪馬、紵絲、公私宴答之給，授以本色而豐溢之。不率，則刑辟擬其後，而無仁恕之歉也。" Ibid., 531-2.

[433] "今夫農夫寧耕，紅女寒織，漁凌曾波，獵犯鷙獸，行旅履霜，酸悲鄉土，淘金、採珠、羅翠羽、探珊象，生死出入，童年皓髮以獲贏餘者，豈不顧父母，拊妻子，慰終天之思，邀須臾之樂哉！而刷玄鬢，長指爪，宴安諧笑於其上者，密布畢網，巧為射弋，甚或鞭楚斬殺以繼其後。乃使縣罄在堂，肌膚剟削，含聲隕涕，鬱悶宛轉於老母弱子之側，此亦可寒心而栗體矣。而以是鼓聲名，市奏最，漁獵大官，貤封門蔭，層累封埒，以至於無窮，則金死一家而害氣亦迸集焉。夫故家名族，公卿勛舊之子孫，其運數與國家為長短，而賊害怨咨之氣偏結凝滯，則和平消實，傾否折足，亦甚非靈長之利也。即或狼藉著見，掛吏議，左降褫錮者，猶銜舟絡馬，飛運以返鄉里，有司賓之，鄉社祝之，閭里畏之，廣頃畝，益陂池，敞榭邃房，鼓鐘妖舞，舂容魚雅以終其天年，錮石槨，簪翁仲，梵唄雲潮以榮施於重泉之下。而游佻公子，發其贏餘，買越娃，擁小史，食遊客，長夜酣飲，驟馬輕紈，六博投瓊而散猶未盡。亦惡知向之朘削零丁者，已滅族靳胤於塞阡、荒壑之旁也！豈不痛與！" Wang, "Dazheng," Ibid.,

[434] "裁生徒，節貢舉，省進士，謹資格，持之以難，擇之以慎，天下乃曉然知上所尊尚之旨，其不容苟且如此，而抑歡然奉養於長吏孝秀而永謝其望心。況累是而上，享玉食，蹈天位者，不愈震耀肌魄以推戴莫京哉！故差其所養，別其所教，執相成而功相倚也。王者規天道，長萬族，順其所從，珍其所寵，則性命正矣。累上以為益尊，則天位凝矣。忘恩以遠怨，則和平臻矣。節養以息民，返不率以歸農，則民志定矣。革陋宋鬻販之私，則大公行矣。百年之內，乘千歲之弊，仍科目而減其額，核資格而難其選，則始基立矣。然後抑浮藻，登德行，立庠序，講正學，厲廉恥，易科目，升孝秀，俟之必世之後而天氣清，人維固，禽心息，口行泯。" Wang, "Shenxuan," Ibid., 522

the potential of human nature.[435]

Equally important, Wang argued, was the necessity of maintaining a meaningful political ranking system, so that the hierarchy of official positions would match the hierarchy of ranks. "The kings create normative names (*ming* 名); society respects normative names; and hundreds of officials accord themselves with normative names."[436] Why was ranking important? He argued that *ranks* (*juelu* 爵祿) differed from *positions* (*shiquan* 事權) for a key reason. While official positions represented the personal concern of the rulers, the design of the ranks was rooted in the natural differentiations of man that were necessary for the functioning of society. Literati scholars ought to commit themselves to the interests of society, but fi they did not respect the functionality of society, they would only follow what the rulers wanted, damaging their own integrity.[437] Wang claimed that in antiquity, sage kings trusted their officials and gave them opportunities to use their knowledge and fulfill their creativity.[438] However, rulers in later times added unnecessary official positions purely for the sake of overlooking their chief ministers. These positions were lower in rank than the ministers, but had been given

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[435] "或鄉老休致者，郡邑得聘領之，為之授兼經，講正學，考內行，辨同異，究性命。" Wang, "Dazheng," Ibid.,531.

[436] "故王者制名，天下奉名，百官赴名。" Wang, "Renguan," Ibid.

[437] "故王者制名，天下奉名，百官赴名。倒其所制，昧其所奉，貿其所赴，則將賤爵祿而重事權。爵祿者，天之秩也，事權者，上之意也。菲天秩則士薄功名，尊上意則人喪廉恥。是以王者慎名，名正則任重，任重則責隆，責隆則政理矣。" Ibid.

[438] "舜之命官也，禹陟司空，宅百揆，棄為后稷，契作司徒，皋陶作士，伯作秩宗，夔典樂，教胄子，龍作納言，各專其采。雖稽讓從容，後心載俞，而旁任必咈，其汝諧以往者，共工百度之薮，虞理名山大澤之長也。故勞謝專尸以體其愛，道孤獨贊以去其制，則仁義立而天工亮矣。" Ibid.

power over them.[439] As a result, individuals became opportunistic, trying to please the ruler in hope of a higher position, rather than committing themselves to what truly mattered for society. Thus, the country had declined.[440]

Toward end of the book, Wang situates his contemporary national crisis – the fall of the Ming and the Manchu invasion - in a trans-dynastic transformation of the Chinese polity. He sets the origin of the Chinese political order at the time of the Yellow Emperor's unification and establishment of civilized life in China proper, or the "Central Territory" (*zhongqu*). Geopolitically speaking, he argues that the Central Territory was a resourceful and self-protecting place, where the various resident groups shared a similar culture and developed close socio-economic connections. Thus, unification (*he* 合) was meant to be. [441] The Yellow Emperor answered the call. He respected the needs of different groups and protected them by developing common cultural and political

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[439] For instance, lower-ranked Chancellors of the Hanlin Academy (*xueshi* 學士) were given positions higher than the Greater Chief Ministers (*jiuqing* 九卿); lower-ranked supervising secretaries (*jishi* 給事) or censors (*yushi* 御史) were given more powerful positions to oversee the higher-ranked ministers and governors at the local level. "今夫學士之秩，五品也，使立於九卿之上。賤妨貴，小加大，背盭凌遲者，莫甚於此！則將使天下蝸螲蠅營以趨事權，而天秩之自然，蕩然不可複稽。夫虛一品之置者，靳其愛以制物也。愛以我私，而制盡人族，與仁義背馳，而求治天下，亦難矣。給事、御史之秩，胥七品也，給事以巡視遣，御史以巡按遣，則操六卿、兩司大臣之臧否以亂其掌故。彼之願職任，累歲時，登進崇階，代天工，作民牧，其前效已可睹也。早知不能，廢之而已。乃升新進，誇小臣，翻戾趾肘，使黃髮卿尹呵斥所輟者，屏息躡踵，褫繡隅坐，以承其咳笑，不亦左與！" Ibid.

[440] "則將使天下蝸螲蠅營以趨事權，而天秩之自然，蕩然不可複稽。……故主貴其名，莫不貴之也；賤其名，莫不賤之也。制名以任賢能，疑名以尊意旨，浮薄長進，權藉推委，效著於偶然而垂為法制，故人紀賤而天維缺，非建國不拔之典矣。唯除疑制者不然。尊其尊，卑其卑，位其位，事其事，難其選舉，易其防閑，公其心，去其危，盡中區之智力，治軒轅之天下，族類強植，仁勇竟命，雖歷百世而弱喪之禍消也。" Ibid.

[441] "中區之間，軒轅所冶，大禹之所經維……其中帶束脈繞，搏聚約固，寒暑相劑。言語相譯，形象相若，百穀相養，六畜相字，貨貝相灌，百川流惡，群山蔭夕以翕成乎中區之合，自然之合也。" Wang, "Lihe," Ibid., 532.

institutions in a bottom-up manner. Under the Yellow Emperor, "while the normative names were unified, everyday [governing] took place in localities (名系一統，而實存四國)." In doing so, he fulfilled the potential of Heaven-and-Earth.[442] In Wang's story, the first historical realization of the ideal Chinese order (*zhi* 治) was also the moment of the first cultural and political unification (*he*). But many factors could make a prosperous and unified order collapse, leading to separation (*li* 離). Separation, however, was not necessarily a bad thing; it provided a new opportunity for regional leaders to lay the foundation for later sage kings to restore unification. On the other hand, a unified order would not be always worth maintaining. When the government lost control of certain geographically strategic locations, or when the rulers did not meet certain standards of learning, to insist on unification would be a waste of energy.

The modern form of the country's political crisis had taken shape with the fall of the Song. The conquest dynasties had interfered with the process of civilization for the Chinese community.[443] "Cultural-racial homogeneity has been [the result of zhi], namely

[442] "昔者軒轅之帝也，上承羲、炎，下被有周，敦親賢，祚神明，建萬國，樹侯王，君其國，子其民，脩其徽圍，差共政教，順其竟綵，乘其合，稍其離，早為之所，而無誇大同。然後總其奔奏，戴其正朔，徠其覲請，講其婚姻，締其盟會，系以牧伯，糾以州長，甥舅相若，死喪相聞，水旱相周，兵戎相衛，仕宦羈旅往來，富貴相為出入，名系一統，而實存四國。此三、五之代寓渙散於糾纏，存天地之純氣而戒其割裂，故氣應以正而天報以合，數千年之間，中區之內闇闇如也。" Ibid.

[443] "曰：天地之數，或三或五，三百年而小變，千五百年而大變。由軒轅迄桀千五百年，禪讓之消，放伐變之。由成湯迄漢千五百年，封建之消，離合變之。由漢迄乎祥興千五百年，離合之消，純雜變之。純以紹合，雜以紹離。純從同，雜亂異。同類主中國，口口口口口(異類主戎狄)，各往其複，各泰其否。然則授天命以振三維者，非獎掖中區，宰制清剛，作智勇之助，驍悍磽駁之氣，固不能早絕。純雜之消，反之於太古軒轅之治，後之治也而無所俟焉。嗚呼！非察消息，通晝夜，範圍天地而不過者，又惡足以觀其化哉！" Ibid , 537

he, and cultural-racial dissimilarities have represented [the result of *luan*], namely, *li*."[444] The invasion of an alien ruler, thus, was a civilizational crisis, not just a dynastic crisis, depriving the Chinese community of what it had been given by Heaven-and-Earth.

In this sense, re-understanding the model of the sages mattered; it could clarify the fundamentals, helping the Chinese leaders to understand their conditions and challenges, ending this pattern of crisis. "Those [who aim to] pursue antiquity and follow Heaven in their rule, [would] use the government of Xuyuan [i.e. the Yellow Emperor] as their basis." They would "assist the [people] of *Zhongxia* (中夏) to realize their full talent. This is the ultimate way of government (*zhidao* 治道)."[445] He believed that *The Yellow Book* would undoubtedly be left for the future as his legacy.[446]

Suffice it to say *The Yellow Book* intended to provide a new political ideology, consisting of a theory about government as well as an historical understanding of the Chinese polity since antiquity. A legitimate government ought to represent the needs of a

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[444] "純以紹合，雜以紹離。純從同，雜亂異。同類主中國，口口口口口(異類主戎狄)"

[445] "述古繼天而王者，本軒轅之治，建黃中，拒間氣殊類之災，扶長中夏以盡其材，治道該矣。" Wang, "Houxu," Ibid., 538.

[446] "客曰，賢哲制未亂，庸愚謀已然，立說之大凡也。今子所撰，陳於數十年之前，可以救而保其堅；方茲陸沈，口口忽其斬焉，過述先事之失，為期忌愆，子所謂失魚而求筌也。曰，孔子著春秋，定、哀之間多微辭。言之當時，世莫我知。聊愾寤而陳之，且亦以勸進於來茲也。昔在承平，禍亂未臻，法祖從王，是為俊民。雖痛哭流涕以將其過計，進不效其言，而退必災其身矣。天下師師，誰別玉氏，荏苒首解，大命以淪。於是哀其所敗，原其所劇，始於嬴秦，沿於趙宋，以自毀其極，推初弱喪，具有倫脊。故哀怨繁心，於邑填膈，矯其所自失，以返軒轅之區畫。延首聖明，中邦作闢，行其教，削其闢，以藩扞中區，而終遠口口，則形質消隕，靈爽亦為之悅懌矣。歲德在丙，火運宣也。斗建維辰，春氣全也。文明以應，竊承天也。太原之系，世胄綿也。為漢大行，忠效捐也。悲懣窮愁，退論旃也。明明我後，逖播遷也。俟之方將，須永年也。黃書之所以傳也，意在斯乎！" Ibid., 539

racial-cultural group to survive and advance itself. Maintaining the group's racial-cultural identity mattered as the basis for building the country. This claim was based on an important two-fold belief: First, a group's rights to cultural-material development needed to be prioritized as its defining interest, and second, a group's own cumulative behaviors and culture formed in its distinctive environment provide the basic tool for its survival and development.

Wang admitted that his pragmatism might appear controversial in the eyes of moralists. In the epilogue he argued that Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒 179 BC-104 BC) and Hu Anguo (胡安國 1074-1138) had interpreted the *Spring and Autumn Annals* for "rectifying morality and excluding the pursuit of political tactics" (正道誼, 絀權謀), but he thought they were wrong. An empty moral discourse would not hold the elite accountable. Instead, "humaneness (*ren* 仁) means to love one's own group; righteousness (*yi* 義) means to manage the normative order for one's own group (仁以自愛其類，義以自製其倫)."[447]

Corresponding to such a non-essentialist view of values, Wang also de-essentialized the ideological concept, "Zhong guo (中國)." "Zhong guo" was still an ideal, but it was largely historicized. It was an ideal not because it stood for any transcendental moral-cultural doctrines, but because it was a successful historical community, a people that had developed advanced culture and government to support

[447] "客曰:'昔者夫子懲禍亂，表殷憂，明王道，作春秋。後儒紹隆其說，董、胡為尤焉，莫不正道誼，絀權謀。今子所撰，或異於是，功力以為固，法禁以為措，苟窮諸理，抑衍而論其數。雖復稱仁義，重德化，引性命，探天地之素，恐乖異乎春秋之度也！'曰:'何為其然也？民之初生，自紀其群，遠其害沴，擯其口口，統建維君。故仁以自愛其類，義以自製其倫，強幹自輔，所以凝黃中之綑縕也。今族類之不能自固，而何他仁義之云云也哉！'" Ibid., 538.

itself. Its ancient heroes left a legacy about how to build a civilization for its people and had successfully created a cumulative group life. These features, in Wang's view, represented the virtues of "Zhong guo."[448] The sages "fulfilled the intelligence and strengths of the Central Territory." It ought to be the mission of those who came later to "take care of the society [that was established] by the Yellow Emperor and to forcefully build the [ethnic] group (*zu lei*)."[449]

Why was it important to lay out this new political statement even it was not a practical proposal for his time? It is important to see that *The Yellow Book* was meant to establish a new ideology of literati learning. To shift away from what he saw as the problematic moralist interpretation of politics and culture also meant to argue for a new worldview. Wang devoted the rest of his life to the work of constructing a new interpretation of the *Ru* tradition based on the many themes that he had identified in *The Yellow Book*. To elaborate on his interpretations of the model of antiquity and the learning of the sages, he engaged with the Classics and developed new systematic theories to explain such issues as the source of knowledge and the origins of socio-political norms. Meanwhile, he discussed problems that he saw in contemporary intellectual culture, arguing for re-understanding the goal of literati learning. In each line

[448] For the discourses about "Zhong guo" developed by Chinese literati scholars in the middle period, which saw "Zhong guo" as a moral or cultural ideal, see Peter K. Bol, "Middle-period discourse on the Zhong guo: The central country," Hanxue yanjiu(2009), (Digital access to scholarship at Harvard link http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:3629313), 13-19

[449] "尊其尊，卑其卑，位其位，事其事，難其選舉，易其防閑，公其心，去其危，盡中區之智力，治軒轅之天下，族類強植，仁勇竞命，雖歷百世而弱喪之禍消也。" Wang, "Renguan," *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol.12

of argument, as I will show, Wang disagreed with the existing Neo-Confucian discourse.

2. Origins of the Faculty of Knowing

Wang Fuzhi's argument for the importance of cultural-materialistic development entailed a key difference between his worldview and the Neo-Confucian worldview. While for the Neo-Confucians the world was a coherent whole and literati learning ought to cultivate coherence in each individual, for Wang, the world was a place where differences between things were real. The differences between things, Wang reasoned, provided the possibility of human knowledge and creation. Sages, equipped with a developmentalist mindset, observed the world to find patterns of different things and generate categories. In so doing, they could make new things and build new orders. Philosophically speaking, not assuming a unity in the order of things does not mean that Wang was nominalistic. For him, abstraction was a necessary step for categorizing things; it would help human beings to organize individual things into kinds and orders so that humans could use things to satisfy their needs and advance their conditions.

One major work in which Wang discussed the foundation of human knowledge in depth was his commentary on Zhang Zai's (張載 1020-1077) *Correcting Youthful Ignorance* (Zheng Meng 正蒙). In what follows I focus on a few representative passages that effectively illustrate his effort to shift away from Neo-Confucian epistemology.

> (Zhang's original line):
> 物無孤立之理，非同異、屈伸、終始以發明之，則雖物非物也。
>
> Things do not have the principle of standing alone. If [they] do not have commonalities and differences, cannot contract or expand, or do not have a beginning and an end, [which make them influence each other thus] transform, then even if they [look like] things, they are not things.

(Wang's commentary):
凡物，非相類則相反。……萬物之成，以錯綜而成用。……比類相觀，乃知此物所以成彼物之利。金得火而成器，木受鑽而生火，惟於天下之物知之明，而合之、離之，消之、長之，乃成吾用。不然，物各自物，而非我所得用，非物矣。[450]

As for things, if they do not belong to the same category, they would be opposed to each other. …The myriad things realize [themselves] by becoming useful through their interactions. … Comparing and categorizing things would lead [one] to know how to make one thing work for another. Metal can be forged into tools by being heated with fire; wood can generate fire by being drilled. [One has to be] insightful and knowledgeable about the things under Heaven, then combine them, separate them, melt them, and extend them, in order to turn them into something useful for oneself. Otherwise, things are always things in themselves, and would never become anything useful for us. If so, we do not even consider them to be things.

To know how the physical world can be transformed to satisfy human needs requires one to analyze different things by comparing their elements and generating categories. The process of gaining knowledge about human affairs follows the same intellectual process. Wang continued,

(Zhang's original line)
事有始卒乃成，非同异有无相感，则不见其成；不见其成，则虽物非物。

Affairs can grow only if they have a beginning and an end; if [things do not] influence each other by their commonalities or differences, existence or absence, then there is no [result of] growing. If there is no growing [taking place in things,] then even if they [look like] things, they are not things.

(Wang's commentary)
事之所由成，非直行速獲而可以永終。始於勞者終於逸，始於難者終於易，始於博者終於約，歷險阻而後易簡之德業興焉。故非異則不能同，而百慮歸於一致；非同則不能異，而一理散為萬事。能有者乃能無，積之厚而後散之廣；能無者乃能有，不諱屈而後可允伸。故曰"尺蠖之屈以求伸，龍蛇之蟄以全身"。若不互相資以相濟，事雖幸成，且不知其何以成，而居之不安，

[450] Wang Fuzhi, "Dong wu" (動物), *Zhang Zi Zhengmeng zhu* (張子正蒙註), *juan*.3, included in *Chuanshan quanshu* (船山全書) Vol. 12

未能自得，物非其物矣。[451]

(Translation of Wang's commentary) The [process through which] human affairs are accomplished is not straightforward or fast, and [it is] not the case that once accomplished they will never change. Those that begin with effort will end with comfort; those that begin with difficulty will end with ease; those that begin with complexity will end in simplicity. [One would first] experience dangers and troubles, but in the end virtues and enterprises would be established and thrive. Thus, there would be no commonality without any distinctions. Hundreds of different concerns would eventually come together consistently. There would be no distinctions without any commonality. One principle would scatter and become ten thousand affairs. Those who can gain things can also lose things. Only after one has accumulated much can one spread [what one has accumulated] broadly. Those who can lose things can also gain things. Only after one dares to not bend can one extend. Thus people say, "inchworms bend to extend; dragons and snakes hibernate to protect themselves." If there is no such mutual compensation [of conditions], affairs may luckily get accomplished, but one would not know how [they are accomplished], and [one] would feel anxious [even one enjoys the benefits of the accomplishment of those affairs]. Without understanding on one's own [how affairs are accomplished], [one cannot say that one has understood] things.

(Zhang's original line)
故曰："屈伸相感而利生焉"。

Therefore, [*The Book of Changes*] says, "It is by the influence on each other of this contraction and expansion that the advantages [of the different conditions] are produced." [452]

(Wang's commentary) 凡天下之物，一皆陰陽往來之神所變化。物物有陰陽，事亦如之。其小大、吉凶、善惡之形，知其所屈，而屈此者可以伸彼，知其所伸，而伸者必有其屈；以同相輔，以異相治，以制器而利天下之用，以應事而利攸往之用，以俟命而利修身之用，存乎神之感而已。神者，不滯於物而善用物者也。

[451] Ibid.

[452] The original sentence is from the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalization II" (Xicizhuan II,繫辭下傳) of the *Book of Changes*. "日往則月來，月往則日來，日月相推而明生焉。寒往則暑來，暑往則寒來，寒暑相推而歲成焉。往者屈也，來者信也，屈信相感而利生焉。" My translation draws on James Legge's translation, see, http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/xi-ci-xia

> (Translation of Wang's commentary) All things under Heaven come from the transformations of *yin* and *yang*. Everything contains *yin* and *yang*, as do human affairs. Things and human affairs have forms: big and small, auspicious and ominous, good and bad. If [one] knows how things and affairs bend, one can [take the advantage of the knowledge] to bend some things and affairs in order to extend other things and affairs; if [one] knows how things and affairs extend, [one] can know that things and affairs that are extending now will eventually bend one day. To let things support each other based on their commonalities and to let things govern each other based on their distinctions, thereby creating tools to benefit the use of people under the heaven, to respond to affairs in order to facilitate people's actions, to anticipate one's fate in order to support one's need of cultivating themselves. [These things all] exist in [one's] sense of mental spirit. The mental spirit does not obstruct itself in things; rather, it knows how to make good use of things.[453]

In the Neo-Confucian tradition, Zhang Zai's philosophy was often seen as having made it possible to imagine that the myriad things and human affairs share one monistic foundation of *qi*, or material force. This claim about *qi* meant to argue that the phenomenal world was real.[454] However, in his commentary, Wang makes use of Zhang Zai's discourse for a different purpose. In Wang's view, Zhang correctly understood the process of the creation of human knowledge, and especially, knew the importance of human needs in this process. The conceptualizing mind comes to make sense of the physical world, transforming things into beneficial tools; it also comes to make sense of human situations, transforming human events toward a more beneficial condition. The process of human beings' interaction with the world is also the process of understanding and transforming the environment. Thus, he found himself in an agreement with Zhang about the source of human knowledge. Knowledge would not exist if human beings' analytical categories did not come from their practical need to live. In other words,

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[453] "Dong wu," Zhangzi zhengmeng zhu, juan 3, from Chuanshan quanshu, Vol.12.

[454] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History,* 64. Also see Wing-Tsit Chan, "Chang Tsai's philosophy of Material Force," in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Wing-Tsit Chan, 495.

human beings can recognize patterns of things, not because these patterns reflect the coherence of their own mind, but because the human observation of these patterns could lead to the creations of better things and conditions to satisfy human needs.

In this sense, Wang favorably compared Zhang Zai with Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077), criticizing Shao for ignoring the human origin of knowledge and for trying to impose a pre-determined system of numbers and signs to explain the world. Zhang was much more reliable because his theory was concerned with experience, while Shao was based on speculation.

> This piece [by Zhang Zai] discusses the mechanism of the birth and transformation of humans and things, as well as the traces of the movement and the interaction of spirit and material force. It illuminates the subtleness of the connection between humans and the Heavens, and the mutual influence between the form [of things] and the application [of things]. [This] is why [Zhang Zai] could illustrate the meaning of knowing and transforming [things], and the maintenance of creative spirit was lodged therein. What he said all drew on his own experience; [his approach] was nothing like Master Shao's [approach], which meant to hold onto a numerical system to observe things.
>
> 此篇論人物生化之理，神氣往來應感之幾，以明天人相繼之妙，形器相資之用，蓋所以發知化之旨，而存神亦寓其間，其言皆體驗而得之，非邵子執象數以觀物之可比也。[455]

Shifting the purpose of learning from moral cultivation to cultural development, Wang was able to claim a new foundation for learning and overcome the troublesome subjectivism of Neo-Confucianism that had been a problem for the literati world since the late Ming. Wang's functional approach to the foundation of learning has important philosophical implications. Once we grant that knowledge is rooted in the needs of human cultural development, two claims follow. First, individual consciousness is no longer sufficient for attaining knowledge. Second, the phenomenal world is knowable to

[455] Ibid.

people precisely because it is needed by human beings to advance their cultural-material condition. This also means, everything in the universe that human beings can perceive is colored by their cultural needs.

For instance, at the beginning of *Record of Thinking and Inquiry* (Siwen lu 思問錄), Zhang makes the following claim:

> The fact that one does not see does not mean there is no color. The fact that one does not hear does not mean there is no sound. The fact that speech is not understood does not mean there is no righteousness (*yi* 義)…Although one knows there are things unknown to him, one continues searching and attaining knowledge, [and one] would explore without being pressured by [the fact that there are things one does not know]. This is what distinguishes the learning of the sages from heresies…. Signs (*xiang* 象) [appear] in the sky, quantities (*shu* 數) [show] in things, and principles (*li* 理) [emerge] in the human mind. Ancient sages figured out principles based on [external] signs and quantities; [they] did not come up with principles first and then manufacture signs and quantities to match those principles. To [artificially] establish signs and quantities based on principles leads to [the message that one should only be concerned about] the way of the Heaven, not the way of human beings. (Doubting Shao Yong.) The past is what I know; the future is what I am concerned with; the present is what I think about. [The concepts of] Heaven-and-Earth and the past-and-present are formed because of these [concerns]; the process of things in the world is born from [these concerns].
>
> 目所不見，非無色也。耳所不聞，非無聲也。言所不通，非無義也。…… 雖知有其不知，而必因此致之，不迫於其所不知而索之，此聖學、異端之大辨。……在天而為象，在物而有數，在人心而為理。古之聖人，於象數而得其理也，未聞於理而為之象數也。於理而立之象數，則有天道而無人道。（疑邵子）過去，吾識也。未來，吾慮也。現在，吾思也。天地古今以此而成，天下之亹亹以此而生。[456]

Wang brings in a telling distinction between *tiandao* (天道)*,* "the way of the Heaven," and *rendao* (人道)*,* "the way of human beings," arguing for the importance of the latter. Committing to "the way of the Heaven," as Wang puts it, suggests reversing the natural

[456] Wang Fuzhi, "Sibianlu neipian" (思辨錄內篇), included in *Chuanshan quanshu*, *juan* 12, 401.

way of knowing and fabricating phenomena based on certain predetermined principles. Instead, the world one needs to understand does not consist of those predetermined principles, but is the structure of existence as human beings experience it. To borrow a term from modern phenomenology, we may say Wang believed that learning should be primarily concerned with the life-world, the world that is constrained – but also validated – by the dimensions of human experience. This life-world is all that matters, and the basic structure of this world is shaped by human needs.

Meanwhile, since moral cultivation became irrelevant to the goal of literati learning as he understood it, Wang found himself needing to reinterpret the concepts of "investigating things (*gewu* 格物)" and "attaining knowledge (*zhizhi* 致知)" in the *Great Learning*. He defined the former as broadly understanding natural phenomena (*xiangshu*) and human history (*gujin*) in order to discover principles (*li*), and the latter as forming judgments to guide action. At an individual level, it would not be a complete process of learning if one simply wanted to investigate the principles of the world without forming judgments to make a change; it is equally problematic if one tries to form judgments without rigorous understanding of the world first.[457]

But what about the knowledge of the self? Is it not an important part of learning? Wang explained,

There are things that I know in my mind that do not come from investigating

[457] "夫知之方有二，二者相濟也，而抑各有所從。博取之象數，遠證之古今，以求盡乎理，所謂格物也。虛以生其明，思以窮其隱，所謂致知也。非致知則物無所裁，而萬物以喪志；非格物則知非所用，而蕩智以入邪。二者相濟，則不容不各致焉。" Wang Fuzhi, "Shuoming II 2," (說命中二) in *Shangshu yinyi. Juan* 3 (尚書引義), included in *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol.2.

> things (*gewu*), thus, it is not true to say that as long as one investigates things (*gewu*) one would absolutely attain knowledge (*zhizhi*). Knowing what is good and what is evil, is knowing. There are cases where good and evil are in things [external to self]. For instance, there is a very evil person whom one should not befriend. One can observe his actions in detail, even though he may be good at hiding [his bad deeds], one can still observe everything. Arsenic kills people, and by studying materia medica and by listening to others, one would know that arsenic should not be eaten. In both cases one can investigate things (*gewu*) and knowledge would be attained (*zhizhi*). But, imagine, if I have a bad intention, even though no one finds out that I am doing something evil, [there would be no doubt that] I am just as bad as Daozhi. Also, wine, meat, and millet are supposed to be nutritious. But there is a limit to our appetite. If we have more than what we can eat and get sick, [these nutritious things would be in turn become bad for us]. Such knowledge would not be attained from investigating things (*gewu*). One can only know it clearly by seeking it within oneself. Thus, filial sons do not need to learn [from outside] in order to know what it means to be filial, and they do not need to calculate in order to act filially. Mothers do not need to learn how to raise a child before getting married [and having a child].
>
> 吾心之知有不從格物而得者，則非即格物即致知審矣。且如知善知惡是知，而善惡有在物者，如大惡人不可與交，觀察他舉動詳細，則雖然巧於藏奸，而無不洞見。如砒毒殺人，看本草聽人言，便知其不可食。此固於格物之而知可至也。至如吾心一念之非幾，但有愧於屋漏，則即與蹠為徒。又如酒肉黍種，本以養生，只自家食量有大小，過則傷人，此若於物格之，終不能知，而唯求諸己之自喻，則固分明不昧者。是故孝者不學而知，不慮而能，慈者不學養子而後嫁。[458]

Wang recognized that there are things humans beings can know by seeking within themselves rather than by conducting investigation into the external world, such as one's intentions, disposition, and physical limitations. But what is important here is that he severs the link between the improvement of moral behavior and the practice of learning, the link that served as the Neo-Confucian premise. Moral behavior should not be seen as something that needs to be learned through the investigation of things, and the pursuit of universal principles was now distinct from moral cultivation. While the investigation of things can indeed lead to better personal judgments, such judgments have nothing to do

[458] Wang Fuzhi, *Du sishu daquan shuo* (讀四書大全說), included in *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol.6

with becoming a moral person; they are for the advancement of human life.

3. The Source of Socio-Political Norms

If knowledge is not about cultivating moral understanding, then how do we know what is right and what is wrong? What is the source of values to guide human life? How do we construct good social-political norms?

What is "Dao" (道)?: The Metaphor of "Tool-Making" (製器)

In his commentary on the *Attached Verbalization* of the *Classic of Change* (Xici Zhuan 繫辭傳), Wang uses the binary of "*qi* (器)" versus "*dao* (道)" to explain how cultural development serves as the only meaningful source of socio-political values. *Qi* literarily means tools or instruments; when used in a philosophical context, it usually highlights the materiality, particularity, and the practicality of human culture. It serves as a category in opposition to *dao*, or the Way, which refers to values, norms, and doctrines for guiding action. By highlighting the inseparable role of *qi* in the existence of *dao*, Wang aimed to fundamentally alter the established Neo-Confucian interpretation.

> [The original line:]
> "Thus it is said, what is above the form is called the *dao*, while what is below the form is called the *qi*
> 是故形而上者謂之道，形而下者謂之器.
>
> [Excerpt from Wang's commentary:]
> The world only contains *qi*. The *dao* is the *dao* of the *qi*, but *qi* cannot be called the *qi* of the *dao*… In the ancient times [before civilization], there did not exist the *dao* of *yirang* (揖讓) [i.e., the institution by which a ruler could abdicate and hand the crown to another worthy man as the new ruler]. In the ages of Tang [Yao] and Yü [Shun], there did not exist the *dao* of *diaofa* (弔伐) [i.e., the institution of punishing the tyrant and comforting the common people]. The Han and Tang periods did not have the *dao* of the present world, and the present world does not have the *dao* of other times. Situations like these are many. Without

> bows and arrows, the *dao* of shooting would not exist; without chariots, the *dao* of driving would not exist; without sacrifice, sweet wine, jade *bi* (璧), bronze bells, sounding stones, woodwind pipes, and strings, the *dao* of ritual and music would not exist; without sons, the *dao* of being a father would not exist; without younger brothers, the *dao* of being an elder brother would not exist. There are many instances where the *dao* can exist or not exist. Without the *qi*, there would be no *dao*. This statement is indeed true, but people do not usually look into it.
> 天下惟器而已矣。道者器之道，器者不可謂之道之器也。無其道則無其器，人類能言之。雖然，苟有其器矣，豈患無道哉？……洪荒無揖讓之道，唐虞無弔伐之道，漢唐無今日之道，則今日無他年之道者多矣。未有弓矢則無射道，未有車馬而無馭道，未有牢、醴、璧、鐘、磬、管、絃而無禮樂之道；則未有子而無父道，未有弟而無兄道，道之可有而且無者多矣。故無其器則無其道，誠然之言也，而人特未之察也。

Socio-political norms do not exist independently from the cultural-material practices that makes these norms realizable and meaningful; rather, they are inherent to the material-cultural practice. Thus, norms change over time. To create appropriate norms for society, it is not necessary to hold onto the old ones. Rather, as long as cultural practice continues and proliferates, there would be no problems regarding the construction of good norms. Wang continues:

> Thus, sages in the past would only [expect to] manage the *qi* (*zhi qi* 治器); they would not [expect to] manage the *dao* (*zhi dao* 治道). What one follows to manage the *qi* is called the *dao*. Obtaining the *dao* is called virtue (*de* 德); completing the *qi* is called action (*xing* 行). To apply *qi* broadly is called flexibility and adaptability (*biantong* 變通). When the effects of the *qi* become manifest, the manifestation is called enterprise (*shiye* 事業). Thus, the *Book of Changes* contains signs (*xiang* 象). Signs are used to symbolize the *qi*. Hexagrams contain lines (*yao* 爻). Lines are used to [reveal the] results of *qi*.[459] Lines have verbalizations (*ci* 辭). Verbalizations are used to analyze and distinguish *qi*.
> 故古之聖人，能治器而不能治道。治器者，則謂之道。道得，則謂之德；器成，則謂之行。器用之廣，則謂之變通；器效之著，則謂之事業。故《易》有象；象者，像器者也。卦有爻；爻者，效器者也。爻有辭；辭者，辨器者也。

[459] Another way to translate this sentence is: "lines are used to imitate the *qi*."

Here, Wang redefines a set of key concepts by centering on *qi*. Sages are those who can build and manage a good material-cultural life for society. Values (*dao*) are what sages follow in building and managing material-cultural life. Virtue (*de*) refers to the ability of the sages to acquire values. Action (*xing*) is completed when the cultural-material foundation of good institutions is realized and maintained. Flexibility and adaptability (*biantong*) refer to the ability to practice material creation broadly and comprehensively. An enterprise (*shiye*) can be said to have been realized only when the material creation is widely effective for the society. Taking the *Book of Changes* as an example, he believed that the symbolic system in the text was meant to be a tool to help improve society's cultural life.

But how would the creation of a thriving cultural life lead to a good social-political order? Wang continues,

> Sages are good at managing *qi* and that is all. Speaking from the perspective of managing, [it means that] names (*ming* 名) are established from above. And once the names are established from above, the names will be also established from below. These names from above and below are equal, without any difference in quantity. What is called "above the form" [namely, what is called the *dao*] is not formless. Only after there is the form could there exist [things] above it. [As for] the realm with no forms, [it] extends across time and synthesizes tens of thousands of changes; it exhausts heaven-and-earth, humans, and things. [Yet it] does not have [form.] Thus, [the *Book of Changes*] says, "Only sages can fulfill their practice [of managing the *qi*]." [What the sages] fulfill are those below [the forms], not the ones above [the forms.]
> 故聖人者，善治器而已矣。自其治而言之，而上之名立焉。上之名立，而下之名亦立焉。上下皆名也，非有涯量之可別者也。形而上者，非無形之謂，既有形矣，有形而後有形而上。無形之上，亙古今，通萬變，窮天窮地，窮人窮物，皆所未有者也。故曰：「唯聖人可以踐行」。踐其下，非踐其上也者。

Wang makes an important historical and theoretical claim: In the process of managing cultural material creation and production, the sages established normative names for things. This top-down effort also, accordingly, inspired society to name things bottom-up.

All of these names came together to form a collective and interconnected world of meanings. Wang argued that the *dao*, namely, the "above the form (*xing er shang*)," does not refer to the grand and unchanging universe that exists outside human culture. Instead, it is the world of meanings generated in the process of cultural creation. Thus, according to this logic, the symbolic system of the *Book of Changes* represented the sagely effort of "practice" (*jianxing* 践行), that is, the facilitation of culture.

Why was this point important? Wang followed,

> Thus, "aural and visual acuity" (*congming*) is about hearing and seeing; "intelligence" (*ruizhi*) is about mind and thought;[460] "humanness" (*ren*) is about [how to treat] people; "righteousness" (*yi*) is about [how to handle] affairs; "centrality and harmony" (*zhonghe*) are about [how to conduct] rituals and music; "impartiality and justice" (*dagong zhizheng*) are about [how to] punish and reward people; "making good use [of things]" (*liyong*) is about [how to use resources such as] water, fire, metal, and wood; "nourishing lives" (*housheng*) is about [how to utilize products such as] grain, gourds, silk, and linen; "rectifying one's virtues] is about [taking care of the] relationships between ruler and minister and between father and son. [461] If one abandons these [particular *qi*] and seeks a state prior to there being *qi*, extending across time, synthesizing the myriad changes, exhausting heaven-and-earth, mankind and things, but without being able to establish names for [the *qi*], how could one even be able to obtain the reality [of the *dao*]? …
>
> 故聰明者，耳目也；睿知者，心思也；仁者，人也；義者，事也；中和者，禮樂也；大公至正者，行賞也；利用者，水火金木也；厚生者，穀瓜絲麻也；正德者，君臣父子也。如其捨此而求諸未有器之先，亙古今，通萬變，窮天穹地，窮人窮物，而不能為之名，而況得其實乎？……

Wang exemplified a set of norms, virtues, and doctrines, which he used to refer to the realm "above form." He argued that they are meaningful "names" because they grow out

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[460] The notions of "congming" and "ruizhi" here are referring to the two sets of virtues mentioned in Chapter 31 of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, "唯天下至聖，為能聰明睿知，足以有臨也。"

[461] The notions of "zhengde," "liyong" are "housheng" are referring to the virtues mentioned in "Counsels of the Great Yu" (Da Yu Mo 大禹謨) of the *Book of Documents*: "禹曰: ' 於！帝念哉！德惟善政，政在養民。水、火、金、木、土、穀，惟修；正德、利用、厚生、惟和。"

of the needs of the community's everyday practice, a process initiated by leaders and immediately followed by society at large. It is in the context of everyday cultural and social practice that norms are generated and maintained. They are not to be found in the realm beyond the dimensions of time, space, and the existence of things and affairs, because such a realm is not a part of human practice, thus cannot be given meaning. Following this logic, Wang continued to define the nature of sagehood and the meaning of literati learning.

> …Thus, in "those who create things are sages," "create" refers to the making of *qi*. "Those who document and explain have wisdom" refers to those who document and explain *qi.* In "it is humans that [have] spirit and [the ability to] understand," "[having] spirit" means clear-sightedness about *qi*. [This means] one is able to understand/recognize the categories and styles of *qi*, analyze the regulations and rules of *qi*, optimize the use of *qi*, and define the rationale [or structure] of *qi*, thus "accomplish [*qi*] quietly in action, attain trust without having to articulate." One accomplishes *qi* in one's mind and takes *qi* [as well as the accomplishment of *qi*] as the basis of virtue. Alas, the *dao* of the gentlemen completely lies in [his managing of] the *qi*. Words (*ci*) are used to manifest *qi*, so that everyone under the Heaven would be motivated to devote themselves to managing *qi*."
> ……故「作者之謂聖」，作器也；「述者之謂明」，述器也。「神而明之，存乎其人」。神，明其器也。識其品別（式），辨其條例，善其用，定其體，則「默而成之，不言而信」，成器在心，而據之為德也。嗚呼！君子之道，盡夫器而已矣。辭所以顯器，而鼓天下之動，使勉於治器也。[462]

The goal of learning, therefore, is the ability to lead society to advance its material cultural production and reproduction. In doing so, one may contribute to the formation of values at a societal level, inspiring everyone in the community to engage with cultural production and reproduction while participating in the making and maintenance of a common system of meaning. The notion of mental spirit (*shen*) refers to the ability to

[462] Wang Fuzhi, "Xi ci shang zhuan" (繫辭上傳) Chapter 12, *Zhouyi waizhuan* (周易外傳) *juan* 5. *Zhongguo zhexueshi ziliao xuanji: Qing dai zhi bu* (中国哲学史资料选辑 清代之部) (Beijing : Zhonghua shu ju : Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing, 1962.) 123.

comprehend and illustrate the making of culture. Once one is capable of recognizing the structures and manners of cultural production, grasping the programs of producing certain things, improving the functions of the products, and setting up rules for further production, one may fully master their design, having acquired the sagely virtues. In this process, words are important; they are used to enable the world to commit to the broader enterprise of cultural production. Words manifest the identities and orders of things in practice. Thus, they should be understood in light of their connections with things in practice; they should not be manipulated and confused as if they have nothing to do with reality.

On the whole, in applying this metaphor of tool-making (製器) to describe the source of values and the formation of norms, Wang makes several claims contradictory to Neo-Confucianism. Intangible doctrines, virtues and norms came from the tangible physical, technological, social, and political practices that are necessary to a group's development needs. The meaningfulness of the discourse of values is thus rooted in common cultural needs, rather than individual morality. Moreover, values must change over time; a dogmatic view will not lead to a good social order. In addition, leaders ought to shape public behavior and facilitate social cohesion by understanding and guiding cultural production, rather than dictating to people and imposing empty discourses of morality upon them. In this process, the common symbolic system is key.

How to Guide Public Order: Basing Government on Culture

How, then, to realize a good socio-political order? To use Wang's terms, how to

make sure the "normative names" are meaningfully defined? Why exactly does it matter to people?

Wang argues, "Names (*ming* 名) come into being with realities (*shi* 實), and realities are manifested through names." Once names are defined, orders, duties, and distinctions of roles will be established. Thus, "while reality gives birth to names, names also produce new reality."[463] The activity of "ordering the names" is where the political order and the cultural order unite. Although naming things is a human practice, it is not arbitrary. Giving names to things has to be based on a correct understanding of society's collective cultural experience and a good judgment of the quality of the existing system of names. To define good and effective public norms, one ought to respect, make sense of, and build on a society's common understanding of the world. Such a common understanding of things serves as a mediating layer between human actions and reality.

To craft better naming systems, it is necessary to show understanding and respect for *xiang* (象), or phenomena.

> Under Heaven there is no *dao* existing beyond the *xiang*... Is it acceptable to ignore *xiang* if one wants to explain *dao*?
>
> 天下無象外之道。… 欲詳道而略象，奚可哉?
>
> As for *xiang* (象)*:* because of [the existence of *xiang*, the distinction between] black and yellow [in color] and [the distinction between] pure and mixed [in texture] give rise to [the notion of] pattern (*wen* 文); because of [the existence of *xiang,* the distinction between] long and short [in length] and [the distinction between] horizontal and vertical [in direction] give rise to [the notion of] degree (*du* 度); because of [the existence of *xiang*, the distinction between] resilient and fragile and [the distinction between] moving and static [in motion] give rise to

[463] "名者，人治之大者也。名生與實，而實必因名以顯。及其名之即定，則令共之義，詳要之職，冠履之分，皆依此而立。則實生名，名亦生實，名實相待而不可偏廢者也。" Wang Fuzhi, *Liji zhangju* (禮記章句), *juan* 2, included in *Chuanshan quanshu,* Vol.4, 9 .

> [the notion of] quality (*zhi* 質); because of the mind's [reaction to the distinction between] big and small [in size] and mind's [reaction to the distinction between] identical and different [in identity] that the [notion] of emotion (*qing* 情) is born; because of [the existence of *xiang,* the distinction between] sun, moon and stars gives rise to [the notion of] brightness (*ming* 明); because of [the existence of *xiang,* the distinction between] dikes and hedges and [the distinction between] reed and mud huts generate the notion of productivity (*zhi* 質); because of [the existence of *xiang,* the distinction between] grasses and trees and [the distinction between] flowers and fruits give rise to the [notion of] wealth; because of [the existence of *xiang,* the distinction between] the scattering wind and the nourishing rain gives rise to the [notion of] season (*jie* 節). As for [the fact that] the hole of the ear gives the ear its aural acuity and the pupil of an eye gives the eye its visual acuity the mechanism [behind them] is the same.
>
> 今夫象：玄黃純雜因以得文，長短縱橫因以得度，堅脆動止因以得質，大小同異因心得情，日月星辰因以得明，墳植廬讓因以得產，草木華實因以得財，風雨散潤因以得節。其於耳啓竅以得聰，目含珠以得明，其致一也。[464]

As we have mentioned above, the formation of phenomena, or *xiang*, is a cognitive process through which humans automatically generate analytical categories for things or affairs based on their structural differences. These categories, including pattern, degree, quality, productivity, wealth, etc., are basic references for guiding action. Thus, for a society to be committed to culture also means to understand and celebrate the importance of common perceptions of things (制器尚象).[465]

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[464] "Xici xia zhuan chapter 3" (繫辭下傳第三章). *Chuanshan quanshu* Vol.1, 1038

[465] "天下無象外之道。何也？有外則相與為兩，即甚親而亦如父之於子也。無外則相與為一，雖有異名，而亦若耳目之於聰明也。父生子而各自有形，父死而子繼。不曰道生象，而各自為體，道逝而象留。然則象外無道，欲詳道而略象，奚可哉？今夫象：玄黃純雜因以得文，長短縱橫因以得度，堅脆動止因以得質，大小同異因心得情，日月星辰因以得明，墳植廬讓因以得產，草木華實因以得財，風雨散潤因以得節。其於耳啓竅以得聰，目含珠以得明，其致一也。象不勝多，而一之於《易》。《易》聚象於奇偶，而散之於參伍錯綜之往來，相與開合，相與源流，開合有情，源流有理。故吉凶悔吝，捨象而無所徵。乾非六陽，無以為龍。坤非六陰，無以為馬。中實外虛，頤無以養。足欹鉉斷，鼎無以烹。推此而言，天下有象，而聖人有易，故神物興而民用前矣。" Ibid., 1038 It is commonly seen that Wang often used *qi* (器) and *xiang* (象) in a interchangeable way when they were both discussed in contrast to *dao* (道). *Zhongguo zhexueshi ziliao xuanji: Qingdai zhi bu* (中国哲学史

The sages, according to Wang, guided humans to follow effective and beneficial ways of organizing their lives. They governed by imparting knowledge to people, and the base they created to deliver their knowledge was an accountable and intelligent system of symbols that represented the situations that people would encounter in their day-to-day cultural and social life. Taking the design of the hexagrams in the *Book of Changes* as an example, Wang explains that, based on their observations of the world, the sages collected all the important phenomena and abstracted them into a basic educational system of odd and even numbers to explain what these phenomena would imply, how they would interact, and how they might change. The system drew on common events that people would encounter in their life to help them form judgments. Phenomena are regulated by numbers, namely, *shu* (数). Numbers explain the tendency of phenomena to change. The symbolic system offered a constant basis (*chang* 常) of meanings for people to order their life, while the numeric calculation was used to show the changes (*bian* 变) in the course of affairs.[466] Because of this system, Wang argued, the guidance of the sages became verifiable (故吉凶悔吝，捨象而無所徵). Then, civilization developed.[467]

资料选辑 清代之部), 123. Also: "天下無象外之道。何也？有外則相與為兩，即甚親而亦如父之於子也。無外則相與為一，雖有異名，而亦若耳目之於聰明也。父生子而各自有形，父死而子繼。不曰道生象，而各自為體，道逝而象留。然則象外無道，欲詳道而略象，奚可哉？" "Xici xia zhuan chapter 3" (繫辭下傳第三章). *Chuanshan quanshu* Vol.1, 1038

[466] "易之有象也，有辭也，因象而立者也；有變也，有占也，因數而生者也。象者氣之始，居乎未有務之先；數之時之會，居乎方有務之際。其未有務，則居也，其方有務，則動也。居因其常，象，至常者也。動因乎變，數，至變者也。" Ibid.

[467] "《易》聚象於奇偶，而散之於參伍錯綜之往來，相與開合，相與源流，開合有情，源流有理。故吉凶悔吝，捨象而無所徵。乾非六陽，無以為龍。坤非六陰，無以為馬。中實外虛，頤無以養。足欹鉉斷，鼎無以烹。推此而言，天下有象，而聖人有易，故神物興而民用前矣。" Ibid.

For Wang, *the Book of Changes* represented the basic principles underlying the emergence and change of important phenomena, while other Classics showed how sages in various areas ordered society by symbolizing those major phenomena represented in the *Changes* and by reinforcing the meanings of those phenomena.[468] In Wang's view, poetic expressions (*bixing* 比興) in the *Classic of Odes*, government affairs (*zengshi* 政事) in the *Classic of Documents*, political hierarchies (*mingfen* 名分) in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, propriety (*yi* 儀) in the *Classic of Rites*, and musical rhythms (*lü* 律) in the *Classic of Music* were nothing but "*xiang*." In other words, the institutions of the sages were built to inform and cultivate people to manage their everyday cultural life. Underlying the design was the sages' intelligence and humaneness. While the *Book of Changes* included in itself an awareness of the open-end possibility of changes, these other Classics taken together were meant to constitute a system of cultural meanings to respond to the most common needs of people.[469]

In Wang's view, the integrated order of antiquity was one in which the government identified itself with the cultural interests of the people, and built its own institutional order based on a common symbolic order rooted in the cultural life of society.

4. The Moral Meaning of the Sagely Enterprise for Humanity

Wang Fuzhi's cultural developmentalism may seem pragmatic, but it is important

[468] "《詩》之比興，《書》之政事，《春秋》之名分，《禮》之儀，《樂》之律，莫非象也。而《易》統會其理。" Ibid. 1039.

[469] "聖人之承天以佑民者至矣。《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》之教，博象以治其常；龜筮之設，窮數以測其變。合其象數，貞其常變，而《易》以興焉。智之深，仁之壹，代陰陽以率人於治。至矣，蔑以尚矣。而非君子之器，則失序而不能承。故天之待聖人，聖人之待君子，望之深，祈之夙。而學《易》之君子，將何以報聖人耶？" Ibid.

to see that Wang's pragmatism was meant to provide a new discourse about the broader meaning of the *Ru* tradition.

All of the efforts of the sages contributed to a flourishing and ordered civilization in antiquity. The sages could accomplish this because they had figured out what humanity was about. Wang argued that humans have an innate faculty of perceiving the structure of things and creating normative meanings based on their perceptions. "[As the mind senses a thing, in the mind] the sign [of the thing] is manifested and the quantitative features of the thing appear (象著而數陳). [Meanwhile,] norms are established and principles rise. (名立而義起)."[470] Hence, Wang did not agree with Mencius that human beings differ from animals because of their innate moral sense. Animals, in Wang's view, also have some inkling of moral sense. But the true difference between human beings and animals lies in culture. Humans can fully develop and manifest their sense of right and wrong by creating and living by a system of rituals (*li* 禮).[471] Embodying their sense of values through rituals is a part of human cultural practice. Through culture, they fully develop their physical, intellectual, ethical, and social potentials. [472]

Thus, sages protected what was innate to humans (佑人性分之所固有); they helped people fully accomplish their virtues and enterprises (獎成其德業). While

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[470] "人之有性，函之於心而感物以通，象著而數陳，名立而義起。" Wang Fuzhi, "Taihe pian" (太和篇), *Zhangzi zhengmeng zhu, juan* 1, included *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol.12.

[471] "天之生人，甘食悅色，幾與物同。仁義知信之心，人得其全，而物亦得一曲。其為人所獨有而禽獸所必無者，禮而已矣。故禮者，人道也。禮隱於心而不能著之於外，則仁義知信之心，雖或偶發，亦因天機之乍動，與虎狼之父子，蜂蟻之君臣無別，而人道毀亦。" Wang Fuzhi, *Liji zhangju, juan* 1. *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol. 4. 4

[472] "人之所以異於禽獸者，禽獸有其體性而不全，人則戴髮列眉而盡其文，手持足行而盡其用，耳聰目明而盡其才，性含仁義而盡其理，健順五常之實全矣。" Wang Fuzhi, *Liji zhangju*, *juan* 24. *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol.4, 17.

Heaven-and-Earth were emotionless, disconnected from the interests of humans and leaving them unattended (天道之遠人，吉凶聽其自然也), it was the sages who were concerned with human interests.[473] By delivering knowledge and building institutions, they guided people to engage in culture, making use of what nature offered to satisfy their cultural needs. In doing so, they also made use of the symbols of these resources to create shared meanings to cultivate people's respect for order and their ethical capacities.[474]

The sages' enterprises were meant to lead humans eventually to act on their capacity of knowing and creation, and to fulfill their mandate of transforming the natural world into a more dynamic and thriving place. Wang explained that the basic forces of *yin* and *yang* create things in the natural world consistently, but they do so without

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[473] "蓋聖人以作易以詔吉凶而利民用者，皆佑人性分之所固有，以奬成其德業，而非天道之遠人，吉凶聽其自然也。" Wang, "Xici shang zhuan chapter 5," (繫辭上傳第五章) *Zhouyi neizhuan*, *juan* 5-1, (周易內傳), included in *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol.1, 524.

[474] "五行者何也？……由其資以厚人之生，則取其精以養形，凝乎形而以成性者在是也。成乎質者，才之所由生也；輔乎氣者，情之所由發也；充氣而生神者，性之所由定也。而有生之初，受於天者，其剛柔融結之神；受於父母者，亦取精用物之化也。得其粹則正；不足於一而枵，有餘於一而溢則不正。故王者節宣之以贊天化而成人之性。是德之所以正者此五者也。由其資以利人之用，則因其材以敦乎質，飾其美以昭乎文，推廣其利以宣德，制用其機以建威，是禮樂行政之資也。而觀其所以昭著，察其所以流行，感其所以茂盛，審其所以靜凝，則考道者之效法存焉。而慎用之以宜則正；淫用之以逞、吝用之以私者則不正。故王者謹司之以宰制化理而立人之義。是德之所由正者此五者也。" Wang, "Hong fan 2," (洪範二) *Shangshu yinyi* (尚書引義) *juan* 4, included in *Chuanshan quanshu* Vol.2, 349. Also see his explanation of the importance of clothing as significant institutional and symbolic creations: "古之聖人，思有以治天下，而其心殫矣。久而乃得之於法象焉。人之所可受吾治者，惟其敬愛而已矣。怵然不敢干之心生，則敬興；訴然樂亭其命之心生，則愛興。觸目而天地之法象在焉，莫或不敬也，或莫不愛也。人成位乎中，而君子者野人之耳目也。人成位乎中，則可以效法天地而慙；君子為野人之耳目，則利用其敬愛法象之心，以作其敬愛而受治。故衣裳之垂也，上下辨焉；物采昭焉，榮華盛焉。潔齊，以示無散亂也，寬薄，以示無虔鷙也。天地方圓之儀則、天產地產之精華咸備焉，陰陽損益之數、律度規矩準繩自然之式咸在焉，以示人極之全也。而天下悉觀感以生其敬愛，於是而聖人者亦有其無功之功，以與天地相參。故惟衣裳可以配乾坤，而非他制器尚象所得而擬焉者也。" "Xici xia zhuan chapter 2" (繫辭下傳第二章) *Zhouyi waizhuan*, *juan* 6, *Chuanshan quanshu*, 1037.

reflecting on what they have done. Only sages, the model of humans, were concerned with how to sustain the reproduction of the world and how to better manage it (代陰陽以率人於治).[475] Heaven is not concerned with right and wrong, but this is not the case for human beings. Wang stressed that once humans learn about how things are created and transformed in nature, and once they successfully gain knowledge for themselves to create things and change the world, they become concerned with right and wrong, because they need to define standards to fulfill their agendas. By building a grand civilizational enterprise and turning people into responsible and diligent cultural beings, the sages led to a better world and fulfilled the human way. They did not emptily claim to represent Heaven-and-Earth; they only wanted to accomplish the human way.[476]

The Problem of Contemporary Culture

Those who believed their learning was in tune with the mind of Heaven-and-Earth were, in Wang's view, deceiving themselves with a kind of naturalistic determinism and a harmful perfunctory attitude. In *Waiting for the Solution* (*Sijie* 俟解)*,* a book aiming to "criticize popular views and sustain the humane way" (針砭末俗，維持人道之作), Wang argued that being moral was to be concerned with cultural development. Devotion

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[475] "陰陽與萬物同功而不與同憂，聖人與萬物同憂……故匱而不給之患，陰陽不患而聖人患之……聖人節宣五行而斟酌用之……" Wang, commentary on the hexagram "Yi" (益), *Zhouyi waizhuan, juan* 3, *Chuanshan quanshu,* 926.

[476] "聖人，盡性者也；性盡，則《易》之理該焉，而何為其尚有憂耶？蓋道在未繼以前，渾淪而無得失，雨暘任其所施，禾莠不妨並茂，善之名未立，而不善之跡亦忘。既以善繼乎人，而成乎人之性矣，一於善而少差焉，則不善矣。聖人求至於純粹以精，而望道未見，則有憂；性盡而盡人物之性，而天運有治亂，人情有貞邪，不可遽施轉移，以胥協於至善，則有憂。而烏能無憂乎？同一道也，在未繼以為天道，既成而後為人道，天道無擇，而人道有辨。聖人盡人道，而不如異端之欲妄同於天；至於業大德盛，人道已盡，乃學於《易》而樂天安土以無憂，此夫子所以自謂卒學《易》而後可以無大過也。" Wang, *Zhouyi neizhuan*, *juan* 5, *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol. 1, 528

to the proliferation of culture would allow people to care about things beyond satisfying their most basic level of needs. Wang criticized Laozi as the origin of teachings that saw material desire as a bad thing. Such teachings encouraged people to withdraw from advancing cultural life, thus wasting the energy and talent that humans are born with, turning them into uncultivated barbarians and even animals.[477] Wang argued that not caring about culture implies being indifferent about learning, discipline, responsibility, and social order. He further criticized the behaviors and views of those influenced by the left-wing followers of Wang Yangming's teaching. They echoed the amoral teaching of Laozi and appealed to people without learning. These disciples did not push themselves to behave ethically, believing that their contempt for external order and their self-indulgence indicated true sincerity. Lacking understanding and broad knowledge about the world, they took their ignorance as a sign of purity, and they were attracted by speculation and personal enlightenment. They were dishonest and calculating in their everyday social interactions, aiming for nothing more than expediency. Moreover, they spent all their time seeking personal benefit, while calling themselves hard-working. These, Wang claimed, were the typical behaviors of unlearned commoners, or *liusu* (流俗). [478] The sages, on the other hand, would save people by inspiring them to transcend

[477] "樸之為說，始於老氏，後世習以為美談。樸者，木之已伐而未裁者也。已伐則生理已絕，未裁則不成於用，終乎樸則終於無用矣。如其用之，可棟可楹，可豆可俎，而抑可溷可牢，可杻可梏者也。人之生理在生氣之中，源自盎然充滿，條達榮茂。伐而絕之，使不得以暢茂，而又不施以琢磨之功，任其頑質，則天然之美既喪，而人事又廢，君子而野人，人而禽，胥此為之。若以樸言，則唯飢可得而食、寒可得而衣者為切實有用。養不死之軀以待盡，天下豈少若而人耶！自鬻為奴，穿窬為盜，皆以全其樸，奚不可哉！養其生理自然之文，而修飾之以成乎用者，禮也。詩曰：'人而無禮，胡不遄死？'遄死者，木之伐而為樸者也。" Wang, *Sijie* (俟解), included in *Chuanshan quanshu*, *juan* 12, 478.

[478] "庶民者，流俗也。流俗者，禽獸也。明倫、察物、居仁、由義，四者禽獸之所不得興。以明倫言之，虎狼之父子，螽蟻之君臣，庶民亦知之，亦能之，乃以樸實二字覆蓋之。欲

their limited needs and existing biases, letting them understand their active role in the universe and recognize their potential to achieve something grand for humanity.[479] If people hold a perfunctory attitude, even proclaiming such attitude as a virtue, and only care about their trivial personal concerns, then humanity would turn into animals.[480]

5. The Mission of Literati Learning: Securing the Continuity of the Culture of *Zhongxia* (中夏)

Culture plays a direct role in maintaining the civilizational order of a society; whether people devote themselves to culture or not has direct consequences. Wang's critique was coherent with his understanding of culture. Culture should not be taken for granted. A civilized way of life for a particular human group comes and goes, determined

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愛則愛，欲敬則敬，不勉強於所不知不能，謂之為率真。以察物言之，庶物之理，非學不知，非博不辨，而俗儒迨而欲速，為惡師友所錮蔽，曰何用如彼，謂之所學不雜。其惑乎異端者，少所見而多所怪，為絕聖棄智、不立文字之說以求冥解，謂之妙悟。以仁言之，且無言克復敬恕也。乃事其大夫之賢者，友其士之仁者，亦以嬌惰奪其志氣，謂之寡交。居處、執事、與人，皆以機巧喪其本心，謂之善於處世。以義言之，且無言靜義入神也。以言餂，以不言餂，有能此者謂之靈利。雞鳴而起，孳孳為利，謂之勤儉傳家。庶民之所以為庶民者此也，此之謂禽獸。" Also "不知所以生，不知所以死，則為善為惡，皆非性分之所固有，職分之所當為，下焉者何弗蕩棄彝倫以遂其苟且私利之欲！其稍有恥之心而厭焉者，則見為寄生兩間，去來無準，惡為贅疣，善亦弁髦，生無所從，而名義皆屬漚瀑，兩滅無余，以求異於逐而不返之頑鄙。乃其究也不可以終日，則又必佚出猖狂，為無縛無礙之邪說，終歸於無忌憚。自非究吾之所始與其所終，神之所化，鬼之所歸，效天地之正而不容不懼以終始，惡能釋其惑而使信於學！" Ibid.

[479] "有豪傑而不聖賢者矣，未有聖賢而不豪傑者也。能興即所謂之豪傑。興者，性之生乎氣也。拖沓委順當世之然而然，不然而不然，終日勞而不能度越於祿位田宅妻子之中，數米計薪，日以挫其志氣，仰視天而不知其高，俯視地而不知其厚，雖覺如夢，雖視如盲，雖勤動其四體而心不靈，惟不興故也。聖人以詩教以蕩滌其濁心，震其暮氣，納之於豪傑而後期之以聖賢，此救人道於亂世之大權也。" *Ibid.,* 478-9.

[480] "故君子者，長人道而引於無窮；獎善止惡，以凝正命。……而人類遂絕乎禽獸矣，而苟私善於己，散惡於眾，則殺害日進，清網日微，無窮之生，一人尼之，而人類亦遂以淪亡。" Wang, commentary on the hexagram of "Gou"(姤), *Zhouyi waizhuan juan* 3-2 (周易外傳卷三下), *Chuanshan quanshu*, vol.1, 361.

by how culture is developed. The culture that Wang had in mind was largely materialistic, capable of generating a physical impact on the world and human beings. Thus, the task of identifying the civilizing process that one is a part of is key to the very existence of the ethnicity comprising the Central Country. It is based on such logic that Wang fundamentally disagreed with naturalist metaphysics, holding that it ignored the role of culture. He found it crucial for a group to maintain a historical consciousness, knowing the continuities of its own cultural life and where it stood now. Wang explained this logic at the end of his book, *Record of Thoughts and Inquires* (Siwen lu 思問錄), in which he drew a grand perspective of the origins of the trans-dynastic civilization that he sometimes called *zhongguo* (中國), *zhongxia* (中夏), or *zhongqu* (中區).

He began by showing his skepticism of Shao Yong's attempt to define the beginning of the universe and of human beings, considering Shao's unverifiable calculation to be meaningless for understanding and ordering human society. Instead, knowledge about the future ought to be generated from inquiries about the human culture of the past that had been knowable to its creators, the people of that society.

> [People] say "Heaven was born at the time of *zi* (子), and before *zi* there was no Heaven; Earth was born at the time of *cho* (丑), and before *chou* there was no Earth; human beings were born at the time of *yin* (寅) and before *yin* there were no human beings." I do not have any knowledge transmitted from such a deep and ancient time, so I have no way to tell whether it is true or not….I have nothing I can use to prove this, and I do not know why those who produced this theory could be so sure about it! Those who investigate the past only use facts that people can see; those who predict the future only base their forethought on traces from the past.
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> 謂"天開於子，子之前無天；地闢於丑，丑之前無地；人生於寅，寅之前無人"。吾無此邃古之傳聞，不能徵其然否也。……吾無以徵之，不知為此說者之何以徵之如是其確也! 考古者，以可聞之實而已。知來著，以先見之幾而已。

What is the history that scholars ought to know? Why is it important?

> Therefore what is known is that the world of the Central Country before Xuanyuan [軒轅 i.e., the Yellow Emperor 黃帝] was just like [the world of] the barbarians! And before Taihao (太昊 i.e. Fuxi 伏羲) it was just like [the world of] animals! Animals cannot complete their material substance (質), and barbarians cannot complete their culture (文). If culture is not completed, it will gradually perish, thus, the past would not be known, and there would be nothing to be transmitted to the future. Thus, there would be no constant standard to tell right and wrong, and there would be no basis to make decisions. People who just cry out when hungry, and who throw away the remaining food when full, are nothing more than animals that can stand upright. After the Wei and Jin dynasties, beginning from the [invasion of] Liu and Shi (i.e. Liu Yuan 劉淵 and Shi Le 石勒), the culture of the Central Country sometimes is illuminated and sometimes becomes obscured. Some day [the culture of the Central Country] must be destroyed and [the Central Country will] be left without culture. Its people will return to the condition before the time of Xuanyuan, and all will be barbarians. *After culture is gone, no material substance can be maintained. What is to be eaten will not be their food, what is to be worn will not be their clothes. Eating different food will change their blood and material force (血氣), and wearing different clothes will change their posture and appearance. [People] will return to the conditions before the time of Taihao, and they will all be animals. Under this condition, language will not be not used, and knowledge will not be verified.* Even if there exist any ears and eyes [that can listen and see] through the aeons, there will be nothing to know. [The past] will be a block of vagueness.
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> 故吾所知者，中國之天下，軒轅以前，其猶夷狄乎！太昊以上，其猶禽獸乎！禽獸不能全其質，夷狄不能備其文。文之不備，漸至於無文，則前無與識，後無所傳，是非無恆，取捨無劇，所謂飢則呴呴，飽則棄餘者，亦植立之獸而已矣。魏晉之降，劉石之濫觴，中國之文，乍明乍滅，他日者必且凌蔑以之於無文，而人之返於軒轅以前，蔑不夷矣。文去而質不足以留，且將食非其食，衣非其衣，食異而血氣改，衣異而形儀殊，又返乎太昊以前，而蔑不獸矣。至是而文字不行，聞見不徵，雖有億萬年之耳目，亦無與徵之亦，此為混沌而已矣。
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> The natural force of *qi* perishes and thrives inversely. Before Taihao, people living in the Central Country gathered together like mammals and birds. But [this does not mean that] everywhere under the sun and moon has to be like that. There must be a place that already looked like the Central Country during the periods of Tang, Yu, and the Three Dynasties. Since communications were limited [during that period], one place's flourishing and another place's decline are impossible to test. When the declining place turns to flourish, and the flourishing place sinks into decline, there is no way to document these [changes], therefore they are hardly known.

天地之氣衰旺，彼此迭相易也。太昊以前，中國之人若麋聚鳥集，非必日照月臨之下而皆然也，必有一方焉如唐、虞、三代之中國也。既人力所不通，而方彼之盛此之衰而不能徵之；迨此之盛，則彼又衰而弗能述以授人，故亦蔑從知之也。

Wang believed that before Xuanyaun and Fuxi, the civilization we know as "Zhongguo" did not exist, and people were just like animals and barbarians. Xuanyuan and Fuxi determined the cultural form of "Zhongguo." However, there is always a chance that cultural forms might perish and the people of a civilization will return to the time when they were just animals; their physical disposition would be altered and their human identity would be forgotten.

Wang did not see the historical development of culture as a universal process for all human populations. Various places may be on different courses of cultural development.

> To begin with places that are close and small, Wu, Chu, Min, Yue, and Han used to be barbarians, but they became centers of culture and teaching. Qi, Jin, Yan, Zhao, Tang, and Sui used to be part of Zhongxia in the past, but today they have become places of dullness and violence. [People in these places are] 90 percent like animals. Since the time of the Song dynasty it has been five hundred years. Master Shao used to say political chaos began when southerners became administrators, thus [he meant] southerners were worse then the northerners. Since the Hongwu and Yongle reigns, scholarship, morality, political achievement, and writings have all been produced in [southern places such as] Jing [i.e. Jingzhou] and Yang [i.e. Yangzhou], while northerners have been found to be behave greedily and evilly, to kill rulers and betray their countries, to collude with the inner court, attach to eunuchs, and serve enemies. Thus, Master Shao's words were true in the Song but have changed today. Today, the two Yues [i.e. Guangdong, Guangxi], Dian [i.e. Yunnan], and Qian [i.e. Guizhou] are becoming civilized, while customs and morals in northern places like Xu [i.e. Xuzhou] and Yu [i.e. Henan, or Yuzhou] are not ideal. [We many say that] a shift of material forces of the earth from north to south could cause such change at this micro scale. If we extend the scale to ancient and remote times, then it is nothing strange to imagine that [when] our place was in chaos and vagueness; some other places were enjoying civilization!

> 其近且小者推之，吳、楚、閩、越、漢，以前夷也，而今為文教之藪。齊、晉、燕、赵、唐、隋，以前之中夏也，而今之錐鈍駑戾者，十九而抱禽心矣。

> 宋之去今，五百年耳，邵子謂南人作相，亂自此始，則南人猶劣於北也。洪、永以來，學術、節義、事功、文章皆出荊、揚之產，而貪忍無良、弒君賣國、結宮禁、附宦寺、事仇讎者，北人尤為酷焉。則邵子之言，驗於宋而移於今矣。今且兩粵、滇、黔漸向文明；而徐、豫以北，風俗人心益不忍問。地氣南徙，在近小間有如此者。推之荒遠，此混沌而彼文明，又何怪乎!

Thus, Wang argued that the only meaningful origins of history to be discussed are not the remote, imagined, unknown beginnings of the universe, but the beginning of the culture that he and his readers were a part of. That is to say, the culture that began when the Yellow Emperor and his successors created a shared symbolic system for their people to guide their lives and build their cultural self-understanding.

> When the *Book of Changes* says "If *qian* and *kun* are destroyed, there will be no *Change,*" it does not mean when heaven and earth collapse, but means, when the grand [cultural] concepts of *qian* and *kun* are not followed and practiced in this land. Then, the power/virtue [of the *Change*] would be destroyed. Hence it is said "When the Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun laid down the rules for clothing, then the world was governed. They must have based them on [the cultural concepts of] *qian* and *kun*." And [in this sense], so we can say the world begins with the generation of Xuanyuan.
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> 《易》曰："乾坤毀則無以見易"，非謂天地之滅裂也，乾坤之大文不行於此土，則其德毀矣。故曰："黃帝、堯、舜垂衣裳而天下治，蓋取諸乾坤"，則雖謂天開地闢於軒轅之代焉可矣。[481]

The generation of Yellow Emperor created common symbols based on the cultural concepts of "*qian*" and "*kun*" to let people understand themselves and generate a sense of order, which Wang believed marked the beginning of the community's life. The history of cultural creation since then provides modern scholars with the basic source for guiding the future.

[481] Wang, *Siwenlu*, Outer chapter (思問錄外篇), *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol.12, 468.

What should scholars do in the modern world? To identify oneself with the learning of the sages does not mean that scholars should follow the Classics strictly. Maintaining culture does not mean dogmatically following the political institutions of antiquity, but rather, identifying with the intellectual model of the sages and understanding the principles behind their judgments. [482]

Moreover, scholars ought to know that, being responsible for the cultural development of the society, *Ru* learning could have continuity even when the political order did not. It was an independent trans-dynastic civilizational force.

> The authority of the *Ru* co-exists with the authority of emperors and kings in our society; as one rises the other falls. When they are in agreement, our society will be governed according to the Way, and the Way will be exemplified by the Son of Heaven. But when that agreement breaks down, the authority of emperors and kings comes to an end. The *Ru*, however, still maintain this Way on their own. It is because the Way is preserved by humans that it does not perish.
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> 儒者之統，與帝王之統並行於天下，而互為興替。其合也，天下以道而治，道以天子而明；及其衰，而帝王之統絕，儒者猶保其道以孤行而無所待，以人存道，而道不可亡。[483]

The tradition of *Ru* is even more important than the tradition of the rulers. Wang found himself in such a position to maintain the Way of the *Ru*. Having never joined the Qing government, Wang devoted himself to Classical and historical scholarship and teaching to illustrate the model of the sages and to maintain the continuity of their cultural legacy.

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[482] "子曰：'殷因於夏禮，所損益可知也。'因者，仁義之蘊、中和之藏，彝倫之敘耳。夏殷周治法相仍，而猶隨時以損益，況郡縣之天下，迥異於三代者哉！……必通變以審天則，窮裡以察物宜，曲體乎幽明之故，斟酌乎哀樂之原；使賢哲可就，不肖可及，以防淫僻，以辨禽獸，而建中和之極，用錫萬民。固必參五經之大義微言，以出入會通，而善其損益。雖或有過焉，可俟後之作者，繼起而改之，可勿慮也。" Wang, "Hedi 5" (和帝五), *Du Tongjianlun, juan* 7 (讀通鑑論), *Chuanshan quanshu*, Vol. 10.

[483] Wang, "Wendi 15" (文帝十五) *Du Tongjianlun, juan* 15, *Chunashan quanshu*, Vol. 10.

Comparison and Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter, I have shown how the Neo-Confucian officials in the early Qing court collaborated with the Manchu rulers in turning Neo-Confucianism into a conservative government ideology. They chose to define the role of the ruler as the central moral agent of the system, downplaying the literati. According to their theory, it was primarily the responsibility of the ruler, rather than of individual scholars, to reach the Coherence of the universe and bring a unified order to the world. The responsibilities of the literati scholars, instead, involved supporting the cultivation of the rulers, building a moral bureaucracy, transforming common people into loyal and filial subjects through teaching and ritual, and educating and selecting scholars through official academies based on the curriculum of the *Four Books*. While the early Qing Neo-Confucians succeeded in gaining sponsorship for their school at court, they also undermined the literati's claim to moral authority that the Song and Ming Neo-Confucians regarded as fundamental for the agency of their community.

I have explored possible reasons for this turn. These Neo-Confucian officials who collaborated with the Qing rulers were associated with such statecraft Neo-Confucian thinkers during the Ming-Qing transition as Sun Qifeng and Li Yong, whom I have discussed in the previous chapter. Associating the Ming's fall with the "self-obsession" and moral relativism of late Ming culture, they hoped to save the Neo-Confucian tradition from the left-wing followers of the Wang Yangming School. No longer confident about the idea that "innate good knowing" ought to be the goal of cultivation or the source of action, they proposed a path to moral learning through commitment to daily, down-to-

earth statecraft service and self-reflection. Devoting oneself to the goal of serving the world became an important measurement of moral sincerity.

For their followers, the official Neo-Confucians who played a crucial role in the rise of Qing imperial ideology, introducing an external political agent, namely, the ruler, into the picture, not only fit this theory but also helped to disperse the influence of the Wang Yangming School. In addition, by convincing the Manchu rulers to follow their theory, they justified their participation in the new government. I have shown that Kangxi soon endorsed this ideology to legitimate the Manchu government in ruling over the Chinese. Based on his devoted learning and capable statecraft leadership he claimed that he had reached the Coherence of Heaven-and-Earth and represented the tradition of the sage kings. At the same time, he managed to use the same language to accuse his own Chinese officials of falling short in their learning.

With this background in mind, I have then turned to Huang Zongxi, Gu Yanwu, and Wang Fuzhi, three representative cases of the first generation of Qing scholars engaged in an evidentially based scholarship on the Classics and history. Associated with the Fushe network of the late Ming, in the post-conquest world they each turned Fushe-style policy studies, textual learning, and argumentative writing into a thoroughgoing socio-political theorization. Their efforts can be seen as the construction of a new ideology, based on which they explained the crisis of their time, proposed their envisioned ideal order, and, especially, provided a new understanding of what the role of literati learning ought to be.

Huang, Gu, and Wang developed their positions not by speaking to each other, but by independently speaking to the existing official language of learning and politics.

They worked out their ideas individually, but because of their common goal of transforming the prevailing culture, their logic had much in common.

They all found it necessary to explore the true model of antiquity, a model that was entirely different from the Neo-Confucian imperial ideology. Instead of seeing the legacy of the sage kings as a transcendental moral mind that had figured out the perfect Coherence of Heaven-and-Earth, these three figures all looked at antiquity as a result of cumulative institutional and cultural construction, which contributed to the formation and development of a cultural and political community they called "Zhong xia (中夏)" or "Zhong guo (中國)." In other words, the true learning of the sage kings was nothing other than their ability to construct community life based on their understanding of the community's needs for survival, development, and a civilized order.

For them, inhering the legacies of the sage kings meant to explore their designs in context and to understand the foundation of their model. Based on this logic the Neo-Confucian assumption about how to reach sagehood became irrelevant, and the method based on the learning of the *Four Books* ungrounded. In the scholarship of Huang, Gu, and Wang, the Classics were valuable for two interrelated reasons: they provided a theoretical inspiration about the foundation of government, and they themselves also played a significant historical role in forming the cultural and political values of the community. The pursuit of knowledge, or of *li* (理), was no longer about reaching an intuitive understanding of the Coherence ingrained in everything, but about understanding how values were generated and transformed through the history of the community. Only in doing so could scholars know what was right for their contemporary society. Hence, learning ought to be a historically minded process based on extensive

studies of the creations of the sages in antiquity and the trans-dynastic cultural, institutional, and social experience of the community since then.

Importantly, behind this shift in logic lay a new way to defend the meaning of the *Ru* tradition. For these men, "Zhong guo" still stood for an ideal, but it was not because it represented certain fundamental moral-cultural doctrines that inherited the Way of the Heaven. Rather, it was because it represented a successful historical community that had developed advanced culture and government to support itself. In this sense, the *Ru* learning tradition was valuable precisely because it had committed itself to the interests of the community and guided its development through history.

This new dimension in understanding the role of the *Ru* learning tradition contained several important claims that would leave a lasting legacy. First, they all believed that, in order to commit themselves to the interests of the community, scholars ought to identify their learning with the community's own cultural legacies, rather than search for any top-down, external source of values. An imagination of a cultural identity for the people from "Zhong xia (中夏)," "Zhong guo (中國)," or "Hua xia (華夏)" mattered for understanding the common interests of the community. In this regard, they anticipated modern nationalism. Second, they all believed that the *Ru* doctrines (e.g., humanness and righteousness) were valuable not because they helped to cultivate universal moral attitudes or behaviors, but because they offered a value basis for cultivating civic responsibilities. Third, all of them agreed that a successful political order ought to be built on an accurate understanding of the historical mechanism of civilization and human interests, and the discourse of *Ru* learning spoke to the mechanism and interests. Thus, it was their job to explain how.

Their position led to a powerful competing discourse on the agency of elite culture relative to Qing political power. All of them found existing learning corrupted, and the system of elite selection flawed, and all of them shared a strong "nationalistic" sentiment. But regarding what the foundation of antiquity was, how "Zhong guo" as a historical community was formed, and what civilizing role the *Ru* tradition had played in the process, each figure came to a different answer.

Huang Zongxi proposed what we may call a "constitutional" model. The ideal political order that the sage kings designed in antiquity was one in which the power of rulers was legitimated by their service for the common good. In the system, educated elites represented the common interests of the community and set up standards in politics; schools were institutionalized as a part of the larger political design in which an educated elite expressed its opinions freely and fulfilled its responsibility to construct the common good. Unlike the Neo-Confucians who believed that the key to a good public order was to transform its ruling elite into moral beings, Huang argued that it was the "constitutional" model that would cultivate a public-minded, responsible, and learned elite. The *Ru* cultural tradition embodied such spirits, but they were corrupted by the empty and dogmatic learning of his time. He acted on his ideas as a teacher, organizing a Classical Learning Society to guide young scholars to pursue scholarship in order to form their independent judgment, cultivate their intellectual-cultural creativity, and activate their sense of responsibility.

Gu Yanwu proposed a system of regionalism as the key to the wellbeing and solidarity of the national community. He believed that the continuity of the community since antiquity had largely been sustained by big clans and lineages with family traditions

of Classical learning and solid control of wealth and local power, which not only helped the community to survive chaotic political transitions, but also functioned as a crucial intellectual source for the national government and material support for national security. However, he saw this foundation as having collapsed in his time. On the one hand, learning had been corrupted as it became empty, self-centered, and closely tied to the seeking of social status in a centralized political system, rather than being devoted to producing knowledge about the local and national community and generating judgment about how to reform. On the other hand, the lack of powerful and responsible local community leaders led to the weakening of the country and the decline of social customs. Ideally, he suggested entirely removing the civil service exam system. But more practically, he encouraged rebuilding lineages and ancestral halls (particularly in the north) to resemble the clan system in antiquity, hoping to have the lineages function as the basis for inspiring responsible elites, maintaining the learning tradition, and rebuilding trust and a sense of honor from the bottom up.

For Wang Fuzhi, what was foundational to antiquity was the sage kings' construction of a racial-cultural identity for the community. He argued that a legitimate government ought to represent the needs of the racial-cultural group to survive and advance itself. More suspicious about the self-interested intention of the rulers than Huang, Wang did not argue that an accountable government could be realized through designing a public-minded institutional structure. Instead, to hold the government accountable, it was necessary to build the community on a meta-principle of group identity. Importantly, his claim about the central role of ethnicity had much to do with his celebration of material cultural production as the basis of civilization. Material cultural

production is the source of knowledge and norms, which leads to the formation of a common meaning system key to the production and reproduction of the community. Such a collective and cumulative order of culture had its origins in the time when the ethnic group started to develop its particular way of interacting with nature to fulfill its needs for reproduction. Group identity was thus the key to a community's cultural continuity and development. What this also meant, according to Wang, was that a righteous social-political order ought to respect this collective and cumulative culture and base its own logic on the logic of the community's cultural tradition. Thus, the ideal order environed by Wang – like the order of the Yellow Emperor – was a hierarchy with differentiated roles based on people's various talents and cultural abilities. A just system heavily relies on the maintenance of a fair selection system. However, in his own day, he argued that the centralized and self-interested dynastic system had manipulated the selection system into a favor that rulers used to draw people in and maintain their power. This had led to delusion, confusion, and hypocrisy, which had greatly weakened the benefits of the group and destroyed their cultural order. Thus, *Ru* learning had to restore the legacy of the early leaders of the community by committing itself to fostering the "Chinese" ethnic group's way of life and ensuring a good political order based on the group's cultural tradition.

What was important for all of these figures was their belief that the energy that drives a community to develop a civilized life exists in the community members' interests. For Huang Zongxi, the key interest was the "common good," rooted in the most common and basic moral intuitions of human beings. For Gu Yanwu, it was the need for mutual support and the sense of trust and honor. For Wang Fuzhi, it was the need for cultural-material survival and the corresponding order of meanings. All of them argued

against taking the unchanging universal Coherence outside of human cultural creation as the source of learning and government, because the characteristics of the common good, trust and honor, and cultural needs all changed through history. The meaning of the "public" or the "common" interest ought to be defined historically, and it was the responsibility of scholars to define it and to find the right answer for the community of their own times, so that they could guide the change and facilitate the community's development.

These three models did not get a chance to debate with each other until the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, when the model of the imperial dynasty was seriously challenged and the search for a post-dynastic order became urgent. Nevertheless, it seems that some immediate tensions are quite apparent.

The first is the tension between Huang Zongxi's individualism and Wang Fuzhi's collectivism. For Huang, in order to have his "constitutionalist" model work, elite learning ought to represent the spirit of autonomy, originality, and the ability to make informed judgments. Although he did not share Wang Yangming and Liu Zongzhou's goal of moral learning, he deeply admired their celebration of the individual mind as a faculty of thinking for oneself. Accordingly, he celebrated the spirit of *Ru* culture as fostering individual enrichment and creativity. His interest in the genre of intellectual history, represented by his groundbreaking work *Scholarly Annals of Ming Confucians* (*Mignru xue'an* 明儒學案), was an example. For Huang, everyone could and should aim to achieve this goal through learning because everyone has an intuitive moral sense of being good. However, Wang's imagination about culture was less spiritual than materialistic. In a rather structuralist view, he looked at all aspects of human development,

from the growth of knowledge to the development of social, economic, and political systems, as results of an interconnected cultural process. This process has an overarching structure, which goes beyond the will of any individual. Such an understanding of culture stressed its role as a label of group identity, representing a collective experience. His ideal hierarchical order was a fixed system, whose stability and fairness rely on a clear differentiation of skills and resources. For him, as I have shown, the belief that the well-being of a community is indebted to the role of one "learned," superior group, would eventually lead to conflicts, hypocrisy, and manipulation. Thus, for Wang, *Ru* learning ought to represent a broad, collective tradition of meanings embedded in language and everyday cultural production.

The second tension is about the role of government. While Huang emphasized changing the institutional structure of government as the key to any future reforms, both Gu and Wang envisioned a decentralized system, downplaying the significance of the central government in organizing community life. But, if we go deeper to look at how this decentralized system ought to work, Gu and Wang also differed. While Gu stressed the importance of a private, non-government force in sustaining the community, Wang underlined the role of provincial governments in distributing resources, facilitating trade, and promoting economic and cultural development, and he found dramatic inequality of wealth a problem. The role of long-lasting, wealthy families was also important, but they did not serve a primary role in maintaining social order; rather, the local governments ought to seek their support when necessary.

The third tension is about the role of group identity. All three of them shared a strong nationalistic attitude because they believed that literati learning ought to identify

itself with the cultural and political interests of the people of the community. All expressed their loyalty to the Ming in some context as well, because its cultural identity remained continuous from the sage kings, and they could not accept the Manchus because of their different culture and social customs. However, the role that "identity" played in their discourse differed. For Huang, living under the rule of foreigners meant that the people of the Central Country would not receive fair treatment. In this sense, identity consciousness mattered when people judged what was right or wrong for the interests of the community. Thus, the genre of Dynastic Histories was problematic because it legitimized foreign rulers on the grounds that they were members of the lineage of dynasties, thus confusing scholars about whose interests they ought to serve. For Wang, however, the construction of group identity based on racial-cultural continuity lay at the very center of the community's survival and development.

None of these models were put into practice during the Qing, but their ideological claims for learning remained. As the government sponsored Neo-Confucianism and restored the civil service exam based on the curriculum of the Four Books, the number of scholars who identified with the evidential approach to Classical and historical learning continuously increased, and they grew into a highly specialized community by the mid of the eighteenth century. At the same time, however, as the community attracted more and more talented scholars, Evidential scholarship also experienced a significant transformation. Among later generations, the social and political thought of the first generation disappeared. The most talented scholars of the eighteenth century devoted themselves to textual studies and the methods of philology. This textual and linguistic

turn went together with an enormous growth and specialization of scholarship; it also led to a consequential transformation of understanding about the values of their learning. Their intense debates over the meaning of the *Ru* tradition with people sympathetic to the Neo-Confucian tradition would become a major event in the intellectual world from the mid-eighteenth century through the early nineteenth century. In the next chapter, I will address the transformation of Evidential learning and its consequences.

Chapter 3. From Ideology to Methodology: The Politics of Qian-Jia Evidential Scholars' Apolitical Philology

Introduction

As I have shown in the previous chapter, the early Qing Evidential scholars believed that the foundation of a good government should be the common interests of the group. The sage kings constructed civilized life in antiquity by guiding the community to develop a shared culture. The literati learning tradition was responsible for continuing the civilizing enterprise of the sage kings, with scholars committing themselves to the interests of the group. The Classics were important because of their two-fold role. On the one hand, they provided a theoretical model of government. On the other hand, they were cultural-historical products that had shaped the formation of the community's culture and self-understanding. Their theoretical value and historical value could not be separated from each other. For the early Qing Evidential scholars, it would be impossible to gain the theoretical learning of the sages without studying the Classics as historical products. This scholarly logic contrasted with the contemporary Neo-Confucians, who did not believe that the center of literati learning should be historically based inquiry. Therefore, the most tangible and apparent challenge that Evidential scholarship posed to the official Neo-Confucian ideology was the Evidential scholars' perspective on the Classics as an historical medium.

For the later Evidential scholars of the eighteenth century, the role of the Classics as cultural-historical products continued, but their role in political-theoretical inspiration dwindled. By the late seventeenth century, the Manchus had successfully established a

unified and powerful empire. They collaborated with literati officials and restored the discourse of Neo-Confucian learning as their ruling ideology. The order of government and the design of official selection that early Qing political Evidential thinkers proposed in their theoretical writings were not realized; these writings were also largely censored or marginalized until the mid of nineteenth century. In this context, as I will show in this chapter, Evidential scholarship successfully grew into a large community and dominated scholarly interests, separating itself from the Neo-Confucian imperial ideology, but dramatically shifted its approach to claiming literati values, a shift that can be understood as a transformation from the construction of political ideology to the promotion of a unified methodology. Instead of posing challenges to the political legitimacy of the imperial ideology, the eighteenth-century Evidential scholars separated themselves from imperial ideology by arguing for the truth of their textual method.

This chapter focuses on the significance of this shift. The most important events involved the rise of philology during the reigns of the Qianlong (乾隆 1735-1796) and Jiaqing (嘉慶 1796-1820) (hereafter referred to as Qian-Jia scholarship), and the dramatic polarization by the beginning of the nineteenth century between the Qian-Jia (乾嘉) scholars and the scholars who defended government ideology.

In this chapter, I shall discuss how the Qian-Jia scholars themselves understood the meaning of their practice. In particular, I will give a close reading of Dai Zhen's philosophy of learning, which Dai intended as an entirely different way for literati scholars to understand their role in a world where literati scholars rarely participated in government. Dai Zhen's philosophization of the meaning of his scholarship was lost on most of the Evidential scholars of the time, who were highly specialized philologists but

were skeptical of theorization. However, his argument would be an important resource for scholars from the late Qing to the May Fourth Movement. In addition, to understand what the practice of the Qian-Jia scholars meant for the broader literati community, I reconstruct how the Tongcheng writers (桐城派) and the Gongyang New-Text Classical learning scholars (公羊今文經學) argued against the Qian-Jia approach. My goal is to provide a historical perspective on the fundamental conundrums regarding shared values that had emerged by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the dynastic crisis began.

Disappearance of Social and Political Theory and the Rise of Textual Studies

Searching for Cultural Capital: Evidential Scholarship after the Early Qing Generation

The influence of Evidential scholarship spread from the end of the seventeenth century. For the generation of scholars slightly younger than Huang Zongxi, Gu Yanwu, and Wang Fuzhi, such as Yan Ruoqu (閻若璩 1638-1704) from Shanxi and Hu Wei (胡渭 1633-1714) from Zhejiang, the intellectual power of its historical method attracted their attention, providing them a path to scholarly achievement. They engaged in discussing Classics and history with figures such as Huang and Gu, and they earned reputations for skepticism toward what they saw as the "abstruse" and "dogmatic" learning of Neo-Confucianism.

However, the political discussion and criticism that had often motivated the earlier generation's scholarship disappeared. Yan Ruoqu was best known for his *Evidential Commentary on the Old Texts of the Book of Documents* (Shangshu guwen shuzheng 尚

書古文疏證), which showed that the Old-Text portion in the *Classic of Documents* was a forgery. Yan's talent and rigor were noticed by Huang Zongxi, and Yan asked Huang to write a preface for the book. However, Yan himself did not seem to be interested in pursing the principles of government and society. As Lu Baoqian (陸寶千) demonstrates, Yan's commentary on Gu Yanwu's *Knowledge Gained Day by Day* dwells mainly on the accuracy of the factual information and references, rather than Gu's discourses about public life.[484] Hu Wei produced another iconoclastic Classical study, in which he argued for the irrelevance of the Yellow River Diagram (河圖) and Lo Shu Square (洛書) to the understanding of the *Book of Changes*. Both Yan and Hu proved themselves by solving difficult problems in Classical interpretation that had challenged scholars since the late Ming.[485] They were recognized for their breadth of Classical and historical knowledge, their ability to detect forgeries (*bianwei* 辨偽), their disciplined and precise thinking, and their specialized knowledge and skills.

Meanwhile, they were also looking for opportunities to make their reputations by participating in projects supported by the court. Yan Ruoqu attended the *Boxue hongci* exam in 1679 but failed. In 1682, he was invited by Xu Qianxue (徐乾學 1631-1694) to work on the *Unified Gazetteer of the Great Qing* (Daqing yitong zhi大清一統志) with Hu Wei and the historian Gu Zuyu (顧祖禹 1631-1692). Their scholarship opened a way to achieving reputations outside the civil service exam and its emphasis on the Four

[484] Lu Baoqian (陸寶千), *Qingdai sixiangshi* (清代思想史) (Taibei: Gaungwen shuju, third print, 2006), 182-4.

[485] For a documentation of major figures in early Qing devoted to detecting textual forgeries of the Classics, see Lin Qingzhang (林慶彰), *Qingchu de qunjing bianwei xue* (清初的群經辯偽學) (Taibei: Wenjin Press, 1988).

Books.

Evidential scholars increasingly rejected theorization, disconnecting their knowledge from political discourse, in order to protect their own objectivity and impartiality. For the Anhui scholar Yao Jiheng (姚際恆 1647-c.a. 1715), the author of *A Comprehensive Discussion of Nine Classics* (九經通論), who was also famous for detecting textual forgeries and for book collation, Classical learning ought to focus on removing problematic interpretations through careful and disciplined scholarship. He criticized the tendency to push forward one authoritative interpretation of the Classics, because he was worried that scholars would read their own ideas into the texts. Political leaders often encouraged the interpretation of the Classics for public life, and justified their policies with interpretations that were often politically motivated.[486]

It has been well documented that, roughly from the Qianlong reign through the Jiaqing reign, Evidential scholarship attracted talent and formed a growing scholarly community.[487] As Liang Qichao and Benjamin Elman have shown, the growth of

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[486] "常謂經之有解，經之不幸也。曷為乎不幸？以人皆知有經解而不知有經也。曷咎乎經解？以其解之致誤，而經因以晦。經晦而經因以亡也，其一為漢儒之經解焉，其一為宋儒之經解焉，其一為明初諸儒墨守排纂宋儒一家之經解而著為令焉。噫！果其為聖人復起不易之言，以著為令，可也。今之著為令者，然耶？否耶？夫經解與著令，其事大不相通，其君若相，不過以一時治定功成，草草裁定，初不知聖賢真傳為何若耳。乃使天下之學人耳目心思卒歸於一途，而不敢或異，是以經解而著令，不又其甚焉者乎。窮變物理，自然材智日新，寧甘久腐。苟以漢宋諸儒久誤之經解而明辨之，則庶幾反經而經正，其在此時矣。此以《經解》名篇，正是漢儒之濫觴，漢以前無之，則吾竊怪夫斯名之作俑也。" Zheng Jixiong (鄭吉雄) , *Qingru mingzhu xuandu* (清儒名著述評)

[487] In *Qingdai xueshu gailun* (清代學術概論), Liang Qichao called this period as the "peak" , or *quansheng qi* (全盛期) of the Evidential Learning scholarship, and defined this period as a great "popularization," or *qunzhong hua* (群眾化) of Evidential scholarship. He saw it as a movement. (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she: 1998), 26-33. In *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, Benjamin Elman by and large agrees with Liang.

Evidential scholarship could be illustrated by the increasing specialization of research. There was specialization based on subjects, such as language, calendric study, inscriptions and epigraphs, book collation, and historical geography. There was also specialization based on particular Classical and historical texts.

Furthermore, through the eighteenth century a great number of specialized scholars conducted their scholarship under the patronage of literati officials. As Elman has shown, the Qian-Jia School prospered under the patronage of Chinese officials from the prefectural level to the provincial level. The best scholars would be recommended for support by famous provincial governors or provincial education commissioners who were either Evidential scholars themselves or hoped to establish their own names as great patrons of scholarship. Zhu Jun (朱筠 1729-1781), Bi Yuan (畢沅 1730-1797), Weng Fangang (翁方剛 1733-1818), and Ruan Yuan (阮元 1764-1849) were among the major supporters of most of the leading scholars at various times, such as Dai Zhen (戴震 1724-1777), Qian Daxin (錢大昕 1728-1804), Zhang Xuecheng (章學誠 1738-1801), Jiao Xun (焦循 1763-1820), Ling Tingkan (凌廷堪 1757-1809), and others. As patrons, these officials provided stipends for private scholars who were no longer interested in pursuing degrees; they founded projects to collect, compile and catalog books; they facilitated academic networks and organized meetings for scholars to debate and to advance their research; they built semi-official academies to encourage studies, and offered lectureships to the scholars whom they patronized. The thriving book collecting and printing culture also boosted the growth of Qian-Jia communities.[488]

[488] Elman has detailed the broader cultural and social environment in the Jiangnan region in which the Qian-Jia scholarship could develop, see Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*.

The spread of Evidential Scholarship among the literati in the eighteenth century was evidenced by its growing influence on the civil service examinations. Many scholars and patrons, including Zhu Gui (朱圭1731-1806), Zhu Jun, Wang Chang (王昶 1726-1806), Qian Daxin, Lu Wenzhao (盧文弨 1717-1795), Wang Mingsheng (王鳴盛 1722-1797), Ruan Yuan, Qin Huitian (秦蕙田 1702-1764), Weng Fanggang, Yao Wentian (姚文田 1758-1827), and Wang Yinzhi (王引之 1766 - 1834), supervised examinations and tried to promote candidates with Classical and historical knowledge and philological training.[489]

The rise of Qian-Jia scholarship also began to influence the Qianlong Emperor's attitude toward literati learning. The early Qianlong court showed a passive attitude toward Evidential Scholarship. An edict in 1740 expressed uneasiness about the decline of scholarly interest in Neo-Confucianism.

> "The authority of the tradition of government is based on the authority of the tradition of morality; if the learning is not set correct, then the Way is not going to be clear." Cheng-Zhu learning is the ladder leading to sagehood and the path to the search for the Way, therefore it should not be ignored. The investigation of ancient decrees and institutions (考據典章) certainly cannot be neglected, but the subtlety of Classical learning (經術) had to be elucidated by the Song scholars. [Among] scholars who discourse on learning (講學), the sincere ones are indeed rare; the fake ones deceive the public so as to build up a false reputation, gradually damaging [learning] by generating sectarian [disputes]. However, [one] should not give up eating for fear of choking, or fault the teaching of the names (名教) because of [those whose] learning of the Way is fake and disrespectful and abandons the Leaning of Coherence.
>
> "夫治統原於道統，學不正擇道不明"，程朱之學乃入聖之階梯，求道之塗轍，不可不講明而切究之。考據典章固不可廢，而經術之精微，必得宋儒而闡發之。講學之人，誠者不可多得，而偽者欺世盜名，漸起標榜門戶之害，然不

[489] Chen Zhi (陳致) "Qingdai zhongwan qi zhiyi zhong han song zhi bie: yi Liu xianzeng zhujuan wei li" (清代中晚期制藝中漢宋之別：以劉顯曾硃卷為例) *Chuantong zhongguo yanjiu qikan* (傳統中國研究集刊) 2. (2006): 415-7.

肯因噎廢食，以假道學獲罪名教而輕棄理學。[490]

To cope with the problem, Fang Bao compiled a selection of model exam essays approved by the court, the *Imperial Selection of Essays on the Four Books* (Qinding benchao sishu wen 欽定本朝四書文). At the beginning of the Qianlong reign, the emperor had followed the same political rhetoric as Kangxi, calling himself both the ruler and the teacher of the world. However, through the rest of his reign, it seemed he felt the need to adjust his position to a scholarly community that was now largely defined by Evidential Scholarship. For instance, as Chen Zhi (陳致) shows, in 1749, the Qing court asked officials to recommend "those who were devoted to Classical learning, honest and broad." No special exams were required; nominees were judged based on the quality of their scholarship, as long as their recommenders believed that these scholars' ethical behavior did not contradict their reputations. Forty-nine scholars were recommended. In the following year Hui Dong was recommended via the same channel.[491] In the policy section of the 1761 palace exam, Qianlong unexpectedly asked the candidates to explain the origins and transformation of the court institutions involving Classical learning. He used the opportunity to show his familiarity with and his support for the Classical commentary tradition. As he claimed in the exam question,

> Scholars' broad learning must originate from the Classics…I myself advocate Classical learning (經術), and from time to time I discuss the ways of governance with *Ru* officials. Accordingly [I] again broadly encourage the scholars in the government, endeavor to find those who are well-learned in the Classics and who

[490] Guo Wenkang(郭文康) *Qingshi biannian* (清史編年) *juan* 5（Beijing: Renmin daxue Press, 2000), 107

[491] Chen Zhi,"Qingdai zhongwan qi zhiyi zhong han song zhi bie: yi Liu xianzeng zhujuan wei li," 410.

are cultivated in their behavior, and promote them.

> 夫學者載籍極博，必原本於六經……朕崇尚經術，時與儒臣講明理道。猶復廣厲學官，蘄得經明行修之士而登之。[492]

Moreover, in his edict proposing the *Siku quanshu* project (Complete Library of the Four Treasuries), Qianlong claimed that he advocated the study of cultural tradition because of its importance for government. He said,

> I follow antiquity and support culture (稽古右文), thereupon [using them to] assist governance. Every day [I] diligently pursue canonical learning (典學). I think about the books stored in the libraries [around the country], which are erudite and extremely broad. The major ones [can] assist Classical exegeses, leaving models to the future, thus [they] can be called the lessons for thousands of years. Even the minor ones that address only a small subject, and that compile narratives so detailed that every last fact or phenomenon is enumerated, could be unified comprehensively in systematic order. Each is uniquely fitted to its proper tradition and discovers something. They help to advance learning and cultivate the mind.…The only goal of study is to obtain guiding principles and know more of the words and deeds of the past in order to gain virtue. Only if book collections are broad and encompassing can research be fine and precise. For instance, in the Kangxi era, the *Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings* [*from the Earliest to Current Times*] (i.e. Gujin tushu jicheng, 古今圖書集成) was collected and annotated, and provided a great view of policy making [through the ages]. Using various compilations, and thematically arranging materials from such a vast number of sources that no one reader could expect to understand them all, the compilation enabled its user to trace the sources [of various ideas] and to examine one by one their points of origin.
>
> 朕稽古右文，聿資治理，幾餘典學，日有孜孜。因思策府縹緗，載籍極博，其鉅者羽翼經訓，垂范方來，固足稱千秋法鑒。即在識小之徒，專門撰述細及名物象數，兼綜條貫，各自成家，亦莫不有所發明，可為遊藝養心之一助。……第念讀書固在得其要領，而多識前言往行以畜其德，惟搜羅益廣，則研討愈精。如康熙年間所修圖書集成全部，兼收並錄，極方策之大觀，引用諸編，率屬因類取裁，勢不能悉載全文，使閱者沿流溯源，一一征其來處

[492] Yang Jilin (楊寄林) et.al eds, *Zhonghua zhuangyuan juan*: *Daqing zhuangyuan juan*(中華狀元卷．大清狀元卷) Vol. 1（Taiyuan: Shanxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 81. Specific questions about the Classical commentary tradition already began to appear in the policy essay section of the civil service exam in 1745. See, Chen Zhi, Ibid.

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Qianlong's discourse helped to justify the values of the Evidential Scholars in the mid Qing. As Kent Guy notes, in proposing the project, Qianlong depicted himself as someone who would help to define unity for the scholarly world. He admitted that Evidential scholars' work dealt with ancient sources of virtue and talent for the contemporary world. Zhu Jun, the patron of scholars such as Dai Zhen, actively responded to the emperor as a representative of the scholarly community. In return, he asked the court to give the scholars access to the *Great Compendium of Yongle* (Yongle dadian 永樂大典). In some sense, the court empowered the scholarly community to investigate the legacies of the past. By the late Qianlong period, an agreement based on the importance of the cultural past for a better world today was formed between the scholarly community and the court, without touching upon foundational issues of political values.

The Rise of Textual Studies and Its Intellectual Consequence

Some transformations of Evidential Scholarship that accompanied the rise of the Qian-Jia school are worthy of note. As we have seen, the early Qing Evidential scholars primarily focused on the conditions of good government and human society in the Classics. They encouraged scholars to theorize normative laws of government and human society based on information from historical experience, and thereby practiced political

[493] "Qianlong sanshi qinian zhengyue chusi feng Shangyu,"(乾隆三十七年正月初四日奉 上諭), I translated this passage by consulting the relevant parts of translation from Kent Guy, see 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), 35-6

reasoning and judgment for a better politically minded intellectual culture and government. However, their heirs, the Qian-Jia scholars, shifted the practice of empirical learning based on the Classics and history.

First, like the early Qing Evidential scholars, the Qian-Jia scholars saw themselves as responsible for investigating the institutional realities of ancient civilization, and treated the Classics as resources for doing so. However, rather than using the information to pose questions about government and society, the Qian-Jia scholars were primarily devoted to reconstructing the cultural-institutional context of the ancient texts. Their interests included a wide range of topics that had their cultural-institutional origins in the Classics, including rituals, music, customs, names of things, poetry, technology, and knowledge, the order of everyday cultural life as found in the Classics. For them, it was such cultural-institutional information that served as the main legacy of the Classics. In other words, the Qian-Jia scholars conducted leaning on the assumption that the Classics comprised authoritative evidence for the culture of antiquity. Understanding the Classics and reconstructing the cultural institutions of antiquity became integrated and mutually dependent.

The early twentieth century scholar Liu Yizheng (柳詒徵 1880-1956) divided Qian-Jia scholars' cultural-institutional studies into a few different categories, which can give us some concrete cases. Studies such as Jiang Yong's (江永 1681-1762) *Interpretation of the Conventions of the Classic of Rites* (Yili shili 儀禮釋例) and Ling Tingkan's 凌廷堪 (1757-1809) *Interpretation of the Conventions of the Classic of Rituals* (Lijing shili 禮經釋例) were about general understanding of ancient rituals. Studies such as Ren Dachun's 任大椿 (1738-1789) work *Interpretation of Hats and Clothes* (Bianfu

shili 弁服釋例) were interested in specific cases (*zhuan li* 專例). Studies such as Zhang Huiyan's (張惠言 1761-1802) *Illustrations of the Classic of Rites* (Yili tu 儀禮圖) meant to illustrate how all the rituals documented in the texts ought to be arranged and conducted. Studies such as Dai Zhen's (戴震 1724-1777) graphic representation of the technological section of the Classic of the Rites of the Zhou (Kaogong ji tu 考工記圖) and Ruan Yuan's (阮元 1797-1801) *Graphic Investigation of the Use of Vehicles* (Chezhi tukao 車制圖考) hoped to illustrate a specific technology or tool as recorded in the texts. Studies such as Shen Tong's (沈彤 1688-1752)'s *Investigation of the Distribution of Land as Official Salary in the Rites of Zhou* (Zhouguan lutian kao 周官祿田考),Wang Mingsheng's (王鳴盛 1722-1797) *Explanation of Military Taxation in the Rites of Zhou* (Zhouli junfu shuo 周禮軍賦說), and Hu Kuangzhong's (胡匡衷 1728-1801) *Interpretation of the Official Titles in the Classic of Rites* (Yili shi guan 儀禮釋官) focused on how one institution in one Classic worked. Studies such as Jin E's (金鶚 1771-1819) *Searching for the Past: Explanations of the Rituals* (Qiugu lu lishuo 求古錄禮說) and Cheng Yaotian's 程瑤田(1725-1814) *Records of General Craftsmanship* (Tongyi lu 通藝錄) were more devoted to a broad investigation of institutions. [494]

The Qian-Jia scholars, not being especially interested in theorization and philosophization, pursued a lower level of more contextualized claims about antiquity. If the early Qing Evidential scholars hoped to understand the intentions of the sages by using the Classics to search for their general principles of building political organizations

[494] Liu Yizheng (柳詒徵) *Zhongguo wenhua shi* (中國文化史) Vol.3 (Taibei : Zheng zhong shu ju, Minguo 1971), 119

and human society, the Qian-Jia scholars valued learning that could make sense of the cultural-institutional context.

As part of this turn in the goal of Classical scholarship, historical criticism, which early Qing Evidential scholars emphasized as an important genre for engaging in political discussion, seemed to have disappeared. In contrast to the early Qing Evidential scholars, who saw that the training of a critical perspective ought to serve as the goal of historical study, the mainstream Qian-Jia scholars, such as Qian Daxin (錢大昕1728-1804), Wang Mingshen (王鳴盛 1722-1797), or Zhao Yi (趙翼 1727-1814), were not so interested in demonstrating and explaining historical patterns or themes meaningful for the present, or collecting policy writings from the past as the records of historical actors. Rather, they were interested in reconstructing the corpus of dynastic histories as texts or investigating institutional topics in the past. This was a historical philological enterprise similar to Classical learning. As Zhao Yi once recalled, he chose to work with historical texts because he did not think he was good enough to work on the Classics.[495] Reconstructing historical institutions as recorded in the dynastic histories served Qian-Jia scholars as another way to make a reputation.

A telling example is Wang Mingsheng 's explanation of his work, *A Discussion of the Seventeen Dynastic Histories* (Shiqishi shangque 十七史商榷)*,* one of the most famous historical studies of the eighteenth century. Wang explained that by "discussion" (*shangque* 商榷) he meant collating the texts of the *Seventeen Dynastic Histories* by

[495] "閒居無事，翻書度日，而資性粗鈍，不能研究經學。惟歷代史書，事顯而義淺，便於瀏覽，爰取為日課。有所得，輒劄記別紙，積久遂多。" Zhao Yi, introduction (小引) to *Nian-er shi zhaji* (廿二史劄記) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 2008).

"correcting wrong words, adding missing words and removing redundant words, to explain selective texts, institutions, and events that were contained in these histories in order to facilitate people's reading of them." By and large, wrote Wang,

> Decrees and institutions (典制) documented by the historians [of the past] are not perfect. Readers of history [thus] do not need to generate unreasonable criticisms, or expatiate on [these decrees and institutions] at length, in order to clarify the rules and lessons [from the past]. Only investigate the reality of the decrees and institutions, to count the course of change of the institutions (建置沿革) in detail as if showing things in one's own hands to others. Some may be suitable for rules, and some may be suitable for lessons. Simply letting other people choose for themselves would be all right.
> 大抵史家所記典制有得有失，讀史者不必橫生意見，馳騁議論，以明法戒也。但當考其典制之實，稗數千百年建置沿革瞭如指掌，而或宜法，或宜戒，待人之自擇焉可矣。[496]

To see history as a field for practicing one's critical mind, or for acquiring evidence in order to judge contemporary public life, was not considered to be appropriate. It seems that for Wang, a critical attitude would somewhat violate the textual integrity of the dynastic historical records that he aimed to rebuild.

The textual and cultural turn marked by the rise of the Qian-Jia scholarship in the eighteenth century and through the early nineteenth century was an important transformation. On one hand, it had much to do with Qing censorship. From the Yongzheng reign through the Qianlong reign, the Qing court censored writings that

[496] "十七史者，上起《史記》，下訖《五代史》，宋時嘗匯而刻之也。商榷者，商度而揚榷之也。海虞毛晉汲古閣所刻行世已久，而從未有全校之一周者。予為改訛文，補脫文，去衍文，又舉其中典制事蹟，詮解蒙滯。審核踳駁，已成是書，故名曰"商榷"也。《舊唐書》《舊五代史》毛刻所無，而云"十七"者，統言之，仍故名也。若《遼》《宋》等史則予未暇及焉。大抵史家所記典制有得有失，讀史者不必橫生意見，馳騁議論，以明法戒也。但當考其典制之實，稗數千百年建置沿革瞭如指掌，而或宜法，或宜戒，待人之自擇焉可矣。" See Wang Mingsheng's introduction to *Shiqishi shangque* (十七史商榷), *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, vol. 452.

challenged the political and moral legitimacy of Qing rule, or that criticized the current social and political system by proposing a grand plan for an ideal human order.[497] However, this change was also a result of specialization in Evidential Scholarship.

By the first half of the nineteenth century, when Jiang Fan (江藩 1761-1831) decided to compile an intellectual genealogy for the Qian-Jia school, the decision of whether to include Huang Zongxi and Gu Yanwu in this genealogy became a controversial issue. Jiang argued that the lineage should begin with Yan Ruoqu (1638-1704), Hu Wei (1633-1714), and others. Huang Zongxi and Gu Yanwu did not fit in this tradition, even though they first turned to the Classics to pursue their learning. In Jiang's view, they were still very much involved with the Neo-Confucian tradition.[498] Moreover, they were stubborn and unreasonably critical toward the Qing court during the transition.[499] It seems that Jiang Fan was aware of the distinction between the early Qing Evidential scholars' intellectual-political take on Classical learning and the Qian-Jia scholars' philological interest, so his search for a shared tradition with Evidential Scholarship at the peak of the Qian-Jia school suggests that the Qian-Jia scholars tried to create a coherent discourse to justify their approach. What was this discourse? For the Qian-Jia scholars, why was their learning significant?

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[497] Kent Guy, The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-Lung Era, 24-5; 31-3.

[498] "予曰:'黎洲乃蕺山之學，矯良知之弊，以實踐為主；亭林乃文清之裔，辨陸王之非，以朱子為宗。故兩家之學皆深入宋儒之室，但以漢學為不可廢耳。多騎牆之見，依違之言，豈真知灼見者哉！" Jiang Fan, *Hanxue shicheng ji* (漢學師承記) *juan* 8 (Taibei: Guangwen press, 1965)

[499] "予曰：'甲申、乙酉之變，二君策名於波浪礪灘之上，竄身於榛莽窮穀之中，不順天命，強挽人心。發蛙黽之怒，奮螳螂之臂，以烏合之眾，當王者之師，未有不敗者矣。逮夫故土焦原，橫流毒浪之後，尚自負東林之黨人，猶效西台之慟哭，雖前朝之遺老，實周室之頑民，當名編熏胥之條，豈能入儒林之傳哉！"Ibid.

The Politics of Being Apolitical: *Xungu* and the Role of Literati Learning

The consensus among Qian-Jia scholars that their textual method should be the path to literati learning had emerged by the second half of the eighteenth century.[500] This consensus is evident in the *Siku quanshu* project. As Zhou Jiming's (周積明) study on the *Catalogue with Critical Abstracts of the Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* (Siku tiyao 四庫提要) (hereafter referred to as the *Catalogue*) shows, the Qian-Jia scholars used the *Siku quanshu* project as a public medium for their polemics against the Neo-Confucians.[501] For instance, among the Compilation Guidelines the editors found it necessary to declare that,

> [Although] interpreting the Classics is for illuminating moral principles (明義理), if [one] does not understand the textual meanings [of the Classics], from where can one infer moral principles? [Although] discussing history is for judging right and wrong (示褒貶), if [one] does not know the roots and branches of events, based on what can one tell right and wrong? …[The works that the project chooses to] include today are all based on precise evidential [studies] and clear arguments. Perhaps [the project] can help to minimize empty talk and to promote substantive learning.
>
> 故說經主于明義理，然不得其文字之訓詁，則義理何自而推。論史主於示褒貶，然不得其事蹟之本末，則褒貶何據而定。…… 今所錄者率以考證精核論辨明確為主，庶幾可謝彼虛談，敦茲實學。[502]

As received scholarship has shown, the editors' celebration of a descriptive approach to Classical and historical learning ran through the *Catalogue*. In their view, the Neo-

[500] A representative collection of research on the moral claims of the Qian-Jia school, see Lin Ching-chang and Chang So-an eds., *Qian-Jia xuezhe de yilixue* (乾嘉學者的義理學) (Taibei : Zhong yang yan jiu yuan Zhongguo wen zhe yan jiu suo, 2003).

[501] See Zhou Jiming (周積明) *"Sikuquanshu zongmu* yu Qian-Jia 'xin yili xue'"(《四庫全書總目》與乾嘉"新義理學"), in *Qian-Jia xuezhe de yilixue* (乾嘉學者的義理學), 1-40.

[502] "Fanli 12" (凡例十二), *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (四庫全書總目提要) *juan shou* 3 (卷首 3).

Confucians' speculative reading of the texts corresponded with their ungrounded moral discourses. Instead of criticizing the philosophical, social, and political implications of the Neo-Confucian view, the majority of Qian-Jia scholars criticized the Neo-Confucian view on the grounds that their textual method led to inaccurate and damaging interpretations of the Classics.

But how was this argument formed and what were the Qian-Jia scholars trying to say? To understand the Qian-Jia scholars' intention, I shall first look at Hui Dong (惠棟 1697-1758), who was often seen by the Qian-Jia scholars as the one who laid the groundwork for their method. Then, I will move on to Qian Daxin (錢大昕 1728-1804) and Dai Zhen, two leading figures in the younger generation of Qian-Jia scholarship when it was at its peak. They were inspired by Hui's method and discovered in it a political position with which to criticize the Neo-Confucian ideology and attempt to unify the literati world based on their method.

Following Antiquity by Practicing Xungu (訓詁): Hui Dong's Linguistic Contextualism

Hui Dong was born into a scholarly family in Jiangsu. His grandfather Hui Zhouti (惠周惕 ca. 1646-1695) was a good friend of the Classical scholar Zhu Yizun (朱彝尊 1629-1709). Both Hui Zhouti and Zhu Yizun belonged to the generation of Yan Ruoqu, and like him, they both pursed Classical scholarship and gained recognition from the new government.[503] Hui Dong's father Hui Shiqi (惠士奇 1671-1741) obtained the *jinshi*

[503] Hui Zhouti gained the *jingshi* degree and Zhu Yizun was admitted through Kangxi's *boxuehongru* exam.

degree and served as Educational Commissioner in Guangdong. Hui Dong himself failed the civil service exam and became a private scholar.[504] For many years, he was supported by Lu Jianzeng (盧見曾 1690-1768), an official who had a marriage alliance with the family of Ji Yun (紀昀 1724-1805), the main editor of the *Siku quanshu* project and a supporter of Evidential Learning scholarship. In Yangzhou, under Lu's support, Hui Dong influenced younger people such as Dai Zhen (戴震 1724-1777) and Wang Chang 王昶 (1724-1806).[505] During the rest of his life, Hui Dong mostly stayed in Suzhou and interacted with men of a younger generation including Jiang Sheng (江聲 1721-1799), Qian Daxian (錢大昕 1728-1804), Yu Xiaoke (余蕭客 1732-1788), and Wang Mingsheng (王鳴盛 1722-1797).

Hui was largely venerated for his ground-breaking contribution to the practice of *xungu* (訓詁), namely, the investigation of the textual meanings of words and terms in the Classics. As his student Wang Chang wrote in Hui's epitaph,

> Mr. Hui was born thousands of years after [antiquity]. He immersed himself in thinking and interrogating information, and he investigated the untransmitted ancient meanings (古訓) of the Classics in order to obtain the great principles and the subtle words of the ancient sages and worthies…. Thanks to his influence, everyone knows that studying the Classics thoroughly is essential, and everyone who can thoroughly study the Classics knows that one should trust the ancient (信古). This all started with Mr. Hui, and for this he can be seen as a hero!

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[504] For an intellectual biography of Hui Dong, see Li Kai (李開), *Hui Dong pingzhuan* (惠棟評傳) (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1997.) The *Beizhuanji* (碑傳集) states that Hui Dong failed his exam because he cited *The Book of Han* in his exam essay. *Beizhuanji*, volume 11, p.3984. Cited from Li Kai, *Hui Dong pingzhuan,* 17.

[505] See Cao Jianghong (曹江紅), "Hui Dong yu Lu Jianzeng mufu yanjiu" (惠棟與盧見曾幕府研究), *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* (中國史研究), no.1 (2012): 177-195.

> 先生生數千載，眇思旁訊，探古訓不傳之秘，以求聖賢之微言大義……流風所煽動，海內人士無不重通經，通經無不知信古，而其端子先生發之，可謂豪傑之士矣！[506]

A general glimpse at Hui's works shows that he was not so much interested in explaining the thought or broader claims of the sages, as he was interested in glossing the textual meanings of Classical expressions by contextualizing them in a wide array of ancient texts. For instance, in his representative work, *The Ancient Meanings of the Nine Classics* (Jiu jing guyi 九經古義), he selected what he saw to be the difficult and important historical terms, words and phrases from the Classics to gloss, including the names of institutions, rituals, idioms, beliefs, and customs. The textual pool he used to interpret these Classical expressions was a comprehensive selection of works from antiquity through the Han, including early Masters' writings outside the *Ru* tradition, Han Classical commentaries and essays, Daoist texts, and even some post-Han philosophers' essays. Overall, Hui's method resembles a kind of keyword-based textual search, supported by his impressive mastery of a broad world of ancient texts.

Preoccupied by the need to decipher the textual meaning of the Classics, Hui applied the procedures of textual studies to different kinds of texts and expressions without any clearly defined analytical purpose. Thus, he treated such expressions as parts of a broad textual-cultural tradition and a shared world of historical discourse. For instance, in *Narrative of the Book of Changes* (Zhouyi shu 周易述), Hui Dong interprets the concept "*dao*" by cross-referencing texts about "*dao*" from *Huainanzi* (淮南子), *Hanfeizi* (韓非子), the *Zheng zhangzhe* (鄭長者), a Daoist text listed in the *Treatise on*

[506] "Hui Dong xiansheng muzhiming,"(惠先生墓誌銘), Qian Yiji ed., (錢儀吉) *Beizhuan ji* (碑傳集) *juan* 133 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 3985.

Literature of the *Han History* (Han shu yiwenzhi 漢書藝文志), *Guanzi* (管子), *Zhuangzi* (莊子), Jia Yi's (賈誼 200 B.C.-168 B.C.) political treatises including *The New Book* (Xinshu 新書), and Ruan Ji's (阮籍 210 B.C.-263 B.C.) *General Discussion on Laozi* (Tong Laozi lun 通老子論), rather than offering a final judgment of the meaning of the term or giving his take on how to understand the "Way."[507] Likewise, for institutions, Hui was also not so much interested in explaining the intentions or thought behind their creation, but focused on restoring the historical reality of their names and functions.

Suffice it to say that Hui's linguistic contextual method drew attention to a different dimension of the historical world of the Classics. By focusing on the larger historical-linguistic context in which Classical expressions stayed meaningful, he was able to reconstruct a larger cultural reality of antiquity, which was independent of scholars' evaluative interpretations. In doing so, as Wang Chang put it, Hui demonstrated that ancient meanings should be trusted over Song interpretations (*xin gu*).

Hui's method was important because underlying it was a different claim about what antiquity meant and how one should follow it. In his study of the *Analects*, Hui argued that the virtue of Confucius had nothing to do with his creativity; what made Confucius admirable was that he remained entirely loyal to ancient culture. For instance, Hui was excited to discover that there were many overlapping expressions between the *Analects* and the Classics. "Confucius declared that he would rather transmit than create. How true! Half of the chapters in *Xiangdang* (鄉黨) [directly] use the ancient *Classic of*

[507] See Zhang Jixiong, *Qingdai mingzhu shuping,* 142-4.

Rites, and many chapters in *Yaoyue* (堯曰) are explications of ancient texts (訓典)!"[508] Significantly, following antiquity was for Hui the inheritance the textual-cultural legacy of the sage kings; it was not the direct interpretation of their abstract values or ways of thinking for the sake of creating new institutions in the present. Creation was a risky business; it might contradict the goal of restoring antiquity, because it would necessarily involve interpretation.

Hence, Hui thought highly of the quality of the Han commentary tradition, both for its historical proximity to antiquity and for its scholarly connections to Confucius. In his studies, Hui devoted much time and energy to the Han commentaries.[509] He also believed the Han scholars provided a family-based training model useful for scholars in his own day.

> The Han [Classical teachers] followed their family-transmitted methods and rules to understand the Classics. Thus there were teachers of the Five Classics (五經師). The learning of interpreting the meanings of words (訓詁) was all passed down through these teachers' oral transmission. Later it was written on bamboo strips and silk. Thus the discourses of these Han Classical teachers could be established in schools and passed down to the future together with the Classics. The Five Classics were found in the wall [of Confucius' home]; they were full of ancient characters and speeches, and only the Classical teachers could recognize them. The meanings of the Classics exist in the [ancient] readings of the text (經之義存乎訓). Learning the words and examining their pronunciations would enable one to learn the meanings (義), therefore the ancient readings (古訓) should not be modified and the Classical teachers should not be abolished.

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[508] "夫子言'述而不作'，信哉！《鄉黨》一書，半是禮經，《堯曰》數章，全書訓典。論君臣雖人言不廢，言恆德則南國有人；於善人為邦，則曰'誠哉是言'；於隱居行義，則曰'吾聞其語'……" Hui Dong, "Lun yu,"(論語) *Jiujing guyi* (九經古義) *juan* 16, 16a,*Yingyin wenyuange Siku quanshu*, Vol.0191.

[509] For instance, in his work *The Han Learning of the Book of Changes* (Yi Hanxue 易漢學), he intended to provide people access to studies by Han Classical scholars.

> 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。[510]

Hui further claimed that Han Classical scholars obtained their knowledge of the meaning of the Classics from their family traditions, and that their families could be traced back to the time of Confucius and his disciples.[511] Such concrete historical and textual associations guaranteed their reading of the Classics. Their interpretations must have been closer to the original textual meaning. Based on Hui's understanding of the purpose of Classical learning, the "Han Learning" tradition became an alternative to the tradition that focused on the intentions of the sages, which began to be labeled as "Song Learning" in the eighteenth century.

Based on this logic, it is not surprising to see that Hui Dong embraced a conservative understanding of the public role of Classical scholars. Serving as authorities on the cultural past, they ought to maintain the continuity of the community's ancient textual-cultural meanings and conventions. Their knowledge of these conventions and their application of such knowledge in public expression would help society to maintain its stability and order.[512]

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[510] Hui Dong, "*Jiujing guyi* shu shou" (九經古義述首), *Songya wenchao* (松崖文鈔) *juan* 1, 4b, included in *Juxuexuan congshu* (聚學軒叢書) compil. Liu Shiheng (劉世珩) (Guichi: Liu shi, 1903).

[511] Chang Su-ching (張素卿) explains in detailed how Hui Dong hoped to justify that a proper tradition of Classical studies needed to be based on transmission of techniques and textual knowledge within the families of the Classicists. See Chang: "'Jing shi yi cun hu xun' the jieshi guannian – Hui Dong jingxue guan kui," (經之義存乎訓」的解釋觀念 — 惠棟經學管窺), in *Qianjia xuezhe de yi li xue,* 281-318.

[512] In an essay for a temple worshiping earlier worthies (三賢祠), Hui argued that the task of Classical learning was to "understand the structure of the state (國體)" and to "clothe

The Politics of Xungu during the Qian-Jia Period

A younger generation of figures at the peak of the Qian-Jia school, such as Qian Daxin and Dai Zhen, paid homage to Hui Dong as a groundbreaking master, although their own scholarly achievements undoubtedly surpassed Hui's. Hui himself rarely attacked the Neo-Confucian tradition. He did not seem to be interested in Neo-Confucian questions about the human mind and nature, but he recognized that the Neo-Confucians had their own tradition of pursuing meaning that was different from the Han tradition.

However, riding the momentum of their rising influence, leading scholars during the Qian-Jia era were ready to confront the imperial ideology. In their criticisms of Neo-Confucianism, the Qian-Jia scholars essentialized the method of *xungu* into a virtue and celebrated it as an attitude. They attacked the Neo-Confucian discourses on learning as irresponsible and incoherent with the true methods of the *Ru* tradition, and they went beyond that to offer an understanding of topics such as nature and destiny (性命) based on premises different from Neo-Confucian discourse.

1. Qian Daxin's Discourse on *Xungu* and Criticism of Neo-Confucianism

Qian Daxin (1728-1804) was born into a lower-ranked literati family in Jiading, Jiangsu. A talented student, he was recommended to the Ziyang Academy (紫陽書院) in Suzhou, where he met Hui Dong, Wang Mingsheng, Wang Chang, and others. He gained the *jinshi* degree in 1754 and served as the provincial examiner in various places and as

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bureaucratic governance (吏治)." Hui, "夫儒林不通達國體，經術不潤飾吏治，匪特學不足以經世，而其治之幾於民者，亦不能服教畏神而至於久遠。" See "Sanxianci ji"(三賢祠記), *Songya wenchao*, *juan* 2, 19a-b.

the Education Commissioner in Guangdong province. He soon left that post, however, to spend decades teaching at academies, and he was soon recognized as the most broadly-learned and resourceful scholar in the Qian-Jia school.

Qian inherited Hui's interest in the practice of linguistic contextualization, fascinated by the fact that there was a world of meanings in the texts that could be reconstructed through analyzing language. He also celebrated the authority of the Han commentary tradition, sharing Hui's belief that the true purpose of learning was to restore the textual-cultural legacy of the antiquity. As we shall see, Qian believed that by doing so scholars themselves would become part of this cultural tapestry. But regarding the Neo-Confucian tradition, he went one step further. He attacked the validity of the Neo-Confucian approach and claimed that the method of *xungu* was the only valid approach.

> It is often said that the Six Classics are the words of the sages. If one searches for the meanings [of the Classics] by understanding their words, one has to start from *xungu* (訓詁)*;* to say that there exist other kinds of meanings outside *xungu*, and to regard Buddhism's "do not create written [doctrines]" to be the most advanced [approach], that is not our *Ru* learning. *Xungu* has to follow the tradition of the Han scholars, because the Han scholars were not far from antiquity and their family traditions had continued; [through them] the great principles (大義) of Confucius' seventy students still remained, which were different from [the ones] manufactured by the later people who did not know [the Classics]. Before the three dynasties, writing, pronunciation, and textual meaning were interlinked; Han Classical scholars could still recognize them. *To take antiquity as one's teacher is simply to learn what [the textual meanings] are and nothing more* (以古為師，師其是而已). How could it mean to downgrade the present and glorify antiquity in order to [intentionally] mark one's difference to compete with others?
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> 嘗謂六經者，聖人之言，因其言以求其義，則必自訓詁始；謂詁訓之外別有義理，以桑門以不立文字為最上乘者，非吾儒之學也。詁訓必依漢儒，以其去古未遠，家法相承，七十子之大義猶有存者，異於後人之不知而作也。三

代以前，文字、聲音與訓詁相通，漢儒猶能識之。以古為師，師其是而已矣，夫豈陋今榮古，異趣以相高哉！[513]

The Neo-Confucian approach was invalid because its model of discoursing on learning (*jiangxue*) was entirely contradictory to the true message of Confucius, which was, in his view, broad learning (*boxue* 博學). They were wrong for two reasons. First, they were ignorant of the Classics and their broad world of meanings. Second, because of this, they were isolated from the larger textual-cultural process that literati scholars ought to be a part of. Qian articulated this reasoning in a preface written for *The Tower for Embracing the Classics* (Baojing lou 抱經樓), the library of the famous book collector Lu Zhi (盧址 1725-1794). Qian argued,

> I think the meaning of *jing* (經), [the character for Classics,] comes from [the process of] weaving silk. Textile makers collect many threads of silk, accumulate them, put them together in order. These [warps] are called the *jing*. Then they use [another set of threads] as the weft. Up and down, back and forth, the complexity does not break the structure. Thus are rich and bright patterns (文采) generated. *The Classic of Change, The Classic of Documents, The Classic of Odes, The Classic of Rites, and The Spring and Autumn Annals,* are what the sages used to regulate Heaven-and-Earth. At a high level they can be used to order the world, and below that they can be used to cultivate oneself. [They] connect all aspects of the Way, and [they] cover all normative principles (義).
>
> 予唯經之義取乎治絲。製布帛者，聚眾絲而積之，使其有條理不紊亂，是之謂經。然後以絲緯之，縱橫往復，雜而不越，而文采生焉。《易》《書》《詩》《禮》《春秋》，聖人所以經緯天地者也。上之可以淑世，次之可以治身，於道無所不通，於義無所不該。
>
> However, some scholars would rather guard some incomplete [knowledge about the Classics] and stubbornly follow their own biased way, merely respecting one Master's discourse as their basis. Although they know it is not right, they have to force themselves to support that view. Some are even worse. They cast aside everything else, boast that they have apprehended it with their own mind, laugh at

[513] "Zang Yulin *Jingyi zashi* xu," (臧玉林經義雜識序), *Qianyantang wenji, juan* 24 (潛研堂文集), included in *Jiading Qian Daxin quanji* (嘉定錢大昕全集), Vol.9 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe Press, 1997) 375.

xungu as [the efforts of] vulgar *Ru*, and ridicule broad learning as being caught up in things without seeing their purpose. Thus, there are people who are called Classical scholars without reading books, and there are people who are called masters of discoursing on learning without reading the Classics.

而守殘專己者，輒奉一先生之言以為依歸，雖心知其不然，而必強為之辭。又有甚者，吐棄一切，自誇心得，笑訓詁為俗儒，訶博聞為玩物，於是有不讀書而號為治經者，並有不讀經而號為講學者。

Confucius says, "Gentlemen broaden learning with culture (*wen*)." Master Yan relates the fact that Confucius skillfully led, and thus says [Confucius] "Broadened me with culture." Master Zisi wrote *The Mean*, [in which he] says, "Learn broadly, and investigate thoroughly." The book of *Mencius* says "Learn broadly and explain in detail." As for the sage who edited the *Six Classics* in order to leave his teaching to ten thousand future generations, it is not that he never worried that scholars' variety [of interests would lead them to] small branches [of study], but he [still] must take learning broadly as the primary [requirement]. If so, then it is clear that empty and speculative learning cannot transmit the Classics. The terrace soaring to the clouds is not built of one piece of wood; the elegant embroidered garment is not made by one thread of silk. To love antiquity and to be quick to seek it; to hear a lot and then select the good, is what Confucius did. How could [one] not learn? Has there ever been a person such as Yuan Bo Lu[514] in the past claiming himself to be a Classical Master? Qingya [i.e. Lu Zhi] is determined to embrace the surviving Classics, but [decided to] begin with collecting books. This [attitude and approach] can be called knowing the root."

宣尼之言曰，君子"博學於文"；顏子述夫子之善誘，則曰"博我以文"；子思子作《中庸》，曰"博學之，審問之"；《孟子》之書曰"博學而詳說之"。夫聖人刪定《六經》以垂教萬世，未嘗不慮學者之雜而多岐也，而必以博學為先，然則空疎之學，不可以傳經也審矣。凌雲之台，非一木所造；文繡之衣，非一絲所成。好古敏求，多聞擇善，夫子所以，焉不學也！自古豈有原伯魯之徒而號為經師者乎？青厓有獨抱遺經之志，而先之以聚書，可謂知本矣。[515]

Broad learning based on a wide range of textual resources would allow scholars to grasp the orderliness and the connectedness in the broad pattern of meanings of antiquity. It

[514] Yuan Bo Lu (原伯魯) is said to be an official during Zhou dynasty who was remembered for his disinterest in learning.

[515] Qian, "Baojing lou ji" (抱經樓記), *Qianyantang wenji, juan* 21 (潛研堂文集), in *Jiading Qian Daxin quanji,* Vol.9, 336.

was this understanding that ought to provide the basis for both the public order and scholars' self-cultivation.

In this sense, the Neo-Confucians were also wrong about their belief in the natural order of things outside human culture as their source of values. Individuals who stubbornly believed that they knew the natural order of things insisted on their personal views, ignorantly refusing to be connected to the larger legacy of cultural meaning. In a comment on the Song philosopher Shao Yong, Qian argued, "Principles (*li* 理) under Heaven are only of one kind." "Distinguishing the principles of things (*wuli* 物理) and the principle of morality (*yili* 義理) as two, and seeing the learning of the principle of things as superior to [the learning of the] principle of morality, is that justified?"[516] All there was, in Qian's view, was the cultural pattern embodied in language. Moral principles were only to be found in the world of meanings in antiquity.

To make his claim clearer, Qian outlined a lineage from the sages to the Han Classical scholars. He held that their shared tradition reflected the effort to maintain the continuity of ancient linguistic meanings.

> First there are words, and then there are meanings (詁訓). Once there are meanings of words, then there are moral principles. Explanations and meanings are where moral principles come from. It is not true to say that there exist some moral principles that are from places beyond the explanations and meanings of words….

[516] "夫性命之學有出于義理之外者乎？天下之理一而已…… 區物理與義理而二之，而謂物理之學轉高出于義理之上，有是理乎？《中庸》言性之書也，曰"天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教。道也者，不可須臾離也，可離非道也。" 故曰：'道不遠人'。凡離乎人而言物、離乎理而言性命者非吾所謂道也。吾人凡離乎人而言物、離乎理而言性命者，非吾所謂道也。" Qian, "Li Zhicai Shao Yaofu wenda bian,"(李之才邵堯夫問答辨) *Qianyantang wenji*, *juan* 16, in *Jiading Qian Daxin quanji,* Vol.9, 349.

有文字而後有詁訓，有詁訓而後有義理。訓詁者，義理之所由出，非別有義理出乎訓詁之外者也。

The lessons from the antiquity are the ancient explanations and meanings of words. To not forget the explanations and meanings of words is to complete the virtue of people. [Thus] explanations and meanings of words are indeed significant for humankind! Anciently, Tang and Yu issued textual rules (典謨), [in which] they firstly called on [people] to study the teachings and practices of the ancient sage kings (稽古); the Duke of Zhou [compiled] *Erya* (爾雅), and the ancient meanings were complete; Confucius became a great sage, claiming that, "being fond of the antiquity, he was quick to seek it." He also said that "he trusts and loves antiquity" (信而好古), therefore he detested those who "do not have knowledge about antiquity but write (不知而作)." Therefore he edited the *Six Classics* to return to the refined words (歸于雅言). [This is] the cultural legacy, and the Way is preserved here (文也，而道即存焉). The Han scholars followed family-transmitted rules to explain the Classics. Their interpretations of words and their [levels of] commentaries (詁訓傳箋) did not miss the point of their predecessors (先民之旨).

古訓者，詁訓也；詁訓之不忘，乃能全乎民彝之懿。詁訓之於人大矣哉！昔唐、虞典謨，首稱稽古；姬公爾雅，詁訓具備；孔子大聖，自謂'好古敏以求之'，又云'信而好古'，而深惡夫'不知而作'者，由是刪定《六經》，歸于雅言。文也，而道即存焉。漢儒說經，遵守家法，詁訓傳箋，不失先民之旨。

Beginning with the admiration for emptiness (空虛) among the Jin [scholars], and the liking for enlightenment (頓悟) among the Song worthies, [scholars] have been laughing at study and inquiry as trivial, and have abandoned commentaries as dregs. Classical scholars followed their own ideas and regarded their opinions as correct, and consequently they employed vulgar and popular slang to interpret the Classics. For instance, Ouyang Yongshu (i.e. Ouyang Xiu) interpreted the meaning of [the character 'you 誘 ' in the phrase] '吉士誘之' as 'seduce', and the followers thus scolded the *Odes of the Shao and South* as a poem about seduction and elopement (淫奔), and [suggested] removing it. Not applying the ancient meanings (古訓), [these people] have inflicted such deep harm to the Classics!...

自晉代尚空虛，宋賢喜頓悟，笑學問為支離，棄注疏為糟粕，談經之家，師心自用，乃以俚俗之言詮說經典。若歐陽永叔解'吉士誘之'為'挑誘'，後儒遂由詆召南為淫奔而刪之者。古訓之不講，其于聖經甚矣！[517]

[517] Qian, "*Jingji zuangu* xu" (經籍纂詁序), *Qianyantang wenji*, *juan* 24, in *Jiading Qian Daxin quanji,* Vol.9, 377. The following part of the essay celebrates Zhu Jun's effort to publish Classical interpretations that focus on literal meanings. "（朱筠）乃於視學兩浙之暇，手定凡例，即字而審其義，依韻而類其字，有本訓，有轉訓，次敘列布，若網在綱。擇浙士之秀

Not knowing the real meanings of words and insisting on their subjective interpretations, as the Song scholar Ouyang Xiu was said to have done, had damaged the textual-cultural tradition and violated the tradition of the sages.

Overall, Qian Daxin's textualism was an example of the devaluation of the Neo-Confucian tradition by the Evidential scholars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Reducing the cultural legacy of the sages to the textual meanings of the Classics, they rejected the possibility of interpreting the Classics based on any forms of understanding outside the literal meaning of the texts. Any external theory might challenge the authenticity of the texts. As Jiao Xun (焦循 1763-1820) put it:

> The *Book of Changes* is like the Heaven. Heaven cannot be known without actually measuring it. … [As for the *Book of Changes*], measuring it based on what the text says, it will also gradually become clear. One cannot count on absorbing its meaning by applying any pre-supposed empty principle. Nor can one use an external mind to judge it.
>
> 夫《易》，猶天也。天不可知，以實測而知…… 本經文而實測之，《易》亦以漸而明。非可以虛理盡，非可以外心衡也。[518]

It seems to me that the motivation behind this textualism was political. To protect the texts was to protect the authority of the broad textual-cultural tradition in a world where Evidential scholars were not engaged in political decisions but were admired for representing antiquity. But what justified their position? Was it fair to ignore Neo-Confucian claims about the foundation of human morality? Dai Zhen, who was equally

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者若干人，分門編錄.....夫《六經》定于至聖，捨經則無以為學；學道要于好古，蔑古則無以為學。此書出，而窮經之彥，焯然有所遵循，鄉壁虛造之輩，不得縢其說以衒世，學術正而士習端，其必由是矣。" 377-8.

[518] "夫《易》，猶天也。天不可知，以實測而知…… 本經文而實測之，《易》亦以漸而明。非可以虛理盡，非可以外心衡也。" Jiao, "*Yitulue* zixu,"(易圖略自序), *Diaogu ji* (雕菰集), *juan* 16, 11a. *Xuxiu siku quanshu,* Vol.1489.

inspired by the *xungu* method and became the most talented philologist in the eighteenth century, found it necessary to explain what he believed to be the logical and historical justification for *xungu* and why the Neo-Confucian worldview was wrong.

2. *Xungu* as the Path to Sagehood: Dai Zhen's Redefinition of Morality and Deconstruction of Neo-Confucianism

Dai Zhen (戴震 1724-1777) was born into a salt merchant's family in Xiuning, Anhui. He was originally a disciple of Jiang Yong (江永 1681-1762), a specialist in mathematics, calendric studies, and phonology, who saw himself as a Neo-Confucian due to his conviction that his mathematical and empirical studies could reveal the principles of the natural world. Like Jiang, Dai Zhen grew into an excellent scholar in the fields of calendric studies, technology, and phonology. Moreover, he brought these fields of knowledge into his study of Classical texts. But unlike Jiang, Dai developed a thorough critique of the Neo-Confucian tradition.[519]

Dai failed the civil service exam many times, but was introduced by Qian Daxin to Zhu Jun and became famous in the literati world. Through Lu Jianzeng, he met Hui Dong in Yangzhou. Almost thirty years younger than Hui, Dai found Hui's method tremendously inspiring. It is said that meeting with Hui Dong and learning about his method pushed Dai to reflect on the meaning of Classical learning.

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[519] For a documentation of Dai Zhen's major scholarly contributions, see Li Kai (李开), *Dai Zhen pingzhuan* (戴震评传) (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe Press, 1992.) For an in-depth analysis of Dai Zhen's method of Classical scholarship, see Zheng Jixiong, *Dai Dongyuan jingdian quanshi de sixiangshi tansuo* (戴東原經典詮釋的思想史探索) (Taibei: Taida chuban zhongxin Press, 2008.)

1. The Goal of *Xungu* and the Meaning of Classical Learning

In a comment on Hui Dong, Dai wrote:

> People always say that: "There are Han Classical learning and Song Classical learning. The first one primarily focuses on the ancient meanings (故訓), and the other one primarily focuses on principle and righteousness (理義)." This [distinction] is truly incomprehensible to me. As for the principle and righteousness, if anyone could acquire them simply through mental speculation, then anyone could do it, how could this [activity] contribute to the Classical learning? When those who only speculate in the end do not fit the principle and righteousness of the worthies and the sages they will then seek [moral principles] in the ancient Classics. Once they start seeking the principle and righteousness in the ancient Classics, [they will realize that] the remaining words from the past almost perished, and [therefore] the present and antiquity are disconnected. They will then seek [for principle and righteousness] through *xungu* [exploring the meanings of words in the past].
>
> 言者輒曰：「有漢儒經學，有宋儒經學。一主於故訓，一主於理義。」此誠震之大不解也者。夫所謂理義，苟可以舍經而空凭胸臆，將人人鑿空得之，奚有於經學之云乎哉？惟空凭胸臆之卒無當於賢人聖人之理義，然後求之古經。求之古經而遺文垂絶，今古縣隔也，然後求之訓故。
>
> Once the meanings of the words become clear then the ancient Classics also become clear; once the Classics become clear then the principle and righteousness of the worthies and sages become clear; [once the principle and righteousness of the worthies and sages become clear] then that about which my mind agrees with them (我心之所同然) becomes clear also. The principle and righteousness of the worthies and the sages are nothing other than that which exists in the ancient normative texts and institutions (典章制度).
>
> 訓故明則古經明，古經明則賢人聖人之理義明，而我心之所同然者乃因之而明。賢人聖人之理義非它，存乎典章制度者是也。
>
> Mr. Songya [i.e. Hui Dong], in working on the Classics, expected scholars to engage with Han masters' interpretations of meanings of the texts, in order to investigate broadly the normative texts and institutions of the three dynasties. To inquire into the moral meanings through such [investigations] will ensure [that one's inquiry is based on] evidence. When [the speculators] divide ancient meanings and moral principles into two separate things, then the interpretation of the meanings will not be to illuminate principle and righteousness; what then is the point of doing *guxun*? …
>
> 松崖先生之爲經也，欲學者事於漢經師之故訓，以博稽三古典章制度，由是推求理義，確有據依。彼岐故訓、理義二之，是故訓非以明理義，而故訓胡

爲？理義不存乎典章制度，勢必流人異學曲說而不自知，其亦遠乎先生之教矣。[520]

In this passage, Dai makes three claims. First, Dai believed that studying ancient meanings was a legitimate method of Classical learning because it offered a path to the understandings of the sages, not simply because the ancient meanings had to be restored to maintain the continuity of the broad textual and linguistic tradition. The legacy of antiquity could not be reduced to the legacy of language. The fight between *xungu* and *yili* was a pointless fight over labels. Second, Dai stressed that the principles of the sages were what the sages relied on when they created the government documents and institutions (*dianzhang zhidu* 典章制度) in antiquity. Thus, to gain these principles one would have to reconstruct knowledge about the reasons and purposes behind the creation of those documents and institutions. The Classics were the only basis for scholars to understand the reasons and intentions of the sages. This point was spelled out in another essay more clearly as the following. "If we do not pursue the speeches and actions of the ancient worthies and sages, then how would we search for their minds after thousands of years?"[521] Thus, Dai believed that Hui Dong's approach was valuable because by figuring out the literary meanings of the Classics, scholars could rebuild the historical foundation of the ancient documents and institutions with reliable knowledge. But how could today's scholars gain those principles of the sages without theorizing the principles of government institutions on their own? This leads us to the third claim, which was that

[520] Dai, "Ti Hui Dingyu xiansheng *Shoujing tu* "(題惠定宇先生受經圖), *Dai Zhen quanshu.* Vol.6 (戴震全書), (Hefei: Huangshan shushe Press, 1995), 396.

[521] "不求諸前古賢聖之言與事則無從探其心於千載" Dai, "Zhengxue zhaiji" (鄭學齋記), *Dai Zhen quanshu,* Vol.6.

once scholars could fully make sense of the principles behind the sages' institutional creations and identify with the sages, they would be able to see those principles in their own minds, reach sagehood, and become ethical people.

Importantly, for Dai, antiquity was a moral legacy, and this moral legacy was particularly about how to order the public world into a righteous world. Later scholars could inherit this legacy by figuring out the thinking that lay behind the creations of the sages. In doing so, they would form their own minds of righteousness (*daoyi zhi xin* 道義之心) and shape the minds of people in society. This claim was elaborated in his preface to Yu Xiaoke's *Collecting and Discovering Ancient Classical Commentaries* (Gujingjie gouchen 古經解鉤沈), in which he gave a general account on the meaning of Classical learning.

> *Shi* are those who study antiquity and conduct Classical learning. [Should] they merely use their title [of *shi*] to gain fame and power? Or [should] they commit to understanding the Way and stay honest to their mind? A person's possession of the mind of righteousness (道義之心) is sometimes manifest and sometimes elusive. When the mind is active and clear, [the person's mind of righteousness] becomes manifest. When [the mind] has not reached [the state] of luminosity, [the person's mind of righteousness] becomes elusive.
>
> 士貴學古治經者。徒以介其名使通顯歟？抑志乎聞道，求不謬於心歟？人之有道義之心也，亦彰亦微。其彰也，是爲心之精爽，其微也，則以未能至於神明。
>
> The Six Classics are the model (宗) of righteousness and the storehouse (府) of mental luminosity. The ancient sages have passed; their mind and will (心志) matched the mind of Heaven-and-Earth, and became the mind of righteousness for their people (爲斯民道義之心). This is what was meant by the Way.[522]

[522] There have been two ways of punctuating this sentence. According to Tang Zhijun's *Dai Zhen ji* (戴震集) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), it is punctuated as: "古聖哲往矣，其心志與天地之心協，而爲斯民道義之心，是之謂道。" According to *Daizhen quanshu* (戴震全書) (Hefei: Huangshan shu she, 1994), which was edited by Zhang Dainian, it is punctuated as: "古聖哲往矣，其心志與天地之心協而爲斯民道義之心，是之謂道。" Here I follow Tang Zhijun's punctuation.

> 《六經》者，道義之宗，而神明之府也。古聖哲往矣，其心志與天地之心協，而爲斯民道義之心，是之謂道。
>
> *Shi* born thousands of years later search for the Way from ancient government documents and institutions (典章制度). Yet, the remaining words from the past are almost lost, and the present is far from antiquity. [But] the distance in time perhaps is not as far as the distance between two places, [yet] when they simply relied on Classical scholars' [interpretation of the] ancient meanings of words to understand, it was no different from translating the language to serve as their guide. How much more the case when once the philological learning (小學) of the ancients was lost, there emerged the glossing of words. After the method of glossing words was lost, then [the explanation of the Classics] descended into speculation. For hundreds of years, the problem in explicating the Classics has been simply that [scholars were] good at speculating.
>
> 士生千載後求道於典章制度，而遺文垂絕，今古縣隔，時之相去，殆無異地之相遠，僅僅賴夫經師故訓乃通，無異譯言以爲之傳導也者。又況古人之小學亡，而後有故訓，故訓之法亡，流而爲鑿空。數百季已降，說經之弊，善鑿空而已矣。[523]

The problem was that Neo-Confucian scholars, and all Song scholars who were interested in discoursing on morality, did so independently of studying the Classics. This was not because they were interested in the moral principles of the sages rather than their language, but because they were ignorant about the sages' textual and institutional creations as documented in the Classics.

Accordingly, Dai found it necessary to clarify the real role of Confucius. Confucius was not simply a loyal transmitter of ancient doctrines and terms. Rather, he understood the principles behind the building of government institutions, although he did not have the opportunity to put them into practice. In claiming so, Dai also suggests that this was the condition of Classical scholars of his own time.

When I was young, I wondered about the meaning of Tuan-mu's statement in the

[523] Dai, "Gujingjie gouchen xu"(古經解鉤沈序), *Dai Zhen ji* (戴震集), 191-2.

> Analects: "[From other sources] one can get to hear about the literary culture and the institutions of the Master but not about his discourses on human nature and the Heavenly Way." Later, after reading the *Changes*, I realized that his discourses on human nature and the Heavenly Way are found therein. After the decline of the Zhou dynasty, the way whereby Yao, Shun, Tang, King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Zhou had established sound government – all "gloriously manifested in the literary expression and institutions" – were discarded as things which had served their time. Since Confucius did not achieve the status of a ruler he was not in a position to embed them in institutions, rites, and music. Thus, he clarified their basis and traced their source in order that men for a thousand generations might know the causes of peace and disorder and whether it would be appropriate to follow or to change certain institutions and regulations, much as one uses the scale to determine weight, and the compass and square, the level and line, to measure the squareness or roundness, the levelness or straightness, of things. His discourses on these subjects may appear to be lofty and profound, but they are things that had to be said. From what Confucius did say, we know that the former sages had never spoken of these things. If not for Confucius, from whom else could one hear about them?
>
> 丙申余少讀論語端木氏之言曰：「夫子之文章可得而聞也，夫子之言性與天道不可得而聞也。」讀《易》，乃知畜性與天道在是。周道衰，堯、舜、禹、湯、文、武、周公致治之法，煥乎有文章者，棄為陳迹。孔子既不得位，不能垂諸制度禮樂，是以為之正本溯源，使人於千百世治亂之故，制度禮樂因革之宜，如持權衡以御輕重，如規矩準繩之於方圜平直。言似高遠而不得不言。自孔子言之，實言前聖所未言；微孔子，孰從而聞之！故曰「不可得而聞」。[524]

2. Reinterpreting Morality: *On the Origins of Good* (原善)

But how could reconstructing ancient documents and institutions enable scholars to become moral people? How would one know if one had figured out the minds of the sages? What did being "moral" or "righteous" mean for Dai? Apart from producing formidable philological studies, Dai left two major philosophical books: *On the Origins of Good* (Yuan Shan 原善) from 1753 and *A Commentary on the Meanings of Words in*

[524] Dai, preface to *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* (孟子字義疏證), *Dai Zhenji*, 263. Translation is from *Tai Chen on Mencius: Exploration in Words and Meanings,* translated by Chin Ann-ping and Mansfield Freeman. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990) 65. All the translations on *A Commentary on the Meanings of the Words in Mencius* in the dissertation draw on the translations in this book, with my modifications when needed.

Mencius (Mengzi ziyi shuzheng 孟子字義疏證) from 1776. In both works, he explained the foundation of his argument for the purpose and the role of learning.

The book that best demonstrates Dai's step-by-step reasoning is his *On the Origins of Good*.[525] It consists of three *juan*, each including a set of philosophical statements and interpretations of Classical passages about these philosophical statements. The book was originally prepared as an essay for a larger project entitled *Brief Account of the Seven Classics* (Qijing xiaoji 七經小記). The five essays of this project were meant to cover five topics, representing Dai's classical learning curriculum: "Essay on Glossing the Ancient Meanings of Words"(Xungu pian 訓詁篇), "Essay on the Origin of Astronomical Phenomena"(Yuanxiang Pian 原象篇), "Essay on the Studies of Rituals" (Xueli pian 學禮篇), "Essay on Rivers and Earth" (Shuidi pian 水地篇), and "Essay on the Origins of Good" (Yuanshan pian 原善篇).[526] Each chapter was meant to represent a part of the learning of the sages. In particular, the last chapter, which served as a summary of the general meaning of Classical learning, was meant to give coherence to the other parts of the curriculum.

Dai did not finish this book project, but he started the last essay early on. After drafting the first version of *On the Origins of Good* in the 1750s, he continued to explain his ideas in various places. His correspondence and his *Commentary on the Meanings of Words in the Mencius* included many of his elaborations. To show how he constructed his

[525] The book itself was written rather early as an initial exploration, which hardly represents the clearest version of his discussions.

[526] Duan Yucai (段玉裁), "Dai Dongyuan xiansheng nianpu" (戴東原先生年譜), *Dai Zhen ji,* 483.

arguments, I shall use the text of *On the Origins of Good* as a basic reference. I will not limit myself to this text alone, however, when it is helpful to use his other relevant writings to explain his ideas. [527]

Step 1: Heaven-and-Earth and the Source of Good

At the beginning of the book Dai defines the process of Heaven-and-Earth as the production and reproduction (*shengsheng* 生生) of all kinds of different things (*pinwu* 品物) in the world. He also called this process the *qi hua* (氣化) of things*,* namely, the material formation of individual things.[528] In this process, things produce and reproduce based on an orderly arrangement (*tiaoli* 條理); the orderliness of this process would not be interrupted. [529]

What does *tiaoli*, this orderly arrangement, mean? One passage in his commentary on the *Mencius* helps to elucidate this crucial concept.

> The notion of "*li*" (理) is a name assigned to [the arrangement of the parts of anything which gives the whole] its distinctive property or characteristic, [and which] can be observed by careful examination of the parts down to the minutest detail. This is why we speak of the principle of differentiation (分理)….When proper differentiations are made, there will be order without confusion. This is called orderly arrangement (條理).
>
> 理者，察之而幾微必區以別之名也，是故謂之分理…… 得其分則有條而不紊

[527] The version of the text I use is from *Dai Zhen quanshu* Vol.6. English translations in this dissertation will be based on Cheng's translation with my modifications. See, *Tai Chen's Inquiry into Goodness*: *A Translation of the Yüan Shan, with an introductory essay* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1971), 64.

[528] "氣化之於品物，可以一言盡也。生生之謂歟!" "Yuanshan I" (原善上), *Dai zhen quanshu*, 9.

[529] "是故生生者，化之原；生生而条理者，化之流。" Ibid., 8.

，謂之條理。[530]

For anything in the world, there is a *li,* which shows the particular structure of that thing, that which defines what it is and distinguishes it from other things. *Tiaoli* refers to the status of orderliness after the proper differentiations of things are attained. Thus, the creative process of Heaven-and-Earth consists of the orderly formation of various things that follows the proper differentiations. Not surprisingly, Dai agreed with Zheng Xuan's (鄭玄 127-200) interpretation of "*li"* as "*fen*" (分), or differentiation.[531]

The orderliness (條理之秩然有序) of arrangement and the constancy of the orderliness (條理之截然不可亂) in this process, Dai continued, are common to everything in the world, fundamental to their coming-into-being. Based on this premise, Dai went on to define the source of values.

Humaneness (*ren* 仁) refers to the process of production and reproduction; propriety (*li* 禮) refers to the orderliness of the arrangement; and righteousness (*yi* 義) refers to the constancy of the orderliness. In other words, to be humane means to be concerned with, and to facilitate, the production and reproduction of the world; to have propriety means to follow the orderliness of the differentiations of things; and to be righteous means to fully grasp the constancy of the orderliness of the differentiation of

[530] The original paragraph: "理者，察之而幾微必區以別之名也，是故謂之分理；在物之質，曰肌理，曰腠理，曰文理；（亦曰文縷。理、縷，語之轉耳。）得其分則有條而不紊，謂之條理。孟子稱「孔子之謂集大成」曰：「始條理者，智之事也；終條理者，聖之事也。」聖智至孔子而極其盛，不過舉條理以言之而已矣。" Dai, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, tiao 1. *Dai Zhen ji*, 265. Translation has my modifications based on original translation in *Tai Chen on Mencius*, 69.

[531] Dai Zhen ji, 265.

things.[532] Combining these three properties of the process of Heaven-and-Earth, Dai called them the headings of "good" (*shan* 善), arguing that they should be seen as the fundamental standard (大衡) of values.[533]

Step 2: Knowledge and Human Nature

What does this premise mean for human beings? Importantly, the faculty of *zhi* (智), or knowledge, enables human beings to apprehend the orderliness of the differentiation of things, thus allowing them to appreciate the humaneness of Heaven-and-Earth, namely, the production and reproduction of Heaven-and-Earth. Dai claimed,

> If [one] understands the orderliness of arrangements in one's mind, one's mind becomes profound and orderly. This is the meaning of knowledge. Is knowledge not where humanness is stored?
>
> 若夫條理得於心，其心淵然而條理，是為智；智也者，其仁之藏乎！[534]

Knowing the orderliness of the arrangement with absolute clarity enables one to make righteous judgments, namely to respond so as to facilitate the production and reproduction of Heaven-and-Earth, helping all-under-Heaven to achieve the reproductive process.

But what is the source of the faculty of *zhi,* or knowledge? Why could human

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[532] "生生者，仁乎；生生而條理者，禮與義乎。何謂禮? 條理之秩然有序，其著也；何謂義? 條理之截然不可亂，其著也。得乎生生者謂之仁，得乎條理者謂之智。至仁必易，大智必簡，仁智而道義出於斯矣。是故生生者仁，條理者禮，斷決者義，藏主者智，仁智中和曰聖人；智通禮義，以遂天下之情，備人倫之懿。至貴者仁，仁得，則父子親；禮得，則親疏上下之分盡；義得，則百事正；藏於智，則天地萬物為量；同於生生條理，則聖人之事。" Ibid.

[533] "善：曰仁，曰禮，曰義，斯三者，天下之大衡也。" Ibid., 7.

[534] Ibid.,10.

beings recognize the coherence of things and understand the creative process of Heaven-and-Earth? Humans, just like other living beings, are a part of the natural process. The formation of their lives relies on the orderliness and the constancy of the process.[535] This means they gain their own nature (*xing* 性) in the process of differentiation. Their nature (*xing*) determines their particular form (*xingzhi* 形質) and their capacity (*cai* 才), which enable them to conduct work (*shi* 事) and store skills (*neng* 能) that are important for their lives and their interactions with the world.[536]

In particular, there are two basic aspects of human nature that allow them to do so: blood and breath (*xueqi* 血氣) and mental cognition (心知). "There is blood and breath [first], and then there is mental cognition (*xinzhi*). Hence, work (*shi*) and skills (*neng*) under-the-Heavens are born." This mechanism, in Dai's view, shows how the nature of human beings enables them to complete their Way, namely, to work and accumulate their skills.[537] In this process, human beings attain luminous understanding about the world, which he also called the "knowledge of Heavenly virtue" (*tiande zhi zhi* 天德之知); they will respond to the world righteously and apprehend the Heavenly process of production and reproduction.[538]

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[535] "人與物之一善同協於天地之德，而存乎相生養之道" Ibid.,9.

[536] "性，言乎本天地之化，分而為品物者也。限於所分曰命；成其氣類曰性；各如其性以有形質，而秀發於心，征於貌色聲曰才。資以養者存乎事，節於內者存乎能，事能殊致存乎才，才以類別存乎性。" Ibid., 7.

[537] 有血氣，斯有心知，天下之事能於是乎出，君子是以知人道之全於性也。Ibid.

[538] "心之精爽以知；知由是進於神明，則事至而心應之者，胥事至而以道義應，天德之知也。是故人也者，天地至盛之徵也；惟聖人然後盡其盛。天地之德，可以一言盡也，仁而已矣；人之心，其亦可以一言盡也，仁而已矣。耳目百體之慾，喻於心，不可以是謂心之所喻也；心之所喻，則仁也。心之仁，耳目百體之慾莫不喻；則自心至於耳目百體，胥仁

Before we continue, I shall pause for a while to compare Dai's metaphysics to the Neo-Confucian tradition in order to explain what Dai was trying to do. The template that Dai used to lay out his metaphysics is very similar to Zhu Xi's language in the "Treatise on Humanness" (Ren shuo 仁說), in which Zhu defines humanness (*ren*) as the creative process of Heaven-and-Earth (*sheng*).[539] We can presume that Dai had closely read Zhu Xi's treatise before writing *On the Origins of Good*. Dai's approach was similar Zhu's in the sense that he was also trying to essentialize Heaven-and-Earth as the basis of values. Values are real as they have roots in the structure of things. In other words, for both Dai and the Neo-Confucians, the definition of "the way things are" carries a normative connotation for human beings to think and act. However, Dai had a different interpretation of what the process of Heaven-and-Earth shows and what it means to know.

The key difference between Dai and Zhu is reflected in Dai's argument about *li* (理).[540] As we know, according to the Neo-Confucian theory, there is *li* for each thing and everything, which Willard Peterson helpfully translated as "coherence." For the Neo-Confucians, coherence is unity; one can move from knowing the coherence of particular things to grasping the coherence of the entire process of Heaven-and-Earth. In other

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也。心得其常，於其有覺，君子以觀仁焉；耳目百體得其順，於其有欲，君子以觀仁焉。" "Yuanshan II," (原善中), Ibid., 15.

[539] The opening line of Zhu Xi's "Ren shuo" is: "天地以生物為心者也，而人物之生，又各得夫天地之心以為心者也。故語心之德，雖其總攝貫通、無所不備，然一言以蔽之，則曰仁而已矣。" Zhu Xi, "Ren shuo" (仁說) *Hui'anji* (晦庵集) *juan* 67.

[540] Drawing on A.C. Graham's book, *Two Chinese Philosophers: The Metaphysics of the Brothers of Cheng* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1992), Williard Peter proposed translating "*li*" as "coherence," for the purpose of stressing "the quality or characteristics of sticking together." Peterson, "Another look at li", *Bulletin of Sung-Yuan Studies*, no. 18 (1986), 14.

words, there is a unitary coherence underlying everything.[541] Although there is no coherence without *qi* (氣), the material basis of things that gives individuals their particular forms and behaviors, nonetheless, coherence is categorically different from *qi*; it is *not* phenomenal. Imagining the existence of coherence as such allowed the Neo-Confucians to explain what it meant to know and learn. Learning ought to be done beginning from a dedicated investigations of the coherence of particular things, but the eventual goal, as celebrated by the Neo-Confucians, was to reach the moment of *huran guantong* (忽然貫通), namely, the moment of realizing one's intuition of the unity of the world. In other words, to attain *li* meant to grasp the unitary coherence underlying all things, and it was essentially a process of integration. Thus, "*guantong*" (貫通) was the key. In doing so, one could manage to cultivate the coherence within one's own mind and stay in tune with Heaven-and-Earth, matching one's mind with the mind of Heaven-and-Earth.

This status would allow learned individuals to respond to the world spontaneously in the right way, because it would enable them to see the generative mechanism of everything.[542] What does this mean for human society? As Peterson argues, for Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, "The ascription of coherence to the realm of heaven-and-earth provides the basis for finding it in human experience and realizing order in the realm of all-under-heaven."[543] If the ultimate order in Heaven-and-Earth is unity, then the ultimate human order should accordingly be unity. In this way, the creative process of Heaven-and-Earth

[541] Ibid., 15-17.

[542] Ibid., 15

[543] Ibid., 24

and the order of human society will continue without interruption. Selfishness, caused by human desires, was thus imagined by the Neo-Confucians to violate the unitary coherence, hence violating the creative process.

However, for Dai, finding *li* referred to something different. Dai imagined the process of Heaven-and-Earth as an orderly and constant differentiation (*fen*) of things based on the most essential structural distinctions. It was the opposite of integration, and he avoided the notion of *guantong*. In Dai's imagination, *li* was still a normative concept, but much more contextualized and localized. It became something that is intelligible only in a world of coexisting differences. For this reason, I think Dai's *li* is closer to "essence" than to "coherence." To put it simply, for Dai, analyzing the *li* of one thing was not about integrating it in the cross-category coherence of everything, but about understanding how it truly differs from other things.

Thus, to see *li* was to apprehend the constancy and orderliness of differentiation. It should be a process of continuous unpacking and analyzing the uniqueness that accurately defines the identity of one thing in relation to other co-existing things; it was not a process of attaining an intuition of unity. In doing so, human beings – the most intelligent form of life in the world – could recognize and support the process of production and reproduction. Pursuing *li,* in this sense, enables human beings to better define the roles of things based on careful comparative analysis. Therein lies the moral potential of humanity. To define norms, the first and foremost task ought be studying individual things by grasping their essential differences.

Given this difference in Dai's premise about knowledge, some important questions follow: Why is the world not already in good order? What is good? How could learning

contribute to it?

Step 3: Learning and Sagehood – New Definition of Morality

These questions are addressed in Dai's detailed discussions of sagehood and learning. Sages are not born to be sages; they are humans who have realized their "knowledge of Heavenly virtue" (*tiande zhi zhi*) through learning. The result of their learning is that whenever outer events occur, their mind will respond in accordance with justice and righteousness.[544] "To identify with orderliness in the process of production and reproduction, is what sages do."[545] But it takes effort to achieve sagehood.

> That man cannot often fulfill his capacity is due to one of two problems: one is selfishness (*si* 私), and the other is ignorance (*bi* 蔽). Selfishness, when it arises in one's mind, leads to indulgence in one's personal desires; when it plays a part in politics, it entails partisanship; when it affects one's actions, it results in wrongdoing; when it arises in human affairs, it becomes unreasonableness and deceit. In the end, selfishness has its root in the satisfaction of one's personal interests. In the other case, when the mind is ignorant, the mind becomes confused; when political matters are similarly ignorant, the men involved in them become partial; when ignorance is manifested in one's behavior, the behavior is already wrong; when ignorance appears in human affairs, people become groundlessly speculative and stupid, and [ignorance] has its root in deceit. Speculation leads to false assessments; stupidity leads to obstinacy; being false with no self-reflection, when acting on affairs, also leads to obstinacy. If a selfish man is content with his selfishness, he may be said to do violence to himself. If a man whose intelligence is beclouded does not seek to enlighten himself with truth, he may be said to have abandoned himself to ignorance and stupidity. When a man has done violence to himself by embracing selfishness and abandoning himself to ignorance, it is

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[544] "…則事至而心應之者，胥事至而以道義應，天德之知也。是故人也者，天地至盛之徵也；惟聖人然後盡其盛。天地之德，可以一言盡也，仁而已矣；人之心，其亦可以一言盡也，仁而已矣。耳目百體之慾，喻於心，不可以是謂心之所喻也；心之所喻，則仁也。心之仁，耳目百體之慾莫不喻；則自心至於耳目百體，胥仁也。心得其常，於其有覺，君子以觀仁焉；耳目百體得其順，於其有欲，君子以觀仁焉。" "Yuanshan II," *Chuanshan quanshu,* 15.

[545] 是故生生者仁，條理者禮，斷決者義，藏主者智，仁智中和曰聖人；智通禮義，以遂天下之情，備人倫之懿。至貴者仁，仁得，則父子親；禮得，則親疏上下之分盡；義得，則百事正；藏於智，則天地萬物為量；同於生生條理，則聖人之事。" Ibid., 8.

> difficult to speak of goodness with him, and he will finally become a man without goodness. We certainly cannot blame a man's potential ability (or natural endowment) for this. In order to get rid of selfishness, one can do nothing better than to strengthen one's compassion for other people (強恕). To free oneself from ignorance (解蔽), one can do nothing better than to pursue learning. To get a guiding principle, nothing is better than loyalty and trust. To find the place to rest, nothing is better than illuminating the good.
>
> 人之不盡其才，患二：曰私，曰蔽。私也者，生於其心為溺，發於政為黨，成於行為慝，見於事為悖，為欺，其究為私己；蔽也者，其生於心也為惑，發於政為偏，成於行為謬，見於事為鑿，為愚，其究為蔽之以己；鑿者，其失誣；愚者，其失為固；誣而罔省，施之事亦為固。私者之安若固然，為自暴；蔽者之不求牖於明，為自棄；自暴自棄，夫然後難與言善，是以卒之為不善，非才之罪也。去私，莫如強恕；解蔽，莫如學；得所主，莫大乎忠信；得所止，莫大乎明善。[546]

On the surface, Dai's criticism of the obsession with self-interest and ignorance sounds similar to Neo-Confucian language. However, for Dai, self-obsession and ignorance were wrong not because they would prevent individuals from realizing the ultimate moral intuition, but because they would isolate individuals from the orderliness of the differentiation of human society (*ge* 隔). The learning of the sages, thus, was not the cultivation of a person's intuition about right and wrong; rather, it was a model of practicing empathy, compassion, and impartial understanding of the differences. It was this practice that would eventually lead to a good common (共) order of public life.

> Humaneness is the foundation for all other virtuous actions, which [enables one to] reflect on all things and feel close to all-under-Heaven (與天下共親), thus loyalty is but a corollary to that of humaneness. Righteousness is what is proper for the human way, which [enables one to] judge all things and share with everyone in the world (與天下共睹). Hence, the virtue of trust is a corollary to that of righteousness. Propriety is where the Heavenly standards rest. Acting on it in ethical relationships and in everything will lead to peace in the world (天下共安), and no one will fail to fulfill his obligations. Hence compassion is a corollary to propriety….

[546] "Yuanshan III," 23. Translation is based on Cheng Chung-ying's translation with my modifications. Cheng, Tai Chen's *Inquiry into Goodness*.

> 仁者，德行之本，體萬物而與天下共親，是故忠其屬也；義者，人道之宜，裁萬類而與天下共睹，是故信其屬也；禮者，天則之所止，行之乎人倫庶物而天下共安，於分無不盡，是故恕其屬也……
>
> These three things, [loyalty, trust, compassion,] after practicing and achieving them, lead to humaneness and wisdom. Being humane and wise is being free from selfishness and ignorance. Those who have acquired the power of production of reproduction are humane. To do the contrary and damage humaneness is selfish. Those who know the orderly arrangement are intelligent. If one is isolated from the orderly arrangement (隔於是) and is weak in his knowledge, he is ignorant in his mind.
>
> 斯三者，馴而至之，夫然後仁且智；仁且智者，不私不敝者也。得乎生生者仁，反是而害於仁之謂私；得乎條理者智，隔於是而病智之謂蔽。[547]

Real learning would not force unity on the world, but would realize a true common order based on a fair and informed understanding of the difference between individuals.

According to this new premise, then, how should one become less self-interested and less ignorant? How should one avoid becoming isolated? To reach external knowledge about the proper order of human life and to cultivate the orderliness of one's own mind are connected. Knowledge is rooted in each individual' connections with others in social life. Sages considered themselves to be part of community life. Alluding to Neo-Confucian scholars, Dai claimed that any attempt to force one's personal view on others in the community would be self-obsessed and biased.

> [When a man] takes his own knowing (知) as knowledge, asserting that his own knowing can apply to all sorts of behavior without being wrong, then the Way will not prevail in the world. [When] a good person believes in his own behavior, asserting that humaneness, honesty, loyalty and trust are already known, then the Way will not be illuminated.
>
> 用其知以為智，謂施諸行不繆矣，是以道不行；善人者信其行，謂見於仁厚

[547] Ibid., 24. Translation is based on Cheng Chung-ying with modifications. See, Cheng, *Tai Chen's Inquiry into Goodness,* 101-2.

忠信為既知矣，是以道不明。

> Therefore, a gentleman sees great values in overcoming self-obsession (克己). Remaining solitary and not being in harmony with his surrounding people is what the self means. Those who let the self cloud [their minds] are isolated from the good; being isolated from the good is being isolated from all under the Heaven. Those who do not isolate themselves from the good can reach humaneness, realize righteousness, and know the [Way of] Heaven.

> 故君子克己之為貴也；獨而不咸之謂己。以己蔽之者，隔於善，隔於善，隔於天下矣；無隔於善者，仁至，義盡，知天。

Thus, to overcome one's biases and selfishness, and to reach commonality, one ought to act under the awareness of coexisting differences. In this sense, Dai argued that the sages did not try to impose a top-down unifying order based on their individual understanding of the ultimate coherence of the world, but tried to find commonality by participating in community life. This allowed them to truly appreciate how society should be ordered and how they should act. To model the sages, cotemporary scholars ought to use the ancient texts as a starting point to find how sages discovered the orderlies of things and how they created a common public order.

> Hence, everything has its orderly arrangement (條理), and every act has its propriety (至當). [One should] prove [the order and arrangement of things and the propriety of actions] in ancient doctrines and accommodate oneself [to various times and situations] to achieve an appropriate position, [becoming] fully clear in [one's] mind and then knowing where to stop. [When a] gentleman lives alone, what he thinks about is humaneness; [when he] speaks in public, he will always speak in conformity to righteousness. [When he] acts, he will always accord his actions to propriety. Reaching propriety, [he leaves no sense of] righteousness imprecise. Being precise in [his sense of] righteousness, [he leaves no practice of] humaneness unreached. [After] achieving humaneness and fulfilling [his] ethics in relation to other men, [he would become a] sage. Being easy and simple, and reaching the ultimate good, are [the attainments that] a sage desires to share with all people under Heaven for a thousand generations.

> 是故一物有其條理，一行有其至當，徵之古訓，協於時中，充然明諸心而後得所止。君子獨居思仁，公言言義，動止應禮。達禮，義無弗精也；精義，

仁無弗至也；至仁盡倫，聖人也。易簡至善，聖人所欲與天下世同之也。[548]

Suffice it to say that Dai conceived of the meaning of morality in an entirely different perspective from the Neo-Confucians. Being moral did not mean that one ought to overcome one's desires and fulfill one's responsibility to enlighten others. Instead, it meant treating others fairly, taking individual differences seriously as the basis of one's actions. In this sense, cultivating one's mind to grasp the larger whole and to speculate upon a grand unity would only lead to ignorance and bias. The Neo-Confucian imagination was not just groundless, but fundamentally harmful.

3. The Role of Learning in Public Life: *A Commentary on Meanings of Words in Mencius* (孟子字義疏證) and the Public Meaning of *Xungu*

As Dai claimed at the end of *On the Origins of Good*, the learning of the sages enabled them to be connected with the world, rather than being isolated and biased. Explaining what this meant in organizing public life, Dai claimed that being connected and unbiased meant that the sages showed compassion and understood differences. His discourse of morality had shifted away from the Neo-Confucian view that the sages were those who had cultivated moral character and ought to shape others accordingly.[549] But why was this new understanding of morality important to his world? What should scholars do?

In *A Commentary on the Meanings of Words in Mencius* (Mengzi ziyi shuzheng 孟

[548] Ibid., 24. Also see Cheng, Tai Chen's *Inquiry into Goodness*, 102.

[549] For representative discussions on Dai Zhen's philosophy focusing on common ethical principles shared by local communities, see Zheng Jixiong, "Lun Dai Dongyuan jingxue zhong de wenhua yishi," *Dai Dongyuan jingdian quanshi de sixiangshi tansuo*. 43-86.

子字義疏證), Dai addressed these questions. Written late in his life, he considered this book to be his most important contribution to scholarship. Defining the goal of the book as "rectifying people's minds (正人心)," [550] he delivered a series of critiques of Neo-Confucian concepts and their negative impact on social life.[551] If his *On the Origins of Good* was written to work out his criticism of Neo-Confucianism in a metaphysical argument about the world and humanity, this book translated the metaphysical argument into a discussion of social order and individual action. It reads like a public-minded statement to the literati world, unearthing the discursive origins of Neo-Confucian concepts in the history of textual interpretation and the school's problematic social and political consequences.

The first *juan* of the book, which consists of fifteen conversations about the meaning of "*li*" (理), serves as the most essential argument. My following analysis focuses on this part. Dai wanted to challenge what he considered to be the key claim of the Neo-Confucian tradition, namely, Zhu Xi's interpretation of *li*. As Zhu put it, rephrased by Dai*, li* exists "as if it were a reified object received from Heaven and endowed in the mind." (如有物焉，得於天而具於心). For Dai, this claim assumed that the understanding of right and wrong is given by the Heaven and exists in the mind, comprising what Zhu called the "*xing*" (性), or "the good human nature." Individuals

[550] Duan Yucai cited Dai,"僕生平著述之大，以《孟子字義疏證》為第一、所以正人心也。"Duan Yucai, "Dai Dongyuan ji xu" (戴東原集序)

[551] The first *juan* focuses on *li,* principle (fifteen articles), the second *juan* on *tiandao*, the Heavenly Way (four articles), and *xing*, human nature (nine articles), and the third *juan* focuses on *cai,* talents (three articles), *dao,* the Way (four articles), *renyilizhi*, humanness, justice, propriety, and wisdom (two articles), and *quan*, measures or standards (five articles). I am using the version from *Dai Zhenji* , ed., Tang Zhijun (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanhse, 1980).

pursue learning and reach an intuition of the great unity, and in doing so they restore their good nature. For the Neo-Confucians, as we know, faith in the potential of restoring the good nature within their own minds was crucial; it gave them the agency to cultivate themselves. Dai understood this logic, but found this belief wrong and harmful. Stressing his interpretation of *li* as the essence that differentiates things, he tried to refute Zhu Xi's celebration of the intuitive unity of the human mind. Dai insisted that *li* only exists in things, functioning as a differentiating yet normative property. It can be seen by the human mind but it is not already contained in the mind.

> With reference to things, it is not the case that apart from things there is something else called principle and righteousness (理義). "Since there are things, there must be their specific norms (則)"; with their norms we set things right. That is all there is to it. With reference to the human mind, there are no separate *li* bestowed [from Heaven] and endowed in the mind. The mind's spiritual percipience, [when throwing light] on a thing or an event, allows one to grasp its unchanging norms. It is just like, all rays shine but when they match *li* (中理者) they are at their peak and what they show is not wrong.
>
> 是故就事物言，非事物之外別有理義也；「有物必有則」，以其則正其物，如是而已矣。就人心言，非別有理以予之而具於心也； 心之神明，於事物咸足以知其不易之則，譬有光皆能照，而中理者，乃其光盛，其照不謬也。[552]

Why was this distinction important? Dai explains that this belief, that the human mind naturally contains the ultimate understanding of right and wrong in its good nature, only came to prevail after the Neo-Confucians. Although it did not have a deeply rooted textual tradition, it had become deeply embedded in people's lives, causing damage to the community.

> The word "*li"* does not often appear in the Six Classics, in the works of Confucius, or in commentaries or other historical records. But today even the stupidest of men, when boorish and brutal, will often appeal to "*li*" whenever he

[552] Dai Zhen ji, 272.

> makes a decision or argues with another person. Since the Song the practice of learning from each other has made it customary for people to think of "*li*" as if it were a reified object acquired from Heaven and endowed in the mind. As a result, personal opinions are taken to be "*li.*" Thus those who rely on their imposing manner, who take advantage of their position of authority, and who, in addition, are clever in speech, are able to promote their [version of] "*li*" while those who are weak, irresolute, and incapable of arguing convincingly have to yield their [version of] "*li.*" Alas! Little do people realize that to regulate affairs or men in this manner is not in accordance with "*li.*"
>
> 曰：《六經》、孔、孟之言以及傳記群籍，理字不多見。今雖至愚之人，悖戾恣睢，其處斷一事，責詰一人，莫不輒曰理者，自宋以來始相習成俗，則以理為「如有物焉，得於天而具於心」，因以心之意見當之也。於是負其氣，挾其勢位，加以口給者，理伸；力弱氣懾，口不能道辭者，理屈。嗚呼！其孰謂以此制事，以此制人之非理哉！[553]

In social life, the Neo-Confucian faith encouraged people to form ungrounded opinions and impose their opinions onto others. In consequence, the powerful and privileged took advantage of it to mistreat others, justifying their own views as righteous.

But how can we know when our judgments are not just based on our ungrounded opinion, but indeed have a valid ground? How do we know if we are acting on principle? What did the original notion of preserving the "Heavenly principle (*tianli* 天理)" in the Classics (e.g. *Book of Rites*) mean, if the Neo-Confucian interpretation was wrong? [554]

> [One] asks: what did the ancients mean by "Heavenly principle? (天理)"
> 問：古人之言天理，何謂也?
>
> I answer : principle (*li*) exists where [our] feelings (情) do not err (爽失). It is not possible to have acquired principle without first having satisfied feelings.

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[553] Dai Zhen ji, 268.

[554] For instance, the notion of *tianli* appears in "Record of Music" (Yue Ji 樂記) from the *Book of Rites.* "人生而靜，天之性也；感於物而動，性之欲也。物至知知，然後好惡形焉。好惡無節於內，知誘於外，不能反躬，天理滅矣。" Also, 夫物之感人無窮，而人之好惡無節，則是物至而人化物也。人化物也者，滅天理而窮人欲者也。於是有悖逆詐偽之心，有淫泆作亂之事。是故強者脅弱，眾者暴寡，知者詐愚，勇者苦怯，疾病不養，老幼孤獨不得其所，此大亂之道也。"

> Whenever [we] want to do something to others, [we] should turn to ourselves and quietly reflect: "If other people do this to me, am I able to bear it?" Whenever [we] want something from others, [we] should turn to ourselves and quietly reflect: "If other people want this thing from me, am I able to fulfill it?" [Once we] gauge [the feelings] of others by our own, then the principle will be clear. The "Heavenly principle" refers to the principle that is differentiated on the basis of what is natural. The principle that is differentiated on the basis of what is natural means this: gauging the feelings of others by one's own so that there is fairness in every [action].[555]
>
> 曰：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，能受之乎?」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。天理云者，言乎自然之分理也；自然之分理，以我之情絜人之情，而無不得其平是也。
>
> Of those who maintain that "principle (*li*) is a thing received from Heaven and endowed in the mind," there is no one who does not substitute personal opinion (*yijian*) in place of it. Now if a person acts on the basis of his personal opinion, then he is wrong; but if he acts after due consideration for the feelings [of others], then he is right.
>
> 夫以理為「如有物焉，得於天而具於心」，未有不以意見當之者也。今使人任其意見，則謬；使人自求其情，則得。[556]

A reliable indicator to tell if one is right or wrong is human feeling (*qing* 情), because it allows people to reciprocate in social life and make reasonable decisions based on their knowledge of the shared level of satisfaction. Dai realized that this claim might sound surprising because it made human feelings the tool for measuring right and wrong.

> [One] asks: Using [one's own] feelings to gauge the feelings [of others] without mistakes truly allows [one] to gain the principle of actions. [But] how are the concept of "feelings" and the concept of "principle" different from each other?"
>
> 問：以情絜情而無爽失，於行事誠得其理矣。情與理之名何以異?
>
> I answer: All that exists in us and in others is called "feeling." That which is neither excessive nor inadequate feeling is called "principle." …What people hold onto as constants are called norms. When things are analyzed according to their

[555] Dai Zhen ji, 265-6.

[556] Dai Zhen ji, 268

> individual differentiations, [the distinct patterns and orders] are called principles. When [the power of discernment] is realized in words and action, it is called excellent virtue. A thing is an affair or an event. When we speak of an event we do not go beyond the ordinary activities of daily life such as eating and drinking. Principles arrived at without referring to such things are not what the ancient sages and worthies understood as "principles."
>
> 曰：在己與人皆謂之情，無過情無不及情之謂理。……以秉持為經常曰則，以各如其區分曰理，以寶之於言行曰懿德。物者，事也；語其事，不出乎日用飲食而已矣；舍是而言理，非古賢聖所謂理也。[557]

Feelings enable people to find the right norms in social life based on what they want for themselves. People discover what the right norms are based on *reciprocity*, rather than suppressing their personal needs. Hence, it is necessary to prevent people from suppressing their feelings by following an external rule on how they should feel. It is necessary to recognize human desires (*yu* 慾).

> *The Classic of Odes* says, "The common people are contented, for daily they have their drink and food." And the *Book of Rites* says, "Man's greatest desires are for food, drink, and sexual pleasure." In ruling their states, the sages showed consideration for the feelings of the people and complied with their desires, and [in so doing, they] fulfilled the kingly way.
>
> 詩曰：「民之質，日用飲食。」記曰：「飲食男女，人之大慾存焉。」聖人治天下，體民之情，遂民之欲，而王道備。

The Neo-Confucians confused the learning of the sages – which "considered the feelings of the people and complied with their desires" – with other teachings that denied the importance of desire. In so doing, the harm they had done was even more than other teachings, because they had gained their social capital by claiming to define the true tradition of the sages. The false binary between desire and moral understanding had deeply influenced the political discourse and the common view of people. Dai argued,

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[557] *Dai Zhen ji*， 266-7. Translation is based on Ann-ping Chin, *Tai Chen on Mencius,* 72.

People knew that Laozi, Zhuangzi, and the Buddhists differed from the sages, [so] when they heard the theory that desires should be eliminated, they were inclined to doubt it. [However,] when the Song Confucians [expressed the same idea,] [they] believed that it was in harmony with the sages' [teachings]; everyone concluded that principle (*li*) and desire (*yu*) were distinct from each other.

人知老、莊、釋氏異於聖人，聞其無欲之說，猶未之信也；於宋儒，則信以為同於聖人；理欲之分，人人能言之。

It is not surprising, therefore, that those who are presently in the ruling position regard [the way of] the ancient sages and worthies, which is to understand the people's feelings and satisfy their desires, to constitute the daily trivialities of the lowly and the vulgar - certainly not something worthy of their attention. Moreover, when it comes to reproving others on the basis of "principle," it is easy for them to point out what is considered the highest standard in the vast world and then to condemn others in the name of "righteousness (*yi*)." The exalted reprove their inferiors on the basis of "principle;" elders reprove their juniors on the basis of "principle;" the noble reprove the ordinary folk on the basis of "principle." Although they are wrong, they insist that they are following "principle." The inferiors, the juniors, and the ordinary folk protest this by appealing to "principle," but even [when these people of lower status] are right, [they] are judged to be against "principle."

故今之治人者視古賢聖體民之情，遂民之欲，多出於鄙細隱曲，不措諸意，不足為怪；而及其責以理也，不難舉曠世之高節，著於義而罪之，尊者以理責卑，長者以理責幼，貴者以理責賤，雖失，謂之順；卑者、幼者、賤者以理爭之，雖得，謂之逆。

Thus, those below are unable to reach those above on the basis of shared feelings and desires. When the superiors censure the inferiors on the strength of "principle," there will be a countless number of crimes from below. When men die because [they have violated] the law, there are those who have pity for them; but when men die because they have violated "principle," who has compassion for them? Alas! To mix Daoist and Buddhist ideas with those of the sages can result only in calamities worse than were ever inflicted by Shen [Puhai] or Han [Fei].

於是下之人不能以天下之同情、天下所同欲達之於上；上以理責其下，而在下之罪，人人不勝指數。人死於法，猶有憐之者；死於理，其誰憐之! 嗚呼，雜乎老、釋之言以為言，其禍甚於申、韓如是也!

Dai did not think the Neo-Confucian tradition had bad intentions to begin with. At various places Dai admits that the original goal of the Neo-Confucians was honorable.

They tried to overcome the influence of Buddhism and Daoism and develop an approach to learning that could cultivate educated people to guide society. What Dai wanted to draw people's attention to, however, was the consequence of this school's service to political power and its institutionalization into people's everyday lives as a yardstick of social justice, dominating popular conceptions of righteousness. Unlike the Neo-Confucians who believed that one's judgment about the order of the world was inseparable from one's personal moral character, Dai stressed that this view showed exactly what the problem was. A man might be honest, without selfish desires, but his judgment about what others want might be wrong. Dai continued to argue, "Although he believes that he is serious and upright and that he hates evil as an enemy, he fails to realize that the facts or circumstance of affairs are difficult to ascertain, that it is so easy to lose [an objective sense of] right and wrong to partiality." "As a result," Dai explained, "others frequently suffer an injustice without the person ever realizing his mistake; or perhaps after the event he is awakened, but then remorse is of no avail."[558] One consequence of this ungrounded attitude of self-righteousness and blindness was that it could be easily abused to maintain the status of those who held political and social privilege in the community. As for the unprivileged, not only they had no chance to be heard, but mostly they had no way to reflect on the judgment, as they were also shaped by the mainstream discourse, believing themselves to be wrong even they were not. This would lead to a misinformed ruling elite and an unfair public order.

Hence, Dai believed that it was necessary to return to Mencius, who defined the

[558] "即其人廉洁自持，心无私慝，而至于处断一事，责诘一人，凭在己之意见，是其所是而非其所非，方自信严气正性，嫉恶如雠，而不知事情之难得，是非之易失于偏，往往人受其祸，己且终身不寤，或事后乃明，悔已无及。" *Dai Zhen ji,* 268.

source of moral understanding to be "*tongran zhi li* (同然之理)."

> [One] asks: Mencius said, "What all minds agree upon are principle (*li*) and righteousness (*yi*). The sages only apprehended before us that which our minds agree upon." [It seems that he was referring to] "this principle" from the point of view of the mind. Why is that?
>
> 問：孟子云：「心之所同然者，謂理也，義也；聖人先得我心之所同然耳。」是理又以心言，何也?

> [I] answer: Only what all minds commonly agree upon can be called principle and righteousness. It follows, then, that what is not [a matter of] common agreement is [a matter of] individual opinion (*yijian*) and is not principle or righteousness. When one man regards something as right and the world throughout the ages says that it is inalterably so, this is what is meant by common agreement (*tongran*). By raising principle, one sees that the mind can make distinctions; by raising righteousness, one sees that the mind can make judgments. When we analyze [things and events], [we find that] each has its norm (*ze*) – this is called "principle." To accord action to principle is called "righteousness." Therefore he who understands principles is clear about the distinctions of [things and events]. He who is capable of effecting righteous acts is good at making judgments. When there is no clear understanding [of principles], one often vacillates and creates doubts for himself. When there is a lack of ability [to effect righteous acts], one often allows bias and selfishness to influence his judgment and harm the Way. As for those who seek principle and righteousness but lack adequate wisdom, what they find cannot be called principles or righteousness.
>
> 曰：心之所同然始謂之理。謂之義；則未至於同然，存乎其人之意見，非理也，非義也。凡一人以為然，天下萬世皆曰「是不可易也」，此之謂同然。舉理，以見心能區分；舉義，以見心能裁斷。分之，各有其不易之則，名曰理；如斯而宜，名曰義。是故明理者，明其區分也；精者，精其裁斷也。不明，往往界於疑似而生惑；不精，往往雜於偏私而害道。求理義而智不足者也，故不可謂之理義。自非聖人，鮮能無蔽；有蔽之深，有蔽之淺者。人莫患乎蔽而自智，任其意見，執之為理義。吾懼求理義者以意見當之，孰知民受其禍之所終極也哉！[559]

Importantly, to emphasize his bottom-up perspective, Dai interpreted Mencius's *tongran zhi li* as principles that are commonly agreed upon. The pursuit of such principles would provide a legitimate basis for creating a good public order. Dai's

[559] *Dai Zhen ji*，266-7. Translation is based on Ann-ping Chin, *Tai Chen on Mencius,* 72-3.

bottom-up approach cannot be understood as an argument for democracy, however. To find the principles that are to be commonly agreed and to create the moral meanings (*yi*) that are to be commonly shared would require a process of learning and cultivation of knowledge (*zhi* 智). To overcome the influence of the Neo-Confucian teaching in society was not to abandon learning. Instead, the idea of Mencius provided the possibility for building a new cultural and institutional order based on learning: common people (*zhongren* 众人) would recommend intelligent and knowledgeable people (*zhizhe* 智者) as leaders, while the intelligent and knowledgeable people would model the sages as their ideal. [560]

Since to pursue the way of the sages was to cultivate learning by thinking with the sages who built a good order in antiquity, then study of the Classics, which contained the institutions and texts of antiquity, was the only concrete approach.

> The universe is vast, and men and things are numerous; affairs are tortuous and complex, but they have distinct strands. Only if they are in accord with their principles as straightness is in accord with a plumb line, levelness with water, roundness with a compass, squareness with a square, do they then become a standard for the world and ten thousand generations. … *The Doctrine of the Mean* says, "[The way of the true ruler] is tested by the experience of the Three Kings and found without error, set up before Heaven-and-Earth and found to be without contradictions to their mode of operation, laid before spiritual beings without misgiving or fear, and can wait a hundred generations for a sage [to confirm it] without a doubt." When something has met these tests, it can be said to accord with principle and be "what is to be commonly agreed." Mencius said, "the compass and square produce perfect circles and squares. The sage exemplifies perfect human relations."
>
> 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。……中庸稱「

[560] "天下智者少而愚者多；以其心知明于众人，则共推之为智，其去圣人甚远也。以众人与其所共推为智者较其得理，则众人之蔽必多；以众所共推为智者与圣人较其得理，则圣人然后无蔽。凡事至而心应之，其断于心，辄曰理如是，古贤圣未尝以为理也。" Ibid.

> 考諸三王而不謬，建諸天地而不悖，質諸鬼神而無疑，百世以俟聖人而不惑」。夫如是，是為得理，是為心之所同然。孟子曰：「規矩，方圓之至也；聖人，人倫之至也。」

In this learning process, scholars ought to know that sages were not superior in their moral character. There is nothing mystical or omnipresent for scholars to speculate about. It is the responsibility of scholars to stress these two points, rather than standing by as society perpetuated the Neo-Confucian misunderstanding.

> … The sage is also a man. Because he has fulfilled the essence (*li*) of man, the multitude exalts him from his sagacity and wisdom. But to fulfill the essence of man is nothing more than completing what is necessary in human relations and in daily activities. What is necessary refers to [the norms] that cannot be altered [in human relations and in daily activities] no matter how far one's reasoning reaches. Thus we speak of the ultimate result, and we are not tracing the root (本)…If we seek for what is necessary and unalterable in Heaven, earth, men, things, and affairs, the essence of each thing (*li*) will become perfectly clear and evident. But if in exalting and glorifying the notion of *li* [as the ultimate coherence], instead of merely saying that it refers to the essences of Heaven, earth, men, things, and affairs, we revise our ideas and say that "*li* is omnipresent" and "it is a reified thing," the result will be that students will remain confused and unable to find this thing even after they grow hoary headed in their search.

> ……聖人亦人也，以盡乎人之理，群共推為聖智。盡乎人之理非他，人倫日用盡乎其必然而已矣。推而極於不可易之為必然，乃語其至，非原其本。……舉凡天地、人物、事為，求其必然不可易，理至明顯也。從而尊大之，不徒曰天地、人物、事為之理，而轉其語曰「理無不在」，視之「如有物焉」，將使學者皓首茫然，求其物不得。[561]

In order to find norms, learning should not focus on tracing the ultimate origin (*ben* 本) of everything, which would give people the illusion that they could even do such a thing. Rather, it ought to focusing on finding the absolute essence of each thing. In this sense, the *xungu* method in Classical studies would serve two significant functions. First, it would allow scholars to restore the everyday cultural world of antiquity, contextualizing

[561] *Dai Zhen ji*, 278. Translation is based on Ann-ping Chin, *Tai Chen on Mencius,* 90.

the practices of the sages in the broader world and making sense of the logic behind their concrete creations of norms.[562] Secondly, the *xungu* method would consequently give contemporary scholars a critical tool to disperse the influence of mainstream moral-political discourse.

Unlike the early Qing political Evidential scholars, who had in their political plan articulated a new elite selection program to replace the existing civil service examinations, Dai did not propose to change the system. He instead found a way to reflect upon and criticize mainstream beliefs by unearthing their discursive roots and how they had been institutionalized in popular opinion. This approach suited a period when Evidential scholars did not see themselves as participants in political decisions or as legislators. In this regard, Fang Dongshu's (方東樹 1772-1851) observation is to the point:

> For people such as Gu Yanwu and Huang Zongxi, although they encouraged substantive studies, they did not yet specifically wave the flag of Han learning. It was Mr. Hui [i.e. Hui Dong] who started to particularly wield the flag of Han learning. Although Mr. Hui held the flag of Han learning, he did not yet strictly prohibit people from pursuing Coherence (*li*). To strictly prohibit people from pursuing Coherence (*li)* began from Mr. Dai. [i.e. Dai Zhen].
>
> 顧黃諸君，雖崇尚實學，尚未專標漢幟。專標漢幟，則自惠氏始。惠氏雖標漢幟，尚未厲禁言理。厲禁言理，則自戴氏始。[563]

Dai deconstructed the Neo-Confucian ideal of scholars as moral exemplars, rendering Neo-Confucian discourse a bad faith. But although Dai's celebration of the

[562] For an excellent analysis of Dai's efforts in his various Classical studies to make sense of the orderliness of the common culture in antiquity, see Zheng Jixiong, "Lun Dai Dongyuan jingxue zhong de wenhua yishi" (論戴東原經學中的文化意識), *Dai Dongyaun jingdian quanshi de sixiangshi tansuo*, 43-85.

[563] Fang Dongshu, *Hanxue shangdui* (漢學商兌)

xungu method was grounded in his new metaphysics of morality, he was not interested in changing the official learning system and was only engaged in a bottom-up critique. Meanwhile, for the majority of Qian-Jia textual scholars, to distinguish themselves from Neo-Confucian learning meant to withdraw entirely from discussion of the moral foundation of learning. As long as they were engaged in the collective effort of restoring the Classical and historical textual tradition, and as long as their learning was rigorous, disciplined, and could lead to concrete, impressive results, they would be justified within this group as pursuing the Way of the sages. But not everyone in the eighteenth and early ninetieth centuries was interested in textual studies, and certainly not everyone who joined textual studies was as competitive as they wished. The pressure that these successful Evidential scholars brought to the literati community was clearly felt.

Responding to the Challenges of Qian-Jia Scholarship

As the leaders of Qian-Jia scholarship promoted the apolitical *xungu* method as the true path to antiquity, and openly criticized the tradition of "Song learning," they raised a major challenge to the rest of the literati community. How did the intellectual leaders of other traditions respond? What did the Qian-Jia scholars' claims mean for them? I would like to examine a few representative positions, which can help us to understand the challenges that the discourse of Qian-Jia scholarship posed to literati culture.[564]

[564] For instance, Theodore Huters, "From Writing to Literature: the Development of Late Qing Theories of Prose," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47, no. 1 (1987): 51–96. Benjamin Elman, "The Relevance of Sung Learning in the Late Ch'ing: Wei Yuan and the Huang-Ch'Ao Ching-Shih Wen-Pien," *Ch'ing-Shih Wen-T'i* 9, no. 2 (1988): 56–85. Wang Fan-sen, "Fangdongshu yu hanxue de shuaitui" (方東樹與漢學的衰退) *Zhongguo jindai sixiang yu xueshu de xipu*(中國近

Responses from the Tongcheng School: Heaven-and-Earth and Moral Agency

As scholars have pointed out, although the Neo-Confucians themselves rarely raised any influential arguments against Qian-Jia scholarship in the eighteenth century, the leaders of the Tongcheng (桐城) school, who called themselves ancient prose (*guwen* 古文) writers, became the spokesmen for the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian tradition.[565] From the late seventeenth century on, the Tongcheng School emerged as distinct from the camp of Evidential Scholarship; it became the main competing discourse against the Qian-Jia school throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. By and large, it saw Cheng-Zhu learning as its theoretical grounds, and held that its practice of writing illustrated the essence of the Cheng-Zhu tradition. As we shall see, the Qing alliance between the tradition of *wenzhang* (文章) and Neo-Confucian tradition only made sense in the context of the rise of the Qian-Jia tradition.

The Tongcheng school took shape in the late Kangxi reign under Fang Bao (方苞 1668-1749). Fang's main claim is well known: writing ought to have *yi* (義), or meanings, delivered with *fa* (法), or effective forms. In saying this, Fang claimed that he identified with Sima Qian (司馬遷), who inherited the legacy of the writing of the *Spring and*

代思想與學術的系譜) (Taibei: Lianjing chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 2003), 3-22. Wang Minda (王敏達), *Yao Nai yu qianjia xuepai* (姚鼐與乾嘉學派)（Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2007). Zhang Xun(張循), "Hanxue de neizai jinzhang: Qingdai sixiangshi shang 'Han Song zhizheng' de yige xin jieshi" (漢學的內在緊張: 清代思想史上 [漢宋之爭] 的一個新解釋), *Jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* (近代史研究所集刊) no. 63 (2009): 49–96.

[565] Zhang Xun summarized this common view based on existing scholarship in his article, "Hanxue de neizai jinzhang", 53-4.

Autumn Annals. The original relevant passage by Sima Qian came from Sima's discussion of the role of Confucius. Sima's claim was that Confucius, who himself could not assume the position of ruler, had to embed his knowledge about the Kingly Way in his *Spring and Autumn Annals.* In doing so, Confucius designed a system of expression to deliver his messages.[566] In Fang's view, the writing of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was congruent with the message of the *Book of Changes* regarding good verbal expressions; namely, good expression contains a meaningful purpose (*yan you wu* 言有物), and it has a well-designed structure (*yan you xu* 言有序).[567] Writers should value both meaning (*yi*) and method (*fa*).

Fang's claim emerged in a period when the Classics and historical texts were increasingly studied as a broad legacy of ancient government and history, while the Qing government endorsed the Neo-Confucian curriculum centering on the *Four Books*. Fang did not reject the newly emergent Classical and historical learning. For instance, he admired the historian Wang Sitong, a disciple of Huang Zongxi, for his statecraft knowledge, and he also tried to conduct Classical learning on his own. [568] However, it seems that by turning to Sima Qian's discourse and pointing to the message regarding

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[566] Sima's original sentence, "是以孔子明王道，幹七十餘君，莫能用，故西觀周室，論史記舊聞，興於魯而次春秋，上記隱，下至哀之獲麟，約其辭文，去其煩重，以制義法，王道備，人事浹。七十子之徒口受其傳指，為有所刺譏褒諱挹損之文辭不可以書見也。" The preface to his "Annual Table of the Twelve Feudal Rulers" (Shier zhuhou nianbiao 十二諸侯年表)

[567] "春秋之制義法，自太史公發之，而後之深於文者亦具焉。義即《易》之所謂'言有物'也，法即《易》之所謂'言有序'也。義以為經而法緯之，然後緯成體之文。" Fang Bao, "You shu huozhi zhuan hou"又書貨值傳後.

[568] Fang Bao admired the historian Wang Sitong for his statecraft knowledge and also tried to conduct Classical learning on his own. See Fang Bao, "Wan Jiye mubiao" (萬季野墓表), see Zheng Jixiong, *Qingru mingzhu shuping*.

verbal expressions in the *Book of Changes,* he stressed the argument that the Classics still contained a model of *wenzhang* (文章), or prose writing, which was also inseparable from the action of ordering the world. Literati scholars who were fond of writing could also be a part of the larger program of serving the public. Importantly, Fang's claim was not that *wenzhang* itself could contain the Way, or that by practicing writing scholars could know the content of the Way; rather, it was the art of persuasion that contained a natural force to shape the world. How, then, would scholars generate messages in their writing? The learning of the *Four Books* would provide the content. Fang followed Neo-Confucian discourse in seeing the goal of learning as cultivating moral insight. It seems to me that, apart from political reasons and personal background, Fang's embracement of Neo-Confucianism made sense given that he hoped to justify *wenzhang* as a valid cultural practice that was as important as historically-minded Evidential scholarship. The ahistorical discourse of Neo-Confucianism provided the best available theoretical ground for *wenzhang.* One of Fang's achievements as an official was his compilation of an official guide to composing civil service exam essays (欽定四書文), which aimed to produce talent based on the combination of the learning of the *Four Books* and training in the art of writing.

By the time of the *Siku quanshu* project, Qian-Jia scholarship had begun to shape the civil service exams and had gained court sponsorship. Its leaders also began to openly attack the rest of the literati world as ignorant and biased for their lack of *xungu* training. As intellectual politics intensified, these trends struck younger Tongcheng figures as a crisis of intellectual culture. One of Fang Bao's main followers, Yao Nai (姚鼐 1731-1815), at that time a Hanlin scholar, joined the editorial board of the *Siku quanshu*.

However, he left the capital in 1774 because he could not bear the Qian-Jia antiquarianism that was pervading the capital, and he spent the rest of his life teaching writing.[569]

For Yao, Qian-Jia scholars overemphasized the importance of textual studies in the overall program of literati learning. In a counterattack based on Neo-Confucian and Tongcheng premises, Yao claimed that the Qian-Jia approach was trivial and meaningless; by reducing the role of the Classics to a bunch of old texts, its partisans isolated themselves from the truth of Heaven-and-Earth. It was Heaven-and-Earth that offered the source for individuals to develop moral agency.

A vivid example of Yao's critique was a piece that he composed as a preface for Qian Dian (錢坫 1744-1806), who was Qian Daxin's nephew and also a renowned philologist. Qian Daxin, as we have already discussed, claimed that the broad textual-cultural tradition was the true sagely tradition, and there was nothing real in the pursuit of the principle of natural things. Qian Dian was close to Qian Daxin and joined his cohort after the elder Qian quit his official titles and turned to teaching and study.[570] When Qian Dian had to leave Beijing and travel to the south, Yao Nai wrote a very subtle preface for him that later became a celebrated example of his prose writing.

> When Confucius died, the great Way became obscure. Han Confucians inherited the legacy of the Qin burning of the books and for the first time set up special fields of learning, each responsible for one Classic. Teachers and pupils passed these down; those of the same generation were jealous of one another and did not make their findings known to one another. In regard to the Way of the sages, this is like building walls and blocking the path in. In time, scholars appeared who had

[569] Huters, "From Writing to Literature", 70-1.

[570] See Dai Yi's biographical introduction, "Qianjia shixue dashi Qian Daxin" (乾嘉史學大師錢大昕), *Wenshizhe* (文史哲), no 3. (1997), 36-41.

penetrated all the Classics, who sought evidence all around and chose the best explanations. As for their flaws, they mixed [their findings] with divination and confused them by adding eccentricities and lowly trifles, so the world laughed at them. Around the period of Wei and Jin, empty talk became popular. [People] considered pure talk to be superb and [Classical] exegeses to be useless. [They] were indulgent and decadent. [This situation continued] until the order collapsed. Yet, the world perhaps particularly loved their words and thus could not bear abolishing [them]. From that time the north and the south diverged to fashion different approaches to learning. [After] over five hundred years, the Tang unified the world. [The official scholars] integrated the advantages of the north and the south into one set of commentaries, publically demonstrating one tradition. But as to whether their choices were right or wrong, there was no final decision.

孔子沒而大道微，漢儒承秦滅學之後，始立專門，各抱一經。師弟傳受，儕偶怨怒，嫉妬不相通曉，其於聖人之道猶築牆垣而塞門巷也，久之，通儒漸出，貫穿群經，左右證明，擇其長說，及其敝也，雜之以讖緯，亂之以怪僻，猥碎世又譏之。蓋魏晉之間，空虛之談，興以清言為高，以章句為塵垢，放誕頹壞，迄亡天下。然世猶或愛其說辭不忍廢也，自是南北乖分學術異尚，五百餘年，唐一天下，兼採南北之長定為義疏，明示統貫，而所取或是或非，未有折衷。

During the Song, the real scholars discovered the goal of the sages, and there were generally definitive interpretations of the Classics. The Yuan and Ming followed these interpretations, and wrote them into law. When the self-indulging emperors (佚君) of Ming repeatedly corrupted politics, it was the scholar-officials who maintained the principles of a moral society and personal integrity, so that the Ming lasted for a long time before it finally declined. Was it not the result of Song scholars' discussion of learning?

宋之時，真儒乃得聖人之旨，群經略有定說，元明守之，著為功令，當明佚君，亂政屢作，士大夫維持綱紀，明守節義，使明久而後亡，其宋儒論學之效哉？

Moreover, the movement of Heaven-and-Earth changes … [As for] the changes in scholarship, if there are great scholars paying attention to the fundamentals and correcting the fallacies [in this process of change], then the new trends will be better than the old ones. Otherwise, [the new trends] will not be as good as the old ones. It has been like this since the Han. From the end of the Ming to the present day, scholars have been tired of learning about and listening to what they were officially required to learn, and have also been uneasy that shallow scholars did not delve into the ancient [texts] and were blinded by more recent [texts.] Thus, they have been particularly seeking to [study] the names, objects, institutions, exegeses, writings, and calculations of the ancient world. [They] measure [learning] based on [scholars'] breadth of [knowledge] and attack each other's oversights. Those who are most serious want to entirely abolish the Cheng-Zhu

> [learning] and follow the scholars of the Han. When the branches are harvested the roots will be lost, and when the details are collected the significance will be missed. Is this not ignorance?
>
> 且夫天地之運，久則必變…… 學者之變也，有大儒操其本，而齊其弊，則所尚也賢於其故，否則不及其故，自漢以來皆然，已明末至今日，學者頗厭功令所載為習聞，又惡陋儒不考古而蔽於近，於是專求古人名物制度訓詁書數以博為量，以闕隙攻難為功，其甚者欲盡舍程朱而宗漢之士，枝之獵而去其根，細之蒐而遺其鉅，夫寧非蔽與？
>
> Mr. Qian Xianzhi from Jiading has a strong memory and thinks deeply; [he] is an outstanding role model among today's scholars. I used to tell him what I thought, [he] did not reject me. Yet, [that was when] he still lived in the hustle and bustle of the capital. Mr. Qian is going to return to Jiangnan and travel to Lingnan. [On the trip] there will be no friends nearby. He will only see big mountains, rivers, and tall trees, and he will only hear the sounds of birds and animals. When [he] looks around Heaven and Earth, empty and vast, and [he takes the chance] to reflect on the intentions of the sages in transmitting their doctrines and educating the world, and in giving priority to the big things, then he will agree even more with what I have said.
>
> 嘉定錢君獻之強識而精思，為今士之魁傑，余嘗以余意告之，而不吾斥也，雖然，是猶居京師厖淆之間也。錢君將歸江南而適嶺表，行數千里，旁無朋友，獨見高山大川喬木，聞鳥獸之異鳴，四顧天地之內，寥乎茫乎，於以俯思古聖人垂訓教世、先其大者之意，其於余論將益有合也哉。[571]

Yao tried to reduce Qian-Jia scholarship into a minor trend within the transmission of *Ru* learning in history. He explained that he understood the general cause of the school, but he had to criticize it for its discouragement of intellectual unity and moral responsibility. In the end he situated Qian Xianzhi in a imagined poetic scene, vividly depicting him as alone, embraced by Heaven-and-Earth, reflecting on the truly fundamental and enduring doctrine of the sages on his way to the south, without being distracted by the complex partisan quarrels in the capital, by which Yao implied the Qian-Jia group's competitive but trivial scholarly disputes. Ending his piece with this imaginary set-up, Yao intended

[571] Yao Nai, "Zeng Qian Xianzhi xu" (贈錢獻之序), Xibaoxuan wenji (惜抱軒文集) *juan* 7, *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, 1453. A section of the translation is from Huters, 75.

to elicit the reader's judgment on Qian's mistaken choices and hope for Qian's return to the real Way. The moral sensation that Yao created with his literary talent would influence quite a few late Qing scholars (such as Zeng Guofan曾國藩) to see Qian-Jia learning as partly responsible for the decay of literati morals and the decline of the dynasty.

Like Fang Bao, Yao was not a strict Neo-Confucian moralist focused only on discoursing on the mind and nature based on the *Four Books*. Instead, he promoted *wenzhang* and argued that it was good writing that enabled scholars to see the working of Heaven-and-Earth through their minds. For instance, Yao was fascinated with using metaphors drawn from nature to describe the effect of writing.

> I have heard that the Way of Heaven-and-Earth consists of nothing but the *yin* and *yang*, the gentle and the strong. Writing (*wen*) is the finest essence of Heaven-and-Earth, and the manifestation of the *yin* and the *yang*, the gentle and the strong…If one has obtained the beauty of the *yang* and strong, then one's writing will be like thunder, like lightning, like a long wind emerging from the valley, like lofty mountains and steep cliffs, like a great river flooding, like galloping steeds…If one has obtained the beauty of the *yin* and the gentle, then one's writing will be like the sun just beginning to rise, like cool breeze, like clouds, like vapor, like mist, like secluded woods and meandering steams, like ripples, like water gently rocking, like the sheen of pearls and jade, like the cry of a wild goose disappearing into the silent void.
>
> 竊聞天地之道，陰陽剛柔而已。文者，天地之精英，而陰陽剛柔之發也。…… 其得於陽與剛之美者，則其文如霆，如電，如長風之出谷，如崇山峻崖，如決大川，如奔騏驥。……其得於陰與柔之美者，則其文如升初日，如清風，如云，如霞，如煙，如幽林曲澗，如淪，如漾，如珠玉之輝，如鴻鵠之鳴而入廖廓。[572]

Importantly, for Yao, the cultivation of *wenzhang* would enable scholars to discover the larger coherence of the Classics, the coherence that the historicism of the

[572] Yao Nai, "Fu Lu Xiefei shu" (復魯絜非書) in *Sibao xuan quanji*, *juan* 6,10 – 11a, quoted from Huters, "From Writing to Literature", 72.

Qian-Jia philology would never be able to access. The practice of *wenzhang* would keep the Classics meaningful and fresh through generations. In the preface to his *Classified Compendium of Ancient Prose* (Guwenci leizhuan xumu古文辭類纂序目) (1779), Yao claimed,

> As for wen, it does not matter if it is ancient or modern; the only [norm] is whether it is fitting or not. [Because the six Classics] are fitting, they [could] be one unified Way until today. Knowing how the six Classics could be fitting, even if [one is] far removed from antiquity, one can take the six Classics as the model for the present day. [The six Classics] are just like everyday food and clothes that cannot be discarded; if [one does] not know why they are fitting, then [they would] appear to be old and useless. Thus, to leave one person's words to the world in order to help the people in the future, [it would] allow [the six Classics] to be expected for the future.
>
> 夫文無所謂古今也，惟其當而已。得其當，則《六經》至於今日，其為道也一。知其所以當，則於古雖遠，而於今取法，如衣食之不可釋。不知其所以當，而敝棄於時。則存一家之言，以資來者，容有俟焉。[573]

On these grounds, Yao defended the Neo-Confucians and broader Song learning tradition from the Qian-Jia scholars' attack on the Song scholars' inability to conduct accurate textual studies. In turn, Yao criticized his contemporary philologists as intellectually and morally corrupted.

> In the past Li Wenzhen (i.e. Li Guangdi 李光地) and Vice Minister Fang [Bao] used discussions from Song and Yuan scholars to incorporate Han scholars, and thoroughly explained the ideas of the Classics. [They] only sought to make sense of the meaning [of the Classics] and reach points of agreement, rather than emphasize the one-sided [approach of a] Master. Among their explanations there indeed existed some speculations (望文生義，揣合形似之說), but [they] helped to establish moral teachings, and therefore did not miss the sages' intention in the six Classics to order the world…..Later scholars … based their foundation of learning on seeking truth from facts, and they saw their goal as corresponding to the meaning of the Classics and loyalty to the approach of their school. In the beginning their approach was advocated by those who wanted to accumulate their learning and who were fond of antiquity, but their minor followers have aggravated [the tendency]. [These followers] seek opportunities to ingratiate

[573] Zheng Jixiong, *Qingru mingzhu shuping*, 192

themselves with authority in order to secure their personal gains; they search for [other scholars'] linguistic fallacies to make unreasonable criticism of [their] reputation and integrity. [In so doing,] they are misleading younger people, [making them] chase each other in [the learning of] trivial words and uncommon theories, rather than integrating [their learning] into a whole. …

昔李文貞、方侍郎苞，以宋、元諸儒議論，柔和漢儒，疏通經旨，惟取義合，不名專師。其間未嘗無望文生義，揣合形似之說，而扶樹道教，於人心治術有所稗益。……其解經雖不必盡合於經，而不失聖人六經治世之意。……後之學者……以實事求是為本，以應經義、不倍師法為宗。其始亦出於積學好古之士為之倡，而末流浸以加厲，因便抵巇，周內其語言文字之疵，以貴責名義，駭誤後學，相尋逐於小言辟說，而不要其統。……[574]

The most sophisticated Tongcheng/Neo-Confucian critic was Fang Dongshu (方東樹 1772-1851), of the next generation. His views shed light on the deep intellectual-political conflicts of the early nineteenth century, a time when the literati world started to witness continuous social and political problems. His book, *A Discussion of Han Learning* (Hanxue shangdui 漢學商兌), came out in 1831 as a response to Jiang Fan's (江藩) *The Record of the Lineage of Han Learning* (Hanxue shicheng ji 漢學師承記), which retrospectively glorified what had commonly been seen as the so-called "Han Learning" school of the Qing since the generation of Yan Ruoqu. Fang was Yao Nai's student, but Fang also had a background in Qian-Jia textual studies. He went through the writings of more than thirty leading Qian-Jia scholars, including Dai Zhen, Ruan Yuan, Qian Daxin, and Hui Dong, critiquing their claims based on both textual evidence and philosophical arguments. Fang did not try to validate Neo-Confucian metaphysics.

[574] This passage was cited by the Tongcheng writer Mei Zengliang (梅曾亮 (1786-1856) in essay "*Jiujing shuo* shu hou" (九經說書後), included in his *Baijian shanfang ji* (柏梘山房集) *juan* 5. Quoted from Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jinsanbainian xueshu shi* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1964) vol.2, 573.

Instead, he explained why the attack from the Qian-Jia scholars missed the point of the Neo-Confucian tradition, and he tried to defend the Neo-Confucian method based on its contribution to literati culture. He also went deeper to explain why the methods of the Qian-Jia school would lead to an irresponsible literati culture, and unearthed some of the inconsistencies and self-referentiality of Qian-Jia scholarship.

Troubled by the Qian-Jia scholars' linguistic contextualism, in the first part of the book Fang defended the validity of many Neo-Confucian concepts by pointing to the Qian-Jia scholars' limited understanding of the legacies of the literati tradition. For instance, the fact that the term "Learning of the Way" (*daoxue* 道學) was a later creation by the Neo-Confucians did not suggest that the pursuit of the "Way" was thus meaningless to the tradition. It would be superficial and rigid to render an idea invalid just because the term used to express that idea was a later product. [575] Then, instead of reading the literati tradition philologically, Fang reconstructed a conceptual history of the "Way" from antiquity onward to show that, throughout history the *Ru* had in fact maintained a fairly coherent philosophical understanding of the "Way," as well as understandings of "coherence" (*li)* and "mind" (*xin*). Thus, in his view, this coherent pursuit of the "Way" through history meant that the "Learning of the Way" should be a sufficient representation of the *Ru* tradition.[576]

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[575] "夫學道，乃士人之職業；'道學'乃後人所加之名號。隨文各當，不可執著。" Fang Dongshu, *Hanxue shangdui, juan* 1, included in Jiang Fan and Fang Dongshi, *Hanxue shi chengji: wai er zhong* (漢學師承記：外二種) (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian Press, 1998), 242.

[576] "按：向來疑宋儒者，譏其墮禪。此獨污其篡道，雖焦竑、楊慎輩，極力詆毀，皆未有若是之堅僻者。夫學道，乃士人之職業；「道學」乃後人所加之名號。隨文各當，不可執著。古者治出於一，道在君師學校，而猷畝所樂者亦是。……"Ibid., 242-9.

Moreover, based on this argument, Fang intended to make a general claim that the *xungu* method was not conducive to the learning of the values of the sages, because it kept scholars from thinking about the philosophical and moral meanings of ideas and fixed their interest on reconstructing the language. "If transmitting the Classical texts means that the Way [of the sages] is also transmitted," Fang argued, "then, the contribution of the 'Han Learning' scholars would not be ignored. [However,] if the Classical texts are transmitted but the Way [of the sages] is not, then how could the contribution of the 'Song Learning' scholars be discounted?" [577]

Next, Fang moved onto to the epistemological argument of the Qian-Jia tradition, criticizing Qian-Jia scholars' shift away from cultivation of the moral mind (*xin*) as the goal of learning. To cultivate the moral mind and to understand the Coherence (*li*) of things were inseparable. However, in his view, the investigation of the names and institutions in the Classics was the least relevant activity for that purpose.

Here Fang seemed to be picking on Dai Zhen's deconstruction of the Neo-Confucian understanding of *li* (理), or coherence. As we have shown, in his commentary on Mencius, Dai had argued that the *li* that human beings can perceive is simply the orderliness of the differentiations between things; it only exists in things, rather than representing an indicator of moral knowledge that the human mind directly receives from Heaven. To learn to analyze the *li* of things was to see individual things as they are, rather than to gain an intuitive understanding of their unity. Only in doing so could scholars avoid confusing their subjective opinions with moral judgment. However, Fang

[577] "間嘗論之，以為經傳則道傳，漢儒之功不可廢，乃經傳而道仍未傳，宋儒之功豈可污邪？"Ibid., 261.

did not believe that the pursuit of *li* and the cultivation of the mind could be separated. Fang traced this view back to Gu Yanwu. He noticed that Gu Yanwu had tried to search for the *li* of things, but had also criticized the idea of learning as transmitting the *xin* (心), or the mind. Understanding these two notions from the Neo-Confucian position, Fang was not fully clear how Gu could abandon *xin* to talk about *li.*

> Just as what Gu [Yanwu] said, the mind is to be unified and identified with this *li*. [This means that] with this [mind] the sages investigated into the most subtle and precarious with perfect accuracy, transmitted [the mind] while holding to the mean so that everything agreed with this *li*. Since Gu could not speak of *li* without the mind (*xin*), then, when [he] mentioned, again, that the learning of the sages and worthies was to meet the needs of society and the country [through using] one's mind, [what he actually meant by mind] was nothing other than the ultimate *li* (至理 *zhili*), which would not change even in thousands of years. Since Gu had already clarified that sages used their minds (*xin*) to integrate this *li*, so that this *li* could be transmitted to thousands of years, why did [he] still say that the mind does not depend on transmission so one should not speak of the transmission of the mind (*xin*)? If Gu intended *not* to advocate the transmission of the mind (*xin*), only transmitting the *li*, then [I] do not know through what medium can this *li* be transmitted? If this *li* traverses the past and present with no difference, and can be adopted any time for anything by anyone, always without insufficiency, and is always available without needing [people to make the effort] to transmit it, then doesn't this mean that the words of the ancient sages and worthies could be all abandoned? [Since] *li* is complete in the mind, [then] it is beyond history, and it is unitary (夫理具於心，無古今，一也). Today, to only allow talking about *li* but not mind (*xin*), is just like saying that people only need to store enough rice but do not need to talk about the rice plant. Isn't this ignorant?
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> 且如顧氏所云，心者，所以統宗此理。聖人所以致察於微危精一，相傳以執中，使無不合於理。是顧氏已不能舍心以言理，又云聖賢之學，自一心達之家國之用，無非至理，歷千載而無間。是顧氏已自明，言聖人以其心統具此理，以傳於千載，何以云言心不待傳，不當言傳心邪？假如顧氏意不言傳心，第言傳理，不知此理託於何物以傳邪？若以理貫徹古今，而無不同，但隨時、隨事、隨人取用，自無不足，無待於傳，則是古聖賢經典文字皆可廢？夫理具於心，無古今，一也。今言理而不許言心，譬如言世人但取足米，不必言禾，此不為童昏之見邪？[578]

[578] Ibid., 268.

Fang noticed that not only did Gu Yanwu consider the goal of learning to be the pursuit of the *li* of the world, but also he recognized the importance of cultivating the mind. But Fang did not understand why Gu could still challenge the Neo-Confucian belief in the need for transmitting the mind (*chuanxin* 傳心) to the future as the mission of scholars. Importantly, Fang did not seem to understand that, by "pursuing the *li* of the world", Gu did not mean the process of reaching the state of Coherence to make the right moral judgment; he meant the process of gaining understandings about the laws and principles of government and society. By gaining and reflecting on such *li*, the laws and principles of human society, the judging mind would make decisions about government. In this sense, the pursuit of *li* ought to be an open-ended process based on empirical studies and theorization. Accordingly, the formation of the judging mind, the *xin*, would also be an historically rooted experience, influenced by the particular needs and worldly reality of the scholars' time. To be able to gain *li* and to cultivate one's thinking as such, scholars had to give up the mission of transmitting a unified and ultimate moral mind.

Interestingly, it seems to me, neither side, Fang Dongshu nor the Qian-Jia scholars, conceived of the possibility of treating the pursuit of *li* as an open-ended theorizing process. Accordingly, neither looked at the cultivation of the mind as an historically rooted learning process. To attack the Neo-Confucian tendency to impose subjective opinions on the world, the Qian-Jia scholars went to the other extreme of avoiding talking about the cultivation of any constructive judgment about public order. For Fang, this meat the Qian-Jia scholars had abandoned the responsibility of the *Ru* to transform the world; they had forgotten their moral role and damaged literati culture.

The polarization between the side of Fang Dongshu and the Qian-Jia Evidential scholars was also largely rooted in the textualist turn of Evidential scholarship itself after the early Qing founders. For instance, in the following section, Fang endorsed Yan Ruoqu's argument that "In working on the Classics one does not need to limit oneself to *li.*" Fang believed that Yan was right as Yan was talking about the studies of specific subjects of the Classics such as calendars and calculations. Importantly, rather than continue studying the Classics and the histories in pursuit of social and political thought, the young Evidential scholars since Yan Ruoqu's generation had given the domains of *li* and *xin* back to the Neo-Confucian moral interpretation, mainly claiming their validity based on textual methods rather than the social and political relevance of their judgment.

For people such as Fang, although it was tolerable to have a group of specialized scholars conducting scholarship as Yan did, when the Evidential scholars started to raise a new flag based on the *xungu* method to redefine the meaning of the entire Classical learning tradition, it became a big problem.[579] In his next section, Fang selected claims about the superiority of the *xungu* method from Qian Daxin, Hui Dong, Dai Zhen, and Ruan Yuan to argue against them case-by-case. Apart from reiterating his claim that the philological meaning of a term did not necessarily lead to an understanding of the moral meaning of the Classics, Fang also pointed out places where the Qian-Jia scholars were self-referential and dogmatic.

[579] For instance, "閻若璩謂治經不必拘理（見自駁舊用劉原父十月之交辛卯朔日食說）此專爲天文歷算言之則可，非一切經文可不拘理，而專求之訓詁也。" Ibid.

For instance, Fang criticized Hui Dong's celebration of the continuity of the ancient meanings of words, and especially his celebration of the *Erya* (爾雅) text.[580] Fang argued that the *Erya* was a later text based on the Classics and commentaries, therefore, using the *Erya* to interpret the Classics was self-referential. Fang also targeted the claim that phonology was indispensible for understanding the moral meaning of the Classics. He claimed that using the phonetic principle of ancient words to read the Classics might make sense for some texts, such as the *Book of Changes* and the *Classic of Odes*, which were written with rhymes. However, the six Classics were a giant corpus, and not all parts could be understood by simply investigating individual words or terms; many phrases and expressions of the Classics were chosen by their authors with a coherent purpose (義逐辭成).[581] Following this point, Fang continued to note similar problems with applying Xu Shen' (許慎) theory of Chinese characters to make sense of the meaning of the Classics.[582] He admitted that Xu Shen's work was meaningful on its own, but when Hui Dong specifically applied Xu Shen's work to prove the meaning of the Classics and when followers regarded Xu Shen's work as the key to understanding the

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[580]"'惠氏曰：《爾雅》《釋訓》《釋詁》，周公所作，故《詩》稱'古訓是式'。漢世謂之訓詁，訓詁者，雅言也。周之古訓，山甫式之。'子之雅言，門人記之。《爾雅》以觀於古，故又謂之《爾雅》，俗儒不信《爾雅》，而仲山甫之古訓，夫子之雅言，皆不存矣。"按：惠氏此論，亦斥朱子。蓋朱子謂《爾雅》是取傳注以作，後人卻以《爾雅》證傳注。"Ibid., 318.

[581] "小學之事其類有三：曰形、曰聲、曰義。訓詁經傳，則主于義理，雖義理訓詁有時不出形聲之外，然經傳既集字成辭，則文繁字廣，亦義逐辭成，固不僅用諧聲之文、从聲之字足成辭也，故諧聲之說，祇可專據《詩》《易》及有韻之文，而不可概論一切經文，而況概以求全經之大義乎？"

[582] "許君本以六書之義解說文字，謂聖人不虛作，必有依據。所謂依據者，指六義也，凡以明聖人作此字之義有一定依據也。若夫經義則不然，有一字作一義用，有一字作數義用，今執《說文》以一字考經，所以致以文害詞，以詞害意，穿鑿而不可通也。"

Classics, it became a problem.[583] Focusing on words as the imperative in deciphering the Classics was dogmatic. It ignored the importance of the mental process in the writing and thinking of the author, crucial for the formation of the Classics. Also, an exclusive focus on individual words and their linguistic and cultural contexts could lead to overlooking the author's self-conscious selection and manipulation of words.[584]

In his final section, Fung criticizes the Qian-Jia scholars for being irresponsible and lacking the learning necessary for ordering the world. Their studies of ancient language and institutions could not lead to any constructive contribution to government and society.

> People following the Han Learning insist that moral principles (義理) exist in meanings of words and institutions. However, just taking their investigation of the convention of vehicle-making as an example, Mr. Jiang (i.e. Jian Yong) has studied it, Mr. Dai (i.e. Dai Zhen) has drawn an illustration, Mr. Ruan, Jin, Cheng, Jiang, Sheng, and Zhang [discussed it in the context of imperial buildings], and Mr. Huang, Jiang, Ren and Dai [discussed with respect to clothing and hats]. Each of them is specialized, and they all argue with each other. We have no way to tell whose view represents the true and definitive view. Is this what Zhuangzi meant by "waiting for a definite answer"? Personally, I think it is certainly ideal if this kind of knowledge can be clarified, but even if this kind of knowledge can not be clarified, it would have nothing essential to do with the primary issues such as the [cultivation of the] self, the mind, human nature and life, government policies, common people's livelihood, and the approaches of learning. Things have root and branches; why are they worthy of being praised? Based on Xunzi's view that we should follow the newer kings as our model, for things such as hats and clothes, convention of vehicles, distribution of land for officials, taxation, etc.,

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[583] "凡如此類皆許氏之功臣而非全為經義，獨惠氏校《說文》多以證明經義，而說者又以惠氏不過兼學，非專門深于《說文者》然，則爲《說文》之學者又不必爲明經義也。"

[584] "夫謂義理卽存乎訓詁，是也。然訓詁多有不得眞者，非義理何以審之？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，豈况說經不可廢也？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，而强執異本異文以訓詁，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「義理本于訓詁」，其可信乎？言不問是非，人惟論時代，以爲去聖未遠，自有所受，不知漢儒所說，違誤害理者甚衆。漢學諸人，釋經解字，謂本之古義者，大率祖述漢儒之誤，傅會左驗，堅執穿鑿，以爲確不可易。"

> even though they are conventional institutions made by the ancient sage kings, they are still like dusty food and rotten meat. Why so? The major issues, such as the founding of the three calendar systems [of Xia, Shang, and Zhou], the celebration of their own spirit such as Loyalty and Prudence (and Culture), the enfeoffment system and the rituals and music, even the sages themselves in the three dynasties did not follow exactly [what their predecessors did], why should the later generations follow the ancient conventions?
>
> 漢學諸人，堅稱義理存乎訓詁典章制度。而如考工車制，江氏有考，戴氏有圖，阮氏、金氏、程氏、江氏、盛氏、張氏宮室，黃氏、江氏、任氏、戴氏衣服冕弁。各自專門，亦互相駁斥，不知誰為真知定見。莊子所謂有待而定者邪！竊以此等明之固佳，即未能明，亦無關身心性命國計民生學術之大。物有本末、是何足臧也。以荀子法後王之語推之，則冕服、車制、祿田、賦稅等，雖古聖之制亦塵飯木屑耳。何者？三統之建，忠質之尚，井田禮樂諸大端，三代聖人已不沿襲，又何論後世，而欲追古制乎？[585]

From Fang's perspective, their scholarship only represented a trivial affection for the "dead" institutions of the past. Moreover, the fact that they tried to propose a different discourse about the learning of the Classics meant that the Qian-Jia school stood as an obstacle for the literati community to return to its real path. To restore the unity and morality of literati culture, Fang argued for the necessity of discoursing on learning (*jiangxue*), reminding the audience of the scholarly legacy of the *Donglin* scholars, especially their view that learning needed to establish moral standards and enable scholars to develop their moral mind.

Fang's conclusion demonstrated that the Qian-Jia school posed a real challenge to the literati community, for which the civil service exam based on the Cheng-Zhu learning curriculum defined the standard understanding. What is worth noticing is that, from Yao Nai to Fang Dongshu, they defended the Neo-Confucian tradition, or the "Song learning" tradition, not because they themselves were devoted to the Neo-Confucian worldview,

[585] Fang Dongshu, *Hanxue shangdui, juan* 3.Quoted from Lu Baoqian, *Qingdai sixiangshi*, 182.

but mostly because they were worried that the Qian-Jia scholars' discourse would deconstruct the justification for the public role of learning and cause scholars to withdraw from public life. This worry was not just real to the Neo-Confucians and the Tongcheng writers, but also real to another group of Classical scholars.

Responses from New-Text Classical Learning: Classical Learning and the Political Role of Literati Scholars

Critical responses to the Qian-Jia school did not only rise in defense of Neo-Confucianism. There was also a different line of opinion from the so-called Changzhou School (常州學派). I shall briefly address this critique, as understood in current scholarship.

Cai Changlin's (蔡長林) study persuasively demonstrates that the leader Zhuang Cunyu's (莊存與 1719-1788) revival of the New-Text approach to Classical learning was very much a reaction to the overwhelming success of the Qian-Jia scholarship in the mid-Qing, and especially a reaction to Qian-Jia scholars' criticism of the existing practice of exam essays.[586] In particular, Cai shows that Zhuang's family honored its own tradition of serving as the emperors' teachers, responsible for training the emperors to be successful rulers based on the teaching of the Classics. In their view, the Qian-Jia

[586] Cai Changlin (蔡長林) *Cong wenwhi dao jingsheng : kaojuxue fengchao xia de Changzhou xuepai* (從文士到經生：考據學風潮下的常州學派) (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 2010). Cai Changlin proposes a different narrative on the rise of the Changzhou school from Benjamin Elman in *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*: *The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). Cai argues against Elman's claim that Changzhou school took its shape from the court politics during late Qianlong reign was not fully. Cai also claims that labeling the Changzhou school with the interest in the Gongyang tradition was a retrospective view. 167.

scholars, who identified themselves as the interpreters of ancient institutions and culture, rose from the grassroots. They withdrew from teaching how to govern or making top-down political decisions, thus they could not represent the real political role of the *Ru* tradition. It seems that for the Zhuang family, the rise of the Qian-Jia school was more of a political problem than an ideological threat.

As Cai shows, although Zhuang was influenced by the textual studies trend, he modified the Qian-Jia approach for his own purpose. Philology was trivial because the knowledge produced by the Qian-Jia scholars was unrelated to the real job of a Classicist at court, which was to use the Classics to convey a political agenda, rather than to treat them as research materials. In this sense, the New-Text Classical learning tradition was the right approach, as it claimed to be able to make sense of the "subtle words and the grand purpose" of the sages, stressing the role of the Classics as a political plan designed for the ruler to use. For Zhuang and his students, their models were Western Han court political thinkers such as Jia Yi (賈誼 200 BC – 168 BC) and Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒 179 BC - 104 BC) who used the Classics to deliver political arguments, rather than the Eastern Han Classical commentators such as Xu Shen (許慎 58-147) and Zheng Xuan (鄭玄 127-200), whom the Qian-Jia scholars often took as their models of linguistic and textual studies.[587] Moreover, the Changzhou school stressed the importance of exam essay writing as training one to draw on the Classics to develop political arguments.

In fact, many of Zhuang Cunyu's followers, such as Hong Liangji (洪亮吉 1746-1809), Sun Xingyan (孫星衍 1753-1818), Zhang Huiyan (張惠言 1761-1802), and Liu

[587] Ibid.,174-5.

Fenglu (劉逢祿 1776-1829), are said to have been absorbed into Qian-Jia networks when the influence of that school reached its peak. As Cai shows, however, echoing Zhang Taiyan (章太炎 1869-1936), these scholars with their Changzhou school background still brought their interests in political justification and rhetoric into their Classical interpretations.[588] Although Qian-Jia scholarship influenced their understanding of ancient institutions and documents, they turned this influence into a kind of politicized Classical interpretation that had strong contemporary implications, rather than being engaged in specialized textual inquiries or cultural studies.

There was another group of Changzhou scholars who did not want to be absorbed by the Qian-Jia group and started to organize their own Classical interpretative writing community to respond to the increasing popularity of Qian-Jia scholarship. The writer and local historian Li Zhaoluo (李兆洛 1769-1841) is an example. Li was often said to be sympathetic toward the Tongcheng School, but he had no interest in the cultivation of moral insight or training in literary form(義法). As Cai shows, Li confronted Ruan Yuan, who established influential academies and tried to convince young scholars to join the Qian-Jia group. Li insisted on the importance of combining writing (*wenzhang*) with classical learning (*jingsu* 經術)[589] and organized a community for civil service exam preparation.[590] However, he focused more on the power of the eight-legged essay in shaping politics than on investigating the basis of policy making. In other words, he seemed to be more motivated to criticize Qian-Jia textual studies and to cultivate

[588] Ibid., 187-188.

[589] Ibid., 206-29.

[590] Ibid., 208-9.

scholars' interest in shaping politics, than to engage in the study of government.

On the whole, based on the two lines of response that we have seen, the challenge of Qian-Jia scholarship to the literati community was also a challenge to the ideal of *Ru* as a moral and political agency in public life. This challenge was concretely demonstrated in the following aspects: a historicized understanding of antiquity as a cumulative textual, institutional, and cultural tradition, a view of learning as representing this bottom-up, historically formed cultural legacy, strong skepticism toward claims about the top-down, predetermined value discourse as the basis of learning, and a commitment to intellectual integrity based on detachment from politics. Both the Neo-Confucian/Tongcheng writers and the New-Text Classicists found these to be problematic.

The war over the premise of learning led to a so-called polarization between the "Han" and the "Song." The majority of Qian-Jia scholars committed themselves to the restoration of the broad textual-cultural traditions since antiquity, seeing their educational role to be the shaping of society's linguistic-cultural norms. As for those who were more philosophically sensitive, such as Dai Zhen, the Qian-Jia method embodied a practice of criticism. The legacy of the sages was their bottom-up investigation of the community's life, their understanding of human differences, and their compassion toward common desires. Their Way was transmitted through the shaping of people's everyday sense of justice and fairness. Since, for Dai, the Classics were a record of the historical community's practice and attitudes, the *xungu* method gave philologists a powerful tool to deconstruct official Neo-Confucian discourse about moral norms and to expose the power structure behind Neo-Confucian politics. Although both the majority of the Qian-

Jia philologists and the philosophically minded thinkers like Dai Zhen expressed strong disagreement with the official discourse, however, none of them imagined any realistic possibility of changing existing institutions or constructing a new political role for scholars, which would require building a progressive discourse about the agency of literati learning in history.

For scholars who were not competitive enough in textual studies or did not share the premise of the Qian-Jia scholars, the existing Neo-Confucian metaphysics (and the esoteric discourse of the Gongyang tradition) still provided a possible moral justification for the literati community's political role. Such justification entirely rejected looking at learning as a historically minded practice, seeing their learning as transmitting a pre-determined, correct understanding of the reality of the world. This war would continue into the late Qing. It contained two key debates that would occupy the late Qing reformists: On what foundation should learning be connected with the government? And, where should literati scholars find the foundation? These questions would loom large in the late Qing when new generations found themselves under the threat of unprecedented civilizational crise.

Chapter 4. Reinterpreting Antiquity in Global Perspective: The Return of Literati Political Activism and the Predicament of Kang Youwei's Progressive Agendas, 1860-1895

Introduction

In the first half of this study (Chapters 1-3), I have explored the rise and transformation of Evidential Learning from the Ming-Qing transition to the early nineteenth century. I have shown that Evidential Learning rose to respond to a profound crisis of literati identity in the early seventeenth century caused by the collapse of the common understanding of literati's public leadership based on the New-Confucian model. As I have shown, the legacies of the Evidential Learning had two main aspects: a new ideology in the late seventeenth century and a new collective textual-cultural study in the eighteenth century. The new trend led to a profound but largely neglected debate over values during the Qing, a debate between the Evidential Learning conception of shared values as a bottom-up, historical product of China's cultural community and the imperial Neo-Confucian conception of values as universalistic and predetermined moral doctrines as defined by the Qing government.

How does this background help us to understand China's modern transition, and particularly the rise of China's modern nationalistic discourse in the early twentieth century? Modern nationalistic discourse emerges in early twentieth century China in the context of a revival of the Evidential Learning tradition. I will argue in Chapter 5 that this revival profoundly influences and shapes the formation of China's national identity.

Taking into account this revival gives rise to a novel, more nuanced understanding of what the concept "nationalism," or *minzu zhuyi* (民族主義) meant for intellectual leaders, and ultimately uncovers the ideological foundations of modern China. The most prominent nationalist thinkers in the late Qing transition, Liang Qichao (梁啟超) and Zhang Taiyan (章太炎), were initially followers of Kang Youwei's (康有為) "New Learning" Movement. Therefore, before delving into the core of the argument in Chapter 5, it is necessary to understand the origins of Kang Youwei's movement as a response to the government-led Self-Strengthening Movement. This will provide the foundation to study how a critical reaction to Kang Youwei's positions and the revival of Evidential Learning converge to shape the claims of modern Chinese nationalistic thinkers.

Chapter 4 picks up where Chapter 3 has left off. As I have shown at the end of Chapter 3, the expansion of Evidential Learning under the increasing popularity of the Qian-Jia textual method, and the Qian-Jia scholars' challenge of the validity of the Neo-Confucian method, had contributed to a greatly polarized literati world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which lacked a common ground over shared values. Until the mid of the nineteenth century, there was not one unifying discourse defining how literati learning ought to be connected to the ordering of the world. For many, this condition and the Qian-Jia scholars' critique of government ideology elicited a crisis of literati public responsibility.

Chapter 4 begins by showing how, during the increasing social and political distresses in the nineteenth century, a constant desire of finding a common culture to ensure literati community's political leadership shaped the debates over the ideologies of reforms during the Self-Strengthening Movement. I reconstruct the ideological basis of

the Self-Strengthening movement by analyzing two major models that contributed to it: namely, the Neo-Confucian statecraft model exemplified by Zeng Guofan (曾國藩) and Li Hongzhang (李鴻章), and the Qian-Jia model promoted by Zhang Zhidong (張之洞). I show how each model proposed a literati ideology to mobilize scholars to engage with reform, and how each developed different ways to integrate the increasingly available Western sources of technology, ideas, and knowledge into their envisioned elite culture. I explain why these two groups held that only by strengthening the current Qing system and sticking to a synthesis of the current learning models could literati maintain their leadership in public life.

Having set this stage, I then turn to the emergence of the non-government intellectual-political force initiated by Kang Youwei's "New-Learning" agenda from the late 1880s to late 1890s, which grew out of an increasing urge to re-conceptualize the foundation of government – politics (政) and teaching (教) — for radical institutional reforms (變法). I demonstrate that Kang Youwei's movement argued for transforming existing institutional and ideological structures with the goal of securing the leadership of an accountable and cosmopolitan-minded learning tradition. In order to maintain the leadership of literati community in the face of the Western cultural impact, the leaders of the Self-Strengthening movement insisted on the importance of basing elite learning on existing moral or cultural discourses. Kang and his followers, however, rose to search for new ideologies that would transform literati scholarship into progressive political theorizations, promote open-ended Classical and historical learning, integrate studies of new theories from the West, and endorse a more direct and critical participation of literati scholars in government.

To understand the vision behind the "New Learning" movement, I pay particular attention to Kang's Classical and historical scholarship and his political-theoretical writings from the mid to the late 1880s. I explain how he constructed a new literati ideology in the late 1880s by working out a new interpretation of the foundation of China's antiquity, upon which the real *Ru* scholarly tradition was originally based. In so doing, he aimed to initiate a conceptual break from the existing models of literati learning and reform, a break that he claimed to be necessary for his generation to reconnect itself with antiquity and to fulfill the responsibility of restoring the legacies of China's Sage Kings.

I will explain in-depth the philosophical basis and the political goals of Kang's claims in light of his understanding of China's condition in the late nineteenth century. I will end this chapter by showing how Kang's model generated impact on a younger generation of scholars, what challenges his model had posed to the literati world, and how the tensions his agendas had initiated by the end of the nineteenth century could help us to understand the rise of Liang Qicaho and Zhang Taiyan in the next chapter.

Two Statecraft Models of Elite Learning: From Zeng Guofan to Zhang Zhidong. 1850s-1880s

Learning and Politics by the 1850s

In current scholarship, the late Qing official-led Self-Strengthening Movement is often studied for its institutional influence in the context of late Qing governmental reforms toward modernization. The intellectual-cultural meaning of the movement as an elite enterprise of learning, however, has not been fully explored. Considering that mid-

nineteenth century intellectual history witnessed intense debates over learning, situating the movement in the context of intellectual culture will enable us to better comprehend what the movement meant at that time, how the leaders defined the movement, and how the movement shaped the context of later changes. This section will examine the questions underlying the actions of the literati elite during this movement.

For the literati scholars of the mid-nineteenth century, their world was not just troubled by corruption, local uprisings, and foreign aggression, but also by the literati's inability to reach a common ground of learning to guide their engagement with public life. [591] As the previous chapter has shown, by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the success of Qian-Jia philology had triggered controversies regarding the nature of literati learning. These controversies became even more problematic during the mid-nineteenth century when social and political troubles spread. I shall briefly review the challenges that the Qian-Jia scholars had posed and the deeper problems that those challenges had uncovered.

As I have shown in earlier chapters, for the early seventeenth-century founders of Evidential Learning, such as Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi, and Wang Fuzhi, *Ru* learning ought to guide politics by theorizing knowledge about social-political life, based on open-ended and cumulative Classical and historical scholarship. The Classics provided them with the documented experiences and insights of the sage kings, the founders of China's civilization. Studying the Classics allowed later scholars to gain theoretical visions and historical information for understanding and guiding their contemporary world. Scholars

591 For representative discussions on the early-nineteenth century crises, see Philip Kuhn *Origins of the Modern Chinese State* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002.) Susan Mann, "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion," in John Fairbank ed., *Cambridge History of China,* vol. 10, 107–162.

also needed to study history from antiquity to the modern era, in order to test their interpretations of the experiences and insights of the founders. Not assuming that the Classics contained any unitary message about the Coherence of natural things, their learning was intended to cultivate historically informed political-theoretical thinkers, who would not only know how politics, society and culture work, but also know what defines the foundation of government and civilization. Their scholarly movements were also ideological agendas to redefine the source of shared values. Such a bottom-up ideological enterprise put them in sharp contrast to the imperial ideology, a bureaucracy-centered interpretation of Neo-Confucianism. The latter insisted that to guide the world, literati learning should firstly transform the state bureaucracy, from the ruler down to local officials, into a moral agent. People holding such a view took Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism as their scholarly foundation. Unlike Gu, Huang and Wang, who turned Classical learning into a practice of historically based political theorization, imperial Neo-Confucian scholars aimed to find and stay in tune with the moral Coherence of the Classics through book learning and maintaining a moral government through their everyday statecraft practice.[592]

In the mid-eighteenth century, in a much more stable social-political environment, Evidential Learning had experienced dramatic expansion and specialization. This resulted in a significant shift in evidential scholars' focus and objectives. Not primarily concerned with politics and ideological pursuits, evidential scholars during the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns committed themselves to a collective philological effort to reconstruct the cultural-institutional context of the Classics, and to trace the institutional and cultural legacy of

[592] For a detailed explanation on these two different proposals and implications, see chapter 2.

antiquity reflected in later historical texts. Importantly, under this cultural turn in their scholarly focus, the Qian-Jia evidential scholars promoted a shared philological methodology in Classical and historical learning in order to maintain a common position of literati learning critical of the imperial Neo-Confucian ideology. Whereas the Neo-Confucian program still operated based on the goal of searching for a unified and transcendental moral message for individuals to be found in the Classics, the Qian-Jia scholars' promotion of philological methodology as the only path to normative knowledge entirely challenged the basic assumption of Neo-Confucian ideology. Not only did they value the Classics as significant historical relics from the past that shaped the course of China's civilization, but, most importantly, they stressed the assumption that the Classics constituted an independent and internally coherent semantic world, where the understanding of any one piece of cultural-institutional practice necessarily relied on the understanding of the semantic system of the Classics. The Qian-Jia scholars' radical historicism led to a contextualist view of values. They distrusted positive theorization of normative principles based on speculation about the innate moral agency of individuals, and focused instead on cultural-institutional life, such as rituals, texts, language, music, and technology, as factors determining human behavior and interests. In so doing, the Qian-Jia scholars were able to maintain their agency by conducting an entirely apolitical scholarly agenda, making the Neo-Confucians appear empty and hypocritical. However, as the Qian-Jia scholars found their shared position through a common methodology, they also gave up the effort to construct any politically engaged ideological position. They shifted away from the early Qing founders' celebration of reflective thinking in making judgments about political life, avoided conducting higher-

level theorizations of social-political principles based on open-ended historical experiences, and disengaged themselves from reflecting on the contemporary practice of government.

If the early Qing founders of Evidential Learning intended to shift political and moral authority from government ideology to independent and critical scholarship, their Qian-Jia descendants went to another extreme, making it unnecessary for learning to be directly connected to political responsibility.[593] Such a conclusion, reached by the majority of Qian-Jia scholars, led to intense reactions. For the Tongcheng (桐城) ancient-prose (古文) writers, who connected Neo-Confucian learning with the practice of literary writing, the Qian-Jia scholars ran the risk of destabilizing the common ground of the entire literati community and jeopardizing the political authority of the literati. By refusing to grant the Classics any Coherence that could be reached through the individual moral cultivation, the Qian-Jia scholars relieved themselves of their responsibility as a public elite, undermining the unity of literati identity. Another group of challengers, the New-Text Classicists (今文經學), concerned with maintaining the political commitment of learning, turned to the Gongyang tradition's esoteric Classical reading, which promoted the view that behind the Classics there was a coherent political-moral message from Confucius for later scholars that would legitimize their political engagement.[594]

[593] As have discussed in the previous chapter, although Dai Zhen brilliantly excavated the philosophical and moral meaning of the Qian-Jia evidential scholarship, nonetheless, he pursued a kind of social and cultural criticism, rather than producing political knowledge to guide government, or to encourage scholars to engage in statecraft enterprises.

[594] For a detailed discussion of the debates, see Chapter 3.

Importantly, the New-Text Classicists' strategy was similar to that of the Tongcheng/Neo-Confucian camp in that both looked for an ahistorical doctrine to ensure a coherent reading of the Classics, in order to unite the literati world around its political roles. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, their strategies pointed to a difficult intellectual split, often described as a polarization between "Song learning" and "Han learning." Scholars were left with two options: seeing learning as the process of coming back to a transcendental political-moral Coherence if they wanted to be politically responsible, or embracing a radical contextualism that denied any normative mental agency if they wanted to carry on accumulative scholarly scholarship. Early Qing evidential scholars' analytical approach to Classical and historical leaning with the goal of theorizing social-political knowledge was no longer on the menu.

Entering the Daoguang (道光) reign, the meaning of the Qian-Jia approach was challenged in the face of increasing crises, from rebellions to foreign aggression. The desire grew for a total doctrine to unite elite learning around statecraft reform. Tang Jian (唐鑒 1778-1861), a major Neo-Confucian scholar from Hunan, led a group conducting discourses on learning in the capital, [595] and he mentored many local scholars in Hunan after he retired. [596] His circle also became a place where Tongcheng writers discussed moral learning in the Daoguang reign. Tang aimed to revive the learning of Lu Shiyi and Zhang Lüxiang (張履祥 1611-1674), among other early Qing Neo-Confucians, whose

[595] According to Wu Daofang (武道房), these people included Wu Tingdong (吳廷棟) 1793 - 1873), Tang Jian (唐鑒 1778-1861), Woren (倭仁 1804-1871), He Guizhen (何桂珍 1817-1855), Dou Xu (竇垿 1803-1865). See Wu Daofang, *Zeng Guofan xueshu zhuanlun* (曾国藩学术传论) (Hefei : Anhui daxue chubanshe Press, 2012).

[596] These people, according to Wu, included Luo Zenan (羅澤南 1808-1856) and Liu Rong (劉蓉) 1816-1873). Ibid., 69.

claim that moral cultivation could only be realized through devoted statecraft practice had contributed to the appropriation of Cheng-Zhu learning as an imperial moral ideology. Meanwhile, he motivated officials and literati scholars to pay attention to bureaucratic misbehavior in their statecraft learning.

On another front, Wei Yuan (魏源 1794-1857) continued the line of New-Text Classicists' efforts in working out a unitary doctrine. Wei had a sharper sense of the institutional roots of Qing bureaucratic misbehavior, and he called for empirical rigor in studying dynastic documents. But in order to motivate the entire scholarly community to find solutions to contemporary troubles, the primary task, for Wei, was still to reconstruct an ideology based on the assumption that the Classics provided a coherent message. In Wei's view, the Qian-Jia method was based on the Eastern Han philological tradition. It was rigorous, and could often develop detailed studies about past institutions, but it could easily become fragmented and meaningless in the modern world and threaten the larger moral role of learning. A more significant approach, for Wei, was demonstrated by the Gongyang tradition, which looked at antiquity as an ideal world in which "[the traditions of] Classical learning, writings, and statecraft affairs could eventually become one."[597]

This message was interestingly woven into the structure of *The Collected Writings on Statecraft of the Imperial Dynasty* (Huangchao jingshi wenbian 皇朝經世文編), a selection of literati writings compiled by Wei under the sponsorship of He Changling (賀長齡 1785-1848), a close friend of Tang Jian. The volume begins with a section on

[597] "今日復古之要，由故訓聲音以進于東漢典章制度，此齊一變至魯也。由典章制度以進於西漢微言大義，貫經術文章政事於一，此魯一變至道也。" Wei Yuan, "Liang Han jingshi jinguwen jiafa kao xu" (兩漢經師今古文家法考敘), *Wei Yuanji* (魏源集) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1976), 152.

learning (學術), followed by a section on government (治體). The rest is comprised of specific statecraft writings organized according to the Qing government's Six Boards. This structure seems to be making a point: each tradition - writing, learning, and statecraft - gains its meaning by being a part of a triad. Like his Neo-Confucian friends and his Gongyang mentors, Wei's understanding of the literati responsibility of ordering the world, *jingshi*, was state-centric. The literati community was more of a reform-minded "think tank" dedicated to fixing the institutional troubles of the dynasty, rather than a reflective and theoretical scholarly community devoted to examining the foundations of a polity.[598]

These two groups – the New-Text Classicists and the Tongcheng/Neo-Confucian camp – were closely connected in the Daoguang reign and often found themselves in need of one another to work out ideological schemes to overcome the influence of Qian-Jia scholars. This goal even inspired some efforts to reconcile these two commentary traditions. Wang Fansen's study of Shao Yichen's (邵懿辰1810-1861) work *A Synthetic Discussion of the Classic of Rites* (Lijing tonglun 禮經通論) offers a good example.[599]

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[598] Wei Yuan's statecraft learning has been often discussed for its critical discussion of governance (治) and his anti-dogmatic reformism. See Susan Mann and Philip Khun, "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion," *The Cambridge History of China* (Vol. 10), 166-170, and Philip Khun, *Origins of Modern Chinese State*, 27-53. But this line of claim often overlooks the role of Gongyang commentary tradition for him as a tool to propose a unified meaning for the Classics. For Wei, this approach could provide a common moral discourse for the literati world to respond to institutional misbehaving and fallacies. I am skeptical that Wei's Classical and historical studies meant to critically reflect on the nature of China's polity.

[599] Shao was a student of Tongcheng writer Mei Zengliang (梅曾亮 1786-1856). Inspired by the early Qing Neo-Confucian scholar Li Guangdi, Shao wrote an influential work, entitled *A Synthetic Discussion of the Book of Rites* (Lijing tonglun 禮經通論), in which he argued that Zhu Xi's reading of the Classics based on the Great Learning was supported by the reading of Gongyang commentary tradition. See Wang Fan-sen, "Qingji de shehui zhengzhi yu jingdian

These two groups were often grouped together under the label of "Song learning" (宋學) to be distinguished from the Qian-Jia evidential school, labeled as "Han learning" (漢學) scholars. However, there was no sign that any unity had been reached in the so-called "Song learning" camp, until the period of the Taiping rebellion in the 1850s and 1860s. In some sense, the Taiping rebellion provided the "Song" camp an opportunity to prove its leadership in public life. As the following sections will show, the success of Zeng Guofan's leadership directly led to a revival of Neo-Confucianism as a government ideology. Under his reinterpretation, the ideology effectively integrated the Self-Strengthening Movement, offering a starting point for more intellectual questions later.

Zeng Guofan's Enterprise and the Revival of Neo-Confucianism in 1860s

Born into a landlord family in Hunan, Zeng Guofan (曾國藩 1811-1872) entered the Imperial College in 1838 and soon became interested in scholars such as Tang Jian and Shao Yichen. He soon joined their discourse groups and became a devoted follower of early Qing statecraft Neo-Confucianism. Meanwhile, he formed connections with Tang's followers at his hometown in Hunan through changing newly learned ideas about moral learning.[600] As he later recalled, his learning during this period helped him to realize what a *Ru* ought to be.[601] He identified with the statecraft Neo-Confucian tradition, and, apart from devoting himself to reading relevant books, he made himself an

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quanshi – Shao Yichen yu *Lijing tonglun*," (清際的社會政治與經典詮釋—邵懿辰与《禮經通論》), included in *Zhongguo jindai xueshu de xipu*, 23-38.

[600] Wu Daofang, Zeng Guofan xueshu zhuanlun, 67

[601] Ibid.

attentive critic of bureaucratic behavior and tried to persuade the ruler to listen to Neo-Confucian officials.[602]

With the spread of the Taiping rebellion in the early 1850s, Tang's followers in Hunan, such as He Guizhen, Luo Zenan, and Liu Rong, began to organize militias for self-defense. Zeng, who went back home after his mother's death, soon involved himself in the militia enterprise and became the leader, effectively absorbing and expanding the militias under his leadership. In contrast to the failures of government troops, by the end of 1860 Zeng had achieved unexpected success by utilizing the local endeavors of Neo-Confucian elites. These successes soon earned him trust at court and allowed him to control forces across several important provinces. At the same time, he cultivated other Neo-Confucian provincial leaders such as Li Hongzhang (李鴻章 1823-1901) and Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠 1812-1885), who trained their armies following similar models, and integrated them into Zeng's increasing national power.

For the literati world, Zeng's growing leadership aimed for achievements far beyond the military. Believing that the key to an ordered world lay in the creation of a moral bureaucracy, they called for a coherent moral discourse of learning that would unite the ruler, the officials and the literati. Their military successes made two other political enterprises possible.

First, they aimed to rebuild bureaucratic officials' transformative leadership in local society and engage local elites in support. For instance, right after recovering localities from the Taiping, Zeng and his colleagues immediately began resuming the civil service exam, restoring officially sponsored academies, founding official publishing

[602] Ibid., 14-7.

houses, and so on.[603] The instruction offered by these academies was based on the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian curriculum.[604] The rational for this was that the chaos of the world resulted from an uncultivated bureaucracy, which resulted from the lack of cultivation and learning.

Second, this military success gained Zeng and his colleagues an opportunity at court to persuade the ruler to engage in moral learning and to abide by Neo-Confucian precepts.[605] Li Tangjie (李棠階 1798 – 1865) wrote to the Xianfeng (咸豐) emperor that to protect the country from catastrophe and to save the people, the ruler had to take the lead in self-cultivation.[606] Wu Tingdong (吳廷棟 1793 – 1873) addressed the importance of moral learning as a necessary step for the ruler to gain the loyalty of literati leaders. [607] Zeng himself also reminded Xianfeng to pay attention to cultivation. As Shi Gexin (史革新) noted, at the beginning the Xianfeng emperor was not fully convinced, but, starting

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603 For an introduction of the Zeng Guofan circle's rebuilding of official academies, see Barry Keenan, *Imperial China's Last Academies* (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, 1994).

604 Wu Daofang, Zeng Guofan xueshu zhuanlun, 266-7.

605 My understanding of the revival of Neo-Confucian learning and politics in court during this period is based on the studies by Shi Gexin (史革新), Wu Daofang and Barry Keenan. Shi reconstructed a detailed picture of the revival and its political implications, see Shi, "Chengzhu lixue yu wanqing tongzhi zhongxing," (程朱理学与晚清同治中兴) *Jindaishi yanjiu* (近代史研究) no.6 (2003): 72-104; Wu Daofang offered more information about education and culture. See, Wu, *Zeng Guofan xueshu zhuanlun*, 266-8; Keenan's discussion of late Qing's official academies offers information about the social aspects of the Neo-Confucian local education. Barry Keenan, *Imperial China's Last Academies*.

606 "夫出治在君，而所以出治者在人君之一心。今海內沸騰，生民塗炭，誠刻苦奮勵之時也。臣竊謂刻苦奮勵之時，不徒在於用人行政，而在於治心；治心之要不徒在於言語動作，而由在於克己……" Li Tangjie, "Tiaochen shizheng zhi yaoshu," (條陳時政之要疏) *Li Wenqing gong yishu* (李文清公遺书)*, juan*.1, (河北道署刊本, 1882), 1-2. Quoted from Shi Gexin, "Chengzhu lixue yu wanqing tongzhi zhongxing," 88.

607 Shi, "Chengzhu lixue yu wanqing tongzhi zhongxing," 89.

from the early 1860s, after hearing the news of Zeng's successes, the Xianfeng court's attitude changed. The emperor publically recognized the importance of his self-cultivation, admitting that he and the entire bureaucracy should be both cautious in their everyday statecraft management and prevent any future disasters from happening.[608] The renowned Neo-Confucian moralist Woren (倭仁 1804-1871), another student of Tang Jian, was also appointed to become the emperor's teacher. Meanwhile, the court redefined the standards to include earlier figures who had combined Neo-Confucian moral ideas and statecraft into the Confucian temple.[609] The court promoted a large number of Neo-Confucian officials to crucial positions in government.[610]

Upon this common ground, Neo-Confucianism was revived in the 1860s at court. However, to make the ideology politically and intellectually meaningful to a broader literati community and other social actors, it required more. What distinguished Zeng from other Neo-Confucians was that he managed to work out an inclusive interpretation of learning, based on the statecraft Neo-Confucian tradition, that was conducive to the goal of reform. In other words, individual cultivation and ordering the world were united in the reform policy. This was evident in his interpretation of "ritual," *li* (禮).[611]

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[608] Ibid., 89-90.

[609] Ibid., 90.

[610] According to Shi Gexin, at least seventy known Neo-Confucian scholars spreading among seventeen provinces, and about 21% of them held high positions in central and provincial governments. Ibid., 84-5.

[611] For a comprehensive introduction of Zeng's focus on "ritual" and how it was connected to other aspects of his statecraft enterprise, see Wu Daofang, chapters 6-7, 182-222. My interpretation consulted Wu's interpretation, but differs in that I aim to reflect on why Zeng chose to define ritual as how he did, while Wu tends to accept Zeng's definition and focuses on illustrating the idea than explaining it.

First, Zeng was fascinated by the *Rites of Zhou* (Zhouli 周禮) because he found in that book a key idea regarding learning and government. The Zhou government aimed to unite every aspect of social life and political affairs through ritual (*li*). "For ancient scholars," Zeng claimed, "there was no such thing as statecraft technique, there was only the learning of ritual. The *Rites of Zhou* has specialized offices for [affairs] ranging from dividing the capital and measuring land, to alcohol and markets, shamans and divination, sketching and drawing, inauspicious birds and poisonous insects, and it investigates each of them in great detail. When I read Du Yuankai's (杜元凱) *Interpretive Notes on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (Chunqiu shili 春秋釋例), I was impressed by Zuo Qiuming's (左丘明) explanations. Confucius' evaluations and adjusted judgments (*quanheng wanbian* 權衡萬變) [of political life] were rooted in the old texts of Zhou (i.e. *Rites of Zhou*.)"[612] For Zeng, the *Zhou Rites* was inspiring not because of its specific content, but because of the ideas behind its design of offices and the rigorous investigations carried out by its offices. In other words, the Zhou offered a model in which government leaders responded to every social and political need, and in the process morality was realized. Scholars in later times who took such a perspective seriously should be seen as the real followers of Confucius. Learning should respond to the needs of social-political life correctly by defining moral norms and embedding them in statecraft.

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[612] "蓋古之學者，無所謂經世之術也，學禮焉而已。《周禮》一經，自體國經野，以至酒漿廛市，巫卜繕稿，夭鳥蚩蟲，各有專官，察及纖悉。吾讀杜元凱《春秋釋例》，嘆丘明之發凡，仲尼之權衡萬變，大率秉周之舊典。故曰：'周禮盡在魯矣！'自司馬氏作史，猥以《禮書》與《封禪》《平準》並列。班、范而下，相沿不察。唐杜佑纂《通典》，言禮者居其泰半，始得先王經世之遺意。有宋張子、朱子，益崇闡之。聖清膺命，巨儒輩出，顧亭林氏著書，以扶持禮教為己任。江慎修氏纂《禮書綱目》，洪纖弊舉。" Zeng, "Sun Zhifang shijiang zoulun xu," (孫芝房侍講芻論序), *Zeng Guofan quanji: Poetry and Essays* (Vol.14) (曾國藩全集 詩文) (Changsha: Yuelu shushe Press, 1986), 343.

Second, statecraft was a meaningful expression of *Ru* learning. What would it involve? How to ground norms? For Zeng, cultivation of the moral mind and statecraft learning were inseparable. "Once one understands the learning of moral principles (*yili* 義理)," as Zeng explained in an open letter to students in Zhili province, "statecraft learning (*jingji* 經濟) would be already inherent in one's study of moral principles."[613] What does moral cultivation mean? For Zeng, to gain knowledge of norms required literati scholars to understand the designs of the multifarious rituals of Zhou government. Zeng explained, "[Starting] from broadness will enable returning to the essence, investigating things will enable correcting one's mind. For this [one] has to rely on the *Classic of Rite*s…Then the roots and the ends will be complete, the origins and developments will be connected."[614] In doing so, Zeng celebrated the Qian-Jia "Han" learning tradition for its studies of ancient rituals and identified it as aiming for the same end as the Neo-Confucian officials. Although the Qian-Jia evidential scholars' historical learning may not provide any direct knowledge of norms, nonetheless, they offered inseparable textual evidence for Neo-Confucian officials to think through their proposals for establishing norms. Importantly, he took evidential scholars' work seriously as basic materials, while keeping the view that moral cultivation was the only path to the knowledge of norms. Such collaboration

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[613] "……為義理之學者，蓋將使耳、目、口、體、心思，各敬其職，而五倫各盡其分，又將推以及物，使凡民皆有以善其身，而無憾於倫紀。夫使舉世皆無憾於倫紀，雖唐虞之盛有不能逮，苟通義理之學，而經濟該乎其中矣。……義理與經濟初無兩術之可分，特其施功之序，詳於體而略於用耳。" Zeng, "Quanxue pian shi Zhili dizi," (勸學篇示直隸士子), Ibid., 422.

[614] "鄙意由博乃能返約，格物乃能正心，必從事於《禮經》，考核於三千三百之詳，博輯乎一名一物之細，然後本末兼該，源流畢貫，雖極軍旅戰爭，食貨凌雜，皆禮家所應討論之事。" Zeng, "Fu Xiatao fu," (覆夏弢甫) *Zeng Wenzheng gong shuzha, juan* 7 (曾文正公書札), 9a. (Chuanzhong shuju: 1876) (光緒二年傳忠書局增刻修本)

would allow officials' proposals to be always coherent with an idealized antiquity, where governance and morality were unified in ritual.

Third, since "ritual" covered everything in social-political life, the categories of statecraft practice should not be limited by the experiences recorded in the texts from the past, but should always open to new needs, responding to these new needs with sympathetic moral guidance.[615] This also meant that the new needs of a changing society would provide opportunities for the government to establish new statecraft initiatives, thus to guide the world. In this sense, ritual adapted itself to change, creating a cohesive relationship between bureaucracy and society. The ruling capacity of the elites and the order of the world were thus united. Zeng's statecraft Neo-Confucian ideology was materialistic and moralistic at the same time. It internalized reforms as an imperative for literati learning, and in doing so it legitimated literati leadership to the court.

Zeng's conceptions can help us understand several important aspects of the early Self-Strengthening movement. First, Zeng was able to gain support from an exceptionally large and well-rounded group of literati scholars, ranging from Neo-Text Classicists, Qian-Jia evidential scholars, and ancient-prose writers, to statecraft specialists and institutional historians. Zeng's inclusiveness made it possible for literati scholars to get involved in official-led reforms. And his spirit of "ordering the world" (*jingshi*), which

[615]"所貴乎賢豪者，非直博稽成憲而已，亦將因其所值之時、所居之俗而創立規制，化裁通變，使不失乎三代製禮之意……誠得好學深思之士，不泥古制，亦不輕徇俗好，索之幽深而成之易簡，將必犁然有當於人心。""Fu Liu Xiaxian zhongcheng," (覆劉霞仙中丞) *Zeng Wenzheng gong shuzha, juan* 14 (曾文正公書札) 38a-b.

combined dedication to reform and individual values, would provide a crucial motivation for continuing the Self-Strengthening movement until the end of Qing.[616]

Zeng's group thus treated "foreign affairs" (*yangwu* 洋務) as a significant area of statecraft reform. For Zeng, "manufacturing (*zhizao* 製造), schools (*xuexiao* 學校), and the military (*caobing* 操兵)," three major domains of "foreign affairs,"[617] constituted important goals for strengthening the Qing state. While conservative Neo-Confucian scholars at court criticized Zeng's group for learning from the West in new initiatives, for Zeng's group these "foreign affairs" by themselves were culturally and morally neutral. Literati elites had to embrace them. They defined the new situations that China was facing and the new needs to which the government had to respond, thus they also provided new chances for elites to guide the world. New schools focusing on science, technology, language and international law, new official departments and rules for interacting with foreign states, new initiatives supporting Chinese scientists and engineers to build machines and weapons, and new plans for sending students overseas to study Western technology were all considered legitimate efforts.

Zeng articulated meanings for the foci of new Western knowledge. Science and technology, the core aspects of "Western learning" for Zeng's circle, were explained to

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[616] For instance, in his circle we see New-Text Classicist Zhu Ciqi (朱次琦 1807-1882) who would become a mentor of Kang Youwei, ancient prose writer and thinker Wu Rulun (吳汝綸 1840-1903), Han evidential scholar Yu Yue (俞樾 1812-1907), statecraft thinker Feng Guifen(馮桂芬 1809-1874), translator and journalist Wang Tao 王韜 (1828-1897), business specialist Zheng Guanying 鄭觀應 (1842-1922), and many scientists, etc. Xue Fucheng (薛福成 1838-1894) in his "Xu Zeng Wenzheng gong mufu minliao" (敘曾文正公幕府賓同僚) noted 83 major private secretary consultants associated with Zeng, and celebrated Zeng's openness and inclusiveness. *Yong'an wenbian*(庸庵文編) *juan* 4, 17-21. (清光緒刻庸庵全集本)

[617] "其大要不外三端，曰製器，曰學校，曰操兵。" *Zeng Guofan quanji,* Vol.10, 6092-6093.

be totally compatible with Neo-Confucian statecraft learning. In a memorial, Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang claimed,

> The sophistication of Western technology is something that China cannot reach, such as mapping calculations, calendar making, measurement of distance at sea, and machinery manufacture. These are all associated with ship making and troop training. Institutionally [the Western countries] broadly establish academies, [letting students] study based on specialized subjects, and every commoner has knowledge, his learning all [coming from] specialized areas and masters. Every technique (藝) they create, and every object (器) they produce, is the result of [a tradition of learning] passed down by the father to the son. [People] inherit their enterprises through generations, then fully investigate things in great details and combine [the details] into a broad [system]. The longer [this process takes] the more sophisticated [the results become.] Their governments treat the subjects of military administration and ship administration as the learning of body, mind, nature and destiny.
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> 至外國技術之精，為中國所未逮，如輿圖算法，步天測海，製造機器等事，無一不與造船練兵相為表裡。其制則廣立書院，分科肄業，凡民無不有學，其學皆專門名家，每治一藝，每治一器，皆系父子相傳，世繼其業，然後通微合漠，愈久愈精。其國家於軍政船政，皆視為身心性命之學。[618]

For Zeng and Li, the advancement of the West had much to do with a tradition of conducting science as a form of rigorous and dedicated self-cultivation. In other words, what Zeng and Li discovered in science was its political and moral identity, something that united the Western elite's self-cultivation (*xiushen*) with its statecraft enterprises (*jingshi*). As Zeng explained in another memorial regarding sending young Chinese students aboard, "Westerners learn for substantively saving the world. No matter whether they are literati, workers, or soldiers, none of them would fail to go to school, illuminate

[618] "Zou dai Chen Lanbin zhi jiangnan banli jiqipian," (奏帶陳蘭彬至江南辦理機器片) *Zeng Guofan Quanji. Memorials* (Vol.12) (曾國藩全集 奏稿) (Changsha: Yuelu shushe Press, 1994), 7133-44.

the Coherence [of things] together, observe instruments frequently, and personally apply [what they have learned] in practice."[619]

This statecraft Neo-Confucian view of science provided a common language for Zeng's official circle in collaborating with missionaries to reform elite learning.[620] In Li Hongzhang's preface to W. A. P. Martin's (丁韙良)'s *Gewu Rumen* (格物入門), which means an introduction to the sciences, a textbook prepared for Chinese students enrolled in Beijing's Tongwenguan (同文館) in 1866, Li made the point that, on top of the many existing interpretations of the "investigation of things" (*gewu* 格物) in Chinese history, science from the West, with its particular interpretations of the common themes Coherence (*li* 理), material force (*qi* 氣), and number (*shu* 數), provided one more legitimate interpretation. Furthermore, the epistemological process behind science was generally close to Zhu Xi's idea of "attaining knowledge" (致知).[621] In his comment on

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[619] "西人學求實濟，無論為士為工為兵，無不入塾讀書，共明其理，習見其器，躬身其事，齊盡其心思巧力，遞相師授，期於月異而歲不同。" Zeng, "Ni xuan congying zidi chuyang xiyi shu,"(擬選聰穎子弟出洋習藝疏), included in *Wanqing wenxuan* (晚清文選), compil. Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian Press, 1987),84

[620] A substantively researched article by Zhang Qing (章清) offers important clues to see how missionaries and Chinese literati scholars understood each other's learning based on a universal framework. Zhang, " 'Cai Xixue': Xueke cidi zhi bianlun jiqi yiyi – lue lun wanqing dui 'xixue menjing' de tantao," (採西學：學科次第之辯論及其意義：略論晚清對'西學門徑'的探討) *Lishi yanjiu* (歷史研究), no.3 (2007) 107-28. My interest in the epistemological universalism of Zeng Guofan's cohort draws on Zhang's discoveries, but my conclusion differs. Zhang argues that the epistemological universalism during this period resulted from missionaries' efforts to introduce science based on certain Christian views about world history. But I think it overlooks the revival of Neo-Confucians during this period as active sponsors and interpreters of Western science.

[621] "……自古迄今，解格物者七十二家，大旨不外窮至、捍禦二者而已，入主出奴，遂成聚訟。自西學興，而格物之說又一變，眾說融會之機，其兆於此乎。世之說《易》者，以理為主宰，以氣為流行，以數為對待。泰西之學，則以默達費希加說理，費希加說氣，瑪得瑪第加說數。利氏東來，中國始有《明理探》、《幾個原本》二書，蓋其一說理，其一說

another work, *Xixue Lueshu* (西学略述) by Joseph Edkins (艾約瑟), which means a brief account of Western learning, Li further situated the meaning of science in a continuum that began from the individual effort to investigate things and attain knowledge (*gezhi* 格致), and ended with the statecraft achievement of wealth and power (*fuqiang* 富強).[622] For the major missionaries dedicated to introducing Western science and Christianity, such an interpretation of science was appealing. It was not that foreign because both Christianity and Neo-Confucianism argued for the universal imperative of human morality. More importantly, it helped them show the Chinese that science as a Western tradition was crucial for ordering the state. Young John Allen (林樂知), in his book *Zhongxi Guanxi Luelun* (中西关系略论) (1876)[623] followed the same discourse as Li, referenced *Great Learning* (大學) when he wrote: "the most important task today is

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故，皆記始於界說者也。余按《後漢書 馬融傳》註，界猶限也。《易》曰艮其限，艮之大象曰思不出其位。《大易》訓艮為止，《小尔疋》訓格亦為止，是格、界二者之訓本可互通。如以西學界字之義，詁《大學》格字之意，則界以內皆所當窮至者也，界以外皆所當捍禦者也。……西人畢生致力於象緯器數之微，志無旁騖。其論形而上理，雖與漢宋諸儒不同，若謂其於形下之理一無當於聖人之旨，固不可也。丁總教習冠西遠方之傑，掌教都門同文館，能讀經史百家之書，今治格物之學，以入門命其書，其猶界說之微旨歟。……冠西之書，以力、水、汽、音、熱、光、電七學為經，以問答為緯，回環辯難，自為主客，往往事本目前，解出意表。……當其冥心孤往，默討潛搜，如禪之入定，儒之坐忘，雖謂之以捍禦，為格物焉可，此逮乎鞭笞入里，兔起鶻落，有異於晦翁之所謂窮至者乎？余喜西學格物之說不背余吾儒，故覽冠西之書而發起余之嘆。抑又聞之西學所謂斐錄所費亞者，至精且薄，茲特其凡將急救耳。冠西誨人不倦，西學堂奧必更有在，書以俟之。"Li Hongzhang's preface, *Li hongzhang Quanji* (李鴻章全集) Vol.1 (Hefei: Anhui jiao yu chu ban she, 2008), 62-3.

[622] "泰西之学，格致为先，自昔已然，今为尤盛。学校相望，贤才辈出，上有显爵，下有世业，故能人人竞于有用，以臻于富强。" Li, "Xu" (序), *Xixue lueshu* (西学略述) (Beijing: 1886) (北京总税务司署) 1-3. Quoted from Zhang Qing, " 'Cai xixue'," 120.

[623] The English title for this book is, China and her Neighbors: A Tract for the Times, being designed to promote Peace and encourage Progress, by setting forth the Motives and Objects of Foreigners in coming to China etc. (Shanghai: Shanghai American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1876.)

nothing other than *gezhi*. This one book, *Great Learning*, grounds the path to good government on *gezhi*. Today, mathematics, chemistry, manufactory, and biology, et.al, are all *gezhi*. Western countries conduct *gezhi* as its primary learning. Therefore the state became wealthy, and the people became strong.*"*[624] Many similar attempts to illustrate the meaning of science based on the *Great Learning* can be seen in contemporary writings by missionaries, officials, and literati scholars.

To use *gezhi* to make sense of science offered a universal criterion for Chinese students to compare China with the West and to argue for what elite learning ought to be.[625] Based on the Neo-Confucian view, elite learning between China and the West was not categorically different. Diplomat and thinker Xue Fuchen (薛福成 1838-1894), in his preface to *Gezhi huibian* (格致汇编), namely, *The Chinese Scientific Magazine*, claimed that,

> In China the learning of *gezhi* is considered to be the foundation of government, and in the West it is considered to be the guide to wealth and power. There is no difference in their roots…To combine the Western learning and Chinese learning of past and present into one, is that to which I look forward in my heart!

[624] "夫當務非他，格致而已矣。《大學》一書，治平之道，基於格致，今之數學、化學、製造學、植物學等，皆格致也。西國首事格致，國由是富，民由是強。識力堅定，有恃無恐，而國之取信於民者，益固。" Young John Allen, "Zhongxi guanxi lue lun xu"(中西关系略论序), Ibid., 1a.

[625] The Shanghai Polytechnic Institution managed by Wang Tao and John Fryer (傅兰雅) asked students to answer an essay question in 1887 based on the topic, "On the Differences and Similarities between the Learning of Gezhi in China and West" (格致之学中西异同论). As Zhang shows, the best three essays made connections between the tradition of Great Learning and Western science as categorically compatible enterprises. They saw that both enterprises had strengths that the other one could learn, but regarding the importance of learning *gezhi,* the Chinese and the Westerners were in agreement. Zhang, " 'Ci xixue'," 122.

> 格致之学, 在中国为治平之始基, 在西国为富强之先导, 此其根源非有殊也……蕲使古今中西之学, 会而为一, 是则余之所默企也夫![626]

For Chinese literati leaders represented by Zeng Guofan and his circle during the period from the 1860s to the late 1880s, what largely underpinned the science (*gezhi*)/wealth-and-power (*fuqiang*) rationale was the self-cultivation (*xiushen*)/statecraft enterprise (*jingshi*) ideal. Zeng's deep trust in this ideal was fundamental to his confidence in the literati community's leadership for China in an increasingly globalized world. In one letter to Li Hongzhang regarding how to treat the powerful West, Zeng wrote:

> Foreign affairs are in themselves hard to manage, but the fundamental way of handling them does not go beyond [behaving] loyally, trustfully, honestly, and prudently…
>
> 夷務本難措置，然根本不外孔子忠、信、篤、敬四字……[627]

In a second letter he explained what this attitude meant,

> …To illustrate [this principle] with a proper doctrine, it would be Confucius' way, [namely,] treating backward foreign tribes with loyalty and prudence. To illustrate [this principle] with a strategic story, it would be King Goujian's method: [namely] staying humble [in front of the Wu and] letting the Wu leader expand his ego… [I] heard that, earlier, soldiers in Shanghai were often offended by foreigners, but since you brought the Xiang army and the Huai army there for defense, nothing similar has happened. Confucius said, "as long as [one] can lead the country, who would dare belittle him?" As long as we stay disciplined and earnest, [and as long as] our institutions are well ordered, we will not be bullied and humiliated without cause. Since we are not being bullied and humiliated, we will stay modest in everything we do, then, there will not be future troubles. This is the way of pacifying [the foreigners], and this is also the way of strengthening oneself.

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[626] Xue Fucheng, *Chushi yingfa yibi siguo riji* (出使英法義比四國日記), (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1985), 71-73.

[627] Zeng, "Fu Li Shaoquan," (覆李少荃), *Zeng Wenzheng gong shuzha, juan* 9, 42b.

> ……以正理言之，即孔子忠敬以行蠻貊之道。以陰機言之，即句踐卑辱以驕吳人之法，聞前此滬上兵勇多為洋人所侮慢，自閣下帶湘淮各勇到防，從無受侮之事。孔子曰：能治其國家，誰敢侮之。我苟整齊嚴肅，百度修明，渠亦自不至無端欺凌。既不被欺凌，則處處謙遜，自無後患。柔遠之道在是，自強之道亦在是。[628]

Zeng's advice demonstrates a strong moral voluntarism. During political crises, as long as literati maintained their belief in personal cultivation and a corresponding commitment to their own social-political system, the world would be ordered and their leadership would be respected. But what if such a belief and commitment were no longer sufficient for saving the social and political order? Could the literati community still make a case for its leadership? These questions would challenge literati scholars in the following decades, leading to more profound debates over learning in the face of increasing political crises.

Zhang Zhidong and the Return of Qian-Jia Philology: 1870s – 1890s

In the late Qing context Zeng Guofan's enterprise was often referred to as the restoration (*zhongxing* 中興) of the Tongzhi era, a term pointing to its achievements but also its briefness. Zeng's model, which managed to bridge Chinese and Western sources of new learning, while linking the central and the provincial leadership, and connecting different branches of *Ru* tradition, started to collapse in the 1870s, and this collapse eventually led to the fall of his model of elite learning.

A critical event that greatly contributed to the crisis of Zeng's leadership was the Tianjin Massacre in 1870. Rumors that French Catholic nuns and missionaries bought

[628] Zeng, "Fu Li Shaoquan zhongcheng," (覆李少荃中丞), *Zeng Wenzheng gong shuzha, juan* 10, 18b-19a.

and killed kidnaped Chinese children to make medicine led to a confrontation between the local Chinese magistrate and the French Consul, which eventually resulted in a riot that burnt churches and killed French officials, nuns, and many Chinese Christians associated with the churches. Western governments sent gunboats with demands to repair the damage and punish the Chinese instigators. Zeng Guofan, appointed by the court to negotiate with the Westerners, investigated the situation, declared the nuns to have been innocent, announced a plan to execute the instigators, removed the magistrate, and prepared an apology to the French government. Although for Zeng his decision to let the Chinese take responsibility was an effort to maintain justice and order, the decision triggered vehement criticisms of Zeng at court and in the literati community. Accused of being a traitor, Zeng was demoted from the position of the general-governor of Zhili. He died in Nanjing in 1872.

It seems to me that this tragic event showed that Zeng's version of Neo-Confucian ideology, with its focuses on cultural integration and technocracy, had failed to prepare literati to deal with current realities. Differences in social customs and cultural beliefs could be real; they could lead to uncontrollable clashes that literati leadership could not afford to ignore. The critical reaction of the literati world to Zeng's decision demonstrated some foundational fissures that began to loom large in the 1870s. Many of these critical voices came from the so-called "purist" (*qingliu* 清流) officials at the center who did not have much direct administrative power but tried to make their voices heard by challenging the "Foreign Affairs" officials. In their view, protecting China's interests was connected to recognizing China's own cultural beliefs, social customs, and values as different. The "Foreign Affairs" administrators, who had made enormous investments in

appropriating Western technology in search of wealth and power, sacrificed China's interests in searching for peace and diplomatic agreement with foreign powers.[629]

Received scholarship on late Qing politics tends to overlook the intellectual context involved in such political controversies. A recent study by Lu Yin (陸胤), however, persuasively demonstrates the close overlaps between the so-called "purists" political circle and the reemerging Qian-Jia "Han" learning groups, who began to have influence in the 1870s.[630] The revival of Qian-Jia tradition was originally led by officials such as Weng Tonghe (翁同龢 1830-1904) and Pan Zuyin (潘祖蔭 1830-1890),[631] who considered themselves to be following the models established by earlier scholars such as Weng Fanggang (翁方剛 1733-1818) and Ruan Yuan (阮元 1764-1849).[632] Under their leadership a group of famous evidential scholars conducted Classical and historical research, organized banquets to share their interest in antiquarian studies, exchanged ideas in the fields of philology, geography, inscriptions, rubbings, etc., and celebrated the cultural institutions of China's past.[633] As Lu Yin shows, when the Zeng group engaged

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[629] See Yang Guoqiang (杨国强), *Shuaishi yu xifa: wan Qing Zhongguo de jiubang xinming he shehui tuosnu* (衰世与西法：晚清中国的旧邦新命和社会脫榫) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju Press, 2014), 277-9.

[630] See Lu Yin, Zhengjiao cunxu yu wenjiao zhuanxing: jindai xueshu shi shang de Zhang Zhidong xueren quan (政教存续与文教转型：近代学术史上的张之洞学人圈）(Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2015.)

[631] Ibid., 40-2.

[632] According to Lu, these people included Li Ciming (李慈銘 1830-1895), Dong Wenhuan (董文渙 1833-1877), Chen Qiaosen (陳喬森 1833-1905), Wang Yirong (王懿榮 1845-1900), Sheng Yu (盛昱 1850-1900), Wu Dacheng (吳大澂 1835-1902), Shen Zengzhi (沈曾植 1850-1922).

[633] Entering the Guangxu reign, increasing numbers of scholars specialized in institutional and geographical history appeared in the group, including Wen Tingshi (文廷式 1856-1904), Zhang Jian (張謇 1853-1926), Li Wentian (李文田 1834-1895), Ke Shaoning (柯劭忞 1848-1933),

in handling "Foreign Affairs," these Han learning scholars, who mostly served as editors in the Hanlin Academy, imperial college, and so on, revived literati cultural practice, lamenting the loss of books and antiques that had taken place during the social-political turbulence of the 1860s.[634] Politically, they set themselves in contrast to the Zeng group, believing that their learning of the past cultural institutions endowed them with a higher moral standard and enabled them to represent China's values and interests.[635]

The remaining elements of the Zeng group under the leadership of Li Hongzhang lost ground in the 80s and 90s, when newer demands from the foreign powers led to new crises, and increasing political polarization contributed to ineffective leadership.[636] The Qing lost its tributary state of Vietnam to France and Myanmar to Britain. By the late 1880s, the literati world had witnessed the rise of Japan, which was now strong enough to lay claim to Taiwan and Korea with military force. In this context, the failure of Li Hongzhang's Beiyang Fleet against Japan in 1895 and the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki came to symbolize the end of the era of the Tongzhi Restoration. Such incident inspired fundamental reconsideration of the guiding ideology of the early Self-Strengthening movement. The new learning promoted by Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, which emphasized science and technology as the key to wealth and power

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Liang Dingfen (梁鼎芬 1859-1919), Huang Shaoqi (黃紹箕 1854-1908), Xu Fang (徐坊 1864-1916), Wang Xianqian (王先謙 1842-1917), Zhu Yixin (朱一新 1846-1894)

[634] See Lu, *Zhengjiao cunxu yu wenjiao zhuanxing*, 41

[635] See Yang Guoqiang, *Shuaishi yu xifa,* 278. Also see, Yen-P'ing Hao and Erh-min Wang, *Changing Chinese views of Western relations*, 1840-95, *Cambridge History of China*. Vol.11, 142-201.

[636] For a detailed documentation of the background, see, Immanuel C. Y. Hsu "Chapter 2, Late Ch'ing foreign relations, 1866-1905," *Cambridge History of China.* Vol.11 70-141

now appeared to be superficial and materialistic, lacking an in-depth understanding of the political and cultural factors underlying the advance of the West.[637] What underlay this challenge was the collapse of the statecraft Neo-Confucian model as an effective framework for engaging the literati world, while the literati world witnessed increasing governmental recognition of the Qian-Jia tradition. In 1884, Imperial Academy Director Sheng Yu 盛昱 (1850-1900) organized students to compile a work under the title *A Synthetic Compilation of Phonetic Loan Characters* (Tongjia huibian 通假匯編), and led students to collate the Classical texts based on characters carved on stone drums from the Qin dynasty. In 1889, Wang Yirong (王懿榮 1849-1500), proposed to compile a sequel to the *Siku quanshu* (四庫全書) and asked schools nationwide to study Qing evidential scholars' commentaries on the Classics.[638] Moreover, they proposed that the court should include the Eastern Han scholar Xu Shen (許慎), and early Qing evidential scholars Huang Zongxi and Gu Yanwu in the Confucian temple to celebrate their roles in establishing evidential learning.

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[637] For instance, official Li Duanlai (李端棻) complained in 1896 that earlier translations of Western books failed to cover the Western way of government. "于治国之道, 富强之原, 一切要书, 多未肄及。" Zhu Youhuan (朱有瓛), *Zhongguo jindai xuezhi shiliao* Vol.1-b (中国近代学制史料) (第一辑下册) (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1983). Another telling example: Shen Shandeng (沈善登) wrote to Zhang Zhidong in 1894: "近年士大夫競言培養人才、推尊西法，殊不知今之所謂同文館、武備等等，充其力量不過舌人之職、手藝之民。泰西立國本原，何嘗在此？……" "……近來士習日壞，師道之傳，經書根本，全然拋棄。" "Shen Shandeng laihan 1," (沈善登來函 第一本), Zhang Zhidong's archive (張之洞文件), no. Jia 182-218 (甲 182-218), Modern History Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Quoted from Lu Yin, "'Qingliu' fuchen yu jindai xuefeng – yi Zhang Zhidong xueren quan de xingcheng wei li (II)." (清流"浮沉与近代学风——以张之洞学人圈的形成为例（下）), *Guoxue xuekan* (國學學刊) no.04 (2012). Footnote 55.

[638] Lu, *Zhengjiao cunxu yu wenjiao zhuanxing*, 43

The shift in intellectual-political power in the center indicated that by the 1890s the Qian-Jia tradition had been revived in the literati world. The key figure who made this shift happen was Zhang Zhidong (張之洞 1837-1909). As a true appreciator of Qian-Jia scholarship, Zhang made his way from the "purists" at court to the provincial administrators and brought nationwide Qian-Jia school scholars to the front of reform. In the following pages, I will draw on major scholarship on Zhang and his scholarly circle to briefly explain how he redefined elite learning and what it meant in the late Qing context.

Born into a scholar-official family from Zhili, Zhang obtained his *jinshi* degree in 1863. Known as a fighter in the camp of the "purists," he was also an important member of the "Han learning" group in the capital.[639] However, not satisfied with simply practicing Qian-Jia scholarship in a small circle at the capital, by the 1880s Zhang was promoting Qian-Jia scholarship at the local government level as the official standard for learning. He was appointed as a vice-examiner or educational supervisor in Zhejiang, Sichuan, and Hubei, and during this period he published two learning guides, *Words of Youxuan* (Youxuan yu 輶軒語) and *Answers to Questions about References* (Shumu dawen 書目答問), and sponsored official academies to attract students to Qian-Jia scholarship as the basic path of literati education.

In *Words of Youxuan,* under the section "speaking of learning"(語學), Zhang introduced the classic Qian-Jia philological approach and its three-fold textual basis. First, under the section on "understanding the Classics thoroughly" (通經), Zhang listed a set of well established principles, including "It is better to read the complete text of the

[639] Often served as the organizer of Weng and Pan's events, Zhang also married Wang Yirong's sister.

Classic;" "In order to explain the Classics it is better to master the [ancient] characters;" "It is better to follow Han scholarship;" "Han scholarship requires studying the ancient meanings of words and investigating the historical facts;" "It is better to read Classical studies by figures from the current dynasty," and "It is better to specialize in one Classic."[640] Second, on the topic of "studying history (讀史)," Zhang stressed the importance of "Not engaging in value judgment of historical figures," and asserted that "When the facts of the historical events became clear, then the moral judgment will automatically be clear."[641] Third, under the topic of "Reading the masters to understand the Classics thoroughly (讀子為通經)," Zhang explained that studying the writings of the masters during the Zhou and Qin periods "would be beneficial to [the study of] the Classics," because they would "help with verifying the factual information in the Classical texts," "verifying and fixing the false and missing texts," and, because they used the same words as the Classics, they "shared the ancient meanings and pronunciations." The slightly later writings of the Masters, although many of their interpretations were biased, at some point also fit the meaning of the Classics.[642] Overall, Zhang used the philological method and common textual sources to define "learning." In the second book, *Answers to Questions about Bibliography* (Shumu dawen), compiled

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[640] "讀經宜讀全本"; "解經宜先識字"; "宜講漢學"; "漢學所要者而，一音讀訓詁，一考據事實"; "宜讀國朝人經學書"; "宜專治一經"。 *Zhang Zhidong quanji* (張之洞全集), Vol.12 (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe Press, 2008).

[641] "讀史忌忘議論古人賢否"; "古事得失, 事實詳確，善惡自分"; " 讀史忌批評文章"。 Ibid.

[642] "子有益於經者：一，證佐事實。一證補諸經偽文、佚文，一兼通古訓、古音韻。然此為周秦諸子言也。漢魏亦頗有之，至其義理雖不免偏頗，亦多有合於經義，可相發明者，宜辨其真偽，別其瑜瑕，斯可也。" Ibid.

with the help of Miao Quansun (繆荃孫 1844-1919) and Zhang Shoukang (章壽康 1850-1905),[643] Zhang prepared an annotated bibliography, which was meant to cover recent scholarship as well as new editions and commentaries on older scholarship that had come out after the compilation of the great eighteenth-century compendium of the *Siku quanshu.* Zhang aimed to show students that research and the textual tradition were cumulative.

But how was this agenda related to other practices of elite learning? Zhang aimed to show that Qian-Jia scholarship could offer common ground for all. He admitted that the doctrines of the learning of morality (*yili*), literary writing (*wenxue*), and statecraft (*jingji*) had already been figured out by the ancient sages, and that learning in these areas did not depend on the results of modern evidential inquiries. The students' task was to understand and apply these doctrines in practice. However, evidential inquiries would give scholars access to the most detailed and accurate explanations of those doctrines, and thus would enable scholars to understand the standards of the ancient sages and to evaluate their own practice against them (學古之權衡).[644] The general rationale was explained in the following passage,

> For those who enter Classical learning from philology, their Classical learning will be trustworthy; for those who enter historical learning from Classical learning, their historical learning will be trustworthy; for those who enter the Learning of the Coherence from Classical learning and historical learning, their Learning of the Coherence will be trustworthy; for those who compose literary writing from the main background of Classical learning and historical learning, their literary

[643] Lu, Zhengjiao cunxu yu wenjiao zhuanxing, 82, 87.

[644] "大抵徵實之學，今勝於古，（經史小學，天算地輿，金石校勘之屬皆然，理學、經濟、詞章，雖不能過古人，然考辨最明確，說最詳，法最備，仍須讀今人書籍，方可執以為學古之權衡耳。）即前代經學、史、子、集，苟其書流傳自古，確有實用者，國朝必為表彰疏釋……" *Shumen dawen* (書目答問), *Zhang Zhidong quanji*, Vol.12.

> writing will be useful; for those who conduct statecraft learning from the background of Classical learning and historical learning, their statecraft learning will show greater achievement.
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> 由小學入經學者，其經學可信；由經學入史學者，其史學可信；由經學、史學入理學者，其理學可信；以經學、史學兼詞章者，其詞章有用；以經學、史學兼經濟者，其經濟成就遠大。[645]

Therefore, the common ground of learning was to be reached through the Qian-Jia tradition, and such a common ground would not aim for the unity of morality, but rather to bring literati scholars together based on a shared textual tradition and a shared method. To institutionalize this proposal, Zhang shifted the goal of government-sponsored academies from Neo-Confucian learning to Qian-Jia scholarship. In Hubei he established the Heart of the Classics Academy (Jingxin shuyuan 經心書院) in 1869, and in Sichuan the Respecting Classics Academy (Zunjing shuyuan 尊經書院) in 1875, following the model of Ruan Yuan's Sea of Learning Hall (Xuehai tang 學海堂) and the Refined Lodge of the Exegesis of the Classics (Gujing jingshe 詁經精舍). He used the scholarship accomplished by students of Sea of Learning Hall and Refined Lodge of the Exegesis of the Classics to motivate students enrolled in his new academies. One important result was that Zhang redefined the goal of official academies. It was not necessary to study Neo-Confucian learning in the academies because Neo-Confucian learning mainly addressed personal behavior, rather than scholarship. "Song learning cherishes dedicated actions (躬行), not empty talk (虛談). Thus [such virtue will be instilled by] examples and rules set up by the headmaster; it cannot be taught in class

[645] Zhang, "Guochao zhushu zhujia xingming lue" (國朝箸述諸家姓名略), Ibid., 9976.

exercises."[646] Nor was it necessary to study examination essays on the Classics (時文) because this distracted students from cultivating their real scholarly ability.

Zhang hoped to make use of government resources to promote a general elite education based, by and large, on the Qian-Jia approach to learning. Zhang did not try to integrate statecraft management into learning, as had the statecraft Neo-Confucians; neither did he try to connect scholars' knowledge of the textual tradition and cultural institutions to the making of social-political policies, as had the early Qing political evidential scholars. In what sense, then, would learning contribute to the role of literati scholars in their world? Here, it is important to mention that Zhang's major inspiration in constructing his learning program were the ideas of Chen Li (陳澧 1810-1882), the most renowned master of Qian-Jia scholarship in the mid-nineteenth century and the mentor of many established "Han" scholars in Zhang's time.[647] Belonging to the generation of Zeng Guofan, Chen was equally concerned with the conundrum of the "Han-Song" divide and committed himself to searching for common ground in the literati world. In *Reading Notes at the Eastern Study* (Dongshu dushu ji 東塾讀書紀), a book in which he compiled his research notes for later scholars, he states,

> I wrote this book to imitate the model of [Gu Yanwu's] *Knowledge Gained Day by Day* (Rizhilu 日知錄)… In *Knowledge Gained Day by Day*, the first volume

[646] "諸生問曰：'然則何以不課性理？'曰：'宋學貴躬行，不貴虛談，在山長表率之，範圍之，非所能課也。（後所說「慎習」、「尊師」云云，即宋學也。）……（用漢學之師法，雖兼采諸儒之說，亦漢學也。守宋學之準繩，雖不談性理，亦宋學也。漢學師法，止於實事求是；宋學準繩，止於嚴辯義利，無深談也。）'" Also, "諸生問曰：'不課時文，何也？'曰：'無庸也。世人應試而不好學，根柢日薄，而四書文日益不振。明詔使鄉會場加意經策而下無以應，故為此以養其原，以補其不足……" Zhang, "Chuangjian Zun jing shuyuan ji"(創建尊經書院記) , *Zhang Zhidong quanji*, Vol.12

[647] For a discussion of Chen Li's scholarship, see Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jinsanbainian xueshushi,* 596-632.

> focuses on Classical Learning, the second volume focuses on the methods of governance, and the third volume focuses on broad learning. My own book only discusses the way of scholarship (學術). My talents cannot compare to those of Tingling [Gu Yanwu]….As for the methods of governance, I dare not discuss them. [But] this is not to say that I am not concerned with wordily affairs, rather, I think that [good] politics is brought about by talented people, and talented people come into being from scholarship. My book focuses on illustrating scholarship. If the book has the good fortune to be transmitted, perhaps there will be more people who are learned and intelligent (讀書明理). If they decide to join the government, they will definitely benefit the world. The effect of this book will emerge after several decades.
>
> 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，以為政治由於人材，人材由於學術。吾之書專明學術，幸而傳於世，庶幾讀書明理人多，其出而從政者，必有濟於天下。此其效在數十年之後者也。[648]

Chen admired Gu Yanwu.[649] On the one hand, he pointed out that he was not able to connect his broad textual learning to government as had Gu. On the other hand, he saw that Gu's model stressed scholarly training as a way to transform the literati community into a "learned and intelligent" elite capable of leading the government. It was this second legacy that helped Chen relate his own learing to the larger meaning of literati scholarship. In some sense, Zhang Zhidong emerged as a spokesman for Chen after the fall of Zeng Guofan's model. Zhang's efforts to promote Qian-Jia scholarship in provincial schools impressed Chen, and Chen's many students were absorbed into Zhang's team of private secretaries. But unlike Chen, who failed the civil service exams and became a teacher rather than an official, Zhang straddled the literati world and the government. The fact that Chen's ideal had to be realized through Zhang's efforts

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[648] *Dongshu dushu ji* (東塾讀書記) *juan* 4, from *Chen Li ji* (陳澧集) (Shanghai : Shanghai guji chubanshe Press, 2008), Vol.1, 175.

[649] For my analysis of Gu Yanwu's *Rizhilu,* see Chapter 2.

indicated that such an ideal of general elite education, whose meaning was interpreted based on the need for political talent, required government sponsorship. In order to develop general talent, however, the scope and content of scholarship could not be defined by state ideology. In this sense, Zhang demonstrated an alternative model for linking learning and politics. If Zeng Guofan's model claimed to integrate learning and state ideology, Zhang's model called for striking a fine balance between these two so that both sides could benefit from each other. It was up to officials like him to maintain such a balance.

Zhang's achievements gained him a reputation as an effective administrator of learning (*xuewu* 學務). In the early 1880s, with the growth of the team of the evidential scholars, Zhang entered provincial leadership and directly involved himself in reform, bringing his commitment to the cultivation of general talent.[650] In doing so, he tied together the nationwide network of "Han" scholars and brought them into national leadership.[651] This group of scholars exerted their influence through two channels. First, their scholarly interests helped redefine the knowledge considered necessary for the Self-Strengthening movement, entering a field which had been dominated by students trained in specialized schools of science and technology. In an official advertisement for hiring talent, Zhang phrased the enterprise of the self-strengthening movement in the following way:

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[650] Zhang served as the Shanxi Provincial Governor in 1882, Liangguang Governor-General from 1884-1889, and Huguang Governor-General from 1890 to 1907, while temporarily served Liangjiang Governor-General from 1894 to 1896, and from 1902-1903 Zhang became a grand minister (軍機大臣體仁閣大學士) in the Grand Council in 1907, and was administrating the newly established Department of Learning (管理學部大臣) from 1907 to 1909.

[651] Shen Zengzhi, Liang Dingfen, Zhu Yixin et.al would play important roles as Zhang's private secretaries in Zhang's later career.

> I heard [the idea] that ordering the country (經國) ought to treat self-strengthening movement as its foundation, and the self-strengthening movement ought to take storing talent as its first step. Today, as tens of thousands of countries come to interact with each other, incidents also increase day by day. [Handling] foreign affairs is the most urgent task… Looking at the affairs involved in the negotiations between China and foreign countries, trade has been taken as [diplomatic] ritual (禮), war as a tool (用), treaties as regulations (章程). [We ought to focus on] knowing each country's local products, business, territory, policies, scholarship/learning, weaponry, and international laws as the base; [we ought to] take understanding each country's language and writings as the entrance.
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> 蓋聞經國以自強為本，自強以儲才為先，方今萬國盟聘，事變日多，洋務最為當務之急。……查中外交涉事宜，以商務為禮，以兵戰為用，以條約為章程；以周知各國特產、商情、疆域、政令、學術、兵械、公法律例為根柢；以通曉各國語言文字為入門。[652]

Like Zeng Guofan, Zhang saw the Self-Strengthening movement as an enterprise in which literati scholars could realize their political ambition and responsibility, and in so doing he connected the movement to the issue of learning, though his view on the kind of learning that was needed differed. Zhang emphasized the value of knowledge about the institutional, cultural, social, and intellectual conditions of different foreign countries, because handling "foreign affairs" and strengthening oneself in the world was largely a matter of knowing the differences between China and the other foreign powers. The intellectual scope needed for this enterprise could not be covered adequately by scientists and technicians alone. Zhang organized book projects to invite scholars and students to compile textual sources about the foreign powers. Genres of institutional history (*zhilüe* 志略) and investigation based on textual evidence (*kao* 考) became major frameworks of knowledge to learn about the West.[653] Importantly, this information and knowledge was

[652] Zhang, "Yanfang yangwu rencai qi" (延訪洋務人才啟), *Zhang Zhidong quanji*, Vol.3.

[653]For instance, Lu Yin shows that, from the late 1886s to the mid of 1890s, Zhang invited people and/or organize students to compile encyclopedia or reference books on "foreign affairs" and

often conceptualized as "contemporary affairs"(*shiwu* 時務) or "contemporary politics (*shizheng* 時政), a part of "statecraft matters" (*jingji* 經濟). People who participated in the early "Foreign Affairs" movement did not fully agree with such a conceptual framework. For Zhang Zhidong, science and technology from the West mattered, but it was downplayed as a part of Western technical knowledge (*xiyi* 西藝) that was simply useful for "contemporary affairs" (*shiwu*). However, figures such as Zhong Tianwei (鐘天緯1840-1900), who served Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, worried that Zhang's framework risked overlooking the importance of science as something fundamental to learning.

The second channel for "Han learning" scholars to engage in reform was the design of a general elite education to produce talent for national leadership, one that would supplement the increasingly specialized technical schools. The building of the Extending Refinement Academy (Guangya shuyuan 廣雅書院) in 1887 in Guangzhou and the Academy of Hunan and Hubei (Lianghu shuyuan 兩湖書院) in 1890 in Wuchang were two major experiments. Over the years, the core curriculum changed several times, but the primary focus on Classical and historical scholarship remained. The general goal, as Zhang defined for the Lianghu Academy, was to learn the *method of book learning*, which would prepare provincial elites to become good officials if they served the government, rather than turning them into Classical masters.[654] Meanwhile, students were

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"contemporary affairs," such as *Yiwu leiyao* (夷務類要), *Yangwu jiyaoi* (洋務輯要), *Shiwu cuoyao* (時務撮要). Lu, *Zhengjiao cunxu yu wenjiao zhuanxing*, 111.

[654] See Zhang's description of the regulation on curriculum in "Fenjiao guicheng" (分教規程) for Lianghu academy, "教諸生知讀書之法，備做官之用，並非慫令五年之內，造成鴻博經師." It was published on Xiangxue bao (湘學報) Quoted from Lu Yin, "Zhang Zhidong yu jindai

expected to follow "*shiwu*" or "*shizheng*" as their responsibility to engage in statecraft. This need was articulated more clearly in the Lianghu Academy in the early 1890s when more new knowledge from the West (often via Japan) entered China and became an inseparable part of the elite's everyday knowledge about the outside world. This new knowledge covered Western current events, government, history, and scholarship, often grouped under the general category of "Western politics" (西政) or "Western politics and teachings" (泰西政教). Along this line, by the end of the nineteenth century, Zhang also became a sponsor of new learning communities and institutions engaged in "*shiwu*" and "*shizheng,*" such as the Strengthening Learning Society (強學會) organized by Kang Youwei (康有為), as well as one of the most popular newspapers during this period, *Shiwu bao* (時務報, English title: *The Chinese Progress*), whose chief editors were Liang Qichao (梁啟超) and one of Zhang's private secretaries, Wang Kangnian (汪康年 1860-1911). Students were encouraged to compile volumes of textual resources about the Western world as their way of engaging "*shiwu*" and "*shizheng.*" Zhang also encouraged translations of books about Western politics, history, and scholarship addressing topics that he thought had been omitted from the Western books translated under Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang's leadership.

By and large, for Zhang and a large group of "Han learning" officials and scholars, knowledge about Western government, history, scholarship and technologies could be understood as the category of *shiwu* or *shizheng*, and this category appeared in the reformed civil service exam until its abolition in 1905. This body of new knowledge was

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guozu 'shikong gongtongti' – cong *Quanxue pian* dao kuimao xuezhi." (张之洞与近代国族"时空共同体"——从《劝学篇》到癸卯学制), *Kaifang shidai* (开放时代), no.5 (2017): 56-75.

officially interpreted as the instrument for improving officials' statecraft management. At the same time, it was Classical and historical scholarship that served as the source of the moral, cultural and political foundation of *Ru* learning and justified the role of literati in society. Although Zhang claimed that what made the West powerful was its broad elite learning traditions, not its technology alone, Zhang's circle kept some distance from the Zeng Guofan model by interpreting the "learning" of the Western elite as the West's own integrated traditions of politics and teaching (*zhengjiao* 政教). Accordingly, general social and political thinking from the West were considered to be particular to the Western context, something that differed from China.

However, as more knowledge about Western civilizations entered the literati world, some scholars following Zhang began to argue that their Classical and historical learning background could in fact enable them to do more with this new knowledge. It could offer scholars political-theoretical frameworks to connect the Chinese tradition with the West, thus generating overarching conceptual categories beyond the particular textual and topical traditions of literati learning. In other words, Evidential Learning could become the best preparation for students to understand Western history, politics, institutions and scholarship, but this required a large shift in the focus of textual learning. Rather than primarily emphasizing training in philological methods and cultivating scholarly attitudes, students would need to turn to the contemplation of comparative political-theoretical generalizations. One spokesman of this view was Kuai Guangdian (蒯光典 1857-1910). In a letter to Zhang Zhidong regarding the direction of education reforms, Kuai explained this rationale based on the *Classic of Rite*:

> The six Classics are books for saving the world, but it was the *Classic of Rite* that is the most suitable one. *The Classic of Rite* needs to be only roughly understood

(粗通), just like the *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* needs to be roughly understood. They should not be put into specialized Classical learning or historical learning. With the learning of *The Classic of Rite* as one's foundation, one can read the [institutional studies] by Du [You] and Ma [Duanlin], one can read *Collected Statutes of The Great Qing,* and one can comprehend Western politics and government (西洋政治).

六經皆經世之書，而《禮經》最為明切。《禮經》之必須粗通，猶之《通鑑》之必須粗通，不能歸入專門經學、專門史學也。有此根柢，可以讀杜、馬之書，可以讀《大清會典》，可以通西洋政治。雖考論研求，當俟之通六書九數之後，宜先授讀。且提倡教門，此為最急。[655]

In Kuai's view, the talent cultivated through Classical and historical scholarship could also make sense of Western political practice. When serving as the director of the Western learning (西學) department at the Lianghu Academy, Kuai suggested removing the specialized philological training based on Classics and history that involved collating, compiling and selections of texts, turning Classical and historical learning into lectures, and hosting oral exams as the way to test students' learning. Students would be given more time to digest new knowledge from the West. For Kuai, the main point of the Qian-Jia approach was to gain conceptual knowledge based on China's past political experiences and to understand the West in light of it. Kuai's suggestion was controversial and bold for many leading figures in Zhang Zhidong's camp, especially for Chen Li's student Liang Dingfen (梁鼎芬 1859-1919), at the time the director of the "Chinese learning" (中學) department at Lianghu.[656] In a way, Kuai's proposal exhibited an unexpected consequence of Zhang's reform of learning. For Kuai, the "Han learning"

[655] "Zhi Zhang Guangya shangshu,"(致張廣雅尚書書), *Jinsuzhai yiji* (金粟齋遺集) *juan* 3 (Taibei: Wenhai chubanshe Press, 1969), 244-245.

[656] See Lu Yin's discussion of the controversies between Kuai and Liang. Lu, Zhengjiao cunxu yu wenjiao zhuanixing.

textual method was irrelevant to elite learning, the enclosed philological system based on the textual tradition was unimportant, and the Classical and historical resources could be equally meaningful simply for their theoretical structure about government. Importantly, following Kuai's idea would destabilize the envisioned balance between literati learning as general cultural education and politics as a government-led agenda that Zhang Zhidong in his role as an official sponsor hoped to maintain. Knowledge about Western government (*zheng*) and teaching (*jiao*), in Kuai's proposal, would not be legitimately put under the category of *shiwu.* Instead, after literati scholars studied the Classics and histories as sources for understanding government, they could engage with the new social-political knowledge from the West as theories rather than as factual information. This comparative rationale of training could trigger radical reflections on the Qing government and officials' leadership.

Kuai's ideas emerged at a moment when a much broader and radical understanding of the meaning of *jingshi* (經世), ordering the world, was gradually emerging. It was also the moment when a new generation of scholars arose, who did not need to identify their public responsibility with serving the interests of the court, but with searching for fundamental values and theories that would integrate social, political and cultural life, something they believed would be valuable not only for China but the world as well. The very first step, for them, was to argue for reinterpreting the model of Antiquity based on overlooked literati traditions and the new sources of learning from abroad to which they now had access. Zhang Zhidong and his conventional "Han learning" community, who did not expect this turn, would need to respond to this progressive shift.

Reinterpreting Antiquity in a Global Perspective: Kang Youwei's Progressive Learning Agendas. 1885 – 1898

When Kang Youwei led a generation of young scholars into national politics after 1895, they called themselves the practitioners of a movement of "New Learning" (*xinxue*). They actively studied Western theories and history, while at the same time, they went back to the Classics as a resource for general political principles. For this generation, understanding what had made the modern West successful was an ongoing process of cross-reference between their learning about the modern West and their interpretation of China's Antiquity. They saw themselves as transcending an almost century-long dispute between the polarized "Han" and "Song" interpretations of the Classics, which they saw as a meaningless debate that had prevented inquiry into the reasons behind China's increasing political crisis. The New Learning community sought to theorize such general terms for social-political life as society (*qun* 群), polity (*zhengti* 政體), and civilization (*wenming* 文明). In doing so they were concerned with building an order in which elite learning could effectively guide politics, although they had different views of what that learning should be. In the following pages I will focus on Kang Youwei's model and what it meant for the literati world.

Antiquity as an Integrated Order of Teaching and Government

A student of the Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Ciqi (朱次奇 1807-1882) during the 1870s, Kang Youwei was also widely read in Classical commentaries and institutional histories. Moreover, he was said to have become curious about Western learning and modern Western society and politics early on. In 1885, Kang wrote an ambitious book,

entitled, *A Thorough Discussion of Teaching and Learning* (Jiaoxue tongyi 教學通議).

He explained the goal of the book as follows [emphasis in italics is mine],

> *Today, the reason why the world is not governed is that Teaching (教) and Learning (學) are not cultivated.* [But people may disagree with me and say that] today scholars are as many as trees in the forest, and rooms are crowded with teaching officials at government schools. Why [do you] complain that teaching and learning are not cultivated? [I would] say that, it is because [those teaching officials] do not model the antiquity (師古). [But people may also disagree with me and say that] today [the studies of] rituals (禮制), philology (訓詁), and literary writing (文辭) all follow antiquity. *Why [do you] complain that they fail to model the antiquity? [I would] answer that [people only] learn the useless parts not the essential meaning.*
>
> 今天下治之不舉，由教學之不修也。今天下學士如林，教官塞廷，教學惡為不修？患其不師古也。今天下禮制、訓詁、文辭皆尚古，惡為不師古？曰：師古之糟粕，不得其精意也。
>
> *Those who are good at talking about the antiquity must be insightful about today; those who are good at talking about teaching must understand how to govern.* Today's people are just like people in the past. [There is] no need to shift the time back [to realize the good government.] Governing today is just like governing in the past. [There is] no need to change the methods [of the antiquity] today [to realize good government.] [For the earliest illustration of the methods we should] go back to [the sage kings] Tang (i.e. Yao) and Yu (i.e. Shun); [for the second illustration of the methods we should] narrate Duke Zhou and Confucius, [and for the recent illustration of the methods we should] identify with Master Zhu (i.e. Zhu Xi). [Following them, we would be able to] illustrate the responsibilities of teaching and learning, distinguishing between the programs of [nongovernment] teachers (師儒) and official schools (官學), and promote the ideas of the "Six Arts" (六藝). *[And, we] unit [the tradition of the methods] and give it coherence, put it in order, and organize it. [We should] return to the antiquity and restore the origin, create laws and establish institutional systems.*
>
> 善言古者，必切於今；善言教者，必通於治。今之民，猶古之民也，不待易世；今之治，猶古之治也，不必膠法。上推唐、虞姬，中述周、孔，下稱朱子，明教學之分，別師儒官學之條，舉"六藝"之意，統而貫之，條而理之，反古復始，創法立制。[657]

[657] *Kang Youwei quanji* (康有为全集) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2007), Vol. 1, 19.

In this statement, Kang pronounced his general claim that the crisis at his time was caused by problems in the program of teaching and learning. He targeted current educational practices as superficial and made a distinction between the contemporary Classical learning and the real learning of antiquity. The contemporary elite culture, involving studying the detailed information about rituals and ancient words, or engaging with writing as the approach to realize self-cultivation, had totally missed the point about modeling antiquity (*shigu* 師古). The real essence of antiquity was nothing other than the vision behind sage kings' construction of political order. Since humanity remained unchanged, the vision also remained true. Only by studying the Classics as the source of government could contemporary scholars make use of the model of antiquity as their guidance for creating good laws and institutions. Specifically, Kang claimed that the vision of the sage kings was an integrated top-down order of teaching (*jiao* 教) and governing (*zhi* 治). The principles for setting up government and the principles for preparing teaching were connected. Only leaders who knew how to design teaching would know how to govern. To do so, Kang proposed that scholars should synthesize three major traditions of the past into a coherent order for today: that of early sage kings such as Yao and Shun, that of Duke Zhou and his interpreter Confucius, and that of the most recent contributor Zhu Xi.

Hence, the goal of the thirty-one chapters of the book was to explain the basis of the integrated system of teaching and government in antiquity, define the legacies and limitations of Confucius and Zhu Xi, trace how the model was interpreted and implemented through history, what problems were encountered, and what modern scholars ought to do.

Kang began the first chapter with a general theory about the birth and progress of civilization based on the social practice of teaching and learning (*jiao xue* 教學). He argued, humans are born with different levels of intelligence (*zhi* 智), which give rise to different abilities to recognize and distinguish things (*bian* 辨) and to reflect (*si* 思). Intelligence allows humans to create cultural forms to improve their lives, which, in turn, improve human intelligence and render it more sophisticated. Meanwhile, in social life, elders (*zhangzhe* 長者) naturally acquire a superior position. The hierarchy between elders and their juniors (*youzhe* 幼者) is the foundation for rites and the concept of righteousness (*liyi* 禮義) as well as political ceremony and legal rituals (*chaoyi tingxun* 朝儀庭訊). These two aspects of humanity (*rendao* 人道) – knowledge transmission and social hierarchy – join together to make civilized life develop. The elders, who often have better knowledge and experience, teach the juniors; and the juniors expect to learn from the elders.[658] This is where teaching and learning start. Knowledge and ethical norms develop as an integrated and mutually inseparable order, and civilization begins and progresses.[659]

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[658] Kang did not specify if the elders acquire their higher positions in a society because they have better knowledge and experience. But, it seems to me that he assumed that the elders would control knowledge and experience.

[659] "教學不知所自始也？人類之生，其性善辨，其性善思，惟其智也。禽獸顓顓冥愚，不辨不思。人之所以異於禽獸者在斯。智人之生，性猶善辯，心猶善思，惟其聖也。民生顓顓頑愚，不辨不思，君子所以異於小人者在斯。惟其善於辨思，人道之始，其必有別矣。群聚五人，則長者異席，此禮儀之造端，朝儀庭訊之椎輪也。人道之始，其必有作矣。冬居橧巢，夏居營窟，此城郭、宮室之發軔也，燔黍捭豚，薦桴土鼓，此飲食、祭司、聲樂之權輿也。剡木為舟，刳木為楫，此飛輪、大艦之高曾也。思之愈精，辨之愈精，老者傳之幼者，能者告其不能者，此教之始也。幼者學於長者，不能者學於能者，此學之始也。" *Kang Youwei quanji*, Vol. 1, 20.

Why was this important? It was because this basic principle of civilization contributed to the formation of China's high antiquity. Kang continued to explain. From the time of Fuxi (伏羲) and Shennong (神農) to the time of Shun (舜), society evolved and a systematic program of teaching and learning was gradually put into practice through government. By the time of Shun, there appeared specialized officials focusing on teaching people ethical relationships, arts, and skills needed for the development of social-economic life. Some teaching belonged to the category of Public Teaching (*gong jiao* 公教) for elite and common people, and some teaching belonged to the category of Private Learning (*si jiao* 私教) for vocational knowledge and official training. By the time of the Duke of Zhou, a multilayered and comprehensive design of teaching and government was fully grown. Teaching was the central institution that held everything together. Officials were instructors of moral norms, behavior codes, and the arts and technologies for and management of life; government documents of laws and rituals were open to people as teaching materials to guide their everyday life. People would learn about the institutions themselves and no one was unfamiliar with them. The government and people were effectively linked, making policies easy to implement and public life connected. Teaching provided the government with a solid ground, and government gave teaching substance.[660]

The system of the Duke of Zhou was the ultimate demonstration of high antiquity. It connected everything in a coherent order, thus successfully nourishing society.[661] Since

[660] Ibid., 20-21, 23, 24-26, 26-33, 36.

[661] "周公之制，有'六德'、'六行'、'六藝'、讀法之公學，有百官之專學，有王公、卿士、師儒之大學，天下人士習游於其中，術業日精，而養民精國之法亦美備。其法人與天祭，器與道合，粗與精均，貫上下合，事物無不周遍。此周公所有位天地，育萬物，盡人性，

the end of antiquity, Kang argued, the system had been forgotten or wrongly implemented in the past two thousand years.[662] Without this integrated order, later governments and people ceased to be so effectively connected and public life disjointed. In defiance of the mechanisms of civilizational development, the government had largely separated itself from the general human need for teaching and learning, failing to fulfill its responsibilities. Official departments taking charge of specialized enterprises lost their roles as the masters of knowledge for these enterprises. [663] How did it happen?

This system started to decline by the end of the Zhou. Through the Warring States era, the texts and canons accumulated through the Zhou were lost.[664] Although Confucius gathered the texts and tried hard to maintain the tradition, the broader enfeoffment system and the institutional setting on which the integrated order was based had disappeared. Moreover, Confucius himself did not have the political authority to institute the programs of the Zhou. Although his followers engaged with the elite education of that dynasty, they could not recover its comprehensive program of specialized knowledge. Thus, although Confucius wanted to care for the people, he had no way to realize his wishes. Instead, he compiled the *Six Classics* to illustrate the political, moral and cultural values of the Zhou. Learning those texts alone, however, would not lead to the restoration of the teaching

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智周天下，道濟生民，範圍而不能過，曲成而無有遺。蓋承黃帝、堯、舜之積法，兼二代之文，兼三王之事，集諸聖之成，遭遇其事，得位行道，故能創制顯庸，極其美備也。” Ibid., 36.

[662] Ibid., 21

[663] Ibid., 24.

[664] See Chapter “The Missing of the Offices” (Shi Guan 失官) and Chapter “The Perishing of the Learning” (Wang Xue 亡學), Ibid., 33-36.

programs of the Zhou offices.[665] On the other hand, because of Confucius' contribution to the discussion of moral virtues (*dexing* 德行) represented by the *Analects*, he left a legacy for cultivating unified social customs.[666] The only place where Confucius tried to express his political vision, Kang argued, was the *Spring and Autumn Annals,* and the core of that vision was about "distinguishing social norms (*dao mingfen* 道名分) and differentiating the [social] hierarchy (*bian shangxia* 辨上下)" so that people could understand their roles clearly (*ding minzhi* 定民志).

Although the Five Classics were used from the Han onward to educate the elite, Kang claimed that the scale of learning had been greatly reduced over history. People who had a comprehensive and substantive understanding of the Classics were rare.[667] The situation only became worse through the period of the Six Dynasties. The Tang institutions of learning under Taizong (太宗) thrived, but they still could not compare to antiquity, because elite learning heavily focused on literary writing. Starting from the Song, the nation-wide civil service exam tied elite learning closely to the quest for social status (納天下之科舉，全為祿利之梯). From then until Kang's own day, following the

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[665] "經雖出於孔子，而其典章皆周公經綸之跡，後世以是為學，豈不美哉！雖然，以之教學則可，然亡官守之學則不可。'六經'言官守之學，道本燦然。然封建已廢，井田世祿不行，君日尊，民日遠，地日大，，雖用'六經'為教，而'六經'之治則掃地，是名雖尊孔子，而實非孔子之學矣。然'六經'之言治雖不宜用，而'六經'之言道則講之日精，此則全為孔子之學，而不得屬之周公矣。後世之民不幸，不得見周公之治，遇官學之全明，在數系末度，蕃息蓄藏，備養民之理，稱神明之容。後世學者猶倖存'六經'、《論語》，獲知理道，此則孔子之功，而非孔子所願也。" "Liu Jing" (六經), Ibid., 38.

[666] "《論語》為言德行之書，間及禮、樂、寡及射、御，絕不幾書、數及卜祝、農醫、天文、地輿之學，純乎其為師氏之學，為後世學之大宗。驅天下而納之，自童呆至耆儒老師咸習之。至宋益盛。後世百治不舉，而人心風俗猶有善者，賴此而已。此則全乎孔子之學也。" Ibid.,

[667] Ibid., 41.

design of civil service exams from the Song and the Ming, elite learning had become entirely unrelated to the initial purpose of raising and teaching the people. It is important to see that, according to Kang's logic, the importance of educating the masses did not entirely lie in transforming the people. Rather, Kang blamed the elite education of his day for disconnecting the government from society, and for weakening the foundation of civilization. The fact that offices were not teaching people through every important aspect of their cultural and social lives had much to do with the self-centered and narrow program of elite education. This situation also explained why the government lacked sufficient stores of the modern knowledge necessary to govern (國家無所籍以為治).[668]

Thus, Kang claimed, to follow the true model of the antiquity today was to challenge exam learning and to reconnect elite learning with the needs of the world through teaching and governing.[669] This was exactly the goal of Confucius when he prepared the body of the Classics but he was not able to realize his plan of government because he did not have power. The most talented figure to understand this principle after Confucius was Zhu Xi. In Kang's view, Zhu Xi's Learning of Coherence (*lixue* 理學) inquired into the roots and branches of everything, from Heaven-and-Earth to human nature and destiny, from ordering the country to investigating the numbers and names of things. Moreover, Zhu was able to extrapolate profound moral principles based on his subtle understanding of things and his powerful conceptualization. In Kang's view, all of these allowed him to design a complex system of learning, teaching, elementary

[668] *Ibid.,* 41-44

[669] *Ibid.,* 45

education, family rituals, and so on.[670] Apart from these efforts, Zhu Xi's major achievement was to open the door of learning to all. Everyone could believe that they had the potential to be cultivated.[671] However, Zhu Xi did not pay much attention to Confucius' real aspiration, namely, to restore Duke Zhou's design of an integrated social-political order. Zhu was not able to carry out any larger government reform. (It is important to see that, in contrast with Zhu Xi, Kang was not concerned with maintaining a family-centered local order. Neither did he claim that values were rooted in individuals. In his discourse moral values were understood as doctrines of social values.)

In the rest of this book, Kang outlines his own thought about restoring learning that could reconnect the government to the world, including how to define and implement the teaching of moral virtues (*dexing* 德行), how to arrange people to read laws and rules (*dufa* 讀法), how to define and spread the Six Arts (*liuyi* 六藝), and how to unify language and writing to make all of these forms of indoctrination possible. Returning focus to his present day, Kang criticized the antiquarian interests of the "Han learning" scholars who were dominating the landscape of reform.

It is crucial to understand that Kang's redefinition of China's antiquity was meant to be *a new literati ideology*, rather than a practical blueprint. His model of antiquity was an idea about the basis of social-political life, an idea that he believed people had forgotten. As he phrased it, the fact that antiquity was not taken as a model for today proved that the current practice of learning was insufficient. To reconnect with antiquity,

[670] *Ibid.,* 44-5

[671] *Ibid.,* 46

scholars ought to constantly reflect on the basis of contemporary institutions and teaching, embracing a mentality of intellectual progressiveness, rather than obsessed with self-cultivation or fragmented textual studies.

But what kind of role should learning play? His ideal order as an integrated system of teaching and government draws on a combination of political Neo-Confucianism and Gongyang New-Text Classical learning. A prosperous civilization should be one where teaching/learning and social-political hierarchies seamlessly join and support each other. Without the process of teaching and learning between government and the people, the government would not thrive; without the government's institutional foundation, the content of teaching and learning would quickly become narrow, alienated, and superficial. Importantly, Kang understood the goal of learning as developing definite instructions for cultural practices and social-moral principles. In his theory, these instructions are originated from the need of a community for an all-encompassing top-down management of civilized life, and it cannot be provided by groups such as families or local communities in other forms. Scholars ought to seek broader participation in the government to establish instructional teaching and offices. Moreover, since the goal of rules and laws is to instruct people how to live, scholars need to constantly revise them and improve them as the society develops, knowledge accumulates, and human needs evolve. Following the antiquity, thus, ought to be an open-ended process of learning and political practice.

But, if scholars should not follow the existing learning programs endorsed by the government and established officials, namely, self-cultivation based on the Four Books and the Qian-Jia textual studies, how were they going to practice learning? If Classical

learning ought to be open-ended, where should they find the principles to guide human life? How should scholars understand human needs?

Heaven-and-Earth, Civilization, and Human Agency

These questions were addressed by Kang in his *Inner and Outer Chapters of Master Kang* (Kangzi neiwai pian 康子內外篇), a series of essays written one year later (1886). In these essays, Kang's focus had shifted from analyzing the social-historical model of antiquity to exploring its philosophical foundation. What is the goal of human life? How to evaluate their interests? What defines the right teaching? [672]

The basic argument in these essays can be reconstructed into the following claims. Heaven-and-Earth gives human beings intelligence (*zhi*) to understand the world and to build appropriate hierarchies based on their knowledge. The progress of civilized life, in turn, enables humankind to improve their total amount of intelligence. This accumulative and development of intelligence enables human beings to stay in tune with the constant creative process of Heaven-and-Earth.

To develop this argument, Kang went down to the bottom of human psychology to make sense of the purpose of civilization. He started with the notion of *shenming* (神明), which means certain spiritual consciousness or psyche that Heaven-and-Earth gives to living beings. The existence of such kind of consciousness in living beings makes them want to connect with others. Human beings have a high level of consciousness; thus, they have a strong need of extending themselves to connect with others. However, just like any other living beings in nature, human beings also need to protect themselves. Hence,

[672] Nine essays of this set of work were published later on *Qingyibao* 清议报 in 1899.

they only connect with their own kind, and they use whatever capacities they are endowed with to protect and manage themselves. The impulse to connect with others of their own kind is their sense of humaneness (*ren* 仁), and the impulse to create appropriate distinctions between themselves and others in the making of connections is their sense of righteousness (*yi* 義). But what count as the appropriate orders? It is intelligence (*zhi*) that gives human beings the ability to define what it means to be righteous (*yi*) so that they could create appropriate distinctions for managing their interactions with the world.[673]

Based on this premise, Kang argued, although we are always certain what humanness (*ren*) and what intelligence (*zhi)* mean, with the former referring to the impulse to connect with other human beings and the latter referring to the ability to understand and to create an order, nonetheless, the content of social norms, namely, righteousness (*yi*), propriety (*li* 禮), and trust (*xin* 信), is always open-ended and needs to be defined.[674] In other words, we rely on intelligence to define what it means to be righteous, what it means to be decent, and what it means to be trustworthy. Intelligence

[673] "夫萬物之故，皆有所以然之理，天固與之具，自為調護，自為扶持。其精為人，神明獨運，然亦僅以自營。推其同形，其神明愈大者，其所推愈大，亦及其同類而已。及同類者，仁也；所有斷限者，義也。其斷限之等，以及其大小遠近，皆自其識為之，所謂智也。智也者，外積於人世，內浚於人聰，不知其所以然，所謂受於天而不能自已也。學也者，窮物理之所以然，裁成輔相，人理之當然而已。然當然之理未易言也。……然則人何就何去？曰：行其有定，觀其無定，通之而已。何為行？曰：先王制為君臣、父子、兄弟、夫婦、朋友、吾生於其中，則循其故常……衣服、宮室、正朔、文字、義理，猶之人也。所謂行也。夫道要於可行，學出於不能，道之與學，相反而相成也。" "Lixue pian" (理學篇), from *Kangzi neiwai pian* (康子內外篇), *Kang Youwei quanji*, Vol. 1, 100.

[674] Ibid., 108.

helps human beings to define norms, allowing humans beings to truly realize their need of connecting with others, namely, their need of fulfilling their sense of humanness (*ren*).

Then, how do we become intelligent? Kang argued, intelligence is both cultivated through experience and rooted in the human mind; it is a mystical capacity bestowed by nature and no one knows how it works. Different from animals, human beings learn. Intelligence grows as human brains develop and experiences accumulate. The sages are those who have the highest amount of intelligence. Thus, they have greatest worries and fears; they can foresee things, and they know how to regulate human love and hate to define rules for humans to manage themselves.[675] Kang claimed, "intelligence give births to tens of thousands of principles (故惟智能生萬理)."[676]

In the process of fulfilling intelligence, civilization is born.[677] For Kang, civilized life is first of all the product of the intelligence of the sages, not a bottom-up development of the populace. But the participation of people in the civilized life also determines whether the total amount of human intelligence would increase. This process begins when a few sages offer the brightness of their mind to the common people who try to abide by making use of nature's resources. As the civilization grows, people living in it become smarter, and the collective amount of intelligence increases. Human understanding is accumulated under the guidance of the sages. Thus, even if "barbarians"

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[675] "……嬰孩沌沌，有愛惡而無哀懼，故人生惟有愛惡而已。哀懼之生也，自人之智出也。魂魄足矣，腦髓備矣，知覺於是多焉，知刀鋸水火之足以傷生也，於斯謹避之。嬰兒不知刀鋸水火之足以傷生而不避也，禽獸亦然。聖人之知更多，故防害於未至，慮患於未然，曲為之防，力為之制。故其知愈多者，其哀懼愈多；其知愈少者，其哀懼愈少。……聖人智之極也。" Ibid., 101

[676] Ibid., 108.

[677] Ibid.

today do have some amount of intelligence, they do not live a civilized life, thus they are not so much different from animals.[678] Intelligence is a mystical capacity, nonetheless, we can measure it based on the result of civilizations. In other words, civilization is the expression of a society's intelligence.

Hence, Kang stressed, based on this standard, China was one part of human civilization, because its ancient sages had contributed their intelligence to their people and opened the civilizing process by building a civilized life. Kang claimed,

> Since [Fu] Xi, Xuan [Yuan], and Shen Nong, The Central Country (*zhongguo* 中國) began to have intelligence. Europe started to have intelligence since Adam and Eve. Even in the continent of America, Mexico and Peru also developed thriving [systems of] music and rituals, writings, palaces, and clothing. But [they] declined later. In places where there were no sages, ignorance appears more and more clearly. …Frist there are human forms, and then there comes intelligence. After intelligence, there are [social-moral] principles. [Social-moral] principles are made by humans. Jia Yi (賈誼 200 BC-169 BC) proposed to establish [the distinctions between] ruler and minister and respect hierarchy. This is not what the Heaven commands, but what humans [choose] to create. Thus, [social-moral] principles are human principles.
>
> 自羲、軒、神農以來，中國於是有智；歐洲自亞當、衣非以來，於是有智。雖阿墨利加洲、墨西哥、秘魯之先，亦有禮樂、文章、宮室、輿服之盛，特其後亡之耳。此外無聖人者，則顓蒙日見矣。……夫有人形而後有智，有智而後有理。理者，人之所立。賈誼謂立君臣、尊上下，此非天之所為，乃人之所設。故理者，人理也。[679]

Civilization emerged in various places, evidenced by the creation of instructive teachings and rules in those societies by their sages. (In the West it was the time of Adam and Eve, and in South America it was the time of the appearance of ancient Mexican and Peruvian cultures.)

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[678] Ibid.,110-111.

[679] Ibid.

In working out this set of theoretical arguments, Kang achieved an important goal. Stressing that social norms and rules are open-ended and should be redefined constantly, he justified learning as a continuous reflection on the foundation of values and ongoing construction of rules and norms. Focusing on the universal faculty of "intelligence" given by the Heaven-and-Earth as the source of norms and rules, instead of the specific products of "principles" in the history of different societies, all societies with ancient civilizations became comparable on the ground of their common development of "intelligence." In doing so, he was able to redefine the agency of China's scholars based on a general discourse about humanity, give them confidence, and urge them to see themselves as a part of the global culture precisely because they had a glorious tradition bestowed by the sages.

This goal is best articulated in the opening essay of the book, where Kang urged the contemporary Chinese intellectuals to understand that the seemingly troublesome condition of China in his time offered them an exciting opportunity. "[Now is] the moment [that only comes once] in a thousand years!"[680] The key to the realization of this agency, Kang argued, was to fully understand the political power of their teaching. In other words, they needed to understand that instructing people how to live was the most powerful governing instrument that they could ever master. This was true for all civilizations.

> Under the Heaven what is the most powerful [force] to transform people? [There is] nothing more powerful than the discussion of right and wrong and reflection on right and wrong. The bond between father and son is human nature, but Buddha could take it away and make the bond between teacher and disciple more essential. [Protecting one's] body and life are such an urgent [need], but the Sages

[680] Ibid., 99

> could take it away and make [people] to scarify [themselves] for the rulers and their fathers. [If someone] can take away others' personal life and inborn bound by discoursing on a piece of law and establishing a piece of moral principle, then there is nothing under the Heaven that cannot be taken away. Thus, for those who understand this technique, what else can they not transform!
>
> 天下移人最巨者何哉？莫大於言議、覺議矣。父子之親，天性也，而佛氏能奪之而立師徒；身命之私，至切也，而聖人能奪之而徇君父。夫以其自有之身，及其生身之親，說一法立一義而能奪之，則天下無有不能奪者矣。故明此術者，何移而不得！ [681]

Thus, Kang further claimed, for those who are good at being rulers and teachers (善為君師者), they should know that people's belief can be guided and transformed gradually over time, as long as they learn to build the right momentum and understand how people think.[682] After understanding this, the intellectual-political elites should realize their opportunity to complete their mission of realizing their worldly enterprise (*shigong* 事功) by establishing instructions to transform the people. "If [things] as essential as family ethics and as important as life can easily be taken away by words, why not regulate people through politics and decorate it with ritual and music? " Especially given that, "among all the countries on earth, only China is in the position of [easily transforming society]." This was because, Kang argued, in China the ruling elite was endowed with a uniquely strong power in society. More importantly, this influence did not come from bullying or bribing people; it derived ultimately from a mandate that was owed to the benevolent rule of the sage kings, and to the generations of later followers who identified their goals with the legacy of the sage kings. The result was that, in China, common people had genuinely respect for good social customs and ministers were sincerely loyal

[681] Ibid., 97

[682] Ibid.

to the system. This condition thus provided the intellectual-political elites of today with a unique opportunity to lead well.[683]

To do so, it was important for them not simply to rely on any traditional discourses; instead, they ought to develop the ability to think through what was appropriate for the present day by consulting history and balancing the benefits of various choices; and they ought to understand the external conditions and the way that people think in order to make their instructions meaningful.[684] In this way, the ruler and the literati elite would easily cultivate the collective talent to build society and improve government, so that everyone who was willing to become their subjects would escape discomfort and ignorance.[685] Eventually, he claimed, the Chinese intellectual-political elites would restore the greatness of China's antiquity and turn China into a model for the world, the goal that Chinese sages in the past had always tried to achieve.[686]

Then, what should scholars do? As we have seen, for Kang, the civilizing progress was not a bottom-up cultural development of historical communities, but a process centering on the reciprocal relations between civilization and the evolving human potential of intelligence. Kang situated civilization in an entirely trans-cultural framework, celebrating civilization as a noble endeavor to fulfill humans' natural command to connect and take care of themselves. Motivated by this truly universal

[683] Ibid.

[684] Ibid., 98

[685] Ibid., 99.

[686] Ibid. 99

understanding about the source of values, Kang argued that Chinese scholars could not afford to be obsessed with narrowed-minded and pedantic textual learning anymore.[687] Not understanding the Heavenly roots of civilization, scholars would be disconnected from the spiritual consciousness (*shenming*) of Heaven-and-Earth that bestows humans with the mystical capacity of generating intelligence. To make this point, Kang eventually claimed that the role of leaders and teachers was to fulfill the ultimate spiritual force in Heaven that reproduces and civilizes the world. [688] Thus, to fully commit to China's future, literati learning ought to be concerned with the humankind as a whole.

> Therefore, for those who only love themselves, their understanding is only about themselves; for those who only love their family, their understanding is only about one single family; for those who extend their love to their hometown and lineage, their understanding is slightly broader; for those who extend their love to their region and state, their understanding is even broader; those who take all under the Heaven as one family and identify with China as one member of that family, their blood and qi connect [with other people in China], and they know each other's pain and itch, thus their awareness and understanding is also much broader, and their civility reaches further. Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Duke of Zhou, Confucius, and Mozi are such kind of people.
>
> 故有僅愛其一身者，其識周於一身者也；有愛一家者，其識又周於一家者也；有推而愛其鄉族者，其識稍大矣；又有推其愛而幾於邦邑者，識益大矣；其以天下為一家，中國為一人，血氣相通，痛癢相知，其覺識亦大，其愛想之周者益遠。堯舜禹湯周孔墨，是其人矣。[689]

Based on his interpretation of the role of literati scholars, Kang believed that the more culturally reductionist and universalist one's learning becomes, the broader one is

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[687] Ibid., 106

[688] "今有道焉，渺造化之跡，通神明之數，氣天寅合，變動形化，四通六辟，其運無乎不貫。其粗跡為君師之事，該本末，洽道數，生生之倫，拔幽眇而文明，昭千萬祀而若揭，未嘗為虛而寄體。造物忘乎聖通，其孰能與於斯？自仲尼之後，分其體，率其性，卷舒開闔，若者其有意乎？"

[689] Ibid., 106.

connected to the humankind, and the closer one is linked with the nourishing force of the Heaven. This is the noblest practice of learning, and a better China and a better world are to be realized through the same process of learning.

In this vein, Kang proposed, on one hand, when adopting the established moral discourses of the past, such as the ethical codes between ruler and minister, father and son, or husband and wife, contemporary leaders should use them pragmatically given that they might work for maintaining the community's order. On the other hand, they ought to pursue learning as thoroughly as they can to understand the principles of things and courses of human society, and to philosophize the interactions between human culture and the universe.[690]

Modern Western Parliamentary Democracy as an Illustration of the Integrated Order of Antiquity

Kang Youwei began to be intrigued by the development of the modern West in the 1880s when he was developing his system. Its material prosperity and its well-governed life suggested to Kang that the West had reached a certain profound understanding of the world and human life. Kang first realized that the West had effectively built a system when he visited Hong Kong and Shanghai by early 1880s. "I thus know that Western people govern based on standards, thus they cannot be seen as the ancient barbarians." Later, he commented, "when I passed through prosperous Shanghai, I further learned that Western people [can manage] governance with thought-

[690] Ibid., 100.

out principles (有本). Thus I bought many western books to study."[691] We have no clear understanding of how much Kang knew about the West when he wrote *A Thorough Discussion of Teaching and Learning*, but we know that three years after he penned the book, he wrote to Zeng Jize (1839-1890曾紀澤), who had served as a diplomat in the United Kingdom and France, to ask about aspects of Western government that Kang could not understand:

> Gu Tinglin [i.e. Gu Yanwu] used to say … the mind of common people is the mind of the tens of thousands of generations under the heaven. I often wish [myself] to be like this. In the Three Dynasties, rulers governed and managed the population. … The reason that they could provide people with land and also [appoint] teachers to stay in local schools to teach and cultivate people was that they followed the enfeoffment systems. A duke governed an area of hundreds and tens of *li* square; under him there were the offices of Xiandaifu, Zhouzhang, Dangzheng, Lixu, and Zuzheng. [The system] was so detailed arranged, thus [the rulers] could know how many households, people, and domestic animals were there; townsmen could read the canons (讀經) from time to time, thus their ears and eyes [or, behaviors] were easily cultivated. Therefore, talented [people] with moral virtues and skills would be recognized; it would be easy to nurture and teach people. Perhaps, because many officials who stayed close to people, [the central government could] depend on them to manage people's life. Moreover, there were mountain managers, forest governors, and mining administrators. The rulers [back then] manifested their virtue, and people enjoyed the benefits. It was all because of such an arrangement of government. Later in Wei, Qi, Sui, and Tang dynasties, [the governments did] distribute lands to people and keep some as people's property to keep through generations, but when the system was followed by Emperor Taizong until the time of Emperor Gaozong [it became] broken just when it was adopted. [Perhaps it was because] the provinces and counties were sporadic, and one magistrate could not act on detailed management.
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> 顧亭林曰：…… 匹夫之心，天下萬世之心也。僕常願有然。昔三代時，王者經理其民，若分身家以授子弟者。故每夫授田百畝，水旱之災，則非徒興蠲賑，又補助之……其所以能授田，而又有少師坐於裡塾以教化之者，則以封建行故也。諸侯所治百數十里，其下有鄉大夫、州長、黨正、里胥、族正之

[691] He commented in 1879, "乃知西人治國之有法度，不得已古舊之夷狄視之。乃復閱《海國圖志》《瀛寰志略》等", and in 1882, "道經上海之繁盛，益知西人政事之有本，舟車行路，大購西書以歸講求焉" Quoted from Pan Guangzhe (潘光哲) Wanqing shiren de xixue yuedushi (晚清士人的西學閱讀史) (Taibei Zhongyang yanjiu yuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 2014).

官，如此其細密，是故能知民間夫家、人民、六畜之數，州黨鄰里以時讀經，故耳目易染。故德行、道藝之秀無能自隱，其養易備，生教易成。蓋近民之官多，故纖悉足恃也。此外又有山虞、林衡、卿人、礦人之官，上德能宣，而下利咸開，恃此道也。後世魏、齊、隋、唐，非無口分、世業之用，然及太宗行之至高宗先天而大壞，蓋郡縣之疏，以一守令不能為纖密之治故也。

Today the discourses of the way of governing from the West can be said to be vigorous. The merit is that the rulers could know the situations of people. How is their system of local government? Do they provide people land and whether there are people who do not have food and clothes? How big are their towns (I guess if they do not have railways, then each town cannot be bigger than a hundred *li* square, but if they have railways, each town can be bigger than that)? How many officials are there working at the local government? Their design must be much less detailed than [the design of] our Three Dynasties, but [it seems that] they can manage affairs and govern people, [and they] have everything prepared in detail. Do they know the numbers of households, people, and domestic animals? Can learning be widely established? The governors' power must be big. [Do people] not worry that they would mistreat people? Are there Parliament representatives [in localities] to oversee the local governors? But if [local governors were overseen by the Parliament representatives] then the situation must be even harder. In one town there are limited amount of talented people, and the Parliament representatives in localities are not all worthies. Based on my observation of the militia in my local place, people elect the county's committee of gentry (紳督董鄉事), which is quite similar to the Parliamentary system in the West. But [problems such as] bias, selfishness, lack of concerns for the public, and factions are everywhere. How could this [system] be used for governing? Are the governors elected by the rulers or by the people? If they are elected by the people, are there problems caused by fractions? [If so,] then the elected governors would not necessarily have talent. Would they know about how to learn and how to benefit people? …How do they hire government clerks and runner? …And, since they create academies (仕學院) to teach people who want to serve the government, then, officials, regardless what kinds, must come from the academies. What are their methods for selecting officials? ……

今泰西之言治道，可謂盛矣。其美處在下情能達。不知其鄉邑之制如何？無授田之制，得無亦有幾飢寒之人耶？其鄉邑之里數大小有幾（無鐵路，則不可過百里；有鐵路，似過百里亦得矣）？令長之下，屬官幾何？比我三代之制必疏，然能實事理民，纖悉畢備，若知夫家、人民、六畜之數乎？諸學藝能遍立乎？令長之權必大矣，不畏其虐民乎？得無有議院紳以制令長耶？如此則事又難行。且一邑之中，人才有限，其議紳未必皆賢。僕觀於吾鄉團練之局，推舉各紳督董鄉事，甚類泰西議院之制。然偏私不公，立黨相傾排者，比比皆是，則亦豈能為治耶？其令長之選，由君長選之，疑由民舉之？若由民舉，得無有結黨之弊耶？則亦非美才也。何若有學道惠人之理乎？…… 其

府吏胥徒之法若何？……又其慾仕者有仕學院以教之，然則無論何官員，必由此院出矣，其選舉之法若何？……[692]

For Kang, the Western parliamentary system seemed to have aimed to build an integrated social-political order similar to China's enfeoffment system in Three Dynasties, that is, to fully connect the rulers and the people. But if so, how did they achieve it? During the Three Dynasties, the government took care of people's wellbeing by offering them property and detailed guidance and education, while later dynasties had failed to maintain these connections under the prefectural system. Kang was eager to know 1) how the West designed and implemented a system to connect the rulers with the people, 2) whether the West also established learning for people to obtain life skills, and 3) whether the public election of politicians could find people with learning who were concerned about the people's interest. With his vision of antiquity, Kang found himself attracted by the politics of the modern West in which public elections (公舉) and public education played an important role. In this sense, as Kang would argue in the following year, the secret to the prosperity of the modern West was none other than the ideas and practices of China's sage kings in antiquity as depicted by the Classics. Importantly, Kang shifted people's views on parliamentary democracy from a particular political apparatus into something enriched with a deeper meaning, seeing it as a system based on the true principle of humankind that had also been embodied in China's antiquity. In a memorial to the emperor, Kang wrote, "in the past, foreign tribes invaded [the central kingdom] one after another, [but] they merely insulted us with strong military forces, and were never [able to challenge our] way of governing and learning. Today the Western countries compete

[692] "Yu Zeng Jiegang shu" (與曾劼剛書), *Kang Youwei quanji* (康有為全集), Vol.1, 176-77.

[with us] in the way of governing, and beat us with their advanced intelligence and knowledge. This truly has never happened with those ancient tribes."[693] But how did they achieve this? Kang continued, "they respected the worthies, celebrated public achievements, protected their people and stayed close to the commoners. Their rulers think about how to make use of the [talent] of every individual scholar and citizen, thus they intend to protect and nourish them, having little intention to guard against them and control them. Thus their elite and people are able to stay close to the government and to the ruler."[694] Kang represented the view that the moral essence of parliamentary democracy was that a perfect connection between rulers and people could be maintained, and the educational responsibility of the government could be carried out. (故有情而必通，有才而必用).

In a series of memorials to the emperor beginning in 1895, Kang acted on his theories and argued for changes that could allow the literati elite and government institutions to institutionally engage in education, building connections between the people and their rulers. Only by doing so could China restore an effective government.[695]

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[693]"夫泰西諸國之相逼，中國數千年未有之變局也。曩代四夷之交侵，以強兵相陵而已，未有治法文學之事也；今泰西諸國以治法相競，以智學相上，此誠從古諸夷之所無也。" Kang, "Shang Qingdi disishu" (上清帝第四書) *Kang Youwei quanji*, Vol, 2, 81.

[694] "嘗考泰西所以致強之由：一在千年來諸國並立也，若政稍不振，則滅亡隨之，故上下勵精，日夜戒懼，尊賢而尚功，保民而親下。其君相之於一士一民，皆思用之，故護養之意多，而防制之意少。其士民之於其君其國，皆能親之，故有情而必通，有才而必用。"

[695] "然富而不教，非為善經；愚而不學，無以廣才；是在教民。……甚至鑒於明末，因噎廢食，上以講學為禁，下以道學為笑。故任道之儒即少，才智之士無多，乃至嗜利無恥，蕩成風俗，而國家緩急，無以為用。法弊至此，亦不得不少變矣。……夫天下民多而士少，小民不學，則農工商賈無才。產物成器，利用厚生，既不能精；化民成俗，遷善改過，亦難為治；非復幬群生之意也。故教有及於士，有逮於民，有明其理，有廣其智。能教民則士愈美，能廣智則理愈明。今地球既闢，輪路四通，外侮交侵，閉關未得，則萬國所學，皆宜講求……常考泰西之所以富強，不在炮械軍兵，而在窮理勸學。彼自七八歲人皆入學，

He emphasized, "[If the government] is rich but fails to teach [people], [it cannot be said that the government] is good at governing."

Launching the "New Learning" Movement

What kind of role should the literati elite play? First, Kang consistently argued for the importance of learned societies. "The key to promoting learning lies in forming communities (合群)"; "I often investigate why the West could be wealthy and strong, [and] it is all due to the strength of the learned societies in seeking knowledge."[696] Secondly, Kang advocated reform of the government to allow more regionalism than bureaucratic centralism. Local officials and elites at the county level could thus devote more of their energy to the people's education and life."[697] Thirdly, Kang proposed allowing every hundred-thousand households to elect educated elite representatives who are "broadly learned in history and the contemporary world," who "have a thorough understanding of both the traditions of China and of the West," who "understand polity

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有不學者責其父母，故鄉塾甚多。其各國讀書識字者，百人中率有七十人。其學塾經費，美國乃至八千萬。其大學生徒，英國乃至一萬余。其每歲著書，美國乃至萬餘種。其書郡縣，各有書藏，英國乃至百餘萬冊，所以開民之智者亦廣亦。而我中國文物之邦，讀書識字僅百之二十，學塾經費少於兵餉數十倍，士人能通古今達中外者，郡縣乃或無人焉。" See "Gongcheng shangshu"公車上書, sections of "Jiaomin" 教民 and "Kaizhi" 開智, *Jiaoyu sixiang* 教育思想, *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi ziliao huibian* 中国近代教育史资料汇编 (Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 134-5.

[696]"夫挽世变在人才，成人才在学术，讲学术在合群"，"尝考泰西所以富强之由，皆由学会讲求之力。" *Kang Youwei Zhenglun ji* (康有为政论集) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), Vol. 1, 169.

[697] "夫教養之事，皆由國政。而今官制太冗，俸祿太薄，外之則使才未養，內之則民情不達，若不變通，則無以為養之本也。天下之治，必由鄉始。……今請首停捐納，乃改官制，因漢世太守領長之制，唐代節度兼觀察之條，每道設一巡撫，上通章奏，下領知縣……使吏胥之積弊，皆化為士人；三老之鄉官，各由民舉。"

(政體)," and who "have integrity and can speak straightforwardly."[698] These elected literati elites, regardless of whether they have passed the civil service exams, needed only to be elected to gain the right to give the ruler advice. They would meet in discussion when major government decisions need to be made. In so doing, they would be able to connect the ruler and the people.[699]

What kind of learning, then, should intellectual elites conduct? Apart from developing a comprehensive curriculum of science and technology, how could they delve into the principles of human life to inform the making of laws? Kang's *Complete Book on Real Principles and Public Law* (實理公法叢書), which he worked on in the late 1880s, offers an intellectual model. This unfinished book was written in the genre of a code for regulating social life. It begins with a category called "General Discussion of Humankind" (總論人類門), followed by categories spanning family life and government.[700] Under

[698] "夫先王之治天下，與民共之，《洪範》之大疑大事，謀及庶人為大同。《孟子》稱盡賢、殺人，待於國人之皆可。盤庚則命眾至庭，文王則與國人交。《尚書》之四目四聰，皆由辟門，《周禮》之詢謀詢遷，皆合大眾。嘗推先王之意，非徒集思廣益，通達民情，實以同憂共患，結（洽）合民志。昔漢有征辟有道之制，宋有給事封駁之條。伏乞特詔頒行海內，令士民公舉博古今、通中外、明政體、方正直言之士，略分府、縣約十萬戶，而舉一人，不論已仕未仕，皆得充選，因用漢制，名曰議郎。皇上開武英殿，廣懸圖書，俾輪班入直，以備顧問。並準其隨時請對，上駁詔書，下達民詞。凡內外興革大政，籌餉事宜，皆令會議於太和門，三占從二，下施部行。所有人員，歲一更換，若民心推服，留者領班。著為定制，宣示天下。上廣皇上之聖聰，可坐一室而知四海；下合天下之心志，可同憂樂而忘公私。皇上乃舉此經義，行此曠典，天下奔走鼓舞，能者竭力，富者紓財，共贊富強，君民同體，情誼交孚，中國一家，休戚與共。以之籌餉，何餉不籌？以之練兵，何兵不練？合四萬萬人之心以為心，天下莫強焉！……"

[699] Also, in "Shang Qingdi di si shu" he suggested: "一曰下招求言；二曰開門集議；三曰闢館顧問；四曰設報達聰；五曰開府辟士。" Kang Youwei quanji, VoL.2, 86-7

[700] For instance, "Husband and Wife" (夫婦門), "Husband, Wife and Childe" (夫婦子女門), "Teacher and Pupils" (師弟門), "Ruler and Ministers" (君臣门), "Senior and Junior" (長幼門), "Friendship" (朋友門), "Rituals" (禮儀門) (divided into the name of God, Calendar, Majesty, Rest Day), "Punishment" (刑罰門), "Teaching Affairs" (教事門) (divided into subcategories

each category, Kang first lists the general principles that are essential to the creation of the institutions for that area. He calls these "Real Principles" (實理). For instance, under "General Discussion of Humankind," four principles are included. "Each person shares the original elements of Heaven and Earth to become a human being."[701] "Each person has spirit, thus [each person] has knowledge. It is what is called intellect. But the nature of each person's spirit is different."[702] "When human beings are born, they already have the quality of loving and hating. As they grow and interact with other people, [if] they develop their quality of loving, then they will be beneficial to others, and [if] they develop their quality of hating, then they will be harmful….."[703] "When human beings are born, they are trustworthy and they are not deceitful. They learn to become deceitful under others' influence."[704]

Then Kang lists several "Public Laws" (公法) under this category. In his definition, the best public laws are those deduced from "geometric principles" (幾何公理). Because few of these are available, people also need to find the best human-made laws and work on them. For instance, the first one is explained as "every person has his

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waiting to be filled), "Governing Affairs" (治事門) (divided into official system 官制, regulations for physical body, housing, tools, and diet, 身體宮室器用飲食之節, Funerals 葬, Sacrifice 祭). In the end there is "Public laws for judgments" (論人公法).

[701] "人各分天地原質以為人" *Kang Youwei quanji*, Vol.1, 148

[702] "人各具一魂，故有知識，所謂智也。然靈魂之性，各各不同。" Ibid.

[703] "人之始生，便具愛惡二質。及其長也，與人相接時，發其愛質，則必有益於人；發其惡質，則必有損於人。又愛惡只能相生，不能兩用。"Ibid.

[704] 人之始生，有信而無詐，詐由習染而有"。Ibid

or her own right to be independent."[705] He comments, "This is a law derived from geometrical principles. It completely matches the principle that each person shares the original elements of Heaven and Earth to become a human being, as well as the principle that each person has a sprit. [Thus this public law] best benefits the human way."[706] Other public laws that he sees matching the Real Principles included: "to make laws that celebrate love and remove evil," "to reward trust and punish deceit," "to use man-made laws in the spirit of equality," and "institutions ought to be unified. If certain law is decided by public discussion as a public law, then it will be implemented publicly, and it will not be allowed to use those laws [that do not follow the public decisions] privately." [707]At last, under the section "Examples" (比例), he lists six counter examples currently practiced in the world.

What is important to see is that, in writing the book, Kang established a model of strongly positivistic political thinking. First, to govern well meant to establish the right laws, namely "public laws" based on the most universal and self-evident truths about human beings and their lives, namely the "real principles."[708] The book was intended to be a compilation of "principles" (理) that are both relevant to institution-building and are scientifically tested (實測). Equally important, it takes into account the major traditions

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[705] "人有自主之權" Ibid.

[706] "此為幾何公理所出之法，與人各分原質以為人，及各具一魂之實理全合，最有益於人道"Ibid.

[707] "制度咸定於一，如公議以某法為公法，既公共行用，則不許有私自行用諸比例之法者。" Ibid.

[708] For him, *shili* is a part of the general category of "moral principles" 義理, and *gongfa* a part of the general category of "institution" 制度

of teaching (教) in the world, and collects the "institutions" from these traditions that are not contradictory to the "real principles." It also collects those that may appear to be contradictory to the "real principles" but had been still used by people. For all of these institutions, it is important to find the parts that follow the "real principle" and are good for the human way, which he also calls "public principles based on geometrical deduction," to define "public laws."

As he emphasizes, principles and rules have to be based on two criteria: *shi* (實) and *gong* (功). "*Shi*," refers to three standards. 1) when talking about "shili," they needed to be scientifically tested; 2) when someone investigates the effects of certain laws in human society, these have to be based on *shilun,* concrete investigation; 3) laws deduced from geometrical principles are always more "real" (shi) than man-made laws. "Gong" refers to the following standards. The purpose for compiling such a book is for the public to have a document with binding power. Discourses of institutions that are collected into the book have to be removed from specific contexts. If geometric principles are not sufficient, man-made laws can be used, but their purpose will simply be to benefit the public human way, not to benefit any individuals.

Thus, for Kang, to govern well first of all required implementing the most logical thinking as well as scientifically tested theory in designing rules. To have the best rules meant that the basis of the rules had to be shared by humanity in general. Also, the book should be composed in two versions: one in literary Chinese, and another one in vernacular language.[709] Any items of principle or law should be written in modern

[709] "一用文言，一用俗語。評論義理，當以俗論定，乃更譯成文書。"

language, not in archaic language."[710]

Second, together with the composition of this book, a set of subjects are essential to keep the law-making process grounded on reliable knowledge and meaningfully connected to the changing world. For instance, these books included a thorough discussion and comparison of "public laws," an explanation of the "real principles" behind human life, a global history (地球正史), global history of scholarship (地球學案), a complete collection of evidential research (考證全書), dictionaries of different countries, and so on. All of these books would need to be updated from time to time as an institutionalized political and legal activity. To make knowledge approachable, there would also have to be a children's version of this set of books to be studied and recited.[711] Also, books focusing on all kinds of specialized knowledge (yixue) offer important guidance for designing the rules of all areas of social life. (推定專門之學各種書籍). Historical works also needed to be collected because they would offer the basis for evidential investigation when deciding on laws. (編年分類以存古今書籍).[712]

For Kang, to govern well first of all required implementing the most logical thinking as well as scientifically tested theory in designing rules. To have the best rules

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[710] "立目均以今人修書者之語，不得用古語，其古教經典有關制度之言，則以按語備之。"

[711] "一曰整齊萬身公法書籍""萬身公法之書籍，凡《實理公法全書》《公法會通》、《禍福實理全書》《地球正史》《正史學案》、《考證全書》萬國公法、各國律例，各國字典，地球書籍，目錄提要全書是也。萬國公法，各國律例，各國字典，講求萬身公法之人，但整齊其目錄而已。若其餘七書，則講求萬身公法之士，俟全書編輯告成後，每五年必增修一次焉。" Ibid., 159.

[712] "三曰推定專門之學各種書籍- 藝學之書; 四曰編年分類以存古今書籍: 地球所有精通有用之書，以上盡收之矣。然其餘古今人之書，考據加尚不能驟廢之。且猶恐前人之書，有為後挹註所未盡者，則仍未可輕之也，編年分類以存之，斯可矣。" Ibid

meant that the basis of the rules had to be shared by humanity in general. Teaching ought to be delivered through laws, in the sense that laws ought to manifest positive truth about the world and human life. They would guide people's lives and take care of them by closely defining all aspects of life. Although rules and laws change through time, historical and cultural contexts should not play a role in drawing conclusions about norms. Conclusions about norms had to be truly universal and reductionist.

Kang Youwei's positivism corresponds to his commitment to teaching as a didactic action to improve the human intellect. Therefore, his attempt to push intellectuals to engage universal categories in political thinking led to a totalistic learning program. The center of this program is a worship of one learning mind that connects everything and stays in tune with real values in nature. He set up the expectation for his students as follows:

> As things, human beings are more precious because they can learn, that is how they differ from all the other things; as human beings, scholars can learn thus they are different from other human beings; as scholars, those who learn broadly are better than those who learn narrowly; as broadly learned scholars, those who know the universe/cosmos are better than those who only know about one place; those know hundreds of enterprises are better than those who only know about one corner; Understanding the reasons of the changes of heaven and human beings, and exhausting the transformations of yin and yang, are better than those who stick to the regular and follow the conventions, who rigidly adhere to the texts and obstinately abide by the literary meaning.
>
> 同是物也，人能學則貴，異於萬物矣；同是人也，能學則異於常人矣；同是學人也，博學則勝於陋學矣；同是博學，通於宙合，則勝於一方矣；通於百業，則勝於一隅矣；通天人之故，極陰陽之變，則勝於循常蹈故拘文牽義者矣。[713]

His academy, although based on a traditional classification of morality, statecraft, Evidential Learning, accordingly included subjects ranging from science to Buddhism,

[713] Ibid., 341

from Western philosophy to philology. Under "Moral Principles" (*yili*), instead of sticking to the Classics or the Four Books, he introduced a general category called "Confucian learning" (*kongxue* 孔學), together with Buddhist learning (*fuo xue* 佛學), learning of the Masters from the Zhou and Qin periods (*zhou qin zhuzi* 周秦諸子), Song and Ming learning (*song ming xue* 宋明學), and Western philosophy (*taixi zhexue* 泰西哲學). Under "Evidential learning" (*kaoju* 考據), he included Chinese Classical learning, world history, geography, mathematics, and science. Under "Statecraft learning" (*jingshi* 經世), he included political theory (*zhengli* 政理), Chinese political history (*zhongguo zhengzhi yangeshi* 中國政治沿革史), political practices, and learning of the masses. At the end, "literary learning" (*wenzi zhi xue* 文章之學) covered Chinese writing and foreign languages.[714]

More significant than the practicality of the program were the intellectual values behind it that he wanted to deliver. Kang's impact on the younger generation in the early 1890s was large. As Chen Qianqiu (陳千秋 1869-1895) commented, Kang's teaching led students to transcend the conflicts between the Song and the Han. The first one had been reduced to the learning of personal morality, while the latter had become trivial, avoiding confronting topics about principle. Kang pushed his followers to speak to politics as *Ru* (儒) of humanity, who knew the principles underlying civilized life.[715] From the late

[714] See Liang Qichao, *Kang Youwei zhuan* 康有為傳.

[715] "陳千秋跋……國朝諸儒，刳心絀性，而宋學亡；經師碎義逃難，而"漢學"亦亡。……千秋與服領英秀捧手請業，爰述斯記以為歸言，其詞雖約，而治道經術之大，隱隱乎撥槎而光晶之……生民之托命，或有賴焉。若更進而通天人之故，窮製作之原，則循誦斯編，又不過父子之文章可得而聞也。" *Kang Youwei quanji*, Vol.1 351

1880s through the mid 1890s, Kang's role was controversial but appealing to many young people. As Liang recalled, Kang could philosophize based on his limited knowledge about the universe and the human world in a way that no one could emulate. He was able to talk about the "great foundation" (大原) of the success of modern west, while presenting the goal of learning as "to save humanity" (救人類).

To extend his view to the larger world and to unify the literati community based on his definition of the reform, Kang began to reinterpret the Gongyang Classical tradition in the early 1890s as an ideological basis. Explaining how Kang did so goes beyond the scope of this paper, but, based on the previous analysis of his ideas, it is not difficult to speculate why Kang chose to do so. Apart from that factor that his worldview was already influenced by the Gongyang metaphysics, to propose the Gongyang tradition would allow Kang to achieve several things. First, the tradition saw the Classics as a coherent political agenda by the Confucius and undermined their cultural-historical nature. Thus, it could help Kang to justify his envisioned political role for the literati community and keep the Classics philosophically relevant. Second, the Gongyang tradition's esoteric reading of the Classics emphasized the spiritual connection between Confucius and the Heaven-and-Earth, worshiping Confucius as a prophet. For Kang, this would allow scholars to pursue open-ended studies about universe and society while still identifying themselves with the tradition of Confucius, helping the literati world to maintain its agency and unity. In the end, for Kang, as we have seen, it was the Heaven-and-Earth that served as the source of values, not culture. Third, the universal and progressive view of human civilization underlying the Gongyang tradition could provide Kang an effective language: since Confucius established his teaching through the

Classics with a truly universal vision of the process of human civilization, scholars who identified with him today ought to actively search for universal understanding about human life and establish laws for humanity.

The Predicament of Kang Youwei's Progressive Learning Agendas for the Late Qing Literati World

Critical Response from the Han Learning Scholar-Officials

Kang's progressive proposal of uniting the literati world under redefined social-moral values and laws, and his use of the Gongyang tradition as a textual foundation, led to intense critical reactions from Zhang Zhidong's circle of Han scholars. As early as the summer of 1891, Kang sent some parts of his newly drafted *Xinxue weijing kao* (新學偽經考) to Zhu Yixin 朱一新 (1846-1894), the well-established Han scholar who was serving as the director of Zhang Zhidong's Guangya Academy in Guangdong. Kang received a series of critical responses from Zhu, in which Zhu quickly moved from Kang's Classical scholarship to argue against Kang's new ideology and its potential impact on intellectual culture. In one of the most polemical letters, Zhu argued against Kang's claim for a progressive learning agenda. Because the argument in the letter demonstrates the most central conflict in the literati world in late 1890s, I quote the letter here at length.

> There have never been laws without flaws. When a [Sage] King rises, if there are small flaws, he amends them on a small scale; if there are large flaws, he amends them on a large scale. Laws can be changed, but the intentions behind the law-making cannot be changed… The problems in governing are from the misconduct of those who carry out the laws, not from the ones who establish the laws. Today [you] plan to use the discourse [to present Confucius] as the Uncrowned King [whose goal was to] reform the system, in order to [realize your] real goal of [creating] new methods…Even if the Sage really meant so, then he would have …

wanted to restore the old system of the Three Dynasties. How [could he want to] replace the Chinese way with the foreign way (用夷變夏)? ... If you hope to follow this way [of Confucius], then, for the Sages' Classical texts and the worthies' commentaries that have been remained until today, you should take all the time you have to protect and treasure each word and each sentence. How can you instead guide people to destroy the texts and turn against the [Classics]? [I am] afraid that once your grand work becomes popular, it would prepare [people to eventually] abandon the six Classics. …Those who study the Classics ought to base their conclusions on the text of the Classics alone, rather than impose one's own opinions on them. Each Classic has its own purpose (指歸). Putting them together and unifying them for no reason is just like cutting off the toes to fit the shoes. The shoes may not fit but the toes have been already harmed….

從古無不敝之法。有王者作，小敝則小修之，大敝則大改之。法可改，而立法之意不可改…… 政之敝壞，乃行法者之失，非立法者之失也。今托於素王改制之文，以便其推行新法之實。……即聖人果有是言，亦慫質文遞嬗，復三代聖王之舊制耳，而豈用夷變夏之謂哉？……誠有意於斯道，則凡聖經賢傳之倖而僅存者，一字一言，當護持珍惜之不暇，而反教猱生木，入室操戈，恐大集流傳，適為毀棄'六經'張本耳。…… 治經者，當以經治經，不當以己之意見治經。六經各有指歸，無端比而同之，是削趾以適履，履未必合而趾已受傷矣。……

The school of the Sage teaches people to read *The Classic of Poetry* and *The Classic of Documents* and to stick to rituals, as for the matters of nature (性) and the Way of Heaven (天道), we are not able to know for sure. *The Classic of Change* and *The Classic of the Spring and Autumn Annals* are both about nature and the Way of Heaven, even You [i.e. Ran You] and Xia [i.e. Zi Xia] could not add anything to them. However, [now you] want to use the biased discourses of the Gongyang school to change *The Classic of Poetry*, *The Classic of Documents*, ritual, and music. What [texts] should people in the future trust? And what should scholars take and follow [as their basis]? As you proposed, there were only twenty-eight articles in *The Classic of the Documents* that people should read, and apart from *The Classic of Change, The Rite*, *Gongyang's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Guliang's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*, *The Analects, and The Mencius,* everything else was all supposed to be abandoned. Four out of Five Classics are going to be removed, and *The Analects* is also doubtful. Scholars would barely have anything to read, and they would have to ask for guidance from the Hundred Masters. But are the words of the Hundred Masters indeed better than the ancient texts of the Classics? In your letter [you said that although their writings] all have their own merits, and [their learning all] have their own points, [they were all] committed to the pursuit of humanness (仁). What a big claim is it! … But does this claim mean that [people should] follow Confucius and Mencius and take establishing oneself and helping others to establish themselves (立達) as the pursuit of humaneness, or [does it mean that people] should celebrate

the [doctrine of] Mozi and take universal love (兼愛) as the pursuit of humaneness?

聖門教人《詩》《書》執禮，性與天道不可得而聞。《易》《春秋》皆言性道之書，游、夏且不能讚一辭，而慾以公羊家之偏論，變易《詩》《書》禮樂，將使得後人何所取信，學者何所持循？如足下言，《尚書》當讀者僅有二十八篇，餘自《周易》、《儀禮》《公》《穀》《論》《孟》而外，皆當廢棄。五經去其四，而《論語》猶在疑信之間，學者幾無可讀之書，勢不得不問途於百家諸子。百家諸子之言，其果優於古文哉？來書言時各有宜，學各有主，而必以求仁為歸。大哉言乎！微足下僕不聞此言也。然求仁之說將主孔孟而以立達為仁乎，抑主墨氏而以兼愛為仁乎？

… The Six Classics and Four Books are what everyday life is based on(日用所共由), and they are just as indispensible as water, fire, spice and rice. Whether it is the New Text tradition or the Old Text tradition, they both take the great centrality and the ultimate correctness (大中至正) as their goal, and this is the only moral principle (義理) from the ancient time till now. Where [do we] need the new and the rare (新奇)? I have heard that we could renew our virtues everyday (日新其德), but I have never heard that we can renew moral principles (日新其義理). The Qian-Jia scholars used to take the issue of moral principles as a forbidden topic. [However], today, to fix what they have missed, [according to your proposal, instead of] searching for restoring the conventional discourse of morality [of the Neo-Confucians], you claim for the change of morality. Those barbarians do not have the ethical distinctions between rulers and ministers, fathers and sons, brothers, husbands and wives, and such [situation] is called the change of moral principles. [Do you want to] see our own Classical tradition as too ordinary to follow, and have to take those [barbarians'] changes as the new and the rare (新奇)? First there are moral principles and then institutions. Barbarians' institutions derive from barbarians' moral principles. Moral principles differ, thus social customs differ; social customs differ, thus the institutions differ. Today [you] do not think about the fundamentals, but talk about changing the institutions/laws loftily. [If] the institutions/laws are changed, are our moral principles also going to be changed?

……六經、四子之書日用所共由，如水火菽粟之不可闕，無論今文、古文，皆以大中至正為歸，古今止此義理，何所庸其新奇。聞日新其德矣，未聞日新其義理也。乾嘉諸儒，以義理為大禁，今慾挽其流失，乃不求復義理之常，而徒備言義理之變。彼戎翟者，無君臣，無父子，無兄弟，無夫婦，是乃義理之變也。將以我聖經賢傳為平澹不足法，而必以其變者為新奇乎？有義理而後有制度，戎翟之制度，戎翟之義理所由寓也。義理殊，斯風俗殊；風俗殊，斯制度殊。今不揣其本，而漫云改制，制則改矣，將毋義理與之俱改乎？

Manufacture (百工制器) is skill; it is not principle (理). Human hearts become more and more insincere every day, and artificialness becomes more and more common every day. Since the new way has been opened (風氣既開), people would

do things that they did not do (有莫之為而為者), why do you have to worry that their skills are not sophisticated enough? Because [you think] their skills are not sophisticated enough, you want to change our institutions (制度) as a sacrifice, and you want to change our moral principles (義理) as a sacrifice. How is [your plan] different from removing [someone's] feet in order to save [someone] from the punishment that meant to cut off their feet, and different from saving [someone from] drowning by [pushing someone] into the pond? This [plan] too cannot work! Human heart is drowning into selfishness; those who practice [new] methods hope to take advantage of our methods to gain their own private interests. But whenever a new law/method is created, there would be a new problem. Thus the way of governing has to prioritize correcting one's heart and emphasizing [good] social customs. As for [whether] the laws/methods and institutions are well prepared or not, it is a concern of secondary importance. Let alone that the laws/methods and institutions are already well prepared. They were not initially [built] by waiting for the help borrowed from the foreign customs, and how can [you] attribute the problems that came out later to the initial creations [of the laws and institutions], and then use the discourse obsessed with selfishness (功利) to guide [the laws and institutions]? …One or two virtuous and talented figures hyper-corrected [the problems], and then believed that *The Classics of Poetry, The Classic of Documents, Zhou Rites, and the Classic of Music that* have been transmitted through generations of sages as not capable of responding to the changes, thus rather decided to engage in the pursuit of the new and the rare [ideas] and saw that the way to wealth and power existed [in the new and the rare]. Does what had led to wealth and power for other people exist in here? Does it not exist in here? Or [do they] have their own way from their own origins? Or [is it true that] what they see as their origins take their own way as the way, which is not what we the central land can follow thus definitely cannot be taken by the society and future?

百工制器是藝也，非理也。人心日偽，機巧日出，風氣既開，有莫之為而為者，夫何憂其藝之不精？今以藝之未極其精，而慫變吾制度以徇之，且變吾義理以徇之，何異救刖而牽其足，拯溺而入於淵？是亦不可以已乎！人心陷溺於功利，行法者借吾法以逞其私，而立一法，適增一弊。故治國之道，必以正人心，厚風俗為先，法制之明備，抑其次也。況法制本自明備，初無俟借資於異俗，詎可以末流之失，歸咎其初粗，而遂以功利之說導之哉？……一二賢智之士，矯枉過正，又以為聖聖相傳之《詩》《書》《禮》《樂》，果不足以應變也，而姑從事於其新奇可喜者，以為富強之道在是。彼族之所以富強，其在是乎？其不在是乎？抑亦有其本原之道在乎？抑彼之所謂本原者，道其所道，而非吾中土所能，且為天下後世所斷斷不可行者乎？……[716]

Zhu correctly perceived that Kang's proposal of reform as creating new institutions and

[716] "Zhu Yushi fu Kang Changru disishu," 朱侍御復康長孺第四書 (year 1891), Ibid., 328.

laws was meant to motivate intellectual elites to reflect on norms and generate new thinking about moral principles. This direction was highly problematic for Zhu as a Han learning scholar. Firstly, it involved injecting new sources of normative thinking into the realm of values beyond the Classics, such as the writings of the Warring State Masters and contemporary Western ideas. In Zhu's view, these sources clearly developed very different claims for values and would lead to different cultural practices. Moreover, this direction would impose an ahistorical generalization of the values behind the creation of the Classics as a whole, which would lead to selections and misinterpretations of the texts to support Kang's pre-imposed universal ideas. Zhu agreed that the Qian-Jia scholars did not pay enough attention to the issues of moral principles, but to fix that problem, the current Neo-Confucian discourse on moral principles, which was developed solely based on the Classical tradition, was sufficient. By no means could Western ideas and practices lead China's intellectuals to find a universal Way that both ancient China and the modern West share, because there was not one. Thus, the job of intellectuals was not to produce one based on new sources of normative thinking. Instead, it was the Classical learning conducted in the way of the Han scholars that mattered at the moment as a source for literati scholars to maintain their current cultural-political identity. They should commit themselves to the reconstruction of the cultural, textual, and institutional foundation of China's past, rather than freely engage themselves with normative theorization at all.

The clashes between Zhu and Kang enable us to see an intensified epistemological and cultural tension in the intellectual world. For Kang, to think about social and political norms required constant reflection on current moral principles and the creation of new ones in order to fulfill humanity. As Kang emphasized in one of his

letters to Zhu, "… the commonality (公) of moral principles is based on how the human mind works, thus it is universally true."[717] Moreover, searching for universal claims on norms provided the basis for establishing universal teachings. For Kang, this was the way to reactivate the intellectual, moral and political commitment of the tradition of *Ru*. To conceive of Confucius as the Sage who established the teaching and created the institutions that meant to transcend culture and history required people to favor the Gongyang characterization of Confucius as a prophet. It was thus necessary to justify the intellectual pursuit on a coherent philosophical interpretation of the Classics. For Kang, it was also the best way to save the tradition of Confucian teaching and the Confucian way in a global world. Thus, he saw Zhu as reactionary, narrow-minded, and lacking intellectual engagement with the needs of the world.[718]

For Zhu, there was no universally normative Way at any level that intellectuals should pursue as their agenda. There was the Chinese Way that concretely existed in the

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[717] "若夫義理之公，因乎人心之自然，推之四海而皆准，則又何能變之哉？" Ibid.

[718] "至於人心風俗之宜，禮義廉恥之宜，則《管子》所謂"四維不張，國乃滅亡"。有國有家，莫不同之，亦無中外之殊也。……誠如足下所謂'六經'之道，日用所共由，如火不可缺，仆即慫恿而逃之，則行遍地球，亦如足下所謂未聞有所謂新奇者。如足下謂彼族無倫理，而有自義理，以為其制度，此則真所謂新奇。然西人無之，地球內無之，不知足下何所指也。……故僕之急急以強國為事者，亦以衛教也。沮格而歸，屏絕雜書，日夜窮孔子之學，乃得非常異義，而後知孔子為創教之聖，立人倫、創井田、發三統、明文質、道堯舜、演陰陽、精微深博，無所不包。僕今發明之，使孔子之道有不藉國力而可傳者，但能發敷教之義，宣揚布護，可使混一地球。……先辟偽經，以著孔子之真面目；次明孔子之改制，以見生民未有；以禮學、字學附之，以成一統；以七十子後學記續之，以見大宗。……竊觀足下義理甚明，節行甚高，條理甚安鄉，行事有法度，議論通古今，喟然憂國家，罷黜而不怨，好賢而愛士，今之君子也，故折節敬服。然足下之言義，尚泥乎宋人之義理，而未深窺孔子之門堂。任事則深採老子之術學，而未盡大直方之概；窮經說則篤守舊說，而未能精思推闡其奧；未教術則狹隘緩卑，而未窺條理之精詳……鑒經說之繁，不精深求大道，故以史學為貴。惡夷狄之名，不深求中外之勢，故以西學為諱。足下有直節高行，海內瞻仰，關係不少，願俯心抑氣，採及葑菲，去自尊之成心，屏夙昔之習見，以求孔子之大道，及古今中外之宜，必有所進也。" Ibid., 323-6

textual, cultural and institutional tradition constructed by the Classical learning tradition, and the Western Way that existed in specific Western textual, institutional and cultural institutions. Any attempt to bring the normative discourses from these two traditions together based on general terms would lead to the need to replace one with the other. However, in admitting that normative discourse indeed mattered for reform, Zhu had to return to the moral doctrines of Neo-Confucianism as a response to Kang's challenge, and he turned the doctrines into something identified as Chinese moral discourses embedded in their own textual, institutional and cultural tradition.

The Making of a Conservative State Ideology: The Exhortation of Learning (勸學篇)

Zhu Yixin's response to Kang in 1891 exemplified the critical reaction of the majority of Han learning reformists toward Kang and his followers from the mid 1890s through the Hundred Days' Reform. Zhu's decisive rejection of any pursuit of universal moral principles, together with his use of Neo-Confucian language as a Chinese definition for its own moral values, appeared as the main ideas in Zhang Zhidong's famous piece published in 1898, *The Exhortation of Learning* (勸學篇). The main goal of the document was to re-define the reform agenda in response to China's failures during the 1890s, while at the same time distancing his circle from Kang's radical ideology. The need to respond to Kang pushed Zhang and his circle to fully articulate their contesting ideology in this text. Thus, it is informative in explicating Zhang's logic, which would define the ideology of the Qing's officialy supported New Policy in its last decade.

The text is arranged in a system consisting of inner chapters and outer chapters. In the inner chapters, Zhang defined the shared goals of reform and the role of literati learning, while in the outer chapter he laid out steps for reforming learning. In the inner chapters, Zhang began by arguing that the survival of the imperial state, the survival of the teaching tradition of *Ru*, and the survival of the Chinese people were essentially the same thing. He started with a historical claim that *Ru* learning had played a major historical role in bringing good social-political order to China. Learning created talent, and talent sustained and empowered the country.[719] The interests of the state, the interests of the teaching of *Ru*, and the interests of the Chinese people were closely related because, over thousands of years, government and teaching had always been connected (政教相維) under the craft of *Ru* (儒術). There had been hardly any discontinuity in the effort to treat teaching as the way of governing. The Qing dynasty, by following the line of Neo-Confucian teaching, particularly emphasized the doctrine of transforming the self into a moral being through personal practice (躬行實踐).[720] Moreover, a powerful state

[719] "範文正為秀才時，即以天下為己任。程子曰：'一命之士，苟存心於利物，於人必有所濟。'顧亭林曰：'保天下者，匹夫雖賤，與有責焉。'夫以秀才所任，任者幾何？一命所濟，濟者幾何？匹夫所責，責者幾何？然而積天下之秀才則盡士類，積天下之命官則盡臣類，積天下之匹夫則盡民類，若皆有持危扶顛之心、抱冰握火之誌，則其國安於磐石，無能傾覆之者。是故人人親其親，長其長，而天下平；人人智其智，勇其勇，而天下強。大抵全盛之世，庠以勸學，官以興能，朝廷明於上則人才成於下。艱危之世，士厲其節，民激其氣，直言以悟主，博學以濟時，同心以救弊，齊力以捍患，人才奮於下則朝廷安於上。……是故學術造人才，人才維國勢，此皆往代之明效，而吾先正不遠之良軌也。"
"Tongxin," 同心 *Quanxue pian*. 勸學篇

[720] "聞欲救今日之世變者，其說有三：一曰保國家，一曰保聖教，一曰保華種，夫三事一貫而已矣。保國、保教、保種，合為一心，是謂同心。保種必先保教，保教必先保國……我聖教行於中土，數千年而無改者。五帝三王，明道垂法，以君兼師，漢、唐及明，宗尚儒術，以教為政。我朝列聖，尤尊孔、孟、程、朱，屏黜異端，纂述經義，以躬行實踐者教天下。故凡有血氣，鹹知尊親。蓋政教相維者，古今之常經，中西之通義。"。

would guarantee the survival of the teaching; the teaching would lead to the flourishing of intellect, and intellect would promise the survival of Chinese people. If the government was fundamentally challenged and the country was divided up, then the Way of the Sages would be useless. The Classics and the Four Books would be abandoned, and the cultural life of *Ru* would become irrelevant to the careers of the national elite (士). As a consequence, the Chinese would either serve the Westerners based on Western rules, or become enslaved by the Westerners.[721] Thus, in order to overcome the political crisis, one should stay loyal to the imperial state and seek to empower it. He argued that this was what Mencius meant by saying that "as long as [we] can govern the state, no other people would dare belittle [us]." Merely trying to save the teaching of *Ru* by celebrating the learning of Confucius (孔學) would not be sufficient. Moreover, merely trying to save the Chinese people by unifying the masses (合群動眾) would not be sufficient either.[722]

For Zhang's group, the statecraft Neo-Confucian discourse was used as evidence that the Confucian principle that teaching and governing should be connected had been

[721] "我朝邦基深固，天之所perish，必有與立。假使果如西人瓜分之妄說，聖道雖高雖美，彼安用之？五經四子，棄之若土苴；儒冠儒服，無望於仕進。巧黠者充牧師，充剛巴度，充大寫［西人用華人為記室。名大寫］。椎魯者謹納身稅，供兵匠隸役之用而已。愈賤愈愚，愚賤之久，則貧苦死亡，奄然澌滅。聖教將如印度之婆羅門，竄伏深山，抱守殘缺。華民將如南洋之黑昆侖，畢生人奴，求免笞罵而不可得矣。"

[722] "今日時局，惟以激發忠愛、講求富強，尊朝廷、衛社稷為第一義。執政以啟沃上心、集思廣益為事，言官以直言極諫為事，疆吏以足食足兵為事，將帥以明恥教戰為事，軍民以親上死長為事，士林以通達時務為事，君臣同心，四民同力，則洙泗之傳、神明之胄，其有賴乎。且夫管仲相桓公、匡天下，保國也，而孔子以為民到於今受其賜。孟子守王道、待後學，保教也，而汲汲焉憂梁國之危，望齊宣之王，謀齊民之安。然則舍保國之外，安有所謂保教、保種之術哉？今日頗有憂時之士，或僅以尊崇孔學為保教計，或僅以合群動眾為保種計，而於國、教、種安危與共之義忽焉。《傳》曰："皮之不存，毛將安傅？"孟子曰："能治其國家，誰敢侮之。"此之謂也。"Tongxin," *Quanxuepian*

fully realized. If saving the tradition of teaching mattered for the elite, then to maintain the current state ideology would be of primary importance. In this vein, the following chapters explain how the Qing, based on its guiding state ideology, had successfully built an ordered and prosperous society. The point was to show that the Qing's achievements ought to give literati confidence in the effectiveness of the moral terms of the Qing state ideology.[723] In section three, entitled "Clarifying the [Three] Main-Stays (明綱)," Zhang elaborated on the terms of statecraft Neo-Confucianism, claiming that the ethical order between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife are foundational to China's traditional way of life and to the identity of the Sages. It is important to see that, rather than explaining why these claims were philosophically or historically true, Zhang's goal was to cite passages to show that these claims were supported by the Classical commentary tradition.[724] Such an ethical order could also be seen in some aspects of Western life, but for the Chinese they were central. The Qing's success in creating a good and prosperous order was thus due to the fact that the ideal of *Ru* were respected. Thus, for Zhang, it was dangerous to ignore the Qing's respect for *Ru* teaching, or to challenge the current state ideology on the grounds that it differed from the "real" Confucian tradition, because such a challenge would eventually lead to questions about the learning tradition that served as the basis for elite social identity. Therefore, it was not acceptable

[723] See "Jiaozhong" chapter 教忠

[724] "君為臣綱，父為子綱，夫為妻綱，此《白虎通》引《禮緯》之說也，董子所謂"道之大原出於天，天不變道亦不變"之義本之。《論語》"殷因於夏禮，周因於殷禮"，註：“所因，謂三綱五常。”此《集解》馬融之說也，朱子《集註》引之。《禮記·大傳》：“親親也，尊尊也，長長也，男女有別，此其不可得與民變革者也。” "Minggang" chapter 明綱

to celebrate popular sovereignty in China.[725] To further emphasize the incommensurability between Chinese moral values and those of the West, and the danger of erasing the boundaries between them, the following chapter entitled "Knowing the Distinctions of Groups" (知類) combined racial identity with cultural identity, and emphasized the unique identity of the Yellow people in Asia as coming from the Sage kings' ancient rule. As he saw it, those who despised the Chinese definition of moral order would identify themselves with Western culture, and try to serve the interests of the West and gain protection from the West. Yet, based on the experience of other colonized countries, these people would be discriminated against in many important aspects of social life, such as education, career promotion, and financial status.

To respond in detail to Kang's ideas about learning, Zhang criticized various problematic discourses of the Masters of the Warring States period. He emphasized that although one could read the Masters for supplementary views on government and to understand China's history of learning, ultimately discourse has to be based on the Classics.

Then Zhang explained his position regarding new ideas about political systems that were coming from the West. To promote the political autonomy of common people would be harmful to society because it would allow uneducated mobs to rise and take over political authority, damaging definitions and justification of the social order and political order. Thus it was necessary to preserve the power and the authority of the

[725] "Minggang." He explained that Western customs also had to stresse the ethical order in society, especially between father and son, and between husband and wife, thus they also had to follow rituals. But to show that the West also followed rituals did not mean to say that therefore these doctrines were universal.

current state.[726] He admitted that it was important for literati groups to engage with policy making as "parties of public opinion" (公論黨), but this could be done without referring to the idea of "popular sovereignty" (民權), a misleading translation which was in direct contradiction with the state ideology.

How, then, to conceptualize the need to learn from the West, and how to incorporate this into elite learning? To save China and "Chinese learning" (中学), one should not ignore "Western learning" (西学). But if one does not start from "Chinese learning" to consolidate one's foundation and to rectify one's interests, then those who are powerful would become the leaders of rebellions, and those who are weak would become slaves of the foreigners. For Zhang, Chinese learning had to be centered on the Classics and history, to impart normative knowledge about what had defined China's tradition of political practice as a part of its cultural tradition. Only in this way could scholars learn from the West in a manner that could address the specific problems that China was facing.

Zhang proposed a specific sequence of learning. "Today's scholars," as he wrote, "have to comprehend the Classics in order to understand the intention of China's sages in establishing their teaching, investigate history in order to recognize the rise and fall of

[726] Zhang made the following points. In terms of politics, Chinese people were not educated enough to make the parliament succeed. In terms of the economic system, the Qing state would never forbid people to open companies or factories. But in his view, the state had to play an important role in regulating the enterprises otherwise bad behaviors such as cheating would appear. Regarding building schools, the Qing state would never forbid the gentry from donating for establishing academies, free schools, charities, and these activities would not need to be based on the concept of the popular sovereignty. He thought that if the state did not have any power, then people would loose their incentives for learning. In terms of the building of the military system, the authority of the state was important for providing technique and financial support support.

our past dynasties and the customs of the varies regions of China, and broadly read the writings of the Masters and the literary collections of scholars. Then, [they can] select the parts of Western learning (西学) that we need but do not have, and select the parts of Western politics (西政) that can help us to fix our problems. [They will obtain] benefits from them but not harm." The Westerners also followed such a sequence in their own learning, he argued; schools in foreign countries would teach the Christian Bible for their religious tradition (宗教) and Latin for maintaining knowledge about their antiquity (存古). For instance, they would learn about their national maps first and then move to global maps. Their textbooks mostly talked about the virtuous government of their previous rulers, and their music mostly celebrated their own countries' power and prosperity. Thus, "if the Chinese elite do not pursue Chinese learning, it would be just like people who do not know their last names, a horse-rider without reins, or a boat without a rudder. The deeper their Western learning becomes, the more they would criticize China… Could the state feel safe in employing them?"[727]

Zhang thus proposed the principle of "retaining simplicity" (守約) to respond to the question of how textual learning should be done.[728] In order to save Chinese learning,

[727] "今日学者，必先通经以明我中国先圣先师立教之旨，考史以识我中国历代之治乱、九州之风土，涉猎子、集以通我中国之学术文章，然后择西学之可以补吾阙者用之、西政之可以起吾疾者取之，斯有其益而无其害。如养生者，先有谷气而后可饫庶羞；疗病者，先审藏府而后可施药石。西学必先由中学，亦犹是矣。［华文不深者不能译西书］外国各学堂，每日必诵耶苏经，示宗教也；小学堂先习蜡丁文，示存古也；先熟本国地图，再览全球图，示有序也；学堂之书，多陈述本国先君之德政，其公私乐章，多赞扬本国之强盛，示爱国也。如中士而不通中学，此犹不知其姓之人，无辔之骑、无柁之舟，其西学愈深，其疾视中国亦愈甚，虽有博物多能之士，国家亦安得而用之哉？"

[728] "儒術危矣，以言乎邇，我不可不鑒於日本；以言乎遠，我不可不鑒於戰國。昔戰國之際，儒術幾為異學諸家所軋，吾讀司馬談之《論六家要指》而得其故焉，其說曰：'儒家者流，博而寡要，勞而少功。'何以寡要少功，由於有博無約。如此之儒，止可列為九流

it was important to generalize and conceptualize a simpler program so that while new kinds of learning came into China, China's scholarship would remain useful and relevant. The goal of Classical learning was to understand the general and most essential, so that one could use this learning to cultivate oneself, govern one's behavior, and search for doctrines beneficial to governing the state.[729] In some sense, Classical learning for general education would be largely transformed into the study of the history of Classical

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之一耳，焉得為聖，焉得為賢？老詬儒曰'絕學無憂'，又以孔子說十二經為大謾；墨詬儒曰'累壽不能盡其學'，墨子又教其門人公尚過不讀書；法詬儒曰"藏書策，修文學，用之則國亂"。［《韓非子》語］大率諸子所操之術，皆以便捷放縱投世人之所好，而以繁難無用誣儒家，故學者樂聞而多歸之。夫先博後約，孔、孟之教所同，而處今日之世變，則當以孟子守約施博之說通之。且孔門所謂博，非今日所謂博也，孔、孟之時，經籍無多，人執一業可以成名，官習一事可以致用，故其博易言也。今日四部之書汗牛充棟，老死不能遍觀而盡識。即以經而論，古言古義隱奧難明，訛舛莫定，後師群儒之說解紛紜百出，大率有確解定論者不過什五而已。滄海橫流，外侮薦至，不講新學則勢不行，兼講舊學則力不給，再歷數年，苦其難而不知其益，則儒益為人所賤，聖教儒書浸微浸滅，雖無嬴秦坑焚之禍，亦必有梁元文武道盡之憂，此可為大懼者矣。尤可患者，今日無誌之士本不悅學，離經畔道者尤不悅中學，因倡為中學繁難無用之說，設淫辭而助之攻，於是樂其便而和之者益眾，殆欲立廢中學而後快，是惟設一易簡之策以救之，庶可以間執讎中學者之口，而解畏難不學者之惑。……今欲存中學，必自守約始，守約必自破除門面始。爰舉中學各門求約之法，條列於後，損之又損，義主救世以致用當務為貴，不以殫見洽聞為賢。十五歲以前，誦《孝經》、四書、五經正文，隨文解義，並讀史略、天文、地理、歌括、圖式諸書，及漢、唐、宋人明白曉暢文字有益於今日行文者。自十五歲始，以左方之法求之，統經、史、諸子、理學、政治、地理、小學各門，美質五年可通，中材十年可了，若有學堂專師或依此纂成學堂專書，中材亦五年可了。而以其間兼習西文，過此以往，專力講求時政，廣究西法，其有好古研精、不騖功名之士願為專門之學者。此五年以後，博觀深造，任自為之…… "Shou yue"

[729] "一、經學通大義，切於治身心、治天下者，謂之大義。凡大義必明白平易，若荒唐險怪者乃異端，非大義也。《易》之大義，陰陽消長；《書》之大義，知人安民；《詩》之大義，將順其美，匡救其惡。［詩譜序：論功頌德、所以將順其美，刺過譏失、所以匡救其惡］《春秋》大義，明王道，誅亂賊；《禮》之大義，親親，尊尊，賢賢；《周禮》大義，治國，治官，治民。三事相維。［太宰建邦之六典、治典經邦國、治官府、紀萬民，其餘教典、禮典、政典、刑典、事典皆國、官、民三義並舉。蓋官為國與民之樞紐，官不治則國民交受其害。此為《周禮》一經專有之義，故漢名《周官經》，唐名《周官禮》］此總括全經之大義也。如十翼之說《易》，《論》《孟》《左傳》之說《書》，大小序之說《詩》，《孟子》之說《春秋》，《戴記》之說《儀禮》，皆所謂大義也。"

scholarship.[730] Specialized philological scholarship would be left to a smaller group of scholars.

In this vein, in the outer chapters where Zhang listed his concrete proposals for the reform of education at a larger scale, he proposed a way of arranging the old learning and the new learning, and suggested ways to conceptualize their different meanings. Zhang proposed to treat "Chinese learning" and "Western learning" as two categorically different cultures, with entirely different purposes and meanings for the literati world. [731] In particular, he identified "the Chinese learning as inner learning, and Western learning as external learning," and claimed that "the Chinese learning cultivates body and mind, while the Western learning responds to worldly affairs."[732] An the end, Zhang

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[730] "欲有要而無勞，約有七端：一、明例，謂全書之義例。［毛詩以訓詁音韻為一要事，熟於《詩》之音訓，則諸經之音訓皆可隅反］一、要指，謂今日尤切用者，每一經少則數十事，多則百餘事。一、圖表。［諸經圖表皆以國朝人為善，譜與表同］一、會通，謂本經與群經貫通之義。一、解紛，謂先儒異義各有依據者，擇其較長一說主之，不必再考，免耗日力。［大率國朝人說而後出者較長］一、闕疑，謂隱奧難明碎義不急者，置之不考。一、流別，謂本經授受之源流，古今經師之家法。［考其最箸而今日有書者］以上七事，分類求之，批卻導窾，事半功倍。大率群經以國朝經師之說為主，《易》則程傳與古說兼取。［並不相妨］《論》、《孟》、《學》、《庸》以朱註為主，參以國朝經師之說。"

[731] "谓圣人所创，可也；谓中土今日之工艺不胜于唐虞三代，不可也。万世之巧，圣人不能尽泄，万世之变，圣人不能预知。然则西政、西学果其有益于中国，无损于圣教者，虽于古无征，为之固亦不嫌，况揆之经典灼然可据者哉？今恶西法者见六经古史之无明文，不察其是非损益而概屏之，如诋洋操为非，而不能用古法练必胜之兵；诋铁舰为费，而不能用民船为海防之策，是自塞也。自塞者，令人固蔽傲慢，自陷危亡，略知西法者又概取经典所言而傅会之，以为此皆中学所已有。如但诩借根方为东来法，而不习算学，但矜火器为元太祖征西域所遗，而不讲制造枪炮，是自欺也。自欺者，令人空言争胜，不求实事。溺于西法者甚或取中西之学而糅杂之，以为中西无别，如谓《春秋》即是公法，孔教合于耶苏，是自扰也。自扰者，令人眩惑狂易，丧其所守。综此三蔽，皆由不观其通。不通之害，口说纷呶，务言而不务行，论未定而兵渡江矣。然则如之何？"

[732] "曰：中学为内学，西学为外学；中学治身心，西学应世事。不必尽索之于经文，而必无悖于经义。如其心圣人之心，行圣人之行，以孝弟忠信为德，以尊主庇民为政，虽朝运汽机，夕驰铁路，无害为圣人之徒也。如其昏惰无志，空言无用，孤陋不通，傲很不改，坐使国家颠，圣教灭绝，则虽弟佗其冠，冲淡其辞，手注疏而口性理，天下万世皆将怨之詈之，曰此尧、舜、孔、孟之罪人而已矣。"

emphasized again that it was the responsibility of scholars to embrace "filial piety" (親) and "loyalty to the ruler"(尊), and it was crucial for China to win the battle between the Chinese teaching tradition and the Western teaching tradition.[733]

Zhang Zhidong's group did agree with Kang Youwei on a number of issues. First, a more effective government required an active political culture, where the literati community's opinions could be successfully absorbed into policymaking. Second, to empower the country required the literati to transform a narrowly defined scholarly curriculum into a more general teaching program for the common people. However, Zhang did not think these changes had to be achieved by reflecting on the constitutional principles of government.[734] Intellectually speaking, what was central to the Han learning group's view was a contextualist view of values: Values are culturally constructed, thus each different culture has its own view of morality embedded in its traditions. This is why they believed Kang's search for general constitutional principles centering on universal human nature was wrong. Political speaking, such a cultural-constructive view of values was deeply connected to conceptions of the role of literati learning. If it was assumed that

[733] "異教相攻，自周秦之間已然。儒、墨相攻，老、儒相攻。莊，道也，而與他道家相攻；荀，儒也，而與他儒家相攻。唐則儒、釋相攻，後魏、北宋則老、釋相攻，儒之攻他教者辨黑白，他教之相攻者爭盛衰。歐洲因爭新教、舊教，連兵相殺數十年，乃教士各爭權勢，藉以為亂，非爭是非也。至今日而是非大明，我孔、孟相傳大中至正之聖教，炳然如日月之中天，天理之純，人倫之至，即遠方殊俗亦無有譏議之者。然則此時為聖人之徒者，恐聖道之陵夷，思欲扶翼而張大之，要在修政，不在爭教，此古今時勢之不同者也。中外大通以來，西教堂布滿中國，傳教既為條約所準行，而焚毀教堂又為明旨所申禁，比因山東盜殺教士一案，德國藉口，遂踞膠州，各國乘機要求，而中國事變日亟。有誌之士但當砥厲學問，激發忠義，明我中國尊親之大義，講我中國富強之要術，國勢日強，儒效日章，則彼教不過如佛寺道觀，聽其自然可也，何能為害？"

[734] It seems to me that the emphasis on Gu Yanwu as a ueful sources for late Qing government-led reform was important because Gu's proposal was less about a radical constitutional reflection, but more about a redesign of state-society relations.

moral values were a product of cultural tradition, then the political and social trajectory of a polity through history was a natural result of larger forces of cultural tradition. Such forces could be found in the cumulative institutions – language, knowledge, law, rituals- that had structured the lives of individuals and communities. For Zhang and his group, the vital role that literati should never abandon was to be part of the cultural forces structuring people's lives. They must resist abrupt changes to the current terrain of values and cultural practice. For the Han scholars, this was how the Confucian ideal of uniting teaching and politics worked. Kang's reflections on the constitutional principles of government, on the other hand, based on his understanding of general human nature, had largely transformed the agency of elites. From actors shaping cumulative institutional forces, based on their own culture, they became recorders of a universal understanding of human life as their source of teaching. Based on the Han learning scholars' cultural and political views, to reduce the authority of their own cultural tradition in learning would only lead the common people to challenge the current cultural-institutional order, eventually jeopardizing the literati elite's position in the system.

Given these tensions, Zhang's group chose to call for an ideology that appears reactionary. The source of teaching, if it had to be generalized, was based on the terms of Neo-Confucianism. This was not because the Han scholars believed the Neo-Confucian moral terms to be true, but because this school had been a part of the larger *Ru* cultural tradition and the main source used by the state to construct its discourse of teaching. Thus, Zhang's immediate task was to show that 1) the Manchu rulers had actively incorporated Neo-Confucianism into their state ideology and teaching, 2) the Qing had made great achievements, and 3) the moral terms of Neo-Confucianism had a textual foundation in

the Classical tradition. Thus it would be dangerous for the elite to reflect on the constitutional ground on which the Qing government was based. Such focus could not only contradict the state ideology, but might also lead to criticism of the entire literati culture, which would pose a foundational challenge to the role of the Confucian tradition in the social and political life of China.

"Ziyou" (自由) as Teaching: Yan Fu as an Example of Zhang Zhidong's Worries

Kang Youwei never doubted that his ideology was the true message of Confucius. For him, to maintain the connection between teaching and politics required a total transformation of learning as he proposed to respond with the necessary changes. He thus considered the Han scholars' reactions to be too conservative to be meaningful. But Yan Fu's (嚴復 1854-1921) series of critical writings attacking the literati learning tradition around 1895 offered a vivid example of the kind of direction that Zhang Zhidong was worried about.

Yan's early experience of learning followed the ideological model of Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang an inclusive and technologically oriented Neo-Confucian discourse.[735] In the late 1880s, Yan Fu went to England to study, where he began to pay attention to Western social thought.[736] In many ways, Yan Fu's judgment on the success of the modern West and his diagnosis for China resembled Kang Youwei's view. In his

[735] Benjamin Schwartz and Wang Hui both convincingly showed that Zhu Xi's version of Neo-Confucianism was often used by Yan to understand Western science and social development. See Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power Yen Fu and the West*, and Wang Hui, *Xiandai zhongguo sixiang de xingqi*, part 2, vol. 1.

[736] See Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, 29.

essay “On the Origin of Strength” (原強) published in 1895, Yan pointed out that in the West people stayed in strong solidarity with their government/rulers, committing themselves to the national interests. It had much to do with the fact that those countries had “abandoned taboos, removed complicated and strict [political norms], discarded obstacles,” and “everyone can express their intentions, explaining what they want to say,” “[thus] there is no great hierarchical disparity between the rulers and people; [the rulers and the people] are united like one body.” Such solidarity was not foreign to China. The nomadic tribes who had invaded China in the past had also built such strong solidary because their societies and governments were simple, possessing few hierarchical distinctions. But what made the modern West different was that, unlike the nomadic tribes, they had developed into a sophisticated civilization with a self-reflective design of government and a fruitful practice of learning. This made the West similar to China. But Western regulations for politics and commerce were well designed and prepared; each person was responsible and competent in some specialty; bureaucratic life was well organized and managed, and no one felt impatient because of frequent policy modifications. Their citizens were not only physically stronger, but also more virtuous, smarter, and more skilled. Thus, “those so-called [enterprises of] farming, digging, pottery making, metal forging, textile weaving, tree planting, and grazing, together with [enterprises that] go as superior as the official affairs of punishment, wars, and transportation, [namely,] all the affairs for protecting people and nourishing people, have a level of sophistication and breadth that is unbelievably higher than [the level of the]

Chinese people." Corresponding to their inferior civilizing conditions, the Chinese people were inferior in their intellect (民智), virtues (民德), and spirit/courage (民氣). [737]

But how could this be possible? Yan explained,

> Each thing that they do is based on learning (學術); and every practice of learning they do is from their pursuit of concrete affairs and concrete principles (实事实理). [Their pursuit] accumulates into steps (层累阶级) until reaching the level of extreme breadth and sophistication. Perhaps there is nothing [for them] that could be emptily discussed but not to be realized.
>
> 且其为事也，又一一皆本之学术；其为学术也，又一一求之实事实理，层累阶级，以造于至大至精之域，盖寡一事焉可坐论而不可起行者也。[738]

Yan Fu was astonished, as Kang had been, that in the West social and political life could be successfully designed and managed without this complex design and management creating obstacles for the unity of society. People in the West were able to acquire knowledge based on concrete investigation and thinking through principles of things and human affairs. How did this intellectual change happen? Unlike Kang, who attributed the source of the development of modern West to Francis Bacon's philosophy of industrial science and the implementation of patent law, which encouraged people to develop their intellect, Yan Fu turned to Darwin's theory of natural selection and Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism, which had transformed the theory of natural selection into questions of ethical order and governance, which Yan subsumed under the title of the "Study of human groups" (群學). In the same article, Yan introduced these two figures as men who

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[737] "所可悲者、民智之已下、民德之已衰、與民氣之已困耳、雖有聖人用事、非十數百年薄海知亡、上下同德、痛刮除而鼓舞之、終上足以有立。而歲月悠悠、四鄰眈眈[眈眈]、恐未及有爲、而已爲印度、波蘭之憤。將錫彭塞之說未行、而達爾文之理先信、況乎其未必能遂然也。吾輩一身即上足惜、如吾子孫與中國之人種何。於戲。天地父母、山川神靈、其尚無相茲下士民以克誘其衷、咸俾知奮。"

[738] Yan Fu, "Yuan Qiang" 原強

used their learning to "protect people's lives and manage their livelihood" and those upon whom the rulers could rely to "benefit people and govern the country."[739]

As Benjamin Schwartz showed, in 1881, Yan had started to read Spencer's *The Study of Sociology* and recognized that the empirical and logical reasoning behind mathematics and science was crucial for understanding the principles (*li*) of the world. Yan Fu found science similar to Zhu Xi's idea of investigation of things, which was intended to lead to the fulfillment of moral goodness. But, instead of following the statecraft Neo-Confucian emphasis on the end of self-cultivation as lying in officials' technological statecraft enterprise, Yan, like Kang, looked at the meaning of the pursuit of principles in the context of the development of building social and political institutions, rather than seeing the pursuit as the path to personal ethical fulfillment. The success of the West was not merely due to the encouragement of science, but the result of bringing scientific ways of thinking into their understanding of human affairs. The manifestation of such achievement was the naturalistic, universalistic, and reductionist enterprise of sociology. The conceptual tools that mathematics science relied on, such as causality, continuity, transformation, etc., were all absorbed into sociology, making it the ultimate learning for the West.[740] Like Kang, Yan found that the continuum between understanding of the natural world and of human affairs was a core element in the achievement of the West.

But how could such learning have power? Yan, like Kang, found himself searching

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[739] "今之扼腕奮舌，而講西學，談洋務者，亦知五十年以來，西人所孜孜勤求，近之可以保身治生，遠之可以利民經國之一大事乎？"

[740] "其《繕性》以下三篇，真西學正法眼藏，智育之業，捨此莫由。" *Qunxue yiyan* yiyu zhuiyan" 《群學肄言》譯余贅言, *Yan Fu ji* 严复集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), Vol.1, 126.

for an explanation of the ultimate truth of the universe that made such learning real. As Yan put it, the fact that "England and other European countries are wealthy and powerful" meant that in their countries "public principles were more and more recognized day by day (公理日申)."[741] Because Western scholars had developed thinking and tools to figure out how natural things work, and accordingly, how to create a prosperous material world, they could take care of and cultivate their people by regulating their behavior. In doing so, they had guided the organization of their civilized life to stay in tune with the ultimate source – natural selection. Gradually, some societies became stronger and more civilized, while others did not. But how could social organizations reflect the principle of nature? Yan worked on a philosophical interpretation in another article "On the Acuteness of the Crisis" (論世變之極) to prove why the Western teaching of freedom fit the principle of natural selection of human groups. The crucial linking element was the mind produced by logical and scientific training.

> Simply put, when it comes to learning they exclude falsity and celebrate truth, and when it comes to punishment and political administration they give up their personal interests/biases and work for the public interest. These two things are not initially different from China's principle and way. Considering that when they act on them [they] always work and when we act on them [we] always encounter problems, [it is because they are] different in terms of [their support of] freedom (自由) or not. As for the discourse of freedom, it is indeed what China's ancient sages were afraid of, thus they had never established it as our teaching (教). Those Westerners say that, each person is born from nature with one's own gift, and one who obtains freedom acquires it all (得自由者乃為全受). Thus everyone gains one's freedom and each country gains its freedom, [but] it must be ordered that they would not invade and damage each others' [freedom.] Violating the freedom of others is [considered to be] acting against the *Heavenly Principle* and damaging the human way.….The Chinese concepts '*shu*' (恕) [i.e. empathy] and '*xieju*' (絜矩) [i.e. understanding others by measuring oneself] are only about social interactions

[741] "英國與諸歐之所以富強，公理日伸，其端在此一事。" "*Fa Yi* an yu"《法意》按語, *Yan Fu ji* Vol.4，969.

> with people, but the Western [idea] of freedom [meant that] in one's possession of things there indeed lies what allows one to live. If [the attitudes toward] freedom are different, then the differences between human groups would grow.
>
> 苟扼要而談，不外於學術則黜偽而崇真，於刑政則屈私以為公而已。斯二者，與中國理道初無異也。顧彼行之而常通，吾行之而常病者，則自由不自由異耳。夫自由一言，真中國歷古聖賢之所深畏，而從未嘗立以為教者也。彼西人之言曰：唯天生民，各具賦畀，得自由者乃為全受。故人人各得自由，國國各得自由，第務令毋相侵損而已。侵人自由者，斯為逆天理，賊人道。……中國理道與西法自由最相似者，曰恕，曰絜矩。然謂之相似則可，謂之真同則大不可也。何則？中國恕與絜矩，專以待人及物而言。而西人自由，則於及物之中，而實寓所以存我者也。自由既異，於是群異叢然以生。[742]

Importantly, for Yan Fu, the meaning of "*ziyou*" was not about individual agency, but was understood as a form of teaching to regulate social-political life. It cultivates a rational mind, which has the same virtue as a logical and scientific mind. It is such a good mind that enables a person to behave and think well, and it is such a good mind that enables a people to develop according to the ultimate force of the universe. In this sense, the fact that China did not have the exact teaching of *ziyou* as an economic and social system, and the fact that China did not develop science as a method to shape people's minds in interacting with the environment, were interconnected and self-reinforcing. In order to save China, the task of the elite was to fully adopt science and the teaching of *ziyou* into Chinese culture. Only in such a way could China find its path back to the way of nature. Thus, following his comment on "freedom," Yan listed several dichotomies that in his view represented the current differences between "Chinese teachings" and the "modern Western teachings":

> The Chinese emphasize the three main-stays, while Westerns prioritize equality; the

[742] Yan Fu, "Lun shibian zhi ji" 論事變之極

> Chinese love their parents, while Westerners admire the worthies; the Chinese govern society based on filial piety, while Westerners govern society based on the public interest; the Chinese respect the rulers, while Westerners esteem the people; … the Chinese have more taboos, while Westerners have more criticisms. As for finance, the Chinese stress reducing expenditure, while Westerners pay attention to broadening the sources of income; the Chinese pursue thrift and simplicity, while Westerners look for pleasure and enjoyment. As for social interactions, the Chinese praise modesty, while Westerners devote their efforts into expressiveness. The Chinese acclaim etiquette, while Westerners like simplicity. As for learning, the Chinese praise the breath of knowing, while Westerners value new knowledge. As for disasters, the Chinese count on destiny, while Westerners rely on human strength.
>
> 則如中國最重三綱，而西人首明平等；中國親親，而西人尚賢；中國以孝治天下，而西人以公治天下；中國尊主，而西人隆民；中國貴一道而同風，而西人喜黨居而州處；中國多忌諱，而西人眾譏評。其於財用也，中國重節流，而西人重開源；中國追淳樸，而西人求歡虞。其接物也，中國美謙屈，而西人務發舒；中國尚節文，而西人樂簡易。其於為學也，中國誇多識，而西人尊新知。其於禍災也，中國委天數，而西人恃人力.[743]

To stress the role of the teaching of "*ziyou*" in making the modern West the most "suitable" and most successful civilization, Yan Fu constructed these stereotypical dichotomies between China and the West. In his famous essay criticizing Han Yu, he further attributed the undesirable aspects of the Chinese people to Han Yu's intellectual legacy in shaping mainstream intellectual culture. He particularly targeted Han Yu's "Yuandao" 原道 (On the Origin of the Way), pointing out that Han's construction of the Sages as cultural heroes who created the material and ethical world for people was harmful. By criticizing Han Yu, the interpreter through whom a model of antiquity was established for mainstream elite learning, (rather than going to understand the model of China's ancient civilization), Yan called for a total change in intellectual values, for the purpose of changing people's behavior. His goal was still to define a shared learning as the agent of change for China, but his interpretation of *ziyou* was mainly a legal teaching

[743] Ibid.

to externally regulate people's social and political behavior.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced a major shift in the discourse of intellectual values from the government-led Self-Strengthening movement (1860s-1890s) to the bottom-up mobilization and broader political participation of younger scholars led by Kang Youwei in the mid-1890s. These two generations proposed different answers to the question of what role literati scholars ought to play in the face of new global challenges.

I first looked at the agendas of the Self-Strengthening movement in the context of the unresolved intellectual politics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. I have compared two major models that constituted the different stages of the movement – the Zeng Guofan/Li Hongzhang model built on statecraft Neo-Confucianism, and the Zhang Zhidong model built on the "Han learning" circle. Each model proposed a shared ground of literati learning to guide reform based on a distinct understanding of the *Ru* tradition; each model tried to unite the divided literati world and sought a way to integrate the new learning from the West that was necessary for reform.

I have shown that Zeng Guofan, who rose to leadership in resisting rebellions and foreign aggression during 1850s and 1860s, restored the official education and selection program at the provincial level and restored literati leadership in government. Zhang's success, which was largely based on the support of local-level Neo-Confucians, led to a revival of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian imperial ideology. This ideology mobilized the Self-Strengthening Movement in its first two decades. I have explained that the statecraft Neo-Confucian model of reform under the leadership of Zeng and Li Hongzhang combined self-cultivation with statecraft learning, seeing that the key to an ordered world

lay in the creation of a moral bureaucracy. On the one hand, the model called for a coherent moral discourse of learning that would unite the ruler, the officials and the literati world under the goal of reforming China into a well-ordered world according to Neo-Confucian moral ideals. In doing so, Zeng managed to work out an inclusive interpretation of learning that was conducive to the goal of the reforms. Individual cultivation and ordering the world were united in the reform policy, and the rulers had to play their role as moral beings and sponsors of learning so that the intellectual world and official world would be united to serve the government. On the other hand, such learning successfully incorporated the incorporation of science and technology into the state ideology as a coherent component of self-cultivation. The basic logic was that the wealth and the power of the West had much to do with the fact that Western governments supported the rigorous pursuit of science (格致) as a necessary path to the self-cultivation (修身) of the intellectual elite. This attitude and practice contributed to their successful statecraft enterprise. Zeng Guofan's model was shaken when foreign aggression loomed and cultural and religious conflicts erupted between missionaries and the Chinese.

I then turned to the rise of Zhang Zhidong's Han learning community. I have shown that, in response to Zeng's overemphasis of integration and technocracy, Zhang Zhidong and his Han Evidential Learning network began to gain prominence and took on the leadership of the Self-Strengthening Movement. The Han group emphasized incompatibility between the values of China and the values of the West, demonstrating a more realistic attitude toward the cultural conflicts. Meanwhile, Zhang's group disagreed that moral cultivation based on the learning of the Four Books ought to dominate elite learning. The group sponsored academies teaching Classical and historical learning based

on the Qian-Jia philological method. For Zhang, the goal of education based on Classical and historical texts was not to produce new political knowledge or principles to guide government, but rather, to promote a general education for cultivating the cultural elite. As a part of the model of reform, it was the responsibility of state officials to support general education and balance power between the literati world and the government. At the same time, the new knowledge from the West needed to be studied, but why and how it should be studied was explained differently. Based on a culturalist perspective, on the one hand, Zhang's group took more seriously the cumulative Western cultural and political traditions as necessary background knowledge to learn about the West. But on the other hand, insisting on the cultural and historical nature of moral values, and stressing the intellectual responsibility of maintaining Chinese tradition, they defined the role of Western learning as a part of the category of *shiwu* (時務), namely, contemporary affairs, which was a pragmatic field of knowledge mainly used for statecraft management.

Despite the differences between these two models, both believed that only by strengthening the current Qing system and by sticking to a synthesis of the learning models in current practice could the literati group maintain its leadership and keep the role of *Ru* teaching in the system.

After setting up this context, I turned to Kang Youwei's agenda of "New Learning" from the late 1880s to the late 1890s, which mobilized the emergence of a non-governmental intellectual-political force. I have shown that this force came from the increasingly popular desire to re-conceptualize the goal of politics (*zheng*) and teaching (*jiao*), the foundations of government, for initiating radical institutional reforms. In

contrast to the leaders of the Self-Strengthening Movement, Kang and his like-minded thinkers acknowledged the success of the modern West as the result of the Western cultural elite's advanced understanding of the true mechanisms of civilization, and their corresponding design of a modern political system. Therefore, in trying to explore the foundation of the modern Western model, they brought their own positions of learning into a profound dialogue with social-political theories from the West. I have paid particular attention to Kang's Classical and historical scholarship and political-theoretical writings from the mid to the late 1880s, when his studies of Western books and his knowledge about the world expanded. I have explained how Kang thoroughly constructed a new literati ideology in late 1880s by working out a new interpretation of the foundation of China's antiquity, upon which he said the real *Ru* learning tradition was originally based. At the same time, he argued that the modern West had realized the principles behind the social-political models of China's antiquity. Kang tried to initiate a conceptual break from the existing models of literati learning and reform, a break that he claimed to be necessary for his generation to reconnect itself with antiquity and to take the responsibility to restore the great achievement of China's Sage Kings.

In particular, I have shown that, based on a synthesis of political Neo-Confucianism and esoteric Gongyang commentary tradition, Kang interpreted Chinese antiquity and the modern West as an integrated order of teaching (*jiao*) and government (*zheng*). In his view, the legitimacy and power of government are both rooted in its ability to lead people to conduct cultural and material production, and to indoctrinate them in everyday social behavior. The government, staffed with scholars as officials and teachers, maintained expertise in all kinds of knowledge and rules. Kang thus argued that

literati scholars of his day ought to play a new progressive leadership role, guiding public life by constantly reflecting on the existing teachings about laws, rules, and cultural practices and creating new ones, so that literati learning would be fully committed to contemporary needs, and the learning of the Sages would be restored. In order to do so, scholars ought to devote themselves to the search for verifiable universal knowledge about human behavior, and the construction of discourses of moral principles to guide people's life. In Kang's view, this ideal integrated model of teaching and government was realized in his day by the modern Western parliamentary system and its pursuit of scientific knowledge. Parliamentary Democracy allowed the rulers and the people to be connected through the local election of cultural elites, who carried out the government's broader responsibility of vocational teaching, legislation, and indoctrination of social values. Their elite learning encouraged the pursuit of universally valid principles and their application to guided social life.

I have also discussed the philosophical foundations Kang used to justify his interpretation of antiquity and to define his understanding of the source of values. Kang believed that the role of the literati was to indoctrinate people how to live and how to behave. Behind this proposal was Kang's positivistic understanding of knowledge and laws, and an egocentric interpretation of human virtues. In pursuing universally valid principles as the basis of guided community life, leaders and teachers would fulfill the universe's command to make use of their innate spirit to cultivate and accumulate human intelligence to construct self-preserving civilization. In so doing they would bring that civilization into tune with the universe. Here, Kang made a compelling claim to his generation: in order to commit oneself to the building of a better China, it would be

necessary to devote oneself to a cosmopolitan-minded agenda of learning. The broader one's scope of learning became, the deeper one's connection grew to a united Chinese community. In the process of learning, this goal could best be realized through deducing universal categories of knowledge by verifying the existing natural-philosophical or scientific knowledge produced by all the world's advanced civilizations. In this process, scholars should value such knowledge regardless of the particular historical context where it was born. This process was not supposed to be meaningful only for China; it was ultimately a contribution to the integration of all human civilizations into one single civilization of humankind (*datong*). Through this process, Chinese cultural elites would become cosmopolitan-minded and shoulder responsibility for the future of the world.

To promote his ideology as a common ground, Kang made use of the shared Gongyang commentary tradition, and celebrated Confucius as a prophet who knew the will of the universe and who had envisioned the ultimate integration of human civilizations. Meanwhile, he hoped to turn Confucian tradition into a religion. In Kang's view, he was restoring the true Confucian agenda in a new global context. In this way, not only could literati scholars initiate a progressive agenda of learning by engaging with new concepts from abroad, but also they could maintain the agency of *Ru* learning.

I have also argued that by re-theorizing the foundation of antiquity, Kang was able to interpret China's civilization as a part of the world and redefine the values of literati learning traditions based on a universal theory of government and civilization. At the same time, he analyzed the success of the modern Western model as a concrete reference for his theory. For the new generation, this model of intellectual practice ought to define the scope and ambition of scholars who wanted to join a responsible

intellectual-cultural elite in China within a globalizing context. Other people might not agree with Kang's particular interpretation of the role of literati scholars as indoctrinators, however, they all tried to theorize the model of China's antiquity and give their own interpretations of the role of literati scholars by situating China's traditions in the world of civilizations. To do so, they devoted themselves to the study of the Classics as the source for theorization, explored the basis of modern Western models, and engaged with an inclusive program of learning.

In the last part of this chapter, I have shown how Kang's approach triggered enormous pushback from established cultural elites, especially the "Han learning" scholars led by Zhang Zhidong. In their view, Kang's argument that literati scholars ought to reflect on the basis of existing teachings and institutions based on the search for a universal source, transcending China's own culture, would risk abandoning the cumulative literati cultural traditions that were key to maintaining the leadership of the literati elite. I have illustrated this clash by analyzing a fascinating debate between Kang Youwei and Zhang Zhidong's "Han learning" circle. One result of this debate was Zhang Zhidong's publication of a reactionary doctrine, *Quanxue pian*.

I have also briefly discussed Yan Fu, because his case offered a concrete reference to the concerns of Zhang Zhidong's group. Yan shared Kang's naturalistic determinism, positivism, and universalism. He also had a background of political Neo-Confucianism. He believed that elite learning ought to provide teaching to regulate social behavior. And, in a global context, scholars ought to redefine existing teachings by taking into account the experience of the West. Yan also grounded the source of values in natural principles. He believed that scholars could find the correct doctrines to guide

society only if they cultivated their minds into logical and reductionist agents, staying in tune with the natural principles of things. But for Yan, these natural principles were defined by Evolution, and his teaching was based on the British libertarian conception of "freedom." Like Kang, Yan argued that the literati ought to become cosmopolitan-minded, but Yan ended up judging China's post-Song literati learning against the example of the West, criticizing literati culture after the Song as inferior because it did not fit the universal principle of things.

Importantly, the clashes triggered by Kang Youwei's movement brought a central question onto the table. How could literati scholars meaningfully draw on cosmopolitan sources while maintaining the authority of the cumulative *Ru* learning tradition? Can there be other meaningful possibilities that go beyond this clash? In next chapter, I will focus on how Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan referred to different learning traditions to overcome this conundrum, and will explore what their positions tell us about China's modern intellectual transition.

Chapter 5. Forging a Chinese Cultural Identity: Reviving Evidential Learning Tradition as the Basis for a New Order. 1895-1905

Introduction

In this final chapter, I turn to Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan, two of the most influential and motivational intellectual leaders of the last decade of the Qing. They are often called the founders of modern Chinese nationalism, in that they promoted ideas of a new political order based on a Chinese national identity. They wrote new national histories of China, which aimed to reconstruct China's cumulative civilization from the antiquity until present. Originally followers of Kang Youwei's New Learning movement, they came to advocate a more progressive agenda of reform, and suggested that a broader and more critical participation of literati scholars in government was necessary. They engaged with the organization of learned societies and pursued political-theoretical learning by simultaneously reflecting on antiquity and understanding the models of the modern West. However, they quickly became aware of the limitations of Kang Youwei's position and developed their own progressive visions.

In this chapter, I reconstruct the development of their positions and their impact at the time. I show how they first argued against statecraft officials, and then came to disagree with Kang. Instead of sharing Kang's ahistorical view of values and reductionist practice of learning, they grounded elite learning in a view of culture as an open-ended and cumulative process. I focus on how they established their own interpretations of the nature of elite learning and the history of the *Ru* tradition, how they explained the

achievements of the modern West, how they drew on new knowledge and theories from the West and Japan to understand human civilizations, and how they diagnosed China's problems based on its history. Based on this, I demonstrate why the search for the unique qualities of Chinese civilization, or the *guoxing* (國性), became so important in their efforts to build elite learning. Moreover, I explain why their proposals could speak to many intellectuals and younger students as an intellectually and politically meaningful enterprise.

Although both of these men focused on cultural creation as the source of agency for learning, they developed different interpretations of culture, different approaches to the building of a Chinese cultural identity, justifications for promoting the idea of "nationalism" (*mingzu zhuyi*), and models for a future political system for China. I will analyze their commonalities and differences, because their debates would shape the politics of the last years before the 1911 revolution and leave an enduring legacy. In this vein, I will explain the rise of the National Learning Movement, *guoxue* (國學), under the guidance of Zhang Taiyan, and show how the movement buttressed an emerging revolutionary intellectual culture. I will end the chapter the end, I will show how the claims of *guoxue*, particularly the one by Zhang Taiyan, provided Sun Yat-sen an essential language for defining the value basis of a new China and the necessary cultural resources for Sun to mobilize the broad cultural community to push revolution.

Grounding the Source of Learning in Culture: Liang Qichao's Vision, 1895 – 1905

The Turn from Philology to Political Learning and Cosmopolitanism: 1896-1898

Liang Qichao met Kang Youwei in the late 1880s. Unlike Kang, whose learning

had been built on a foundation of Neo-Confucianism combined with institutional history, Liang began as a talented student of evidential scholarship. As a young student, Liang believed that the philology of the Qian-Jia (乾嘉) school held greater intellectual and moral promise than exam learning. He came to this conclusion in the early 1880s, after reading Zhang Zhidong's *Words of Youxuan* (Youxuan yu 輶軒語) and *Questions and Answers about Bibliography* (Shumu dawen 書目答問). He later recalled that Zhang's introduction to Qian-Jia learning taught him to understand what it meant to conduct scholarship (學問).[744] This interest increased after he read the philological works of Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815) and Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744-1832).[745] Following this path, Liang was admitted to The Sea of Learning Academy (Xuehaitang 學海堂). Before he began studying with Kang Youwei, Liang had already pursued training in philological research on the Classics and historical texts. [746]

Becoming Kang Youwei's student in 1890, however, allowed the publicly-minded Liang to connect himself to the national concerns of his time. Liang began to explore the institutional history of China, as reflected in the dynastic histories and Ma Dunlin's *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻統考, alongside Western history, political theories, and science. By the early 1890s, apart from reading books such as *A Brief Account of the Overseas States* (Yinghuan zhilüe 瀛環志略) and other works of Western history and

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[744] *Yinbingshi heji*. wenji 飲冰室合集 文集 1, 55. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1989)

[745] "十三歲始知有段、王訓詁之學，大好之，漸有棄帖括之志." See *Liang Qichao nianpu chang bian* under the year 1887 (Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1983)

[746] "十月，訓詁學有所成，退出學海堂，和康有為學陸王心學、史學和西學. See *Nianpu* under the year 1890.

political thought translated by the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge Among the Chinese, the *Guangxuehui* (廣學會), Liang was also introduced to the Learning of the Mind 心學, the tradition of Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 and Wang Yangming 王陽明.[747] He recalled engaging with this tradition, however, by studying Huang Zongxi's 黃宗羲 intellectual history *The Records of Ming Confucian Learning* (Mingru xue'an 明儒學案) and *The Records of Song and Yuan Confucian Learning* (Songyuan xue'an 宋元學案). As Huang writes in his preface to *The Records of Ming Confucian Learning*, the work celebrates the free and creative agency of the human mind. Liang was inspired by Huang's humanistic discourse on the human mind, rather than by the moralistic and almost metaphysical approach of Neo-Confucianism. (As I will demonstrate later, Liang's approach to the understanding of the mind influenced by Huang Zongxi would play a significant role in his political and cultural thought.) Meanwhile, during this time Liang became Kang's research assistant, collecting sources about world history and helping Kang with philosophizing universal political principles.[748]

Such training allowed Liang to pursue political theoretical thinking as an analytical inquiry, allowing him to critically reflect on the limitations of existing institutional and intellectual frameworks. He became unsatisfied with Zhang Zhidong's promotion of Qian-Jia philology for its political and cultural nativism. In various writings, he argues against what he saw as the conservative mentality of contemporary

[747] The works published by the *Guangxuehui* that Liang read were presumably *Taixi xinshi lanyao* 泰西新史攬要 and *Zuozhi chuyan* 佐治芻言.

[748] *Nianpu*, year 1890.

officials, emphasizing that there were many common categories of issues that any society needed to face in designing a government, such as land management, schools, selection of officials, the system of political consulting, justice, local governance, market regulations, international relations, the economy, ceremonies and rituals, and so on. Such matters were the common concerns of political elites, though different societies would generate their own ideas in learning how to deal with them. The fact that these issues had been discussed in both the Chinese Classics and in Western political works illustrated the importance of examining political thinking across different cultural traditions. Following this argument, Liang aimed to justify the need for a cosmopolitan-minded and reflective approach to reform, based on certain common grounds of the human political community. Although certain specific Western methods differ from those of China, they are, nonetheless, responses to the common needs of building a political community.[749] Liang argues,

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[749] One example: "難者曰：子言辯矣。然伊川被發，君子所歎，用彝變夏，究何取焉？釋之曰：孔子曰：'天子失官，學在四彝。'春秋之例，彝狄進至中國，則中國之古之聖人未嚐以學於人為慚德也。然此不足以服吾子，請言中國。有土地焉，測之，繪之，化之，分之，審其土宜，教民樹藝，神農后稷，非西人也。度地居民，歲杪製用，夫家眾寡，六畜牛羊，纖悉書之，《周禮·王製》，非西書也。八歲入小學，十五就大學，升造爵官，皆俟學成，庠序學校，非西名也。謀及卿士，謀及庶人，國疑則詢，國遷則詢，議郎博士，非西官也（漢製博士與議郎、議大夫同主論議，國有大事則承問，即今西人議院之意）。流宥五刑，疑獄眾共，輕刑之法，陪審之員，非西律也。三老耆夫，由民自推，闢署功曹，不用他郡，鄉亭之官，非西秩也。爾無我叛，我無強賈，商約之文，非西史也。交鄰有道，不辱君命，絕域之使，非西政也。邦有六職，工與居一，國有九經，工在所勸，保護工藝，非西例也。當寧而立，當扆而立，禮無不答，旅揖士人，禮經所陳，非西製也。天子巡守，以觀民風，皇王大典，非西儀也。地有四遊，地動不止，日之所生為星，悊緯雅言，非西文也。腐水離木，均發均縣，臨鑒立景，蛻水謂氣，電緣氣生，墨翟、亢倉、關尹之徒，非西儒也。故夫法者天下之公器也，征之域外則如彼，考之前古則如此。而議者猶曰夷也夷也而棄之，必舉吾所固有之物，不自有之而甘心以讓諸人，又何取耶？"
"Bianfa tongyi" 變法通議 *Liang Qichao quanji*, Vol.1 13

> Laws are the public/common tool in human world. [Their expressions] can be demonstrated in other societies in their forms, and can also be seen in the texts of our antiquity in our forms. People who want to reject [thinking about them] because they call [the studies of laws] foreign, are in fact taking what we have already developed, disowning it and giving it to others. What is good about this?[750]
>
> 故夫法者天下之公器也，征之域外則如彼，考之前古則如此。而議者猶曰夷也夷也而棄之，必舉吾所固有之物，不自有之而甘心以讓諸人，又何取耶？

But unlike Kang, whose goal was to deduce from world civilizations a set of universal rules to define people's behaviors in order to indoctrinate people, Liang regarded the purpose of political learning – especially the study of law – as the cultivation of the elites' public commitment, critical thinking, and ability to guide political life. If Kang Youwei considered the Western Han Gongyang school master Dong Zhongshu as his model, for Liang, it was Huang Zongxi who served as a model political thinker, with his constitutional vision in *Waiting for the Dawn* (Mingyi daifang lu 明夷待訪錄) and his celebration of the political-intellectual agency of elite learning.

A Different Vision of the Role of Learning in Social-political Life in the mid-1890s

Liang's difference with Kang in understanding learning and politics is evidenced in his "Lun xuexiao" (論學校 Discussion on Schools), in his first influential work *Bianfa tongyi* (變法通議 A Thorough Discussion on Changing the Methods of Governing) (1896). Liang agreed with Kang that the government should implement education for common people.[751] His explanation of why the current government had failed to do so

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[750] Ibid.

[751] "智惡乎開？開於學。學惡乎立？立於教。學校之製，惟吾三代為最備。家有塾，黨有庠，術有序，國有學，立學之等也……《管子》言'農、工、商，群萃而州處，相語以事，

was different, however. He drew on the logic and language of Huang Zongxi, who had argued in the *Waiting for the Down* that the basic problem of monarchy was that the rulers treated government as their own asset, making it impossible for the government to serve the public interest. “The early kings wanted their people to be intelligent, while the later rulers wanted them to be stupid.” The reason was that rulers were worried that educated people would be inspired by critically minded scholars to use the moral principles of antiquity (援古義) to criticize the government of their day (非時政). The rulers wanted the people to be uneducated, and elite learning to be superficial.[752] The consequence was that, although the title of the political and cultural elite, *shi* (士), still existed, these literati were unable to function as an independent political force and fulfill their public responsibility. Thus contemporary scholars conducted meaningless studies whose sole goal was to earn exam degrees, without learning anything about the history of

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相示以功，故其父兄之教不肅而成，其子弟之學不勞而能’：是農學、工學、商學，皆有學堂也。孔子言‘以不教戰，是謂棄民’……免罝之野人，可以備幹城；小戎之女子，可以敵王愾；販牛之鄭商，可以退敵師；斫輪之齊工，可以語治道；聽輿人之誦，可以定霸；采鄉校之議，可以聞政。舉國之人，與國為體。填城溢野，無非人才。所謂以天下之目視，以天下之耳聽，以天下之慮慮，三代盛強，蓋以此也。馬貴與曰：‘古者戶口少而才智之民多，今戶口多而才智之民少。’餘悲其言。” Ibid., 17-18

[752] “雖然，蓋有由也：先王欲其民智，後世欲其民愚。天下既定，敵國外患既息，其所慮者，草澤之豪傑乘時而起，與議論之士援古義以非時政也。於是乎為道以鈐製之。國有大學，省有學院，郡縣有學官，考其名猶夫古人也，視其法猶夫古人也，而問其所以為教，則曰製義也，詩賦也，楷法也。不必讀書通古今而亦能之，則中材以下求讀書求通古今者希矣。非此一途不能自進，則奇才異能之士不得不輟其所學，以俯焉而從事矣。其取之也無定，其得之也甚難，則倜儻之才必有十年不第，窮愁感歎，銷磨其才氣，而無複餘力以成其學矣。如是則豪傑與議論之士必少，而於馴治天下也甚易。故秦始皇之燔詩書，明太祖之設製藝，遙遙兩心，千載同揆，皆所以愚黔首，重君權，馭一統之天下，弭內亂之道，未有善於此者也。譬之居室，慮其僮僕，竊其寶貨，束而縛之，置彼嚴室，加扃鐍焉，則可以高枕而臥，無損其秋毫矣。獨惜強寇忽至，入門無門，入閨無閨，悉索所有，席捲以行；而受縛之人，徒相對咋舌，見其主之難，而無以為救也。” Ibid

government, contemporary political institutions, or the conditions of society. This deficit of publically minded talent helped the rulers to maintain their power, but the public suffered.[753]

In Liang's view, the abuse of political power and the current corruption in elite learning were two sides of the same coin and could explain the roots of China's weakness. In another 1896 essay, entitled "On China's Cumulative Weakness as the Result of Avoiding Problems" (Lun Zhongguo jiruo youyu fangbi 論中國積弱由於防弊), Liang, again, follows Huang Zongxi's logic and language to argue that, "Early kings were concerned with the public when they governed, thus they were committed to solving problems, whereas when later rulers governed, their goal was to serve their own interests, thus each of them only cared about avoiding potential harm."[754] The later rulers' shortsightedness constrained any healthy changes necessary for improving the quality of government, thus destroying talent and suppressing the sense of public responsibility among the elite. To strengthen this claim, Liang backed it up with his reading of history.

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[753] "凡國之民，都為五等：曰士、曰農、曰工、曰商、曰兵。士者學子之稱，夫人而知也。然農有農之士，工有工之士，商有商之士，兵有兵之士。…… 今夫有四者之名，無士之實，則其害且至於此。矧於士而不士，聚千百帖括卷折考據詞章之輩，於曆代掌故瞠然未有所見，於萬國形勢瞢然未有所聞者，而欲與之共天下，任庶官，行新政，禦外侮，其可得乎？…… 若夫內外各官，天子所以共天下也。而今日之士，他日之官也。問國之大學，省之學院，郡縣之學官，及其所至之書院，有以曆代政術為教者乎？無有也。有以本朝掌故為教者乎？無有也。有以天下郡國利病為教者乎？無有也。當其學也，未嚐為居官之地。其得官也，則當盡棄其昔者之所學，而從事於所未學。《傳》曰：'吾聞學而後入政，未聞以政學者也。'以政學猶且不可，況今之既入官而仍讀書者，能有幾人也。以故一切公事受成於胥吏之手，六部書辦，督撫幕客，州縣房科，上下其手，持其短長，官無如何也。何以故？胥吏學之而官未學也，遂使全局糜爛，成一吏例利之天下，禍中腹心，疾不可為。" Ibid

[754] "先王之為天下也公,故務治事; 后世之為天下也私, 故各防弊。" "Lun zhongguo jiruo youyu fangbi"

Like Huang, he argued that this had become a pattern in China's history ever since the Qin. The rulers' concern with their own security led to censorship and shortsightedness, which weakened the teaching and politics of the polity, letting the barbarians (彝狄) and the rebels (流寇) take over. The new rulers, who often came from these two groups, only continued this pattern rather than ending it.[755]

But, Liang asks, "How did such a shortsighted intention come about?" Following Huang, he points to the rulers' selfishness (自私) as the root, namely, their belief that the state was their private property. He thus draws attention to the necessary "distinction between the public interest and [the rulers'] private interest" (公私之義).[756] Being concerned with the *gong* (公), the public interest, is key to the wellbeing of the political community. Thus, the learning community ought to serve as a moral force within the political community, representing the *gong*, the public interest. The power of the rulers ought to be legitimized as well as checked by the learning community.

But how would the learning of scholars represent the interests of the public? How would it prevent the selfishness of rulers from harming the public interest? Liang joined Huang Zongxi's criticism of the rulers' infringement of the public interest to the Western conception of popular sovereignty, the *zizhu zhi quan* (自主之權), and gave his

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[755] "自秦迄明，垂二千年，法禁則日密，政教則日夷，君權則日尊，國威則日損。上自庶官，下自億姓，游于文网之中，習焉安焉，馴焉扰焉，靜而不能動，愚而不能智。歷代民賊,自謂得計，變本而加厲之？及其究也，有不受節制，出于所防之外者二事：曰彝狄，曰流寇。二者一起，如湯沃雪，遂以滅亡。于是昔之所以防人者，則适足為自敝之具而已。" Ibid

[756] ……防弊之心烏乎起？曰:起于自私。請言公私之義。Ibid

influential interpretation of this conception in the context of interpreting the meaning of being a member of a responsible intellectual elite.

> Where does the mind that cares only about preventing harm [rather than pushing progressive change] come from? Please let me explain the principle of [distinguishing] the public interest from private interest. The West has a saying that everyone has sovereignty (*quan* 權). But, what does this mean? [It means that] everyone ought to fully do what they ought to do, and everyone ought to gain the benefits that they deserve. Once the public interest becomes important, the world will be governed. Those who just focus on preventing harm only want those who govern others to have sovereignty, while those who are governed have none. To take away everyone's sovereignty and bring it under one [ruling] person is called selfishness. But, sovereignty is related to both efforts/achievements (事) and benefits (利). Even if only one person was able to handle everything in the world, and thus that one person alone deserved to enjoy all the benefits in the world, still, a gentleman would not consider it to be optimal. The early kings knew this, thus they said "it is not scarcity that is the problem; inequality is the problem." They also said, "a gentleman has the means to be fair and just, considering *gong* as a virtue."
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> 防弊之心烏乎起？曰：起于自私。請言公私之義。西方之言曰：人人有自主之權。 何謂自主之權？各盡其所當為之事，各得其所應有之利， 公莫大焉，如此則天下平矣。 防弊者欲使治人者有權，而受治者無權，收人人自主之權，而歸諸一人，故曰私。雖然, 權也者，兼事与利言之也。使以一人能任天下人所當為之事，則即以一人獨享天下人所當得之利，君子不以為泰也。先王知其不能也，故曰："不患寡而患不均。"又曰："君子有絜矩之道，言公之為美也。[757]

To ensure that each member of a society has sovereignty is key to the wellbeing of a polity, because, in doing so, a polity shows its respect for the *gong*, the public interest, rather than being blind to the rulers' appropriation of the polity as their own asset. In order to be responsible for the wellbeing of social-political life, the learning community ought to be the force that represents the *gong,* the public interest. Importantly, Liang did not believe that guaranteeing the claim to popular sovereignty necessarily meant recognizing the equal rights of each individual in the constitution – as Hobbes or

[757] Ibid.

Rousseau would claim. Rather, Liang's notion of popular sovereignty was subordinated to the idea of meritocracy. Liang fully shared Huang Zongxi's argument in his "On the Origin of the Rulers" (Yuan jun 原君) that political rights and authority (利害之權) were a reward for people's contributions to the community.[758] In Liang's view, the awareness of popular sovereignty represented fundamental virtues and responsibilities that the learning community ought to embody: namely, concern for the public interest, and efforts to reconstruct a critical and independent intellectual leadership to guide the government. Only by doing so could China solve its enduring problems and undo the negative patterns that had contributed to its contemporary decline. In other words, Liang's interpretation of popular sovereignty included individual devotion to public life and to learning as basic requirements.

How, then, should contemporaries ensure that the literati community conducts the right learning and devotes itself to the public interest? Liang argued that although the term of sovereignty, *quan,* came from the West, the idea behind the term had always played a role in China's literati traditions. Questioning the government, based on knowledge and integrity, had been central to the intellectual traditions of the past, beginning with the communities of learning led by Confucius and his students Mencius and Xunzi. The late Ming political activism led by the Donglin and the Fushe movements

[758] This following quote from the same article is a good example. "地者積人而成, 國者積權而立，故全權之國強， 缺權之國殃，無權之國亡。何謂全權？國人各行其固有之權；何謂缺權？國人有有權者， 有不能自有其權者；何謂無權？不知權之所在也。無權惡乎起？曰：始也，欲以一人而 奪眾人之權，然眾權之繁之大，非一人之智与力所能任也，既不能任，則其權將糜散墮落，而終不能以自有。雖然，向者眾人所失之權，其不能复得如故也，于是乎不知權之所在。故防弊者，始于爭權，終于讓權。何謂讓權？ 天下有事，上之天子，天子曰議以聞，是讓權于部院；部院議可，移文疆吏，是讓權于督撫，督撫以頒于所屬，是讓權于州縣；州縣以下于有司，是讓權于吏胥。"

was a more recent example.[759] Once the literati community identified itself with this tradition, it would be encouraged to speak out on political issues, cultivating and representing public opinion. Unlike Kang Youwei, who claimed that the role of the learning community was to connect the rulers to society and offer policy guidance, for Liang, the primary role of the learning community was to serve as an autonomous and critical community of intelligence and knowledge (心智). It should also serve as the model for other political and social communities, such as the parliament and corporations. The learning community ought to embody the virtue of "*gong*" by offering knowledge, mobilizing public devotion, and cultivating informed judgment and criticism.

Constructing a Learning Community

How should people reconstruct a responsible learning community to carry out this learning tradition? Beginning in 1897, Liang acted on putting his idea into practice. In various letters to officials and scholars, he proposed the establishment of a specialized political academy (*zhengzhi xueyuan* 政治學院).[760] In 1897, Liang Qichao brought this agenda to governor Chen Baozhen's 陳寶箴 (1831-1900) Hunan Contemporary Affairs School (Hunan shiwu xuetang 湖南時務學堂). Serving as the general director, Liang divided the curriculum into two parts, namely, "Broad and Comprehensive Learning"

[759] "學會起於西乎？曰：非也，中國二千年之成法也。……孔子養徒三千，孟子從者數百，子夏西河，曾子武城，荀卿祭酒於楚、宋，史公講業於齊、魯，樓次子之著錄九千，徐遵明之會講逾萬，鵝湖、鹿洞之盛集，東林、幾、複之大觀，凡茲前模，具為左證。先聖之道，所以不絕於地，而中國種類不至夷於蠻越，曰惟學會之故。學會之亡，起於何也？曰：國朝漢學家之罪，而紀昀為之魁也。漢學家之言曰，今人但當著書，不當講學。紀昀之言曰：'漢亡於黨錮，宋亡於偽學，明亡於東林。'嗚呼！"Lun Xuehui" 論學會

[760] For instance, see his letters to scholar 劉古愚 and to Zhang Zhidong.

(*Putong xue* 溥通學) and "Specialized Learning" (*Zhuanmen xue* 專門學). Under the "Broad and Comprehensive Learning" section, Liang included Classical scholarship, the Warring State masters, the learning of general principles, the history of China and of foreign countries, and an introduction to science. The section of "Specialized Learning" included international law, learning of institutions, and science.[761] In explaining the agendas of the school, Liang wrote:

> Talking about ordering the world (*jingshi* 經世) today is slightly different from talking about ordering the world since the Tang and Song. Today it requires one to have in-depth mastery of the essential meanings of the Six Classics and to test the meanings against the books written by the multiple Masters of the Zhou and Qin periods, as well as the Western books on general principles (*gongli* 公理) and general rules (*gongfa* 公法). [This step] serves as the warp. In order to pursue the principles (*li* 理) for ordering the world, one has to read broadly about historical institutions and the lessons of past dynasties, and to test [one's discoveries] against the ancient histories of the West, such as ancient Greece and Rome. [This step] serves as the weft. In order to obtain the ancient method of ordering the world, one is required to scrutinize the advantages and problems of local government (*tianjia junguo libing* 天下郡國利病), to know the reasons why they deteriorated, and to find ways of strengthening them. And [one ought to] test one's conclusions against the books on constitutions and regulations produced in the modern West and against the newspapers of different countries. [This step] is the practical action. Resolving to solve all the important affairs in the world, then, one will be able to speak of the agenda of ordering the world.
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> 居今日而言經世，與唐宋以來之言經世者又稍異，必深通六經之作之精意，證以周秦諸子及西人公理公法之書，以為之經；以求治理天下之理，必博觀歷朝掌故得失，證以泰西希臘羅馬諸古史，以為之緯；以求古人治天下之法，必細察今日天下郡國利病，知其積弱之由，及其可以圖強之道，證以西國近史憲法章程之書，及各國報章，以為之用。以求治今日之天下所當有事，夫然後可以言經世。[762]

Liang's rationale behind the categorical design of learning also resembled Huang Zongxi's Classical Learning Society in Ningbo in the 17th century, although the learning

[761] "Shi wu xuetang gongke xiangxi zhangcheng" 時務學堂功課詳細章程.

[762] "Hunan shiwu xuetang xueyue," 湖南時務學堂學約

materials had expanded to include Western political studies and history. How would this program contribute to the literati learning community? In his comments on students' study notes, Liang explained first that to be able to think in political-theoretical terms is a prerequisite to the struggle for political autonomy (*quanli* 權利). Gaining political autonomy requires that individuals make the effort to accumulate knowledge and develop judgment on their own, so that they can govern their own lives and understand what they need. "Political autonomy and wisdom are inseparable; one point of wisdom leads to one point of political autonomy, and a hundred points of wisdom leads to a hundred points of political autonomy." Without the ability to conduct political thinking in general terms, people will not be able to stay independent, no matter how loyal and committed they may be.[763] The theoretical sources for pursuing this learning include the Classics, the Zhou and Qin political thinkers, and Western political and social studies. The empirical ground that allows good theorization relies on a comparative inquiry into the history of China and the history of the West. But Liang also noted that such historical inquiries should not focus on the rulers, but on social and institutional changes.[764] Furthermore, for Liang, knowing meant to make judgments; knowledge could only be attained if one could learn and think for oneself. Knowing was thus based on reflection about the external order,

[763] "凡權利之与智慧，相依者也。有一分之智慧，即有一分之權利；有百分之智慧，即有百分之權利；一毫不容假借者也。故欲求一國自立，必使一國之人之智慧足可治一國之事。今日之中國，其大患總在民智不開。民智不開，人材不足，則人雖假我以權利，亦不能守也。士气似可用矣，地利似可恃矣，然使公理公法、政治之學不明，則雖有千百忠義之人，亦不能免于為奴也。諸君既共識此意，急求學成，轉教他人，一而十，十而百，百而千，千而万，便人咸知有公理公法之學，則或可以不亡也。" "Hunan shiwuxuetang zhaji pi" 湖南時務學堂札記批

[764] "有君史，有國史，有民史。西人近專重民史。中國如九通之類，可以謂之國史矣， 然体裁猶未盡善也。若二十四史，則只能謂之廿四家譜耳！無數已往人与骨皆朽化矣,，斤斤記其雞虫得失，而自夸曰史學史學，豈不謬哉！汝見及此，汝可以為良史矣。" Ibid.

which might include current political norms or social customs. Accordingly, this understanding of knowing entails that, once one gains knowledge, one will be motivated to act and to make changes in the world. Appropriating Wang Yangming's notion of "unifying knowledge and action" (知行合一 *zhixing heyi*) in the context of political learning, Liang encouraged students: "If one believes one knows, but does not want to act, then one does not really know. Thus the scholar's job is simply to seek to know. Making the effort to learn, [you will discover] that there are so many things waiting for you to handle in the world."[765]

Against Kang Youwei's View of Learning, Redefining China's Condition in the Modern World

Importantly, Liang Qichao's commitment to intellectual agency and political autonomy made him skeptical of Kang Youwei's call for a Confucian religion and of Yan Fu's Darwinian determinism. As early as 1897, in a letter to Yan Fu, Liang complained that Kang's proposal was against the true spirit of the New Learning, though he had not yet openly discussed this with Kang.[766] He was also unsatisfied with Yan Fu's explanation that the Western race had fully realized its advantages because from the very

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[765] "王文成曰：'未能知，說甚行?' 然亦未有能知而不能行者。若知而不行，必非真知也。故學者亦但求知而已。勉強學問，天下可辦之事正多，我非大言以欺諸君也。" Ibid.

[766] "國之一統未定，群疑并起，天下多才士；既已定鼎，則黔首戢戢受治，蔺然無人才矣。教之一尊未定，百家并作，天下多學術；既已立教，則士人之心思才力，皆為教旨所束縛，不敢作他想，室閉無新學矣。故庄子束教之言，天下之公言 也。此義也，啓超習与同志數人私言之,而未敢昌言之。" Letter to Yan Fu, *Yu Yan Youling xiansheng shu* 与嚴幼陵先生書, 1897 spring.

beginning the West had discovered the power of democracy, while the Chinese race just began to realize the values of democracy and was about to turn to the West as the right model. Based on his historical studies, Liang argued first that it was incorrect to criticize Chinese civilization as totally despotic or to attribute China's problems to a lack of democratic spirit in its cultural traditions, because history was more complex. Power had not been centralized under the feudal system, and the question of how to check the ruler's power had been also a concern in China. Furthermore, he suggested that it was biased to say that the West had already grasped the idea of democracy in its antiquity, enabling it to reach its maturity. In fact, Liang noted that parliamentary democracy was a new and modern design for both the West and China. The Westerners were developing it, and the Chinese were just about to join them in developing such a system on their own.[767]

Liang Qichao took the reflective agency of Chinese elite learning seriously, and found it difficult to accept the idea that the developmental outcome of a certain political system was already predetermined at the beginning. It was only after the Hundred Days' reform had failed, however, that Liang was able to fully discuss his differences of opinion and to define his intellectual and political agendas. The failure of the reform showed that the current government could not be counted on to bring progressive changes. Thus, from 1898 to the early 1900s Liang saw the promotion of his bottom-up learning agenda as vital.

To accomplish this, Liang first published a series of short essays in his *Book on Freedom* (*Ziyou shu* 自由書) to celebrate free intellectual agency and political autonomy. In 1900 he received a letter from Kang Youwei. Kang was worried that Liang had been

[767] Ibid.

celebrating the discourses of "popular sovereignty" (*kaiminquan* 開民權) and "ziyou" (freedom 自由) too much, so that they outweighed the real need for simply educating people (*kaiminzhi* 開民智). Liang was disappointed and replied that his teacher now sounded like Zhang Zhidong.[768] Liang argued that "freedom" might sound disrespectful of order, but it was important to understand that what it tried to truly celebrate were the political values of autonomy (自立) and self-governance (自治). To be autonomous and to govern oneself would require one to accept civil responsibility.[769] To simply indoctrinate people with technical knowledge and behavioral regulations would not cultivate in them a sense of autonomy and responsibility.

Along these lines, Liang found himself having to argue against Kang's conception of the *Ru* learning tradition. In 1902, Liang published his influential essay "A Discussion

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[768] "夫子谓今日'但当言开民智，不当言兴民权'，弟子见此二语，不禁讶其与张之洞之言，甚相类也。夫不兴民权则民智乌可得开哉。其脑质之思想，受数千年古学所束缚，曾不敢有一线之走开，虽尽授以外国学问，一切普通学皆充入其记性之中，终不过如机器切成之人形，毫无发生气象。试观现时世界之奉耶稣新教之国民，皆智而富，奉天主旧教之国民，皆愚而弱；（法国如路梭之辈，皆不为旧教所囿者，法人喜动，其国人之性质使然也。）无他，亦自由与不自由之分而已。（法国今虽民主，然绝不能自由。）故今日而知民智之为急，则舍自由无他道矣。中国于教学之界则守一先生之言，不敢稍有异想；于政治之界则服一王之制不敢稍有异言，此实为滋愚滋弱之最大病源。"

[769] "至自由二字，字面上似稍有语病，弟子欲易之以自主，然自主又有自主之义，又欲易之以自治，自治二字，似颇善矣。自治含有二义：一者不受治于他人之义，二者真能治自己之义。既真能治自己而何有侵人自由之事乎？而何有法国托名肆虐之事乎？故有自治似颇善矣——而所谓不受治于他人者，非谓不受治于法律也。英人常自夸谓全国皆治人者，全国皆治于人者，盖公定法律而公守之，即自定法律而自守之也。实则仍受治于己而已。盖法律者，所以保护各人之自由，而不使互侵也。此自由之极则，即法律之精意也。抑以法国革命而谤自由，尤有不可者；盖自由二字，非法国之土产也。英之弥儿，德之康得，皆近世大儒，全球所仰，其言自由，真可谓博深切明矣。而夫子引隋炀、武后以比之，似未免涉于嫚骂矣。"

on Why Preserving Teaching [Social Morality] is not how to Honor Confucius" (Baojiao fei suoyi zun Kong lun 保教非所以尊孔論). In it he argued that the Confucian learning tradition was not a religious teaching. It was only concerned with human-centric ethics, never having tried to argue for the existence of any supernatural moral authority external to human culture. Instead, it was its spirit of learning and its celebration of thinking for oneself that made Confucianism inspiring.[770] To admit that Confucius could not foresee what would happen two thousand years after his time did not make him any less valuable. Rather, it was those who tried to impose one unified reading of Confucius throughout Chinese history, under the name of Confucian Teaching, that had limited thinking and led to China's weakness.

> There are many reasons why a civilization progresses, but free thinking has been the most general reason…The world is grand, and the world of scholarship is grand. What can ever limit your potential and what you can do? Nothing, other than carefully following the doctrines of a single master…
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> 文明之所以進，其原因不一端，而思想自由，其總因也…… 夫天地大矣，學界廣矣，誰亦能限公等之所至，而公等果行為者？無他，暖暖姝姝,守一先生之言……[771]

Why did Confucius' teaching have enduring values? Liang argued that it was precisely because of its interest in humanity, the human community, and government. Liang believed that one sign of the progress of civilization is the overtaking of dogmatic

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[770] "孔子則不然，其所教者，專在世界國家之事，倫理道德之原，無迷信， 無禮拜，不禁怀疑，不仇外道，孔教所以特异于群教者在是。質而言之，孔子者哲學家、 經世家、教育家，而非宗教家也。西人常以孔子与梭格拉底并稱,而不以之与釋迦、耶 穌、摩訶末并稱，誠得其真也。夫不為宗教家,何損于孔子!" "Baojiao fei suoyi zun kong lun."

[771] Ibid.. Also, in the following sentences, he celebrates Confucius as a representative of free thinking, "孔子之所以為孔子，正以其思想之自由也。而自命為孔子徒者，乃反其精神而用之，此豈孔子之罪也?嗚呼，居今日諸學日新、思潮横溢之時代，而猶以保教為尊孔子，斯亦不可以 已乎!"

religious doctrines by free thought in public life. From this perspective he argued that Confucius' teaching would actually become increasingly important for the world.

> The teaching of Confucius … would not perish. Other [religious] teachings only emphasize ceremonial formality, thus [once the idea of] freedom is celebrated, the ceremonial formality [of those teachings] disappears…But the teaching of Confucius is not the same. What it teaches is about what it means to be a human being, what it means to have a human community, and what it means to have a state. As human civilization progresses, the study of all of these topics becomes more necessary.
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> 孔教者……而万古不能滅者也。他教惟以儀式為重也，故自由昌而儀式亡；誰以迷信為歸也，故真理明而迷信替。其与將來之文明決不相容，天演之公例則然也。孔教乃异是，其所教者，人之何以為人也，人群之何以為群也，國家之何以為國也。凡此者，文明愈進，則其研究之也愈要。[772]

In particular, Liang claimed that Confucius' ideas about transforming oneself into a responsible person through education (人格教育) were vital for a new political order. As long as politics, education, and philosophy remained important, the discourses of Confucius would always be valuable. However, dogmatizing Confucius or even turning him into a prophet would actually damage his legacy.[773]

Liang's characterization of Confucius' teaching as a legacy of free and self-reflective thinking about civil life made it possible for him to portray the Confucian learning tradition as an historical and cultural force in shaping China's civilization. He

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[772] Ibid.

[773] "近世大教育家多倡人格教育之論。…… 人格教育者何？考求人之所以為人之資格，而教育少年，使之備有此格也。東西古今之圣哲，其所言合于人格者不一，而最多者莫如孔子。孔子實于將來世界德育之林， 占一最重要之位置，此吾所敢豫言也。夫孔子所望于我輩者，非欲我輩呼之為救主，禮之為世尊也。今以他人有救主、世尊之名號，而我無之，遂相惊以孔教之將亡，是烏得為知孔子矣乎!夫梭格拉底、亞里士多德之不逮孔子也亦遠矣，而梭氏、亞氏之教，猶愈久而愈章，曾是孔子而顧懼是乎！吾敢斷言曰：世界若無政治、無教育、無哲學，則孔教亡。苟有此三者,孔教之光大,正未艾也！持保教論者，盍高枕而臥矣。"

suggested that intellectual elites today ought to devote themselves to this tradition by thinking ambitiously, learning about their contemporary world based on the sources available to them. In "On How the Force of Scholarship Would Shape the World" (Lun xueshu shijie ruhe yingxiang shijie 論學術勢力如何影響世界), Liang aimed to mobilize intellectuals. He wrote,

> What is the most unique and strong force in the world? It is wisdom, it is scholarship… I would like to tell our scholars that you all have such force that you can shape the world. Why is it that [you are] not using it? You may not become Bacon, Descartes, Darwin, but why can't you aim to become Voltaire, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Tolstoy? It may be hard to shape the world, but how about shaping one country? If [you can manage to] shape one country, you are indeed allowing our country to shape the world.
>
> 然則天地間獨一無二之大勢力，何在乎？曰智慧而已矣，學術而已矣……吾慾敬告我國學者曰，公等皆有左右世界之力，而不用之，何也？公等即不能為培根、笛卡兒、達爾文，豈不能為福祿特爾、福澤諭吉、托爾斯泰？即不能左右世界，豈不能左右一國？苟能左右我國者，是所以使我國左右世界也。[774]

By celebrating and committing themselves to learning, scholars would also make themselves virtuous models for the citizenry. They could demonstrate how to speculate, how to study, and how to come to responsible conclusions.[775] The most important mission today for intellectual elites was not simply to establish the foundation for a government, Liang claimed, rather, it was to "become the model for the morality of citizens."[776]

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[774] "Lun xueshu zhi shili zuoyou shijie" 論學術之勢力左右世界, 1902, *Liang Qichao quanji* Vol.3, 557.

[775] "……夫虛理非不可貴，然必借實驗而後得其真。" Ibid.

[776] "某以為中國今日不徒無才智之為患，而無道德之為患。……今日諸君之天職，不徒在立國家政治之基礎而已，而又當立社會道德之基礎。諸君此之不任，而更望諸誰人也？……其在今日，則先求諸君之行誼品格，可以為國民道德之標準，使內地人聞之，以為真摯、

Together with his stress on the values of learning and scholarship as the realization of free intellectual agency and political responsibility, Liang demonstrated a different approach to understanding China's condition in the world. Instead of trying to philosophize a monistic principle behind the civilization of humankind, he inquired into the comparative history of civilizations, especially focusing on how political thinking and learning had created communities and how they shaped the courses of civilizations. In his story, civilization is a cumulative and open-ended process, in which intellectual leaders' ideas play a major role in shaping historical and conceptual change. His 1901 book, *On Commonalities and Differences in the Transformation of Ideas about Polity* (Gouojia sixiang bianqian yitonglun 國家思想變遷異同論), was one of his first attempts. Written as an intellectual history of how ideas about the state or polity 國家 in different periods of Western history had shaped political practices, the study meant to inspire readers to understand their own role in China's civilizing process. Bringing analytical history into learning, Liang made it possible for readers to situate themselves within this grand enterprise, conceptualizing their own role in shaping the trajectory of China and the world.

Constructing a New Ideology: The Thesis of Xinmin shuo (新民說) and Liang's Interpretation of "Minzu zhuyi" (民族主義). 1900-1902

Liang Qichao's own ideological agenda matured after his public criticism of Kang

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勇敢、厚重、慈愛者，海外之雪風也，從而效之。……若夫有借留學為終南捷徑，語言文字，一八股也；講堂功課，一芭苴也；卒業證書，一保單也，若是者非徒侮辱學生之資格而已，且侮辱國民之資格。" "Gezhixue yange kaolue" 格致學沿革考略 1902, Ibid., 951

Youwei. This can be seen in his *On New People* (Xinmin shuo 新民說) and his pioneering historical studies of Chinese civilization. Here we shall first examine his claims outlined in *On New People*.

1. A Claim for Constructivism: A Community's Historically Cumulative Political Life as the Source of Moral Values.

In *On New People*, Liang's first step is to establish a systematic explanation of the purpose of government based on his interpretation of human interests and the meaning of political life. Human beings are born with the need and the capacity for forming communities, because in doing so they protect their interests and ensure survival. Therefore, they are able to commit themselves to a higher order of community interests, turning themselves into responsible members of society. Liang emphases that moral values are born in community life, and they change along with the civilizational conditions of the community. There is no fixed standard regarding which values are good and which are bad. As Liang argues,

> Do [I] know where moral values come from? The reason why moral values are established is that they benefit the community. Thus, communities with different civilizing conditions usually need different moral values. And the ultimate purpose is to solidify the community, perfect the community, and improve the community. … Generally speaking, the most suitable moral values are those that could benefit the community based on the conditions and situations of the moment. The spirit of morality is always born from the interests of the community; if [the moral values] are contradictory to the sprit, then, [even if] they appear to be the best, they may also become the worst at some time. (For instance, freedom is considered as the best value today, but if promoted in uncivilized communities, it would become the worst. Despotism was considered as the best in the ancient times, but if promoted in civilized communities, it would become the worst. And these two cases are good examples.) Therefore, public virtues are the origins of all virtues. Goodness refers to what benefits the community, and badness refers to what does not benefit the community.

且論者亦知道德所由起乎？道德之立，所以利群也。故因其群文野之差等，而其所事宜之道德亦往往不同，而要之以能固其群、善其群、進其群者為歸。……蓋以彼當時之情狀，所以利群者，惟此為宜也。然則道德之精神，未有不自一群之利益而生者；苟反於此精神，雖有至善，時或變為至惡矣。（如自由之制，在今日為至美，然移之於野蠻未開之群，則為至惡，專制之治，在古代為至美，然移之於文明開化之群，則為至惡；是其例證也。）是故公德者，諸德之源也，有益於群者為善，無益於群者為惡。[777]

Rejecting the view that moral values are to be found externally in Heaven-and-Earth, in some unchanging and absolute form, Liang stresses their origins in human community life. They are real only if they benefit community life, and in this sense, at a given time, values that are right for one community are not necessarily right for another, because different communities each have their own civilizing processes. Instead of seeing moral values as something that could be adopted dogmatically from other communities, Liang believed that one had to seek them out by understanding the conditions of one's own society. In other words, the search for moral values requires a historically grounded understanding of the community. How, then, to develop such an understanding?

2. Polity

As Liang defined it, a polity, or *guojia* 國家, is one significant stage in the formation of society.[778] It enables individuals to protect their interests effectively, and represents a higher stage in the development of human community life because its

[777] Xinmin shuo, Liang Qichao quanji Vol.3

[778] "國家之立，由於不得已也。即人人自知僅恃一身之不可，而別求彼我相團結、相補助、相捍救、相利益之道也。而欲使其團結永不散，補救永不虧，捍救永不誤，利益永不窮；則必人人焉知吾一身之上，更有大而要者存。每發一慮，出一言，治一事，必常注意於其所謂一身以上者。(蓋非利群則不能利己，天下之公例也。)" Ibid.

members - the citizens, or *guomin* 國民 – are capable of devoting themselves to public life through institutions for the betterment of the entire community. Being a citizen means being able to commit one's energy to the wellbeing of the public.

What makes some polities more successful than others? Referring to Liang's earlier argument, the most important element is the members' awareness of their *quanli* 權利, political rights. This awareness is measured by their ability to actively engage in political life and to create constitutions and laws to protect citizens' interests.[779] It does not matter if the laws are flawed at the beginning, for as long as the members of society are aware of their agency in pursuing their interests, these laws and constitutions will be improved over time, and their *guo* will grow stronger and defend itself from external harm. Building on a metaphor of a tree and its roots, Liang emphasized that the interest of the *guo* and the interest of its members, who enable the *guo* to function, comprise an inseparable whole. If the *guo* is a tree, then the citizens' awareness of *quanli* would be the roots. The deeper and broader the roots develop, the stronger and the more prosperous the tree grows. Only when citizens become politically autonomous, by taking their public responsibility, would the *guo* itself become autonomous in the broader world. Thus teaching thus did not mean to indoctrinate people, but rather to stimulate their awareness of their political agency and thus to fight for their rights or authority in the face of government power. Citing a quote from Mencius on how teaching plays a necessary role in cultivating humanity, Liang claimed that without awareness of their rights and without

[779] "權利競爭之不已，而確立之保障之者，厥恃法律。故有權利思想者，必以爭立法權為第一要義。凡一群之有法律，無論為良為惡，而皆由操立法權之人制定之以自護其權利者也。強於權利思想之國民，其法律必屢屢變更，而日進於善。蓋其始由少數之人，出其強權以自利；其後由多數之人，復出其強權相抵制，而亦以自利。" Ibid.

the agency to fight, people are no different from animals.[780]

But how could people be aware of their *quanli*? Liang argued that human beings are born with a sense of it. The modern term *quanli* in fact represented the idea of the innate knowledge of the good and capacity for good (良知良能) shared by Wang Yangming and Mencius. Using Mencius' metaphor about how the trees on the Ox Mountain are destroyed, he saw the idea of political autonomy as the innate human conscience. Although knowledge of the good and the capacity for good are innate, they can become stronger, weaker, remain hidden or even perish, depending on the historical conditions and political environment.[781] In other words, a good polity would fulfill humanity's innate moral sense and bring the best out of people. In this sense, he mentioned that he

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[780] "國家，譬猶樹也。權利思想，譬猶根也。其根既撥，雖復榦植崔嵬，華葉蓊鬱，而必歸於槁亡。遇疾風橫雨，則摧落更速焉。即不爾，而旱暵之所暴炙，其萎黃彫敝，亦須時耳。國民無權利思想者以之當外患，則槁木遇風雨之類也。即外患不來，亦遇旱暵之類。吾見夫全地球千五兆生靈中，除印度、非洲、南洋之黑蠻外，其權利思想之薄弱，未有吾國人若者也。孟子有言：'逸居而無教，則近於禽獸。'若取羅馬法之法理，而以論理解釋之，則豈惟近法而已？一國之大，而僅有四萬萬禽獸居焉，天下之可恥，孰過是也？我同胞其恥之乎？為政治家者，以勿摧壓權利思想為第一義。為教育家者，以養成權利思想為第一義。為一私人者，無論士焉、農焉、工焉、商焉、男焉、女焉，各以自堅持權利思想為第一義。國民不能得權利於政府也，則爭之。政府見國民之爭權利也，則讓之。欲使吾國之國權與他國之國權平等，必先使吾國中人人固有之權皆平等，必先使吾國民在我國所享之權利與他國民在彼國所享之權利相平等。若是者國庶有瘳，若是者國庶有瘳！" Ibid.

[781] "大抵人生之有權利思想也，天賦之良知良能也。而其或強或弱，或隱伏或澌亡，至不齊者何也？則常緣其國家之歷史政治之浸潤以為差。孟子牛山之喻，先我言之矣。非無萌蘖，牛羊又從而牧之，是以若彼濯濯也。歷覽東西古今亡國之史乘。其始非無一二抵抗暴制以求自由者，一鋤之，三四鋤之，漸萎靡，漸衰頹，漸銷鑠；久之而猛烈沈醲之權利思想，愈制而愈馴，愈沖而愈淡，乃至回復之望絕，而受羈受軛，以為固然。積之數十年數百年，每下愈況，而常至澌亡。此固由其人民能力之薄弱，而政府之罪，又烏可逭也？夫此等政府，豈嘗有一焉能嗣續其命脈以存於今日者？即有一二，亦不過風燭殘年，旦夕待死而已。政府以此道殺人，毋乃適為自殺之利刃乎！政府之自殺，己作之而己受之，其又奚尤？顧所最痛者，其禍乃延及於國家全體而不能救也。國民者一私人之所結集也。國權者，一私人之權利所團成也。故欲求國民之思想、之感覺、之行為。舍其分子之各私人之思想、感覺、行為，而終不可得見。其民強者謂之強國；其民弱者謂之弱國。其民富者謂之富國；其民貧者謂之貧國。其民有權者謂之有權國；其民無恥者謂之無恥國。" Ibid.

agreed with Socrates, who made the point that "the human is a political animal."[782] Thus the fight for *quanli* is a commitment and responsibility. It needs to be developed and cared for. The only way to achieve this is to understand the source of an ideal political life and to realize it under the leadership of the intellectual elite. To emphasize this view, he explained that "freedom" is meant to be critical of established views and common opinions, and it has to be based on the self-discipline to restrain oneself from indulging in superficial desires. For individuals to fully realize their autonomy, they have to know that there is no higher authority than human beings themselves – neither god nor doctrine – to develop rules for living together and protecting themselves. Thus, to seek to realize the spirit of self-governance is a noble goal, both for the fulfillment of the individual self, and for the realization of a successful community.

3. A Progressive Theory of Civilization, and Learning as the Civilizing Force.

Following this line of thought, Liang put forward a theory of civilization. He often used the new term *jinhua* 進化, by which he literarily meant "progress," to describe the civilizing process through which human beings survive and prosper. He claimed that the birth of a polity*, guo*, created by its members for themselves, defines the origins of civilization. It motivates knowledge, culture, and the search for moral values for the community life. To become a citizen (*guomin* 國民) is not a process dependent upon the dictation of any higher authority, but rather a self-reflective process for which members of society strive. The civilizing process of a group consists in its people's efforts to

[782] "亞里士多德曰：'人也者，政治之動物也。'然則人類之必有政治能力，其天性矣，至其何以自有而之無？則不出兩途：一曰隱伏而不能發達，二曰發達而旋復摧夷" Ibid.

become citizens. A strong and prosperous civilized life is one in which the innate human knowledge of the good – the sense of autonomy – is developed and thrives. Furthermore, the civilizing process of a given community is filled with steps – not necessarily always progressive – towards the community's self-realization as an autonomous polity.

But who is responsible for leading such a civilizing enterprise? What enables communities to stay on the path of survival and prosperity? Members of society would not automatically transform themselves into responsible citizens. It is the intellectual and political elites, who are capable of learning, thinking and acting, that unite people into a political community. They are the leaders who can create laws and constitutions based on the common understanding (xin suo tongran 心所同然) of people. Importantly, Liang stressed that the reason why a polity can work is that the rules established for the community are the expressions of the common conscience of its members (蓋發於人人心中良知所同然).[783] The successful leaders who shape people to become responsible members are the *first* to become aware of their common conscience. Quoting Cheng Yi, Liang called them *xian juezhe* 先覺者.[784] They are those who are able to know and thus

[783] "書曰：'節性惟日其邁。'荀子曰：'人之性惡也，其善者偽也。'節者何？制裁之義也。偽者何？人為之義也。〈偽，從人從為，楊注云：矯其本性也。謂凡非天性而人作為之者也。〉故夫人之性質，萬有不齊，駁雜而無紀。苟順是焉，則將橫溢亂動，相觸相鬩而不可以相群。於是不可不以人為之力，設法律而制裁之。然此法律者，非由外鑠也，非有一人首出，制之以律群生也。蓋發於人人心中良知所同然；以為必如是乃適於人道，乃足保我自由，而亦不侵人自由。故不待勸勉，不待逼迫，而能自置於規矩繩墨之間。若是者，謂之自治，自治之極者，其身如一機器然。一生所志之事業，若何而預備，若何而創始，若何而實行，皆自定之。……" Ibid.

[784] Section 10: "Lun zizun," 論自尊: "夫國家本非有體也，藉人民以成體。故欲求國之自尊，必先自國民人人自尊始。伊尹曰：'予天民之先覺者也，予將以斯道覺斯民也，非予覺之而誰也？'顏淵曰：'舜何人也？予何人也？有為者亦若是。'孟子曰：'夫天未欲平治天下也。如欲平治天下，當今之世，舍我其誰也？'若此者，就尋常庸子視之，不以為狂，必以為泰矣！而聖賢之所以為聖賢者，乃在於此。……彼數子者，其所以高自位置，與夫

define the common goals of a community, and who lead the improvement of learning and thinking. It is their contribution that facilitates the betterment of social customs and politics (風俗政治). "The progress of a *guo* must be born from scholarship and thought (學術思想), and social customs and political practice (風俗政治) are their products." To make this point, Liang argues that it was during the Warring States period that the Yellow race's reputation ascended to the top, because scholarship and thought were freely thriving.[785]

In this sense, a polity has to be a product of human being's cumulative efforts, a result of conscious reflection, learning, and commitment. In different historical periods and moments, intellectual elites devote themselves to the construction of political communities and turn people into responsible members of society based on the sources and knowledge available to them. What transcends these particular historical contexts and conditions is a shared concern about, and effort to improve, the political awareness of the community. This allows them to garner respect and receive delegated political power from the community. As long as humans need to live together to protect themselves, and as long as leaders take responsibility to develop a self-governed political life, then the polity will survive, and the civilizing process (*wenming jinhua* 文明進化) will continue.

What, then, does this mean for China? Liang suggests,

世俗之多大言少成事者，皮相焉殆無以異。而不知其後此之建豐功揚偉烈，能留最高之名譽於歷史上，皆此不肯自賊，自暴，自棄之一念，軀遣而成就之也。嗟夫！國於天地，必有與立，歷覽古今中外之歷史，其所以能維繫國家於不敗之地者，何一非由人民之自尊而來？何一非由人民中之尤秀拔者。" Ibid.

[785] "凡一國之進步，必以學術思想為之母，而風俗政治皆其子孫也。中國惟戰國時代，九流雜興，道術最廣。自有史以來，黃族之名譽，未有盛於彼時者也。秦、漢而還，孔教統一。" Ibid.

> A polity that exists in the world must have something that enables it to establish itself. Looking at the history of China and the history of the foreign countries, among those that successfully sustained their polities, which one of them was not developed based on their people's self-respect, and which of them did not come from the leadership of the excellent group who led their age with the great principle of self-respect?
>
> 國於天地，必有與立，歷覽古今中外之歷史，其所以能維繫國家於不敗之地者，何一非由人民之自尊而來？何一非由人民中之尤秀拔者，以自尊之大義倡率一世而來哉？[786]

The fact that China had developed such a rich and long-lasting civilization, Liang argued, must show something important about China's past political experience. Like other civilizations, China might not always have had an ideal government over the course of its history, but beginning with the Yellow Emperor of antiquity, responsible leaders developed a constitutional model for the self-governance of the community in their own historical contexts, in what became a cumulative civilizing process for China. Since that era, the Chinese had accumulated a rich tradition of learning and teaching of values. It maintained a tradition as a civilizing force, with which later people could identity in their own contexts.

4. "*Minzu zhuyi"* 民族主義: Searching for the Civilizing Force to Guide Learning

In order to maintain the civilizing force and to develop it in new contexts, Liang saw it as necessary to identify with the tradition that had developed in China since it had created and realized its first ideas of political life. Therefore, Liang wrote,

> For a polity that can establish itself in the world, their people must have some unique quality. From their discourse of morality and law to their social customs, habits, literatures, and art, there must exist a kind of independent spirit somewhere that has been passing on from grandfathers to grandchildren. Then, the community

[786] Liang Qichao quanji, Vol.3, 656

is formed and the polity is established. This is the true source of nationalism (*minzu zhiyi* 民族主義). The fact that our people have been standing on the Asian continent for thousands of years suggests that we must have some magnificent, noble, and excellent quality. But it takes effort to protect such quality from being lost. However, by protecting them, Liang claims, "I do not mean just simply letting them grow naturally, thus randomly saying 'I will protect them, I will protect them' and so on. Taking trees as an example, [we know that] it is not true to say that every year there will be new sprouts growing out… Taking wells as an example, [we know that] it is not true to say that every moment there will be new streams of spring water flowing out… How can new *sprouts* and new streams of spring water come from external sources? The old is also the new, and it is exactly because [the old sources] can renew itself every day that the old realizes itself. We wash and clean them to let them shine; we exercise them and practice them to keep it in shape; we cultivate them and deepen them to enrich their origins…The spirit of our people thus would be kept and advanced.

凡一國之能立於世界，必有其國民獨具之特質，上自道德法律，下至風俗習慣，文學美術，皆有一種獨立之精神，祖父傳之，子孫繼之，然後群乃結，國乃成。斯實民族主義之根柢源泉也。我同胞能數千年立國於亞洲大陸，必其所具特質，有宏大高尚完美，釐然異於群族者，吾人所當保存之二勿失墜也。雖然，保之云者，非任其自生自長，而漫曰"我保之，我保之"云爾。譬諸木然，非歲歲有新芽之茁，則其枯可立待；譬諸井然，非息息有新泉之湧，則其涸不移時。夫新芽、新泉豈自外來者耶？舊也而不能不謂之新，惟其日新，正所以全其舊也。濯之拭之，發其光晶；鍛之鍊之，成其體段；培之浚之，厚其本原；繼長增高，日正月邁，國民之精神，於是乎保存，於是乎發達。[787]

Liang was calling for the learning community to identify with a certain kind of foundational force that had endured since the beginning of China's civilization. Importantly, this force had to be realized in China's own civilizing experience, and it could be only identified with a critical attitude.

Liang argued that it was impossible to advance the quality of one's own people without understanding the qualities that had made other peoples create and sustain their own civilizations. Each civilization is a cumulative path-dependent process, thus each of

[787] Ibid., 657

them has a valuable but limited experience to explore. Liang situated his agenda of "renewing people" between what he saw as two extremes, namely, the proposal to appropriate Western knowledge as the new *universal* ground, a proposal that I have argued Kang Youwei and Yan Fu had led to, and the reactionary conservative position on values that I have argued Zhang Zhidong's Han learning statecraft group represented.

> To strengthen our country, we cannot ignore how other people have learned to establish themselves. [We should] select what they are good at and take them with us, in order to make up what we are missing. …Thus, what I mean by renewing our people is not like those whose fascination with Western trends leads them to despise and cast away our values, scholarship, and social customs of millennia in order to join the West. Neither is it like those conservatives who simply hold onto our values, scholarship, and social customs of millennia [as the only source] for our standing in the world.
>
> 慾強吾國，則不可不博考各國民族所以自立之道，匯擇其長者而取之，以補我之所未及。今論者於政治、學術、技藝，皆莫不知取人長以補我短矣，而不知民德、民智、民力實為政治、學術、技藝之大原。……故吾所謂新民者，必非如心醉西風者流，蔑棄吾數千年之道德、學術、風俗，以求伍於他人；以非如墨守故紙者流，謂僅抱此數千年之道德、學術、風俗，遂足以立於大地也。[788]

Suffice it to say, *On New People* was Liang Qichao's call for a shared elite learning to facilitate the discharge of their social and political responsibilities and leadership, and with this call he redefined the meaning of political life. Importantly, Liang found a way to go beyond the domestic production of knowledge in thinking about what makes a healthy social-political order, but at the same time he considered it intellectually meaningful and essential to take seriously China's cumulative civilizing experience since antiquity, especially its intellectual-cultural traditions. In the search for *guoxing* (國性), the national quality or character, the origins of China's civilization did not need to offer a

[788] Ibid., 658

fixed definition of values. Rather, these origins offered a common approach regarding where to find them and how. This approach was to investigate how values were realized in the real community life in the past, thus to think with history.

The Foundation of Elite Learning: A History for Zhongguo 中國 *and the Search for "Guoxing"* 國性**. 1901-1902**

What does it mean in practice to search for China's *guoxing*, namely, the quality or character of the Chinese nation? Liang's enterprise was illustrated by a set of groundbreaking historical writings in 1901 and 1902, including his pioneering studies of the origins and development of Chinese civilization, particularly focusing on China's political thought, government, and scholarship. He offered a rigorous epistemological and methodological exploration of the foundation of historical knowledge, and made an attempt to build a national history based on the methods that he identified. Liang would turn to these agendas again in later his life and would follow the same rationales that he had first developed in 1901 and 1902.

1. What does historical learning do?

The Definition of History (Shixue zhi jieshuo 史學之界說) written in 1902 is an illustrative example. In this work, Liang did not just aim to define the study of history, but intended to deliver an epistemological claim about learning and to offer a shared method for intellectual elites to understand the human world in order to find their role in shaping it. First of all, unlike Kang Youwei, Tan Sitong, and Yan Fu, Liang was not

interested in defining the metaphysical foundation of reality as the pursuit of learning, rather, he was interested in the issue of "phenomena," *xianxiang* 現象*,* the movements of objects as perceived by human beings. Opposing Kang Youwei and Yan Fu's monism in their search for an absolute external source of values, Liang turned in a different direction to consider the ability of humans to know. From the perspective of phenomena, Liang argued that there are two kinds of basic modes of movement that constitute phenomena. The first kind, which is often categorized as the study of nature (i.e.天然學), such as seasonal changes and astronomical phenomena, is often circular and fixed, with behaviors that can be easily predicted. The second kind, which should be studied as historical subjects, includes movements that are progressive, cumulative, and open-ended. It is in the study of this kind of movement that the dimension of time matters.[789]

Accordingly, stepping away from Kang Youwei, Liang argued that it was important to distinguish human affairs from the natural world as two categorically different phenomena. Studies of natural phenomena, such as the disciplines of astronomy, geography, physics, and chemistry, are often clearer and easier, because these phenomena are easier to predict and their behaviors can be tested in experiments. The study of human

[789] "第一，歷史者，敘述進化之現象也。現象者何？事物之變化也。宇宙間之現象有二种：一曰為循環之狀者，二曰為進化之狀者。何謂循環？其進化有一定之時期，及期則周而复始，如四時之變遷、天体之運行是也。何謂進化？其變化有一定之次序，生長焉，發達焉，如生物界及人間世之現象是也。循環者，去而复來者也，止而不進者也；凡學問之屬于此類者，謂之'天然學'。進化者，往而不返者也，進而無极者也；凡學問之屬于此類者，謂之'歷史學'……而天然界与歷史界，實分占兩者之范圍。天然學者，研究空間之現象者也；歷史學者，研究時間之現象者也。就天然界以觀察宇宙，則見其一成不變，万古不易,，故其体為完全，其象如一圓圈；就歷史界以觀察宇宙，則見其生長而不已，進步而不知所終，故其体為不完全，且其進步又非為一直線，或尺進而寸退，或大漲而小落，其象如一螺線。明此理者，可以知歷史之真相矣。" *Shixue zhi jieshuo, Liang Qichao quanji*, Vol.3

affairs, however, needs to take into account the fact that human activities unfold in a cumulative and open-ended mode of movement. History is the study of such cumulative and open-ended phenomena. Thus, the methods involved in the study of human affairs such as politics and society are entirely different, because human affairs are not completed, forming part of an ongoing and cumulative change. Other studies of human affairs should all be considered as close to the study of the realm of history (歷史界之學), such as politics 政治學, sociology 群學, economics 平准學, and religious studies 宗教學. (Although the subject of biology also addresses phenomena of growth and progress, from a biological point of view all lives have their predictable cycles and die, which differentiates the subject of biology from history.) In other words, Liang focuses on how human creations shape their community life. In the study of history, the future of a subject is hard to predict, and researchers should be self-conscious about the fact that they themselves are a part of the change. [790]

Furthermore, Liang argued that the study of history elucidates the phenomenon of social progress (renqun jinhua人群進化). First, Liang stressed, when we use the term *jinhua* in the context of human affairs, we need to know that there is no predetermined

[790] "由此觀之，凡屬于歷史界之學，(凡政治學、群學、平准學、宗教學等，皆近歷史界之范圍。) 其研究常較難；凡屬于天然界之學，(凡天文學、地理學、物質學、化學等，皆天然界之范圍。) 其研究常較易。何以故？天然界，已完全者也，來复頻繁，可以推算，狀態一定，可以試驗。歷史學，未完全者也，今猶日在生長發達之中，非逮宇宙之末劫，則歷史不能終极。吾生有涯，而此學無涯。此所以天然諸科學起源甚古，今已斐然大成；而關于歷史之各學，其出現甚后，而其完備難期也。此界說既定，則知凡百事物，有生長、有發達、有進步者，則屬于歷史之范圍；反是者，則不能屬于歷史之范圍。又如于一定期中，雖有生長發達，而及其期之极點，則又反其始，斯仍不得不以循環目之。如動植物，如人類，雖依一定之次第，以生以成，然或一年，或十年，或百年，而盈其限焉，而反其初焉。一生一死，實循環之現象也。故物理學、生理學等，皆天然科學之范圍，非歷史學之范圍也。" Ibid.

destiny for humanity.[791] Second, it does not make sense to look for the phenomenon of progress at the level of individual life. Rather, human progress is a social phenomenon to be understood, though at the individual level it will not be visible. It is the human community that serves as the agent to make progress happen, and in this sense, the study of history is meaningful when it tries to understand the progress of a community.[792]

Why is this important? Because, although at an individual level one cannot say that younger people would be superior to their elders, at the social level, the accumulation of knowledge and culture can empower later generations and allow them to achieve much more. For instance, the children of later generations would know much more about the world than the wisest sages of earlier times. This is the power of civilization. Would individuals, without being shaped by society and culture, become civilized on their own? It is hard to say, and history will not tell. But what history can reveal is how civilization develops to empower human beings to create a better life, and the fact that people can use

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[791] "第二，歷史者，敘述人群進化之現象也。進化之義既定矣。雖然，進化之大理，不獨人類為然，即動植物乃至無机世界，亦常有進化者存。而通行歷史所紀述，常限于類者，則何以故？此不徒吾人之自私其類而已。人也者，進化之极則也，其變化千形万狀而不窮者也。故言歷史之廣義，則非包万有而并載之，不能完成；至語其狹義，則惟以人類為之界。" Ibid.

[792] "雖然，歷史之范圍可限于人類，而人類之事實不能盡納諸歷史。夫人類亦不過一种之動物耳，其一生一死，固不免于循環，即其日用飲食、言論行事，亦不過大略相等，而無進化之可言。故欲求進化之跡，必于人群。使人人析而獨立，則進化終不可期，而歷史終不可起。蓋人類進化云者，一群之進也，非一人之進也。如以一人也，則今人必無以遠過于古人。語其体魄，則四肢五官，古猶今也；質點血輪，古猶今也。語其性靈，則古代周、孔、柏(柏拉圖)、阿(阿里土多德)之智識能力，必不讓于今人，舉世所同認矣。然往往有周、孔、柏、阿所不能知之理，不能行之事，而今日乳臭小儿知之能之者，何也？無他，食群之福，享群之利，借群力之相接相較、相爭相師、相摩相蕩、相維相系、相傳相嬗，而智慧進焉，而才力進焉，而道德進焉。進也者，人格之群，非尋常之個人也。(人類天性之能力，能隨文明進化之運而漸次增長与否,此問題頗難決定。試以文明國之一小儿，不許受教育，不許蒙社會之感化。沐文明之恩澤，則其長成，能有以异于野蠻國之小儿乎？恐不能也。" Ibid.

history to identify this progress is the most important merit of historical learning for scholars. It is in this context that Liang argued that it was important for Chinese scholars to go beyond the conventional approach of historical writings such as individual biographies, and to study the cumulative process of civilization of human groups. Only by becoming self-conscious about this process could people become its agents. "We have no knowledge about our people's civilizing past, because we do not know that historical study is about the traces of human communities."[793]

Moreover, historical learning is necessary if people are to identify the common principles and common rules (公理公例) of civilizations. Liang emphasized that learning comes from a combination of two factors: the cognitive mind of the scholar (which he calls the subjective part 主觀) and the external objects or phenomena to be studied (which he calls the objective part 客觀).[794] What is telling about this distinction is that, for Liang, the common principles and rules that scholars could draw from history were self-reflective theorization; this differed from Kang Youwei's interpretation of theorization as a positivist and reductionist practice that had to transcend human historical consciousness. But, at the same time, Liang did not go to another extreme. For him, knowledge, common principles and rules were not simply a projection of one's own cultural and historical conditions, but something partly rooted in the common human

[793] "猶不能于本群之大勢有所知焉，由不知史之界說限于群故也。" Ibid.

[794] "第三，歷史者，敘述人群進化之現象，而求得其公理公例者也。凡學問必有客觀、主觀二界。客觀者，謂所研究之事物也；主觀者，謂能研究此事物之心靈也。（亦名'所界'、'能界'。'能'、'所'二字，佛典譯語，常用為名詞。）和合二觀，然后學問出焉。史學之客体，則過去現在之事實是也；其主体，則作史、讀史者心識中所怀之哲理是也。有客觀而無主觀，則其史有魄無魂，謂之非史焉可也。(偏于主觀而略于客觀者，則雖有佳書，亦不過為一家言，不得謂之為史。)" Ibid.

sense of phenomena. In searching for the common principles and rules of civilization, one civilization's unique historical changes have to be understood in light of the courses of other civilizations.[795] Also, for Liang it was necessary to take into account the various studies of different subjects and their principles, such as geography, geology, the study of human race, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, political studies, religious studies, legal studies, economics, ethics, psychology, logic, and literary studies. They would help scholars to develop a broad understanding of how different realms of life, activities, and phenomena serve as factors in history.[796]

Once these aspects are clarified, scholars can understand why historical inquiry serves as an indispensable tool for human communities to guide their life; as Liang puts it, "to let the progress of the past lead the progress of the future." (以過去之進化，導未來之進化者也). Thinking with history is thus in itself an essential way of exerting one's intellectual-cultural agency for a better social-political life, because it self-reflectively contributes to the civilizing process of one's society. Thus, Liang claims, historical learning is a responsibility of intellectual elites. It should be shared as the common way of searching for guidance to improve one's community. As Liang points out, "Our

[795] "但其事雖難，而治此學者不可不勉。大抵前者史家不能有得于是者，其蔽二端：一曰知有一局部之史，而不知自有人類以來全体之史也。或局于一地，或局于一時代。如中國之史，其地位則僅敘述本國耳，于吾國外之現象，非所知也（前者他國之史亦如是）。其時代，則上至書、契以來，下至胜朝之末止矣；前乎此，后乎此，非所聞也。夫欲求人群進化之真相，必當合人類全体而比較之，通古今文野之界而觀察之。" Ibid.

[796] "二曰：徒知有史學，而不知史學与他學之關系也。夫地理學也，地質學也，人种學也，人類學也，言語學也，群學也，政治學也，宗教學也，法律學也，平准學也（即日本所謂經濟學），皆与史學有直接之關系；其他如哲學范圍所屬之倫理學、心理學、論理學、文章學，及天然科學范圍所屬之天文學、物質學、化學、生理學，其理論亦常与史學有間接之關系，何一而非主觀所當憑借者。取諸學之公理公例而參伍鈎距之，雖未盡适用，而所得又必多矣。" Ibid.

generation enjoys the fruits of today's civilization, [and this is] the rights (權利) we have gained from the ancients; our continuation, expansion, and reproduction of today's civilization are our responsibilities for the future." Moreover, Liang emphasizes, "The fact that China has not yet become as advanced as the modern West must have much to do with the fact that such kinds of learning have not recently been produced and conveyed to mold the people." [797]

2. A History of Learning and A History of Zhongguo (中國): Identifying with the Evidential Learning Tradition in a New Context

If historical learning is essential for guiding China's social-political life, how should it be done? Liang's *On the General Trend of China's Scholarly Thought* (Lun Zhongguo xueshu sixiang bianqian zhi dashi 論中國學術思想變遷之大勢), published in 1902, and *The Preface to Chinese History* (Zhongguo shi xulun 中國史敘論) of 1901, which later grew into *The New History* (Xin shixue 新史學) in 1902, offer his answers.

First, one crucial step in understanding China's civilizing progress was to reconstruct the historical agency in shaping the civilization; Liang saw this agency in

[797] "夫所以必求其公理公例者，非欲以為理論之美觀而已，將以施諸實用焉，將以貽諸來者焉。歷史者，以過去之進化，導未來之進化者也。吾輩食今日文明之福，是為對于古人已得之權利；而繼續此文明，增長此文明，孳殖此文明，又對于后人而不可不盡之義務也。而史家所以盡此義務之道，即求得前此進化之公理公例，而使后人循其理、率其例以增幸福于無疆也。史乎史乎，其責任至重，而其成就至難。中國前此之無真史家也，又何怪焉！而無真史家，亦即吾國進化遲緩之一原因也。吾愿与同胞國民，篳路藍縷以辟此途也。" Ibid.

society rather than belonging to the rulers. It is here that an identity of nation/people was needed. Although Liang was aware that "Zhongguo" 中國 was a somewhat idealized and haughty term he saw the term nonetheless as best for capturing the agency of a historical group who created China's cumulative civilized life, because it would not overlap with any dynastic names or with other names applied by foreigners.[798] In proposing to investigate the history of *Zhongguo*, Liang aimed in *The Preface to Chinese History* to offer a more meaningful conceptualization of China's community experience that would not center on dynastic history. Thus, he identified the beginning of history from the time of the Yellow Emperor who had, according to the Classics, ordered the first political communities in China and led the development of the basic elements of civilization.[799]

The second step was to find the civilizing force with which the intellectual elites ought to identify. A special history of scholarship, *On the General Trends of China's Scholarly Thought* (Lun Zhongguo xueshu sixiang bianqian zhi dashi 論中國學術思想變

[798] "吾人所最慚愧者，莫如我國無國名一事。尋常通稱，或曰諸夏，或曰漢人，或曰唐人，皆朝名也。外人所稱，或曰震旦，或曰支那，皆非我所自命之名也。" Ibid.

[799] As Liang sees it, it may be more reliable to define the beginning of history as the time of Yu, because China was historically often called the Xia. But he also agrees that there must be a long civilizing process already taking place before Yu, a process that has been commonly believed to have started from the Yellow Emperor, who were the first to organize the social and political life for the Chinese community and left a clear legacy to the following sage kings Yao, Shun and Yu. The lineage of the kings seemed to be very clear. Sima Qian also adopted this view and traced the history back to the Yellow Emperor. Thus, it would be reasonable today to define the beginning of Chinese history as the time of the Yellow Emperor. "中國自古稱諸夏，稱華夏，夏者以夏禹之朝代而得名者也。中國民族之整然成一社會，成一國家，實自大禹以後。若其以前，則誠有如《列子》所謂三皇之事，若存若亡；五帝之多，若決若夢者。其確實與否，萬難信也。故中國史若起筆於夏禹，最為徵信。雖然，中國為全世界文明五種源之一，起所積故自深遠。而黃帝為我四萬萬同胞之初祖，唐虞夏商周秦之君統，皆其裔派，頗有信據。計自黃帝至夏禹，其間亦不過數百年，然則黃帝時去洪水之年亦已不遠。司馬遷作《史記》，托始黃帝，可謂特識。故今竊取之，定黃帝以後為有史時代。" *Liang Qichao quanji*, Vol. 3, 452.

遷之大勢) illustrates how to do this. Liang again brings his commitment to intellectual agency into his analysis of history. He opens the essay with the claim that it is scholarship and reflective thinking that serve as the soul of civilization for any country, while its political administrations, laws, and customs are the external expressions of such agency.[800] Elite learning is responsible for grounding itself in, and speaking to, its significant tradition of scholarship and thinking. Liang asked, given the advancement of Chinese civilization in the world, particularly the influence of its language, its ancient heritage, and its enduring status, how could today's scholars not to be proud of the history and the creativity of its people? Even if it was true that China had suffered decline in its recent history, in order to restore it in the new global context, China's elite had to identify with its own intellectual tradition. [801]

Why should this be the case? Liang argued that on one hand, it was China's unique qualities and characteristics that gave its intellectual elite a foundation to establish its agency. On the other hand, it was such a tradition that had largely shaped the thought of

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[800] "學術思想之在一國，猶人之有精神也，而政事、法律、風俗及歷史上種種之現象，則其形質也。故慾覘其國文野強弱程度如何，必於學術思想焉求之。" Ibid., 562

[801] "立於五洲中之最大洲，而為其洲中之最大國者誰乎？我中華也。人口居全地球三分之一者誰乎？我中華也。四千餘年之歷史未嘗一中斷者誰乎？我中華也。我中華有四百兆人公用之語言文字，世界莫能及。我中華有三十世紀前傳來之古書，世界莫能及。西人稱世界文明之祖國有五：曰中華，曰印度，曰安息，曰埃及，曰墨西哥。然彼四地者其國亡，其文明與之俱亡。今試一遊其墟，但有摩訶末遺裔鐵騎蹂躪之跡，與高加索強族金粉歌舞之場耳。而我中華者，屹然獨立，繼繼繩繩，增長光大，以迄今日，此後且將彙萬流而劑之，合一爐而冶之。於戲，美哉我國！於戲！偉大哉我國民！吾當草此論之始，吾不得不三熏三沐，仰天百拜，謝其生我於此至美之國，而為此偉大國民之一分子也。……故合世界史通觀之，上世史時代之學術思想，我中華第一也；中世史時代之學術思想，我中華第一也；惟近世史時代，則相形之下，吾汗顏矣。雖然，近世史之前途，未有艾也，又安見此偉大國民不能恢復乃祖乃宗所處最高尚最榮譽之位置，而更執牛耳於全世界之學術思想界者！吾欲草此論，吾之熱血如火如焰，吾之希望如海如潮，吾不自知吾氣焰之何以溢湧，吾手足之何以舞蹈也。於戲！吾愛我祖國，吾愛我同胞之國民。" Ibid.

people today. In explaining his goal of writing a scholarly history, Liang wrote,

> Being born in this country, living as its people, enjoying the contributions and legacy that this tradition of scholarship has given, it is our responsibility to celebrate it, promote it, and develop it. But why hasn't there been anyone trying to do so? All things under the heaven must be compared in order to be understood. Without comparison, one would not know one's limitations or strengths. Let's first not talk about the past. Those who are considered to be fond of learning and in-depth thinking include two kinds of people: first, those who are merely embarrassed by the condition of their own scholarship and thought, but have never tried to enter the scholarship and thought of the foreign countries, and second, those who are simply dazzled by foreign scholarship and thought, but do not bother to understand that of their own country.
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> 生此國，為此民，享此學術思想之恩澤，則歌之舞之，發揮之光大之，繼長而增高之，吾輩之責也。而至今未聞有從事於此者何也？凡天下事必比較然後見其真，無比較則非惟不能知己之所短，並不能知己之所長。前代無論矣。今世所稱好學深思之士，有兩種：一則徒為本國學術思想界所窘，而於他國者未嘗一涉其樊也；一則徒為外國學術思想所眩，而於本國者不屑一唇其意也。
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> I love my nation (國), and I love my people (國民), and I cannot help myself. I would take the initiative to write down part of what I know, [first] as a preparation for my future learning on this subject [i.e. the history of Chinese scholarship and thought], and [second] as a pioneering attempt to be spread among my like-minded colleagues who also want to delve into this subject. If I am given a couple of decades, would my people join me and act on the agenda? [Then we would evaluate again] the status of Chinese scholarship and thought in modern history. Moreover, I have a word for our young generation: looking forward twenty years from now on, I am not afraid that foreign scholarship and thought would not be imported; I only fear that our own scholarship and thought would not be developed. Twenty years without any development may not necessarily cause damage to our tradition, but, for any country to sustain itself on earth, it must have its own quality. If we want improve our own country, we cannot leave our own quality alone, [we need to] purify it and grow it. Today is a transitional moment, when tradition is falling and when new ideas have not yet appeared to follow tradition. If you all love your nation, if you would like to awaken your people's love for the nation, this is a very important issue. Otherwise, after [we learn to stop] enslaving ourselves to the ancient doctrines, we begin to enslave ourselves to the foreigners and despise our own people. Also, you all consider yourself as reasonable for importing civilization. [But] when teaching people, in order to be effective, [you] would want to guide them by making use of their own habits and by making analogies based on what they already know… If you people give up on learning your own scholarly tradition, then, even if we introduce hundreds of and tens of Darwins, John Mills, Huxleys, and Spencers, I am afraid that they would generate no impact on the world of scholarship.

> [雖然，]吾愛吾國，吾愛吾國民，吾不能自已。吾姑就吾所見幾之一二，雜寫之以為吾將來研究此學之息壤，流布之以為吾同志研究此學者之篳路襤褸。天如假我數十年乎，我同胞其有聯袂而起者乎？伫看近世史中我中華學術思想之位置何如矣。且吾有一言，慾為我青年同胞諸君告者：自今以往二十年中，吾不患外國學術思想之不輸入，吾惟患本國學術思想之不發明。夫二十年間之不發明，於我學術思想必非有損也。雖然，凡一國之立於天地，必有其所以立之特質。慾自善其國者，不可不於此特質焉， 淬厲之而增長之。今正當過渡時代倉黃不接之餘，諸君如愛國也，慾喚起同胞之愛國心也，於此事必非可等閒視矣。不然，脫崇拜古人之奴隸性，而復生出一種崇拜外人、蔑視本族之奴隸性，吾懼其得不償失也。且諸君皆以輸入文明自任者也，凡教人必當因其性所近而利導之，就其已知者而比較之，則事半功倍焉。不然，外國之博士鴻儒亦多矣，顧不能有裨於我國民者何也？相知不習，而勢有所扞格也。若諸君而吐棄本國學問不屑從事也，則吾國雖多得百數十之達爾文、約翰彌勒，赫胥黎，斯賓塞，吾懼其於學界一無影響也。[802]

For Liang, we must note, identification with the spirit of learning that had shaped China's civilization meant essentially to identify with the agency of the nation and the creativity of its people. Thus, by *guoxing,* the national quality or character, he meant the identity of the learning tradition. In writing a history like this, Liang was calling for a common ground of learning based on a shared understanding of how the scholarly forces of the past had interacted with the larger world and maintained China's civilized life. The goal was to restore the greatness of that scholarly tradition, and in doing so, restore the greatness of the community's political life.

It is in this sense that we can better understand why in the first years of the twentieth century Liang found *minzu zhuyi* 民族主義, nationalism, a meaningful and righteous virtue that could serve as a basis the future political order. Rather than seeing it as a claim for citizens' loyalty to the state, Liang stressed that nationalism was for him a civic value that would encourage people to identity themselves with the interests of their

[802] Ibid.

community, in contrast to the newly rising *diguo zhuyi* 帝國主義, imperialism, which asked citizens to devote their energy to the interests of the state.[803] For Liang, restoring the greatness of the tradition of scholarship and thought was an essential step in directing the force of elite learning to the interests of the community life, which was more righteous and noble than devoting it to the interests of the state. Where, then, to find such a tradition? What textual foundation could it be constructed upon?

Liang periodized the broad history of Chinese civilization into the following stages. The period of the origins (胚胎时代) started when different racial groups were united by the sage kings into a community, the origin of China's scholarship and thought.[804] The material expressions of these origins included the creation of writing, the calendar, music, and medicine during the time of the Yellow emperor. Later, Yu left his legacy by successfully managing floods and building the first empire. The breakthrough of this period was marked by the appearance of many texts during the formation of this polity, texts that later became part of the Confucian Classics. Works such as *The Tribute of Yu* (Yu Gong 禹貢) and the *Great Plan* (Hong Fan 洪範) indicated the birth of China's

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[803] "民族主義者，世界最光明、正大、公平之主義也，不使他族侵我之自由，我亦毋侵他族之自由。其在于本國也，人之獨立；其在于世界也，國之獨立。使能率由此主義，各明其界限以及于未來永劫，豈非天地間一大快事！雖然，正理与時勢，亦常有不并容者。…… 新帝國主義之既行，不惟對外之方略一變而已，即對內之思想，亦隨之而大變。蓋民族主義者，謂國家恃人民而存立者也，故宁犧牲凡百之利益以為人民；帝國主義者，言人民恃國家而存立者也。故宁犧牲凡百之利益以為國家，強干而弱枝，重團体而輕個人。于是前者以政府為調人、為贅疣者，一反響間，而政府万能之語，遂遍于大地。甚者，如俄羅期之專制政体，反得以机敏活潑，為万國之所歆羡，而人權、民約之舊論，几于蕭條門巷無人問矣。" "Guojia sixiang bianqian yitong lun" 國家思想變遷异同論, 1901

[804] "胚胎時代：'中國種族不一，而其學術思想之源泉，則皆自黃帝子孫'（後稱黃族）。黃帝：'進步之信而有徵者四事：曰制文字，曰訂曆象，曰作樂律，曰興醫藥，是也。…… 屢戰異種之民族而吸收之，得智識交換之益，故能一洗混沌之陋，而燦然揚光華也。'" "Lun Zhongguo xueshu sixiang bianqian zhi dashi," *Liang Qichao quanji*, Vol.3, 563

tradition of political and philosophical thinking.[805] Later, Duke Zhou paved the foundations for later government in the *Zhou Rites* (Zhou Li周禮),[806] King Wen compiled the *Changes* (Yi 易), and the *Book of Songs* (Shi 詩) and the *Book of Documents* (Shang Shu 尚書) also appeared. These signaled the completion of the first stages of a general system of ancient scholarship and thought.[807] Liang defined this period as the source of all later developments in ethics, law, institutions, learning and art. In particular, the major frameworks, categories, and discourses that the sage kings employed in guiding the people's community life would become the reference points for later scholarship and cultural creation.[808]

The Warring States era following the fall of the Zhou was the most prosperous era (全盛時代) according to Liang, for this was when Confucius and other thinkers reflected on the cultures that had came before them and developed different ideas about social and

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[805] "禹抑洪水……經驗益廣，交通益繁，玄圭告成，帝國乃立。故中華建國，實始夏後。古代稱黃族為華夏，為諸夏，皆紀念禹之功德，而用其名以代表國民也。其實政治思想，哲學思想，皆漸發生。《禹貢》之制度，《洪範》之理想，皆為三千年前精深博大之籍" Ibid.

[806] "……周公兼三王，作官禮，（近儒多攻《周官》為偽書，《周官》雖或有後人竄附，然豈能一筆抹煞耶？攻之者蓋有二蔽：一由過崇教主，視孔子以前文明若無物焉；二由不通人群進化之公例，見其中有許多制度不脫蠻野思想習俗者，便以為古聖人豈當有此！Ibid.

[807] "文王係《易》，而《詩》、《書》亦爛然大完，古代學術思想之精神條理，於是乎粗備。" Ibid.

[808] " 綜觀此時代之學術思想，實為我民族一切道德、法律、制度、學藝之源泉。約而論之，蓋有三端：一曰人道、二曰人倫，三曰天人相與之際，是也。而其所以能構成此思想者，亦有二因：一曰由於天然者。蓋其地理之現象，空界（即天然界近於地文學範圍者。）之狀態，能使初民對於上天，而生出種種之觀念也。二曰由於人為者。蓋哲王先覺利導民族之特性，因而以天事比附人事以為群利也。" *Liang Qichao quanji,* Vol.3, 564

political life. The fruitfulness of that age came from its freedom of thought, the interest in discussing learning (*jiangxue* 講學), the simplification of writing, the need for talent, and the increasing interaction of ideas from different places. [809]

The transformation of Confucian learning into a state ideology during the Han and the unification of ideology led to a decline of learning and slowed down the civilizing progress.[810] The worst period was post-Han, Liang argued, when Laozi's nihilistic and anti-intellectual tradition dominated intellectual culture.[811] Then Buddhism entered China, influencing the intellectual climate of the Song and leading to the thriving of metaphysics, but not necessarily the growth of scholarship devoted to social and political life.

A new era of advancement came during the Ming-Qing transition, marked by the appearance of evidential learning, especially among the major political thinkers of the early Qing.[812] What Liang discovered in this transition was the birth of a socially and

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[809] "洎幾春秋，兼併漸行，列國盟會征伐，交通益頻數。南北兩思潮，漸相混合，磅礴鬱積，將達極點。於是孔子生而全盛時代來矣……一由於蘊蓄之宏富也。人群初起，皆自草昧而進於光華。文明者，非一手一足所能成，非一朝一夕所可幾也。傳記所載，黃帝、堯、舜以來，文化已起，然史公猶謂搢紳難言焉。……積數前年民族之腦精，遞相遺傳，遞相擴充，其機固有磅礴鬱積，一觸即發之勢。……一由於社會之變遷也。……迄於秦始，實為中國社會變動最劇之時代。上自國土、政治、下幾人心、風俗、皆預前此截然劃一鴻溝。（顧亭林《日知錄》云……不待始皇並天下，而文武之道已盡矣。）Ibid., 567

[810] " 儒學統一時代：儒學統一者，非中國學界之幸，而實中國學界之大不幸也","名節盛而風俗美 "。 顧亭林亦云：' 雖不能使天下之人以義為利，猶使之以名為利。' 明節者，實東漢儒效一最良之結果也。……而捨利取名者往往然矣。是孔學所以坊民之要具也。" "民志定而國小康也" "民權狹而政本不立也" "一尊定而進化濬滯也" . Ibid., 591

[811] "老學時代："三國、六朝，為道家猖披時代，實中國數千年學術思想最衰落之時代也。……懷疑主義之時代也，厭世主義之時代也，破壞主義之時代也，隱詭主義之時代也……"

[812] He discussed the role and influence of Gu Yanwu in the following way: "後世言人文地理者祖焉，" "深知生計與政治為密切關係者"，"聲音訓詁，為百餘年漢學之中堅" "數先生之學

politically engaged and critical scholarly enterprise. Questions motivating scholarship shifted to address the interaction between social customs, economy, culture and politics through history (exemplified by Gu Yanwu), and how to build a constitutional order based on the public interest of community and law (represented by Huang Zongxi and Wang Fuzhi). Scholarly methods increasingly included empirical studies, philology, historical criticism, and intellectual and scholarly history (led by Huang Zongxi). Although these foundational thinkers left a legacy for the rest of Qing, Liang lamented the loss of political interest and concern with responsibility among the scholars of Han learning during the Qian-Jia period.

Paying homage to evidential learning as the foundation of modern Chinese scholarship, Liang identified with these men's critical spirit and sense of socio-political responsibility. Their interpretations and analyses of China's cultural, social, and political changes since antiquity offered Liang immediate references for his own analysis and judgments, although Liang used more modern language and models of historical writing because of his exposure to Western and Japanese historiography. Perhaps the most important legacy of these thinkers for Liang was that they pursued learning as an

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統，不數十稔而俱絕，惟亭林歸然獨存;" As for Huang Zongxi, Huang was seen as "開拓萬古推倒一時者！", and Liang stressed Huang's contribution in intellectual history and political thinking: "學之有史，自黎洲始也。《明夷待訪錄》之《原君》、《原臣》諸篇，幾奪盧梭《民約》之席；《原法》以下諸篇，亦釐然有法治之精神。" Huang was also "律學者祖焉", "算學之端緒". For Wang Fuzhi, "通天人之故者，船山一人", "《讀通鑑論》《宋論》兩編，史識卓絕千古，其價值至今日乃大顯" , and Gu comments Wang's *Yellow Book*, "《黃書》亦《名義待放》之亞也，其主張國民平等之勢力，以裁抑專制，三致意焉"（吾昔抄錄《讀通鑑論》《宋論》《黃書》中發民權之理者）, and he believed that Wang Fuzhi's commentary on the ancient instititonal information in his "baishu" type of Classical learning opened a model for later Qian-Jia scholarss. "乾嘉後漢學家之說經……而實皆船山諸經稗疏已言者." He also celebrated Yan Yuan's critique on Neo-Confucianism. Ibid., 604

independent civilizing force, expressing their identification with the interests of the Chinese historical community. They turned the Classics and historical texts into sources for understanding the formation and development of the Chinese people and their civilization, rather than tools for supporting the political establishment. They also provided a meaningful approach for today's scholars to conceptualize the values of China's civilizing model in a global context, by learning from the sages as cultural and intellectual leaders, without the need for essentializing the Classical tradition into an absolute and dogmatic doctrine.

Liang's proposal for the writing of national history and characterization of a Chinese identity immediately became popular and influential among scholars of his generation, creating a scholarly paradigm.[813] It seems that Liang provided a meaningful approach to learning that not only allowed younger scholars to engage with global sources of learning and to respond to the need for reforms, but still enabled them to identify with a shared *Ru* cultural tradition.

However, Liang's perspective on China's civilization and its modern condition, based on his underlying assumptions about the role of learning and his political values, was not the only view. Zhang Taiyan, who also came from the evidential learning tradition and turned against Kang Youwei, drew attention to a different trend of thought in the evidential learning tradition and developed a distinct interpretation of politics and the elite learning tradition. This interpretation gave rise to a different model in conceptualizing China's civilizing process, together with a different political

[813] See Wang Fan-sen, *Jindai zhongguo de shijia yu shixue* 近代中國的史家與史學. Hong Kong: San lian shu dian you xian gong si, 2008.

interpretation of *minzu zhuyi* (民族主義). Zhang's model would play a stronger role in mobilizing intellectual-political movements in the last decade of the Qing.

Grounding Learning in a Collective and Cumulative Cultural Tradition: Zhang Taiyan's Alternative Position, 1890s – 1910s

Zhang Taiyan's Argument for Political Learning and Engagement with New Knowledge from the Background of Philology in the 1890s

Zhang Taiyan was born into a literati family in Hangzhou in 1869. He began his studies under the influence of his maternal grandfather Zhu Youqian (朱有虔) and his father Zhang Xun (章濬). His grandfather taught him the Classics and introduced to him the late Ming loyalist scholars.[814] His father was a committed Classicist and historical evidential scholar, and he indoctrinated Zhang on the nobility of evidential scholarship. Instead of pursuing an official career through the civil service exams, in 1890 Zhang entered The Refined Lodge of the Exegesis of the Classics (Gujing jingshe 詁經精舍) and became a disciple of Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821-1906), a well-known scholar from Zhang Zhidong's Han learning network.

Although Zhang was drawn to philological methods, his goal was different from that of his teachers. For Zhang Zhidong and Chen Li, the leaders of the Han Learning circle, applying philology to the study of the Classics could overcome biases and discover

[814] Tang Zhijun 汤志鈞 ed. Zhang *Taiyan nianpu changbian* 章太炎年年譜長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013.) vol.1. 4. See also, Wang Fansen 王汎森, "Qingmo de lishi jiyi yu guojia jiangou" 清末的歷史認同和國家建構, *Zhongguo jindai sixiang yu xueshu de xipu* 中國近代思想與學術的系譜 (Taipei: Liking Publishing, 2003). 95-108.

the true textual meaning of the Classics, enabling scholars to cultivate themselves. They criticized Song learning for what they saw as its ungrounded, speculative and self-obsessed reading of the Classics. However, as Tang Zhijun 湯志均 has noticed, Zhang Taiyan's early scholarship demonstrated little concern for the politics inherent in the labels of Han and Song. Rather, he used philology as a tool to gain knowledge about the historical cultural-institutional world in which the texts were produced.[815] The historical nature of his textual scholarship distinguished Zhang from the Han Classicists, and set him on the path to becoming a political thinker.

In a letter Zhang later wrote to Li Hongzhang, he recalls growing up in a period troubled by social problems and foreign aggression. He was concerned about social decline and the people's suffering, which inspired him "To find the ancient Way in order to restore [society]" (思古之道術振之). [816] Thereafter he devoted himself to the Classics, history, institutional studies (經史通典諸書) and contemporary books on government (當代政書)[817]. His objective was to seek guidance (道術) for reform. Through the course of his research he became particularly interested in Xunzi 荀子, Guanzi 管子, Liu Xiang 劉向, and related thinkers who left writings on government, institutions, ritual, and law. Taking texts as historical resources for understanding social-political life, his approach to

[815] Tang Zhijun, *Zhang Taiyan zhuan* 章太炎傳. (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1996.) 9

[816] "會天下多故，四裔之侵，然念生民之凋瘵，而思古之道術振之。" Zhang (February, 1898) "Shang Li Hongzhang shu"上李鴻章書, from Tang Lijun comp. *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji,* vol.1 章太炎政論選集 (上冊) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977) 53.

[817] Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan xiansheng zishu xueshu cidi* 章太炎先生自述學術次第 (Tokyo: Zhang shi guoxue jiangxihui,1912.) 1.

learning resembled those early Qing political thinkers whom he had admired since his youth.[818]

In this sense, it is not surprising that from the very beginning Zhang was open to knowledge and theories from the West. He frequently referred to Western learning and integrated it into his own commentaries to make sense of texts such as *Guangzi* (管子), *Zhuangzi*, and *Huannanzi* (淮南子).[819] Whereas his mentor, Yu Yue, lamented the increasing popularization of Western learning and urged scholars to return to their own tradition (返本) in order to protect their Way (守道),[820] Zhang had no trouble engaging with new knowledge and theories in conducting his own scholarship. Western civilization, as Zhang pointed out, was comparable to that of China in terms of its efforts to understand the world.

> The Europeans and Americans are all Middle Kingdoms (中國) beyond the seas. They are different from our *Huaxia* (華夏) because they are white and we are yellow, but we are all people with virtues, wisdom, skills, and knowledge. That is why ancient Chinese people called Europe the Great Qin to show that they were similar to China and different from the cruel people of *Hunzhou* (葷鬻) and Yuanrong (獫狁).
>
> 如歐美者，則越海而皆為中國。其與吾華夏黃白之異，而皆為有德慧術知之氓。是故古者稱歐洲曰大秦（大秦即羅馬。其曰大秦者，明非本稱，乃實中國所號，猶彼土以震旦稱我也），明其同於中國，異於葷鬻、獫狁之殘忍。[821]

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[818] Zhang Taiyan changed his last name into Jiang 絳, Gu Yanwu's original last name.

[819] Jiang Yihua 姜义华, "Sibin saier wenji yu Zhang Taiyan wenhuaguan de xingcheng,"斯宾塞尔文集与章太炎文化观的形成, in Hu Weixi 胡伟希 ed. *Xinhai geming yu zhongguo jindai sixiang wenhua* 辛亥革命与中国近代思想文化 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe) 326-7.

[820] *Zhang Taiyan zhuan*, 16

[821] Zhang, "Yuanren," 原人, in Zhu Weizheng 朱維錚 ed. *Zhang Taiyan Quanji: Qiushu chukeben, Qiushu Chongdingben, Jianlun* 章太炎全集：訄書初刻本. 訄書重訂本. 檢論

In saying that the West and China had both developed civilizations with "virtues, wisdom, skills and knowledge," Zhang situated his own pursuit of learning as a cosmopolitan agenda; he saw himself as a part of the intellectual life shared by advanced civilizations.

Importantly, Zhang's intellectual ambition enabled him to find Kang Youwei's "New Learning" camp attractive. The camp's progressive proposal for foundational reform, *bianfa* (變法), argued for transforming the thinking that had for decades underlain ineffective official-led reforms. They restored the role of the Classics as a source of political theorization, and pushed scholars to embrace a general conceptualization of human society by engaging with newly imported Western theories and experiences. In doing so, they raised the bar for learning, making it open-ended, critical, and uncertain. They established themselves as a public-minded political force transcending superficial factional conflicts (門戶之爭) in the literati world, and identified themselves with the global trends of learning. Guiding politics now meant to reflect on political-moral principles, *fayi* (發義), based on new knowledge and laws about the world and human society, *xinli* (新理).

Zhang Taiyan joined the "New Learning" camp and questioned the legacy of the Self-Strengthening movement. Like other "New Learning" figures, Zhang pointed out

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(Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chuban she, 2014.) 20. My translation of Zhang Taiyan's *Qiushu* passages is based on my consultation with Xu Fu's 徐復 commentary on the revised edition of *Qiushu* 訄書. *Qiushu xiangzhu* (訄書詳註) commented by Xu Fu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 2000).

that movement's superficiality in focusing on technological and scientific learning as the center of statecraft education, and he criticized the mindset that learning about the West was mainly for strategic purposes. Furthermore, he doubted whether it was still justifiable for literati to believe in "bureaucratic management" (治官) as their overarching goal for reform.

> "The [new] schools take mathematics, chemistry, and physics as the standardized [subjects]. After thirty years of school building, no administrators of technology like [the ancient] Gonggongshi (共公氏) had been cultivated. Even if [there had been someone] like him, would he able to discuss politics? [If we do not train people to] conduct the political learning (政治之學), but have craftsmen to discuss politics, it would be like randomly making holes in an intact wall to plant useless weeds. … People in the past were often content with learning about administering offices of technology, without knowing that the West and the East (i.e. Japan) had their own [traditions of] texts. Today we have learned that they have [their traditions of] texts, but we do not teach them - Why? The school system [should include] three [kinds of] schools and four [kinds of] subjects. [The four subjects are] politics, law, military affairs, and technology. Politics and law need to be learned together, while military affairs and technology need to be studied separately. Once there is [learning of] politics and law, then military leaders and technological manufacturers will have something to be taught. Otherwise, to discuss major political issues based on [the knowledge of] technology is to have thirty spokes of the wheel and expect them to be the hub….
>
> 學校以算術、化、重為臬極，三十年以設精橫，而共公氏不出。雖出，能議政乎？政治之學不修，是僝功審曲者議之，其勢將妄鑿垣牆而殖蔑葦。且方聞之士，學政恆敏，學藝恆鈍。鈍而鮮用，與敏而有用，其效孰過？往者以治官之學自滿，不知東西之有其籍也。今知有籍矣，而勿孳，何也？學校之制，校三而科四：一曰政治，再曰法令，三曰武備，四曰工藝。政法必兼治，備藝必分治。有政與法，然後詰戎與將作者有所受。[822]

For Zhang, the existing academic agenda could not guide the government because it would not produce the talent for discussing politics (議政). Officials were superficial

[822] Ibid. 88 Xu Fu's commentary was on the revised version of *Qiushu*, in which this piece was largely revised and became a part of chapter 46, "Yixue" 議學

because they did not know of the existence of writings from the West and Japan that would guide government (不知東西之有其籍也). He argued for a kind of political learning (政治之學) that would combine government (政) and law (法). He came to a similar conclusion as other progressives: the educational program for guiding politics had to be grounded on a foundational reflection on the current concepts and practices of government institutions. To do so, it is necessary to think in general terms about politics and human society .

To Reconcile Wang Fuzhi and Huang Zongxi: Joining the "New Learning" Group in the mid-1890s

After the Sino-Japanese war, Zhang Taiyan joined *Current Affairs* (Shiwu bao 時務報) and the *Society for the Study of Self-Strengthening* (Qiangxue hui 強學會). Against the advice of his teachers, he left the *Gujing jingshe* and devoted himself to the learning of what he called *zhengshu* (政術), namely, the techniques of government. He actively introduced new theories from the West and Japan (東西學理), integrating new ideas into his learning of the Classics, institutional history and the political thought of other ancient Masters. He also began to publish his own political writings, like other leaders of the young group. In 1897 Zhang published one of his early essays, "Societies for Learning are Greatly Beneficial to Yellow People, Thus Should be Protected" (Lun xuehui da youyiyu huangren jiyi baohu 論學會有大益於黃人亟宜保護), to conceptualize why independent and responsible intellectual societies were essential to a political community. He argued that learning was important not because it was a part of tradition that should be maintained, but because it was an institution crucial to the survival and prosperity of a

racial group's civilization. [823] It was in this early article that Zhang demonstrated his differences with Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao in their theorization of the role of learning.

Zhang's essay demonstrates striking influence from Wang Fuzhi's (王夫之) celebration of culture as a foundational instrument for the survival of each historical human group. As I have discussed in chapter 2, in Wang's *Yellow Book* (Huangshu 黃書) and other political writings he had developed a unique theory of the origin of civilization to support his understanding of the meaning of learning. He stressed that each historical community began as a racially bounded group. Group leaders guided people to draw boundaries between themselves and other groups, developed tools and knowledge for their people based on their common understanding, and created moral teaching based on shared symbolic systems developed from their own community life to protect their group. [824] The particular identity of the group and its distinctive cultural creations reinforced each other. In other words, each racial group makes use of its resources and advances its cultural creations to ensure its self-proliferation. The result of this process is civilization (文明). In this process, learning is an essential instrument for each group to maintain the continuity of its cumulative cultural creations, so it is therefore the key to each group's survival and prosperity. [825]

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[823] Zhang (March 3, 1897) "Lun xuehui da youyiyu huangren jiyi baohu 論學會有大益於黃人亟宜保護," *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji,* 7-13.

[824] The best example is to be seen at the opening chapter of *Huang Shu* (黃書).

[825] These arguments are particularly evidenced by Wang Fuzhi's *Sibianlu* (思辨錄) and *Sijie* (俟解).

Zhang's essay unfolds with similar logic and even similar literary style. He opens the essay by describing the reality of the world as a place where different human races with different physical and cultural features co-exist, and their "moral characters and social customs" (德性風俗) also naturally differ from each other.[826] Following this premise, Zhang continues, it is normal for different groups to try to protect and maintain their own teaching of values. Even China, a rich civilization that tends to have an enlarged sense of self-importance in the world, also has the need for distinguishing itself from others.[827] He then laments that China's scholars (儒冠之士) have been unable to come together and form an effective force. The alienation of scholars from politics could explain the decline in the learning and skills of *Ru*. Catastrophically, due to this situation scholars would not be able to fulfill their mission to protect their own people.[828] In this sense, it was up to scholars to take responsibility for restoring the societies for learning (學會).

However, Zhang claimed that the new societies China would have to be superior to earlier societies such as the Ru (汝) and Ying (潁) in the Wei dynasty, the Luo (洛) and Shu parties (蜀) [meaning the Cheng Brothers and Su Shi's group] in the Song, and the Donglin (東林) in the Ming, whose goals, in Zhang's view, had simply been to fight

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[826] "均是人也，而修短有異，黃白有別，則德性風俗亦殊." "Lun xuehui da youyiyu huangren jiyi baohu," *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji,* 8.

[827] "惟吾神皋沃壤，五德晅準，則教莫正焉，種莫備焉。雖有掍成之志，匪自尊大，而猶不能不自殊別." Ibid., 8

[828] "中國儒冠之士，踽行孑處，無所依毗，皋門有政，庶人所不議，疆埸有事，鄉校所不聞，雖有賢傑，不在官位，則娖娖無所長短，儒術之衰，將不能保其種族。悲夫！" Ibid., 8-9

against those who they considered to be the evil elements at court.[829] Instead of engaging in power conflicts, the new societies for learning ought to bring their knowledge and skills to help people improve their lives. Zhang suggested that the scholarly tradition created by Confucius' disciples had been of this latter sort, for those disciples had fulfilled their responsibility by deploying their erudition to help people. Although in later times scholars often found themselves caught up in empty literary study and the memorization of the Classics, nonetheless the spirit of those scholars had continued to enlighten common people for two thousand years. The reason why China's learning today could not compete with that of the Russians, the British, or the Americans, despite China's rich scholarly tradition, was that scholars could not form their own grassroots community to promote learning. "[Is it true to say] that the learning of the six Classics (六藝之學) and the teaching of the Four Disciplines (四術之教) [i.e. *The Book of Odes*, *The Book of Documents, The Book of Rites, and the Book of Music*] have nothing to offer to nourish our people? [I would] say [the reason] is simply that we have not been able to come together to promote our learning."[830]

Why had this been so difficult? Zhang argues that during the Song and Ming, rulers had succeeded in controlling scholars. They suppressed voices critical of political

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[829] "於此有人焉，合耦同志，以建學會，於息壤之將陷，天保之未定，濬憂噍殺，朝夕講貫，雖磨頂放踵所不敢辭。其與夫汝、潁、洛、蜀、東林之士，僅與忄僉壬為仇敵者，所事孰緩孰急矣." Ibid. 9.

[830] "我齊州之土，自水精制法，七十子後學， 贏糧奔走，任師道於四方，浸尋兩千年，雖辭章帖括，絕流為害，然其彰較磊落者，猶無偭錯，蜂鏑不行，而民知所向，大哉其入人心也。然後卷勇股肱之力，經畫取與之智，不及俄羅斯；居奇操贏，使天下斂袂，不及英吉利；弭兵善鄰，折衝於尊俎，不及美利堅。其諸六藝之學，四術之教，無益於生民歟？曰：惟不能合群以張吾學故。……人之樂群，其天性然也。髫齔之童，迮而誦竹笘，則鳧藻搏躍，聲亦隨之；無以共學，則涕流長嘶矣。學者之樂學，亦天性然也。" Ibid. 9.

authority, and transformed the goal of learning into seeking benefits for oneself, so that scholars exhausted their energy in making a living rather than devoting themselves to ordering the world. In his view, this was the root of China's contemporary crisis.[831] "Today there is only about one in a hundred who studies history and comprehensively learns the past; and there is only about one in a thousand who can look at contemporary affairs carefully and understand the conditions." Therefore, it might be a good thing that China has finally been inspired and frightened by the prosperity of the learning sectors (學部) in the West.[832] The main objective of China's reforms ought to be the building of schools, allowing them to function as general and responsible societies for learning.

In this sense, Zhang proposed, Huang Zongxi's *Waiting for the Dawn* (Mingyi daifanglu 明義待訪錄) could serve as an immediate guide. By building schools and granting them independent power, scholars would be motivated. "Scholars would be able to protect people by establishing teaching for them, and people would in turn protect the state" (以教衛民以民衛國). He concludes, respecting talent and gathering intelligence (禮秀民聚俊才) should be called political reform (革政), which was not revolution, or,

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[831] "……自宋與明作則之主，將以其權力勢藉，錮塞諸生，而懼其腹誹唇反，不仰視天而頫畫地。則為之饘廩利祿以羈縻之，而仍使不足以事其父母，畜其妻子。彼去之則可惜，不去則無俚，牽曳跋踶，前卻進退，營一生則不給，何暇為眾生？ 救一世之不贍， 何暇為五洲？故使天下之士，肥瘠不相顧，痛癢不相知，非直不衛周、孔，且求亦墨翟、禽滑厘不可得。小雅盡廢，四夷交侵，殆以此也。" Ibid. 10.

[832] "西國學部之盛，中華企望而有怖心，尚已。And, 中國四百兆人，識字者五分之一，賴地大物博，戶口殷帳，以分率計之，猶得八十兆，未甚少也。其知文義者，上逮舉貢，下至學官弟子，無慮六十萬人。誦習史傳，通達古今者，百人而一。審諦時務，深識形便者，千人而一。從此提倡後進，郡不過數人，則甚少也。然使舉措不違，此六百人者，雲合霧集，志略輻輳，以振起綴學之士，猶可為也。…昔之愚民者，鉗語燒書，坑殺學士，慫學法令，以吏為師，雖愚其黔首，猶慫智其博士；今且盡博士而愚之，使九能之士，懷寶而不獲用，幾何其不為秦人笑也？" Ibid. 11

geming (革命). And, the most urgent task today is to prevent revolution by pushing forward political reform.[833]

In Zhang's view, the model of parliamentary democracy supported by Kang Youwei's group was very much a realization of Huang Zongxi's ideas about schools. Having just entered the "New Learning" group, Zhang sided with Kang's proposal. This was because, in my view, he shared the desire to empower the learning community, and he agreed that better politics would be generated by an independent force of responsible learning. However, it is apparent that for Zhang, the school/parliamentary system was no more than an expedient initiative. As we have discussed, Kang Youwei found in the parliamentary system an opportunity for scholars to build a fully integrated political-spiritual system to combine ruling and teaching, so that the learning community would guide the political leadership and indoctrinate the people. Liang Qichao, on the other hand, promoted the ideas of parliamentary democracy and popular sovereignty because he truly shared Huang Zongxi's celebration of individual intellectual and moral agency as the foundation of both a responsible learning community and a good socio-political life. Zhang Taiyan differed from both of them. In contrast to Kang, Zhang was more concerned with the independence of the learning community, but not because he felt that the community ought to represent the public's agency and political autonomy, as Liang argued. Rather, it was so that scholars could detach themselves from the corruptions of political power, devoting themselves fully to the interests of the community. Zhang

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[833] "慫善學校，必取《明夷待訪錄》，而朱氏一新斥之曰：彼但知清議出於學校，不知橫議之亦出於學校也。……然則如之何而可？曰：以教衛民，以民衛國，使自為守而已。變郊號，柴社稷，謂之革命；禮秀民，聚俊才，謂之革政。今之亟務，曰：以革政挽革命。" *Ibid.*

suggested that if a government fails to respect the forces of learning, it damages the capacity of the scholarly community to serve the people, impinging on the government's legitimacy. Granting the scholarly community independence would improve the overall condition of the people. It seems that at this stage Zhang was using the idea of a parliamentary system as packaging for his own beliefs about learning. But would it work?

At the core of this belief was Wang Fuzhi's view that learning is and ought to be motivated by the deep-down need for *ailei* (愛類)*,* namely, loving one's own people. Such need inspires people to create culture and material goods and to develop the teaching of values. The Sages were respected precisely because of their devotion and their ability. For Zhang, such a spirit of learning had long ago faded away in China. If what he hoped to restore was a racially bounded cultural identity of learning, then arguing for a parliamentary system would only distract people from the real issue. As Zhang soon realized, his difference with the group was widening. "Kang's followers mostly held to *Mingyi daifanglu,* while I constantly followed Chuanshan's [i.e. Wang Fuzhi]'s *Huangshu*, believing that unless the Manchu government was pushed out, it was meaningless to talk about reforms. Thus our goals gradually diverged."[834]

To Theorize an Alternative Vision of Human Society in New Language: late 1890s

After leaving Kang's camp, Zhang attempted to find his own voice on the national stage in contemporary theoretical language. He actively engaged in journalism and

[834] "時新學初興，為政論者輒以算術物理與政事並為一談。余每立異，謂技與政非一術，卓如輩本未涉此，而好援其屬語以附政論，余以為科舉新樣耳。唯平子與樂清陳黻宸介石持論稍實，然好言永嘉遺學，見事頗易。余所持論不出《通典》、《通考》、《資治通鑒》諸書，歸宿則在孫卿、韓非。康氏之門，又多持《明夷待訪錄》，余常持船山《黃書》相角。以為不去滿州，則改政變法為虛語，宗旨漸分。" *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian* Vol.2 章太炎年譜長編 (卷 2) 38.

translation work in the late 1890s. Many of his writings during this period were collected in the first version of *Qiushu* (囚書 The Book Written in Oppression), published in 1898.[835] In what follows I shall briefly show how he tried to work out a different model of the human socio-political community by integrating certain discourses from the West and Japan into his own understanding of antiquity, based on Classical and historical scholarship.

1. What did Zhang find in Spencer's Writings?

In 1898, the *Changyan Bao* (昌言報 Truthful Words Newspaper) purchased a complete collection of Herbert Spencer's writings. It included Spencer's most formidable philosophical series, *A System of Synthetic Philosophy* (six volumes), and four small books.[836] The last of these was a collection entitled *Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative*. Zhang worked with Zeng Guoquan (曾廣銓 1871-1940) to select and translate two essays from this last book.[837] One was "Progress: Its Law and Cause,"[838] translated by Zhang as "Lun jinjing zhi li" (論進境之理). The other one was "On Manners and Fashions,"[839] translated as "Lun Liyi" (論禮儀). The central message of the

[835] Ibid., 76

[836] *Mr. Herbert Spencer's Works* (1893, London)

[837] Jiang Yihua, "Sibin saier wenji yu Zhang Taiyan wenhua guan de xingcheng," *Xinhai geming yu jindai zhongguo sixiang wenhau*, 319

[838]For one edition of this essay, see Herbert Spencer, *Essays, Scientific, Political, and Speculative* (vol.1). (New York: D. Appleton, 1907.) 8-62.

[839] For one edition of this essay, see Herbert Spencer, *Essays, Scientific, Political, and Speculative* (vol.3). (New York: D. Appleton, 1907.) 1-51.

first essay was to define the nature of progress as a process of cumulative change and proliferation. "Endless facts go to show that every kind of progress is from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous; and that it is so because each change is followed by many changes."[840] Spencer drew on multiple examples from nature and human civilizations, especially focusing on how the growth of civilizations exhibits the reality of progress. He intended to show how technology, knowledge, socio-economic life, political institutions, rituals, languages, etc. could develop cumulatively and continuously into an integrated complex system. The more advanced society becomes, the more complex and heterogeneous human thought and culture become. The more heterogeneous human thought and culture become, the more complex social structure becomes, which leads to increasing specialization in human production. A change in any one of these elements would have an impact on other aspects of the system, leading to further multifarious changes. Taking human civilization as an example, Spencer argues, "Progress is not an accident, not a thing within human control, but a beneficent necessity."[841] Zhang Taiyan captured this idea and phrased it as a process of change that "Begins from one and turns into tens of thousands; the more [things] change, the newer they are" (由一以化萬，化愈多而愈新).[842]

In the second essay, "On Manners and Fashions," Spencer looked at manners and fashions as inseparable institutions that help the ruling elite maintain order. He traced the origins of manners and fashions back to the birth of government and religion, defining

[840] Herbert Spencer, *Essays, Scientific, Political, and Speculative* (vol.1), 59-60.

[841] *Ibid.,* 60.

[842] *Changyan bao*, issue 3, page 2, Section A.

them as institutions of power that are as effective as law and religious teaching. In particular, manners tend to be external rules defined by the elite class, while fashions are usually what individuals choose of their own volition to gain social prestige. Both will change when newly rising social groups become aware of the power relationship embodied in the existing manners and fashions. This awareness often grows together with the increase of education. Overall, Spencer showed that everyday manners, rituals, and customs, are as effective as political and religious institutions. They are a real and constant force in society. They may transform through history, but they do not disappear. The Chinese translation of "manners" renders it *liyi* 禮儀, namely, ritual, and "fashion" as *fengsu* 風俗, namely, custom.

Importantly, these two essays that Zhang and Zeng selected to translate do not touch on Spencer's most famous claims about Social Darwinism and libertarianism, developed in his major works such as the *Principle of Sociology* and the *Principe of Psychology*. Spencer's Social Darwinism outlined an understanding of human society based on the laws of evolutionary biology. Since the evolution of a biological organism can be understood as a beneficent process toward individuation and self-sufficiency, the most ideal socio-political structure should also be designed to match this biological law. Accordingly, socio-economic life functions the best with minimal external intervention.[843] The Chinese world learned about this concept in the late 1890s via Yan Fu, but the essays that Zhang introduced are by no means Spencer's key writings. What about them attracted Zhang?

One plausible explanation is that these two essays resonated with Zhang's own

[843] http://www.iep.utm.edu/spencer/ P.4…In *The Principles of Psychology*, pp. 500 - 502

position, which had been influenced largely by Wang Fuzhi's interpretation of antiquity. Spencer's conceptualization of civilizational progress as a cumulative cultural-institutional proliferation echoed Zhang's understanding. Moreover, Spencer's recognition of the force of manners and fashion confirmed Zhang's interest in the institutional forces of the shared symbolic systems represented by rituals (禮儀) and customs (風俗). Both essays provided him with global evidence and analyses based on detailed anthropological and linguistic studies about primitive cultures and the origins of civilizations. If Yan Fu learned from Spencer that there exists a real moral force in Heaven-and-Earth that was expressed by biological evolution, and that this moral force should provide the foundation of socio-political life, Zhang Taiyan found in these two essays of Spencer's the language and information that he needed to articulate his own historical model of the nature of human society, based on his own Classical and historical learning.[844]

It appears that Spencer's writings helped Zhang to synthesize and articulate his views within a more systematic and global scholarly discourse. Inspired by his reading of Spencer, he continued to study sociological and anthropological works on the evolution of human civilization, including Edmund Tyler's *Primitive Culture* (which Zhang translated as *Yuanshi renwen* 原始人文), and Anesaki Masaharu's (姉崎正治) *Shūkyō gaku gairon* (Introduction to the Science of Religion), Edvard Westermarck's *A History of Human Marriage* (1891), which Zhang translated as *Hunyin jinhua shi* 婚姻進化史,

[844] For instance, in his later writing, Zhang sees that Spencer's discussions of the origins of language showed that writings in early civilizations embodied religious and political functions. This account matched the Classical account of the origins of Chinese writings as well. "Dingwen," 訂文 *Qiushu xiangzhu*, 371-4.

and Ariga Nagao's (有賀長雄) *Zokusei shinkaron* (The Evolution of the Family System). As he recalled later, during the late 1890s, he was able to formalize his originally intuitive thoughts based on the scholarly theories newly imported from the West and Japan (有東西學理收拾進來).[845]

2. The Ultimate Purpose of Forming a Human Socio-Political Order and the Role of Civilization

The case of Zhang Taiyan's use of Spencer's writings is a good example of his attempts in the late 1890s to articulate his ideas about learning and politics in theoretical language. The first edition of his *Qiushu* in 1898 can be seen as the result of this work.

In one of the most important essays included in the first version of *Qiushu*, "On Transformation" (Yuan bian 原變), Zhang explained what he saw as the basic evolutionary mechanism underlying the survival and prosperity of any human group. First, he argued that all species of living beings in the world evolve because they have in themselves an innate will to live, namely, the *zhi* (志). In other words, this will that exists in living beings makes it impossible to stop the process of evolution. Evolution is the way of being. Importantly, instead of finding that species survive by staying in harmony with the moral mind of Heaven-and-Earth, Zhang saw the will to live as putting living beings in tension with the natural environment.[846] Different species differ in their capacity to

[845] Jiang Yihua, "Sibin saier wenji yu Zhang Taiyan wenhua guan de xingcheng," 319.

[846] "物苟有志，彊力以與天地競，此古今萬物之所以變。變至於人，遂止不變乎? 人之相競也，以器。風胡子曰：軒轅、神農、赫胥之時，以石為兵，斷樹本為宮室，死而龍臧。黃帝時，以玉為兵，以伐樹本為宮室，死而龍臧。禹穴之時，以銅為兵，以鑿伊闕，決江

interact with the environment. Advanced beings with higher capacities will gain more advantages in their interaction, thereby maintaining their existence and continuing their evolution. This is an open-ended and cumulative process. While human beings are more advanced than other animals, they are also a part of this process. Thus there is no guarantee what humans would become through this process. Moreover, between human beings there are also distinctions in capacity, because not all human groups evolve equally. In order to live, human beings create tools (器), develop rituals (禮), and evolve into different physical forms (形). Gradually, old tools, rituals, and forms would be transformed into newer ones.[847] But since we do not know beforehand what would change, Zhang conjectured that without the accumulation and development of knowledge (智), humans may decline into less advanced beings. If knowledge increases through this process, however, then the living beings will gradually become both physically and cognitively advanced.[848]Lastly, drawing on Xunzi, Zhang argues, that since we do not know if we would evolve ways beneficial to our race ends, it is essential to form social

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導河，東注于東海，天下通平，治為宮室。當今之時，作鐵兵，為龍淵、泰阿、工布麾之，至於猛獸歐瞻，江水折揚，晉、鄭之頭畢白。（見《越絕書外傳記寶劍》。）石也，銅也，鐵也，則瞻地者以其刀辨古今之期者也。惟玉獨無所見於故書軼事。” “Yuanbian,” *Zhang Taiyan Quanji: Qiushu chukeben, Qiushu Chongdingben, Jianlun* 25-6.

[847] “競以器，競以禮，昔之有用者，皆今之無用者也。民無獸患，則狩苗可以廢。社無鬼神，則朱絲、攻鼓可以息。自是以推．坐不隱地而跪稽，（按：坐不隱地者，多不欲拜稽。《元史憲宗紀》禽欽察部酋巴齊馬克，命之跪。曰：「身非駝，何以跪人為？」此其一事，其詳在《禮俗篇》），廟不揆景而刻石，大臣戮者不賜盤水而拜恩，名實既詭，則皆可以替。競以禮，競以形。昔之有用者，皆今之無用者也。冰期非茸毛，不足與寒氣格戰。至於今，則須發為無用，湊 理之上，遂無短毳矣。太古之馬，其蹄四指，足以破沮洳。今海內有大陸，而馬財一指。然則滄熱燥濕之度變，物之與之競者，其體亦變。且萬族之相軋，非直滄熱燥濕之比者也。若是，人且得無變乎？浸益其智，其變也侗長碩岸而神明。浸損其智，其變也若跛鱉而愚。其變之物，吾不能知也，要之，蛻其故用而成其新用。” *Ibid.* 26

[848] “浸益其智，其變也侗長碩岸而神明。浸損其智，其變也若跛鱉而愚。” *Ibid.*

communities and to define social roles, namely, *hequn mingfen* (合群明分). In other words, the path to the evolutionary improvement of the group, the path to the fulfillment of the will to live, is the formation of the socio-political order. This is an essential principle (義), true of all human beings, and it would be irresponsible for individuals to withdraw from participating in their socio-political community, lest the race decline as a result.[849]

But how could the formation of a socio-political order help humans to develop and ensure knowledge, hence to guarantee their further progress? The formation of institutions is vital to weave everyone into the community life, but the institutions, including law, ritual, language, music, and technology, ought to be deeply rooted in the cumulative and collective cultural practices of the community based on a shared symbolic system. For Zhang, who shared the positions of Xunzi and Wang Fuzhi, institutions were culture, and vice versa. Since institutions ought to be founded on cumulative cultural practices embedded in everyday life, and ought to grow naturally through the life of a group with a shared symbolic tradition, they would provide the most tangible source for the community to foster the proliferation of its cultural life and to advance its creation. Creation leads to further specialization and proliferation, thus advancing human

[849] "吾不敢道其日益，而道其日損。下觀於深隧，魚蝦皆瞽，非素無目也，至此無所用其目焉。鯨有足而不以尌，羖有角而不以觸，馬爵有翼而不以飛，三體勿能用，久之則將失其三體。故知人之怠用其智力者，萎廢而為虙蜼。人迫之使人於幽谷，夭闕天明，令其官骸不得用其智力者，亦萎廢而為虙蜼。…以是為憂，放「無逸」之說興，而「合群明分」之義立矣。章炳麟曰：物不知群，益州之金馬、碧雞。大古有其畜矣，沾沾以自喜，踽踽以喪群，而亡其種，今僅徵其枯臘。（凡殭石，皆生物所化，亦有本是金石，而生物留其印跡者；又有生物已化去，而他金石之質往代其殼，與原式無異者。是蓋雞馬枯殼已化，而金碧代之也。）知群之道，細若貞蟲，其動翩翩，有部曲進退而物不能害。山林之士，避世離俗以為亢者，其侏張不群，與夫貪墨佣駑之役夫，誠相去遠矣。然而其弊，將挈生民以為虙蜼。故曰：鳥獸不可與同群。" *Ibid.* 27

understanding of the world's many aspects. Why is this important? As he stresses in "Public Language" (公言), it would also lead to an increasing need for people to conceptualize at higher levels. In order to name and distinguish things, people develop their conceptual understanding (大共名). (This intellectual capacity does not derive from religious teachings, because religion is often self-referential and discouraging of cultural creation.) Thus, as a socio-political order endures and grows, and as cultural-institutions develop, knowledge (智) accumulates as an organic part of them. It will give rise to the better creation of tools (器), social-cultural norms (禮), and better physical forms (形), and it will satisfy each individual member's will to live.

If we follow Zhang's logic, seeing that socio-political life forms and preserves the continuity of a meaningful cultural-institutional tradition, there is also the important implication that it is crucial for a community to maintain an absolute awareness of its cultural identity and to protect this identity in order to survive and prosper. As I have shown, Wang Fuzhi claimed that what distinguishes humans from animals is their civilization, suggesting that barbarians are less civilized than the Chinese and therefore cannot be defined as fully human. To be fully responsible for the interests of the Chinese community is to hold onto this distinction and guard the values of Chinese civilization. In another chapter, "On the Origins of Human beings" (Yuan ren 原人), going along the same direction but in new language, Zhang argues that different human tribal groups (部族), namely, social groups that share the same historical origins and language, all evolved from animals, but their civilizing processes might have began from different times and their stages may have not arrived the same level. Thus, at any given historical time, there is an irreconcilable distinction between *wen* (文) civilization and *ye* (野) barbarianism,

thus between *xia* (夏), civilized communities, and *rong* (戎), uncivilized tribes.[850] Moreover, it is equally crucial to stress the differences between evenly advanced civilizations, such as between China and the West. To maintain the hierarchy between humans and animals and to draw the distinctions between historical communities (秩乎民獸，辨乎部族) means to define a cultural-institutional tradition. The Yellow Emperor (黃帝), one of the early sages and founders of China's civilization, gave names to things in order to sustain the order of the community and the material wellbeing of his people. In doing so, early people also developed a clear ethnic identity (族類) to distinguish their own group from others. In this way, norms for human life were respected and truth became clear. [851] All of these were laudable efforts that made the Chinese group survive and prosper.

Like Liang Qichao, Zhang Taiyan advanced an approach to learning that was identified with the Chinese Classical tradition while still engaged in new knowledge and social theories from the West. The Classics served him as a meaningful source of general political values because the texts were seen as historical products of the origins of China's civilization, and the Sage Kings were seen as historical actors in the founding of this civilization. Wang Fuzhi's historically based theorization of the Classics and China's

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[850] "人之始，皆一尺之鱗也。化有蚤晚而部族殊，性有文獷而戎夏殊。含生之類，不爪牙而能言者，古者有戎狄，不比於人，而晚近諱之。" "Yuanren," *Ibid*. 19.

[851] "余秩乎民獸，辨乎部族，故以《雲門》之樂聽之（《大司樂》注：'黃帝曰《雲門》、《大卷》。'黃帝能成名萬物，以明民共財，言其德如雲之所出，民得以有族類），一切以種類為斷。是以綜核人之形名，則是非昭乎天地。" *Ibid.* 23. The original sentence "黃帝以正名百物，以明民共財" is from "Jifa" 祭法, a chapter from *The Book of Rites*. According to Kong Yingda 孔穎達, "明民" , means letting people wear clothes according to certain norms, namely, letting them to keep a proper social order; "共財" means making sure that people have enough material wealth. *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (五南圖書出版股份有限公司, 2001) 7.

antiquity provided Zhang with an underlying but crucial bridge to connect Classical learning to the new social theories from the West, helping him to pursue ideas that felt to be justified in general terms of human culture while also true to the *Ru* tradition.

Redefining the Meaning of Ru Learning: late 1890s

Zhang Taiyan's commitment to culture as the inseparable institutional force for community, and his historical understanding of the Classics, put him in increasing tension with Kang Youwei and his like-minded followers such as Tan Sitong (1865-1898) 譚嗣同. As early as 1897, Zhang already noticed that Kang and his followers often melded the learning of politics with mathematics and physics, using the terminology of naturalists to explain politics (以算術物理與政事並為一談). He argued that this approach was no different from the Neo-Confucianism-based civil service exams.[852] For Zhang, Kang's tendency to search for guidance for human affairs in the discourses of nature demonstrated a certain determinism and mysticism. Like Liang Qichao, Zhang criticized Kang for encouraging an irresponsible and subservient learning by following the Gongyang tradition, and found himself in need of arguing for the real values of the *Ru* learning tradition.

In 1899, Zhang published the essay "Disputes between the New Text Classical Tradition and the Old Text Classical Tradition" (Jinguwen bianyi 今古文辨義). Drawing on this essay, Wang Fansen summarizes Zhang's main arguments against Kang's use of

[852] "時新學初興，為政論者輒以算術物理與政事並為一談。余每立異，謂技與政非一術，卓如輩本未涉此，而好援其屬語以附政論，余以為科舉新樣耳。" *Zhang Taiyan nianpu,* 38.

the Gongyang tradition as follows.[853] First, Zhang was critical of the approach of "establishing teachings through the way of the deities" (神道設教), condemning it as the origin of China's superstitions. Second, Kang was irresponsible in manipulating the Classics to match his own discourses. Third, the Gongyang tradition's claim for Confucius' prophetic knowledge about the future was groundless. Forth, the tradition was motivated by the need to legitimate rulers' existing power and stress the hierarchical relationship between rulers and the ministers. Fifth, through the late 1890s he increasingly denied that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* laid out Confucius' political plan in esoteric words, protecting the historiographical nature of the text and historical identity of Confucius.

Why are these problems so harmful? In the essay "A Real Discussion of *Ru*" (Rushu zhenlun 儒術真論) published in the same year, Zhang argued that Confucius was only concerned with human ways; he never believed that people could be certain about any higher purpose of Heaven-and-Earth beyond the agency of human beings. It was precisely because of this that Confucius was great. "As *Xunzi* says, the Way is not the way of the heaven or the way of the earth, but the way of the humans, and the way that gentlemen follow."[854] The Classics did mention "Heaven" and the "God" (帝) in many

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[853] Wang Fansen, *Zhang Taiyan de sixiang* 章太炎的思想 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2012), 48-64. Also, for more detailed discussions on Zhang's critique of Kang's Gongyang interpretation, see Peng Chunling's 彭春凌 *Rujiao zhuanxing yu wenhua xinming* 儒教轉型與文化新命 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[854] 蓋聖道之大，無能出其範者。抑括囊無辨，謂之腐儒。今既摭拾諸子，旁採遠西，用相研究，以明微旨，其諸君子亦有樂乎此歟？……按仲尼所以凌駕千聖，邁堯、舜軼公旦者，獨以天為不明及無鬼神二事。《荀子》曰：道者，非天之道，非地之道，人之所以道也，君子之所道也。（《儒效篇》。）此儒者窮高機遠測深厚之義。Zhang (1899) "Rushu zhenlun," *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji,* 120

places when describing sacrifices, but those texts represented beliefs older than the time of Duke Zhou. When Confucius edited these texts, he left the text unchanged out of respect for history, but he took care to explain that those seemingly supernatural forces were nothing but natural phenomena. For instance, in Confucius's view, the "God" worshiped as the giver of energy was none other than the sun.[855]

Why did this need to be clarified? Because Confucius knew that once people believed that there existed a God or a transcendent will of heaven, they would feel that an external authority decided the consequences of their behavior. Driven by ignorance and uncertainty, people would also imagine ghosts and deities, making groundless accusations against each other when they have conflicts, and destroying the ethical relationships that were crucial to the interests of the community.[856] Confucius' human-centric positionwas important because it would push people to search for a real understanding of human life. For instance, the early belief about "deities who create

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[855] "若夫天體，余嘗謂蒼蒼之天，非有形質，亦非有大圜之氣。蓋日與恒星，皆有地球，其阿屯以太，上薄無際，其間空氣複厚，而人視之蒼然，皆衆日之余氣，固非有天也。……六經言天言帝，有周公以前之書，而仲尼刪述，未或革更，若曰道曰自然而已矣。郊祭大報天而主日，萬物之主，皆賴日之光熱，而非有賴于天。故假言曰帝，其真即日。或以北極爲耀瑰寶，北極又大于日九十三倍，故亦尊之，此則恒星萬數，上帝亦可雲萬數。六帝之說，不遍不賅，要非虛增，然恒星各帝其地球而已，于此地球何與？明堂宗祀，蓋自外至者也。且太微五星，固玄遠矣，即至昵之日，雖昭昭大明，而非有恩威生殺之志."

[856] "因上帝而有福善禍淫之說，其害猶細，其識已愚，因是以及鬼神，則誣妄日出，而人倫殆廢。太古民俗，無不尊嚴鬼神，五洲一也。感生帝之說，中國之羲、農，日本之諾、冊二神，印度之日朝、月朝，猶太之耶穌，無不相類。以此致無人倫者，中外亦復不異。惟其感生，故有炎、黃異德兄弟婚媾之說，蓋曰各出一帝，雖為夫婦，不為黷也。堯之厘降，不避近屬，實嘗於是。其後以為成俗，則夏、商以來，六世而通婚姻，皆感生之說撼之矣。周道始隆，百世遠別，此公旦所以什伯於堯、舜、湯、武，然依違兩可，攻其支流，而未堙其源窟。《生民》之詩，猶曰履敏，則獷俗雖革，而精意未宣，小家珍說，反得以攻其闕."

human emperors" (感生帝), which claimed that sage kings were born from spirits, later evolved in the Western Han into a theory to legitimize the Mandate of Heaven. This superstition about sage kings had deeply influenced social customs. Since early people did not understand the benefits of exogamy to the community, they encouraged intergroup marriage within a short span of generations. This problem was common to many early civilizations, but what made Confucius great was his naturalistic understanding of human life. Zhang claimed that it was because of Confucius' commitment to human needs that he was aware of the harm of old and backward superstitions. It was such an attitude that enabled the Chinese race to proliferate and its civilization to endure.[857] Confucius' celebration of human knowledge enabled him to understand the reality of things and humans. Referring to Wang Fuzhi's claim again, Zhang argued that the motivation behind such a legacy of learning had been nothing more than "caring about one's own group" (愛類而已).[858]

How should scholars follow the Confucian way and carry out their responsibility to their people? In another influential essay published in 1899, "On Bacteria" (Junshuo 菌說), Zhang argued that encouraging inhuman forces as the source of human knowledge was irresponsible and politically harmful. He attacked Tang Sitong's writing "On Humanness" (Renshuo 仁說) because it posited the existence of a certain mystical coherence of the universe, and said that human beings embody this coherence in

[857] "惟仲尼明於庶物，察於人倫，知天為不明，知鬼神為無，遂以此為拔本塞源之義，而萬物之情狀大著。由是感生帝之說詘，而禽獸行絕矣。此所以冠生民橫大陸也". "Rushu zhenlun," 118.

[858] "昊天罔極，如何可酬？抑親親之殺，既具斯形，則知愛類而已."

themselves to guide their actions.[859] Drawing on Xunzi's celebration of intellectualism and Wang Chong's (王充, 27-97) attack on Dong Zhongshu's omenology and his promotion of prophetic knowledge, Zhang argues that Tan's claim was irresponsible, for it tried to shift the source of learning from human creation to the external forces of Heaven-and-Earth. In explaining how learning ought to be responsible, Zhang argued,

> In ancient times, when people said they had already known destiny (知命), what they meant is that they were aware of their limitations; they were not saying they knew how to conduct divination or interpret omens. It is usually difficult for one individual to control the course of his personal life (自主), however, [when it comes to] forming a community to achieve collective enterprises (合群圖事), then the result will be determined by actions. Therefore [we can say that] one individual may have a destiny, but a country (國家) does not. Xunzi says that while one individual's life depends on destiny (命), the destiny of a country depends on ritual (禮). If a ruler observes rituals and respects worthies, he will become a [real] king; [if a ruler] stresses law and loves people, [he will] become a hegemon. [If a ruler] prefers private interest and commits fraud, [his power will] become precarious; [if a ruler] is interested in political tactics and internal strife, [his rule will] be precarious and close to falling. Based on this, one can say that an individual's [control over the course of his life] is limited (有定限), but the destiny of a country is not predetermined. [Xunzi] also says, instead of following Heaven and celebrating it, [he] would rather deploy the destiny of the Heaven for his own purpose (制天命而用之). Thus, he regarded Heaven as nothing to be celebrated, and the destiny of a country as something that can be determined [by human beings themselves]. What does this have to do with Heaven?
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> 故古之言知命者，謂知其不可如何，而非謂其禨祥算術也。要之一人際遇，非能自主，合群圖事，則成敗視其所措。故一人有命，而國家無命。荀子曰：人之命在天，國之命在禮。君人者隆禮尊賢而王，重法愛民而霸，好利多詐而危，權謀傾覆幽險而盡亡矣。以此見一人之命有定限，而一國之命無定限

[859] "或謂必知各原質之成於以太，萬物之成於各原質，而後知內外四大，至於六道，無一非我，乃為乾元至仁之量，是固然矣" Zhang (1899) "Junshuo", *Ibid.* 143 For more detailed interpretations on Tan Sitong's position, see Igno Shafer, "Natural philosophy, physics and metaphysics in the discourse of Tan Sitong: the concept of *qi* and *yitai*." In Michael Lackner, Iwo Amelung and Joachim Kurtz, eds, *New terms for new ideas: Western knowledge and lexical change in late imperial China* (Leiden, 2001), 257-70. Viren Murhty, "Ontological optimism, cosmological confusion, and unstable evolution: Tan Sitong's Renxue and Zhang Taiyan's response," in Viren Murthy and Axel Schneider, eds, *The challenge of linear time: nationhood and the politics of history in East Asia* (Leiden, 2013), 49-82.

也。又曰：從天而頌之，孰與制天命而用之。是則以天為不足稱頌，而國命可自己制，其何有天哉？

[Those] who take the Heaven as someone who knows either lament or complain [about the Heaven], and their stupidity is the same. The only *Ru* in the Han dynasty who did not believe in omens (禍福感應), and only talked about [taking control of] destiny, was Wang Zhongren 王仲仁 [i.e. Wang Chong]!...As for what the Grand Ru [i.e. Xunzi] says, Heaven does not endanger or celebrate [human affairs], and only human beings cause [their own] consequences. For one person, success or failure is predetermined, but for the community, we determine gain or loss ourselves. This is what is different from the discourse that [Heaven] gives credit to the people who conduct good deeds (陰隲下民)[860].

……而其以天為有知，或則衰吁，或則怨望，其愚一也。漢世之儒，勿信禍福感應而獨言命者，惟王仲仁耳！……若夫大儒之說，天無危慶而人有報施，一人則成匱前定，而合群則得喪在我，斯所以異於陰隲下民之說也。[861]

A polity is a *collective* human creation, therefore the group that formed it that can take control of its future. Rituals and laws symbolize cultural and political institutions. Zhang's point was that learning could make a difference, but it had to be devoted to building the community, particularly its cultural and political institutions. By focusing on creating and maintaining a good institutional order, learning would retain its agency, and thus could be held accountable. But if one could not count on Heaven as a knowing agent, where should scholars find their source of knowledge? Who could serve as their model?

In Zhang's 1898 edition of *Qiushu,* he put an essay at the beginning entitled "Following Xunzi" (Zun Xun 尊荀).

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[860] From *Book of Documents,* chapter Hongfan: "惟天陰騭下民，相協厥居。"

[861] The complete passage of the last section of the quote is here. 曰：天者自然而已。曰：命者遭遇而已。從俗之言，則曰天命，夫豈以蒼蒼者布令於下哉？嗟乎！愚者之頌天，宋偃之射天，上官安之罵天，其敬慢不同，而其以天為有知，或則衰吁，或則怨望，其愚一也。漢世之儒，勿信禍福感應而獨言命者，惟王仲仁耳！然執泥小數，至謂項羽用兵，實過高祖，其興亡亦由天命。若國之安危，亦不能布出於此者，是亦固矣。若夫大儒之說，天無危慶而人有報施，一人則成匱前定，而合群則得喪在我，斯所以異於陰隲下民之說也。
Zhang (1899) "Junshuo", *Ibid.* 143

> "Xunzi cultivated himself by accumulating learning and transforming [his nature]; [he] ordered the world by promoting rituals and forming community. [He] did not go back further than the three dynasties to [find his guidance], so [his learning could] avoid appearing unusual and mystical; [he] did not diverge from the latter kings (後王), so that [his learning could] be very clear and ordered. [He saw that once] rituals weave everything together neatly, then, the [regulations of] laws will all lead to positive effects rather than contradicting one another. [Xunzi's idea of] the rectification of names (正名) is considered today to be similar to the epistemology of the learning of logic by Socrates and Aristotle (according to Kuwaki Genyoku). Once this approach is followed, a crowd of worthies will appear everywhere."
>
> 荀卿以積偽俟化治身，以隆禮合群治天下。不過三代，以絕殊瑰；不貳後王，以綦文理。百物以禮穿穀，故科條皆務進取而無自戾。其正名也，世方諸認識淪之名學，而以為在瑣格拉底、亞歷斯大德間（桑木嚴翼說）。由斯道也，雖百里而民獻比肩可也。其視孔氏，長幼斷可識矣。[862]

Zhang turned to question the intentions of Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong, implying that their attempt to find the source of learning in the coherence of Heaven-and-Earth meant that they had tried to ignore human culture and history as their source of learning. In doing so they wanted to appear sensational to the public for their unusual knowledge about Heaven. Instead, the improvement of the social and political order has to be based on effective rectification of norms. What does this require? If rituals can connect the names of everything into a shared semantic order, then, laws, built on clearly defined and ordered names, would be meaningful and effective. But the existence of good rituals that define the meaning of institutions was ultimately the legacy of the latter Kings (後王) of the Three Dynasties.

> The upper section of Xunzi's "Wangzhi" (王制) says, "The Way does not go beyond the Three Dynasties, and the method does not contradict with the later kings."…Elegant sounds (雅聲), old writings (舊文), and old objects (舊器) were used during the Three Dynasties and were shared by people in everyday life. (三

[862] This passage is from "Ding kong." It a clearer explanation on Xunzi that Zhang firstly included in "Zunxun," *Qiushu xiangzhu,* 47.

代所用，人間習識). If one adopts the music, clothing, and objects from the period of the Five Emperors [i.e. the period from the Yellow Emperor to Shun, before the founding of Xia, the first of the Three Dynasties] for the present day, and considers them to be new and rare, then they would be destroyed and abandoned.

《荀子王制》上言：「道不過三代，法不貳後王。」雅聲、舊文、舊器，三代所用，人間習識。若有用五帝之音樂、服器於今，以為新異者，則必毀廢。故傳注曰：「複三代故事，則是複古不必遠舉也。」[863]

By "returning to the antiquity," Xunzi meant to return to the Three Dynasties, not the era before. The Three Dynasties, with their music, writings, and artifacts, left a cumulative cultural tradition that had conditioned the beliefs, values, and customs of Xunzi's time. They were, Zhang asserted, the common knowledge and beliefs of everyday life during the Three Dynasties (三代所用人間習識). In this sense, they were the most important resources for recreating a shared and functioning semantic system, and they made it possible to build coherent and publically grounded legal and political norms. The agency and responsibility of learning, therefore, would be retained only if learning could focus on sorting out and understanding the cumulative cultural-institutional tradition.

The Crisis of China and the Crisis of Learning in a Global World

Both Zhang Taiyan and Liang Qichao found the tendency of naturalistic determinism to be dogmatic, anti-intellectual, and irresponsible, and both argued for shifting the source of values back from an external authority to human creation. Because they had different conceptions of how human creation generated values, however, their

[863] The complete passage of the last section of the quote is here. 《荀子王制》上言：「道不過三代，法不貳後王。」(下言：「聲，則凡非雅聲者舉廢；色，則凡非舊文者舉息；械用，則凡非舊器者舉毀；夫是之謂複古。」二義亦非自反。)雅聲、舊文、舊器，三代所用，人間習識。若有用五帝之音樂、服器於今，以為新異者，則必毀廢。故傳注曰：「複三代故事，則是複古不必遠舉也。」*Ibid.*

understandings of the role that learning ought to play in socio-political life also differed. For Liang, scholarship's leading role would be realized if education fulfilled the agency of each individual to realize his own intellectual, cultural, and political autonomy. To do so, it was necessary for elite learning to identify with a reflective history of the community's effort to seek self-governance and free cultural and intellectual expression. For Zhang, however, learning had nothing to do with individual agency, and a good and just socio-political order would not be realized by efforts to cultivate politically minded individuals. The interests of each individual had to be realized through the creation and maintenance of norms for collective life, and scholarship's leading role would be only realized when it represented the common cultural-institutional tradition shared by the community: a collective, long-lasting, and impartial force that shaped behaviors and beliefs. Thus, learning ought to identify itself with a much more broadly conceived textual-cultural tradition. As he noted, citing Xunzi, future kings would always follow the old names to form the new ones.

Based on his understanding of the role of learning, Zhang Taiyan came to develop a different perspective to conceptualize China's problems and to define the political order that the country ought to build. In "Defining Writing" (Ding wen 訂文), Zhang lamented that China's decline was rooted in the long-term decline of learning and politics. He laid out what he found to be a common principle of human civilizations, based on a theory of the origins of writing. All writing systems were invented for political purposes. Specifically, drawing on information he learned from Spencer's writings, he saw that writings were all originally pictographic, resembling divine images or royal objects that everyone in the community understood to demonstrate and implement power. The

political and the cultural were meaningfully integrated to maintain a social-political order. For Zhang, the important virtue behind this was that a good and responsible government regulates public affairs for the community through a publically shared and clearly defined meaning system. Zhang claimed that early people adopted writing (書契) not because they favored complexity, but because they knew that mistrust would grow from obscurity and misrepresentation. "[When] names and reality were confused, [the Yellow Empire's official Cang Jie] distinguished them and took the foot traces of birds and animals [as an inspiration] to [create] writing."[864] As human society advances, language also accumulates and becomes increasingly complicated. One would expect that, if politics functions well, written language in official writings would undoubtedly follow the growth of common concepts and vocabularies. In other words, to tell whether a polity has been successfully maintaining the order and wellbeing of the social-political life, one can see whether the language and concepts of the ruling elite have developed continuously through history as social life has advanced. If not, then there is a problem; the intellectual-political elite has been incapable of evolving its learning and its rule. Zhang argued, "When a country does not have good politics, what it says would not make sense [to the people], and what it plans to achieve would not have a long-lasting effect."[865] "When official affairs and social life are handled lazily and perfunctorily day by day (日

[864] This is a reference to a Preface of Xu Shen's *Shuowen jiezi* "黃帝之史蒼頡，見鳥獸蹏迒之跡，知分理之可相別異也，初造書契。"

[865] This is a reference to the first stanza in "Ban," from "Shengming" of the "Daya" section, the *Book of Odes*. "上帝板板、下民卒癉。出話不然、為猶不遠 。靡聖管管、不實於亶。猶之未遠、是用大諫 。"

以訾偷), [one] cannot expect that language does not also become perfunctory."[866]

Zhang concluded that since the fall of the Northern Song, China had witnessed a dramatic decline that could be seen from the large decrease in the number of concepts recorded in major dictionaries. Perfunctory elite learning lead to irresponsible politics, reflected in the careless and confusing use of language, which lost the ability to grasp, understand, and change reality.

> Zhang Binlin says, Alas! This is how China has been declining day by day. Shi Zhou (史籀) created the [Great Seal] script. There were nine thousand characters,[867] and none of them were created perfunctorily. Each written word was based on common speech (諺言). The Qin script destroyed them. *Fan Jiang* (凡將) were compiled as a follow-up, and until the time of Xu Shen, there also remained nine thousand words. Expanded from [the work of] Xu Shen, [books] from *Yupian* 玉篇 to *Jiyun* 集韻 [do not contain words] fewer than thirty thousand. None of these words were created perfunctorily; all of the words had their foundation in tradition. Since the fall of Northern Song, people became lazy (訾偷). Their clerical script did not increase, and what increased came from vulgar scholars and ignorant people, which counted as nothing. Thus what people relied on in their oral communications were at most a thousand; what government announcements (檄移) relied on were at most two thousand; those that were written on wool felt, stored in the golden book shelf [of the central government], and were written in literature and history were at most three thousand; those that were chanted in hymns for worshiping the ancient emperors, that music was used to carry, and that were sung in rhapsodies and eulogies were at most four thousand. All the other [words] can be just seen as rotten wood and bad leather! If [we check what] they used to govern officials and to investigate common people, then what came [to appear] on the public official declarations and announcements were limited to two thousands words. With such a political elite, how could a place like China (神州), which has grand [land] and broad affairs, not be in turmoil, resulting in the withdrawal and day-by-day failures of policies and regulations?

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[866] "泰逖之人，款其皋門而觀政令，於文字之盈歉，則卜其世之盛衰矣。昔之以書契代結繩者，非好其繁也，萬事之笞心萌，皆伏於蠱。名實惑眩，將為之別異，而假蹄远以為文字。然則自大上以至今日，解垢益甚，則文以益繁，亦勢自然也。先師荀子曰：後王起，"必將有循於舊名，有作於新名。"是故國有政者，其倫脊必析，綱紀必秩，官事民志日以孟晉，雖欲文之不孟晉，不可得也。國無政者，其出話不然，其為猶不遠，官事民志日以訾偷，雖欲文之不訾偷，不可得也。" "Dingwen," *Qiushu xiangzhu,* 369-70

[867] Zhang draws this information from Xu Shen's *Shuowen jiezi*.

> 章炳麟曰：烏乎！此夫中國之所以日削也。自史籀之作書，凡九千名，非苟為之也，有其文者必有其諺言。秦篆殺之，《凡將》諸篇繼作，及鄰氏時，亦九千名。衍乎鄰氏者，自《玉篇》以逮《集韻》，不損三萬字，非苟為之也，有其文者必有其諺言。北宋之亡，而民日嗇偷，其隸書無所增；增者起於俗儒鄙夫，猶無增也。是故唇吻所倚，千名而足；檄移所倚，二千名而足；細旃之所承，金匱之所藏，箸於文史者，三千名而足；清廟之所奏，同律之所被，箸於賦頌者，四千名而足其他則視以為腐木敗革也已矣！若其所以治百官、察萬民者，則蔑乎檄移之二千而止。以神州之廣，庶事之博，而以佐治者廑是，其庸得不澶漫掍淆，使政令逡巡以日廢也？[868]

In contrast, Zhang lamented, the number of English words was the largest of all the languages in the world, and all of these words "have their independent meaning and do not [randomly] overlap with others." "Looking at [civilizations] that have produced writings, the most prolific one is English, thus [English is the most effective] in Europe."[869] However, looking at China, if the decline of the concepts and words that the government used to investigate and regulate social life could be seen as evidence of its increasing lack of competence, then, after the introduction of Western knowledge with new concepts (*名*), this problem would only become more serious:

> Today, since China began to exchange goods with foreign countries, tools and technology change every day, and new goals and thoughts grow everyday. We are even satisfied with taking simply two thousand concepts to compete with sixty thousand. Given that they already differ greatly in levels, once they are borrowed to translate [Western words], then their way would be dramatically hindered. Nowadays, living beings must follow what they find handy [to use]. But there must be those who would be carried away by the tide to follow foreign concepts. And our language will be further abandoned and become useless.
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> 今自與異域互市，械器日更，志念之新者日蘗，猶暖暖以二千名與夫六萬言者相角，其寔便既相萬，及緣傅以譯，而其道大窮。今夫含生之屬，必從其便者也。然則必有弟靡以從彼者。雖吾文字，亦將棄不用矣。[870]

[868] Ibid.

[869] Ibid.

[870] Ibid.

Western learning came into China when China's own learning and politics were undergoing a decline. On one hand, the Chinese elite had lost the ability to understand and to guide the community's life. On the other hand, new knowledge and new concepts were entering China from the West through translation, making it even more difficult for the Chinese elite to reconnect with their grand textual-cultural tradition and to regain its intellectual and political vitality.

What, then, should scholars do? After Zhang left Liang Qichao's *Shiwu bao* 時務報 in 1897, he joined the *Ordering the World Newspaper* (Jingshi bao 經世報) and *Substantive Learning Newspaper* (Shixue bao 實學報).[871] Zhang's definition of the goal of *Substantive Learning* illustrated his alternative proposal regarding how to engage with new learning and the kind of institutional base that scholars ought to build.[872]

First, linking the quality of elite learning with the quality of politics and laws, Zhang argued that the gradual decrease of "substantive" learning grounded on the broad textual-cultural tradition since Buddhism entered China was responsible for decline in the quality of politics and the law (政法程度) after the Tang and Song.[873] He believed that all kinds of learning except for mathematics had experienced a decline since the Tang and

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[871] *Shiuxe bao* was a periodical issued once every ten days, editors were Wang Siyuan 王斯源 and Wang Renjun 王仁俊. First issue was August 28, 1897. Its advertisement on *Shiwu bao* says, "本報之設，" Tang Zhijun edited, *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji*, 31.

[872] Zhang contributed for *Shixuebao* for five issues, but during this period he published several pieces of reflective writings on the role of *Ru,* such as Rudao 儒道, Rubing 儒兵, Rufa 儒法, Rumo 儒墨, Ruxia 儒俠. *Ibid.,* 31.

[873] "典章不講，藝術不考，則實學亡矣。唐、宋以降，政法程度，舉不能逮先民，惟疇人操算，稍上合乎周髀，斯則碩果不食，於五際為革政之世。" "Shixue bao xu"(實學報敘) August 12, 1897. *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji*, 28.

Song because the cultural elite stopped engaging in "substantive learning," which was the learning of institutions and texts (典章), and in all kinds of art and technology (藝術). The primary goal should be the restoration of such "substantive" learning.

Second, while arguing that Western learning offered an opportunity for Chinese scholars to restore their own broad tradition, Zhang noted that scholars had to find the right way to learn from it in the current context of crisis.[874] In Zhang's view, there were two troubling approaches in his time. On the one hand, he saw the idea of building new schools as unhelpful because the original foundation of learning was weak in many provinces. Local scholars were not only few in number but often ignorant. On the other hand, referring to Kang Youwei, Zhang criticized those who did not have real understanding of Western learning, but tried to fashion themselves into masters of the world's civilizations. They claimed that they knew the doctrines from other world civilizations that would be suitable for guiding China, but in fact they just appealed to common discourse. When people thought science was important, they would claim that they knew about ancient Greek teachings, and when people thought religion could solve problems, they would claim that they knew about Buddhism. They were harmful because they would not only mislead people about Western learning but also obscure the Chinese tradition.[875] Instead, what he understood to be the goal of this periodical was to focus on

[874] "唐、宋以降，政法程度，舉不能逮先民，惟疇人操算，稍上合乎周髀，斯則碩果不食，於五際為革政之世。今日能以歐羅巴學上窺九流者，其芽蘖在是也。惜夫溟渤以外，聽遠音者聞其疾而不聞其舒。" Ibid.

[875] "惜夫溟渤以外，聽遠音者聞其疾而不聞其舒。至於小雅盡廢，四夷交侵，瘡痍既深，乃流嘶哽咽以道之，則已日莫塗遠。救時之彥，於是為置學堂。然一行省數千里，就學者廑以百數，俗儒鄙夫，蔽所希聞，大共非訾者，猶十而三四。 高才之士， 則又韙梧鼠，非螣蛇，涉獵五技，不忍攻苦。又不慫居淺陋、聞格致，以希臘、巴比倫之古教炫之；聞古教矣，以佛說炫之。乃曰黃赤青黑，惟吾目是視；角征穆羽，惟吾耳是聽。綜其所論以

translating Western books and explaining global affairs.[876] He considered this approach to be a kind of historical work. An advertisement for the newspaper claimed that it would "seek knowledge (講求學問) and contrast concept with reality"(核名實). It would "broadly collect information for general discussion," and it would "translate major foreign newspapers." In doing so, the newspaper would "Continue the legacy of the sagely Three Dynasties, and familiarize itself with the outside world."[877]

Thirdly, Zhang celebrated the publication as the best institution for developing intellectual culture. This was not because it would help cultivate public opinion, rather, it would assist scholars to conduct the learning that was necessary for guiding government. Newspapers should function as "the branches and descendants of the office of history" (誠史官之支與余裔). They should allow the intellectual-political class to compose writings about the community's life and people's attitudes, and when politics became corrupted, to publish critiques and analyses based on their learning of the Classics (六藝之學) and their studies of China and the world. This second set of roles, following the

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施之西學，則正負亂；以施之中學，則名實亂。然則彼且以此塗智者之耳目，而況中人乎?吳王子有憂之，曰：吾不暇記夫陵谷之變遷與滄海之為大陸也，又不敢詆娸古人，以為其學不埃及若也，又不忍以阿含楞嚴馭西學也。吾行求其拙，吾學求其實而已。雖然，彼毚愚樸陋與高言孟行者，吳無若彼何矣。吾黨之士，或學矣而未達，或怏郁憤悱而未逐，則吾將與之共蹈於實學之域。史官既絕，天府既息，講學於宦奧，戶外莫應，將效夫西人之建藏書樓歟。吾不能，將設學會以羨致來者，嫥於江南則已隘，大淮以北，大漢以西，千里重研而至者，則未有南榮跦其人也。曩者纂《格致古微》，以廓《疇人傳》、《瀛海論》之義，既拭之木觚以詢賢哲矣。今慫一言而播赤縣，是惟報章。……抑以報章比於書藏學會，則猶有軒輖焉。是故以譯書為鵠的，以譯事為乏，相為餔輔，以成是報。章子曰：偉哉造物者，其以子為此巨史也。" *Ibid.,* 28-9.

[876] "是故以譯書為鵠的，以譯事為乏，相為餔輔，以成是報。章子曰：偉哉造物者，其以子為此巨史也。" *Ibid.,* 29.

[877] "以講求學問、考核名實為主義，博採通論，廣譯各報，內以上承三聖之緒，外以周知四國之為，故名《實學報》。" *Ibid.,* 31.

Zhou Rites (Zhouli 周禮), resemble the Zhou offices of the *Baoshi* 保氏,[878] government critics, *Tanren* 撢人,[879] mediators between the rulers and people, and the *Xiangxu* 象胥,[880] the interpreters for foreign diplomats. Moreover, drawing a parallel between Mozi's identity as a historical official in Zhou and his interest in scientific knowledge, Zhang claimed that the newspaper would also carry out the responsibility of documenting verified knowledge to guide people's lives.[881]

Importantly, Zhang felt that scholars should guide politics by becoming independent knowledge agents with real understanding of the community and the world. They would not generate influence through organized political communities or schools; rather, they would fulfill their moral-political responsibility while maintaining their independence by committing to support of cultural institutions and by guiding policies. In doing so, they would function as a true transformative force. This understanding made Zhang stand out in the new generation of intellectual leaders. Why would organized intellectual communities not be a solution? How in particular should the political elite be formed?

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[878] 《周禮·地官·大司徒》

[879] 《周禮·夏官· 敘官》

[880] 《周禮·秋官· 司寇》

[881] "夫報章者，誠史官之支與餘裔，故（）人之職，擊铎嘩鉦，風聽臚言，以陳之王史氏，其歌謠為國風，其成事為百二十國之寶書，此行之自上者。遭世混濁，淄縞罔辯，金匱石室之氣濁，而山林之氣清。於此有人焉，則上為素保氏，下為素撢人象胥，取六藝之學、中外之聞，辨程其長短，為一書，或旬而紀，此行之自下者也。"*Ibid.,* 30

Questioning Parliamentary Democracy and Advocating an Alternative Elite Selection System based on Gu Yanwu's Regionalism

Thisrent understanding of the role of learning pushed Zhang to question the validity of parliamentary democracy in the late 1890s, and to argue for a different design of government in which his envisioned role of learning could be put into place. In the essay "Shang Yang" 商鞅 written in 1898, he explained his political design as a highly regionalized government system where the *fali* (法吏), the legal officials in local government, would play a crucial role. In Zhang's view, Shang Yang's legalism was not intended to empower the ruler, but to hold him accountable for his conduct based on a clearly defined legal code. Most importantly, Shang Yang contributed to a group of officials who were capable of remedying legal codes to ensure that laws were fairly defined and enforced. In some later essays, Zhang built on Shang Yang's case by suggesting that the idea of *fali* resembled titles such as censorate (*yushi* 御史) and supervising censor or secretary (*jishizhong* 給事中).[882] He envisioned that scholars who were learned in law, history, and social customs would hold such office. Essentially, they would be given the authority to make laws that even rulers would not be able to change.

What lay behind this design was Zhang's disagreement with the elite-selection mechanism proposed by the supporters of parliamentary democracy. Could public elections guarantee that the political elite would be accountable? Would it allow people with real learning to guide politics? In explaining the purpose of his essay on Shang Yang, he referred to Gu Yanwu (顧炎武) as someone who understood the meaning of

[882] Wang Fan-sen, *Zhang Taiyan de sixiang*, 183

Shang Yang's method and who provided an important alternative to the constitutional model of Huang Zongxi.[883] As we have discussed in chapter 2, Gu Yanwu echoed Huang Zongxi in his essay "On the Prefectural System" (Junxian lun 郡縣論), in which he depicted the civil service exam as corrupting elite learning. Instead of proposing changes to schooling to produce the skills and opinions sought by the central government, he suggested entirely removing the centralized selection of elites. Scholars should be recommended for entering local academies where they might be cultivated at the county level, forming a core of solid talent for local society. A small number of these scholars would enter the central government based on recommendation and certain limited examinations.[884]

Zhang's idea about *fali* envisioned a similar kind of decentralized system, in which the political elites would be selected based on recommendations. He did not trust that the parliamentary system would produce responsible elites in the Chinese context, though it could work in societies where a feudal system had shaped people's habits, such as in Western Europe and Japan, where there was a deeply rooted, long-lasting, and mature class of ruling elites to maintain the power relationships within the community. Under those systems, people had developed civil virtues, were fully devoted to managing their livelihood and developing their own enterprises, and were not always eager to take advantage of political change to acquire and secure privileges. Stable power relationships

[883] "寧人先生頗善秦法，太衝則憂乎遠矣。余著此篇，為世人所駭怪，亦思世無太衝，豈得不與寧人共治邪。" Zhang (August, 1898), "Shang Yang," *Zhang taiyan zhenglun xunaji,* 73

[884] Importantly, Zhang made no mentioning of the role of lineage as a local force for maintaining order, which has in its foundation a Neo-Confucian ideal of hierarchy and moral cultivation, which Zhang as an evidential political thinker did not share. The first task for learning to guide politics is to contribute to the building of meaningful and good legal and political norms.

enabled such elites to be educated, and ensured the selection of reliable individuals to comprise these classes.

However, feudalisim had ended in China long ago, and Zhang argued that the country lacked a stable foundation for a parliamentary system. Under the prefectural system, dynasties came and went, with new political elites forming every time a new dynasty was established. To secure their interests, Chinese people had formed the opportunistic habit of seeking privilege by flattering the new rulers, - even when the new rulers were not Chinese.[885] Given this habit, the institution of parliamentary democracy in China would be manipulated. It would not represent the people's interests or educate citizens, but would instead become the tool of the local rich and powerful (豪族) to gain privileges. Moreover, he asked, how could people without learning be allowed to discuss politics?[886] One should not expect that by founding a parliamentary system, social customs would be transformed for the better. If the people elected lacked learning themselves, how could such a system promise good politics?

Behind Zhang's concern about the potential abuse of parliamentary democracy in China was his skepticism about the positive values that the system claimed to represent. In an 1899 conversation with Song Shu 宋恕 (1862-1910), a reformer of Liang Qichao's cohort, Zhang compared the reformers advocating parliamentary democracy to business

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[885] 章炳麟曰：東國之良俗，吾亦識之也。…… 東國以時序秘邇於封建，民性慕進，以媮生墮游為恥。有良俗，故其憲政亦工，非以善政能至善俗也。夫中夏者，塵為郡縣，而國胙數斬，民無恆職。平世善柔之夫，猶能踰超資次，以取卿相。會遭變故，而蜚躍者眾矣。當戎狄入主，降俘相躡，朝為穿窬而夕建麾葆者，不知其選數也。*Zhang Taiyan Quanji: Qiushu chukeben, Qiushu Chongdingben, Jianlun*. 613

[886] "夫使民有權者，必其辯慧之士可與議令者也。……以愚蠢無知之民，起而議政令，則不足以廣益，而只以混淆是非，非禁之將何道哉。" *Ibid.*

brokers, arguing that they were simply seeking fame and power by appealing to popular opinion. They "Saw that they could buy and sell the jade wine cup for a good price, even though the cup had no real use for them."[887] In opposition to this movement, Zhang posed the idea of *fali*. Not only would the *fali* know the broader world, but they would never try to fashion themselves in pursuit of privilege. For Zhang, the claim that a parliamentary system would engage people with public affairs and transform them into responsible individuals was appealing but groundless; true learning ought to entail watching and guideing everyday cultural practice. In a metaphorical way, he explained this point as "assisting the myriad things to be as they are" (輔萬物之自然也) and "taking the mind of the common people as their mind" (以百姓心為心). [888]

> Sometimes the old methods (法) and humble customs become dysfunctional, [but the way of] removing them should be based on [the condition] of people. Today, people [who engage] in discussions [about reform] amplify their voices and brag about their memorials to sell themselves, only claiming that [our problem is that our] methods are broken. [They] do not study what is wrong and what it right, thus none of their words have attacked the bad officials and evil administrators, but they have promoted Zongxi's empty words, while forbidding Xunqing's [Xunzi's] words about reforming officialdom. This only shows that they try to flatter the powerful and the prestigious, and [they] do not sincerely want to save the country.
>
> 夫舊法素俗，或時刓敝，其去之猶當因民。今議者多大聲色、侈章奏以自賈衒，徒言法敝，不課其是非，顧未有一言以攻惡吏幸臣，競扇宗羲之虛言，而以荀卿治人之文為諱。此徒見其諂諛貴勢，不誠有救國心也。[889]

He not only questioned the efficacy of the parliamentary system in China but also

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[887] *Zhang Taiyan Nianpu Congbian*, 117.

[888] "……今有賈人見玉卮者，雖無當，直貴則轉販之。此寧以無黨為有用邪？商道固然。夫立政者不在多言，直守其半語耳。《書》稱「予未有加，思曰贊，贊襄哉！」贊者，佐也；襄者，因也。佐之也者，輔萬物之自然也。因之也者，以百姓心為心也。*Zhang Taiyan Quanji: Qiushu chukeben, Qiushu Chongdingben, Jianlun*. 614

[889] Ibid.

criticized the moral intentions behind the proposal. In a cynical tone, he claimed that these advocates tried to fashion themselves as the representatives of certain universal values because they were attracted by the power of the Western culture behind it. As the government-led reforms proceeded toward constitutionalism, their attachment to the Western power would only help them to gain privilege among the Manchu rulers. On the other hand, Zhang believed that if they focused on everyday cultural practices and social customs, the intellectual elites would not try to impose any across-the-board plans to transform people's lives based on external popular ideals. Only in so doing could they show that their concerns for the interests of the community were real. Intellectuals would be morally wrong if they did not define China's conditions based on its broad everyday cultural practice and social customs. But how should the intellectual world guarantee that its learning would be sincerely concerned with the interests of the community?

Unsurprisingly, Zhang turned to identity politics, arguing that only by identifying oneself with the interests of the Chinese community could one be held accountable. For China today, nothing was more fundamental than "To remove the northern barbarians and to govern on our own [自植]."[890] Echoing Wang Fuzhi, Zhang argued that the goal of restoring and maintaining a polity ruled by the Chinese themselves (夏人) would be foundational to the cultivation of shared civil values for the members of society, such as the sense of honor, justice, integrity, and responsibility, all of these virtues being necessary for a beneficent socio-political community. In other words, values are real to people only if they are grounded on the shared interests of their community. He

[890] "今中夏慫萬疆如東國者，非唐慕之也，又不可苟效憲政以迎致之，莫若理其本。理其本者，當除胡虜而自植。" Ibid

explained,

> As long as our country of Chinese people (夏人) does not collapse, [people] will feel ashamed by the deed of selling out the community's interests for gaining privileges. Then people who have made contributions will not be missed for recommendation, and people who have talent will not be passed over in official selections. [This would] make those unprincipled and opportunistic people dare not to seize chances to gain advantage. Perhaps when arrogance and snobbishness decrease, diligent people will increase. Today those who promote Constitutionalism do not truly know what is the root. Those who exaggerate the importance [of constitutionalism] and claim that it is necessary [for China] are taking advantage of the ignorance of the Manchu rulers, hoping to acquire official titles by proposing it.
>
> 吾夏人宗國不隕，則恥以鬻降為寵。然後舉不失勞，官不失材，使鄙之善柔巧宦者，無敢僥倖以致儈石。其意者驕泄漸除，而勤業稍眾矣。今是言憲政者，非誠有所識於本株也。其或侈言利害，指為必然者，是幸清廷貴人之盲愚，冀以進孰得官耳。[891]

Believing that he had found the ultimate way of rebuilding values for China, Zhang reflected that most of the institutional designs currently in use were not fundamentally wrong. The only problematic policy that had originated in the Qing was the purchase of official positions, which ought to be abandoned. Gradually, new technologies and infrastructure construction would also be taken care of. The key problem, however, lay in an unprincipled officialdom that had no learning or accountability.[892] For Zhang, learning could foster a responsible elite and would lead to the cultivation of these abovementioned civic values. To do so, the primary enterprise was to reconstruct the Chinese identity that

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[891] Ibid.

[892] "察今之病，陸贄所謂時弊，非法弊也。清法之弊，惟入貲得官為泰甚，佗或沿因舊章。鹽廩之數，經費之率，不察古今物貨升降，而橫以一槩行之，是其當革者耳。乃夫鐵道、陸軍諸政，次技巧之序行者，猶飛土為弧矢，蜃車為馳驛，非所謂新法也。自餘或當改革，猶庶幾可以積漸行之。……獨其官吏狃習為姦，苞苴上流，雖良法祇以益蠹，此曰時弊。今不課吏人貞邪，徒曰立憲可以定之，建議可以已之。次所謂以《孝經》治黃巾也。是故處今之世，不誅鉏舊吏，去其泰半，其佗不懼。然是又非習常所能就也，須於光復則大黜之耳。不戮其人，縱令立法踊於日本，終不可以為善國矣。" Ibid.

would be the foundation of the community.

Constructing a New Ideology: Overthrowing the Manchus to Restore the Chinese Polity and Guoxing 國性

The end of the 1890s and the first years of the 1900s marked a significant transition for Zhang Taiyan. A set of events pushed the Qing government into deeper crisis, and clashes within the literati world became ever more intense. The failure of the Hundred Days' reform in 1898 (維新變法) was followed by the persecution of six major scholars and reformers from Kang Youwei's New Learning camp and by the Dowager Empress Cixi's seizure of power. The Boxer Rebellion was mobilized by secret societies, and peasant riots were spurred by natural disasters; popular hatred against Christian churches in China in North China escalated into mass riots against foreigners. Hoping to take advantage of the force of the Boxers against the foreign powers, Cixi encouraged the Boxers and declared war against eleven foreign countries, only leading to more embarrassment and foreign invasion in the summer of 1900. The major provincial governors Li Hongzhang, Liu Kunyi, Zhang Zhidong and Yuan Shikai refused to follow the imperial declaration of war and drew up an agreement with the foreign powers, "Mutual Protection of Southeast China (東南互保)," to preserve the peace within their own territories. In the middle of the Boxer Rebellion, the alliance of the younger generation of intellectual and political activists represented by the "Independence Society" 自立會 organized by Tang Caichang (唐才常 1867-1900), held a conference in Shanghai,

the so-called "Congress of China" (中國國會).[893] The conference agreed on a major military uprising in Hunan, Hubei, Anhui, and Jiangxi, hoping to overturn the power of Cixi, support the emperor Guangxu, and establish a Han Chinese-led constitutional monarchy. Due to Zhang Zhidong's suppression and the last-minute withdrawal of British support, the plan failed, and Tang, together with many other activists, was persecuted.

Such events could be viewed as support for Zhang's analysis of China's contemporary crisis: an incapable and irresponsible ruling class, a fragmented intellectual-political elite, and a self-interested and aggressive Western power trying to take advantage of China's weakness. Sympathetic to the failures of the New Learning activists, though, Zhang could not justify the solution of constructing a constitutional monarchy with a Manchu emperor. Originally a participant in the Shanghai "Congress of China," Zhang left the organization after an outburst of anger and a dramatic move: cutting his queue.[894]

In 1901, Zhang published "On the Correct Hatred of the Manchus" (Zheng chou Man lun 正仇滿論) in the Japan-based *Citizen Daily* (Guomin bao 國民報), an essay in which he confronted the position of constitutional monarchy and the idea of avoiding radical overthrow of the Qing for the sake of keeping social order. Not agreeing with the claim that "*minquan*" 民權, popular sovereignty, ought to be created under the step-by-step construction of a constitutional polity, he claimed that the realization of *minquan*

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[893] Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Yan Fu, Rong Hong etc. see Sang Bing 桑兵 "Lun gengzi zhongguo yihui"论庚子中国议会, *Jindaishi yanjiu* 近代史研究 (Issue 2, 1997): 1-40.

[894] *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian*, 110

was dependent on whether China could reclaim its self-rule from the hands of the Manchus.[895]

In the same year, he wrote an open letter to his mentor Yu Yue to announce his breaking with the pro-government statecraft circle of Han scholars. "Your disciple takes Classical learning as his way of respecting you. Today's Classical learning has its root in the learning of Ningren 寧人 [i.e. Gu Yanwu], and Mr. Gu's motivation was that he wanted people to search for their *guoxing* [國性, national quality/character], thus to recognize the distinctions between the Han and the northern tribes."[896] In the following year, Zhang organized an event in Japan to commemorate the 242nd anniversary of the fall of "China" (支那亡國242年紀念會), referring to the fall of the Ming.

But what did this "*guoxing*", the national character or quality, mean? How could Gu Yanwu's Classical learning serve as a model? Beginning in 1902, Zhang started to construct his position of learning and politics into an ideology for mobilizing further movements.

1. Reconstructing an Intellectual Lineage

In 1902, Zhang began to revise his *Qiushu,* now claiming that his goal was to leave a guide for "later kings." Beginning with the chapter "The Origin of Learning"(原學) and ending with the chapter "Untying the Queue" (解辮髮), the new version was intended to be both an ideological statement and a plan for the future.

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[895] *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian*, 119. The article was written to argue against Liang's claims explained in Liang's "Jiruo shuyuanlun" 積若溯源論 published in *Qingyibao* in 1901, in which Liang argued for a constitutional monarch.

[896] "弟子以治經侍先生。今之經學，淵源在顧寧人，顧公為此正慾使人推尋國性，識漢、虜之別耳，豈以劉殷、崔浩期後生也。" *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian* 115.

The first section of the book consists of a set of essays evaluating the major schools of *Ru* learning, explaining the origins of the *Ru* in the context of competing schools in the Warring States period, and assessing scholars and thinkers of the past to offer a standard for the direction of contemporary intellectual movements.

Zhang's assessments of scholars and thinkers in the revised edition did not center on their personal talent or moral cultivation, but their contributions to the external order of human life, which he called *daoshu* (道術). It is important to note that although Zhang ranked Confucius as the first figure in this critical history, he in fact excluded Confucius' achievements from his assessments. If a couple of years earlier Zhang had still wrestled with the idea of defining Confucius as an institutional reformer, he now abandoned that identification. Confucius was placed at the beginning not because he offered any important political or philosophical lessons, but because he devoted himself to history and made the Six Classics (六藝) available for the future. In "Defining Confucius" (Ding Kong 訂孔),[897] Zhang emphasized the identity of Confucius as a historian,[898] in contrast to Laozi and Mozi. All three of them had access to the resources found in the Six Classics, but Laozi and Mozi were too ambitious to devote themselves to history. Confucius was later highly reputed among these early masters precisely because he collected and preserved ancient documents and compiled history. In a sense, his humility in an age

[897] If just a couple of years earlier Zhang was still wrestling with the idea of defining Confucius as an institutional reformer, now he abandoned the plan, even this definition meant that he attributed little values to Confucius' *Analects.* In his envisioned Chinese regime, scholars enjoyed political dependence and speak to government, thus Confucius does not need to serve as the political simple to guarantee the positions of the scholars.

[898] "雖然，孔氏，古良史也。輔以丘明而次《春秋》，料比百家，若旋機玉鬥矣。談、遷嗣之，後有《七略》。孔子死，名實足以伉者，漢之劉歆。" *Qiushu xiangzhu,* 51

when many thinkers choose to work on grandiose thinking enabled him to leave the legacy of the Six Classics.[899] Importantly, it seems that by leaving Confucius and his enterprise of historical learning out his subsequent critical history, Zhang achieved two things. First, the nature of the Classics as the authentic history of the Chinese community would be left intact. Second, his claim that the source of learning for *Ru* was to be found in history would be omitted from discussion.

Zhang's assessments of the contributions of thinkers and scholars began with Mencius and Xunzi, contributors to the *Ru* tradition who in his view were more insightful than Confucius.[900] Mencius established some important claims about morality, but it was Xunzi who created a balanced vision of government and learning. Inspired by Confucius' historical works, he grounded his learning in the cumulative cultural-institutional tradition of the past, and he stressed the role of ritual, language, law, and knowledge.[901]

In contrast to Xunzi, Zhang sees Mozi as making the mistake of ignoring the recent development of civilization, hoping to return to the period of Yu 禹 to look for

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[899] "曰：六藝者，道、墨所周聞。故墨子稱《詩》、《書》、《春秋》，多太史中秘書。女商事魏君也」，銜說之以《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》，從說之以《金版》、《六弢》（《金版》、《六弢》，道家大公書也，故知女商為道家）。異時老、墨諸公，不降志於刪定六藝，而孔氏擅其威。遭焚散複出，則關軸自持於孔氏，諸子卻走，職矣。" *Ibid.,* 49

[900]"夫孟、荀道術皆踊絕孔氏，惟才美弗能與等比，故終身無魯相之政，三千之化。才與道術，本各異出，而流俗多視是崇墮之。" *Ibid.*

[901] "荀卿以積偽俟化治身，以隆禮合群治天下。不過三代，以絕殊瑰；不貳後王，以綦文理。百物以禮穿敷，故科條皆務進取而無自戾（《荀子王制》上言：「道不過三代，法不貳後王。」下言：「聲，則凡非雅聲者舉廢；色，則凡非舊文者舉息；械用，則凡非舊器者舉毀；夫是之謂複古。」二義亦非自反。雅聲、舊文、舊器，三代所用，人間習識。若有用五帝之音樂、服器於今，以為新異者，則必毀廢。故倧注曰：「複三代故事，則是複古不必遠舉也。」）。其正名也，世方諸認識淪之名學，而以為在瑣格拉底、亞歷斯大德間（桑木嚴翼說）。由斯道也，雖百里而民獻比肩可也。其視孔氏，長幼斷可識矣。"*Ibid.*47

guidance in government. Accordingly, his political view insisted that humans ought to be frugal in life and abstain from desires. Meanwhile, Laozi did not want to base his learning on any part of human history, so that his political discourse was empty, insincere, and full of strategic discourse on effective rulership.[902] In the following five essays entitled "Ru Mo"儒墨, "Ru Dao"儒道, "Ru Fa"儒法, "Ru Xia"儒俠, "Ru Bing"儒兵, Zhang criticized Mozi for undermining the importance of ancient rituals and music and Laozi for his instrumental view of government, but he stressed that the school of *Ru* was compatible with the fair-handed legalists who studied how to create laws. *Ru* also celebrated the knight-errant (遊俠)'s sense of social justice and social responsibility, and they stressed the importance of warriors' courage and loyalty. In other words, *Ru* fundamentally disagreed with the attitudes of Mozi and Laozi regarding the positive meaning of cultural-institutional traditions and government, and *Ru* identified with all the important knowledge and virtues necessary for the wellbeing of the community.

Appling the three models – Xunzi, Mencius, and Xuzi/Mozi – to subsequent history, Zhang argued that scholars' attitudes toward cultural-institutional traditions played a significant factor in determining the content of their positions on politics and learning. Scholars who were more identified with the textual studies of the cultural-institutional tradition also paid more attention to the understanding of the external orders of law, institutions, and rituals, relying less on subjective, speculative, and mythical discourses of learning. They were also more concerned with building a fair and just

[902] Zhang claims that Mozi was interested in *Lianshan* 連山, *Guzuo* 汩作, and *Jiugong* 九共, the early texts from the Xia period. "夫自東周之季，以至禹，《連山》息，《汩作》廢，《九共》絕，墨子支之，只以自隕。老聃喪其徵藏，而法守亡，五曹無施。惟荀卿奄於先師，不用。名辯壞，故言淆；進取失，故業墮；則其虛譽奪實以至是也。" *Ibid.,* 50-51

community life.

Examining the period from the Western Han to the end of the Jin (晉), Zhang particularly celebrated a line of thinkers including Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 BC – 18 AD), Huan Tan 桓譚 (ca. 23- ca. 56), Wang Chong 王充 (27-97), Wang Fu 王符 (83-170), Zhong Changtong 仲長統 (180-220), Cui Shi 崔寔 (ca. 103-170), Yao Xin 姚信 (before ca. 250), Ruan Wu 阮武,[903] Xun Yue 荀悅 (148-209), and Xu Wo 徐幹 (170-218), as well as the so-called legalists, such as Zhong Yao (鐘繇 151-230), Chen Qun 陳群 (?-237), and Zhuge Liang (諸葛亮 181-234), who focused on establishing good law. This line of figures symbolized those who could "Correct speculative and doubtful discourses and analyze multifarious things," who "Distinguished and illustrated [ideas] and made effective achievements" (辨章功實), and who were "Deeply cautious about being superficial, excessive and decadent."[904]

Each generation following this line rose to criticize those who were speculative or opportunistic, who indulged in flowery but groundless words without showing any true principles or engaging reality, or were incapable of governing with meaningful rules.[905] The first example of this kind was Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (B.C. 179-B.C.104). Based on his mystic cosmic resonance theory, he mystified the Classics, especially the *Spring and*

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[903] Their writings: *Fayan* (法言), *Xinlun* (新論), *Lunheng* (論衡), *Qianfu lun* (潛夫論), *Changyan* (昌言), *Zhenglun* (政論), *Shiwei* (士緯) and *Zhenglun* (正論)

[904] Zhang also added Ge Hong 葛洪, who was interested in alchemy but disliked the Daoist and embraced the Confucian idea of rituals and law.

[905] "碎義逃難, 苟得利祿, 而不識遠略; 華言積而不足以昭事理; 盛容服而飾辯說; 刑賞無章。"*Qiushu xiangzhu,* 90

Autumn Annals, as doctrines to make groundless decisions on legal and political actions. He thus politicized scholarship to support his own biased interpretation. Then there were Kong Rong 孔融 (153-208) and Du Shu 杜恕 (198-252) at the end of the Eastern Han, who criticized some of the Legalists. They resembled Mencius, focusing on self-cultivation without much respect to the external orders of rituals and laws. Then there were people such as Ji Kang 嵇康 (224-263) and Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210-263) in the Wei, who adopted a nihilistic attitude toward social and political norms by following Laozi and Zhuangzi.

Zhang argued that the period between the Song and the late Ming demonstrated some of the worst practices of scholarship. A chapter entitled "Harmful Learning" (Xuegu 學蠹) is a harsh attack on Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101). Ouyang enjoyed speculating on the meanings of the Classics and made groundless arguments based on them, having no grasp of the norms, principles, the doctrines and languages of the Classics. Su Shi adopted beautiful rhetoric in his policy writings but did not care about the right or wrong. He confused people with mystical descriptions of the Way and encouraged scholars to experience the Way as a subjective matter. In comparison to them, the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi at least wanted people to be modest and cautious.[906]

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[906] "宋之餘烈，蠹民之學者，程、朱亡咎焉，歐陽修、蘇軾其孟也。""修不通六藝，正義不習，耐瞍以說經，持之無故，談談以御人，辭人也。不辨於名理，比合訓言，反覆其文，自以為聞道，遭大人木強，而已得尸其名，以色取仁，居之不疑矣。軾之器，盡於發策決科，上便辭以耀聽者；義之正負，朝莫之間，不遑計也。……導人於感忽之間、疑玄之地以取之，故終身言談無釁。……夫程朱雖未競竘眇，猶審己求是，誇不若修，無尋常文墨檢式不若軾。修之烈，令專己者不學而自高賢，自謂以文辭承統，正體於上，玄聖素王。軾也使人跌逖而無主，設兩可之辯，仗無窮之辭，遁情以笑，謂道可見端，而不睹其尾，謂求學皆若解閉者，以不解解之也。孔子曰：「亡而為有，虛而為盈，難乎有恆矣。」巫

In a chapter on Wang Yangming (Wangxue 王學), Zhang found himself needing to explain that Wang's statecraft achievements came from his strength in strategy, not from his learning. Indeed, he held that Wang's discourses about nature and destiny (性命) were simplistic and superficial. The idea of "attaining innate moral knowledge" (致良知) was self-contradictory, and his claim that "action and knowledge are one" (知行合一) completely ignored the importance of attaining knowledge from the world, thus his learning could not lead to concrete and objective understanding of the world.[907] But Zhang equally disagreed with Yan Yuan 顏元, who tried to find a way in the early 17th century to overcome the supposed emptiness of Wang Yangming's followers. As Zhang described in a chapter on Yan (Yanxue 顏學), he decided to return to the ancient document "The Office of Land" (地官) of the *Rites of Zhou* as a factual manual to guide learning. Zhang was sympathetic to Yan's effort but pointed out that Yan did not understand the importance of conceptualization and theorization, equating the pursuit of knowledge tp the collection of facts. To expand on this point, Zhang stressed that a more philosophical approach, if used in a moderate manner, could benefit social-political life tremendously, as evinced by many Western philosophers. Zhang lamented that Yan Yuan's efforts to stay empirical and factual was simplistic, suggesting that a balance between philosophy and factual learning was the foundation to real political knowledge.

If the learning from the period of Wei and Jin through the period of Song-Ming became increasingly speculative (亂於魏晉，及宋明益蕩), and if Yan Yuan's attempt at

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醫尚不可作，況樸學百藝邪？幸有顧炎武、戴震以形名求是之道約之，然猶幾不能勝。何者？淫文破典，附靡者眾。"*Ibid.,* 102-105

[907] Ibid. 114

restoring a "substantive" approach to learning was destined to fail, it was the Qing evidential scholars who rose to change the situation. Here, Zhang traced the Classical learning of the Qing back to scholars of the Eastern Han, such as Du Lin 杜林 (?-47), Jia Kui 贾逵 (30-101), Ma Rong 馬融 (79-166) and Zheng Xuan 鄭玄(127-200), who had turned away from the mystical and politicized reading of the Classics by such Western Han theorists as Dong Zhongshu, and looked at the Classics instead as history. This meant that they would not try to read the Classics as if the words carried any direct guidance for contemporary events, instead, it made it possible to understand the intention (意) of people in their own historical contexts. These Eastern Han scholars "broadened the textual records, examined the laws, confirmed the names and facts [from the texts], and discussed society to observe the [condition of the] world, and [in so doing], the Six Classics returned to history."[908] They were able to interpret the supernatural legends and myths recorded in the Classical texts as historical information, making it possible for people in later times to know how they had influenced people's everyday beliefs.[909]

The first Qing figure to develop scholarship based on this attitude and method was Gu Yanwu. His most important contribution was his study of ancient phonetics, which made it possible for scholars to study philology. Then there came Yan Ruoju, Zhang Erqi and Hu Wei. The most systematic studies came out during the Qianlong era, represented by Hui Dong and Dai Zhen. Meanwhile, a different school had developed in the late Ming in Eastern Zhejiang, the leader of which was Huang Zongxi and whose followers included the Wan brothers who studied the *Rites.* Wan Sitong was particularly

[908] "博其別記, 稽其法度，核其名實，論其社會以觀世，而六藝複返於史" *Ibid.* 137

[909] "神話之病，不漬於今，其源流清濁之所處，風化芳臭氣澤之所及，則昭然察矣。" *Ibid*

interested in historiography. Again, they also often blended their learning with the influence of Song scholarship.[910] Between these two groups, Zhang clearly preferred the line of Gu Yanwu. After a detailed documentation of many major Qing scholars, Zhang wrote,

> Generally speaking, the Qing Classical scholars, apart from those choosing to follow the New Text school, were no different from the Han Classical scholars: they did not take the Classical interpretation to make a political judgment, thus they were short on indirect criticism; they did not follow omenology to judge human affairs, thus they were good at pursuing reality. Their strengths and shortcomings are different, but what they share is that they all investigate civilization (皆徵其文明). Why? Biography and general discussions are too broad to be applied [as guidance], thus would not be useful for governing. [They] offer suggestions without foundation (建議而不讎). What is the benefit of exaggerating and misunderstanding (誇誣何益)? Skills such as demonology, astrology, the five phases, and divination, use religion to conceal the Six Classics (六藝), how absurd and groundless! [When it comes to] the way of making judgment about humans, why not treat the Six Classics as ancient history, examining the categories of historical things, rather than trying to [directly] make laws [from speeches in the Classics]; then the traces of decadence and the flowering of ancient society would be generally known. By synthesizing [this knowledge], people would be able to understand the evolution of [society] (明進化); by analyzing such information, people would be able to investigate continuity and discontinuity.
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> 大氐清世經儒，自今文而外，大體與漢儒絕異：不以經術明治亂，故短於風議；不以陰陽斷人事，故長於求是。短長雖異，要之皆徵其文明。何者？傳記、通論，闊遠難用，固不周於治亂。建議而不讎，誇誣何益？鬼、象緯、五行、占卦之術，以宗教蔽六藝，怪妄！孰與斷之人道，夷六藝於古史，徒料簡事類，不曰吐言為律，則上世社會污隆之跡，猶大略可知。以此綜貫，則可以明進化；以此裂分，則可以審因革。故惟惠棟、張惠言諸家，其治《周易》，不能無拘摭陰陽，其他幾於屏閣。雖或瑣碎識小，庶將遠於巫祝者矣。[911]

[910] Zhang also documented that, at the same time, a different school developed in the late Ming from the Eastern Zhangjiang, whose leader was Huang Zongxi and followers included the Wan brothers. They studied the *Rites* and Wan Sitong was particularly interested in historiography. Again, they also often blended their learning with the influence of Song learning.

[911] Ibid., 161

Zhang acknowledged that the Qing Classical scholars did not aim at directly exploiting Classical passages to guide politics. Instead, they developed a way to gather knowledge about how history evolved and how social life changed.[912] Because of this, their learning could be grounded in "reality." By "reality", Zhang meant a contextual and collective power that shaped society. In doing so, these scholars built an independent foundation for themselves. In the last chapter, "The Hermit of Learning" (Xueyin 學隱), Zhang argued that the Classical scholars during the mid-Qing, especially Dai Zhen, established a significant model of intellectual and moral virtue. Referring to Dai Zhen's famous criticisms of Neo-Confucian morality, Zhang argued that Dai lived in a time of political and scholarly corruption, yet he found a way to be a truly critical and independent scholar by teaching his Classical learning. In doing so, he "Extinguished the absurd and the strange [in other teachings], giving those who would like to withdraw from their official posts a valid reason, and enabling those who still served the government to find their own meaning and peace. This is enough!"[913]

Zhang guided readers to the conclusion that Qing evidential scholarship embodied the virtues that were necessary for rebuilding elite learning in his time. Scholars such as

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[912] These Classical and historical scholars developed their learning in a world where several other options of learning also existed. The Neo-Confucians in the Qing had been conservative and 愚民. They were not interested in culture or illuminate any larger ambition of ordering the world as the sage kings. The Tongcheng school considered themselves as the follower of the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucians. The Changzhou New-Text school was essentially the learning of "*wenshi*" 文士, the literary man, who were self-indulgent and did not study the Classics. In the end of the Daoguang era, Wei Yuan adopted the New-Text language to argue that elites should aim at "ordering the world" as their goal of learning. But he had no real knowledge about the 師法略例 or the philology. He put everything together but his Classical reading was incoherent.

[913] "當是時，知中夏黵黯不可為，為之無魚子飢虱之勢足以藉手；上皆思偷惕祿仕久矣，則懼夫諧媚為疏附，竊仁義於侯之門者。故教之漢學，絕其恢譎異謀，使廢則中權，出則朝隱。如是足也！" *Ibid.* 180

Dai Zhen and Gu Yanwu exemplified how learning could be devoted to the interests of the community, while staying entirely self-sufficient and independent from political power. How did they do this? What should contemporary scholars do to maintain their spirit?

2. *Zhengsu* 政俗 as the Source of Scholarship

In the opening chapter, "The Origin of Learning" (Yuan xue 原學), Zhang argued that the nature of elite learning in any society is to acquire knowledge about its *zhengsu* 政俗, by which he meant its cultural and institutional traditions of politics, teaching, and social customs. He began with the assertion that, in general, scholarship is conditioned by *diqi* 地齊, geographical conditions, and *zhengsu*. However, in a globalized world where people from different places can communicate and gather, unique geographical conditions were no longer a major factor in shaping scholarship. The only important factor left to shape scholarship was *zhengsu*. "Scholars would observe and reflect on society, and develop their own learning based on their society's *zhengsu*."[914]

As we have discussed, Liang Qichao also considered the evidential tradition to be a model of elite culture, because its leaders developed an autonomous, reflective, and critical spirit through scholarship. Liang, however, mostly took the seventeenth century exemplars of this tradition as his models. Qian-Jia scholarship, he felt, focused too exclusively on texts. Liang's celebration of the tradition followed the position of Huang Zongxi, who believed that the open-ended and historically minded pursuit of political

[914] "夫地齊阻於不通之世,一術足以概量其國民。九隅既達，民得以游觀會同，斯地齊微矣。材性者，率特異不過—二人，其神智苟上窺青天，違其時則輿人不宜。故古者有三因，而今之為術者，多觀省社會，因其政俗，而明一指。" *Ibid.* 37

knowledge/theory (經術) based on the Classics and history would cultivate a learned and publically minded elite.

Zhang, however, had a difficult relationship with Huang Zongxi's position. For him, Huang's approach, which had become appealing again thanks to people such as Liang Qichao, endorsed Wang Yangming's idea of "attaining innate moral knowledge" (致良知). This was similar to Kang Youwei's Gongyang scholarship and other literary traditions of learning that claimed a universal moral mind based on their own subjective understanding that was hard to verify and share. Such a claim could elevate scholars above social practice and make them believe that they had access to real values that did not have their origins in human culture. In Zhang's view, the reason why the evidential scholars represented by Qian-Jia philology could serve as models was their focus on the cumulative textual tradition that represented *zhengsu*, without even trying to claim access to any values exterior to everyday practice. Focusing on the *zhengsu* would not provide positive knowledge about norms, but it would allow scholars to observe and reflect on those norms. Identifying the source of their own practice in *zhengsu*, scholars could become an integral part of this broader force to shape the life of the community, thus contributing to the community while maintaining their true independence, realizing the authority of elite learning, and reducing the possibility of people manipulating political and moral discourse to seek power.

This moral ideal of elite culture is elaborated in a later piece of writing by Zhang, in which he argued that the ideal represented an underlying cultural force that had fundamentally shaped China's civilization.

> Those who had bright virtue gathered and taught thousands of people in small alleys, without participating in the affairs of a government

academy….Contemporary people try to merely implement the foreign approach of gathering all the talent in government. [But] this kind of government is for tribal leaders and aristocratic nobles. Those foreign countries have not entirely left their feudal past, therefore they adopt this approach. China is different. Even the Han court could not use its strict orders to force two local scholars in Lu to serve. Disciples of [the Classical scholars] Guangong (貫公), Huangong (桓公), and Yongsheng (庸生) were also hermits. Zheng Kangcheng 鄭康成 [i.e Zheng Xuan] refused to serve even after the court invited him many times. Since the Jin dynasty, extraordinary talents often served as officials, but they did not use their learning to gain official titles. Why? Because these extraordinary talents knew that what the school taught were clichés. (The content that the school taught might contain all kinds of appealing and mysterious doctrines, but these doctrines were all [superficially] collected from other written books, thus they were often [groundless] clichés [without substantive understanding of reality]). If [the talented proposed] opinions but their opinions turned out to be inappropriate, then the values [underlying their opinions] would be twisted. Even if [their opinions turned out to be] appropriate, they still would not assume official titles based on the success of their learning. Thus, hiding one's virtue and suppressing one's light is a profound [ability], different from the [abilities required in the] customs shaped in a feudal systems. This is how China (中夏) has become China; its influence is broad and it cannot be changed even after hundreds of generations!

明德之士，聚徒千人，教授家巷，而不與辟雍橫舍之事者也。由是言之，師者在官，作述者在野，其為分職，居然殊矣。世人徒以域外之事相擬，諸材藝卓至者，一切陳立官府，此為酋長貴族之治。域外諸國悉去封建未遠，故可以媮為是也。諸夏即異，自漢世文法深峻，已不能致魯兩生。貫公、桓公、庸生之徒，猶在遺逸。鄭康成屢徵而不從命。自晉以降，特達之士，雖往往在吏職，然不以其學假借王官。何者？知學校之守，襲蹈常故而已。（雖有奇論眇理，皆采自他人成書。采自成書，則為襲蹈常故。）說而不當，則其道反詘，雖當，以其學承藉長官，又弗為也。故夫玄德潛耀之事，深矣遠矣，與市府封建之俗反矣。斯乃中夏所以為故，其風廓然，百世而不可易者也。[915]

If for Liang Qichao the underlying shaping force of Chinese civilization was a history of reflective political thinking since antiquity, for Zhang it was to be found in collective political practice, teachings and customs. If for Liang it was a political minded and critically engaged elite culture that embodied the prototype of his "new citizen," for

[915] "Cheng Shi" 程師, *Zhang Taiyan quanji: Taiyan wenlu chubian. wen lu* (vol.1) 章太炎全集 太炎文錄初編 文錄 (卷一), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 1985), 140

Zhang, the model for future citizens was represented by an industrious and specialized elite culture that would remain outside political power.

> Since the time of Yinzheng 嬴政(i.e. the First Emperor), in the land of Han there has been no [class of] dukes. Once the discrimination between social classes was removed, the customs of people greatly changed. The potential force that could become the citizens (國民) are not those at court, market, or school, but those who remained in the wilds. Thus, once the humble alleys perish, the traces of the Kings disappear.
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> 漢土自嬴政以來，藩侯絕跡，階級即平，民俗亦因之大異，所以為國民作潛勢力者，不在朝市不在庠序，而在蓬艾之間，故陋巷亡而王跡息。[916]

How, then, to create such a kind of elite culture? Where to find the *zhengsu* that learning ought to focus on? How to turn his ideal of elite culture into new civic virtues?

3. Writing Chinese History

These questions lead us to another part of Zhang's agenda: writing a history of Chinese civilization. In 1902, Liang Qichao had criticized Kang's dogmatic interpretation of the Confucian learning tradition, instead presenting it as a tradition that embraced critical thinking and cultural creativity, and began writing a national history of China. Zhang Taiyan quickly noticed Liang's turn to history and culture. In a letter to friend in March 1902, Zhang pointed out that after reading the most recent issues of *The New People's Journal* (Xinmin congbao 新民從報) he had noticed that "Rengong 任公 [i.e. Liang Qichao] has changed greatly; his learning has advanced day by day. To sum up, he now could prioritize the needs of society, [and take such needs] as the standard for what

[916] 漢土自嬴政以來，藩侯絕跡，階級即平，民俗亦因之大異，所以為國民作潛勢力者，不在朝市不在庠序，而在蓬艾之間，故陋巷亡而王跡息。 Zhang, "Da Meng'an" (答夢庵)*Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji* (vol.2), 397. Also, for a recent discussion on Zhang's idealistic imagination of scholar, see Jiang Mei 江湄, *Chuangzao 'chuantong' – Wanqing minchu zhongguo xueshu sixiangshi dianfan de queli.* 創造"傳統"－晚清民初中國學術思想史典範的確立 (Taipei: Renjian chubanshe, 2014.3) 148-55

is right and what is wrong."[917] Elsewhere he noted that Liang Qichao had started to commit himself to the construction of culture (專以昌明文化自任).[918]

For Liang himself, this turn was a natural development of his intellectual and political values. For Zhang, however, Liang's historical turn suggested that he had become more down-to-earth. After he read Liang's proposal for writing a national history of China from the perspective of the development of Chinese civilization, he immediately embraced such a plan, but offered a different design. In his letter to Liang, which was published in the *New People's Journal*, Zhang wrote,

> Personally, I think that if today we write history only for one time period (若專為一代), not only it is hard to discover new principles (發新理), but it also makes it difficult to carefully investigate the facts. [We] should only [write] general history (通史) that traverses thousands of years. [We] do not need to focus on making judgments about individual figures or focus on narrating events, [rather,] we ought to focus on [writing] about thematic institutional treatises (典志), so that such learning as psychology, sociology, and religion could all be merged into it. With new principles and new explanations (新理新說), [the new general history] would not have the problems of being subjectively judgmental as is Yuzhong's (i.e. Zheng Qiao 鄭樵) *Tongzhi* (通志). The value in writing a general history lies in two aspects. First, [it] focuses on discovering principles of progress and decline in socio-political life, and [such principles] would be seen from the thematic institutional treatises. Second, [it] focuses on boosting people's spirit and inspiring the future, and this has to be shown through biographies (紀傳). …[However,] general history has its own style, thus it cannot allow everyone to have his or her biography. Thus it creates tables (表) to record rulers, administrators, literary figures and scholars, and includes a small number of biographies of people who had an important impact on the society of the day. For those aspects of social conditions in various periods that are difficult to be put into a coherent structure, [we] should use Yu Zhong's[919] paradigm in which historical

[917] "《叢報》已出二冊，任公宗旨較前大異，學識日進，頭頭是道。總之以適宜當時社會與否為是非準地，報中亦不用山膏詈語以招阻力。大約此報通行，必能過於《清議》也。" *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian,* 130

[918] *Ibid.,* 131

[919] I think he meant the Southern Song historian Yuan Shu 袁樞 1131-1205, whose *zi* is Jizhong 機仲. Yuan is the author of *Tongjian jishi benmo* (通鑑紀事本末).

events are organized around some key themes (紀事本末例) . The entire book will include a hundred *juan*, in which the thematic institutional treatises shall take half of the book, and the tables, records, and biographies will take the other half. To analyze the categories of affairs and to investigate the principles for each of them, [we] should not just focus on individual historical periods; [in order to be] comprehensive and synthetic, the [paradigm of] institutional records (志) is necessary. And if we want to educate and enlighten people and inspire morale among the elite, then we cannot follow Yuzhong, who was too parsimonious with events; thus biographies are also necessary.

竊以今日作史，若專為一代，非獨難發新理，而事實亦無由詳細調查。惟通史上下千古，不必以褒貶人物、胪敘事狀為貴，所重專在典志，則心理、社會、宗教諸學，一切可以熔鑄入之。典志有新理新說，亦不至如漁仲《通志》蹈專己武斷之弊。然所貴乎通史者，固有二方面：一方以發明社會政治進化衰微之原理為主，則於典志見之；一方以鼓舞民氣、啟導方來為主，則亦必於紀傳見之……通史自有體裁，豈容為人人開明履歷。故於君相文儒之屬，悉為作表，其紀傳則但取利害關係有影響於今日社會者為撰數篇。猶有歷代社會各項要件，苦難貫穿，則取棫仲紀事本末例為之作記。全書擬為百卷，志居其半，志(表)記紀傳亦居其半。蓋慾分析事類，各詳原理，則不能僅分時代，函胡綜敘，而志為必要矣；慾開浚民智，激盪士氣，則亦不能如漁仲之略於事狀，而紀傳亦為必要矣。

In the past, when the Japanese wrote histories of China (支那), their history was simplistic and without meaning. Only their histories of civilizations contained fresh information about different human groups (種界異聞), and the rest was not very relevant. In short, they write textbooks, so these writings cannot be taken too seriously as scholarship. But the rest, [including] discussion of historiography and history of Asia, India, etc., will perhaps benefit our writing of [Chinese] history. ……I have read the *New People's Journal*, and I have seen that it frequently discusses historical learning. In issue eleven it introduces Japanese scholars' writing about Chinese history and explains its merits and demerits. Now I know that you are energized to make a contribution to historical studies. Humble as I am, I commit myself to that which no one is willing to do. Doesn't it mean that perhaps the legacy of our antiquity has not abandoned us (或亦大雅所不棄乎)?

頃者東人為支那作史，簡略無義，惟文明史尚有種界異聞，其餘悉無關宏旨。要之彼國為此，略備教科，固不容以著述言也。其餘史學原論，及亞細亞、印度等史，或反於修史有益……頃閱《新民從報》，多論史學得失，十一期報中又詳舉東人所修中史，定其優劣，知公於歷史一科，固振振慾發抒者。

鄙人雖駑下，取舉世不為之事，而以一身任之，或亦大雅所不棄乎？[920]

In keeping with his interpretation of the virtues of Qing evidential scholarship, the purpose of writing the history of Chinese civilization in the form of a general history was to search for new principles (新理) and understanding. It would not focus on evaluating people and documenting events, but produce thematic treatises (典章) that could include psychology, society, religious studies, and so on. It would allow scholars to discover the principles of progress and decline in social-political life. Biographies, comprising half of the work, would inspire the public to identify at a personal level with Chinese civilization, but, importantly, this personal identification would be based on moral values; it is the bond between the self and the civilization created by the Chinese community.

In a more detailed version of his proposal of Chinese history, "General Principals for a Comprehensive History of China" (Zhongguo tongshi lüeli 中國通史略例), which he included in his revised edition of *Qiushu* in 1902, Zhang further explained the value of the genre "thematic institutional treatises" (典志). They allow scholars to investigate the "reasons behind the changes and the rise and fall of social, political, and legal conditions" (社會政法盛衰蕃變之所原), and would also push people to reject history as a form of scholarship for making moral judgments.[921] This general history would be divided into

[920] Zhang (July, 1902), "Zhi Liang Qichao shu" 致梁啟超書, *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji*, 167. It was published in *Xinmin congbao* in August 4, 1902。

[921] For this purpose, the works of Du You 杜佑 and Ma Duanlin 馬端林, which compiled texts and institutions, offered an useful model. They categorized information, demonstrating an approach close to the analytical method (分析法) necessary for attaining knowledge. But their use of inductive method (演繹法) was not yet perfect. Wang Fuzhi's approach of analysis in his historical criticism (*Du tongjian lun* and *Song Lun*) was also inductive, although his comments were often naïve. With about a hundred volumes, he estimates, the new general history would integrate philosophical principles (哲理) to overcome the triviality of textual learning, but would

several sections. First, the most important section, “Dian”典 (Treatises), including topics: “race” (種族典), “housing” (民宅典), “dredging and building”(浚築典), “technology and crafts”(工藝典), “food and goods”(食貨典), “writing and spoken language”(文言典), “religious teaching”(宗教典), “scholarship”(學術典), “rituals and customs”(禮俗典), “official uniforms”(章服典), “laws and commands”(法令典), and “military preparation”(武備典). In this way, people would be able to trace whether “Affairs are civilized or backward and whether things are advancing or retreating.”[922] Zhang compared the study in this section with the kind of Western sociology that was meant to store the past (臧往). This section would focus on preserving China’s cultural tradition (人文略備).[923] As a

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also 鉤汲智沉，以振墨守之惑.” The commonality between Du You/Ma Duanlin and Wang Fuzhi was that they all looked at institutional changes in history, and they were different from 庶幾異夫策鋒、計簿、相斫書之為者矣！”中國秦漢以降，史籍繁矣。紀傳表志肇於史遷，編年建於荀悅，紀事本末作於袁樞皆具體之記述，非抽象之原論。杜、馬綴列典章，闔置方類，是近分析法矣。君卿評議簡短．貴與持論鄙倍，二子優絀，誠巧歷所不能計．然於演繹法皆未盡也。衡陽之聖，讀《通鑒》《宋史》，而造論最為稚馴，其法亦近演繹；乃其文辯反覆，而辭無組織，譬諸織女，終日七襄，不成報章也。若至社會政法盛衰蕃變之所原，斯人暗焉不昭矣。王、錢諸彥，昧其本干，攻其條末，豈無識大，猶愧賢者。今修《中國通史》，約之百卷，鎔冶哲理．以祛逐末之陋；鉤汲智沉，以振墨守之惑；庶幾異夫策鋒、計簿、相斫書之為者矣!

[922] “西方作史．多分時代；中國則惟書志為貴，分析事類，不以時代封畫：二者亦互為經緯也。彪蒙之用，斯在揚榷，大端令知古今進化之軌而已，故分時者適於學校教科；至乃研精條列，各為科目，使一事之文野，一物之進退，皆可以比較得之，此分類者為成學討論作也。亦猶志方輿者，或主郡國，則山水因以附見，其所起訖，無必致詳；或主山川，記一山必盡其脈帶，述一水必窮其出入，是寧能以郡國封限矣！昔漁仲粗粗，用意猶在諸《略》；今亦循其義法，改命曰《典》，蓋華嶠之故名也。” *Qiushu xiangzhu,* 860

[923] “西方言社會學者，有靜社會學、動社會學二種。靜以臧往，動以知來。通史亦然。有典則人文略備，推跡古近，足以臧往矣；若其振厲士氣，令人觀感，不能無待紀傳。今為《考紀》《別錄》數篇。非有關於政法、學術、種族、風教四端者，雖明若文、景，賢若房、魏，暴若胡亥，奸若林甫，一切不得入錄，獨列《帝王》《師相》二表而已。昔承祚作《益部耆舊傳》，臚舉蜀才，不遺小大；及為《蜀志》，則列傳亡幾。蓋史職所重，不在褒譏，苟以知來為職志，則如是足也。” *Ibid.,* 863

supplement to "Dian" (Treatises), there would be a small section of "Ji" 記 (Records), for recording important events and affairs that had played a role shaping the changes that the "Dian" cannot cover.[924] Then there would be some biographical writings for boosting the morale, classified under under "Kao Ji" 考紀 (Investigation and Accounts) and "Bielu"別錄 (Other Records), but they would be only devoted to people who played a role in politics, law, scholarship, race, and customs/teaching. He emphasized that the goal of such biographical writing would have nothing to do with celebrating or condemning a person. Then there would be "Biao" 表 (tables) to document emperors (帝王), historical geography (方輿), official titles (職官), teachers and ministers (師相), and literary figures and scholars (文儒).[925] Overall, the responsibility of historians was to "foresee the future" (知來); it should not be about making moral judgments. Once the basic goal of historical writing became clear, Zhang believed, it would be important to consult the materials and conclusions from the historical writings of other civilizations. Cross-cultural comparison would allow a better understanding of China's own history.[926]

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[924] "諸典所述．多近制度。及夫人事紛紜，非制度所能限，然其系於社會興廢，國力強弱，非眇末也。會稽章氏謂後人作史．當兼採《尚書》體例．《金縢》《顧命》就一事以詳始卒。機仲之《紀事本末》，可謂冥合自然，亦大勢所趨，不得不爾也。故複略舉人事，論撰十篇，命之曰《記》。" *Ibid.,* 862. In particular, these include: 周服記, 秦帝記, 南胄記, 唐藩記, 黨錮記, 革命記, 陸交記, 海交記, 胡寇記, 光複記.

[925] 帝王表, 方輿表, 職官表, 師相表, 文儒表

[926] "今日治史，不專賴域中典籍。凡皇古異聞，種界實跡，見於洪積石層，足以補舊史所不逮者，外人言支那事．時一二稱道之，雖謂之古史，無過也。亦有草昧初啟，東西同狀，文化既進，黃白殊形，必將比較同異，然後優劣自明，原委始見，是雖希臘、羅馬、印度、西膜諸史，不得謂無與域中矣。若夫心理、社會、宗教各論，發明天則．烝人所同，於作史尤為要領。道家者流，出於史官，莊周、韓非，其非古之良史邪！" *Ibid.,* 867

Zhang did not see his approach as anything new. He found a precedent in Qian-Jia scholarship, particularly the practices of Hui Dong and Dai Zhen. In a personal letter, Zhang celebrated their scholarship.

> Recently I have been working on the treatises on scholarship (學術志), and I think Hui Dong and Dai Zhen are truly my models. They had nothing more than raw historical materials, but, [they] used them to discover the traces of progress in Chinese civilization…. [It was when I] tried to write a general history that I realized that Dai's learning embraces everything. Philology alone can be applied to [issues] beyond [the studies of] the six categories of Chinese characters and the seven pronunciations of Chinese phonology. In the past, Spencer's study of society often investigated unusual languages (異言) and looked for their roots. [His study] started from something small, but what it could prove is big. Why? Antiquity was primitive. As for the actions and affairs of the kings in the middle period, [what] has been documented in history is barely sufficient, and the traces can be only found in writings and language… When China fathoms the roots of its language, it certainly cannot compare to Europe in terms of complexity and breadth, but just taking the place of China (禹域) alone, what [one can gain from a linguistic investigation] is already a great deal.
>
> 近方草創學術志，覺定宇、東原，真我師表，彼所得亦不出天然材料，而支那文明進化之跡，藉以發見。…… 試作通史，然後知戴氏之學，彌倫萬有，即小學一端，其用亦不專在六書七音。頃斯賓薩為社會學，往往探考異言，尋其語根，造端至小，而所證明者至大。何者？上世草昧，中古帝王之行事，存於傳記這已寡，惟文字語言間留其痕跡……中國尋審語根，誠不能繁博如歐洲，然即以禹域一隅言，所得固已多矣。[927]

For Zhang, the philological scholarship of Hui Dong and Dai Zhen represented an ideal of learning. Centering on writings and language, Hui and Dai were able to develop a panoramic and objective vision of politics, culture, and society, resembling Spencer's investigation of ancient culture, politics and beliefs. In comparison, other major historians

[927] 1902, August, 8, "Zhi Wujun Sui shu," 致吳君遂書, *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji*, 172 .

in Chinese history were not able to cross so many boundaries to show such a comprehensive grasp. [928]

> "Taishi [i.e. Sima Qian 司馬遷] knows the civilization of society, but is unfamiliar with [the history] of central politics; Mengjian [i.e. Ban Gu 班固] and Chongyuan [i.e. Kong Yingda 孔穎達] know the institutions of the central court, but are isolated from society. The historian who knows nothing of these two sides but only records historical events is Chengzuo [i.e. Chen Shou 陳壽]. And the one who knows both sides is Yuzhong [i.e. Zheng Qiao 鄭樵], but he is often arbitrary [in making judgments]."
>
> 太史知社會之文明，而於廟堂則疏；孟堅、衡遠知廟堂之制度，而於社會則隔；全不具者為乘祚，徒知記事；悉具者為漁仲，又多武斷。[929]

Beginning in 1902, Zhang followed his own design to conduct historical research. In his influential work "Sequencing Surnames" (序種姓), Zhang drew on the imperial genealogies from the sage kings to the Spring and Autumn periods written in *Origins of the Generations* (Shiben 世本) (c.a. 2nd Century BCE), aiming to reconstruct the lineages of the earliest Chinese surnames that emperors in antiquity had bestowed on others. The early kings led their people to conquer different tribes and merged these tribes under the same writing system, political system and teachings. At the same time they gave people surnames, some of which were based on group's ethnic origins, sometimes on official titles, sometimes on the posthumous names of the dukes of their vassal states, and so on. For Zhang, tracing the origins, changes, and lineages of names to the present would help to identify who became Chinese by taking Chinese surnames. He blamed the Ming emperor Taizu for disturbing the distinctions between the Chinese and the northern tribes by asking them to change their multi-syllabi surnames into single-character surnames, but

[928] Zhang (August 8, 1902), "Zhi wujun sui shu," *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji*, 172.

[929] *Zhang Taiyan nianpu chang bian*, 140-141.

he had no problem accepting ethnic minorities who had long been merged into China by voluntarily taking Chinese surnames, using Chinese language, and acting according to Chinese teachings. He saw himself acting on the agenda that Gu Yanwu started but did not carry through, an agenda of reconstructing the origins, geographical distributions, and changes in Chinese surnames, which would help contemporary people identify the Chinese as a group.[930] With a similar goal, Zhang also wrote "On Dialects" (Fangyan 方言), "Defining Rituals and Customs"(Ding lisu 訂禮俗), "Distinguishing Music" (Bian Yue 辯樂), and other works to trace various cultural-institutional traditions back to antiquity.

Both Zhang Taiyan and Liang Qichao considered historical learning to be foundational. Following what they considered to be the spirit of the Qing evidential scholars, they looked at Chinese civilization as an historically developed cultural-political community. Instead of centering their attention on the political force of government or the social force of the family or lineage, they argued for the importance of identifying learning with the formation of China's civic order. In their scholarship, the Classics are historicized as the products and records of the origins of Chinese civilization. However, Liang looked at China's civilizing process as the outcome of its leaders' reflective and critical engagement in politics, thus emphasizing the role of the history of political thinking in shaping the course of the Chinese community, while Zhang focused on what he called *zhengsu* 政俗, namely, the collective cultural-institutional practice. For him, to

[930] What Zhang was referring to was Gu Yanwu's "Xingshishu" 姓氏書 in his *Rizhilu.*

understand the civilizing process of China meant to investigate the broad textual tradition since antiquity. Zhang relied upon an idealistic view of Chinese civilization just as much as Liang did. He did not try to explain popular culture, but assumed that customs, common beliefs, and habits were the products of a unified high political culture of antiquity. Based on this assumption, he believed that his approach would allow scholars to understand the reality of China and prevent them from indulging in what he considered to be irresponsible and dishonest moral claims.

These men's different understandings of where to locate the Chinese civilizing legacy suggest two kinds of intellectual politics in the context of early 20th century China. Liang, believing that culture is the expression of the free agency of individuals and civilization is a process of the realization of the free agency of the community under the leadership of its cultural and intellectual elite, embraced a kind of political universalism in his interpretation of Chinese civilization. He held that the high cultural tradition of China comprised a reflective and critical practice carrying universal political significance. Culture is real precisely because it is necessary for individuals to realize and express their common agency as humans. People can and should compare political systems in terms of their recognitions of the agency and autonomy of a community's members. The choice of constitutionalism and a parliamentary system for China were thus correct not because they were a part of Western culture that China ought to follow, but because they were built on such ideals. At the same time, it also meant that the study of Chinese civilization could provide useful normative insights to other countries. For instance, after the carnage of the First World War, Liang would propose that Chinese political thought in fact had something to offer to the Western world.

However, Zhang did not share Liang's weak political universalism. For him, politics was essentially a part of the broad cultural-institutional system; culture determined politics. In writing history, he focused on reconstructing the unique conceptual and linguistic tradition that had formed through the growth of the Chinese community, a collective tradition that went beyond any individual intellectual or cultural leader's power of self-reflection. It was this understanding of the unique conceptual and linguistic traditions of China that would guarantee a genuine understanding of China's condition and needs, and it was based on such scholarship that the contemporary intellectual and cultural elite could find its own autonomous foundation. At the same time, however, Zhang's radical historicism would make it difficult for Chinese scholars to offer other societies any models. Any positive conclusions about political systems that claimed to be drawn from common human experience should not be trusted. Such claims would signal that scholars do not think on their own, or that they do not fully commit themselves to the public interest. This radical historicism made a powerful moral claim of autonomy. It was the Chinese intellectuals who understood China's past who had the authority to define the conditions and problems of Chinese society.

Compared to Liang, Zhang's history of Chinese civilization assumed a much more basic and self-evidently defined Chinese national identity as its subject. For Liang, the goal of promoting a national identity through the discourse of *Minzu zhuyi* 民族主義 was to transform individuals into responsible and autonomous citizens. But for Zhang, to define a Chinese national identity was to promote the awareness of the unique way of cultural-political life that a community with a single racial origin had developed through history. Such a conception of national identity would not require its people to make an

effort to transform themselves, but would recognize their uniqueness. In such a community, individuals would acquire true freedom and equality because they could live based on their own customs, without being judged against any universal norms. The members of the community had to commit to a shared cultural tradition, because that tradition was foundational to the interests and future of their own racial community.

5. The Revised Edition of *Qiushu* as a Political Statement: The Mission of Elite Culture, Chinese History, and the Illegitimacy of the Qing Government

Zhang Taiyan presented his newly developed ideology in his revised edition of *Qiushu* (訄書重印本). The revision, in which Zhang included many post-1900 writings, began in June of 1902 and was completed in early 1903.[931] Zhang opens with a preface in which he harshly criticizes two earlier pieces in which he had tried to work around the idea of constitutionalism.[932] The main body of the book contains 63 pieces in all, of which 29 are new additions.

The first edition of *Qiushu* from 1900 had consisted of three main sections: Section One was about the meaning of the tradition of *Ru* learning. Section Two was about the origins of the Chinese civilization, in light of some common principles of the origins of world civilizations. Section Three tried to explain how politics and education should be designed given what we know about the principles of the origins of civilization.

[931] For a detailed investigation of when Zhang compiled the revised the edition of *Qiushu*, see Zhu Weizheng 朱維錚, introduction to *Zhang Taiyan quanji*.

[932] "Kedi kuangmiu"(客帝匡謬) and "Fanzhen kuangmiu" (藩鎮匡謬)

In the revised edition, Zhang greatly expanded the first section on *Ru* learning.[933] It now began with the essay "On the Origin of Learning" 原學 and ended with two pieces on knowledge and understanding, "Defining Real Knowledge" (訂實知) and "Comprehending Cognition" (通識).[934] In the middle were twelve essays - discussed above - on scholarly trends from Confucius to the Qing. By placing this section at the beginning of the book, Zhang made his case for a common ground of elite culture based on the Evidential Learning tradition represented by Gu Yanwu and Dai Zhen, a line of learning that was in his view identified with China's cumulative cultural-institutional tradition.

The contents of Sections Two and Three were also expanded and revised.[935] The topics in Section Two now included the origins of human societies, the origins of the Chinese community, the institution of families or clans, population, sacrifices, writing, and mapping. The new pieces that he added to the revised edition were his two-part study "Sequencing the Surnames of the Race"(序種姓) and an essay "On Dialects"(方言). In the revised edition, Section Two intends to illustrate his "civilizational history" model (文明史) that he started to adopt in the early 1900s, namely, "preserving the past" (存古) by understanding the origins of China's community, politics, teachings, and culture.

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[933] In the total 13 titles, there are 10 new titles, which take about one third of all the new titles he put in the second edition.

[934] Titles in section one: 原學，訂孔，儒墨，儒道，儒法，儒俠，儒兵，學變，學蠹，王學，顏學，清儒，學隱，訂實知，通識

[935] Titles in section two: 原人，序種姓（上下），原變，族制，民數，封禪，河圖，方言，訂文（附證名雜議），述圖，公言，平等難，明獨，冥契 some of these titles are about general topics of culture and politics, while some are on specific Chinese institutions.

In Section Three, almost half of the titles in the revised edition were new.[936] This section focuses on Zhang's historical studies of government in Chinese history. Topics include law making, bureaucracy, taxation, the banning of tobacco, coinage, schools, rituals, and local government. His evaluations of policies in China's past are often based on their contributions to social stability, the improvement of people's livelihood, the balance of government's use of power, and the continuity of the cultural identity of China. Importantly, he delivered his proposals of policies and political principles through historical discussion. For instance, in the essay "Understanding Method" (通法), Zhang looked back to the history of the imperial government since Han, showing several policies that would be useful for China's future. The first one was the separation of the emperors' property from the property of the state. The second one was the development of a relatively independent local government with the prefectural system. The third one was Wang Mang's 王莽 land reform, which claimed that all the land belonged to the state but was distributed to the people. The system later developed into the Tang's "Equal land distribution system"(均田制). The fourth one was the abolishment of the eunuch system in the late Liang. The fifth one was the establishment of provincial administration commissioners (布政使), surveillance commissioners (按察使), and regional military commissioners (都指揮使), which in his view symbolized the separation of administration, jurisdiction, and military power.[1] In writing this piece, Zhang freely drew comparisons between these Chinese creations and institutional design in the West to

[936] 9 new titles (from total 19 titles) titles in section three: 通法，官統（上中下），商鞅，正葛，刑官，訂律，不加賦難，明農，禁菸草，訂版籍（附均田法），制幣，弭兵難，經武，議學，原教（上下），爭教，憂教，訂禮俗，辨樂，相宅，地治。

make sense of the purposes behind the institutions as dealing with similar government needs, but the reference in the writings was from Chinese history itself. It seems that his opening essay in this Section aimed to establish a model for political design, showing how various practices in the past could be understood in the new intellectual world, while providing references to historical texts for contemporary scholars.

In the rest of the revised version of Section Three, Zhang added new essays presenting his views for future government, firmly grounded in terms of Chinese history. In "Local Self-Government" (地治) , Zhang criticized the centralism of the prefectural system and celebrated the model of federalism (聯州) as it was applied in different ways by Prussia and the United States. To show the meaning and merits of the system, he explained how modern federalism echoed the Zhou model of feudalism. In "Defining Household Registration" (訂版籍) and "Selecting a Capital" (相宅), Zhang made reference to his conversations with Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866-1925) on household registration, land taxation and the choice of the location of the capital, providing examples from institutional history to explain the feasibility of various choices. Zhang appended "Evenly Distributing the Land" (平均地權) to his essay "Defining Household Registration," in which he built on his conversation with Sun to design the new government's redistribution of land to the people for a fairer economy. In "On the Origins of the Religious Teaching" (原教), Zhang argued that all political communities had developed religious teaching as a part of their apparatus for ordering social life, thus he argued for the importance of preserving the community's religious beliefs to maintaining the social order without radical transformation. In doing so, he criticized Christian missionaries for what he called their narrow-minded definition of religion and

their criticism of other cultures' religions as uncivilized. Following this line of argument, he included his newly written essays "Defining Rituals and Customs" (訂禮俗) and "Distinguishing Music" (辯樂) to Section Three, in which he laid out the political, cultural, and social origins of various ceremonial practices in antiquity and through their later development. His goal, it seems, was to make sense for the modern world of the cultural and political logic behind these practices, so that their meaning could be apparent to people designing policies in the present.

Zhang also added an entirely new section to the revised edition, explaining why it was legitimate to overturn the Qing government and what to do to make it happen.[937] In the essay, "Passiveness" (消極) , Zhang criticized the contemporary supporters of constitutional monarchy. Their efforts to reform the Qing government would only lead the Qing to continue its irresponsible government in the name of "progress." At the beginning of the essay, he wrote,

> When I talk about bringing reforms and planning new methods, my goal is to leave my words for the future kings to establish their systems, but I am worried that they might easily influence the youth. Instead of progressing to follow the new, the youth should regress to preserve the old. When policies grow everyday, it is called 'positive' [politics]; when policies decrease everyday, it is called 'passive' [politics]. Passive [politics] [may seem to be] insufficient for creating things, but [nevertheless under the passive politics] things would be created! [People, who] remove or follow [policies] without cautious investigation, [while believing that they have] understood the foundation of the Kings' rules, cannot be trusted.
>
> 章炳麟曰：吾言變革、布新法，皆為後王立制，而慮或闌入於清年。清年與進而從新，不如退而守舊。凡政日益，謂之"積極"；凡政日損，謂之"消極"。消極不足以立事．而事立矣！非審去就、識王化根原者，都不信也。[938]

[937] 9 titles are newly added: 消極，尊史，徵七略，哀焚書，哀清史（附中國通史略例），雜誌，別錄（甲、乙），解辮髮.

[938] "Xiaoji" 消極

He thus took a radical position, claiming that the "positive politics" had to stop in order to bring the real change that China needed, namely, to let the Qing fall. Otherwise, the modern politics that the Qing needed to learn would in turn contribute to its expansion into an even more repressive state and more corrupted bureaucracy, which would abuse its power with the help of modern industry and technology. Ideas for bettering the country, such as improving international relationships, increasing international trade, empowering the military and public security, would paradoxically lead to more damage to Chinese society.[939] Zhang argues that scholars avoid the whole agenda of the New Policies (新政). Otherwise, they will make themselves appear to be opportunistic and self-interested.

On what grounds, then, was the Qing government illegitimate? If constitutional reform was not the right choice, what should be done instead? Zhang added a chapter on the meaning of historical writing, entitled "Respecting History" (Zunshi 尊史), toward the end of this section. The essay centers on *Shiben* (世本) as an intellectual model and a standardized source (繩矩) for basic references and knowledge in the study of Chinese civilization.

Unlike Liang Qichao, whose individualism celebrated the writing of biographies of intellectual-political figures as an important cultural form, Zhang countered again that it was more important to compile records of institutions, culture, and society. The main values of historical writing were to demonstrate the origins, development and transformation of human cultural-institutional creations, which he considered to be the

[939] "Xiaoji," *Qiushu xiangzhu*, 337.

history of civilization. Zhang argued that *Shiben,* or, *Origins of Generations*, had been written by Zuo Qiuming (左丘明) as a project parallel to Zuo's commentary on Confucius' *Spring and Autumn Annals* and his *Guoyu* 國語 (The Discourses of the States), two historical works mainly focused on political events and speeches. [940]

In particular, Zhang pointed to four chapters in *Shiben*. The first is a section on the lineages of early rulers, starting from the Yellow Emperor, in its chapter "The Lineage of Emperors" (Dixi 帝系). The second, which has been discussed earlier, is the chapter "Surnames" (Xingshi 姓氏), which aims to map out the origins and proliferation of Chinese surnames given by the early kings based on their tribal, ethnic and geographical origins. Zhang intended that both chapters should be organized neatly, with no unclear or speculative information, enabling them to play an important role in uniting people under a common identity and understanding, while forestalling ungrounded discourses such as much of the information in the Classic of Mountains and Seas (Shanghai jing 山海經). [941] These two chapters would provide basic reference and

[940] "紀傳泛濫，書志則不能言物始，苟務編綴，而無所於期赴。何者？中夏之典，貴其記事，而文明史不詳，故其實難理。……非通於物化，知萬物之皆出於幾，小大無章．則弗能為文明史。蓋左丘明成《春秋》內外傳，又有《世本》以為胠翼，近之矣。" *Qiushu xiangzhu,* 785

[941]"生民之紀．必貞於一統，然後妖妄塞，地天絕。故《世本帝系》、《氏姓》之錄，賢於《中候》《苗興》無訾程計數矣。夫整齊世系，分北宗望，成而觀之．無瑰特。察諸子所說，與箸於《楚辭》《山海經》者，後先凌雜，派別撓亂，然後知此其為繩矩也。" *Ibid.,* 787.

guidance (權度) if one wanted to study the information from other texts.[942] They thus should serve as models of the writing of *zhi,* treatises for contemporary people.[943]

The third chapter Zhang pointed to is "The Chapter on Residence" (Ju pian 居篇), on the geographical origins and movements of the various capitals from the polity of the Yellow Emperor to the early Warring States period. According to Zhang, this chapter showed that the author paid attention to the interests and habits of common people, which could not be included by Confucius in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* because the latter was based on government documents. Those documents had noted state policies "But did not connect them with the geographical conditions and common habits of people."[944] In particular, since people of early times traveled less, they often identified closely with their localities, and people often recommended people from their localities to govern. Gradually humans traveled and communicated with each other, thus local cultures intermingled and became less unified.[945] Just as the "Airs of the States" (國風) in the

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[942] "《山海經》記胙桑等十一姓，或出神聖之後，而入夷狄，宜足為《世本》增益舊聞。其他胄系名號，芬繆難理矣。及以《世本》為權度，而亦灼然昭徹。……微《世本》之為繩矩，眩者亦眾矣。……今繩矩已具，與之博觀於疑事，而新知又可得也。" *Ibid.* 788-9.

[943]"又曰：左氏以《內傳》為紀年，《外傳》為國別，此與紀傳異流而同用。《世本》非表，故其志也。後之史，獨魏收能志《官氏》，顧嫥述錄索虜而已。其他族史，未有能為中夏考跡者也。……後來作者，有述斯篇，其以補遷、固之缺遺焉。述《帝系》《氏姓》二篇。"*Ibid.,* 792-3

[944]"仲尼作《春秋》，而取於周室者，百二十國寶書。……御史所不至者，其書不登。故寶書之數，視其員矣。然皆記述國政，下不通於地齊萌俗。……下通者，此謂之行。《管子》曰："《春秋》者。所以記成敗也；行者，道民之利害也。（《山權數》）"小行人以萬民之利害為一書，名從其官。然則《世本居篇》自此作。" *Ibid.,* 794-5.

[945] "夫古者有分土，無分民。曩令民皆州處，至於老死不相往來，按版而識姓，稽籍而辨族，百姓與能，則大司徒與行人不勞也。丘壤世同，賓萌世異，而民始不衼壹。 *Ibid.,* 796. ……及夫同在九土，時有動靜，函其舊風，因其新俗，雜揉以成種性……" *Ibid.,* 797

Classic of Poetry allowed people to differentiate customs, the chapter "Ju pian" allowed people to differentiate localities, thus enabling people to trace their community's historical geography. Apart from Sima Qian's "Biographies of the Merchants" (Huozhi liezhuan 貨殖列傳) and Ban Gu's "Treatise on Geography" (Dili zhi 地理志) in the *Han History*, Zhang did not believe that later scholarship had followed up on this important category of learning.[946]

The fourth chapter he took as a model was entitled "The Chapter on Creation" (Zuo pian 作篇), which is a list of cultural heroes and kings with their inventions of various essential cultural forms, including agriculture, technologies, laws, musical instruments, ceremonies, and so on, spanning the ages from the supposed discoverer of fire (燧人) to figures from the Warring States. For Zhang, this chapter represented an important model for treatises (志) on crafts and arts (工藝). The sections "Xunfang" (訓方) and "Kaogong" (考工) in the *Zhou Rites* (周禮) are similar in type, but this model largely disappeared in later periods. The most meaningful legacy from the past were these cultural creations of the ancients, because these achievements had made great use of the available resources to nourish people (利用厚生).[947] Among the various kinds of books

[946]"夫《國風》者，見異風；《居篇》者，見異居。自《居篇》而後，惟《貨殖列傳》與《地理志》夫？斯學既喪．故殖民之地，以逋逃罪人棄之，以戎狄斥遠之。述《居篇》。"*Ibid.,* 798

[947] "洋洋乎九功之歌，以利用厚生者。豈不大哉！故曰：'古曰在昔，昔曰先民，先民有作，有所作也。'（《毛詩商頌故訓傳》）《訓方》以正歲觀新物，而《考工》記三代異上，進化有形。其後史官乃不為工藝作志。君子以為．鐘律量衡之設官，（《律歷志》述劉子駿說，述銅律則云"職在大樂"，述概量則云"職在大倉"，述權衡則云"職在大行"，是也）陶匠梓輿之相變，（《史通敘事篇》：'昔《禮記檀弓》，工言物始。夫自我作故，首創新儀，前史所刊，後來取証。是以漢初立槷，子長所書；魯始為髽，丘明是記。河橋可作，元凱取驗於《毛詩》；男子有笄，伯支遠征於《內則》；即其事也。'案，此雖非專指工

recording the genealogy of the ancient community, however, only the *Shiben* had a chapter on cultural creations. Situating the topic of cultural creations in a book of genealogy gave the *Shiben* more merit. People living in a more economically advanced and materially affluent time often do not know how various cultural enterprises were originally created. "The Chapter on Creation" could unify and standardize (統紀) their understanding about the origins of culture.[948] More importantly, by showing how cultural creations were often a group effort and how technologies built upon one another, the chapter teaches people the values of social life, showing them that fundamental reason for social life was to benefit individuals who might have limited power. [949]In addition, Zuo's learning in "The Chapters on Creation" documented the material culture of the society in the form of *zhi* in a historically rich and subtle way. It showed how culture and technologies had been improved through generations, how old wisdoms could be restored when it is needed, and how various places might follow different speeds in developing civilization. Thus, the learning left tangible sources for rulers and scholars to understand the conditions of human life. Such function of *zhi* was similar to the purpose of

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藝，而萌俗尚器，必有最先，亦《考工》之意也）一切可以比類成籍。此作志者所宜更始乎？" *Ibid.,* 799

[948] "今是世系之書，則是奠昭穆，麗派別，勿錄其葬物章典。獨《世本》有《作篇》，所道者不封於姬氏，奔軼泰古，上窮無始矣。此其義何也？以為古者"烝民始生，未有形政，人人異義；父子兄弟離散，不能和合，天下之百姓皆以水火毒藥相虧害。至有餘力，不能以相勞；腐朽餘財，不以相分；隱匿良道．不以相教。"（《墨子尚同上篇》語）作力劇而器用匱。民所歌吟，不怨王者，然盡《大東》《北山》之輩也。今文、武既王，澤人足乎木，山人足乎魚，農夫不斫削不陶冶而足械用，工賈不耕田而足菽粟。上觀作者，皆弗知其權輿。故《作篇》者，所以統紀是也。"*Ibid.,* 801

[949]"故挽近視以為一器一事者，皆數者相待以成。古者或不能給其相待。而匱乏已甚，雖一人之巧，什伯於倕，無益。由是揖其民力，相更為師。苟史官之無《作篇》，而孰以知合群所自始乎?" *Ibid.,* 808

museums.[950] Zhang again criticized Kang Youwei in his conclusion for using the Gongyang theory of three generations, because in his view Kang ignored the gradual and cumulative historical change that happened at the level of rituals, customs, technologies, and so on. Zuo's learning in "The Chapter on Creation" could reveal the progress and decline of civilization without referring to the cosmic resonance theory underlying Gongyang mysticism.[951]

In Zhang's view, the *Shiben* embraced a broad perspective to document the community's life by focusing on informative and essential categories. Its cultural-institutional focus pushed the author to adopt the model of *zhi,* tracing the cultural, economic, linguistic, and institutional developments in early China. Its various chapters together formulated an internally connected system of knowledge. It did not only manifest the historical successiveness of the formation of the community's life, but also the relationships between identity, material culture, language, institutions, geography, etc. Metaphorically, Zhang wrote that it was woven by warp and weft, and it contained both

[950] "緊豈激而泰遠，宕而失後者邪？夫古器純樸，後制麗則，故有名物大同，形範改良者.一矣。（若古自有笛，漢丘仲亦作笛；京房乃備五音也）禮極而褫，樂極而崩，遺器墜失，光複舊物者，二也。（若前漢兗冕已亡，明帝始作）此既冠帶，彼猶毛薪，則其閉門創造.眇與佗會者，三矣。（泰古關梁不通。故合宮衢室，黃、唐粗備。及古公遷岐，猶陶複陶穴．未有家室。此見質文變革，遠及千年。禹域一隅，自為胡、越。今時床幾由來久矣，而席地之儀，猶在日本。古之九州，亦若神州、東國，進化異時，諒無多怪者也）三者非始作，然皆可以作者稱之。左氏於開物成務之世，特為錯互，或舉其始，或揚其中，或述其季，所以見"東夏之命，古今之法，言異而典殊"。（《呂氏春秋察今》語）"偝、堯之時，混吾之美在下"；興時化者，"莫善於侈靡"也。（《管子侈靡篇》語）然則天子為國，圖具樹物，以視天材異同，民用因革。赤刀夷玉，兌戈和弓，胤之舞衣，垂之竹矢，雜陳於路寢者，非直以是觀美，其用則與今世博物院等。故亦素臣作書之志也." *Ibid.,* 810

[951] "世儒或憙言三世，以明進化。察《公羊》所說，則據亂、升平、大平，於一代而已矣。禮俗革變，械器遷訛，誠弗能於一代盡之。…如左氏《作篇》之學，乃足以遠監宙合，存雄獨照，不言金火之相革，而文化進退已明昭矣。斯亦所謂貫穿中外，騁驟古近，而微言見於札牒之表者也。述《作篇》。" *Ibid.,* 813-4

branches and roots. Moreover, in Zhang's view, by systematically documenting and classifying cultural-institutional life, the *Shiben* represented a morally and politically responsible model because it enabled the community to "verify" (徵) the factuality of the past through the textual tradition.[952] For Zhang, the *Shiben* represented a scholarly practice essential to the prosperity of the community.

It was from this perspective that Zhang launched his attack on the Manchu government. In the essay "Lamenting the Books that were Burnt" (Ai fenshu 哀焚書), Zhang argued that the Qing's destruction of large quantities of non-official historical writings from the late Ming revealed that dynasty's corruption from the very beginning. In destroying public memory, the Manchus were cultivating ruling techniques intended to keep their Chinese subjects ignorant and loyal to the government.[953] In a following essay, "Lamenting Qing History" (Ai Qingshi 哀清史), Zhang lamented that the historical documents and writings during the Qing suffered from government censorship. This in turn gave rise to the weak, perfunctory, and opportunistic mainstream literati culture. No

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[952] "《世本》者，不盡以《春秋》，其言竟黃、頊。將上攀《尚書》，下儕周典，廣《春秋》於八代者也。雜而不越，轉一機以持縷，為之於此，成文於彼，此其為有經緯本末，而徵耆艾者哉！"*Ibid.,* 786

[953] "今夫血氣心知之類，惟人能合群。群之大者，在建國家、辨種族。其條列所系，曰：言語、風俗、歷史。三者喪一，其萌不植。俄羅斯滅波蘭而易其言語，突厥滅東羅馬而變其風俗，滿洲滅支那而毀其歷史。自歷史毀，明之遺緒，滿洲之穢德，後世不聞。斯非以遏吾民之發憤自立，且剗絕其由蘗邪？自是以後，掌故之守，五史之錄，崇其諛佞，獎飾虛美，專以駕言誑耀．使莫能罪狀己以階革命。偉哉！夫帝王南面之術，固鷙於秦哉。"

"且乾隆之世，僞複明孝安等三帝年號，於前代誼士，方贈謚樹表，揚厲而不厭。及一夕焚其書，不曰"狂吠"，則曰"悖逆"。何一人之言，而前後駁異如是也？夫患臣僚之攜貳，則褒遺忠以炫之；懼漢族之懷舊，則毀故書以窒之。二者相違，而皆以愚民。惟民也卒受其愚，哀哉！昔者秦始皇帝功德瑕纍，粲然在中夏，其法式詒於後嗣。焚史隱惡．至今而彌甚。攘除胡貉，數世而不行。及授胡貉以柄，使烝報殺略者，得善自隱諱，以為臧身之固，雖秦亦不意是也。"*Ibid.,* 831-4

one took the responsibility to write about society and to think critically.[954] He then compared the Qing with other periods in Chinese history where clear, objective, and insightful historical writings added to the prosperity of social life.

In Zhang's view, the Qing's manipulations of historical writing was like its misconduct in governance.

> Since the Qing governed, [they did not] conform names with reality (不綜名實). There have been great numbers of policies and regulations that are unknown to common people. While the deadlines for finishing official tasks are urgent, the officials and clerks often have rich time. The authenticity of their memorials, records, and official documents is [not reliable, but] influenced by whether they have received bribes. The military system and the administration of justice all have enormous problems.
>
> 自清室布政，不綜名實，筐篋猥積，而細民弗知；期會迫亟，而吏有餘裕。奏記文牘，是非貞偽，成於賕賂。兵制、刑法，不勝其弊。[955]

In particular, he turned to the lack of clear records of everyday economic life (食貨) and to the vagueness of the Qing government's explanations of the roots of its ceremonial and ritual codes, which were based on an ambiguous combination of Chinese and Manchu traditions. For Zhang, these were irresponsible attitudes toward social and cultural knowledge, and they demonstrated that the Qing was unable to conduct benevolent government, driving Chinese society to the precipice of disaster. At the end of the essay,

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[954] 自清室滑夏，君臣以監謗為務。當康熙時，戴名世以記載前事誅夷矣；雍正興詩獄，乾隆毀故籍。姍謗之禁，外寬其名，而內實文深。士益偷窳，莫敢記述時事以觸羅網。後雖有良史，將無所徵信。悲夫！天子之將崩，便房、題湊、璠璵、玉匣之屬，宿成於考工，無所吝諱，雖諱亦不得不豫。今清室之覆亡，知不遠矣！史於亡國，亦大行之具，不於存時宿儲跱之，人死而有隨之齎送以賵襚者，國死而齎送亦絕，可不哀邪？大凡紀傳，財成於史館，直載其事，顧不詳其所因緣。私傳碑狀，雖具道委曲，大氐諛誣也。且貞信以嬰戮．則國史不列；便闢以遇主，則草野不譏；朱紫玉石，貿然淆矣。*Ibid.,* 838

[955] *Ibid.,* 850

he attached as an appaendix his proposal for the writing of a general Chinese history, to show the urgency of restoring the tasks of historical writing for the Chinese community.

In his last essay of this collection, "Untying the Queue" (解辮髮), Zhang declared that it was imperative that the Chinese restore their own rule and overturn the Manchu government. Zhang gave the year 1900 - the year of the Boxer rebellion and the invasion of Western powers in the capital - as the date when he decided that the Qing had to be overturned. Symbolically, however, he calculated that year based on a different chronology, which began with the Gonghe Regency (周召共和) in 841 BCE, the first reliable historical date in Chinese history.[956] According to the Gonghe chronology, 1900 was the 2741st year of Chinese history. Zhang declared,

> The Manchu government is immoral. They persecuted the officials [who tried to stop the rebellion], provoked strong neighboring countries, killed foreign ambassadors and destroyed foreign goods, and [caused] invasions by foreign powers. I am angry at the unworthy deeds of the Eastern Barbarians and the lack of power of the Han group.
>
> 是時滿洲政府不道，戕虐朝士，橫挑強鄰，戮使略貿，四維交攻。憤東胡之無狀，漢族之不得職……[957]

At the end of the essay, he called on his readers to cut their queues, change their clothing, and wash away the humiliations they had suffered under Manchu rule.

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[956] It was also said to be the date when citizens of the Zhou rebelled and the King of Liwang (周厲王) were forced to live in exile.

[957] 共和二千七百四十一年，秋七月，餘年三十三矣。是時滿洲政府不道，戕虐朝士，橫挑強鄰，戮使略貿，四維交攻。憤東胡之無狀，漢族之不得職，隕涕涔涔，曰："餘年已立，而猶被戎狄之服．不違咫尺．弗能翦除，餘之罪也！"將薦紳束發，以複近古。日既不給，衣又不可得，於是曰："昔祁班孫、釋隱玄，皆以明氏遺老，斷髮以歿。《春秋穀梁傳》曰「吳祝發」，《漢書嚴助傳》曰「越劗髮」。晉灼曰：劗，張揖以為古翦字也餘故吳越閒民，去之，亦猶行古之道也。"會執友以歐羅巴衣笠至，乃急斷發易服。歐羅巴者，在漢則近大秦，與天毒同柢。其衣雖迮小，方祫直下，猶近古之端衣，惟吾左輔之日本，亦效法焉。服之蓋與箸桑門衣無異趣云。*Ibid.,* 937

The revised edition of *Qiushu* was a coherent and powerful ideological statement, integrating Zhang's normative claims about learning, culture, social order, and the design of politics. Overturning the Manchus was presented as a moral imperative for the intellectual world, and revolution was justified as a necessary step toward a much-needed intellectual and cultural restoration. More importantly, Zhang introduced a radical politics that was unusual in his time. First, Zhang's historicism, which was rooted in his deep commitment to a collectively conceived cultural-institutional tradition, led to a moral claim for his position. Claiming to represent the most authentic understanding of China's reality, Zhang believed that his position tallied with the authentic interests of the Chinese people. Based on this logic, then, Zhang's argument portrayed China as a victim. His case for ending Qing rule focused on the harm that the Manchus had done to the Chinese people and the argument that the Qing had become an obstacle to China's restoration. Moreover, the book fully illustrated Zhang's central message that the plans for "future kings" needed to be built on the legacy of the "old kings." Filled with difficult allusions and fragmented references from the ocean of texts, the book was a difficult read even for learned Classical and historical scholars in his own time, but it was a symbol of erudition, culture, discipline, and intellectual gravity. For anyone to closely read the book would mean to go through the rich textual traditions comprising the Classics, the histories, the writings of early masters, and so on. It represented itself as a model of thinking and inquiry for the future. For a growing group of radical intellectual activists in early twentieth century China, Zhang's model offered a significant source of meaning for their own actions.

National Learning and Revolution. 1903-1905

From 1903 on, Zhang Taiyan became increasingly influential among the burgeoning groups of young activists and students based in Shanghai and Tokyo, two centers where leading intellectuals and new-style students gathered. By 1906, when Zhang began to take charge of the People's News (Minbao 民報), the propaganda platform for Sun Yat-san's Tongmenghui (同盟會), The National Alliance of Revolutionaries, Zhang would become the soul of the intellectual community behind the revolutionaries. What led him to such a role of intellectual prominence, and what did "revolution" mean to those who followed him?

The Limitations of Laing Qichao's Ideology, and Zhang Taiyan's rise by 1903

From 1901 to 1902, Liang Qichao had argued, based on his interpretation of nationalism (*minzu zhuyi* 民族主義), that the key to China's resurgence lay in the ability of Chinese intellectual elites to transform themselves into autonomous and critical-minded citizens. Liang's mobilization had a big impact, and he came to be perceived as a mentor to the young generation, especially in the community of Chinese overseas students in Japan. Moreover, by late 1902 Liang's promotion of the writing of national history as the basis for Chinese intellectuals' search for agency had already inspired enthusiastic responses in the circles of Classical and historical scholarship, energizing a group of like-minded scholars to reflect on how their learning could shape China's future. For instance, the young scholar Deng Shi （鄧實 1877-1951) was one of many to follow Liang. He quickly wrote his *Shixue tonglun* (史學通論 General Discussion of History) from August to September of 1902, claiming that "The job of history is to tell the

phenomenon of one group's progress/evolution."[958]

However, by 1903, especially after the anti-Russian protests in Shanghai and Tokyo, Liang's individualistic interpretation of cultural and political agency began to look insufficient. The core of Liang's nationalism called for elite intellectuals to serve as models for the common people, by transforming themselves into responsible and politically self-conscious new citizens. This position also suggested that the problems that China faced were the consequences of Chinese people's own incapacity to manage political life. For the younger students, such claim was problematic; it internalized such problems and became an obstacle to a fundamental change. The major student newspapers gradually shifted their positions from reform to revolution. As Liang himself also realized, although he did not intend this consequence, he had indeed opened a path toward a radical and deconstructive conception of autonomy. His concern is evident in his many writings from this period that emphasize the importance of responsibility rather than violence.

Liang's student Jiang Fangzhen 蔣方震 (1882-1938) had an influential argument with Liang. For Jiang, the argument of Liang's *On New People*, which held that people had first to be transformed into responsible citizens in order to construct a better order, was circular. It generalized a critical attitude toward Chinese people, and it also weakened the justification for any external and straightforward political reform.[959]

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[958] For a discussion of the positive reaction to Liang Qichao's concept of new history in the scholarly world, see Wang Fansen, "Wanqing de zhengzhi gainian yu xin shixue" (晚晴的政治概念與新史學) , in his *Jindai zhongguo de shijia yu shixue*

[959] Feisheng (Jiang Fangzhen), "Jinri liang da xueshuo zhi pinglun" (近日兩大學說之評論), *Xinhai geming qian shinian jian shilun xuanji*, 516-25.

Jiang's critique was published in late 1903 in *The Tide of Zhejiang* (Zhejiang chao 浙江潮), a radical and popular student journal with a wide circulation. *The Tide of Zhejiang* was itself an interesting case study in changing intellectual sentiments. It considered itself a platform for collecting knowledge and producing discourse to build the foundations of a better social-political order. In its preface, the editors claimed that, first, they shared the belief that newspapers ought to "import civilization" (輸入文明) to China, but, since "A nation standing in the world must have had its own foundation, thus [the magazine] believes that the foundation on which the country is to be founded could by no means randomly take other countries as examples (比例)." In this sense, they claimed, "Our publication, taking the responsibility of magazines (志), has to collect [information] as broadly as possible, but it must always focus on this [goal]." Secondly, "Our magazine must focus on the overall interests of our people; as for the rights and wrongs of one person or one affair, we will not discuss them in detail." Thirdly, "In order to seek freedom (自由), one first has to claim self-governance (自治). Thus, [one] has to know the details of human behavior, history, geography, and the customs of one's own land, without neglecting any of them; then will one find the task [of achieving self-governance] easy to handle."[960]

Although Liang Qichao had drawn people's attention to Chinese history and its own civilizational legacy of political organization as necessary sources for cultivating intellectuals' sense of agency, he was ambivalent in his attitude toward the learning of

[960] 近頃各報其善者類，能輸入文明為我國放一層光彩，雖然國立於世界上必有其特別之故，以為建國之原質有，萬不能雜引他國以為比例者。本志負雜誌之資格，其蒐羅不得不廣，然必處處著眼於此焉. "Zhejiangchao fakanci, principle one"(浙江潮發刊詞, 宗旨一) *Zhejiang chao*, issue 1, 2.

broadly conceived cultural-institutional traditions under the flags of National Essence, *guocui* (國粹) or National Learning, *guoxue* (國學), terms that recently came into China from Japan.[961] In the fall of 1902 he planned to establish a newspaper titled *The National Learning News* (Guoxue bao 國學報), but ultimately he did not act on it. However, people such as Huang Jie 黃節 (1873-1935), Deng Shi and Ma Xulun 馬敘倫(1885-1970), previously inspired by Liang's proposal of "New History," began to vigorously promote the notions of *guocui* as tools for restoring the agency of the intellectual world.

As Liang Qichao's nuanced position lost ground in the early 1900s, Zhang Taiyan provided an intellectual and political model closer to that sought by such activists. Zhang not only became the sponsor and mentor of young revolutionary students in Shanghai and Tokyo, but took ownership of the emerging ideas of *guoxue* and *guocui*. Under his influence, these two schools of people became closely connected and overlapped. Together, they prepared the intellectual-cultural capital which Sun Yat-sen's future Tongmenghui (同盟會) would build upon. In the following section I shall briefly show how this process took place.

Zhang Taiyan as a Revolutionary Mentor

In early 1902, Zhang Taiyan visited Japan. Sun Yat-sen had invited him to discuss how to design the future political order after the overthrow of the Qing, and soon they became friends. Zhang organized a commemoration of the anniversary of the fall of the Ming, composing a speech. The commemoration attracted students, more established

[961] *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian*, 292.

intellectuals, and political activists. After Zhang came back to Shanghai, one major network that he engaged with was the Zhongguo jiaoyu hui (中國教育會), namely, the Chinese Society for Education, which had been organized by Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), Jiang Zhiyou 蔣智由 (1865-1925), Huang Zongyang 黃宗仰 (1865-1921) and Lin Xie 林獬 (1874-1926) in the Spring of 1902. In early 1903 Zhang began to teach at the Aiguo xueshe (愛國學社), the Patriotic Learning Society, which was attached to the Chinese Society for Education.[962] He also wrote for the *Su News* (Su bao 蘇報), the propaganda newspaper for the same society.[963] As Cai Yuanpei recalled, Cai had originally supported constitutionalism, but could not help but be influenced by the increasingly radical revolutionary atmosphere of the Society. During this period, Zhang was often invited to give public speeches in the Zhang Garden (張園) and he participated in the anti-Russia campaign. He was remembered by many as the most passionate speaker promoting anti-Manchu revolution. As Zhang himself recalled, one common theme of his speeches was the violence with which the Qing had taken China from the Ming.[964]

Under Zhang's influence, the talented scholar Liu Shipei 劉師培 (1884-1919), who had just failed the metropolitan exam, joined the Society. Liu changed his name to Guanghan 光漢, implying the restoration of Han rule. Zhang also served as an intellectual model for many students from the new-style schools. Zhang Shizhao 章士釗

[962] *Zheng Shiqu* 郑师渠, *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu* 晚清国粹派文化思想研究 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1997), 9

[963] Ibid., and *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian*, 152.

[964] See *Zhang Taiyan zishu xueshu cidi*

(1881-1973), who had previously studied at Zhang Zhidong's Lianghu Academy and who later went on to co-found the revolutionary Huaxinghui (華興會), the China Revival Society, with his schoolmate Huang Xing 黃興 (1874-1916), recalled that, Zhang Taiyan was an influential and highly respected leader of the emerging revolutionary community around 1903 and 1904. Zhang Shizhao entered the Patriotic Learning Society and followed Zhang Taiyan to pursue the study of historical institutions (掌故之學). As he saw it, Zhang Taiyan was interested in writing political discussions and criticisms, but his greatest strength was his "Southeastern Prudent Learning" (東南樸學), an evidential learning tradition with a heavy focus on philology.[965] In the Patriotic Learning Society, Zhang also converted many earlier supporters of Kang Youwei, such as Gao Yahun 陶亞魂 (1880-1904) and Liu Yazi 柳亞子 (1887-1958), who demonstrated that they were determined to shift from supporting constitutional monarchism to embracing the idea of overthrowing the Qing.[966] (Liu Yalu later became the organizer of the Nanshe (南社), the Southern Society, which promoted classical Chinese literature and represented the leftwing politics of the Guomindang.) Moreover, Zhang supported Zhang Ji 張繼 (1882-1974) and Zou Rong 鄒容 (1875-1905), some of the most radical young revolutionaries who claimed readiness to become martyrs.

In 1903, Zhang Taiyan published his famous preface to Zou Rong's *Geming jun*

[965] "先生雖好做政論，東南樸學，實為主盟" *Zhang Taiyan nianpu chang bian*, 159.

[966] *Zhang Taiyan zhuan*, 154.

革命軍 (The Revolutionary Army).[967] Soon thereafter, he wrote a long essay attacking Kang Youwei's campaign to save the Guangxu emperor and to build a constitutional monarchy. Zhang redefined the moral grounds of political change and gave his interpretation of nationalism.

> "Nationalism flourishes in the twentieth century. Those criminal and stinky northern barbarians (逆胡羶虜) who do not belong to our race have to be removed regardless of whether we conduct political reform or not, and regardless of whether it can save the people or not… I believe that the name of Geming (革命 revolution) and the name of Guangfu (光復 restoration) are greatly different in reality. To follow the common way, [we use] the name *geming;* but to follow what I personally think to be the right way, [the name for our action] should be *guangfu*…. [It is for] the wishes of four hundred million people to realize their own race's interests… it is essentially a shared interest (公心), it is nothing we can stop, and it is nothing we should stop."
>
> 夫民族主義熾盛於二十世紀，逆胡羶虜，非我族類，不能變法當革，能變法亦當革；不能救民當革，能救民亦當革。吾之序《革命軍》，以為革命、光復，名實大異。縱俗言之，則曰革命；縱吾輩之主觀言之，則曰光復。……為四萬萬人者固慾本種之獲伸，而不慾其為異種所勝，況乎顓、漢爭訟，則裁判之權自非滿州官吏所能有。……此固四萬萬人之公心，而非吾備所能阻止，亦非吾輩所當阻止者也。[968]

Zhang openly equated the realization of Chinese popular sovereignty with racial independence. He was imprisoned due to these two writings, and the process of his conviction was reported in newspapers, which led to further sensationalism and increased

[967] "夫中國吞噬于逆胡，已二百六十年矣。宰割之酷，詐暴之工，人人所身受，當無不昌言革命"。末謂："抑吾聞之，同族相代，謂之革命；異族攘竊，謂之滅亡；改制同族，謂之革命；驅除異族，謂之光復。今中國既滅亡于逆胡，所當謀者光復也，非革命雲爾。容之署斯名，何哉？諒以其所規畫，不驅除異族而已，雖政教學術、禮俗材性，猶有當革者焉，故大言之曰革命也"

[968] "Bo Kang Youwei lun geming shu" 駁康有為論革命書

visibility.[969]

Embracing Guocui 國粹 and Defining Guoxue 國學

Zhang Taiyan's speeches at the Zhang Garden in the spring of 1903 also attracted the scholars Huang Jie, Deng Shi, and Ma Xulun, who had just established the *Bulletin of the Politics and Arts* (Zhengyi tongbao 政藝通報). Founded in Shanghai in February 1902, it was a newspaper devoted to discussing politics and learning. Huang and Deng, the students of Jian Chaoliang 簡朝亮(1851-1933) were trained in Classical and historical scholarship, and were also deeply interested in engaging with newly translated studies from the West and Japan in the fields of history, government, social studies, and science. The purpose of the *Zhengyi tongbao*, as with Liang Qichao's *Shiwubao* and Zhang Taiyan's *Shixuebao* in the late 1890s, was to introduce new knowledge, methods, and theories in order to prepare young scholars to engage in ordering the world.

From 1902 through early 1903, the newspaper's perspective on learning and politics was greatly inspired by Liang Qichao. As we have mentioned, Deng Shi published his *Shixue tonglun* 史學通論 in *Zhengyi tongbao* in the late summer of 1902 to echo Liang Qichao's *Xinshixue*, the New History.[970] Similarly, in late 1902, Huang and Deng published "The Ideology of Preserving the National Essence" (Guocui baocun

[969] It is said that Chinese students in Tokyo also tried to rescue him from the prison. In 1904, while he was still in prison, his revised edition of *Qiushu* was brought to Japan and published in Tokyo.

[970] In this group, at the beginning, Deng and Huang seemed to be closer to Liang Qichao's approach, while Ma Xulun was an earlier admirer of Zhang Taiyan.

zhuyi 國粹保存主義) in *Zhengyi tongbao*[971] to draw people's attention to the new Japanese concept of "*guocui*" 國粹, the "national essence", and its corresponding notion "*guoxue*" 國學, national learning.[972] They interpreted the *guocui* as the spirit underlying the cumulative civilizing process of China, a term similar to Liang's interpretation of *guoxing*, the national quality. Following Liang's weak political cosmopolitanism, they defined *guocui* as something that did not have to be exclusively rooted in specific cultural institutions, but something that Chinese intellectuals could freely engage with and transform into resources fitting China's condition. In doing so, scholars would identify themselves with the national spirit that that had allowed Chinese civilization to endure for such a long time.[973] In particular, as they wrote,

> "As for the *guocui*, it is the particular spirit of a country. When the Japanese conducted reform, the ideology [that celebrated] Europeanization was extremely popular. But in the middle of the trend, there emerged a major reaction, which is the ideology that promoted the preservation of *guocui*. During that period, Western thought was entirely dominating the Japanese intellectual realm. For instance, when trying to make a decision, those supporting the decision would base their [reasoning] on Western theories, and those objecting to the decision would also use Western theories. No one would be willing to base their arguments on the condition of the nation's own political models and customs. This ideology [that promoted preserving the *guocui*] believes, [one should] take others' strengths to fix our own shortcomings. [One] should not be obsessed with the foreigners' culture and objects, [even those that are] the shortcomings [of the foreigners], and [one should not] abandon our own [culture and objects], including those that are our strengths. This discourse sounds fair, however, evaluating it based on its argument, it has some problems.
>
> 夫國粹者，國家特別之精神也。昔者日本維新，歐化主義浩浩滔天，乃於萬

[971] *Zheng yi tong bao*, issue 22,

[972] Scholars often cited an article published in July 1902, entitled "On the Rise and Fall of Japan's National Essence and Europenization" (日本國粹主義與歐化主義之消長) as the evidence that the idea of "guocui" came from Japan.

[973] Huang Jie, "Guo cui baocun zhuyi" 國粹保存主義, *Zhangyi tongbao*, Dec.30, 1902.

流澎湃之中，忽焉而生一大反動力焉，則國粹保存主義是也。當是時，入日本國民思想界而主之者，純乎泰西思想也。如同議一事焉，主行者以泰西學理主行之，反對者亦以泰西學理反對之，未有酌本邦之國體民情為根據而立論者也。文部大臣井上馨特倡此義，大呼國民，三宅雄次郎、誌賀重昂等和之。其說以為，宜取彼之長，補我之短，不宜醉心外國之文物，並其所短而亦取之，並我所長而亦棄之。其說頗允，雖然以論理上觀之，不能無缺點焉。

[If] taking one name, one discourse, one affair, one object, one law, and one order to distinguish ourselves is to define the essence of our own nation, [then, what is called] the essence of our nation is not [truly the] national essence. Instead, [the substance that] is discovered in [the foundation of] the polity, infused within the boundary of a polity, and preserved in the original essence of citizens, [that substance that] contains independent thinking, is the [true] national essence. The national essence has beauty but no roughness, strength and maturity but no weakness, openness but no closed-mindedness; it is what makes humanity evolve. When evolutionists try to preserve the healthier seeds, [they illustrate] what it means to preserve the national essence …Therefore, what our nation already has that is suitable is called the national essence. What comes from other countries but also suit us, what we can totally act on, is also called the national essence. ”

夫執一名一論一事一物一法一令，而界別之曰我國之粹。曰我國之粹，非國粹也。發現於國體，輸入於國界，蘊藏於國民之原質，具一種獨立之思想者，國粹也。有優美而無粗楠，有肚旺而無稚弱，有開通而無錮蔽，為人群進化之腦髓者，國粹也。天演家之擇種留良，國粹保存之義也。……是故本我國之所有，而適宜焉者，國粹也。取外國之宜於我國，而吾足以行焉者，亦國粹也。[974]

Importantly, the article tried to draw people's attention to the argument of Japanese *Kokugaku* scholars, which said that Japan should valorize its own cultural tradition rather than basing its political decisions on Western theories. But it also contended that the reactionary attitude of the Japanese scholars was also problematic. Although they were right that political decisions should not be made purely based on Western standards, it did not mean that values were entirely relative. Indeed, values could be only found and realized within the political practice of a polity by the people that constituted the polity, and values would only grow out of the soil of the specific civic setting. This meant that

[974] Ibid.

the national traditions of political life needed to play an inseparable role in shaping people's inquiry about what is right and what is wrong, but this did not preclude learning from other countries about what is good and what is wrong. In this vein, the article challenged that, if one needed to use the notion "national essence," then it had to be a positive and open term, rather than a description of everything that made a nation different from others. Importantly, in this essay, Deng and Huang largely resembled Liang Qichao. They saw that learning required critical and independent understanding and evaluation of available resources and discourses, and it requested true engagement with the local references of national cultural-political life.

However, after the editors of the *Zhengyi tongbao* started to closely interact with Zhang Taiyan, this attitude changed. In early 1904, the *Zhengyi tongbao* circle began to envision the possibility of organizing a learning society for the pursuit of *guocui* (國粹學社). In March, Huang Jie drafted an announcement, in which he adopted an entirely different perspective to explain what *guocui* meant for Chinese intellectuals:

> National Essence is [nothing other than] science (科學). [The preservation of National Essence] was first practiced in Japan, but the Japanese did not know how to develop [the idea], and it is our job to develop it. [One has to recognize that] presuming the existence of an "essence" (*cui*) implies the existence of something that is not essential. [Let me] make an analogy with matter. Physicists say that matter does not die. For instance, [there is] water [in] air and [there is] salt in water. [But the water in the air and the salt in the water] have no [concrete] shape and entity, so, how to preserve them? This is where the learning of the myriad things (萬匯學) is put into use. [One has to] first investigate (研究) and then [one can] separate [the wheat from the chaff]. Once [this has been done], then [one will be able to] transform [them]. Once transformed, they can be put to use, thus preserved. In this sense, for those who promote national essence, [they ought to] first investigate it rather than seek to preserve it…
>
> 國粹，科學也。日本倡之，而日本不知發之，則待於吾國。蓋粹者必有其不粹者。擬之於物焉，物理家之言曰，凡物具有不滅性，若水之於空氣焉，若鹽之於水量焉。無有形體，於何保存也。是故萬匯學之為用，必由研究而後

可以區分，區分而後可以變化，變化而後可以致用而得保存。然則言國粹者，先研究而不先保存，其所以執果求因者如是，乃公例也。
…
In the Jiachen year (1904), a cohort [of like-minded] scholars co-founded the Guocui xueshe (國粹學社 The Society for Preserving the National Essence), announcing to the world [the following statement.] The garden of the six arts (六藝) has been impoverished and has become a place of grass. …… How sad! The nation is no longer the nation, and the learning is no longer the learning. Our nation has such a broad territory and such a large population. When confronted by other nations, even though is thin and weak, when it falls on other nations, no one would expect the other nations could still survive. However, if our nation has no learning, it would not just be weak but would die. Then, what could it rely on to crash [other nations]!

歲甲辰，同人創為國粹學社，號於海內曰：六藝之囿，鞠為茂草。……悲夫，國不國而學不學也。吾國疆土之大，人民之眾。以眡外族，牛雖瘠，僨于豚上，其畏不死。雖然，不學焉，則將由瘠而死矣，而又奚僨！
…

There have been so many learning societies, but none of them speak about the [learning of] national essence. Or, some of them say [we] have to wait for the good time [to speak about it]. They consider [the learning of] national essence to be an counter argument of Europeanization (歐化), which is the leading conservative force to preserve the old and to exclude the foreign influence.

海上學社林立，未有言國粹者，或曰有待焉，非其時也。則以為國粹者，主乎對歐化而言之，為守舊排外之尤。……
…
When the Japanese speak of preserving national essence, they are talking about competing on politics; when we speak of preserving national essence, we try to compete on science. When speaking of "nation", [we assume that] there are things [unrelated to the] nation. When speaking of "essence", [we assume that] there are things that are not essential. [Once we] understand what things are not [related to] the nation and what things are not essential, then we will know what things are about the nation and what things are essential. Therefore, considering investigation as the foundation of the learning of national essence, maybe, after destroying [the old], we can even manage to preserve.

日本之言國粹也，與爭政論；吾國之言國粹也，與爭科學。曰國，則有其非國者乎。曰粹，則有其非粹者乎。明乎非國非粹，則知乎為國為粹。是故，以研究為國粹學之始基，庶幾繼破壞而有以保存矣。[975]

[975] "Guocui xueshe qifaci" (國粹學社起發辭) 1904, March 1st, issue 1 of *Zhengyi tongbao*. Quoted from *Xinhai geming shiqi qikan jieshao* 辛亥革命时期期刊介绍 vol.2, 327. The translation of this quote is based on Jens Hüter's translation with my modifications. See Jens

Huang's perspective changed greatly from the end of 1902 to early 1904. Disagreeing with the Japanese who understood the national essence as a set of conservative values, Huang looked at it as a form of the pursuit of knowledge, comparable with science. What would the learning of national essence achieve? China as a nation was in true danger because the learning tradition that had been key to its survival and greatness – the six arts - was perishing at a time when China confronted the powerful aggression of foreign nations. Not everything in the past was necessarily important for the nation or useful for the moment, but there were things from the past that were real, eternal, and necessary for the nation's future, which could be only put into use through rigorous study. It was based on this intellectually progressive and liberal view that Huang defined the learning of national essence, which would be an open-ended and cumulative process. The national essence would be preserved if modern people could discover it, rigorously deploying it in their knowledge production, and in so doing the national essence would enable the nation to keep its vigor.

Suffice it to say, after the *Zhengyi tongbao* cohort turned to Zhang Taiyan, there was a major shift in their understanding about how the Classical and learning tradition should play a role in guiding the future, and what one should look for in the past that they believed to be the nation's key legacy. When Huang and Deng were still attracted to Liang Qichao, although they identified their agendas with the learning of China's civilizational history they remained suspicious about the notion of *guocui.* Based on Liang's individualism, it was hard for them to accept that the Chinese national quality

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Hüter "The Fountainhead of All Learned Tradition: Liu Shipei's Treatise on the Official Scribe and Its Significance for Chinese Culture," *Oriens Extremus*, 44, (2003/04), 46.

was to be recovered from the broad range of customs and culture with which the notion of *guocui* was often associated. Now, however, their understanding of China's civilizing legacy began to resemble Zhang Taiyan's view. The national essence was to be found in the collective cultural-institutional tradition that provided the foundations for knowledge and cultural creation. Such an understanding enabled them to look at their tradition of learning as a rigorous and progressive enterprise.

Thereafter, Huang and Deng tried to convince the larger intellectual world to follow them (與天下人士共學). The learning of *guocui* was seen as the real learning tradition of the nation, namely, *guoxue*, the national learning. As Deng argues in "The Learning of National Essence" (國粹學), published in 1904, "A nation can establish itself only if it has its learning, and learning has to be based on the national essence (國粹) in order to be useful. If the nation does not [ground itself on this] learning then the nation will collapse, and if the learning does not [focus on the] national essence then the learning would no longer be learning." Deng goes on to write that in fact, "Our nation has learning, and our learning has also [focused on] the essence."[976]

But what had been preventing the right learning from being followed? In another poetic essay in 1904, Deng made the following claims:

> Each nation has its own learning; the learning for each nation is key to the rise or fall of that nation, and is developed by the particular mind of one people… The learning perished in the burning of books by the Qin, which led to the emergence of a despotic polity; the nation perished in the invasion of the five northern barbarians, which led to the flourishing of alien rule. [When] despotism is

[976] "國必有學而始立，學必以粹為有用。國不學則不國，學非粹則非學……吾國之有學，吾學之有粹……君子續其公言，明其公誼，而一國乃長有學。……與天下人士共學也。……嗚呼，國學不明，大義終塞，將有國破種亡之慘，學其烏可一日已乎？" *Zhengyi tongbao*, 1904, issue 13.

> established, then the learning [to which people devote themselves] is not what we consider to be our learning; [once] the alien rulers thrive, then the nation that [the alien rulers build] is not what we consider to be our nation… The alien learning and the alien nation have been dominating the land of our Shenzhou 神州 [i.e. China].
>
> 一國有一國之學，一國之學即一國興亡之本，而一種人心靈之所開也。……學之亡也，亡於秦火之焚，而專制之政體出；國之亡也，亡於五胡之亂，而外族之朝廷興。專制出，則學其所學，而非吾之所謂學矣；外族興，則國其所國，而非吾之所謂國矣。非吾學，則謂之異學；非吾國，則謂之異國。異學異國，充塞吾神州之土。[977]

In a much simpler fashion, the essay captures the politics of Zhang Taiyan's learning and gives a straightforward discourse to explain China's problems and the responsibility of the intellectual elites. As the essay claims, real national learning demands the restoration of cultural identity and intellectual-political autonomy. Restoring this learning from meaningless sate-serving agendas and rescuing the nation from Manchu rule became the same issue.

Zhang Taiyan's model allowed the editors of the *Zhengyi tongbao* to see themselves as contributing to Chinese civil life while actively connecting themselves to the world through a shared methodology of scholarly pursuit, although the goal of their pursuit was to discover the civilizing legacy of China embodied in its unique cultural tradition. They would increasingly infuse Zhang Taiyan's ideas and language into their own work in the years to come.

At the same time, beyond the circle of the *Zhengyi tongbao*, the evidential scholar Liu Shipei took charge of Cai Yuanpei's *The Alarming Bell Daily News* (Jingzhong ribao 警鐘日報) in January 1904 to publish studies of Chinese civilizational history and

[977] *Zhengyi tongbao*, 1904, 3.

discussions of politics and learning. Liu began his career as a devoted Yangzhou school philological scholar and deeply admired Wang Fuzhi's learning. His grandfather Liu Yusong 劉毓崧 (1818-1867), a Classical scholar specializing in the *Zuo Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals*, participated in the editing and publication of the posthumous writings of Wang Fuzhi (i.e. 船山遺書), and compiled a two-volume chronicle for Wang. With this background, Liu and Zhang Taiyan soon became close friends, and Zhang thought highly of Liu's scholarship throughout his life. Liu's many scholarly agendas in the following years could be seen as pushing forward Zhang's envisioned approach of learning. Moreover, Liu and Lin Xie 林獬 also established *The Chinese Vernacular Newspaper* (Zhongguo baihua bao 中國白話報) to publish historical essays in vernacular Chinese for less educated audiences.

Eventually, in 1905, Huang Jie and Deng Shi took the lead in organizing the Guoxue baocun hui (國學保存會), Association for the Preservation of National learning, in Shanghai. They also planned to open a society called Guoxue Jiangxi hui (國學講習會), Society for Discussion and Practice of National Learning, publish a book series entitled "national essence" (國粹叢書), and compiled textbooks under the title of "national learning" (國學教科書).[978] They announced the publication of *The Journal of National Essence* (Guocui xuebao 國粹學報) in Shanghai. Liu Shipei was invited to become a major contributor.

[978] For the set of initiatives that they engaged, see Zheng Shiqu's discussion in *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu* and Tze-ki Hon, *Revolution as Restoration: Guocui xuebao and China's Path to Modernity*.

Their initiatives were endorsed by Zhang Taiyan, although he was still in prison when the journal was founded. The goal of the journal was to "develop the national learning" 發明國學 so as to "preserve the national essence" 保存國粹. The journal referred to Zhang in various ways as the mentor behind the group. The first issue provides a good example of how Zhang's understandings and scholarly preferences had shaped the message of the journal.

In this first issue, the contributors generally accept the assumption that the survival of a given human group depends on the continuity of its group identity (族), an identity formed through the development of its common culture. Such a shared cultural identity was necessary for building effective and meaningful institutions to allow the group to interact with the world in an effective way. The cumulative practice of this cultural-institutional life contributed to the wellbeing of the group, and in turn maintained its identity. The Sage kings of antiquity successfully developed an effective cultural-institutional system based on learning, and ruled successfully. Therefore antiquity was also the time when this group identity became clear. In a normative sense, Huang defined *guo* as a political community where the cultural-institutional order was well developed and maintained for the interests of the community. Thus, for him, the group identity of the people, the learning used to maintain the cultural-institutional order, and the wellbeing of the political community were an integrated whole.

But, as Huang Jie lamented at the beginning of the first "Preface" for the journal, China today "is not a *guo*." Namely, China was not a legitimate political community even though it was supposed to be. It also lacked learning, *xue.* It did not successfully develop advanced science (科學) to guide the community to improve its knowledge about the

world for broader benefit. The foundational reasons that had contributed to the fall of *guo* and *xue* were dual: failure to maintain the people's group identity, and the dominance of rulers who kept the people ignorant.[979] In Chinese history, these two elements were often combined. The lack of independent learning was often because the curriculum of the elites failed to serve the interests of the Chinese people, instead serving the interests of the alien rulers. The result was the decline of community life. [980]

Huang argued that his contemporaries who were ignorant about the importance of the new learning from the West had no idea about saving the community, but people who only admired the West and abandoned the Chinese tradition of learning – the cumulative tradition of investigation beginning from the Sage kings and their followers - were equally harmful, as they would have no idea about the roots of the problems undermining China's own learning. Such ignorance was a sign that they had lost their identification

[979] "吾國得謂之國矣乎? 曰不國也。社會莫不始于圖騰，繼以宗法，而成于國家者也。吾學得謂之學矣乎? 曰不學也。萬彙莫不統于邏輯，闡爲心理，而致諸物質者也。嗚呼悲夫! 四彝交侵，異族入主，然則吾國猶圖騰也。科學不明，域于無知，然則吾學猶未至于邏輯也。奚以國奚以學爲? 嗚呼悲夫! 溯吾稱國之始，則肇自唐虞。蚩尤作甲兵，始伐黃帝，至于夏殷周，而苗禍亘千百年。然則唐虞之稱國也，吾以見民族之梦焉。嗚呼悲夫! 溯吾學派之衰，則源于嬴秦。始皇燒詩 書百家語，藏書博士，窒塞民智。至于漢武立博士于學官，罷黜百家。以迄劉歆，則假借君權，竄亂經籍，賊天下後世。然則秦皇漢武之立學也，吾以見專制之劇焉。民族之界夷，專 制之統一，而不國，而不學，殆數千年。嗚呼! 奚至于今而始悲也! " Huang Jie, "Guocui xuebao xu"

[980] "嗚呼! 國界亡則無學，無學則何以有國也。吾登高西望，帕米爾高原而東，喜 馬拉山脈而北，滔滔黃河，悠悠大江，熙熙乎田疇都市，宅于是間者，乃不國乎? 而吾巴克之族，猶足以自立; 黃帝堯舜禹湯文武周公孔子之學，猶足以長存; 則奈何其不國也? 奈何其不學也? …國于吾中國者，外族專制之國，而非吾民族之國也。學于吾中國者，外族專制之學，而非吾民族之學也。而吾之國之學之亡也，殆久矣乎! 是故以張賓爲長史，而執大法于石胡之朝; 以許衡爲祭酒，而定朝儀于蒙古之族。識者痛焉，以其以中國民族而爲外族專制之奴，而又出所學以媚之也。國界亡而學界即亡也。持是以往，萃漢宋儒者之家法，而蠅蠅 于十三經二十四史諸子百家之文，罔亦該博焉，而國日瘥，而民日艱，而種族日淆，而倫理日喪亂。"

with the tradition.[981] The first task of learning was thus to reinvigorate the cultural-institutional order, and in the context of increasing intellectual influence from the West and Japan, a crucial task for scholars was to restore the identity of the group and its tradition of learning. Only by doing so could intellectuals obtain independence in governing the community and managing their learning (自主其國自主其學). This effort was what they called *guoxue*, namely, the tradition of the learning of the Sages (黃帝堯舜禹湯文武周公孔子之學).

The purpose of the journal, then, was to guide people to "distinguish groups and differentiate things." (類族辨物). The agenda of *guoxue* was to "illustrate the boundaries of our nation and define the boundaries of our learning." (明吾國界, 定吾學界).[982] How to do this? Huang suggests that Chinese thinkers should take the learning of the West and Japan as external/factual learning (客觀), while look at their own as internal/normative learning (主觀). As they admired the wide application of science in benefiting the community's life, they should take the approach of "research/investigation" (研究) as the

[981]"一睨乎泰西諸國之政之法之藝之學，則以爲非先王之道，而辭而辟之。辟之而不足以勝之也，一龍乎泰西諸國之政之法之藝之學，則以爲非中國所有，而貌而襲之。襲之而仍不足以敵之也，則還而質諸吾國，何以無學？吾學何以不國？而吾之國之學，何以遜于泰西之國之學？則憒然而皆莫能言。嗚呼！微論泰西之國之學，果足以裨吾與否，而此憒然莫能言之故，則足以自亡其國而有余，是亦一國之人之心死也。"

[982] "同人痛國之不立，而學之日亡也，於是瞻天與火，類族辨物，創為國粹學報一編，以告海內曰：昔者歐洲十字軍東征，弛貴族之權，削封建之制，載吾東方之文物以歸，於時意大利文學復興，達泰氏以國文著述，而歐洲教育遂進文明。昔者日本維新，歸藩復幕，舉國風靡，於時歐化主義，浩浩滔天，三宅雄次郎、志賀重昂等，撰雜誌，倡國粹保全，而日本主義，卒以成立。嗚呼！學界之關係於國界也如是哉！宋之季也，其民不務國學，而好為蒙古文字語言，至名其侈辭以為美，於是而宋亡。普之敗於法也，割雅麗司、來羅因以和，而其遺民，眷眷故國，發為詩歌，不忘普音，於是而普興。國界之興亡於學界也又如是哉！夫國學者，明吾國界以定吾學界者也。"

way to restore the essence of that tradition for the future. Although the goal was to investigate the principles that distinguished the Chinese cultural tradition from others, it was still important to pay attention to the literary style in which the knowledge was conveyed, as "the words will not last long if they are not written with literary style" (言之無文，行而不遠).[983] In its own style, the journal maintained literary Chinese.

In another preface for the journal, Pan Bo (潘博) identified this agenda of *guoxue* as the realization of Gu Yanwu's message, which claimed that scholars ought to identify themselves with "tianxia" (天下), with "tianxia" referring here to the Chinese practice of rituals, customs, government, and teachings (禮俗政教).[984]

The journal offered three main sections. The "Editorial Announcement" (社說) section began with a serialization of Deng Shi's articles explaining the meaning of *guoxue*. In the opening piece, "A Basic Discussion on National Learning" (Guoxue yuanlun 國學原論), Deng described the origins of *guoxue* in early Chinese civilization's writings, common beliefs, religious practices, and creation of knowledge. He looked at the birth of institutions such as calendar making, divinations, sacrifices, the conception of the Five-phases theory, etc., as the birth of *xueshu* 學術, namely, scholarship. Scholarship began with the formation of early society, when leaders had to make sense of the world

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[983]"痛吾國之不國，痛吾學之不學，凡欲舉東西諸國之學，以為客觀，而吾為主觀，以研究之，期光復乎吾巴克之族，黃帝堯舜禹湯文武周公孔子之學而已。然又慕乎科學之用宏，意將以研究為實施之因，而以保存為將來之果。 懸界說以定公例，而又悲乎言之無文，行而不遠。意將矯像胥之失，而不苟同伊緩大鹵之名，期光復乎吾巴克之族，黃帝堯舜禹湯文武周公孔子之學而已。嗚呼！雄雞鳴而天地白，曉鐘動而魂夢蘇。天下志士，其有哀國學之流亡者乎？庶幾 披涕以讀而為之舞。"

[984] "Guocui xuebao xu," 國粹學報敘 *Yingyin guocui xuebao*, 017

and its relationship to human behavior. Like Zhang Taiyan, Deng was interested in the legacy of the early founders of Chinese civilization in shaping the *fengsu* 風俗, social customs and beliefs, which he termed the *shehui sixiang* (社會思想), the thought of society.[985] From this perspective, the Classics and other early texts became evidence for the coherent formation of social customs, beliefs, and cultural practices of community life under the teaching and politics of the founders of civilization.

Deng would continue this series of discussions on *guoxue* in the following issues to identify the continuity and transformation of the tradition of scholarship in different periods of Chinese history. In "A Subtle Discussion of National Learning" (Guoxue weilun 國學微論), he traced how early scholarship focusing on sacrifices and divination (鬼神數術) had shifted into history (史) since the period of Spring and Autumn, with official historians carriying out the role of scholarship. In other words, as Confucians, they shifted the interests of scholarship toward human affairs. The historical turn during this period opened the scholarship of the Masters. In "A Thorough Discussion of National Learning" (Guoxue tonglun 國學通論), Deng characterized the period from Han to the end of Ming as the period when the *Ru* learning unified China's politics, customs, and morality, and culture. The reason for its success was easy to understand by following Zhang Taiyan's argument: Among all the Masters, only Confucius worked on compiling and editing the Classics, which became the standard sources for defining learning and politics.[986] Without judging if this was good or bad, he made the circular claim that *Ru*

[985] "Guoxue yuanlun," *Guocui xuebao*, issue 1

[986] See Liu Dong ed., *Shenwen yu mingbian*, 審問與明辨 Vol.1, 119.

learning and many of its doctrines fit China's own geographical, moral, and cultural traditions, thus it should be easily removed from Chinese society. The drawback of the tradition was that it had not been able to spread into the grassroots levels of society. In the last essay of this series, "A Contemporary Discussion of National Learning" (Guoxue jinlun 國學今論), he celebrated the evidential scholarly tradition and claimed that it was already a form of science, while attacking the New Text Gongyang tradition. Overall, he wished that contemporary scholarship would transcend the trivial debates between Han and Song learning, while revitalizing what he called the "ancient learning" 古學, a broad palette of ancient politics, teaching, customs, languages and writing, including the ideas of the Masters from the Hundred Schools. The goal was to make use of the rich cultural-institutional tradition to discover new principles (新理), just as the West had experienced during the Renaissance.[987] Deng's broad definition of *guoxue* as the Chinese pursuit of knowledge through history assumes that history was the source of all human rational knowledge and discourse. He extended Zhang Taiyan's claim for the importance of studying cultural institutions from its original context of political learning into the context of general human knowledge practice.

The second main section of the journal included the following programs: "Zheng" 政篇 (Politics), "Shi" 史篇 (History), "Xue" 學篇 (Learning), and "Wen"文篇 (Literature). The contents in these sections resembled what Zhang Taiyan envisioned as the studies of "zhi" 志 or "dianzhang" 典章, namely, topical studies or thematic treatises about the history of institutions. In the first issue of the journal, the "Zheng" section

[987] "Guxue fuxing lun" *Shenwen yu mingbian*, 144.

serialized a historical discussion of ancient government, named "Detailed Explanation of the Government in Antiquity" (Guzheng shuwei 古政述微). The author planed to introduce what he saw as the basic ideas and practice of the government based on the Classics and other early texts and the ideas and practice that came to shape particular Chinese values. The programs included "Rituals and music" (Liyue wei 禮樂微), "Punishment" (Xingfa wei 刑法微), "Teaching and Learning" (Jiaoxue wei 教學微), "Military and Taxation" (Bingfu wei 兵賦微), "Economics" (Shihuo wei 食貨微), "Mountains and Rivers" (Shanchuan wei 山川微), and "Labor and Commerce" （Gongshang wei 工商微).

The "Shi" section serialized Huang Jie's historical study of the formation and history of the Chinese ethnic group, entitled "Huang shi" (Yellow History 黃史). In terms of ideas, it was intended to follow Wang Fuzhi's "Yellow Book," but it was structured in the style of Sima Qian's *Shiji*.[988] It was an elaboration of Zhang Taiyan's "Xuzhongxing" (Sequencing the Chinese Surnames 序種姓). For Huang, in writing this work he devoted himself to restoring the record of Chinese identity, and the fact that he could do so was because he focused on the history of society (社會). For Huang, this way of writing would make it possible for people to take the condition of group identity as a historical agent and to understand how it could explain the rise and fall of society. [989]

[988] It is structured into "Shu"書, "Biao 表," "Ji 記," "Kaoji 考紀," "Liezhuang 列傳," and "Zaiji 載記." *Yingying guocui xuebao*, 046

[989] Ibid., 043-4 Just to give an example of Huang's social-historical approach, in the first issue, under the first "Book" (書) of the historical work, he included the topics: "種源" "種別""立國""種名國名""氏族變"

In the "Xue" and "Wen" portions, Liu Shipei published several sets of detailed analyses of specific developments of learning in early Chinese history, in light of the general principles of the origins of civilizations. They were the most well-argued and solid scholarly pieces in that issue. In these writings, Liu developed many theoretical and historical perspectives that were key to Zhang Taiyan's scholarship, and drew on Zhang's suggested sources such as the *Shiben* and Spencer's discussions of the origins of religions, but Liu often developed these perspectives in a more systematic and lucid manner. In the first essay in the "Xue" section, "On [the Idea that] the Ancient Learning was Developed from Official Historians" (Lun guxue chu yu shiguan 論古學出於史官), Liu argued that, based on his understanding of Chinese history and Spencer's studies of the origins of religion in various civilizations, it was clear that human beings have the natural tendency to follow and admire their ancestors, and the early kings drew on this tendency of human nature to guide them. Therefore, the ideas of respecting ancestors was born and this form of worship thrived in the Three Dynasties. Accordingly, people in the past also tended to believe in ghosts, and such beliefs had led to the habit of respecting conventions from the past (崇先例), thus, people would voluntarily follow rules and mores (奉法儀). Composed into texts, these conventions became laws (法), documents (書), and rituals (禮). It was the task of the historians, who were often serving as the Taishi 太史 (Grand Scribe) or Qing Daifu 卿大夫 (Minister), to record and compile these writings and to promulgate them to the people. [990] As long as these offices (Taishi 太史 and Qing daifu

[990] 西儒斯賓賽有言，各教起源，皆出於祖先教，斯言也，證之中國古代益信而有徵。民之初生無不報本而返始，先王因其性以導之而尊祖敬宗之說起矣。尊祖敬宗之說起又必推祖所自出，而郊禘之典以興。因郊禘之典以推之，而廟祧以設壇壝以立祭禮一門，遂為三代之特典。且古代所信神權多屬人鬼。尊人鬼故崇先例，崇先例故奉法儀。載之文字，謂之

卿大夫) existed, laws, documents, and rituals would endure. These offices would both prepare the laws and preserve the documentary record. Thus he concluded that ancient scholarship was born from these historians' practices in saving and compiling texts for the purpose of better politics and teaching. An historian could be described as one "who masters the learning of his time," and "the learning of that time is the foundation for the politics and teachings (政教之本)" of the political community. Liu claimed that history is key to the wellbeing of society and government, and it also defines the final objective of all other learning.

In this influential essay, Liu made several important claims. First, what makes society follow external codes is the inherent human tendency to respect the legacy of one's ancestors. In this he found that Spencer's discussions of the origins of human religion agreed with him. In other words, the reverence for the community's past is a basic social-political mechanism that rulers ought to respect if they aim to rule successfully. Liu's second important claim was that it was necessary to work with documents from the past, editing them, putting information into order, explaining, analyzing, and elaborating on them, in order to make sense of the experience of community life and to record it textually. The nature of this learning is historical, and it takes a broad enterprise of scholarship to understand the continuity and discontinuity of all aspects of cultural practice in the past. Taking antiquity as an example, Liu shows that people who studied music, calendars, mathematics, writing systems, and cartography all

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法，謂之書，謂之禮。其事謂之史職，以其法載之文字 [should be 字] 而宣之士民者。謂之太史，謂之卿大夫。有官斯有法，故法具於官。有法斯有書。故官守其書。是則史也者掌一代之學者也，一代之學即一國政教之本，而一代王者之所開也。 *Yinyin guocuixuebao*, 061-2

served as historians.[991] Thus, it was not difficult for the reader to conclude that it was a moral imperative for today's scholars to study the cumulative cultural-institutional traditions of the past in order to fully realize the responsibility of elite learning.

Following his argument on the origins of learning, in Liu's second essay, "A General Preface to the History of Scholarship in late Zhou" (Zhoumo xueshushi zongxu" 周末學術史總序) he explained the transition of the agency of learning from government officials to independent scholars in the late Zhou, after the government's power began to decline. He looked at the development of different schools of Masters as the beginning of the different kind of disciplines that had been categorized recently in new terms. In this essay he divided these fields of learning into five kinds, namely "the history of phycology" 心理學史, "the history of ethics" 倫理學史, "the history of logic" 論理史, "the history of sociology"社會學史, and "the history of the study of religion" 宗教學. In each essay, discussed the figures and schools of Chinese scholarship in comparison with the development of Western disciplines. Importantly, he was not trying to fit the history of Chinese scholarship into a set of "Western categories," rather, he took these categories as meaningfully universal terms, and under each category he tried to take into account the Chinese developments of similar subjects and pursuits, giving his own interpretation of each category by looking at them as products of human inquiry.

Liu's two essays in the "Wen" section show a similarly comparative approach.

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[991] 吾觀古代之初，學書銓明，實史之績，試徵之《世本》作篇。則羲和占日，常儀占月，更區占星，其時則皇古也，其人則史職也。推之律呂，造於伶倫。甲子作於大撓。算教胚胎於隸首。調律創始於榮成。六書探源於誦頡。圖繪溯始於史皇。學出於史有明徵矣。故一代之興即以史局官司典籍。試觀夏之亡也，太史終古去國。殷之亡也，辛甲抱器歸周。周之衰也，老聃去周適秦。史為一代興衰之所係，即為一代學術之總歸。Ibid.

One, entitled "The Origins of Literature" (Wenzhang yuanshi 文章源始), delved into the principles underlying the historical development of words and different kinds of literary writing. The other essay discussed the principles of grammar and rhetoric. Both of these essays draw attention to literary-cultural phenomena in Chinese tradition by comparing them with other cultural traditions. Liu examined literary phenomena in the context of history and community life, and he believed that by investigating these phenomena in China's past, they would be preserved as legacies for the future.

The remainder of the journal was designed to foster an intimate scholarly community for readers. The "Congtan" 叢談 (Miscellaneous Discussions) published scholarly notes. All the notes in the first issues were from Liu Shipei. The "Zhuanlu" 撰錄 (Compilations and Records) included personal letters by celebrated scholars and essays that were not included in their previously published collections. The first issue includes a letter by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, followed by one written by the influential Qian-Jia scholar Wang Niansun (王念孫), and then one from his son, the equally influential Qian-Jia scholar Wang Yinzhi (王引之) to the scholar Jiao Xun (焦循); other contributions included an epitaph for the late Qing evidential scholar Liu Shouzeng 劉壽曾 (Liu Shipei's uncle) by Sun Yirang 孫怡讓, and two letters from Zhang Taiyan to Liu Shipei, in which Zhang encouraged Liu to devote himself to historical learning and philological methods.[992]

The *Guocui xuebao* reflects different levels of inspiration that people had drawn from Zhang Taiyan. There were his close colleagues, such as the equally talented Liu

[992] *Ibid.,* 117-126.

Shipei, who sought to implement his methods and theoretical themes and to develop them into systematic research. There were also organizers and promoters such as Deng Shi and Huang Jie, who were not as scholarly systematic and profound as Zhang and Liu, but could effectively translate their scholarly agendas into a common ground of learning with the larger world. As the *Guocui xuebao* thrived, the concept of *guoxue* soon became naturalized into a self-evident concept. While it was used to refer to the cumulative cultural-historical tradition from the beginning of the civilization, it also entailed that there was a learning tradition originating from antiquity that had nourished the formation of China's community life. In other words, the cultural tradition ought to be studied as a coherent institutional tradition. Scholars who identified themselves with *guoxue* were to admit these two important positions at once.[993]

As the *Guocui xuebao* cohort grew, with more and more figures joining in, Zhang himself also began to identify with the terms of *guocui* and *guoxue*, calling his own learning the pursuit of the *guocui* and labeling his learning focusing on cumulative cultural institutions as *guoxue*. In a sensational note published in the journal in 1905 from Zhang, when he was still in the prison, Zhang declared, "Heaven has entrusted me with the national essence… As for the grand, rich, strong, and beautiful learning of China, [if] its tradition and system are cut off, and if the tradition and the account of our people are extinguished in my hand, then it would be my fault!"[994]

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[993] The participants developed inclusive topics against the Song learning's moral discourse of San-gang (三綱), arguing for saving China's learning from Neo-Confucian mis-interpretation, See Zheng Shiqu's discussion of Ma Xulun, *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu*, 271.

[994] "上天以國粹付余，自炳麟之初生，迄於今茲，三十有六歲。鳳鳥不至，河不出圖，惟余亦不任宅其位，繫素王素臣之跡是踐，豈直抱殘守闕而已，又將官其財務，恢明而光大之！懷未得遂，累於仇國，惟金火相革歟？則猶有繼述者。至於支那閎碩壯美之學，而遂斬其統緒，國故民紀，絕於余手，是則余之罪也！" "Kuimao yuzhong manbi" 癸卯獄中漫

To turn their ideas and learning into a broader educational program, Liu Shipei compiled the *Chinese History Text Book* (Zhongguo lishi jiaoke shu中國歷史教科書).[995] In an advertisement, the journal described it in these words:

> This book focuses on ancient history, from the opening up [of civilization] through the Xia and Yin (i.e. Shang) [dynasties]. It has detailed discussions on race, geography, customs, polity, texts and institutions, scholarship, technology and the arts….It pays attention to the change of political systems, the history of racial competition, the guidelines of institutional reforms, the steps of social progresses, and the general trends of the rise and fall of scholarship. It does not only focus on rulers and dynasties, but also emphasizes the affairs of the people; it does not only specialize in events, but also gives detailed accounts of texts and institutions.
>
> 是冊述古代之歷史，由開闢以至夏殷，舉古代之種族、地理、風俗、政體、典章制度、學術、技藝言之甚詳。……其所注意之點：則一在歷代政體之異同；一在種族競爭之始末；一在制度改革之大綱；一在社會進化之階級；一在學術進退之大勢；不專重君朝而兼重民事，不專詳事蹟，而兼詳典制，誠中國歷史教科書未有之佳本也。[996]

The Association for the Preservation of National learning also compiled a "Local History Text Book" (鄉土歷史教科書) to implement their claim for a regionalized political system, and part of its agenda included searching for and collecting old texts and historical objects.[997]

Like Zhang Taiyan, the *guoxue* cohort considered the goal of its movement as

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筆，*Guocui xuebao*, year 1, issue 8. See Zheng Shiqu *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu*, 20.

[995] *Guocui xuebao* year 4, issue 1, Advertisement.

[996] Ibid.

[997] See Zheng Shiqu, *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu*, 201

improving the civic virtues of the people (興民德),[998] and they distinguished themselves from the ideal of Liang Qichao's *On New People*. For them, civic virtues emerged from awareness of one's unique identity defined by the cumulative cultural-institutional tradition. Following Zhang Taiyan's collectivist and culturalistic interpretation of autonomy, the *guoxue* movement cohort rejected the idea that the true learning could be defined by any universal moral values or categories that transcended the particular conditions of the nation. As Deng Shi emphasized,

> What is national learning? National learning is what a nation posses on its own. Once there is a piece of land, and there is a group of people born there, then a nation exists. Together with the existence of the nation is the existence of its learning. Learning is to study the learning of the nation to meet the needs of the nation, thus to govern that nation. National learning is born with the nation; it is grounded in the geography of the nation, and it is rooted in the characteristics of its people, thus it cannot be alienated [from the nation] at any moment. If a gentleman is born in this nation, then [he ought to] understand this learning, and [if he] knows to love this nation, then [he would not] forget to love its learning.
>
> 國學者何？一國所自有之學也。有地而人生其上，因以成國焉。有其國者有其學，學也者，學其一國之學以為國用，而自治其一國者也。國學者，與有國以俱來，本乎地理，根之民性，而不可須臾離也。君子生是國，則通是學，知愛其國，無不知愛其學。[999]

As Deng indicates, the model of a virtuous citizen is a learned gentleman who identifies with the cumulative civilizing tradition. Based on this definition, the *guoxue* movement went on to define the education required for the making of national elites. In an "Announcement for Establishing a National Essence School" (擬設國粹學堂啟) (1908), the *guoxue* figures claimed,

> The nation exists between the heavens and the earth, thus there must be something

[998] Ibid., 219

[999] Quoted from Zheng Shiqu, *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu*.

> with which it is established. Learning is the source of politics, teaching, rituals, and customs. Once this learning has perished, the politics, teachings, and customs will all perish, then the country will not be able to endure.
>
> 夫國於天地，必有與立。學也者，政教禮俗之所出也。學亡則一國之政教禮俗均亡，政教禮俗均亡，則邦國不能獨峙。[1000]

The claim that "The nation exists between the heavens and the earth, thus there must be something serving as the foundation" (國於天地必有與立) was also made by Liang Qichao in 1901. While Liang believed that the foundation of the nation rested on its tradition of pursuing self-governance, however, the *guoxue* figures of 1905 had already interpreted the foundation of the nation as rooted in the learning of politics, teaching, rituals, and customs, namely, the *zhengsu* 政俗, as defined by Zhang Taiyan.

3. The Morality and Politics of *Guoxue* in the 1900s

Now we can better understand *guoxue*'s politics in context. For many revolutionary intellectuals who felt Zhang Taiyan's appeal, *guoxue* could represent a well-justified alternative to the New Learning approach associated with proposals for a constitutional monarchy. Right after Zhang Taiyan was freed from prison in 1906, the National Studies Society (國學講習會) opened in Japan as an integral section of the larger revolutionary movement of radical intellectuals. Zhang Shizhao's introduction to the establishment of the society published in *Minbao* (民報) was an example. In the introduction, drawing on Zhang Taiyan's criticism of the New Learning group, Zhang Shizhao developed a sophisticated declaration to the intellectual world on why *guoxue* mattered. His argument went as follows.

[1000] "Nishe guocui xuetang qi" 擬設國粹學堂啟, included in the appendix of Zheng, *Wanqing guocui pai*.

In the past, the civil service exam often failed to produce responsible national elites because people who pursued that path were mostly motivated by their self-interest, rarely engaging in any profound reflection on social-political life or serving the interests of the people. "Those who participated in the civil service exam merely conducted superficial and meaningless literary writing and memorization of the Classics to gain fame, and [their learning] had nothing to do with studying real classical works or commenting on the early kings." After the civil service exam was finally removed, the people who engaged in the New Learning began to develop into a new national elite. But these so-called New Learning scholars also became self-interested, concerned with their own careers and reputations, never engaging with real and profound learning.[1001] In particular,

> Those who studied in preparation for the civil service exams [did not conduct *guoxue,* but] they dared not to reject *guoxue.* However, today's New Learning scholars dare to say that *guoxue* ought to be abandoned… *Guoxue* is the source for established a polity. I have heard that, in a competitive world, merely engaging with *guoxue* is not sufficient, but I have never heard that any nation can stand on its own without a thriving *guoxue*. I have heard that a nation can fall though its *guoxue* remains alive, but I have never heard that a nation can still stand even if its *guoxue* collapses. Thus, if no one today promotes *guoxue*, then it would have impact on the survival of our nation…
>
> 前之業科舉者，不敢排斥國學；而今之業新學者，竟敢詆國學為當廢絕。……夫國學者國家所以成立之源泉也。吾聞處競爭之世，徒恃國學固不足以立國矣。而吾未聞國學不興而國能自立者也。吾聞有國亡而國學不亡者矣，而吾未聞國學先亡而國仍立者也。故今日之國學之無人興起，即將影響於國家之存滅 ……

Zhang Shizho made a moral claim for *guoxue* as the most righteous intellectual tradition

[1001] 科舉者，只以膚淺無可道之辭章貼擴為餌，無取乎窺名山而議先王。……士所以趨於科舉者，……利祿之道使然也。……科舉廢矣，代科舉而興者新學也。新學者，亦利祿之途也，而其名為高業。新學者之道業之，其弊害自與科舉等。

of the past, one with which only truly public-minded scholars engaged in order to contribute to the wellbeing of the people. It was a tradition that had been always in tension with learning for the sake of acquiring social and political status. Zhang equated the so-called "New Learning" with the self-interested learning of civil service exams. Pursuing *guoxue* thus became key to the contribution of China's national elites to a better order.

> Let us forget about those [hopeless] conservatives (篤舊者), I only want to talk about those who joined the New Learning. Neither do I want to talk about those compradors who only know a few Western words but are willing to enslave themselves to the Western people and who disdain *guoxue*. I want to speak to those who are committed to China (志在中國者). The reason why a nation can stand must be that the nation has some unique optimal ways of governing (治法), which are the most suitable ways for that nation. [The nation must also] have its unique ways of writing (文辭), which are appreciated by the excellent people. Since what makes a nation stand includes these elements, those who are committed to China cannot afford not to know its unique ways of governing and its unique ways of writing…. It has been two thousands years since the nation of China was first established. Can we say it has not created any unique and optimal ways of governing? [They say] these ways of governing are obscure. The Chinese language is special in the world. Can we say its writing has nothing special and excellent? [They must say the writings] have nothing special and excellent. If they are not lying then they have no learning at all. But if one wishes to achieve any enterprise for China, one has to first engage with [its ways of governing and writing] in order to know [about it]. However…their claims sound very ambitious and their discourses sound very aggressive. What makes them so confident is that they believe one day they would take charge of the nation. But personally, they cannot even make a reference to the names of the Classics and history; neither can they write a normal letter. [When I speak to them] about the ideas of *Ru* and the past experience of the nation (儒言國故), they would carelessly ridicule: 'Is there anything valuable to be learned from there?' They are already outdated! The reason why they behave like this has its roots and origins. Those who can come and pursue New Learning today are often what Su Zizhan [i.e. Su Shi] called the people with knowledge, courage, speeches, and strength: they are the smart people [of the community]. As long as they perform well then the society will be peaceful. Therefore rulers always try to follow the current customs to support them. Before the three dynasties [these people] were supported in school (學). From the Warring States to the Qin dynasty [they] were sponsored as secretary consultants (客). After the Han dynasty [they] served as county officials. After the Wei and the Jin dynasties [they] were selected through the Nine-Rank system. After the Sui and the Tang dynasties [they] were selected through the civil service

exams. Today, it is the new learning [program] that supports these people. Thus, if these people are merely [satisfied by being] utilized by the rulers, then [the program] would become the path through which the smart people are gathered and recruited [into the system]. If scholars (學者) merely learn according to what they are recruited for… then, in order not to neglect their duties, they would only work hard to serve the interests of the rulers. They would lack strength and capability. Even if they hate [the rulers] and want to rebel, they would not be able to take the lead to do so. I think they are entirely opposite from the patriotic people…. How could the wise ones not know this principle?

篤舊者無論矣，吾今語夫業新學者。略識西字，奴於西人，鄙夷國學無可道者，此Comprador之言也，亦無論矣。吾語夫志在中國者。夫一國之所以存立者，必其國有獨優之治法，施之於其國為最宜。有獨至之文辭，為其國秀美之士所愛賞。立國之要素既如此，故凡有志於其一國者，不可不通其治法，不習其文辭。苟不爾，則不能立於最高等之位置，而有以轉移其國化，此定理也。中國立國已二千年，可得謂無獨優之治法乎？言治法猶晦。中國之文字於地球為特殊，可得謂無獨至之文辭乎？必曰無之，非欺人之言則固未之學耳。然則慾求有為於中國，其先所從事之方可知矣。而顧吾見今之號稱志士者，陳義唯恐其不高，立言唯恐其不激。其所以自信者，吾必有以主於中國也。而是人者，乃或口不能舉經史之名，手不能行通常之簡。語以儒言國故，則漫然嗤之曰：是何足取？嘻！亦已過矣！雖然為是者有本有原。夫今之求新學者，此蘇子瞻所謂智勇辯力四者，皆天民之秀傑也。此四者不失職則民靖，故世主恆因俗設法以養之。三代以上出於學，戰國至秦出於客，漢以後出於郡縣吏。魏晉以來，出於九品中正。隋唐以後，出於科舉。而今之世，則出於新學。故新學者，若僅為世主之所利用，即所以……四者之天民而馴致之之道也。苟學者僅如其所馴致者而學之……凡民之秀傑者，多以客養之不失職，其力耕以奉上者，皆椎骨無能為者，雖慾怨叛而莫為之先。……此義也，在明者寧不知之？[1002]

Zhang Shizhao's criticisms of the New Learning scholars followed Zhang Taiyan's criticisms of the selection of political elites in the system of parliamentary democracy. Now, for Zhang, *guoxue* represented an anti-establishment critical position. *Guoxue* was moral; it helped the intellectual elites to remain connected to the real interests of the nation.

Zhang claimed that the majority of scholars knew this problem, but since the

[1002] *Shenwen yu mingbian* Vol.1, 166.

system naturally tended to work in this way, and the scholars had been absorbed into the system, such bad habits would persist and the New Learning scholars would just continue their practices in a new and more complex context. For instance, after the court opened the special subject of statecraft learning (經濟特科) for the civil service exam, it became the best-selling category of examination preparation books. In contrast, those who would choose to work hard and read Zhang Taiyan's *Qiushu* were rare, because this path was difficult and did not promise immediate success. The general problem was that, as soon as an idea for reform became popular, it would be manipulated by opportunistic people who wanted to climb the social ladder. This had happened again with the New Learning figures, who learned and said fashionable things in order to gain status in the system. Zhang Taiyan's learning, represented by his dense, difficult, highly allusive, and archaic style of writing in the *Qiushu*, embodied a contrasting attitude toward learning, one that captured the real *guoxue*.[1003]

> …It must be the New Learning that eventually destroys China….For of the people who promote the real 'new learning', none of them is able to match *guoxue*. One cannot talk about loving one's nation with those who are ignorant about *guoxue*. And, those who understand *guoxue* will not defame it as something worthless. Zhang, who is the author of the *Qiushu*, is Mr. Taiyan from Yuhang. Mr. [Taiyan] is a leading master in the field of *guoxue*. Everyone, as long as they could read Mr. [Taiyan]'s book, would know about him. Today, Mr. [Taiyan] is in exile in Japan. After he had escaped seven times from the orders to arrest him, and after he spent three years in prison, his faith grew and his body became even stronger. This [shows that] Heaven wants to prepare this position for Mr. [Taiyan]. ……What the master promised to teach included [the following]: first, the origins of the Chinese language, writing, and cultural creations; second, the purposes and perspectives behind the designs of the texts, institutions, and systems; third, the people and deeds from the past that serve as models today. ...Thus [I] will not say more about why *guoxue* needs to thrive and how it can thrive. I will find answers from Mr. [Taiyan].

[1003] Ibid., 166

……亡中國者必新學也。夫新學果何罪？而學者不知所以為學，至以亡人國，是則埋葬弘之血而碧不可沒者矣。何也？真新學者，未有不能與國學相挈合者也。國學之不知，未有可與言愛國者也。知國學者，未有能詆為無用者也。作《旭書》之章氏者，即餘杭太炎先生也。先生為國學界之泰斗，凡能讀先生書者，無不知之。今先生避地日本，以七次捕逃，三年禁獄之後，道心發越，體益加豐，是天留此一席以待先生。……先生之允宣講者：一中國語言、文字、製作之原。一典章、制度所以設施之旨趣。一古來人物蹟之可為法式者。……故不贅國學所以須昌明之道，與由何道以昌明之，吾人皆將獲確證之於先生。[1004]

In Zhang Shizhao's argument, *guoxue* served as an ideology. Whether scholars respected *guoxue* and whether they were willing to study it were regarded as measurements of their commitment to the public interest. The only way to understand its visions and values was to identify oneself with its agenda.

The politics of *guoxue* was effective. Its claim to moral superiority successfully inspired students and intellectuals, especially those with background and interest in China's literati learning tradition. As Zheng Shiqu 鄭師渠 shows, many contributors to the *Guocui xuebao* and the members of the Association for the Preservation of National Learning were also founders and editors of journals on politics and education that proposed anti-Manchu revolution and the restoration of a Han Chinese cultural tradition.[1005] Many of these journals tried to mobilize provincial forces, drawing on

[1004] Ibid.

[1005] For instance, according to Zheng Shiqu, there were Liu Yanzi 柳亞子 and Gao Tianmei's 高天梅 *Fubao* 復報, Liu Yazi, Gao Tianmei, and Chen Qubing's 陳去病 *Xingshi* 醒獅, Ning Tiaoyuan's 寧調元 *Han zhi* 漢幟, *Shen zhou ribao* 神洲日報, and *Hansheng* 漢聲, and *Huang Di hun* 黃帝魂

regional cultural traditions as their path to national culture and politics.[1006] In addition, student media, originally inspired by Liang Qichao, had been largely motivated to support the ideas of ethnic revolution, violent overthrow of the government, and strengthening awareness of the Han cultural identity.

On the other hand, because of their broad interests in cultural and institutional history, the *Guocui xuebao* and the Association for the Preservation of National Learning in Shanghai became two inclusive platforms. They attracted other literary and cultural figures interested in China's cultural traditions, who found *guoxue* a meaningful concept because it gave greater relevance to their own work. Famous poets such as Liu Yazi 柳亞子(1887-1958) and Chen Qubing 陳去病 (1874-1933), and artists and critics such as Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 (1865-1955), contributed to the *Guocui xuebao* and joined the Association. Later, they would found their own cultural and revolutionary organization, Nanshe 南社 (The Southern Society).[1007]

The Role of Guoxue in the Rise of Sun Yat-sen

The movements that Zhang Taiyan had inspired gained him considerable capital in the literati world. In the early 1900s, Zhang Taiyan made these resources available to Sun Yat-sen and provided him with the language and ideological framework needed to put

[1006] See Liu Yazi's *Jiangsu* 江蘇, Liu Shipei's *Henan* 河南; Also, *Jincheng* 晉乘, *Yunnan* 雲南, *Yuexi* 粵西, and Ning Diaoyuan's 寧調元 *Dongtingbo* 洞庭波.

[1007] The *guoxue* cohort also offered a platform for some older generation of scholars to join, although Zhang kept an eye to not let his life-long enemy, the Gongyang school scholars such as Liao Ping, to publish their writings. Such as 王闓運, 廖平, 簡朝亮, 孫诒讓, 張謇, 鄭孝胥, 羅惇融, see Zheng Shiqu, *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu*, 14. Overall, it seems that a possibility of building a common ground based on the cumulative studies of the cultural and textual tradition was also emerging, living tangible resources for the future generations.

Sun's agenda in a cultural perspective. [1008]

Sun did not have a literati background, but he had tried to gain recognition from that world. Growing up in a poor family that engaged in farming and labor in a small fishing village in Guangdong, he moved to Hawaii when he was a child to live with his brother. Later he was attracted by Christianity and was baptized in Hong Kong. He was known to be passionate about becoming a hero to change the world and was rebellious toward his villagers' local religion. An ambitious and publicly minded young man, his heroes included the leaders of the Taiping rebellion, Napoleon and Washington. Even after he became a medical practitioner in Guangzhou in the 1880s, he still hoped to make a career as an official. Sun had attempted to gain Li Hongzhang's patronage to join the reforms in 1894 by offering his knowledge about the successes of the Western world, mostly focusing on improving education for advancing agricultural technology and engineering and encouraging trade. Li rejected him, but this experience helped him to make up his mind to build his political foundation through another path: gaining supports from secret societies and other non-elite social groups to organize radical anti-government revolts. From the early 1890s to the early 1900s, Sun found most of his support among Chinese businessmen from Guangdong and Hong Kong, the overseas Chinese community in Hawaii, and secret organizations, such as the anti-Manchu *Sanhehui* 三合會 (Triad Society) in south and south-west China. While the businessmen and overseas Chinese helped to finance his political work, the secret societies provided

[1008] My general discussion of Sun's life and agendas draws on Schiffrin, Harold Z. *Sun Yat-Sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution*. University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

him with a significant model for action, and played direct roles in organizing his uprisings. In terms of effectiveness and determination, Sun had stronger faith in the secret societies than in the student and intellectual communities. Later, when he needed to work with students, he would teach student organizations to adopt the rituals of the *Sanhehui*. In many of his supporters' view, Sun represented the best candidate for a would-be founder of a new regime. His supporters often compared his agenda with the Taiping rebellion, which was glorified as a heroic uprising that tried to remove the Manchus and restore Han Chinese rule.

In late 1894, Sun founded the Xing Zhong Hui 興中會 (Revive China Society) in Honululu. Of its 153 known formally registered members, there were only two students, in contrast with 69 businessmen, 39 workers, and 13 secret society figures, these comprising the top three categories of participants. The two rebellions that Sun organized, in Guangzhou 廣州 in 1895 and Huizhou 惠州 in 1900, both failed, but these events made him broadly known in both the Chinese literati world and the West. An excellent organizer and effective actor, Sun not only continued securing support for his agenda from the overseas Chinese community, he also appealed to foreign powers as a new-style leader who knew about the West and would bring China to face changing global trends. Meanwhile, he sought broader recognition and support from reform-minded Chinese intellectuals and scholars.

With a limited mastery of literary Chinese, the Classics, history and traditional political thought, Sun was worried about his inadequacy in these fields and remained anxious about interacting with the intellectual community. He was remembered as having tried to catch up by reading on his own and by learning from the intellectual leaders that

he worked with, such as Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan. He was fully aware that it was problematic to be unable to conceptualize his action in terms of China's own intellectual traditions. When he was captured by the Qing embassy in London in 1896, he was found to be carrying the first two chapters of Huang Zongxi's *Waiting for the Dawn,* the chapters "On the Origins of Rulers" and "On the Origins of Ministers," with his annotations.[1009]

In exile, Sun observed European society and became particularly interested in labor movements, unionization, strikes, protests, and critiques against the laissez-faire style of economic development endorsed by Social Darwinism. At the same time, after Sun became more famous in the late 1890s, he also became increasingly interested in searching for China's own approach to understanding its challenges to avoid the problems that he found in the West. By 1897, in his conversations with Miyazaki Tōten 宮崎滔天(1871-1922), a supporter of Sun's revolution, Sun shared Miyazaki's discovery that China's own antiquity was similar to the ideal of modern republicanism and the Chinese had already developed a tradition of self-governance (自治). The key to the republican model was nothing more than the ability and spirit to self-govern, they felt, thus China already had it.[1010]

With such a belief, Sun sought to collaborate with Liang Qichao's group after the failure of the Hundred Day's Reform. However, Liang Qichao, however, who had developed his own discourse of self-governance, came to the conclusion that military

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[1009] *Huang Zongxi changzhuan*, 440.

[1010] The conversation is recorded in Miyazaki Tōten (宮崎滔天), *Sanjūsannen no yume* (三十三年の夢)

revolution based on anti-Manchu racial discourse was irresponsible. Before 1903, the idea of forcing the Qing to support a constitutional monarchy was more popular. It threatened Sun's influence, and Liang managed to co-opt some of Sun's supporters among the overseas Chinese in Japan and Hawaii. In this critical context Sun gained support from Zhang Taiyan, who was just ascending to dominance of the radical intellectual arena.

Zhang Taiyan had once met Sun through Liang Qichao in 1899, , but they do not seem to have had a substantive exchange of ideas.[1011] Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao did not think highly of Sun at the beginning. Liang told Zhang once that Sun resembled people such as Chen Sheng 陳勝 and Wu Guang 吳廣, grassroots rebels. For Zhang, Sun "seemed to have understanding about foreign affairs, and he had some sense of racial identity" (稍通洋務，尚知辨別種族). In 1900, after Zhang decided to entirely break with the supporters of constitutional monarchy, he sent his essay "Untying the Queue" (解辮髮) to the Hong Kong branch of the Xing Zhong Hui to be published in their revolutionary newspaper, *China* (Zhongguo xunbao 中國旬報). In early 1902, when Zhang visited Japan, Sun invited him to discuss the revolution and various policy issues. In April, Zhang invited Sun to join his anti-Manchu protest. They started to recognize each other as collaborators. Zhang admired Sun as a forceful and effective political leader. Zhang made reference to his conversations with Sun in his revised *Qiushu*. Inspired by their conversations, Zhang added "Even Distribution of Land Holdings" (Pingjun diquan 平均地權), and found the roots of that policy in China's own historical

[1011] *Zhang Taiyan nianpu chang bian* , 77

context, with the Tang implementation of the Equal Field System (均田制).

Zhang Taiyan's recognition and input gave Sun much-needed cultural and social capital. As he worked on spreading the revolutionary forces into different regions of China, before Zhang was freed from prison in 1906, Sun had already started to apply Zhang's logic and language to his own public writings and speeches to criticize the constitutionalists, and to redefine the meanings of popular sovereignty and revolution based on the proposal for ethnic revolution. He attacked the moral integrity of the constitutionalists (私心而忘公義). He challenged Liang because Liang distrusted the common people's capacity for governing themselves, condescendingly asking people to participate in citizen education. In his public speeches in Hawaii, he targeted the elitism of the constitutionalists in order to absorb more workers, businessmen and peasants. He argued that their goal of realizing self-governance based on a Manchu monarchy did not respect the real meaning of autonomy. He asserted that they had no mastery of *Lunlixue* (論理學), for which he also offered an English translation, "Logical Political," and thus were not in tune with reality (名實不符)[1012]. Many of these claims directly came from Zhang's *Qiushu* pieces dating back to the late 1890s. Sun would refer to Zhang's favorite early political thinkers such as Guanzi in his own works. When it was necessary to make reference to Western concepts, he would use their English spelling to indicate his authentic understanding of the terms.

From 1903 on, Sun also began to spread a more developed revolutionary ideology among overseas Chinese students. This time, he surprised the students with his familiarity

[1012] See 1904, "Bo Baohuangbao"驳保皇报, Sun Zhongshan quanji, *juan* 1, 1981. 275, 277,

with both Chinese intellectual-cultural traditions and Western political concepts, as well as his down-to-earth experience with organizing social movements.[1013] In 1903, for the first time he added the phrase "Pingjun diquan" 平均地權 (Evenly Distributing Land Holdings) to his guiding principles, now listed as " Removing the Barbarians, Restoring China, Establishing the People's Republic, and Evenly Distributing Land Holdings." (驅除韃虜/恢復中華/創立民國/平均地權). He proposed the ideas of a "Five Power Constitution" (五權憲法) to students, based directly on Zhang's argument that in addition to the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers within the government, it would be also necessary to maintain the independence of education and elite selection, and to maintain the Censorate system as an independent power of surveillance. During this period, he also stated in front of Western audiences that China had found the right path, and its modern restoration would only bring benefit to the world, but that this would require the Western powers to support China's claims for political independence and popular sovereignty.

Zhang Taiyan helped Sun to find a convincing position in the intellectual and political debates of his day. Sun could now speak to the Western world as a modern leader, while at the same time standing before the Chinese intellectual elites as someone who knew how to stimulate the inherent greatness of the Chinese people. By 1905, Sun succeeded in gaining recognition among intellectuals and students, dominating the revolutionary discourse, and securing financial and military support from other

[1013] Ibid., 306

communities. Building on these developments, the Tongmenghui 同盟會 was founded in 1905 in Tokyo. It was a truly broad alliance of intellectuals, students, political actors, and military personnel, based on Sun's *Xing Zhong Hui* 興中會, Huang Xing and Zhang Shizhao' *Huaxinghui* 華興會, Zhang Taiyan's *Guangfuhui* 光復會, and other predecessors. Zhang Taiyan, although still in prison, took the role of the main ideologue. He would later collaborate with Sun and Huang Xing in the writing of a set of political documents for the new regime (建國方略). His essay, "On the Meaning of the Republic of China" (Zhonghua minguo jie 中華民國解), included a reiteration of his studies of the racial and cultural roots of Chinese community identity in the *Qiushu,* and his criticisms of constitutionalist ideals.

As Zheng Shiqu shows, in the process of founding the Tongmenghui, Zhang was the glue between political forces and intellectuals. Suffice it to say that he demonstrated to the larger literati world how the academic tradition mattered profoundly for creating the new Republic of China. The political movement was understood as a natural extension of the need to revive learning, and learning was nothing other than the very source for maintaining the identity of the Chinese people. Situating himself into this larger perspective, Sun proposed his Three Principles of the People (三民主義), which claimed that it was the unique power of the Chinese people that served as the foundation of a new China, and demanded that leaders ground themselves in the interests of the people and develop themselves in step with the development of the community. There should be no external standard that for leaders beyond identifying with the real interests of the community.

In his "Forward" for the first issue of *Minbao* (民報), Sun wrote,

The way of repairing the group is to progress with the group; what to use [as guidance] and what not to use, has to be decided based on what is most appropriate [for the group]. This group's history is different from the other group's history, thus the steps [one takes] to support and advance this group differ in sequence and procedure. To follow [this principle] and not go astray from it is what offers the foundation of public opinion. I think the progress (進化) of Europe and America is based on three principles, namely, *minzu* 民族 (national identity), *minquan* 民權 (popular sovereignty), and *minsheng* 民生 (people's livelihood)… these principles are all based on people, and [as they change progressively] the races of Europe and America are all governed and cultivated (治化). All the other [discourses] responding to issues about the relationship between individuals and society that became established doctrines, were simply the expansion and elaboration of these three main ideologies and were related to them.

夫繕群之道，與群俱進，而擇別取捨，惟其最宜。此群之歷史既與彼群殊，則所以掖而進之之階級，不無後先進止之別。由之不貳，此所以為輿論之母也。余維歐、美之進化，凡以三大主義，曰民族、曰民權、曰民生……是三大主義，皆基本於民，遞嬗變易，而歐、美之人種胥治化焉。其他旋維於小己大群之間，而成為故說者，皆此三者之充滿發揮而旁及者耳。今者中國以千年專制之毒而不解，異種殘之，外邦逼之，民族主義、民權主義殆不可以須臾緩，而民生主義歐美所慮積重難返者，中國獨受病未深而去之易。是故或於人為既往之陳跡，或於我為方來之大患，要為繕吾羣所有事，則不可不並時而弛張之。

Our country is [going to be] the first to be advanced in promoting the principle of *Minsheng*-ism 民生主義 (The Principle of People's Livelihood). We prevent the disasters, and we could really combine the political revolution and the social revolution at once, impressing the Europeans and the Americans. My homeland, the biggest nation who are intelligent and powerful, outweighing all the other nations, has been asleep, declining for tens of thousands of generations. Fortunately, it is [now] stimulated by the [global] trends and awakens from sleep. Within a day it will rise vigorously and make great efforts without stopping. [The prediction that it can] yield twice the result with half the effort is truly not an exaggeration. In every group, there are a few [leaders] who have the best mentality 心裡. They can guide the group to progress, and they can apply the most suitable solutions of governing and adjust them to our group, [as well as] making our group's progress adjust to the [progress of the] world. This kind of calling for serving as the first to know and the first to be aware 先覺者, is what our *Minbao* commits itself to. In other words, for innovative scholarly discourses, [once] their ideals are installed in people's heart and transformed into common sense, then they would become closer to be acted on.

夫歐美社會之禍，伏之數十年，及今而後發見之，又不能使之遽去。吾國治

> 民生主義者，發達最先，睹其禍害於未萌，誠可舉政治革命、社會革命畢其功於一役，還視歐、美，彼且瞠乎後也。翳我祖國，以最大之民族，聰明強力，超絕等倫，而沈夢不起，萬世墮壞，幸為風潮所激，醒其渴睡，旦夕之間，奮發振強，勵精不已，則半事備功，良非夸嫚。惟夫一群之中，有少數最良心裡，能策其群而進之，使最宜之治法，適應於吾群，吾群之進步，適應於世界，此先知先覺之天職，而吾《民報》所為作也。抑非常革新之學說，其理想輸灌於人心，而化為常識，則其去實行也近，吾於民報之出世覘之。[1014]

Unlike Liang Qichao's positive idea of autonomy in his *New Citizen*, Sun's *Three Principals of the People* celebrated the internal source of energy that China had possessed as the justification of its autonomy. A new civic order would be realized as long as those least debatable values – identity, autonomy, and livelihood - were commonly accepted by the collective. The role of the intellectual elite was to be "those who are the first to know and first to be aware" (先覺者), in the sense that they would transform the public by restoring the greatness of China, without imposing any positive and universal discourse of values upon them.

Zhang Taiyan and his followers saw themselves as "those who are the first to know and first to be aware." Zhang took over the *Minbao* in 1906 after he was freed from prison, and the newspaper served as the main platform for him to publish some of his most influential political writings to argue against the *Xinmin congbao* in the following years. He also started leading the above-mentioned National Studies Society National Learning (國學講習會) in the press office of *Minbao* and became the mentor of some of the most influential left-wing cultural figures in the following decades, such as Lu Xun 魯迅 and Qian Xuantong 錢玄同. As Zhang observed, his work as the editor of the *Minbao* enabled the Tongmenghui to attract scholarly and intellectual attention in China

[1014] Sun, "*Minbao* fakanci" (民報發刊詞), *Sun Zhongshan quanji*, Vol.1, 288.

at a scale that mere politicians could never imagine.[1015] Not only did they inject the Tongmenghui with new blood, but also they provided a literary and cultural style that Sun's community had been lacking. As Zheng Shiqu argues, the *Guocui xuebao* and the Society for Preserving National Learning in Shanghai were run as two integrated parts of the revolutionary movement, echoing the *Minbao*. Evidential scholars such as Liu Shipei and Huang Kan 黃侃(1886-1936), the main contributor of *Guoxue xuebao*, also published political writings to contribute to left-wing collectivist and materialistic political discourse, such as their lamentations over economic inequality,[1016] emphasizing that basic economic independence was the fundamental right for the members of society to secure their life and political autonomy.[1017]

As Zheng Shiqu shows, in 1908, 65% members of the Society for Preserving National Learning had experiences in one or more revolutionary political communities, such as the Guangfuhui, Tongmenghui, or later, Nanshe. The majority was from Zhejiang, 52%, with an average age of 27.[1018] More detailed studies are needed to understand how such a network was constructed, but suffice it to say that saving China and building a republic were largely understood by this circle as the restoration of a national learning tradition, a tradition that was responsible for China's future.

[1015] Zheng Shiqu, *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu,* 280

[1016] For instance, Liu Shipei's "Bei dainnong"悲佃農 published in Minbao, issue 15, and Huang Kan's "Ai Pinmin"哀貧民 in Minbao, issue 17, see Zheng Shiqu, *Wan Qing guocui pai wenhua sixiang yanjiu,* 200.

[1017] Ibid., 236

[1018] Ibid., 14-16.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have followed Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan roughly from 1895, when they entered the national stage as followers of Kang Youwei's New Learning movement, until around 1905 when they both rose to their intellectual pinnacle, each proposing his own ideology to define the foundation of a new order for China.

To begin with, I have situated the rise of Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan in the context of the New Learning movement, and I have shown that they both developed their own theories of learning and politics, as well as their own understandings of China's problems, in order to overcome the influence of Kang Youwei. In particular, as I have shown in the previous chapter, Kang's movement held that instead of seeking to conduct reform within the existing institutional and ideological frameworks, a true scholar ought to situate Chinese civilization in the global context, drawing on new sources of learning and engaging with reflective understanding of the basic elements – governing, teaching, and learning – that contribute to successful civil life. At the same time, by modeling itself on the Western parliamentary system, the learning would restore its critical force and represent a much broader participation in politics. One challenge that Kang had raised was how to redefine the meaning and the practice of the *Ru* cultural tradition, which was developed in China's particular imperial-historical context, in order to maintain the solidarity and authority of learning? To respond to this question, Kang drew on the Gongyang commentary tradition, proposing to redefine *Ru* learning as a religion whose source of values is truly universal because it lies in Heaven-and-Earth and transcends human culture and history.

Looking at Liang and Zhang in this context, I have first shown that, although Liang and Zhang joined Kang to conduct political theoretical scholarship in promoting a broader and more critical participation of elite learning within the political sphere, they disapproved of Kang's moralistic and reductionist definition of knowledge and his dogmatic and religious interpretation of the *Ru* tradition. Instead, with a background of evidential learning, they brought the tradition of evidentially based political scholarship from the seventeenth century to bear on their definition of learning. For Liang Qichao, who largely drew on Huang Zongxi's view, Kang's interpretation of *Ru* learning as a religion was a celebration of dogma, which clashed with the true meaning of the *Ru* tradition, which should encourage freethinking and knowing for oneself. For Zhang Taiyan, who largely drew on Wang Fuzhi's view, Kang's Gongyang approach celebrated superstition, dogmatism, and groundless speculation based on a mystical discourse of Heaven-and-Earth. Both of these critics tried to re-locate the agency of learning back to cultural creation. They saw the key to civilized life as lying in the understanding of the human creation of a cultural-political community, and the realization by intellectual elites that they are a part of the cumulative cultural creation of their community.

In redefining the grounds of learning, Liang and Zhang both argued, values that make civilization possible are not to be found in Heaven-and-Earth; such values are genuine only if they are realized in the life of the community. Therefore, elite learning ought to search for values in the history of the community, a history that is reconstructed in light of certain commonalities in the cultural origins of civilization but that intends to reveal the particular civilizing legacy of the community. Both of them actively promoted the idea of writing a history of Chinese civilization from the perspective of the formation

and development of the Chinese community (中國史/中國文明史), and regarded the understanding of the *guoxing* 國性 as a goal, analyzing the particular qualities or characteristics that the Chinese community exhibited in creating their civilization. Both Liang and Zhang identified Qing evidential scholarship as the best interpreter of the *Ru* learning tradition, because this school devoted its Classical and historical learning to understanding the social, cultural and political history of the Chinese community from its beginnings, producing systematic knowledge for guiding the community's life, but at the same time remaining independent and critical. To explain and justify their claim for intellectual values, Liang and Zhang each produced their own influential studies of the intellectual and scholarly history of China (中國學術史) to show how the role of *Ru* learning had played an inherent role in shaping community life and the course of civilization. Based on these intellectual agendas, in the first years of the 20th century they almost simultaneously embraced the idea of *minzu zhuyi* (民族主義) to popularize their envisioned intellectual values as the moral foundation for an ideal civil order. By promoting identification with a "Chinese national identity" as a basic civil virtue, they intended to mobilize the elite world to realize the power of publicly minded, historically grounded, and independent learning to guide socio-political life.

In this chapter I have shown that the influence of Liang and Zhang had much to do with their ability to provide a meaningful way of learning to a new generation of scholars, who were wrestling with global sources of information that spoke to political change, while also seeking to identify their agency within their shared *Ru* cultural practice. Liang and Zhang engaged in comparative studies of the cultural and political origins of various civilizations, and they looked at both Chinese and Western civilizations

as historical products. Their goal was to search for political guidance in light of their knowledge of the history of China and the world, and to verify their conclusions based on their understanding of China's reality.

What does the civilizing process of China look like? Where to identify the civilizing legacy in history, and how to identify with it? What are the roots of China's contemporary conditions? How exactly should elite learning be implemented in order to guide the world? As I have shown, although Liang and Zhang shared many commonalities, they offered fundamentally different answers to these questions. They came up with two competing models of elite learning by drawing on two different lines of political thought in the evidential learning tradition. They produced differing interpretations of *minzu zhuyi* and the Chinese national identity, and eventually created two competing political visions regarding the foundation of China's new political order. The debates between their visions would mobilize the most lively and forceful intellectual movements at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century.

Liang Qichao, deeply influenced by Huang Zongxi's constitutionalist argument for learning, argued that the scholarly community ought to represent the public interest by guiding the central government and checking the government's use of power. At the same time, the learning community represented the civil values of the community, educating individual members of society to transform them into publically minded, critically learned, and responsible citizens. They identified themselves with the health of community life, while at the same time, through engaging in that community life, they acquired knowledge, personality, and become self-governing independent beings. Such an idea is best put forth in Liang's famous New Citizen 新民說 thesis. For Liang,

Western parliamentary democracy, regardless of whether it was operated under a Republic or Monarchy, was a vehicle for expressing his envisioned values. In his depiction of Chinese history from antiquity to the present, there had been a tradition since the Sage Kings that was represented by community leaders' active political thinking and cultural creation, which built a public foundation for the community's political life.

However, Zhang Taiyan, who was largely influenced by Wang Fuzhi's theory of culture and race, argued that the key to the survival of a community lay in the continuity of its cultural categories from their origins, which not only provided the community with a basic resource for interacting with the world, but also defined a shared cultural-linguistic identity to guide socio-political life. A fully responsible, autonomous, and learned elite learning community would devote itself to understanding the origins of the common beliefs, customs, and habits of the people from antiquity, and then shape them through their everyday social, political and cultural life. Zhang became deeply skeptical about promoting parliamentary democracy in China, not only because he did not trust the ability of common people to choose elites, but also because he worried that powerful social groups in China would easily manipulate the system, based on empty discourse about moral and political values, to serve their own interests. In fact, the very promotion of a parliamentary system for China to solve China's problems struck him as an example of the manipulation that he feared. Instead, he proposed a highly regionalized government system in which elites could serve as local officials to directly interact with the people and guide their everyday cultural and public life. At the same time, out of his deep worry that any form of individualistic moral discourse in learning would be abused to serve the purpose of social climbing, he celebrated Qian-Jia style scholarship, exemplified by the

philologist Dai Zhen and others, as the true spirit of Chinese civilization, characterizing it as possessing a spirit and force that was truly independent, autonomous, and fully identified with cumulative cultural and political practice. Such a left-wing conception of intellectual values led to two radical social-political agendas: Support for social-economic egalitarianism, and a racially-oriented proposal to rebuild a Chinese-ruled community, using elite learning to unite forces behind what he portrayed as the most basic and authentic discourse of identity politics.

In the last part of this chapter, I have shown how these two positions influenced younger students and intellectual followers. I have particularly argued that although at the beginning Liang Qichao's concept of the New Citizen, constitutionalism, and his *minzu zhuyi* were able to mobilize many young intellectual activists and students, it was Zhang Taiyan's radicalism that became the most powerful force, because Zhang's thesis did not assume that the Chinese culture and Chinese people needed to be internally cultivated in order to realize a better social-political order. By focusing on the *guoxue* 國學 movement and the establishment of the *Guocui xuebao* 國粹學報, I have shown that these young intellectual activists had combined their scholarly agenda, restoration of the great Chinese cultural tradition through historical learning, with their political agenda, the rebuilding of an equal and moral political community based on Chinese identity. I have furthermore shown how the intellectual mobilization led by Zhang Taiyan offered Sun Yat-sen a crucial intellectual-cultural resource to define the foundation of his revolutionary agenda, which would help him to eventually gain victory in his fight with advocates of a constitutional monarchy.

I end this chapter around the time of the abolition of the civil service exam, at a point when these two ideological positions as defined by Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan had become clear. Both positions tried to define politics and learning from a totalizing perspective, and believed the other side to be morally wrong. But what would become of their envisioned elite learning after the fall of the imperial order in 1911? What role would scholars and learning play in the new political community of the Republic? What would happen to the Classical and historical learning traditions? It would require a continued study of the May Fourth generation and after – a study that this dissertation has provided a foundational for – to answer these questions.

Conclusion

How does this study contribute to the understanding of China's modern transition? How does it shed light on the debates over "Chinese culture" in the latter twentieth century and the present? Before discussing these two questions, I would like to refocus our attention on the story presented in this study. This study bridges two major historical transitions that contributed to the ideological formation of modern China: the Ming-Qing transition in the seventeenth century and the late-Qing-Republic transition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Late Qing intellectual actors often drew a connection between these two eras. Why is this important? We can put it into perspective by considering an influential 1972 article by the late historian Frederic Wakeman, who was also fascinated with the intellectual activism of these two eras and its implications.[1019]

Wakeman examined the Donglin movement to understand how "traditional" Confucian intellectuals defined their political criticism and organized political action. He concluded that traditional Confucian political activists could not argue for a source of sovereignty independent from the imperial ruler, because their own status as members of the gentry depended on the same Confucian language that endorsed the emperor. The individual Confucian critic might argue for his own individual autonomy of judgment, but they could not demand rights as a group. Thus, Donglin criticism was mainly

[1019] Frederic Wakeman Jr., "The Price of Autonomy: Intellectuals in Ming and Ch'ing Politics," *Daedalus*, Vol.101, No.2 (Spring, 1972), 35-70.

concerned with the symbolic and abstract moral values evident in governmental action, rather than justification of concrete policies and institutions. In other words, the Confucian literati "mediated, rather than defined the legitimacy."[1020] In contrast, Wakeman came to the conclusion that although the late Qing scholarly reformers and learned associations of the mid-1890s to the early 1910s often saw themselves as inheriting the spirit of seventeenth-century "statecraft learning," they actually exhibited the influence of Western theories of the nation-state because these late Qing groups argued that they, rather than the imperial government, represented the nation's interests, and sought autonomy for themselves.

Wakeman's interpretation overlooks the fact that right after the collapse of the Donglin, radically different discourses emerged about collective intellectual movements and scholars' critical responsibilities relative to the imperial state. The Fushe scholars shifted their attention away from Donglin academicians' moral criticisms of the government, but claimed authority over political knowledge and institution building. Moreover, this new practice grew into a new form of ideology in the late seventeenth century, which argued that political power ought to be legitimized based on the interests of the historical community, and it was literati learning that represented and defined those interests. In fact, the Donglin movement marked the end of an intellectual tradition that had been dominant since the Song, contributing to a profound break in shared values in the seventeenth century. When trying to make sense of the late Qing intellectuals' nationalist movements and discourse, it is crucial to examine the history of the new

[1020] Ibid., 37.

intellectual movements and discourses that emerged during the Qing. In a sense, the intellectual-historical gap that Wakeman's argument omits is precisely what this study has addressed, from the perspectives of the intellectuals themselves.

Rupture within Continuity: The Rise of Evidential Learning

The break in shared values that emerged during the Ming-Qing transition found expression in the decline of Neo-Confucianism and the rise of Evidential Learning. In the first part of this study (Chapters 1-3), I have shown in detail how the Neo-Confucian discourse of literati leadership, which had been commonly accepted since the Song, experienced a tremendous internal crisis during the final years of the Ming and eventually lost its place at the center of intellectual discourse as a new intellectual culture emerged. The Neo-Confucian confidence that literati ought to serve as moral exemplars who were responsible for transforming other individuals into moral beings was shaken, and the belief that literati ought to realize their public role by providing social goods and maintaining a self-sufficient local life collapsed. The first generation of Evidential Learning scholars offered a new claim about shared values that was well in place by the late seventeenth century, creating a new model and justification for the literati tradition. It had its origins in the historically minded political learning of the Fushe, who were not Neo-Confucian moralists but had a developmental mind-set. The rise of Evidential Learning left two major legacies: a forceful new literati ideology (in the seventieth century), and a powerful model of collective scholarship devoted to China's broad textual-cultural traditions (in the eighteenth century).

Despite the continuity in imperial discourse from Ming to Qing, which had much to do with the Qing court's successful adoption of Neo-Confucianism as a state ideology,

the emergence of Evidential Learning in the seventeenth-century was a fundamental break from the Neo-Confucian definition of China's tradition and the state ideology that had been built on it. Instead of seeing the legacy of the sage kings as a transcendental moral mind that had figured out the perfect Coherence of Heaven-and-Earth, the leading thinkers of the seventeenth-century Evidential Learning school redefined antiquity as the product of cumulative, bottom-up institutional and cultural construction. "*Zhong guo*" still stood for an ideal, but not because it represented certain fundamental moral-cultural doctrines that inherited the Way of the Heaven. Rather, it was because it represented a successful historical community that had developed an advanced culture and government to support itself. In this sense, the literati learning tradition was valuable precisely because it had committed itself to the interests of the community and guided its development through history. Evidential Learning argued against any predetermined, universal Heavenly principle serving as the source of values that existed outside of the cultural creation of the community. It stressed the responsibility of scholars for defining the needs of that community. For understanding the common interests of the community, the imagination of a cultural identity for the people of "Zhong xia (中夏)," "Zhong guo," or "Hua xia (華夏)" thus mattered. A responsible scholar ought to identify his learning with the community's own cultural legacies, and in doing so, he would shape the civic virtue of this community, motiving his commitment to the community and bringing a prosperous and just social order.

For these thinkers, the Classics were both a theoretical inspiration and historical artifacts revealing the cultural foundation of the "Chinese" community. This intellectual position led to a powerful competing discourse on the agency of elite culture relative to

Qing political power. All of the leading scholars found existing Neo-Confucian learning to be corrupted and dogmatic and the system of elite selection to be deeply flawed, blaming these problems for the collapse of the Ming and many of the general problems of government and society. Criticism of Neo-Confucian moral learning continued into the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Dai Zhen considered the Evidential Learning method to serve the goal of deconstructing official Neo-Confucian discourse about moral norms, exposing the hypocrisy and the abuse of power behind the Neo-Confucian politics, and bring about a just community that would celebrate the value of reciprocity.

Continuity within Rupture: The Birth of Chinese Cultural Identity

The Tang-Song transition is a well-studied case of literati redefining antiquity so as to justify a break with existing modes of learning and received values. The Evidential Learning thinkers of the seventeenth century engaged in a similar process. They left a significant legacy for later Qing thinkers, not because they promoted a specific argument or doctrine, but because they offered a new structure for literati ideology. Uncovering this structure has allowed me to explain, in the second part of this study (Chapters 4-5), why national thought emerged as an appealing choice and mobilizing force.

The revival of Evidential Learning discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century demonstrates an important but often neglected conceptual structure underlying nationalist discourse. The building of a new post-imperial order meant the creation of a "new" China in contrast to the imperial system, but it also promised the "restoration" of its "true" cultural tradition, which Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan believed had been in decline well before the arrival of the West. This decline was evident in the flawed learning and elite selection system of the civil examinations, a "corrupted"

elite culture and politics, a weakening society and economy, and a decay in social customs. "True" learning, in the view of these thinkers, had been particularly suppressed under Manchu rule. In this sense, they generally argued that the creation of a new order and the incorporation of Western knowledge to improve Chinese culture and politics was also meant to "reconnect" with the "true" tradition. Is this conceptual structure a product of the new Western nationalism? I do not think so. Liang and Zhang were largely continuing the ideological discourse of seventeenth-century Evidential Learning in a new context. But why did they do so, and why can this continuity help us better understand China's modern transition?

At the beginning of the second part of this study, I have situated the rise of nationalistic discourse in the debate over shared learning during the late Qing reforms. I showed that the "New Learning" movement launched by Kang Youwei *et al* in the mid-1890s inherited the literati ideological structure of proposing a new definition of antiquity to initiate a break from the existing models of reform and to mobilize the broader political participation of educated elites. The "New Learning" movement, thus, was first of all a claim to "restore" the "true" Confucian tradition. But what made Kang's "New Learning" discourse different was that Kang believed that a new interpretation of the Confucian legacy in this context required taking Western achievements seriously as a necessary reference, which the government-led reforms had failed to do. The new principles of building a good socio-political order ought to have a common foundation in humanity, and thus ought to hold for both the civilizational achievements of the West and of China. Therein lay the responsibility of the new generation of literati scholars: True reforms required knowing what was universal and grasping the fundamentals.

Importantly, Kang believed that the new global context provided the new generation with a chance to discover the true essence of the tradition of the sages. A new, cosmopolitan source of learning would only improve contemporary Chinese scholars' understanding of their own tradition.

Kang made it possible for the participants in the "New Learning" movement to bring their own learning traditions to the task of interpreting the achievements of both the modern West and ancient China. In searching for a new universal basis of human development, what they believed to be true about the West also reinforced their beliefs about China's antiquity. Western achievements were not taken as an absolute set of doctrines, but as an arrangement and achievement of elite learning that had also been achieved in China's antiquity. The reinterpretation of antiquity and the reading of the West were two sides of the same coin.

I have shown how, from the very beginning, Kang, Liang and Zhang sought to make sense of the sources of Western achievement based on their own different learning backgrounds and values. Kang's views were based on a synthesis of political Neo-Confucianism and the esoteric Gongyang Commentary tradition, in which literati scholars would guide social-political life through a mode of learning meant to indoctrinate universal moral principles; it was radical in its reductionism. He stressed the role of religion in shaping Western civilization, and also reconstructed Confucian learning as a religion. However, Kang provoked resistance from the literati world, for his model implicitly jeopardized the authority of the cultural traditions that defined the literati elite.

In opposition to Kang, Liang and Zhang revived the seventeenth-century Evidential Learning traditions as their theoretical basis. As I have discussed, they adopted the Evidential Learning scholars' view that to achieve a prosperous and beneficent civil order, political life should be rooted in a community's self-understanding and its shared cultural meanings. In this sense, they embraced the new notion of "nationalism" (*minzu zhuyi)*. In contrast to Kang's interest in adopting ahistorical values and didactic knowledge to guide public life, they argued that in defining the common norms for society, scholars ought to identify with China's own cumulative cultural traditions to understand the public needs of the community. On this basis, scholars in their camp conducted comparative historical studies of world civilizations as the basis for their theorization, and looked upon values from the West and China as historical products. The historical approach to the definition of values in the Evidential Learning tradition, therefore, promised the literati community a path to cosmopolitanism without endangering the authority of the literati tradition.

Specifically, Liang promoted Huang Zongxi's "constitutional" model, which celebrated culture as the expression of individual agency and inspired Liang's concept of national history as the progress of the community's political thinking and law building. It is thus not surprising that Liang embraced Western constitutionalism and civic nationalism. Zhang inherited Wang Fuzhi's model of identity politics, which celebrated culture as a collective symbolic force essential for a community's material survival, and inspired Zhang's concept of national history as composed of cultural-institutional continuities. Zhang was fascinated with new cultural-anthropological discourse about the connections between language, customs, cultural beliefs and moral-political norms. I

have explored in detailed how Liang and Zhang constructed two models of modern Chinese national historiography and two models of the post-imperial Chinese order.

One of the central arguments of this study is that the literati's Classical and historical learning tradition played a significant role in the rise of nationalist discourse. It allowed nationalist thinkers to confidently incorporate new Western knowledge and institutional designs, forming a common ground to push radical reforms and revolution. For these leaders, the literati discourse of reconnecting with China's past served as an important shared language. However, this common language disappeared in the public debates over national building and cultural construction in the May Fourth movement. If the "Chinese culture" that Liang and Zhang tried to construct was meant to be an open-ended civilizational process, rooted in antiquity and historically comparable with the West in terms of a general understanding of human civilization, this view was largely abandoned by leading scholars of the May Fourth period. Although the new generation inherited the view from the late Qing nationalists that cultural construction for the community was key to the wellbeing of community life, in their public discourse they argued that the successful construction of a modern Chinese culture ought to be realized through a total break from China's antiquity, the only valid reference for change coming from the West. "Confucianism" now became the same as "despotism" and "feudalism." Reacting against the May Fourth "anti-traditionalists," certain "traditionalists" tried to define an internally coherent, enclosed concept of "Confucianism" to represent the essence of "Chinese culture" that could not be removed from modern Chinese life. But both the May Fourth leaders and the traditionalists still demonstrated a culturalist view of "Chinese culture," polarizing the "Western" and the "Chinese" as two essentialized

categories. History became not so much an open-ended process of development, but a defining boundary for certain coherent cultural attitudes or moral behaviors.

With the Reform and Opening-Up that began in 1978, a public space for intellectual and cultural elites reemerged, and this community again faced the question of what its public role is to be and upon what its common values ought to rest. After a short-lived revival of the May Fourth tradition under the "New Enlightenment" movement, and the tragic breakdown of the democratic movement, a general agreement is coming back that China's direction of change ought to take into account of China's own civilizational experience. In public discourse, China's modernization has been increasingly interpreted as a restoration of its past. Many intellectuals have found themselves picking up where the late Qing thinkers left off.

In the presence of this effort to establish continuity between China's future and its own tradition, we cannot help but ask whether this process serves the same purpose today as it did during the early twentieth century. What does China's tradition mean? What does the making of a "Chinese cultural identity" hope to achieve? For Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan, restoring the "true" tradition of China was meant to remind China of its agency, but it also entailed a process of self-criticism and self-improvement. However, restoring tradition might be used as a mechanism of self-justification, and in this sense, it might also be abused. It remains to be seen which path contemporary Chinese intellectuals will take.

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