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Find Modern Turning From the Rising Trend of Giving Consideration to the Han and Song Compromise School of the Academic History in the Qing Dynasty

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Abstract

As one of the important schools, the Han and Song compromise school was rising in the mid and late Qing Dynasty and it had lasted for hundreds of years. The reasons of the rise were very complex, but the remarks of Weng Fanggang (翁方綱), Zhang Xuecheng (章學誠) and Xu Zongyan (許宗彥) of the Qianlong period undoubtedly enlightened the development of the school. Weng Fanggang considered that establishing a union of the Han school and the Song school was better for the both. Zhang Xuecheng thought that separating the Han school and the Song school would hurt the two. Xu Zongyan believed that the academic level of the Han school was lower and it should unite with the Song school to reach the way of sage (聖學). Although there were some differences in their opinions, they all wanted to correct the bias of the Han school and overcome shortcomings of the Song school. Their thoughts showed the changes of academic views from tradition to modernity in the Qing Dynasty. For us, studying this topic still has realistic significance.

Key words: The Han school; The Song school; The Han and Song compromise; The reasons for the rise

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, academic circles have begun to pay attention to the topic of reconciling the Han and Song schools in the mid and late Qing Dynasty and gotten many achievements. However, the author still thinks that it is lack of detailed explanations about the rising of the Han and Song compromise school and the significance of the rising. In short, the rising of the Han and Song compromise school had immediate causes and remote causes, and this paper does not study remote causes and it only discusses the immediate causes, namely focusing on Weng Fanggang, Zhang Xuecheng and Xu Zongyan who were pioneers of the thought of the Han and Song compromise school.

In the early Qing Dynasty,

Huang Zongxi (黃宗羲), Gu Yanwu (顧炎武) and Wang Fuzhi (王夫之) were famous Confucians who had studied Zhu Xi's (朱熹) philosophy which was the philosophy of a Confucian school in the Song and Ming Dynasties, developed the philosophy and became the founders of the Han and Song compromise school in the early Qing Dynasty. (Pi, 2011, p.222)

During the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, the Han school had a vigorous development. The conflict between the Han and Song schools had gradually become more intense than the conflict between Zhu Xi's (朱熹) school and Lu Jiuyuan's (陸九淵) school. The scholars had gradually split into the Han school and the Song school because they thought that they had big differences in some ideological views. Thus, some people of insight began to think the relation of the Han school and the Song school and tried to solve the contradiction between the two. Weng Fanggang and Zhang Xuecheng were famous among the people.

1. “A UNION OF THE TWO SCHOOLS IS BETTER.” - WENG FANGGANG

Weng Fanggang (1733-1818) was a scholar who engaged in archaeological studies and literature. He was not

famous in the study of the classical philosophy, but he had own views on the relation of the Han school and the Song school and he could see what others could not previously.

In Weng's time, *The Discussion of the Han school* (《漢學商兌》) had not been published and the conflict between the Han school and the Song school was not a big issue. However, some big issues start from small issues. When Qian Zai (錢載) and Dai Zhen (戴震) had an academic debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the Han school, it caused Weng's attention and prompted him to write 9 articles about *The Theory of Textual Criticism* (《考訂論》). (The author notes: Weng talked about "textual criticism" and "meaning research". "Textual criticism" referred to the work of the Han school and "meaning research" referred to the work of the Song school.)

First, the purpose of textual criticism should be to understand the meanings of the classics. It was a main reason that produced the trivial textual criticism was "not according to the meanings of the classics". Weng Fanggang said:

The textual criticism should be according to the meanings of classical philology and it does not need to be an excessively wide range of studies, very detailed, or hunting for novelty. Do not show off, hunt for novelty and seek the excessively wide range of studies and various details, but devote to a textual criticism, then it is the textual criticism.

Weng Fanggang thought that the reason of the rising of textual criticism was scholars indulged in empty talk about the meanings of classical philology and did not understand "the classical philology". He believed that the so-called "textual criticism was against the empty talk about the meanings of classical philology". However, excessive textual criticism was bound to be very detailed and its result was deviant:

The purpose of textual criticism is to help finding the meanings of the classical philology but the excessive textual criticism seeks a wide range of studies and very detailed, or hunts for novelty so understanding the meanings of the classical philology may be forgotten. It is beginning to be deviant. (Weng, 2002, p.412)

For the academic functions of pre Qin Confucianism, Weng Fanggang said, "It is beginning to be deviant." It followed some people who criticized the excessive textual criticism and believed that the excessive textual criticism had damaged academic research in the early years of the Qing Dynasty. Weng Fanggang's remarks had hit at the nub of the excessive textual criticism although some Weng Fanggang's opinions on some textual criticism works could be questionable.¹ He had a good understanding

¹ Weng Fanggang criticized Yan Ruoqu's (閻若璩) "Shang Shu Gu Wen Shu Zheng (《尚書古文梳證》)" "Simple Notes for 'The Book of History'": "He noted many small things in detail and showed off..." Weng Fanggang might have a prejudice towards Yan Ruoqu's book.

of the Han school and he believed that textual criticism was "the thoroughfare" in academic research. "Doing the textual criticism was right, and understanding the meanings of the classical philology especially depends on the textual criticism." In his eyes, the Han school and the Song school complemented each other.

When examining the root of the problem of the textual criticism, he said: "Since the Song Dynasty, people have talked about the textual meanings of the classical philology in-depth. Some people believe that the textual meanings are more important, despise commentaries of the Han and Tang Dynasties, and look down on *Er Ya* (《爾雅》) and *Shuo Wen* (《說文》). Some scholars even cite the meaning of a word according to their own thought, or assert that a word has the same meaning with another word in the ancient times without evidence. This is empty talk about textual meanings and they do not know textual criticism. However, the empty talk about textual meanings also provokes some people to do an excessively wide range of studies and hunt for novelty. The both have their problems. Someone wants to correct textual errors, but makes presumptuous changes. Someone wants to solve an ordering issue of a bamboo book, but jumps to a conclusion. If we try to study the beginning of these problems, we find that it might start from Zheng Kangcheng (鄭康成) annotating *Yu Zao* (《玉藻》) and his correcting the order of the bamboo slips. He believed that there was a sequence problem in the bamboo slips so he made some explanations for the bamboo slips. The sequence problem of the bamboo slips could be solved in a proper way and he should not deal with the problem with personal prejudice. An extreme example was that a Confucian of the Song Dynasty changed the first paragraph of *Kang Gao* (《康誥》) and he believed that the first paragraph belonged to "Luo Gao" (洛誥). In correcting textual errors, Zheng had made many errors when he asserted that a word had the same meaning with another word. Should the descendants follow him? A text which talks about a big issue should make sense. A text which talks about a small issue should be according to logic. A text which talks about a practical matter should be according to the original situation. Following these three rules, we will have a complete textual criticism method. However, the logic must be also based on the textual meaning, and the books used for evidence should be written by masters." (Weng, 2002, pp.412-413) Weng not only pointed out that the Han school and the Song school were "The both have their problems" but also pointed out the Song school's empty talk about textual meanings that caused some problems of textual criticism featured by the Han school. Weng Fanggang criticized the two schools and few people could be like him to give fair comments on the two schools in the Qianlong period.

Second, Weng defines the relevant standards of textual criticism. Since the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, the textual criticism had become a famous school, and

scholars had found that many things could be researched. So, there was a serious question: What should be researched? What should not be researched? What were the correct standards for textual criticism? Weng's thought that a person was bound to have problems when he wanted to research everything.

Weng said that the first standard for doing textual criticism was "whether it is useful for the society". He said:

From a bigger perspective, we can say that the textual criticism can benefit the people's minds and customs; from a smaller perspective, we can say that it lets the people know classical allusions and words, in short, it helps the people to do things.

He cited a thought of *Shang Shu* (《尚書》) and said "You may do textual criticism if you think that it is useful for you, and vice versa. If you know this rule, you know textual criticism better." This rule was a simple standard for the people making decisions. To avoid misunderstanding, he cited examples to explain:

If it is not suitable for use, although the ancient masters said so, as Zheng talking about the six day memorial ceremony... and so on, we do not need to do research on these things because they are not feasible. We are all right if we do not do research on them.

Weng was good at the epigraphy, so he had a broader vision. He believed that researching a letter from home or the track of a painter even had the benefit if it is useful, so "Regardless of a big or small issue, the standard for doing textual criticism is whether it is useful and beneficial." (Ibid., p.414)

Should we study "the six day memorial ceremony"? People can still discuss it today. Weng's first standard was "whether it is useful for the society", which can also be discussed today. However, we can not deny his remarks which pointed out problems and were beneficial to rectify the research method at the time because the mainstream scholars had been going to a wrong direction since the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods. Weng's remarks help us to find the academic changes in the Qing Dynasty.

Weng said that the second standard for doing textual criticism was "whether it is questionable". He said:

We have to do textual criticism when we need it. If there is a different meaning, we need to do textual criticism. If there is a different explanation, we need to do textual criticism. If there is an unclear meaning, we need to do textual criticism. If there is an obstacle, we need to move it. If someone is sick, he needs to see a doctor. However, if we can not find evidence for explaining a word meaning or we can not immediately find relevant materials for it, we can let it be. If there is a different meaning, and people have different opinions about the meaning but they all do not have evidence, we can wait for some people solving this puzzle later. Zhuang Zi (莊子) said that we often do it and wait for the result. (Ibid., p.416)

Following the principle of "doing textual criticism for a purpose", Weng Fanggang always asked the people not to do easy and fast textual criticism, and he asked the people to achieve academic purposes and do a better work

to meet standards, namely, he asked people not to break the bottom line of textual criticism and asked people not to indulge their own vanity. Weng's criticism for the excessive textual criticism had hit the nail on the head.

In conclusion, the core viewpoint of Weng Fanggang was to establish a union of the Han school and the Song school. He said:

Textual criticism is to eliminate differences and straighten the text. An academic confusion is not good. Textual criticism can calm my heart and nourish my body. I can gradually learn deeper knowledge. I should say that textual criticism should be based on the textual meanings. (Ibid., p.414)

However, Weng Fanggang did not advocate combining the Han school and the Song school although he proposed to have a union of the Han school and the Song school. He said: "Separating the Han school and the Song school is not right but mixing the Han school and the Song school also is not right." This showed that his academic thoughts still were to agree with the Song school. Although he proposed to have a union of the Han school and the Song school, in fact, he wanted that the Han school merged into the Song school. His proposition was suitable at the time. Now it is also understandable.

Weng Fanggang was a critic of the Han school but he first boldly put forward to have a union of the Han school and the Song school. It was different from the vague suggestions of Ruan Yuan (阮元) et al. With referring his textual criticism theory, we believe that Weng Fanggang was the first mover of giving consideration to both the Han school and the Song school in the mid and late Qing Dynasty. He theoretically defined the methods, scope and standards of the textual criticism, which indicated the arrival of a new academic transformation. In the academic history of the Qing Dynasty, the new academic changes were inevitable and the significance was self-evident.

2. "SEPARATING THE HAN SCHOOL AND THE SONG SCHOOL WILL HURT THE TWO" - ZHANG XUECHENG

Compared with Weng Fanggang's the "union" of the Han school and the Song school, Zhang Xuecheng (1738-1801) liked the "breaking" and "establishment", but the "establishment" was not stereotyped in the old Confucianism, and it moved into an advanced implication. On the one hand, he criticized inferior scholars of the Han school and the Song school; on the other hand, he proposed that "*The Six Classics* (《六經》) are all historical books". He tried to introduce a new way for the research of the classics.

Zhang Xuecheng was living during the Kang Xi and Qian Long periods and was a famous scholar in the history. His influence on the thought of giving consideration to the Han school and the Song school was his criticism of the academic atmosphere at the

time. In the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, his theoretical reasoning was unique; in fact, Zhang Xuecheng opened a new discourse system of academic criticism. This system had broadened the academic horizon of the Han and Song compromise school and the scholars had perfected this discourse system.

First of all, he criticized the Han school. Zhang Xuecheng's criticism on inferior scholars of the Han school was forceful, mainly divided into three points:

First, some scholars of the Han school did not focus on a subject. Zhang Xuecheng said:

Some cheap scholars do not know that the purpose of their learning is for themselves, and they are in pursuit of knowledge to show off. Some scholars do not focus on a subject when they study. They think that they know everything but they do not know that a scholar should look down on someone who does not know to choose. When some scholars do textual criticism, they do not seek the truth, but just want to cite more references for avoiding other people's criticism. When these people do a compilation, regardless of whether the content is appropriate, they seek that the compilation must be comprehensive. Liu Xin (劉歆) said, "It is better to have rich content rather than less content." Some scholars think Liu Xin is right. In fact, this argument is stupid, and such a proposition also is a problem. However, there are still some scholars who are in favor of this view in our contemporary time. They do not have a clear understanding and cite more references for surprising people. (Zhang, 2005, p.339)

Many people agreed with the criticism given by Zhang Xuecheng in later years. Hu Shi (胡適) who had praised many famous scholars of the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods did not deny this criticism.

Secondly, some scholars of the Han school did not know the purpose of textual criticism. In fact, textual criticism could become boundless and some scholars indeed fell into the academic quagmire and were unable to extricate themselves. Zhang Xuecheng quoted Zhuangzi's remark, "With a limited life, a person pursues infinite knowledge, so, he will be tired." Ironically, he said to careless and sloppy scholars of the Han school:

Now some scholars do not know that the purpose of their doing textual criticism is for themselves, and they want to show off. However, the society has a myriad of things, and people's interest is different. In a limited life, if a person wants to pursue infinite knowledge and satisfy everyone's interest, it is impossible. Famous Yao and Shun could not do it also... If a person could do it, he might just be an evildoer. (Ibid., p.336)

Zhang used harsh words to scold some scholar who did textual criticism, such as "cheap scholars" and "evildoer", but it is understandable from a modern view. Zhang Xuecheng was really standing in the pre Qin Confucianism's position, and he thought, "Kong Zi (Confucius) is tall, like the sky, and however, his theory can be summed up in a sentence." He believed that seeking boundless knowledge and surprising people were all bad methods which were like "Kua Fu (夸父) chases the sun, and a person moves a mountain." (Zhang, 2005, p.339) This comment was profound and Zhang had great

eloquence. In fact, some scholars of the Han school not only refused to talk about social issues and forget the Confucian nature, but also gave up the innovative duty of scholars at the time, so Zhang's criticism was right.

Third, in the Qing Dynasty, the textual criticism was not the same with the ancient textual criticism. He said:

The ancient textual criticism had its purpose. And the scholars made effort to prove things with references and find the meanings with citing different materials in order to get the correct conclusions. Now scholars still insist on talking about textual criticism even though there is not an objective. (Ibid., p.340)

In the Qing Dynasty, some scholars were "not in pursuit of truth, but committed to do a comprehensive research". Zhang Xuecheng believed that a scholar who did textual criticism could infer other things from one fact if he was in pursuit of truth. And to do a comprehensive research, the scholar might make mistakes and it might lead to "The article was not vigorous and does not have a view with a lot of talks." Now some people may think that the scholars were limited by the government and they were unable to extricate themselves in the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, so give sympathy to the scholars. However, at the time, Zhang was standing in the traditional Confucian position to mercilessly expose:

Gentlemen have to do research and write articles. The gentlemen do not wish to write about a thing when people are aware of the meaning. However, the gentlemen still need to do research and write. Unfortunately, gentlemen can become famous by research and writing and also get interests, so the people who are in pursuit of their interests are competing for fame. They rely on research and writing to get their interests, even become greed and do anything for their interests. It is a disease for the gentlemen. (Ibid., p.646)

So we can see that there were academic problems even the loss of morality of Confucians in the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods. It is little wonder that Zhang criticized them unflinchingly.

Then, he criticized the Song school. Zhang Xuecheng criticized the Song school with two main points:

First, some scholars of the Song school were empty. Zhang Xuecheng said: "Some scholars of the Song school like empty talk and are ignorant. It is a major drawback." (Ibid., p.783) Zhang Xuecheng also said:

The Song school... despises the economy and doing actual things, also looks down on knowledge and writing, and it is self-righteous. The Song school likes empty talk and it is no wonder that some scholars are ashamed to talk about the Song school. (Ibid., p.822)

Zhang Xuecheng criticizing the weaknesses of the Song school might follow the previous someone point of view, but he did not completely refuse the Song school. He said,

Gentlemen master the society by learning, and they should not be in pursuit of a trend; the Song school has some disadvantages which have been mentioned by some scholars before, but, it also is a problem that only a few scholars talk about the Song school today. (Ibid., p.822)

Second, the Han school and the Song school should complement each other. He believed that the Han school and the Song school depended on each other and they worked together before. He said:

Since the ancient times, there has been a theory about content and form. The content and form can also be divided into academics, achievements, articles and life. In the beginning, the division was not conclusive, and there were not names for them. In the classification, there are content, form, academics, achievements, articles and life. These names can not be mixed because these names are used to solve some questions. To solve some questions, these names were shown to people and these names were defined because there are no other choices. These names have been accepted in a long time. Now some people do not check the history of these names and use them. These people think that they can become a higher class by using the classification but they make big chaos. The mutual sarcasm of the Han school and the Song school, the mutual slander of the research people and the writing people and the disputes about virtue and knowledge show that some people know the names but do not know the history. (Ibid., p.332)

Unfortunately, some scholars of the Han school and the Song school established their own schools for becoming a higher class. They fought against others to get more recognition and interests, but they were more far away from the "Tao". Zhang indeed was very distressed about this situation. Through a metaphorical way, he expressed that the Han school and the Song school were "helpers for seeking truth" and the two could not be neglected. He said:

The recitation is a tool like a vehicle. When people want to go to a place, they must use vehicles. When they get there, they will abandon the vehicles. One person does not need a vehicle if he does not want to travel. Some people who do not use the vehicles think that they are the same as those people who abandon the vehicles after arriving at the destinations, but a gentleman hates the specious thought. (Ibid., p.157)

Zhang Xuecheng criticized some scholars of the Han school because they were forever in a journey, confused and they do not know their destinations, the so-called "dabble very deep and will go beyond memorization." However, some scholars of the Song school had been always standing there and looked at another side. They imaged the scene with their imagination and never thought to go to the other side to see what it was. The two kinds of scholars, one is always moving and another is always quiet, may look like to be suitable for the research, in fact, they are utterly different, and the both are lack of qualifications to pursue truth.

Once again, Zhang Xuecheng presented a merger of the Han school and the Song school.

Zhang Xuecheng was angry about the abuse of textual criticism and he said:

Textual criticism changes to become notes on the classics of Confucianism. First, the books of textual criticism go into a book classification with Confucian books. Second, the books of textual criticism change to become quotations of vulgar scholars. Third, the books of textual criticism change to become mediocre

teachers' lecture materials. People who do not even know these changes learn them confidently. People who know these changes despise them. Some scholars only know to explain the classics but they do not know the original purposes. Collected historical records become history books. However, in the first change, the history books change to become extracts of the history books; in the second change, the extracts change to become simpler materials used by some advisers; in the third change, the simpler materials change to become the books of enlightening children. People who do not even know these changes learn them confidently. People who know these changes despise them. Some scholars only want to explain the classics smoothly but they do not know the original situations. (Ibid., p.238)

Although Zhang Xuecheng talked about the history books here, he also pointed out the problems of the Han school. Some scholars of the Han school did textual criticism, but they did not understand "Academics will be used to govern the country." (Ibid., p.332) They provoked the accusation of "trivial textual criticism" because they did not know the academic purpose of explaining the classics of Confucianism, the meaning of the research activities and the final direction of textual criticism.

Zhang Xuecheng proposed to rectify the academic situation when he saw the academic problem. He said:

Cheng Zi (程頤) said: "For all things, consider their causes, and it is the best learning." Why do we consider their causes? There always is a trend in the society and trends have to circulate in a Yin and a Yang way. Understanding the truth will be all right. A gentleman who has good knowledge will keep a right view to correct any deviation. In a Yin and a Yang way, one person who knows how to adjust will be all right. A trend starts because of a certain reason; knowledge, writing and theories can be emphasized at different times..... Some scholars do not keep a right view to correct any deviation and they only pursue the trend. They believe that they will be famous if following the trend. They do not really think about it. (Ibid., pp.112-113)

As the first generation of criticizing the Han school, Zhang Xuecheng was different from the Tongcheng school (桐城學派). He believed that textual criticism, writing and meaning research should not be separated and the combination of them was better. He also thought that it would be a big academic loss and have dire consequences for seeking truth if missing one of them. Compared with Weng Fanggang's "return to meaning research" which was partial to the Song school, Zhang Xuecheng clearly pointed out that it was more important to know the cause rather than effect. The view of Zhang Xuecheng was close to the view of modern academics. "For all things, consider their causes, and it is the best learning." This view supported Zhang Xuecheng's view of "The six classics are all history books" which was the disenchantment from the old Confucian world. However, Zhang Xuecheng finally became a marginal scholar because his remarks were against the trend. His idea was certainly in line with the development trend of the times. Han and Song Compromise school of Lingnan were influenced by his views later. Han and Song Compromise school of Lingnan paid attention to the West when it studied the academic

atmosphere and began to advocate the education reform and improving academic atmosphere.

3. “LEARN KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW THE FUTURE” - XU ZONGYAN

Compared with Zhang Xuecheng, Xu Zongyan (1768-1818) had a high reputation, and he was recognized by the academic circles. Xu Zongyan was a successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations of the Jiaqing period (1799), and there were many celebrities in the imperial examinations of the year. At the time, a scholar Zhu Gui (朱珪) said: “Zhang Huiyan (張惠言) is excellent in researching the classics. Wang Yinzhi (王引之) is good at philology. Wu Zi (吳鼐) is famous in writing and so on. Is Xu Zongyan the versatile person?” (Li, 2008, p.1250-1251) Ruan Yuan who was the director of the highest imperial examinations at the time also respected Xu Zongyan. At the same time, Chen Shouqi (陳壽祺), another successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations, praised him, “Xu Zongyan can follow Huang Zongxi, pass Hang Shijun (杭世駿) and become a better scholar!” (Chen, 2002, p.393) So we know that Xu Zongyan had a higher level. In his theory, there are three main points that are related with the paper.

First, major disputes should be put aside and scholars did not have to do trivial research. In *A Letter to Schoolmate Chen Gongpu* (《寄達陳同甫同年書》), Xu Zongyan wrote that the purpose of a scholar’s learning was to find peace of mind rather than catch up with a trend, otherwise it would not fit the name of the scholar. He boldly predicted that Kong Zi would be hard to study the remarks before three generations even though he lived at the time, and Kong Zi at the most studied books of *The Ming Dynasty to the Song Dynasty*. Since the “three generations” was a long time, a point of view before three generations might not be used at the time, so he said:

I think that more than ten big disputes about the classics have been argued for thousands of years and there are no conclusions. Can we solve the issues now? Even if they can be solved clearly, it is impossible that the conclusions can be believed by people who lived in that time, and it is impossible that the conclusions can be accepted by our descendants. If only checking the similarities and differences of the words of the classics, working on the philology or collecting some residual classics, these works are small and I really don’t want to do. (Xu, 2002, pp.399-400)

His suggestion of putting disputes aside seemingly was absurd, but in fact, it had some meaning. In his mind, scholars had more important things to do.

Second, the purpose of study was to “understand truth and save the society.” Xu Zongyan was a person who wanted to blend the Han school and the Song school,

In the research, we should know main meanings of the six classics. Since the Han Dynasty, there have had rise and fall for two thousand years. We should study the rise and fall of

Confucianism and the authenticity of the classics, disdain trivial research and are free from all kinds of fallacies. (Li, 2008, pp.1250-1251)

His research purpose was different from the Han school and the Song school and somewhat resembled the actual knowledge of Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi and Wang Fuzhi of the early Qing Dynasty, as he said:

The deficiency and excess of knowledge is the most obvious. Knowledge is learned by the mind and is practiced outside. When doing the practice, intelligent people do not need to observe everything. When talking about knowledge, intelligent people do not need to know everything. This is the actual knowledge. (Xu, 2002, pp.399-461)

He believed that the knowledge of Kong Zi was very simple and it was “expecting to use”, so-called “understand truth and practice it”. He thought that the Confucians’ learning was awkward at the time and it did not solve problems. In his opinion, the method of the learning was not conducive to the country and the people, and it simply was “confused and they do not know what is right”. These comments were exactly the same as comments said by Chen Li, Huang Shisan (黃式三) and his son who belonged to the Han and Song compromise school. So we know their internal relations in the academics.

Xu Zongyan advocated “Knowledge is learned by the mind and is practiced outside.” Although the remark was like the rationalism of Cheng and Zhu, which believed that the learning should be both sound in theory and practice, Xu Zongyan rarely talked about Cheng and Zhu in his life. When we study his discussion about “the theories of sages”, we can know that he actually advocated the economic and utilitarian studies of the utilitarian study school which had been established since the Yongjia (永嘉) and Yongkang (永康) periods of the Song Dynasty. A history book said that he was “especially proficient in astronomy, knew the secret of the western calendar, made a golden ball to calculate, and studied some special knowledge.”

Third, learning should “learn knowledge” and “know the future” and learning should have a clear final goal. Xu Zongyan criticized the hypocrisy and futility of the Han school. How did he improve the prevailing academic atmosphere at the time? He said:

Our study is to understand things. What do we need to know? Kong Zi said: “There is no way to be gentlemen if do not know destiny; there is no way to gain footholds in the society if do not know the etiquette; there is no way to judge people if do not understand talking meanings.” Kong Zi claimed to know his destiny at the age of fifty, but the beginning was to know the etiquette and understand talking meanings. Kong Zi finally knew the destiny and understood the society. “Learn knowledge” that is to study the classics and know the etiquette. And knowing destiny is to “know the future”.

Following this view, scholars should let their knowledge link with the reality, have a goal in studying knowledge and implement the etiquette in daily life. It was the

essence of pre Qin Confucianism. Scholars were astray in this aspect during the Qing Dynasty. He said:

Scholars in later dynasties have researched textual meanings and ignored actual things. It is that 'know the future' but not to 'learn knowledge', so these scholars like to have empty talk. Some scholars do textual criticism without a purpose and they know to 'learn knowledge' but not to 'know the future', so their research is trivial and messy without a system. A good academic activity is not like this way. (Ibid., pp.399-445)

The former referred to the Song school and the latter referred to the Han school. Here Xu Zongyan criticized the Han school and the Song school and he was not satisfied with both of them. Therefore, he believed that it would have the real "knowledge of sages" if the Han school and the Song school were combined together, namely, "learn knowledge" and "know the future" were combined together. Xu Zongyan had a similar view with Zhang Xuecheng at this point, however, Zhang Xuecheng wanted to "break" the old Confucian world and advocate the academic disenchantment but Xu Zongyan wanted to "combine" the Han school and the Song school and advocate to "understand truth and save the society". Xu Zongyan more favored the economic and utilitarian studies and he was obviously influenced by the times.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Weng Fanggang wanted to have a union of the Han school and the Song school to restore the Song school and he had a traditional thought; Zhang Xuecheng was out of the old Confucian world and wanted to blend the Han school and the Song school into the historical research, recovering pre Qin Confucianism. It looked like to be retro, but it was new and it almost approached the way of modern research; Xu Zongyan advocated economic and utilitarian studies, and studied the western science and technology. He also advocated the classical research, economic and utilitarian studies, and his views had already been the similar with the modern views. From Weng Fanggang to Xu Zongyan, the academic trend had changed for several times in the Qing Dynasty, from

converting to the Song school to converting to science, and then to satisfy realistic needs, which showed hard development of the scholars' views towards the modern views in the Qing Dynasty. These changes might be passive, and even forced, but fortunately these views inspired the Han and Song compromise school later. After Jiaqing and Daoguang periods, Chen Li's (陳澧) Lingnan school (嶺南學派), Huang Yizhou's (黃以周) school of Anhui(安徽) and Zhejiang (浙江), Zheng Guofan's (曾國藩) Hunan school (湖湘學派) were influenced by these views to reform research methods and blend the Han school and the Song school. The Han and Song compromise school emphasized research purposes and textual thoughts, and rejected sectarianism. And it also paid attention to the western academics and the education practice. So the Han and Song compromise school retained a neutral academic view in the confused fighting between the Old Text (古文經學派) and the New Text (今文經學派) along with a strong politic smell. Its meaning was profound.

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