

**Liu Tsung-chou (1578-1645) and
His Reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism**

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Abstract

During the Ming period (1368-1644), the emergence of the doctrines of Ch'en Hsien-chang (1428-1500) and Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529), which are close to the Lu Hsiang-shan (1139-93) School of Mind, played a revolutionary role in challenging the Chu Hsi (1130-1200) School's orthodoxy and dominant role in the academic community. Their teachings caused a paradigm-shift among Neo-Confucians.

Liu Tsung-chou (1578-1645) is considered a great Neo-Confucian master. Living in the late Ming period, Liu was intimately immersed in the paradigm of the School of Mind. His intellectual career was devoted in the main to philosophical reconsideration of the doctrines propounded by Ch'en Hsien-chang, Wang Yang-ming, and Wang's followers. Liu expressed his creative ideas regarding Neo-Confucianism through these reconsiderations and played an important role in the intellectual transition in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing.

Firstly, as a background to Liu Tsung-chou's thought, this study documents the reemergence of the School of Mind in the early Ming. It describes Ch'en Hsien-chang's teaching of sitting in meditation and his doctrine of emphasizing tranquillity. The development of the School of Mind in the middle Ming is explicated by way of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of the extension of innate knowledge. The factionalization of the School of Mind in late Ming is documented through a study of the doctrines propounded by Wang Yang-ming's followers. Secondly, Liu Tsung-chou's family background, early life, political career, and intellectual achievement are introduced. Finally, Liu's contribution to the reconsideration of the doctrine of Mind in Ming Neo-Confucianism are investigated through a systematic study of his views on the existing schools. With reference to Ch'en Hsien-chang's doctrine, I will discuss the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the teaching of sitting in meditation in the Ch'en Hsien-chang School; the arguments regarding them in the Wang Yang-ming School; and Liu's views on them. With reference to Wang Yang-ming's doctrine, I will discuss Liu's changing attitudes toward Wang's doctrine; the two men's different attitudes towards overcoming selfish human desires and extensive learning; and the difference between Wang and Liu on the correct interpretation of the *Great Learning*. In my investigation of Liu's reconsideration of the doctrines promoted by Wang Yang-ming's followers, I will discuss Liu's sense of the degeneration of Wang's followers; the debates on Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching"; Liu's criticism of Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching" and the debates on it; Liu's criticism of the moral decay in the circle of Wang Yang-ming's followers;

and Liu's scheme of moral reformation of his time.

The study will conclude with an assessment of the impact of Liu's reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism and its influence in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing.

DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that this thesis is my own work, and has been composed by me solely.

Signed:

Jen-tai Pan 16 August 2004

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Abbreviations

- CHL* Wang Yang-ming, *Ch'uan-hsi-lu* 傳習錄 [The instructions for practical living] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1988).
- DOTIC* Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).
- Instructions* Wing-tsit Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).
- LNP* Liu Chuo 劉鈞, *Liu Tsung-chou nien-p'u* 劉宗周年譜 [Chronological biography of Liu Tsung-chou] (1882 ed.), in *Liu Tsung-chou ch'üan-chi* 劉宗周全集 [The complete works of Liu Tsung-chou] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1997), vol. 5.
- LTCCC* Tai Lien-chang 戴璉璋 and Wu Kuang 吳光, eds., *Liu Tsung-chou ch'üan-chi* 劉宗周全集 [The complete works of Liu Tsung-chou] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1997).
- MJHA* Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* 明儒學案 [A philosophical anthology of Ming Confucians] (Taipei: Hua-shih ch'u-pan she, 1987).
- Records* Julia Ching, trans., *The Records of Ming Scholars* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).
- Source Book* Wing-tsit Chan, comp. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).
- WYMCC* Wang Yang-ming 王陽明, *Wang Yang-ming ch'üan-chi* 王陽明全集 [The complete works of Wang Yang-ming] (Shanghai: Ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1997)
- YNP* Yao Ming-ta 姚名達, *Liu Tsung-chou nien-p'u* 劉宗周年譜 [Chronological biography of Liu Tsung-chou] (1934 ed.), in *Liu Tsung-chou ch'üan-chi* 劉宗周全集 [The complete works of Liu Tsung-chou] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1997), vol. 5.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Modern scholars of the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing consider that a pivotal intellectual transition took place this period. This transition is described in at least four different ways. First, it is considered as the change from Neo-Confucianism to anti-Neo-Confucianism.¹ Secondly, it is considered a change of intellectual climate from the studies of moral principle to those of “practical statemanship” (*ching-shih chih-yung chih hsüeh* 經世致用之學)² and evidential studies (*k'ao-chü chih hsüeh* 考據之學),³ also known as “practical learning” (*shih-hsüeh* 實學).⁴ Thirdly, it is considered the switch from the pursuit of the learning of “honouring the moral nature” (*tsun te hsing* 尊德性) and the “knowledge of moral nature” (*te hsing chih chih* 德性之知) to the pursuit of the learning of “following the path of inquiry

¹ See Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啟超, *Ch'ing-tai hsüeh-shu kai-lun* 清代學術概論 [Intellectual trends in the Ch'ing period] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1985), p. 6; Wing-tsit Chan, “The materialism of Wang Fu-chih,” in Wing-tsit Chan, comp. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (hereafter abbreviated as *Source Book*) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 692; Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, et al., *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang shih-kang* 中國思想史綱 [An outline of history of Chinese thought] (Taipei: Wu-nan t'u-shu ch'u-pan yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1993), p. 372.

² See Hsieh Kuo-chen 謝國楨, “Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u te hsüeh-feng” 明末清初的學風 [The intellectual climate in late Ming and early Ch'ing], in Hsieh Kuo-chen, *Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u te hsüeh-feng* 明末清初的學風 [The intellectual climate in late Ming and early Ch'ing] (Shanghai: Shanghai shu-t'ien ch'u-pan she, 2004), pp. 36-7; Yamonoi Yü 山井湧, *Min Shin shisōshi no kenkyū* 明清思想史の研究 [Studies of the intellectual history of Ming and Ch'ing] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1980), pp. 223-38.

³ See Hsieh Kuo-chen, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8; Benjamin A. 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).

⁴ See Ke Jung-chin 葛榮晉, *Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh ssu-hsiang shih* 中國實學思想史 [History of Chinese practical learning] (Peking: Shou-tu shih-fan ta-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 1-13; Chung-ying Ch'eng, “Practical learning in Yen Yüan, Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming”, in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 39-45; Irene Bloom, “On the ‘abstraction’ of Ming thought: some concrete evidence from the philosophy of Lo Ch'in-shun”, in Wm.

and study” (*tao wen hsüeh* 道問學) and the “knowledge of hearing and seeing” (*wen chien chih chih* 聞見之知)⁵ Fourthly, it is considered a progression from a pre-modern to a modern age with the emergence of individualism and liberalism.⁶ Although these studies differ in emphasis they all confirm the notion of transition. Living in the late Ming, Liu Tsung-chou 劉宗周 [Chi-shan 蕺山, Nien-t'ai 念臺, 1578-1645] is a good example of a transitional figure.

Liu Tsung-chou is considered the last master of Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism.⁷ It is probably for this reason that most of the modern studies of Liu Tsung-chou concentrate on interpreting his creative thinking on Neo-Confucian philosophy, such as his doctrines of “being vigilant in solitude” (*shen tu* 慎獨) and “making the will

Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

⁵ See Yü Ying-shih 余英時, “Ch’ing-tai hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang shih chung-yao kuan-nien t’ung-shih” 清代學術思想史重要觀念通釋 [Interpretations of some important ideas in Ch’ing intellectual history], in Yü Ying-shih, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang ch’uan-t’ung te hsien-tai ch’üan-shih*. 中國思想傳統的現代詮釋 [Modern interpretations of Chinese intellectual tradition] (Taipei: Lien-ching ch’u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1987), pp. 405-86.

⁶ See Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, Chao Chi-pin 趙紀彬 and Tu Kuo-hsiang 杜國庠, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t’ung-shih* 中國思想通史 [A comprehensive history of Chinese thought] (Peking: Jen-min ch’u-pan she, 1960), vol. 5, pp. 27-9; Shimada Kenji 島田虔次, *Chūgoku ni okeru kindai shii no zasetsu* 中國における近代思想の挫折 [The frustration of modern thought in China] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1949; reissue, 1970), pp. 230-83; Goto Motomi 後藤基己 and Yamanoi Yū 山井湧, eds., *Minmatsu Shinsho seiji hyoron shu* 明末清初政治評論集 [A collected essays of political criticisms of the period of late Ming and early Ch’ing] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971), pp. 409-11; Wm. Theodore de Bary, “Individualism and Humanism in Late Ming”, in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 145-248.

⁷ See Mou Tsung-san 牟宗三, *Ts’ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan* 從陸象山到劉蕺山 [From Lu Hsiang-shan to Liu Chi-shan] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1979), p. 458; Lao Ssu-kuang [Lao Sze-kuang] 勞思光, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih* 中國哲學史 [A history of Chinese philosophy] (Hong Kong: Union Press, 1980), vol. 3b, p. 683; Liu Shu-hsien 劉述先, *Huang Tsung-hsi te hsin-hsüeh ting-wei* 黃宗羲的心學定位 [Huang Tsung-hsi’s role in the School of Mind] (Taipei: Yün-ch’en wen-hua shih-yeh ku-fen yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1986), p. 2; Tungfang Shuo 東方朔 and Tu Wei-ming 杜維明, *Tu Wei-ming hsüeh-shu chuan-t’i fang-t’an lu: Tsung-chou che-hsüeh chih ching-shen yü ju-chia wen-hua chih wei-lai* 杜維明學術專題訪談錄: 宗周哲學之精神與儒家文化之未來 [Interviews with Tu Wei-ming on an academic topic: the philosophy of Liu Tsung-chou and the future of Confucian culture] (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2001), p. 22.

sincere” (*ch’eng i* 誠意).⁸ Some of them, following Mou Tsung-san’s 牟宗三 suggestion, agree that Liu Tsung-chou’s doctrines can be characterized as reformulating Wang Yang-ming’s 王陽明 [Shou-jen 守仁, 1472-1529] “explicit teaching” (*hsien-chiao* 顯教) of the mind in the spirit of the “esoteric teaching” (*mi-chiao* 密教) of “being vigilant in solitude”.⁹ Although this statement is right in depicting the basic character of Liu’s philosophy, there is another aspect which merits further study, that is, the relation of his philosophy to the intellectual transition in late Ming and early Ch’ing.

Liang Ch’i-ch’ao 梁啟超 points out that Liu represented the end of an era because of his criticism of Wang Yang-ming’s followers. Liu forsook empty talk, which was popular in the circle of Wang Yang-ming’s followers, for practical self-cultivation, in an anticipation of the practical learning of Ch’ing scholarship.¹⁰

Ch’ien Mu 錢穆 and Hsieh Kuo-chen 謝國楨 observe that Liu’s idea of human

⁸ See Okada Takehito 岡田武彥, *Ō Yōmei to Minmatsu no Jūgaku* 王陽明と明末の儒學 [Wang Yang-ming and late Ming Confucianism] (Tokyo: Meitoku, 1970), pp. 439-62; T’ang Chün-i, “Liu Tsung-chou’s doctrine of moral mind and practice and his critique of Wang Yang-ming,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al. eds., *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 305-32; Mou Tsung-san, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-541; Lao Ssu-kuang, *op. cit.*, pp. 608-82; Tu Wei-ming, “Subjectivity in Liu Tsung-chou’s philosophical anthropology”, in Tu Wei-ming, *Way, Learning and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 93-116; Wong, Simon Man-ho [Huang Min-hao], *Liu Tsung-chou: His Doctrine of Vigilant Solitude* (PhD dissertation of Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1996); Tungfang Shuo 東方朔, *Liu Tsung-chou p’ing chuan* 劉宗周評傳 [A critical biography of Liu Tsung-chou] (Nanking: Nanking University Press, 1998); Cheng Tsung-i 鄭宗義, *Ming Ch’ing ju-hsüeh chuan-hsing t’an-hsi: ts’ung Liu Chi-shan tao Tai Tung-yüan* 明清儒學轉型探析: 從劉戡山到戴東原 [The transformation of Confucianism between Ming and Ch’ing dynasty: from Liu Chi-shan to Tai Tung-yüan] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000), pp. 41-68; Huang Min-hao [Wong, Simon Man-ho] 黃敏浩, *Liu Tsung-chou chi ch’i shen-tu che-hsüeh* 劉宗周及其慎獨哲學 [Liu Tsung-chou and his philosophy of “being vigilant in solitude”] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 2001).

⁹ See Mou Tsung-san, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-7; Tu Wei-ming, *op. cit.*, p. 106; Tungfang Shuo and Tu Wei-ming, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Cheng Tsung-i, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-57; Huang Min-hao, *Liu Tsung-chou chi ch’i shen-tu che-hsüeh*, pp. 232-4.

¹⁰ Liang Ch’i-ch’ao 梁啟超, *Chung-kuo chin san-pai nien hsüeh-shu shih* 中國近三百年學術史 [A

nature, which regards it as nothing but physical nature, is close to many Ch'ing scholars, such as Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 [Ch'uan-shan 船山, 1619-1692], Yen Yüan 顏元 [Hsi-chai 習齋, 1635-1704], and Tai Chen 戴震 [Tung-yüan 東原, 1723-77].¹¹ Cheng Tsung-i 鄭宗義 even regards Liu Tsung-chou as being involved in the current of anti-Neo-Confucianism.¹² Some recent studies also regard Liu's contributions as so-called "practical learning".¹³

Two of Liu's disciples, Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲 [Li-chou 梨洲, 1610-95] and Ch'en Ch'üeh 陳確 [Ch'ien-ch'u 乾初, 1604-77], are regarded as the leading masters of new intellectual trends in the early Ch'ing. Huang is regarded as a representative of both the new trends of practical statemanship¹⁴ and evidential studies.¹⁵ Ch'en is regarded as a representative of the new trend of anti-Neo-Confucianism.¹⁶ Hsieh

history of Chinese scholarship in the last three hundred years] (Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1956), p. 7.

¹¹ Ch'ien Mu 錢穆, *Chung-kuo chin san-pai nien hsüeh-shu shih* 中國近三百年學術史 [A history of Chinese scholarship in the last three hundred years] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1987), p. 24; Hsieh Kuo-chen 謝國楨, *Huang Li-chou hsüeh-p'u* 黃梨洲學譜 [An intellectual biography of Huang Tsung-hsi] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1967), p. 34. Ch'en Lai 陳來 also emphasizes that Liu's idea of human nature as nothing but physical nature is different from many of his Neo-Confucian forerunners. See Ch'en Lai, *Sung Ming li-hsüeh* 宋明理學 [Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism] (Taipei: Hung-yeh wen-hua shih-yeh yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1994), pp. 390-3.

¹² Cheng Tsung-i, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

¹³ See Ch'en Sheng-yung 陳剩勇, "Pu t'ien chih shih: Liu Tsung-chou Chung-hsing chin-chien lu yen-chiu" 補天之石: 劉宗周中興金鑑研究 [A study of Liu Tsung-chou's "Chung-hsing chin-chien lu"], in Chung Ts'ai-chün 鍾彩鈞, ed., *Liu Chi-shan hsüeh-shu shih-hsian lun-chi* 劉戡山學術思想論集 [The symposia essays on Liu Tsung-chou's thought] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1998), pp. 409-32; Chan Hai-yün 詹海雲, "Liu Tsung-chou te shih hsüeh" 劉宗周的實學 [Liu Tsung-chou's practical learning], in *ibid.*, pp. 433-56.

¹⁴ See Wm. Theodore de Bary, "Introduction", in Wm. Theodore de Bary, tran., *Waiting for the Dawn: a plan for the prince* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 63; Wu Kuang 吳光, "Huang Tsung-hsi yü Ch'ing-tai hsüeh-shu" 黃宗羲與清代學術 [Huang Tsung-hsi and Ch'ing scholarship], in Wu Kuang 吳光, *Ju Tao lun-shu* 儒道論述 [Essays on Confucianism and Taoism] (Taipei: Tung-ta tu-shu ku-fen yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1994), p. 230.

¹⁵ See Ch'ien Mu, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Liu Shu-hsien 劉述先, *Huang Tsung-hsi te hsün-hsüeh ting-wei* 黃宗羲的心學定位 [Huang Tsung-hsi's role in the School of Mind] (Taipei: Yün-ch'en wen-hua shih-yeh ku-fen yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1986), p. 176.

¹⁶ See Hou Wai-lu et al., *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih*, vol. 5, pp. 191-8; Cheng Tsung-i, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-223.

Kuo-chen and Liu Shu-hsien 劉述先 generally agree that Liu's doctrine exerted a great influence on Huang.¹⁷ Ch'ien Mu points out that Huang's endeavouring to learn how to "exhaust the myriad differences of the myriad things", rather than pursuing a one-for-all principle, was influenced by Liu.¹⁸ Chin Kuan-t'ao 金觀濤 and Liu Ch'ing-feng 劉青峰 maintain that Huang's switch from the study of moral principle to that of statecraft was inspired by Liu's monistic philosophy, which holds that "what fills Heaven and Earth is *ch'i* 氣 (pneuma)."¹⁹ Wm. Theodore de Bary also shows that Huang reaffirmed Liu's emphasis on the ruler's need to share power with his ministers in his discussion of ministership and went beyond it to institutionalize dissent in the school.²⁰ There are fewer studies on Ch'en Ch'üeh than on Huang Tsung-hsi,²¹ but most of them confirm that Liu inspired Ch'en's criticism of the *Great Learning*, in which he exposed his position of anti-Neo-Confucianism.²²

Lastly, in his series of essays on the intellectual transition in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing, Wang Fan-sen 王汎森 listed Liu Tsung-chou's influence on many intellectual trends of this period.²³

¹⁷ Hsieh Kuo-chen, *Huang Li-chou hsüeh-p'u*, pp. 24-8; Liu Shu-hsien, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-29.

¹⁸ Ch'ien Mu 錢穆, *Sung Ming li-hsüeh kai-shu* 宋明理學概述 [A general introduction of Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1977), pp. 434-5.

¹⁹ Chin Kuan-t'ao 金觀濤 and Liu Ch'ing-feng 劉青峰, *Chung-kuo hsien-tai ssu-hsiang te ch'i-yüan* 中國現代思想的起源 [The origin of modern Chinese Thought] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000), p. 189.

²⁰ Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince*, p. 184.

²¹ See Cheng Tsung-i, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

²² Chan Hai-yün 詹海雲, *Ch'en Ch'ien-ch'u Ta-hsüeh p'ien yen-chiu* 陳乾初大學辨研究 [A study of Ch'en Ch'ien-ch'u's *Ta-hsüeh p'ien*] (Taipei: Ming-wen shu-chü, 1986), pp. 53-8; Teng Li-kuang 鄧立光, *Ch'en Ch'ien-ch'u yen-chiu* 陳乾初研究 [A study of Ch'en Ch'ien-ch'u] (Taipei: Wen-chin ch'u-pan she, 1992), pp. 103-6; pp. 130-1; Cheng Tsung-i, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

²³ See Wang Fan-sen 王汎森, "Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u te jen-p'u yü hsing-kuo-hui" 明末清初的人譜與省過會 [The rise of the society for reflection on faults in the late Ming and early Ch'ing], *Bulletin of The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. 63, Part 3 (July 1993), pp. 679-712; "Hsin chi li shuo te tung-yao yü Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u hsüeh-feng chih chuan-pien" 心即理說的動搖與明末清初學風之轉變 [The intellectual transformation of the late Ming and early Ch'ing as seen in

All of these studies show the importance of Liu's role in this intellectual transition. My study will place Liu in his historical context. It will investigate how Liu's response to the legacy of his Neo-Confucian forerunners and contemporaries relates to the Ming-Ch'ing intellectual transition. This methodology is distinctive: a historical approach provides a new angle on the study of Liu Tsung-chou's thought, which to date has been written about primarily from a philosophical perspective, by modern scholars such as Mou Tsung-san, Tang Chn-i, Tu Wei-ming and Huang Min-hao [Wong, Simon Man-ho].

Liu lived at a time when Wang Yang-ming's doctrine was being popularized. Many studies of Liu's thought focus on his responses to Wang.²⁴ Wang Yang-ming is regarded as a Neo-Confucian master in the middle Ming. The debate between Chu Hsi 朱熹 [Yüan-hui 元晦, 1130-1200] and Lu Hsiang-shan 陸象山 [Chiu-yüan 九淵, 1139-93] is a prominent feature in the history of Neo-Confucianism. It is generally agreed that Chu Hsi was known for his contention that "nature is principle"

the crisis of the "Mind is Principle" doctrine], *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. 63, Part 3 (June 1994), pp. 333-372; "Ch'ing ch'u ssu-hsiang ch'ü-hsiang yü Liu-tzu chieh-yao: chien lun Ch'ing ch'u Ching-shan hsüeh-pai te fen-lieh" 清初思想趨向與劉子節要兼論清初戴山學派的分裂 [A new intellectual trend in the early Ch'ing period and the compilation project of *Liu-tzu chieh-yao*], *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. 68, Part 2 (June 1997), pp. 417-48; "Ch'ing ch'u te Chiang-ching hui" 清初的講經會 ["The classics discussion society" of the early Ch'ing], *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. 68, Part 3 (September 1997), pp. 503-587; "Jih-p'u yü Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u ssu-hsiang chia" 日譜與明末清初思想家 [Moral diaries and late Ming and early Ch'ing intellectuals], *Bulletin of The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. 69, Part 2 (June 1998), pp. 245-94; "Ch'ing ch'u ssu-hsiang chung hsing-shang hsüan-yüan chih hsüeh te mo-lo" 清初思想中形上玄遠之學的沒落 [The metaphysical crisis of seventeenth-century China], in *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. 69, Part 3 (September 1998), pp. 557-87; "Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u te i-chung tao-te yen-ke chu-i" 明末清初的一種道德嚴格主義 [A variety of moral Puritanism in late Ming and early Ch'ing], in Hao Yen-p'ing 郝延平 and Wei Hsiu-mei 魏秀梅, eds., *Chin-shih Chung-kuo chih ch'uan-t'ung yü t'ui-pien: Liu Kuang-ching yüan-shih ch'i-shih-wu sui chu-shou lun-wen chi* 近世中國之傳統與蛻變: 劉廣京院士七十五歲祝壽論文集 [Tradition and metamorphosis in modern Chinese history: essays in honour of Professor Liu Kuang-ching's seventy-fifth birthday] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1998), vol. I, pp. 69-82.

(*hsing chi li* 性即理), which maintained that the nature of things is the principle that needed to be investigated. Lu Hsiang-shan, on the other hand, was known for his contention that “the mind is principle” (*hsin chi li* 心即理), which insisted that the mind itself is the principle that needed to be cultivated.²⁵ As the Neo-Confucianism of Chu Hsi dominated the Yüan dynasty, the Lu Hsiang-shan School eventually declined.²⁶ The emergence of Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine in the middle of the Ming dynasty led to a revival of Lu’s school. From then on, Wang’s name was often associated with Lu, while Chu’s name was always associated with Ch’eng I 程頤 [I-ch’uan 伊川, 1033-1107]. The distinction between the Ch’eng-Chu School and the Lu-Wang School was so clear-cut that scholars even described the doctrines of Lu Hsiang-shan and Wang Yang-ming as the School of Mind (*hsin-hsüeh* 心學) and the doctrines of Ch’eng I and Chu Hsi as the School of Principle (*li-hsüeh* 理學).²⁷

Although the School of Mind became popular after the emergence of Wang Yang-ming, according to the great historian of intellectual history of the Ming,

²⁴ Okada Takehito, *op. cit.*; T’ang Chün-i, *op. cit.*; Mou Tsung-san, *op. cit.*

²⁵ See Araki Kengo, “Confucianism and Buddhism in the Late Ming”, in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., eds., *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, p. 42. It is far from precise to use these generalizations to characterize the philosophies of these two Neo-Confucian masters. However, they do supply us with clues about the different characteristics of their intellectual orientation.

²⁶ Wing-tsit Chan, “Chu Hsi and Yüan Neo-Confucianism”, in Hok-lam Chan and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Yüan Thought: Chinese Thought and Religion under the Mongols* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 197-223.

²⁷ For example, Wing-tsit Chan has used this distinction in his study of Neo-Confucianism of the seventeenth century. See Wing-tsit Chan, “The Hsing-li ching-i and the Ch’eng-Chu School of the seventeenth century”, in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., eds., *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, p. 543; Ch’ien Mu, although he thought that this distinction was not well-measured enough, also said that “It is not quite against the truth to consider that the Lu-Wang School of Mind concentrated only on human life and Ch’eng-Chu School of Principle concentrated both on human life and the cosmic world (or world of nature)”. See Ch’ien Mu 錢穆, *Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an* 朱子新學案 [A new anthology and commentary on Chu Hsi’s philosophy] (Taipei: San-min shu-chü, 1971), vol. 1, p. 55. Lao Ssu-kuang made a similar distinction in his study of the history of Chinese philosophy. See Lao Ssu-kuang, *op. cit.*, vol. 3a, p. 407. Wm. Theodore de Bary also presents evidence to prove this distinction can be seen in some of the critics of Wang Yang-ming. See Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Message of the Mind*

Huang Tsung-hsi, it had a forerunner in Ch'en Hsien-chang 陳獻章 [Po-sha or Pai-sha 白沙, 1428-1500]. In his famous *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* 明儒學案 [A philosophical anthology of Ming Confucians] Huang Tsung-hsi said:

With Ch'en Hsien-chang, Ming learning started to become precise and subtle. The effort he emphasized is entirely that of interior cultivation: of a state that is prior to joy and anger and yet not empty, and of a state that is amid ten thousand entangled emotions and yet unmoved. This teaching gained importance with the rise of Wang Yang-ming. The teachings of the two masters [Ch'en and Wang] are extremely close.²⁸

Thus, Liu was under the influence not only of Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind but also of Ch'eng Hsien-chang's School of Mind. This study will look at Liu's contributions in the following three important areas of late Ming thought: (1) the revision of Ch'eng Hsien-chang's paradigm of the School of Mind; (2) the revision of Wang Yang-ming's paradigm of the School of Mind and (3) the criticism of the doctrines propounded by Wang Yang-ming's followers. In investigating Liu's contributions in these three areas, I will evaluate Liu's relation to the Ming-Ch'ing intellectual transition.

This study is divided as the following chapters. Chapter 2 documents the reemergence of the School of Mind in the early Ming. It describes Ch'en Hsien-chang's teaching of sitting in meditation and his doctrine of emphasizing tranquillity. The development of the School of Mind in the middle Ming is explicated

in Neo-Confucianism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 95-108.

²⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲, "Pai-sha hsüeh-an shang" 白沙學案上 [The Pai-sha School: part one], in *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* 明儒學案 [A philosophical anthology of Ming Confucians] (hereafter abbreviated as *MJHA*) (Taipei: Hua-shih ch'u-pan she, 1987), chüan 5, p. 78. For an English translation, see Julia Ching, trans., *The Records of Ming Scholars* (hereafter abbreviated as *Records*) (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), p. 84.

by way of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of the extension of innate knowledge. The factionalization of the School of Mind in late Ming is documented through a study of the doctrines propounded by Wang Yang-ming's followers. Chapter 3 introduces Liu Tsung-chou's family background, early life, political career and intellectual achievement. Chapter 4 investigates Liu's contributions to the re-evaluation of the doctrines of Mind in Ming Neo-Confucianism through a systematic study of his views on the existing schools. First, I will discuss the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the teaching of sitting in meditation in the Ch'en Hsien-chang School; the arguments regarding them in the Wang Yang-ming School; and Liu's views on them. Secondly, I will discuss Liu's changing attitudes toward Wang Yang-ming's doctrine; their different attitudes towards overcoming selfish human desires and extensive learning; and the difference between Wang and Liu on the correct interpretation of the *Great Learning*. Thirdly, I will discuss Liu's sense of the degeneration of Wang's followers; the debates on Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching"; Liu's criticism of Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching" and the debates on it; Liu's criticism of the moral decay in the circle of Wang Yang-ming's followers; and Liu's scheme of moral reformation for his time.

The study will conclude with an assessment of the impact of Liu's reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism and its influence in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing.

CHAPTER TWO

Intellectual Background

2.1 The reemergence of the School of Mind in the early Ming

In the history of Ming Neo-Confucianism, the roles of Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming are very important. In his description of Ch'en Hsien-chang in his *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* Huang Tsung-hsi said:

On account of his teaching, many Confucians of the Ming period did not lose their standards for the good life. Only with him did the effort of acquiring sagehood become clear, to be further developed by Wang Yang-ming.¹

This shows that Ch'en and Wang started a new age for the learning of sagehood. In his description of Wang Yang-ming Huang made a more detailed description to explain in what sense Ch'en's and Wang's doctrines are new. He said:

The Ming approach to learning was opened by Ch'en Hsien-chang but started to flourish only with Wang Yang-ming. The earlier custom was to memorize the known sayings of the former scholars, without reflecting carefully or seeking to develop their hidden points. This is the meaning of the statement that each man is only repeating Chu Hsi.²

The description shows that the doctrines of Ch'en and Wang are new in comparison with that of the scholars of the Ch'eng-Chu School. The Ch'eng-Chu

¹ Huang-Tsung-hsi, "Pai-sha hsüeh-an shang", in *MJHA*, chüan 5, p. 79; *Records*, pp. 86-7.

² Huang Tsung-hsi, "Yao-chiang hsüeh-an" 姚江學案 [The Yao-chiang School], in *MJHA*, chüan 10, p. 179; *Records*, p. 100.

Neo-Confucianism was the state ideology of the Ming dynasty.³ Huang's description assigns a revolutionary role to the doctrines of Ch'en and Wang. Ch'en and Wang's revolutionary role is confirmed by the *Ming-shih* 明史 [The history of the Ming dynasty]. In its description of the academic community of the Ming period, the *Ming-shih* said:

Basically Confucians of the early Ming all represented minor branches and what were left of the followers of pupils of Chu Hsi. The transmission of doctrines from their teachers was clearly traceable and their patterns were in perfect order. ... The division of systems of learning began with Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming.⁴

This text confirms the prevalence of the Ch'eng-Chu School and the revolutionary role of Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming. However, it also leaves an impression that the Ch'eng-Chu School of the early Ming had observed tradition without any change. This impression is challenged by modern study.

Ch'en Jung-chieh [Chan Wing-tsit] 陳榮捷, in his study of four famous Neo-Confucians of the Ch'eng-Chu school in the early Ming, Ts'ao Tuan 曹端 [Yüeh-ch'uan 月川, 1376-1434], Wu Yü-pi 吳與弼 [K'ang-chai 康齋, 1391-1469], Hsüeh Hsüan 薛瑄 [Ching-hsüan 敬軒, 1392-1464] and Hu Chü-jen 胡居仁 [Ching-chai 敬齋, 1434-1486], remarks that early Ming Neo-Confucianism grew less

³ Ch'ien Mu 錢穆, "Ming-ch'u Chu-tzu-hsüeh liu-yen k'ao" 明初朱子學流衍考 [A study of the development of the Chu Hsi school in early Ming], in Ch'ien Mu, *Chung-kuo hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang-shih lun-ts'ung* 中國學術思想史論叢 [Miscellaneous essays on Chinese scholarship and thought] (Taipei: Tung-ta t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1978), vol. 7, p. 6; Chan, Wing-tsit [Ch'en Jung-chieh], "The Ch'eng-Chu School of early Ming", in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 45.

⁴ Chang T'ing-yü 張廷玉, et al., *Ming Shih* 明史 [The history of the Ming dynasty] (Taipei: Ting-wen shu-chü, 1975), chüan 282, "Ju-lin chuan i" 儒林傳一 [The narratives of Confucians: part one], p.

and less interested in such intellectual aspects as metaphysical speculation and the doctrine of “the investigation of things”, which are the main concerns in Ch’eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism, and more and more concerned with the mind, its cultivation and preservation, and seriousness as the means of achieving that goal.⁵ These four Neo-Confucians had actually driven the Ch’eng-Chu School into a new direction, the studies of the learning of the mind, which laid the groundwork for the emergence of Ch’en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming’s School of Mind.

Not only did the Ch’eng-Chu School provide the milieu for the emergence of the School of Mind, it had a direct link to Ch’en Hsien-chang’s School of Mind. Ch’en was an intimate disciple of Wu Yü-pi. Ch’en recalled that at the age of twenty-seven he resolved to study under Wu. Wu taught him all the books that ancient sages and worthies had handed down as instructions. Taking Wu’s instructions as his guide for cultivation, Ch’en returned to his hometown, shut himself up at home without ever going out, devoting himself solely to the quest for direction in applying efforts. With no help from teachers or friends, he looked for this, relying daily on books and texts, forgetting to sleep and to eat, and continuing in this manner for many years without ultimately getting anywhere.⁶ He specifically explained: “What I mean by not having got anywhere refers to my mind and principle (*li* 理) not converging or tallying.”⁷ Eventually, he decided to “forsake the complexities of learning from books and sought to find what was simple and

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⁵ Wing-tsit Chan, “The Ch’eng-Chu School of early Ming”, p. 42.

⁶ See Ch’en Hsien-chang 陳獻章, “Fu Chao t’i-hsüeh Chien-hsien” 復趙提學儉憲 [Reply to Chao Chien-hsien t’i-hsüeh], in Ch’en Hsien-chang, *Ch’en Hsien-chang chi* 陳獻章集 [The works of Ch’en Hsien-chang] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1987), chüan 2, p. 145.

⁷ Ibid. The English translation is from *Records*, p. 87.

essential within myself, only by quiet sitting (*ching-tso* 靜坐, also translated as “sitting in meditation”).”⁸ Through sitting in meditation, he appeared to feel something happen to him. He said:

After a long time I saw my mind-in-itself (*hsin chih t'i* 心之體) emerging dimly, but as though it were a thing (*wu* 物). In my daily life, I did all that I desired like a horse guided by bit and bridle. In realizing the meaning of things and in examining the teachings of sages, I found that each had its order and its origin, just as every stream has its source. So I became very self-confident and said, “Could this not be the effort of becoming a sage?”⁹

He seemed to feel that the problem that the mind and principle did not converge or tally was completely solved by the practice of sitting in meditation.

Ch'en's forsaking learning from books and taking sitting in meditation instead as a way for cultivation might have been inspired by Wu Yü-pi. Wu had made up his mind to refuse the civil service examination at the age of nineteen and spent the rest of his life farming and studying in the countryside.¹⁰ He strongly advocated the idea of “getting the Way oneself” (*tzu-te* 自得). Influenced by Wu, Ch'en is also an advocate of this idea.¹¹ It is because of the idea of “getting the Way oneself” that Wu redefined learning from books more loosely. He once said:

In general, the most important doctrine that the teaching of ancient sages was based on is simply *ching* 敬 [reverence]. The mind of a man who is well dressed, reverent in words and behaviour, and who adheres to rites, is naturally restrained. In that case, he gradually achieves morality in spite of not studying classical

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Ch'ung-jen hsüeh-an i” 崇仁學案一 [The Ch'ung-jen School: part one], in *ibid.*, chüan 1, p. 14.

¹¹ William Theodore de Bary, *The Liberal Tradition in China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1983), p. 73.

texts. However, it would be better if he could spend time studying to realize principles and cultivate himself.¹²

This means that, according to Wu, the function of learning from books is not absolutely necessary but only complementary. We can imagine that Ch'eng Hsien-chang's innovative substitution of sitting in meditation for learning from books probably developed from Wu Yü-pi's teaching. The relation between Wu Yü-pi and Ch'en Hsien-chang displays a gradually process of the development of the School of Mind from its anticipation in the Ch'eng-Chu school in the early Ming.

Ch'eng Hsien-chang's taking sitting in meditation is not only related to Wu Yü-pi but can also be traced to many Sung 宋 [960-1279] Neo-Confucians. As a means of personal cultivation, sitting in meditation in Chinese history can be traced to the Taoists in the pre-Ch'in 秦 period [770-222 B.C.]. After it, Buddhists and Taoists both took sitting in meditation as their basic discipline for cultivation. In Confucianism, it was Chou Tun-i's 周敦頤 [Lien-hsi 濂溪, 1017-73] doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" (*chu ching* 主靜) that inspired Ch'eng Hao 程顥 [Ming-tao 明道, 1032-85] and Ch'eng I 程頤 [I-ch'uan 伊川, 1033-1107] to introduce sitting in meditation as the teaching for acquiring tranquillity. Later, other Sung Neo-Confucians, like Lo Ts'ung-yen 羅從彥 [Yü-chang 豫章, 1072-1135], Li T'ung 李侗 [Yen-p'ing 延平, 1088-1163] and Chu Hsi, continued to treat it as a means of personal cultivation.¹³ All of the experiences of the practice of sitting in

¹² Wu Yü-pi 吳與弼, *K'ang-chai chi* 康齋集 [The works of Wu Yü-pi], in *Wen-yüan-ko ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 文淵閣四庫全書 [The Complete Books of the Four Treasuries] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1983), chüan 8, "Jen-yin yü yu-jen shu" 壬寅與友人書 [A letter to a friend in the year of jen-yin], p. 25b.

¹³ See T'ang I-chieh 湯一介, ed., *Chung-kuo ju-hsiieh wen-hua ta-kuan* 中國儒學文化大觀 [An

meditation of these Neo-Confucian forerunners were taken as examples by Ch'en in his promotion of the practice of sitting in meditation.¹⁴

However, compared to these Sung Neo-Confucians, Ch'eng Hsien-chang created a new horizon for the practice of sitting in meditation. For those Sung Neo-Confucians, sitting in meditation was only a complementary method of moral cultivation.¹⁵ They did not tell people to forsake learning from books and to immerse themselves in sitting in meditation. Ch'en not only practised sitting in meditation himself confidently, but also adopted it as a regular custom, persuading his disciples to practise it without considering the differences in their special characteristics and conditions. In a letter to one of his friends, he wrote:

I tell everyone who comes to ask me for instruction to practise sitting in meditation. I do that because I find it useful, not because I intend to play the expert or to mislead others.¹⁶

More than that, he created a normative rule for the practice of sitting in meditation. He contended: "To become accomplished in studies, one must foster a starting point by sitting in tranquillity" (*ts'ung ching chung tso yang-ch'u ke tuan-ni lai* 從靜中坐養出個端倪來).¹⁷ Although Ch'en never explained further what is meant by the

exposition of Chinese Confucian culture] (Peking: Peking ta-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 2001), pp. 164-5.

¹⁴ See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Pai-sha hsüeh-an shang", in *MJHA*, chüan 5, p. 83.

¹⁵ T'ang I-chieh, ed., *op. cit.* Ch'eng Hao, Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi expressed their strong objection to any suggestion that man is in his best state when all the emotions of his mind are "tranquil", which implies the superiority of meditation over action. See A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers: The Metaphysics of the Brothers Ch'eng* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1991), p. 165; Ch'ien Mu, *Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an*, vol. 2, pp. 277-80.

¹⁶ Ch'en Hsien-chang, "Fu Chao-t'i-hsüeh Chien-hsien", in Ch'en Hsien-chang, *Ch'en Hsien-chang chi*, chüan 2, p. 145.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, "Yü He Ke-kung Huang-man" 與賀克恭黃門 [A letter to He Huang-man], p. 133. The expression "fostering a starting point by sitting in tranquillity." (*ts'ung ching chung tso yang-ch'u ke tuan-ni lai* 從靜中坐養出個端倪來) was quoted by Huang Tsung-hsi in *MJHA* as "fostering a starting

starting point (*tuan-ni* 端倪) and how to foster it, this expression gives Ch'en's teaching of sitting in meditation more philosophical implications than implied in his Neo-Confucian forerunners' use of the term.¹⁸

Wang Yang-ming apparently had no direct inheritance from Ch'en Hsien-chang.¹⁹ However, those mystical aspects of Ch'en's teaching of sitting in meditation, such as "fostering a starting point" and "seeing my mind-in-itself

point by quiet-sitting (sitting in meditation)." (*ts'ung ching-tso chung yang-ch'u ke tuan-ni lai* 從靜坐中養出個端倪來). See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Pai-sha hsüeh-an shang", in *MJHA*, chüan 5, p. 86.

Furthermore, the expression was usually quoted as "fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity" (*ts'ung ching chung yang-ch'u tuan-ni* 從靜中養出端倪) in later Neo-Confucian works, which I will present later in this study. It is the reason that the practice of sitting in meditation can be seen as the practice of the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity". I, therefore, consider them as a pair of coexistent theories, and will discuss them together in section 1 of chapter 4.

¹⁸ Ch'en Jung-chieh [Chan, Wing-tsit] 陳榮捷, having given an etymological explanation of the word "*tuan-ni*", firstly translates it as "universe", and then gives the expression a philosophical interpretation as follows: "The phrase "*yang-ch'u*" 養出 (foster) indicates the production of activities and the possibility of action. It is from the cultivation of tranquillity that we can discover the restlessness of the moving of the universe. Furthermore, we can say, it is from the cultivation of tranquillity we can recreate the universe. This point has never been indicated by anyone before. It is Ch'en Hsien-chang who firstly propounded it." See Ch'en Jung-chieh, "Pai-sha chih tung te che-hsüeh yü ch'uang-tso" 白沙之動的哲學與創作 [Ch'en Hsien-chang's active philosophy and its creation], in Ch'en Jung-chieh, *Ch'en Jung-chieh che-hsüeh lun-wen chi* 陳榮捷哲學論文集 [The philosophical works of Ch'en Jung-chieh] (Taipei: Yang-che ch'u-pan she, 1968), p. 72. Ch'en Jung-chieh's translation, however, did not reach a common agreement among modern studies of Ch'en Hsien-chang's philosophy. Chien Yu-wen [Jen Yu-wen] 簡又文 expresses his disagreement with other etymological evidence. See Chien Yu-wen, *Pai-sha-tzu yen-chiu* 白沙子研究 [A study of Ch'en Hsien-chang] (Hong Kong: Chien-shih meng-chin shu-wu, 1970), pp. 175-8. He translates "*tuan-ni*" as "beginning" and refers it to the "beginnings" of virtue spoken of by Mencius. See Jen Yu-wen, "Ch'en Hsien-chang's philosophy of the natural", in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, p. 79. Following Chien Yu-wen, Paul Yun-ming Jiang also translates it as "beginning". See Paul Yun-ming Jiang, *The Search for Mind: Ch'en Pai-sha, Philosopher-Poet* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1980). p. 70. However, Chien Yu-wen, like Ch'en Jung-chieh, refers Ch'en Hsien-chang's expression of emphasizing tranquillity to producing activities in philosophical meaning and maintaining its difference from that of Ch'en Hsien-chang's Neo-Confucian forerunners. See Chien Yu-wen, *Pai-sha-tzu yen-chiu*, pp. 157-78. Paul Yun-ming Jiang also maintains that Ch'en Hsien-chang's discovery of the mind through his enlightenment experience in sitting in meditation represented an epoch-making achievement in the growth of Ming philosophy. See Paul Yun-ming Jiang, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁹ According to Huang Tsung-hsi, Wang "never mentioned Ch'en". See Huang-Tsung-hsi, "Pai-sha hsüeh-an shang", in *MJHA*, chüan 5, p. 78. But, according to Wing-tsit Chan, Wang mentioned Ch'en twice. However, Chan also remarks that Wang only referred to Ch'en's name and did not say much about his doctrine. See Wing-tsit Chan, "Chan Jo-shui's influence on Wang Yang-ming", *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 23 (January-April, 1973), p. 10. Also according to Lao Ssu-kuang, although Wang had a close friendship with Ch'en's faithful disciple Chan Jo-shui 湛若水 [Kan-ch'üan 甘泉, 1466-1560], he did not pay too much attention to Ch'en's doctrines. See Lao Ssu-kuang *Chung-kuo*

emerging dimly, but as though it were a thing”, were replicated again and again in Wang Yang-ming and his disciples’ experiences of moral cultivation.

Wang Yang-ming’s famous experience of enlightenment in Lung-ch’ang 龍場 in Kuei-chou 貴州 is the first example of this. After following Chu Hsi’s doctrines of “the investigation of things” (*ko wu* 格物) and “the extension of knowledge” (*chih chih* 致知) for many years but failing to realize their true meaning, after he was demoted to Lung-ch’ang, through a long period of practising sitting in meditation Wang suddenly came to realize them one night. The biography of Wang Yang-ming reports on this mystical experience:

[Wang] sat solemnly in quietude day and night to pursue the wordless oneness. After a time, his mind became bright and clear. ... Suddenly at midnight it occurred: he realized the true meaning of the doctrine of the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge. In sleeplessness, he felt as if he had heard a voice talking to him. Unconsciously he called out and jumped out of bed. All of his servants were startled.²⁰

It is probably this special experience that led Wang to take sitting in meditation as his main teaching in a period of his life.²¹

che-hsüeh-shih, vol. 3a, p. 407.

²⁰ Wang Yang-ming 王陽明, *Wang Yang-ming ch’üan-chi* 王陽明全集 [The complete works of Wang Yang-ming] (hereafter abbreviated as *WYMCC*) (Shanghai: Ku-chi ch’u-pan she, 1997), “Nien-p’u i” 年譜一 [Chronological biography: part one], chüan 33, , p. 1228.

²¹ Ch’ien Te-hung 錢德洪 [Hsü-shan 緒山, 1497-1574], the main editor of the complete works of Wang Yang-ming, reported: “The learning of the master (i.e. Wang) had changed three times, and his teaching has changed three times as well. ... While living in Kuei-yang 貴陽, he taught his disciples the doctrine of ‘the unity of knowledge and action’ (*chih hsing ho-i* 知行合一) for the first time. After his arrival in Ch’u-yang 滌陽, he mostly taught his disciples to sit in meditation. After arriving in Chiang-yu 江右, he started to teach the doctrine of ‘the extension of innate knowledge’ (*chih liang-chih* 致良知), going right to the heart of the matter, in order to bring insight to his disciples. These were the so called three changes in his teaching.” See Ch’ien Te-hung, “K’o wen-lu hsü-shuo” 刻文錄敘說 [A preface to the newly inscribed literary works of Wang Yang-ming], in *ibid.*, chüan 41, p. 1574.

Even after he changed his teaching into the teaching of the doctrine of the extension of innate knowledge (*chih liang-chih* 致良知; *liang-chih* 良知, also translated as innate knowledge of good, or innate knowing), his teaching of sitting in meditation was so impressive that some of his disciples were still more interested in that aspect. Wang Chi 王畿 [Lung-hsi 龍溪, 1498-1583], one of Wang Yang-ming's famous disciples from the Che-chung 浙中 section, once referred to Wang Yang-ming's experience in quietude as follows:

The master has described that he once saw in quietude the inside of his body, which is like a crystal palace. At that moment he forgot about the self and matter, and forgot about heaven and earth, uniting himself with the emptiness. Bright and magical as it is, absent-minded and changeable as it is, it makes people seem to have something to tell, but they forget how to tell what they wish to tell. This is real scenery.²²

Wang Chi seemed to praise the mystical experience of quietude. Nieh Pao 聶豹 [Wen-wei 文蔚, 1487-1563], another famous disciple of Wang Yang-ming's from the Chiang-yu 江右 section, also took sitting in meditation as his teaching method. In *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, Huang Tsung-hsi described Nieh's learning as follows:

Nieh Pao's learning developed in prison, where he had plenty of tranquillity and nothing to do, until he suddenly perceived the reality of the mind-in-itself, in its radiance and brightness, as that which contains all things. He said joyfully, "This is the equilibrium (or Mean) prior to the rise of emotions. Should I only be able to keep this and not lose it, I would possess the source of all the principles under Heaven." After his release from prison, he regulated a method of quiet sitting that he taught those who studied with him, guiding them to return to tranquillity for the sake of attaining harmony with themselves and a

²² Wang Chi 王畿, "Ch'u-yang hui-yü" 滁陽會語 [Conversations at Ch'u-yang], in Wang Chi, *Wang Lung-hsi ch'üan-chi* 王龍溪全集 [The complete works of Wang Chi] (Taipei: Hua-wen shu-chü, 1970), chüan 2, p. 7a.

composure that enabled them to respond perfectly to events and happenings, so that in practical life they might be in accord with their [minds].²³

Nieh's teaching of sitting in meditation, although it raised doubts in some disciples of Wang Yang-ming, had a companion. Lo Hung-hsien 羅洪先 [Lien-an 念菴, 1504-1564], another scholar from the Chiang-yu section, agreed with Nieh. Lo said: "Nieh's teaching resembled a thunderbolt that struck at the ambiguity of many would-be heroes [of the sagely Way], until he made available to all a wide and open road, and no further doubt need remain."²⁴ He himself once had a similarly enlightening experience. He recalled: "because of a ten-day-long sitting in meditation, I seemed to have seen something."²⁵ He once described what he saw in sitting in meditation as follow:

When I was in a state of extreme tranquillity, absent-mindedly I felt that the mind was empty, fluent without any obstruction, like the wind that blows in the air without limitation, without distinction between inside and outside, or between action and quietude. All things under Heaven, within the four directions, from past to present, were converged into oneness.²⁶

The tradition of acquiring this kind of mystical experience from sitting in meditation lasted for a long time in the Wang Yang-ming School. Even a disciple of Wang Chi, Wan T'ing-yen 萬廷言 [Ssu-mo 思默, ?-?] inherited the teaching of sitting in meditation. He once described his experience of sitting in meditation as follows:

²³ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Chiang-yu Wang-men hsüeh-an erh" 江右王門學案二 [The Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part two], in chüan 17, p. 372; *Records*, p. 128.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 373; *Records*, p. 129.

²⁵ Lo Hung-hsien, "Yü Yin Tao-yü" 與尹道輿 [A letter to Yin Tao-yü], in Lo Hung-hsien, *Nien-an wen-chi* 念庵文集 [The literary works of Lo Hung-hsien], in *Wen-yüan-ko ssu-k'u chüan-shu*, chüan 3, p. 34b.

²⁶ Lo Hung-hsien, "Ta Chiang Tao-lin" 答蔣道林 [A reply to Chiang Tao-lin], in *ibid.*, chüan 4, p.

When I first learned sitting in meditation, I felt nothing, nor could I acquire tranquillity, nor could I keep in focus, nor could I order my breath. I simply tried to concentrate the mind. What upset me was that my thoughts were flying and changing so wildly that I could not harness them. However, as time went by, suddenly I felt that my mind was in stillness without moving. Within those two or three days, I felt as if I was drunk and my thoughts stopped changing. It seemed that there was something dimly emergent inside my mind, brightening gradually. I happily thought, isn't this what Po-sha called "fostering a starting point by sitting in tranquillity"?²⁷

Here Ch'en Hsien-chang's famous axiom "fostering a starting point by sitting in tranquillity" is quoted as the object of Wan's practising of sitting in meditation. It shows that Ch'en Hsien-chang's teaching of sitting in meditation must have given Wan the direct inspiration to practise sitting in meditation.

From the above-mentioned mystical experiences of sitting in meditation in the Wang Yang-ming School we can certainly imagine that Ch'en's teaching of sitting in meditation had great influence on them. No wonder that a scholar of the Ch'eng-Chu School in Wang Yang-ming's time, Lo Ch'in-shun 羅欽順 [Cheng-an 整庵, 1465-1547], traced Wang's School of Mind to Ch'en by saying that: "although Ch'en Hsien-chang is attributed with the promotion of the study of the Way in recent times, I am afraid that the faults of scholars [in recent times] also started from him."²⁸

Although Wang Yang-ming and his disciples had no direct inheritance from Ch'en Hsien-chang, in the sense of their common interest in pursuing the original status of mind as their object for their moral cultivation through practising sitting in

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²⁷ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Che-chung Wang-men hsüeh-an erh" 浙中王門學案二 [The Che-chung section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part two], in *MJHA*, chüan 12, p. 254.

²⁸ Lo Ch'in-shun 羅欽順, *K'un-chih chi* 困知記 [Knowledge painfully acquired] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1990), p. 39.

meditation, they were all immersed in the new intellectual trend inspired by Ch'en Hsien-chang.

2.2 The development of the School of Mind in the middle Ming

Although Ch'en Hsien-chang had inspired a new intellectual trend for future generations, the transmission of his doctrine was not widespread. According to

Ming-shih:

Those who inherited Ch'en Hsien-chang's doctrines were called the Chiang men 江門 School. All of them were concerned only to maintain their personal integrity. Therefore the transmission of Ch'en Hsien-chang's doctrines was not far-reaching.¹

Wang Yang-ming's doctrine had a different destiny. According to *Ming-shih*:

Those who inherited Wang Yang-ming's doctrines were called the Yao-chiang 姚江 School. They established special theories to deliberately articulate their difference from Chu Hsi's doctrines. The members of this school were all over the land. Their transmission lasted for more than one hundred years. Wang Yang-ming's doctrines were widespread.²

However, the different legacies of the above-mentioned schools was not only because of the intellectual style of their members, but also because of the strategies of Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming in responding to criticism from their contemporaries with regard to their doctrines.

In Ch'en Hsien-chang's case, we see that criticism from his contemporaries was very radical. Ch'iu Chün 丘濬 [Chung-shen 仲深, 1420-1495], a famous thinker in

¹ *Ming-shih*, chüan 282, p. 7229.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7222.

Ch'en Hsien-chang's time,³ had satirized Ch'en's doctrine as heresy.⁴ Chang Mao 章懋 [Feng-shan 楓山, 1437-1522], a scholar of the Ch'eng-Chu School, publicly accused Ch'en's doctrine of being Ch'an Buddhism.⁵ Another scholar of the Ch'eng-Chu School, Hu Chü-jen, who was also a disciple of Ch'en's teacher Wu Yü-pi, seriously regarded some of Ch'en's sayings on the enlightened mind as "obvious Buddhist heresy",⁶ attributing this fault to his practice of sitting in meditation.⁷ Ch'en's attitude towards learning from books also inspired general enmity in the Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucian circle.⁸

In dealing with these criticisms, Ch'en was generally very passive. As a philosopher-poet, he was more given to eulogizing the scenery of the situation of enlightenment, less interested in discriminating his doctrine in detail.⁹ The *Ming-shih* reports that when someone tried to persuade him to transmit his doctrine in writing, Ch'en simply kept silent.¹⁰

A significant episode in the middle period of Ch'en's life provides another view of his strategy in facing criticism from his contemporaries. In 1466, twelve years after he had abandoned the civil service examinations, and during which he had invented his teaching on sitting in meditation, Ch'en once again went to Peking to visit the

³ On Ch'iu Chün's life and thought, see Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Neo-Confucianism Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 91-98.

⁴ See Lo Ch'in-shun, *K'un-chih chi*, p. 39.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Hu Chü-jen 胡居仁, *Chü-yeh lu* 居業錄 [Works of Hu Chü-jen] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1975), chüan 3, p. 283.

⁷ See *ibid.*, chüan 4, p. 435.

⁸ See Yü Ying-shih 余英時, "Ts'ung Sung-Ming ju-hsüeh te fa-chan lun ch'ing-tai ssu-hsiang shih" 從宋明儒學的發展論清代思想史 [On the intellectual history of Ch'ing from the perspective of the development of Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism], in Yü Ying-shih, *Li-shih yü ssu-hsiang* 歷史與思想 [History and thought] (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1979), p. 100.

⁹ Regarding Ch'en Hsien-chang's character of as a philosopher-poet, see Paul Yun-ming Jiang, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Ming-shih*, chüan 293, p. 7262.

Imperial Academy.¹¹ According to a report by one of Ch'en's disciples, Chang Hsü 張詡 [T'ing-shih 廷實, 1455-1514], because Ch'en gathered disciples to practise the rite of archery, a rumour was spread about him gathering and training an armed band for rebellion. Ch'en therefore made this visit to prove his loyalty.¹² The rumour verifies the enmity to Ch'en from his contemporaries. During this visit, Ch'en wrote a poem which raised questions on the consistency of his doctrine "emphasizing tranquillity" (*chu ching* 主靜):

Our Way has a grand master,
The immortal Chu Tzu-yang 朱紫陽 [i.e. Chu Hsi].
He spoke of "*ching*" (reverence) unceasingly,
Showing us the Way to virtue.¹³

Another disciple of Ch'en, Chan Jo-shui 湛若水 [Kan-ch'üan 甘泉, 1466-1560], had sensed Ch'en's difficult situation here. Chan said: "The master [Ch'en] usually emphasizes tranquillity, but he especially speaks of reverence in this piece of work."¹⁴ Chan therefore tried to explain the reason why Ch'en did that.¹⁵ It appears that at least in some of these contemporaries' eyes there is some contradiction between Ch'en's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and that of "emphasizing reverence" of the Ch'eng-Chu School. Under these circumstances, it would seem that Ch'en's choosing to reemphasize Chu Hsi's term of "reverence" was in order to

¹¹ Ch'en Hsien-chang, *Ch'en Hsien-chang chi*, appendix 2, "Nien-p'u" 年譜 [Chronological biography], p. 860.

¹² Chang Hsü 張詡, "Po-sha hsien-sheng hsing-chuang" 白沙先生行狀 [A narrative of the life of Ch'en Hsien-chang], in *ibid.*, p. 869.

¹³ *Ibid.*, appendix 1, pp. 701-2.

¹⁴ Chan Jo-shui 湛若水, "Pai-sha tsu ku-shih chiao chieh" 白沙子古詩教解 [Explanations of Master Pai-sha's poetry], in Ch'en Hsien-chang, *Ch'en Hsien-chang chi*, appendix 1, p. 702.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 702-3.

compromise with the orthodox Ch'eng-Chu School.

In the light of Ch'en Hsien-chang's passive strategies of response to criticism from his contemporaries, it was perhaps inevitable that Ch'en's doctrine would decline gradually. The destiny of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine was another story, owing to Wang's very different strategy in responding to criticism from his contemporaries. To elaborate the difference between their strategies, we need to return to the notion that the mind and principle are not convergent.

Like Ch'en Hsien-chang, Wang Yang-ming once felt that the mind and principle were not convergent. According to Huang Tsung-hsi's *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*:

Wang's learning began with wide reading in prose and poetry, which was followed by a thorough reading of the works of Chu Hsi. He followed the steps of the investigation of things but observed that the principles of things and the mind remained dual, providing no entry-point [into sagehood]. Then he drifted in and out of Buddhism and Taoism for a long time until his exile among the aborigines [of Kuei-chou] and the difficulties surrounding this experience stimulated his mind and strengthened his nature. He wondered how a sage would behave under these circumstances and was suddenly enlightened to the meaning of the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge. He then said: "My nature possesses all it needs for acquiring the way of sageliness. I need not look for help outside." Thus his learning changed three times before he discovered the gate to wisdom. From then on, he eliminated entirely the leaves and branches and focused his mind on the roots [of learning]. [First,] he concentrated on sitting in meditation and purifying his mind, believing that only after attaining the equilibrium of consciousness that exists before the rise of emotions could one acquire the harmony of due proportion accompanying the rise of emotions.¹⁶

It is obvious that, in Wang's experience in pursuit of learning, the realization of Chu Hsi's doctrines of "the investigation of things" and "the extension of knowledge" was his main object. It is under Chu Hsi's instruction that Wang "observed that the

¹⁶ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Yao-chiang hsüeh-an", in *MJHA*, chüan 10, p. 181; *Records*, p. 104.

principles of things and the mind remained dual, providing no entry-point [into sagehood]”, which is similar to Ch’en Hsien-chang’s feeling that his mind and principle were not in convergence. Also, like Ch’en, Wang took sitting in meditation as essential for cultivation. To sum up, they are similar in that they both transferred the field of moral cultivation from things and books to the mind itself.

In 1521, Wang for the first time declared his doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”, admitting that his discovery of the crucial role of innate knowledge in moral cultivation came from his experience of enlightenment from practising sitting in meditation in Lung-ch’ang. He said:

The phrase *liang-chih* (innate knowledge) in my doctrine was the only truth, neither more nor less, that I have wanted to elucidate ever since I was in Lung-ch’ang. I had been incapable of figuring it out simply because I had been incapable of finding out the exact words. I have wasted many words in attending to elucidate the truth for scholars. Now, fortunately, I realize the truth. With this single phrase I see through the whole [mind-in-itself]. That is satisfying.¹⁷

It can be said that *liang-chih* (innate knowledge) is what Wang considered to be the essential output of his moral cultivation, which again reminds us of Ch’en’s teaching of “fostering a starting point from sitting in meditation”. *Liang-chih* is seemingly a starting point that Wang fostered from his experience of meditation.¹⁸

Wang Yang-ming’s experience of transformation from following Chu Hsi’s doctrine of “the investigation of things” to inventing his own doctrine of “the

¹⁷ Quoted by Ch’ien Te-hung, see Ch’ien Te-hung, “K’o wen-lu hsü-shuo”, in *WYMCC*, chüan 41, p. 1575.

¹⁸ It is also noteworthy that the essential terminology of Ch’en’s doctrine of “cultivating a starting point” and Wang’s doctrine of the extension of innate knowledge can be traced to Mencius. In Mencius’ mind, there is knowledge which is innate, which is also a starting point for moral cultivation that needed to be cultivated. In this sense, Ch’en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming were similar in working on developing Mencius’ moral philosophy. See *Mencius* (D. C. Lau trans., Harmondsworth:

extension of innate knowledge” is very similar to Ch’en Hsien-chang’s experience in pursuit of learning. However, Ch’en’s passive attitude towards the challenges of the Ch’eng-Chu School was very different from Wang’s more active engagement with Chu Hsi’s doctrine. Before dealing with Chu Hsi’s doctrine again after his enlightenment in Lung-ch’ang, Wang first verified his enlightenment with the ancient classics, which were much older and therefore might be more authoritative than Chu Hsi’s doctrine. According to his biography, in 1508, right after Wang was enlightened regarding the meaning of Chu Hsi’s doctrines of “the investigation of things” and “the extension of knowledge”, he “verified it with the meaning of the Five Classics (*Wu-ching* 五經), and found there to be no contradiction between the two. He wrote an essay in this regard, “Wu-ching i-shuo” 五經臆說 [A speculation on the Five Classics].”¹⁹ In the preface to the essay, Wang wrote:

While I was in exile at Lung-ch’ang, which is situated in the mountains of the southern aboriginal region, I could not bring with me any books. I sat in a stone cave, reciting the books I had read and making notes. When I felt that I had acquired the skill, I used this to interpret the classics. After seven months had passed, I understood the meaning of the Five Classics. I have named my interpretation “A speculation”. I wrote it only in order to express the opinions deep in my mind; they did not have to be in absolute conformity with past scholars’ interpretations.²⁰

It seems that Wang was so confident in his enlightenment that he simply relied on his own opinions to reinterpret the classics, without caring about ancient interpretations. This means that he seemed to sense a potential for challenging the old doctrine which

Penguin Books, 1970), Book II, Part A: 6, p. 83 and Book VII, Part A: 15, p. 184.

¹⁹ WYMCC, chüan 33, “Nien-p’u i”, p. 1228.

²⁰ Wang Yang-ming, “Wu-ching i-shuo hsü” 五經臆說序 [A preface to a speculation on the Five Classics], in *ibid.*, chüan 22, p. 876.

he had followed in his early days.

In 1518, when he published his two works, the preface to the *Ta-hsieh ku pen* 大學古本 [Ancient version of the *Great Learning*] and *Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun* 朱子晚年定論 [Chu Hsi's final conclusion arrived in his last years], Wang publicly expresses his difference with Chu Hsi.²¹ In the preface of the *Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun*, Wang explained why, after his enlightenment, he found that his thoughts on moral cultivation, although they accorded with the ancient classics, contradicted Chu Hsi's official doctrine. Confident in Chu Hsi's wisdom, Wang had investigated Chu Hsi's works where he found the reason of this contradiction. Wang concluded that:

[Chu Hsi] himself realized the faults of his early doctrine in his later life. He was so regretful that he admitted that his guilt in self-deception and the deception of others was beyond redemption. The works like *Ssu shu chi-chu* 四書集註 [Comprehensive commentary on the Four Books] and *Ssu shu huo-wen* 四書或問 [Questions and answers on the Four Books], which were popularly transmitted across the land, were his unsettled doctrine from an early period in his life. He condemned himself for having faults in these early works and thought of rectifying them but failed to do it.²²

Therefore, Wang collected thirty-four of Chu Hsi's letters from his later life to prove that Chu Hsi's later sayings were different from his early sayings.²³ With this collection, Wang rebuilt his faith in Chu Hsi's doctrine.²⁴ Although Wang edited the *Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun* to defend Chu Hsi, his obvious criticism of Chu Hsi's *Ssu shu chi-chu* and *Ssu shu huo-wen*, which were trusted by most scholars, certainly

²¹ Ibid., chüan 33, "Nien-p'u i", pp. 1253-4.

²² Wang Yang-ming, "Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun hsü" 朱子晚年定論序 [A preface to Chu Hsi's final conclusion arrived in his last years], in *ibid.*, chüan 7, p. 240.

²³ Wang Yang-ming, "Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun" 朱子晚年定論 [Chu Hsi's final conclusion arrived in his last years], in *ibid.*, chüan 3, pp. 128-41.

²⁴ Wang Yang-ming, "Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun hsü", in *ibid.*, chüan 7, p. 241.

threatened the authoritative role of Chu Hsi in public.

In the beginning of the preface to the *Ta-hsüeh ku pen*, he pinpointed the essential meaning of the *Great Learning* as follows:

The essential meaning of the *Great Learning* is simply to make the will sincere (*ch'eng i* 誠意). The effort of making the will sincere is simply the investigation of things. The end of making the will sincere is simply abiding in goodness.²⁵

Wang's taking "making the will sincere" as the essential meaning of the *Great Learning* is obviously different from Chu Hsi's interpretation. Chu himself more strongly emphasized the preliminary role of "the investigation of things" in the *Great Learning*. Chu had once said: "The most important issue of the *Great Learning* is simply the phrase "*ko wu*" 格物 (the investigation of things). If we can realize the meaning of this, the rest of the book is easy to understand."²⁶

Furthermore, at the end of the preface, Wang even made criticisms of Chu Hsi.

Wang said:

[The *Great Learning*] became more fragmentary because of the addition of "*ching*" (reverence), and became more burdensome because of being supplemented by another chapter. I am afraid that learning will become further from the goodness.²⁷

The original chapters of commentary that explained "the investigation of things" and "the extension of knowledge" in the *Great Learning* had been lost in Chu Hsi's time.

²⁵ Wang Yang-ming, "Ta-hsüeh ku pen yüan hsü" 大學古本原序 [The original preface of the ancient version of the *Great Learning*], in *ibid.*, chüan 32, p. 1197.

²⁶ See Chu Hsi, "Ta-hsüeh i" 大學一 [On *Great Learning*: part one], in Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 朱子語類 [Classified conversations of master Chu Hsi] (Taipei: Hua-shih ch'u-pan she, 1987), chüan 14, p. 255.

It was Chu Hsi who made a supplement as a chapter to explain “the investigation of things” and “the extension of knowledge”. Also, it was Chu Hsi who emphasized the importance of reverence in explaining the doctrine of “the investigation of things”.²⁸

Wang appeared to be dissatisfied with Chu Hsi’s interpretation of the *Great Learning*.

Lastly, Wang used his doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” to replace Chu Hsi’s interpretation of the meaning of “the investigation of things” in the *Great Learning*. In his commentary, Chu Hsi wrote:

If we wish to extend our knowledge to the utmost, we must investigate the principles of all things we come into contact with, for the intelligent mind of man is certainly formed to know, and there is not a single thing in which its principles do not inhere. It is only because all principles are not investigated that man’s knowledge is incomplete. For this reason, the first step in education of the adult is to instruct the learner, in regard to all things in the world, to proceed from what knowledge he has of their principles, and investigate further until he reaches the limit. After exerting himself in this way for a long time, he will one day achieve a wide and far-reaching penetration. Then the qualities of all things, whether internal or external, the refined or the coarse, will all be apprehended, and the mind, in its total substance and great functioning, will be perfectly intelligent. This is called the investigation of things. This is called the perfection of knowledge.²⁹

Obviously, Chu Hsi considered the “things” (*wu* 物) of “the investigation of things” (*ko wu*) as all things in the world, and the “knowledge” (*chih* 知) of “the extension of knowledge” (*chih chih* 致知) as knowledge of all things in the world without any

²⁷ Wang Yang-ming, “Ta-hsüeh ku pen yüan hsü”, in *WYMCC*, chüan 32, p. 1197.

²⁸ Regarding Chu Hsi’s supplementing the chapter of the investigation of things in the *Great Learning*, see Chu Hsi, *Ssu shu chi-chu* 四書集註 [Collected commentaries on the Four Books] (Taipei: Hsüeh-hai ch’u-pan she, 1982), p. 6. For Chu Hsi’s pinpointing of the importance of “*ching*” (reverence) in explaining the doctrine of investigation of things, see Chu Hsi, “Ta-hsüeh huo-wen” 大學或問下 [Questions on *Great Learning*: part two], in Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu yü-lei*, chüan 16, pp. 402-408.

limitation. Wang Yang-ming, however, had a significantly different interpretation. In his *Ch'uan-hsi lu* 傳習錄 [Instructions for practical living], Wang bluntly criticizes Chu Hsi for wrongly interpreting the doctrine of “the investigation of things”.³⁰ He explained as follows:

The master of the body is the mind. What emanates from the mind is the will. The original substance of the will is knowledge, and wherever the will is directed is a “thing” (*wu*). For example, when the will is directed toward serving one’s parents, then serving one’s parents is a “thing”. When the will is directed toward serving one’s ruler, then serving one’s ruler is a “thing”. When the will is directed toward being humane to all people and feeling love toward things, then being humane to all people and feeling love toward things are “things”, and when the will is directed toward seeing, hearing, speaking, and acting, then each of these is a “thing”. Therefore I say that there are neither principles nor things outside the mind.³¹

In Wang Yang-ming’s interpretation, the “things” and “knowledge” became more confined to the field of moral matters. Wang also had a special interpretation of the word “ko” as follows:

The word *ko* in *ko wu* is the same as the *ko* in Mencius’ saying that “a great man rectified (*ko*) the ruler’s mind.” It means to eliminate what is incorrect in the mind so as to preserve the correctness of its original substance. Wherever the will is, the incorrectness must be eliminated so correctness may be preserved. In other words, in all places and at all times the principle of Heaven must be preserved. This is the investigation of principles to the utmost. The principle of Heaven is clear character, and to investigate the principle of things to the utmost is to manifest the clear character.³²

²⁹ Chu Hsi, *Ssu-shu chi-chu*, p. 8; *Source Book*, p. 89.

³⁰ Wang Yang-ming, *Ch'uan-hsi-lu* 傳習錄 [The instructions for practical living] (hereafter abbreviated as *CHL*) (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1988), p. 36.

³¹ *CHL*, p. 37, For an English translation, see Wing-tsit Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming* (hereafter abbreviated as *Instructions*) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), part I: 6.

Given his innovative annotation of the word *ko* in *ko wu* as “rectify”, which is dramatically deprived of the epistemological meaning of the word in Chu Hsi’s annotation as “investigate”, Wang’s interpretation of the meaning of *ko wu* was significantly different from Chu Hsi’s interpretation.³³

Wang Yang-ming also pinpointed “the extension of knowledge”, with his extensive interpretation of “knowledge” as “innate knowledge”, in place of “the investigation of things” as the essential ethic of the *Great Learning*.³⁴ It appeared that he was confident enough to substitute his own interpretation of the *Great Learning* for Chu Hsi’s.

His interpretation was obviously such a serious threaten to orthodox Ch’eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism that, in 1523, the examiners of the metropolitan civil service examination put a question about the School of Mind in the examination, implicitly to repudiate Wang Yang-ming.³⁵ Arguments against Wang Yang-ming became popular in these days. In dealing with them, Wang was unexpectedly resolute. He said:

During the time that I was in Nanking [in 1516], I still thought to compromise with normal people. But nowadays I only trust innate knowledge as the true knowledge for discriminating right from wrong. I therefore have no need to hide or excuse myself. I would rather be a wild man leading people to describe me as a man who acts without fear of what he says. I simply act in accordance with

³² *CHL*, p. 37; *Instructions*, part I: 7, pp. 14-15.

³³ Huang Chin-hsing 黃進興, “Li-hsüeh k’ao-chü-hsüeh yü cheng-chih: i Ta-hsüeh kai-pen te fa-chan wei li” 理學考據學與政治: 以大學改本的發展為例 [Neo-Confucianism, textual criticism and politics: the development of the revised editions of the ‘Ta-hsüeh’ as an example] *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* (December, 1989), vol. 60, part 4, p. 899.

³⁴ Tang Chün-i, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun: tao-lun p’ien* 中國哲學原論: 導論篇 [A fundamental exposition of Chinese philosophy: introduction] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1984), p. 299.

³⁵ *WYMCC*, chüan 35, “Nien-p’u san” 年譜三 [chronological biography: part three], p. 1287.

innate knowledge.³⁶

This passage shows how strongly Wang was resolved to break with orthodox Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism.

Wang Yang-ming's challenge to orthodox Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism, though inviting criticism from his contemporaries, influenced literati life and gradually won victory. In the 1523 metropolitan examination, several of Wang's disciples who took the examination walked out of the hall in protest. Another used the opportunity to celebrate Wang's teachings and was rewarded with a *chin-shih* 進士 degree. The anti-Wang policy among examiners seemed to be failed. Furthermore, some of Wang's disciples became examiners in the 1568 metropolitan examination. With their promoting Wang's doctrine in the examinations, Wang's doctrine steadily penetrated the system. Besides that, Chia-ching 嘉靖 era (1522-66) commentaries on the *Four Books* also show the turn from orthodox Ch'eng-Chu interpretations to newer views drawn from Wang Yang-ming and his disciples.³⁷

To sum up the comparison between Ch'en Hsien-chang's and Wang Yang-ming's Schools of Mind, we find that both of them had experienced the problem of mind and principle not converging after following the teaching of Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism in their pursuits of learning, and both found ways of escaping from this predicament by transferring the field of moral cultivation from things and books to the mind. Ch'en, as a forerunner of a new intellectual trend of the School of Mind, was immersed in "getting the Way himself", and was passive in

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Los Angeles:

response to the challenges from the official orthodoxy of Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism. This caused his School of Mind to decline in the long run. Wang, on the other hand, as an indirect inheritor of this new intellectual trend, was more active in confronting Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism by inventing his own doctrine of the extension of innate knowledge and reinterpreting Chu Hsi's doctrine of the investigation of things. Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind, therefore, stood firm as a new intellectual paradigm.

2.3 The factionalization of the School of Mind in the late Ming

Although Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind stood firm as a new intellectual paradigm in Neo-Confucianism, different interpretations of his doctrine among his disciples emerged as it became popular, and thus the factionalization of this School of Mind occurred. When talking about Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge", Wang Chi found eight different interpretations of the idea of *liang-chih* (innate knowledge) among Wang Yang-ming's disciples.¹ Another disciple of Wang Yang-ming, Hu Han 胡瀚 [Chin-shan 今山, 1381-?], also found four different interpretations of the doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" among Wang Yang-ming's disciples.² These different interpretations naturally brought some problems for Wang Yang-ming's disciples in capturing the true meaning of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine. After the late Ming there were many scholars who divided the Wang Yang-ming School into different sections with different standards. Huang Tsung-hsi divided it into six sections according to geographical location.³ Modern Chinese Marxist-Leninist historians divided it into "yu-p'ai" 右派 [right-wing] and "tso-p'ai" 左派 [left-wing] sections according to their attitude toward the proletariat.⁴ The Japanese scholar Okada Takehiko 岡田武

¹ See P'eng Kuo-hsiang 彭國翔, *Liang-chih hsüeh te ch'an-k'ai: Wang Lung-hsi yü chung wan Ming te Yang-ming hsüeh* 良知學的展開: 王龍溪與中晚明的陽明學 [The unfolding of the doctrine about innate knowledge: Wang Chi and the middle and late Ming studies of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 2003), pp. 342-3.

² See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Che-chung Wang-men hsüeh-an wu" 浙中王門學案五 [The Che-chung section of Wang Yang-ming School: part five], in *MJHA*, chan 15, p. 330.

³ There were the Che-chung 浙中, Chiang-yu 江右, Nan-chung 南中, Ch'u-chung 楚中, Northern [Pei-fang 北方] and Yüeh 粵-Min 閩 schools.

⁴ See Chi Wen-fu 嵇文甫, *Tso-p'ai Wang hsüeh* 左派王學 [The left-wing section of the Wang Yang-ming School] (Taipei: Kuo-wen t'ien-ti tsa-chih she, 1990), pp. 74-84; Chi Wen-fu, *Wan Ming*

彦 divided it into three groups: Kensenha 現成派, which considered that to act is to follow ready-made innate knowledge; Kijakuha 歸寂派, which considered that the way was to return to the stillness of the mind; and Syujoha 修証派, which considered the way to be through gradual cultivation and reflective thinking.⁵

The reason for the factionalization of the Wang Yang-ming School may be traced to Wang's doctrine itself. In his later life, Wang propounded his famous "Four Sentences of Teaching" (*ssu-chü chiao* 四句教). Its meaning is so ambiguous that it left a legacy of controversy which continued long after his death.⁶ The Four Sentences of Teaching" is from "Conversation at T'ien-ch'üan 天泉" in 1527.⁷ In this conversation, Wang Yang-ming said:

The absence of good and evil characterizes the mind-in-itself (*hsin-t'i* 心體).
The presence of good and evil characterizes the movement of the will.
The knowledge of good and evil is *liang-chih* (innate knowledge).
The doing of good and ridding of evil is the investigation of things.⁸

The crucial point is in the interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's description of the

ssu-hsiang shih lun 晚明思想史論 [A history of thought of the late-Ming] (Peking: Tung-fung ch'u-pan she, 1996), pp. 15-49.

⁵ See Okada Takehito 岡田武彦, *Ö Yōmei to Minmatsu no Jūgaku*, pp. 103-258.

⁶ Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom: The Way of Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 149-50.

⁷ See *CHL*, p. 359; *Instructions*, Part III: 315, pp. 243-45.

⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Yao-chiang hsüeh-an", in *MJHA*, chüan 10, p. 179; *Records*, p. 101. Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" is a very important part of this study. A further discussion of it will feature in chapter 4. It is worth noting that the concept is developed from the four steps of moral cultivation in the *Great Learning*, which are "the rectification of the mind" (*cheng hsin* 正心), "making the will sincere" (*ch'eng i* 誠意), "the extension of knowledge" (*chih chi* 致知) and "the investigation of things" (*ko wu* 格物). See the *Great Learning*, in *Source Books*, p. 86. My later discussion on the arguments concerning Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching" on the mind (*hsin* 心), the will (*i* 意), knowledge (*chih* 知) and things (*wu* 物) are also to be understood in terms of their meaning in the context the *Great Learning*.

nature of “the absence of good and evil” in the mind. Some scholars interpreted this as “The mind-in-itself, with good and evil, is human nature”.⁹ It is noteworthy that Mencius’ theory of the goodness of human nature is generally accepted by Confucians.¹⁰ The former interpretation obviously put Wang’s description in danger of deviating from the Mencian tradition. It was under these circumstances that Huang Tsung-hsi argued: “Scholars have understood them [i.e. Wang’s “Four Sentences of Teaching”] incorrectly, taking what is said about nature as being neither good nor evil to mean that the supreme good is neither good nor evil.”¹¹

This phenomenon is probably due to theoretical problems in Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine itself. The “Four Sentences of Teaching” caused a significant debate between Wang’s two disciples, Ch’ien Te-hung 錢德洪 [Hsü-shan 緒山, 1497-1574] and Wang Chi. As Ch’ien records:

[When they discussed Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences of Teaching”] Ju-chung [汝中, i.e. Wang Chi] said: “This is not the final conclusion. If we say that in the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil, then there must be no such distinction in the will, in knowledge, and in things. If we say that there is a distinction between good and evil in the will, then in the final analysis there must also be such a distinction in the substance of the mind.” I said: “The substance of the mind is the nature endowed in us by Heaven, and is originally neither good nor evil. But because we have a mind dominated by habits, we see in our thoughts a distinction between good and evil. The work of the investigation of things, the extension of knowledge, the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See Mou Tsung-san, *Chung-kuo che-hsiieh te t’ e-chih* 中國哲學的特質 [The characteristics of Chinese philosophy] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1963), p. 67; Ch’ien Mu, “Ju-chia chih hsing shang lun yü ch’i chin hsing chu-i” 儒家之性善論與其盡性主義 [Confucian’s theory of the goodness of human nature], *Chung-kuo hsiieh-shu ssu-hsiang lun-ts’ung* 中國學術思想論叢 [Miscellaneous essays on Chinese scholarship and thought] (Taipei: Tung-ta t’u-shu kung-ssu, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 1-15; Wing-tsit Chan, “Idealistic Confucianism: Mencius”, in *Source Book*, pp. 49-50.

¹¹ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Yao-chiang hsüeh-an”, in *MJHA*, chüan 10, p. 180; *Records*, p. 102.

sincerity of the will, the rectification of the mind, and the cultivation of the personal life is aimed precisely at recovering that original nature and substance. If there were no good or evil to start with, what would be the necessity of such efforts?¹²

It appears that Wang Chi was so overwhelmingly impressed by Wang Yang-ming's description of the nature of "the absence of good and evil" in the mind that he denied the other three sentences of his "Four Sentences of Teaching", which emphasize the existence of good and evil, the tasks of discriminating good from evil and doing good and removing evil. He emphasized the need to realize the fact that there is no distinction between good and evil in the mind, the will, knowledge and things. Ch'ien Te-hung, though agreeing that the human mind was originally neither good nor evil, was more concerned that the mind is apt to be dominated by habits, which might put good and evil thoughts into it. He therefore emphasized the effort to recover that original nature and substance of the mind through discriminating good from evil.

In brief, the debate between Wang Chi and Ch'ien Te-hung came down to two main questions: "Is the human mind dominated by habits?" and "Is there a necessity to exert effort to recover the original nature and substance of the human mind?" When they took their debate to Wang Yang-ming for elucidation, Wang replied:

You two gentlemen complement each other very well, and should not hold on to one side. Here I deal with two types of peoples. The man of acute intelligence apprehends straight from the source. The original substance of the human mind is in fact crystal-clear without any impediment and is the equilibrium before the

¹² *CHL*, p. 359; *Instructions*, Part III: 315, pp. 243-44.

feelings are aroused. The man of acute intelligence has accomplished his task as soon as he has apprehended the original substance, penetrating the self, other people, and things internal and things external all at the same time. On the other hand, there are inevitably those whose minds are dominated by habits so that the original substance of the mind is obstructed. I therefore teach them definitely and sincerely to do good and remove evil in their will and thoughts. When they become expert at the task and the impurities of the mind are completely eliminated, the original substance of the mind will become wholly clear. Ju-chung's view is the one I use in dealing with the man of acute intelligence. Te-hung's view is for the second type. If you two gentlemen use your views interchangeably, you will be able to lead all people--of the highest, average, and low intelligence--to the truth. If each of you holds on to one side, right here you will err in handling properly the different types of man and each in his own way will fail to understand fully the substance of the Way.¹³

It seems that Wang attempted to keep neutral in this debate. But he finally admitted that: "It is not easy to find people of acute intelligence in the world. Even Yen Hui 顏回 [Yüan 淵, ?-?] and Ming-tao [i.e. Ch'eng Hao] dared not assume that they could fully realize the original substance of the mind as soon as they apprehended the task. How can we lightly expect this of people? People's minds are dominated by habits. If we do not teach them concretely and sincerely to devote themselves to the task of doing good and removing evil right in their innate knowledge rather than cultivate a mind of vacuity and quietness. This defect is not a small matter and must be exposed as early as possible."¹⁴

To sum up, although Wang did have confidence in the clarity of the original substance of the human mind, he never ceased to worry about the possibility of its being obstructed by habits. Wang's attitude is very typical of Confucians. It shows

¹³ *CHL*, pp. 359-60; *Instructions*, Part III: 315, p. 244.

¹⁴ *CHL*, p. 360; *Instructions*, Part III: 315, pp. 244-5.

“the Confucian belief that the individual can and should summon a godlike flow of moral power within himself, but this belief was paradoxically combined with a fearful realization that he would be unable to do so, trapped in a fundamental predicament.”¹⁵ This would explain Wang’s emphasis on the necessity for normal people “to devote themselves to the task of doing good and removing evil right in their innate knowledge” in order to recover the original nature and substance of the human mind.

Because the doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” was Wang Yang-ming’s most important doctrine, one that he thought of as his personal invention for moral cultivation, for the purpose of “doing good and removing evil right in people’s innate knowledge,” we need to go back to this doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”. Once, when a disciple who had heard Wang’s instructions on “the extension of innate knowledge” but who still felt that his effort was not sufficiently earnest asked Wang to elucidate the way to the extension of innate knowledge, Wang answered him in a very ambiguous way. His *Chuan-hsi lu* records:

The Teacher Wang Yang-ming said, “If you already know what the extension of innate knowledge is, how can it be elucidated? From the beginning innate knowledge is clear. The thing to do is to exert effort earnestly and concretely. Otherwise, the more one talks about it, the more muddled it will become.” The disciple replied, “My request is precisely on the elucidation of the effort to extend innate knowledge.” The Teacher said, “You have the way yourself. I have no other method to offer. Once there was a Zen 禪 [Ch’an] master. When someone came to him to ask about the Law of Buddha, he merely raised a dust

¹⁵ Thomas A. Metzger, *Escape from Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 49.

whisk. One day his followers hid his dust whisk to see what other schemes he would resort to. When someone asked him about the Law he looked for the dust whisk but could not find it, and merely raised his empty hand. This innate knowledge of mine is the dust whisk of my scheme. Aside from it, what can I raise?" A little later, another friend asked about essentials of the task. The Teacher looked to the side and asked, "Where is my dust whisk?" Those present were excited and happy.¹⁶

From this dialogue, we can see that Wang was supremely confident in the self-evidence of the clarity of innate knowledge, which was simply beyond any doubt. He considered "the extension of innate knowledge" to be realized only through practice in real life, which needed no theoretical elucidation. Therefore, subjected to repeated questioning from his disciples on elucidation of the effort to extend innate knowledge, he could do nothing but use the Ch'an Buddhist story to respond, seeking, presumably, to persuade his disciples to think reflectively on their behaviour in real life.

Wang's answers are epigrammatic, but he did admit that he had no method to offer concerning the way of "the extension of innate knowledge", leaving it to his disciples to find methods themselves. No wonder that the interpretation of the doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" became problematic, as exemplified by the debate between Ch'ien Te-hung and Wang Chi on his "Four Sentences of Teaching". Although Wang Yang-ming asked these two disciples to use their views interchangeably, it seemed that he did not acknowledge any conflict between their views. Neither disciple was willing to compromise. It is said that Ch'ien Te-hung regarded the formula of the "Four Sentences of Teaching" as a fixed teaching that

¹⁶ *CHL*, p. 335; *Instructions*, Part III: 280, p. 224.

could not be changed, while Wang Chi called it an expedient doctrine.¹⁷ Wang Yang-ming's doctrine was destined to be thus subjected to different interpretations.

As it became popular, Wang Yang-ming's doctrine seems to have been distorted. The emergence of the doctrines of Wang Chi and the scholars of the T'ai-chou 泰州 School, are obvious examples. In his *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, Huang Tsung-hsi made a general description of this phenomenon with his criticism of Wang Chi and the most representative figure of the T'ai-chou School, Wang Ken 王艮 [Hsin-chai 心齋, 1483-1541]. He excluded the T'ai-chou School from his enumeration of the sections in the Wang Yang-ming School, although he did concede its significant role. At the very beginning of his description of the T'ai-chou School, he said:

The teaching of Master Yang-ming became popular everywhere under Heaven on account of Wang Ken and Wang Chi. But it gradually lost its transmission in part due to Wang Ken and Wang Chi. Wang Ken and Wang Chi were frequently dissatisfied with their master's teaching, seeking all the while to unveil more of the Buddha's mysteries and attribute them to the master. Thus they pressed Yang-ming into the ranks of Ch'an Buddhism.¹⁸

From a historical perspective, it is clear that the teaching of Wang Yang-ming did not in fact "lose its transmission". However, as a profoundly dedicated Neo-Confucian, Huang Tsung-hsi was inevitably critical, considering his view that the teaching of Wang Yang-ming had lost its true meaning because of the radical misinterpretations of Wang Chi and Wang Ken.

¹⁷ See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Che-chung Wang-men hsüeh-an erh" 浙中王門學案二 [The Che-chung section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part II], in *MJHA*, chüan 12, p. 239.

¹⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an i" 泰州學案一 [The T'ai-chou School: part I], in *MJHA*, chüan 32, p. 703; *Records*, p. 165.

However, it is clear that it probably was Wang's confidence in his doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" that gave some of his disciples, like Wang Chi and the members of the T'ai-chou School, the courage to try the choice of teaching for the "man of acute intelligence". Because of their choices, the teaching of Wang Yang-ming that became popular was his teaching for the "man of acute intelligence", not his teaching for the "people of average and the low intelligence".

Wang Chi and the T'ai-chou School, with their popularity, inspired a lot of criticism in the late Ming. Confident of his own interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching", Wang Chi developed from it his own "Four Negatives" (*ssu-wu* 四無):

If we are enlightened to the fact that the original mind is without good or evil, then we must realize that the will (or intention) is without good and evil, knowledge is without good and evil, and things are without good and evil.¹⁹

Based on this idea, Wang Chi concluded that rules of good and bad conduct were artificial, not standards that emerged naturally from the mind. He therefore put forward his own interpretation of *liang-chih* as follows:

Liang-chih is something that is produced by nothing, being the Mean of consciousness before the emotions arise. There is no other such prior state before such knowledge outside the harmony of emotions in due proportion, and there is no posterior state of consciousness following such knowledge. One can naturally gather one's composure without forcing it, and one can naturally manifest emotions without deliberation. Thus self-realization can happen at

¹⁹ Wang Chi, "T'ien-chüan cheng tao chi" 天泉證道記 [The Record of Confirmation of the Way at T'ien-chüan], in Wang Chi, *Wang Lung-hsi ch'üan-chi*, chüan 1, pp. 1a-b.

once, without reliance on effort and cultivation. By the same reason, the extension of *liang-chih* was taught for the sake of those who had not yet attained enlightenment. Those who could believe in *liang-chih* could come and go by themselves, as the bead travels across the abacus, without need of any control, keeping naturally from waywardness.²⁰

As we have mentioned earlier, in Wang Yang-ming's opinion, only "the man of acute intelligence" could "accomplish his task as soon as he has apprehended the original substance, penetrating the self, other people, and things internal and things external all at the same time." Wang Yang-ming also told Wang Chi and Ch'ien Te-hung that there were inevitably "people of average and the low intelligence" "whose minds are dominated by habits so that the original substance of the mind is obstructed," and that with those people, one should "therefore teach them definitely and sincerely to do good and remove evil in their will and thoughts." However, in Wang Chi's interpretation, this distinction between "the man of acute intelligence" and "people of average and the low intelligence" was simply dismissed; to believe in *liang-chih* became so crucial that the caution for doing good and removing evil was easily ignored.

Wang Chi's "Four Negatives" became a main target of criticism from many scholars, especially scholars of the Tung-lin 東林 School, who insisted that mind was ultimately good.²¹ They even criticized Wang Yang-ming for inspiring Wang

²⁰ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Che-chung Wang-men hsüeh-an erh", in *MJHA*, chüan 12, p. 239; *Records*, p. 116.

²¹ Mizoguchi Yüzō 溝口雄三, "Iwayuru Tōrinha jinshi no shisō—zenkindaiki ni okeru Chūgoku shisō no tenkai—(jō)" いわゆる東林派人士の思想—前近代期における中國思想の展開(上) [The thought of the so-called Tung-lin school: the development of Chinese thought in the pre-modern period (part one)] *Toyo bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 東洋文化研究所記要 [The bulletin of the Institute for Research on Oriental Culture], 27: 4 (March 1978):117.

Chi's ideas of the "Four Negatives".²² However, Wang Chi had his faithful followers, too. Debates on the "Four Negatives" became a heated issue in the late Ming. The debate between Hsü Fu-yüan 許孚遠 [Ching-an 敬庵, 1535-1604] and Chou Ju-teng 周汝登 [Hai-men 海門, 1547-1629], one of Wang Chi's disciples, is a prime example of the opinions of each side.

The debate took place around the year 1592, beginning in one of the lectures organized by Hsü and Chou. In this debate, Chou expounded Wang Chi's doctrine regarding the absence of good and evil as the essential teaching. Hsü disputed the issue in his *Chiu ti* 九諦 (Nine Inquiries) to argue with him. Chou then wrote the *Chiu chieh* 九解 (Nine Explanations) in further explanation.²³ In brief, Hsü insisted on the highest goodness of the mind and human nature. He tried to rescue Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences" from being trapped in a moral nihilism.²⁴ Chou insisted on the transcendental characteristics of the mind and human nature, which is beyond artificial good and evil.²⁵ Their debate reflects a fundamental disagreement on the problem of the characteristics of the mind and human nature.

According to Huang Tsung-hsi, these lectures attracted famous participants, stimulating intense discussions. The disciples of Hsü Fu-yüan and Chou Ju-teng also had their own disputes.²⁶ It shows that the scholars of the late Ming period were very interested in the problem of whether mind is without good or evil or is ultimately good.

²² Chi Wen-fu, *Wan-ming ssu-hsiang-shih lun*, p. 22.

²³ See Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an wu" 泰州學案五 [The T'ai-chou School: part five], in *MJHA*, chüan 36, p. 854; chüan 41, "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu" 甘泉學案五 [The Kan-ch'üan School: part five], in *ibid.*, p. 976.

²⁴ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu", in *MJHA*, chüan 41, p. 976.

Moreover, Wang Chi's lack of attention to doing good and removing evil was championed by members of the T'ai-chou School, comprising the most "radical" of Wang Yang-ming's disciples.²⁷ In his description of the T'ai-chou School, Huang Tsung-hsi's comments on the disciples of Wang Chi and Wang Ken show the impact they had on the fragmentation of Wang Yang-ming's teaching on the nature of mind:

In Wang Chi's case, no disciple emerged who was stronger than [Wang Chi] himself, and his teaching was balanced and remedied by the Chiang-yu school. So there was no total disintegration effected. In Wang Ken's case, many of his disciples could fight the dragon and the snake with their bare hands.²⁸ By the time his teaching passed down to men like Yen Chün 顏鈞 [Shan-nung 山農, 1504-96] and Ho Hsin-yin 何心隱 [Liang Fu-shan 梁夫山, 1517-79], it was no longer within the boundaries of Confucian moral philosophy. ... These men turned Heaven and Earth upside down. There has been no one like them among the ancients and moderns.²⁹

It seems that Wang Ken's disciples were more influential because they were more radical and active than Wang Chi's.

However, it was Wang Ken himself who was responsible for encouraging the radicalization of the T'ai-chou School. Wang Ken was a very innovative interpreter of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine. In order to persuade his disciples to use a plain way to teach the populace, Wang Yang-ming had once agreed with one of his disciples who said that "the people filling the street are all sages".³⁰ Wang Ken, as a humble

²⁵ Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an wu", in *ibid.*, chüan 36, p. 854.

²⁶ See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu", in *ibid.*, chüan 41, p. 976.

²⁷ Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 19-20.

²⁸ The metaphor is used to show their daring. See *Records*, p. 173.

²⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an i", in *MJHA*, chüan 32, p. 703; *Records*, p. 165.

³⁰ See *CHL*, p. 357; *Instructions*, Part III: 313, p. 240.

worker himself, went further in expressing his optimistic attitude towards the pursuit of the sagehood in the populace, arguing that “the daily activity of the common people was the Way”,³¹ and “the sagely Way is not different from the daily activity of the common people”.³² His special characteristics and ways of teaching also added to his influence. As Huang Tsung-hsi reported: “For although Wang Chi’s skill as a debater was considered second only to that of Yang-ming, nevertheless there were some who lacked faith in his teachings. It was Wang Ken who, through his glances and facial expressions, was capable of inspiring the greatest number.”³³ Wang Ken was therefore considered a kind of populist who differed from the moral elitism of the Wang Yang-ming School.³⁴

Following Wang Ken’s special instruction, his disciples, many of them workers like Wang Ken himself, developed populism even further, to the extent of challenging the old ethics. For example, Yen Chün and the like became known for their positive affirmation of human desire,³⁵ Ho Hsin-yin for his activity in gathering mobs that threatened political authority,³⁶ and Li Chih 李贄 [Ch’uo-wu 卓吾, 1527-1602], the most controversial figure of the T’ai-chou School, for his challenge to traditional ethics, which give rise to a series of accusations that he was destroying

³¹ See Huang Tsung-hsi, “T’ai-chou hsüeh-an i”, in *MJHA* chüan 32, p. 710; Ching, *Records*, p. 176.

³² Wang Ken, “Yü-lu” 語錄 [Dialogue], in Wang Ken, *Wang hsün-chai ch’üan-chi* 王心齋全集 [The complete works of Wang Ken] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1975), chüan 2, p. 15a.

³³ Huang Tsung-hsi, “T’ai-chou hsüeh-an i”, in *MJHA*, chüan 32, p. 710; Ching, *Records*, p. 176.

³⁴ Shimada Kenji 島田虔次, *Chūgoku ni okeru kindai shii no zasetsu* 中國における近代思惟の挫折 [The frustration of modern thought in China] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1949; reissue, 1970), pp. 98-100; Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, Chao Chi-pin 趙紀彬 and Tu Kuo-hsiang 杜國庠, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t’ung-shih* 中國思想通史 [A comprehensive history of Chinese thought] (Peking: Jen-min ch’u-pan she, 1960), vol. 4, Part II, pp. 958-1002.

³⁵ Shimada Kenji, *op. cit.*, p. 112

³⁶ Shimada Kenji, *op. cit.*, p. 121-24; Hou Wai-lu, et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 1003-30; Ronald Dimberg, *The Sage and Society: The Life and Thought of Ho Hsin-yin* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1974), p. 46.

social norms.³⁷ Some modern scholars regard Wang Ken and the members of the T'ai-chou School as leaders of an intellectual change that had the potential for individualism most closely resembling that of the modern West.³⁸

Scholars of the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing who faced the tragedy of the decline of the Ming dynasty related the developments of Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind to the destiny of the Ming dynasty. Some even maintained that this intellectual trend was a cause of Ming dynastic decline.³⁹ Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 [T'ing-lin 亭林, 1613-82], one of the most important critics of Neo-Confucianism, criticized this intellectual trend as follows:

Today's gentlemen assemble up to a hundred guests and disciples to discuss "Mind" and "(Human) Nature," brushing aside the method of acquiring "knowledge through extensive learning" in seeking "consistency". They turn from the discussion "of the world's trouble and poverty" in favor of discussion of "lofty and esoteric doctrines, and the excellence of single-mindedness". With this I cannot agree.⁴⁰

As a leader of a new intellectual trend of empirical study of the Ch'ing 清 period

³⁷ Shimada Kenji, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-229; Hou Wai-lu, et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 1031-95.

³⁸ Shimada Kenji, *op. cit.*, p. 214, p. 250; Wm. Theodore de Bary, "Individualism and Humanism in Late Ming", in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 145-48. Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, although he disagrees with Shimada's opinion on the modernity and individualism of the T'ai-chou school, also maintains that the T'ai-chou school led some ethical changes in the late Ming. See Mizoguchi Yūzō, *Chūgoku zenkindai shisō no kusazu to tenkai* 中國前近代思想の屈折と展開 [The twist and unfolding of pre-modern thought in China] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1980), pp. 51-212.

³⁹ Benjamin A. 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), pp. 50-53.

⁴⁰ Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武, *T'ing-lin wen-chi* 亭林文集 [The literary works of Ku Yen-wu] (Taipei: Kuang-hua yin-shu kuan, 1956), chüan 3, "Ta yu- jen lun-hsüeh shu" 答友人論學書 [A reply to a friend on studies], p. 1. For the translation, see Immanuel C. T. Hsü trans., *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period* [Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啓超, *Ch'ing-tai hsüeh-shu kai-lun* 清代學術概論] (Cambridge,

[1644-1911], Ku strongly opposed the School of Mind.⁴¹ The above description is obviously an accusation that the School of Mind bore the responsibility for the decline of the Ming dynasty. Ku even made a direct attack on Wang Yang-ming himself. Ku said:

There have been men who could single-handedly change the world, with their influence lasting as long as a hundred odd years: in ancient times, [for example], we have Wang Yen's 王衍 [I-fu 夷甫, 256-311] *ch'ing-t'an* 清談 (pure discourse) and Wang An-shih's 王安石 [Chieh-fu 介甫, 1021-86] new doctrine. ... In modern times, Wang Yang-ming's *liang-chih* was another case. Mencius said: "A long time has elapsed since this world of men received its being, and there has been in the course of its history now a period of good order, and now a period of confusion." Is it not for future sages to turn the world of disorder to order?⁴²

The intellectual trend of pure discourse, of which Wang Yen was one of the main representatives, is generally considered by historians as one of the reasons for the decline of the Western Chin 晉 dynasty [265-316].⁴³ It is also considered that Wang An-shih's new doctrine caused the failure of political reform in the Northern Sung dynasty.⁴⁴ In comparing Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" to Wang Yen's "pure discourse" and Wang An-shih's "new doctrine", Ku seems to accuse Wang Yang-ming himself for the decline of the Ming dynasty.

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 29.

⁴¹ See Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, *Chung-kuo chin san-pai nien hsüeh-shu shih*, pp. 52-64; Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, *Chin-tai Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang hsüeh-shuo shih* 近代中國思想學說史 [A history of thought and doctrines of modern China] (Taipei: Ku-feng ch'u-pan she, 1987), pp. 165-213.

⁴² Ku Yen-wu, *Yüan ch'ao pen Jih-chih lu* 原抄本日知錄 [Records of daily knowledge (manuscript edition)] (Taipei: Ming-lun ch'u-pan she, 1970), chüan 20, "Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun" 朱子晚年定論 [Chu Hsi's final conclusion of his last years], p. 539; Immanuel C. T. Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴³ Ch'ien Mu 錢穆, *Kuo-shih ta-kang* 國史大綱 [Essentials of Chinese history] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1974), p. 225.

Another critic of Neo-Confucianism, Fang I-chih 方以智 [Mi-chih 密之, 1611-71], also made a serious attack on Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind:

The reason Wang Yang-ming was content to allow that "the mind is nature" and "the mind is the classics" is because he wanted to save scholars from fragmentary studies. But his inferior disciples indulge in empty talk and forsake practical learning. They dismiss the study of the classics. They totally distort the teaching [of Wang Yang-ming].⁴⁵

In Fang's opinion, Wang Yang-ming's positive influence was in saving scholars from studies of literary prose and study for the civil service examination, which was fragmented in Wang's time. However, Wang's emphasis on the primacy of the role of the mind endangered his doctrine into over-internalization, with the pursuit of learning focused only on the Doctrines of Mind (*hsin-hsüeh* 心學) and neglecting the study of the classics. Although Fang tried to spare Wang Yang-ming from the brunt of this attack by focusing his criticism on Wang's disciples, he still showed that it was Wang Yang-ming's doctrine that caused the degeneration of the Neo-Confucians.

To condemn Wang Yang-ming's doctrine or its later developments as the only or main cause for the decline of the Ming dynasty is perhaps not so convincing. However, there was obviously an intellectual crisis in the late Ming period that would

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 578.

⁴⁵ Fang I-chih 方以智, *Yao-ti p'ao-chuang* 藥地炮莊 [A criticism of Chuang-tzu] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1973), "Tsung-lun chung" 總論中 [Introduction: part two], p. 17b.

inevitably involve a typical Neo-Confucian scholar like Liu Tsung-chou.

CHAPTER THREE

Liu Tsung-chou's Life¹

3.1 Family and early life

Liu Tsung-chou was born in the Shui-ch'eng 水澄 community in the Shan-yin 山陰 district of Shao-hsing 紹興 Prefecture, the province of Chekiang 浙江 on 4 March 1578.² A fatherless and only child, before long he was taken by his mother to live with his maternal grandfather Chang Ying 章穎 [Nan-chou 南洲, 1514-1605].³ Liu's family was very poor. In his childhood, he had no winter clothes of his own, and wore adult clothes donated by his uncle until he was fifteen or sixteen years old.⁴

Liu began to study at the age of seven in the Chang family's private school.⁵ When he was ten his mother could no longer afford to pay the fees, and so he started to study with his maternal grandfather. Chang Ying was a famous teacher; many of his students won degrees in the civil service examination. Although he was known as a talented scholar from a very early age, Chang Ying himself had failed in the civil service examinations eleven times. It was only when he was over fifty years old that

¹ The basic sources for Liu Tsung-chou's life are two chronological biographies, both entitled *Liu Tsung-chou nien-p'u* 劉宗周年譜 [Chronological biography of Liu Tsung-chou]. The original biography was compiled by his son, Liu Chuo 劉洵 (hereafter abbreviated as *LNP*) (1882 ed.). The second was a supplementary edition of the former compiled by Yao Ming-ta 姚名達 (hereafter abbreviated as *YNP*) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1934). Both are collected in Tai Lien-chang 戴璉璋 and Wu Kuang 吳光, eds., *Liu Tsung-chou ch'üan-chi* 劉宗周全集 [The complete works of Liu Tsung-chou] (hereafter abbreviated as *LTCCC*) (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1997), vol. 5.

² *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 83; Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 532.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

he decided not to attend the examinations again and started his career as a teacher. Probably because of his dissatisfaction at failing his pursuit of an official life, he was often drunk. When drunk, he enjoyed discussing the classics and history, and criticizing his contemporaries. He once described himself as a man who hated evil people as if they were his deadly foes.⁶ Chang Ying often talked about the moral behaviour of the ancient sages to Liu Tsung-chou who accompanied him at dinner every evening. Liu was impressed and also grew to admire them. From childhood on, Liu despised single-minded study for the civil service examinations in pursuit of an official post.⁷

However, in a poor family like his, to win a degree in the civil service examinations would certainly be of benefit to his family. In this respect, Liu's mother had great influence on him. As a widow with an only child, she made great efforts to educate him. Though occupied by her weaving, she supervised his studies every evening. She also disciplined him harshly: nothing would escape the vigilance of her discipline, and any bad behaviour would give rise to serious censure. The neighbours were all impressed by the way she raised her son.⁸ Chang Ying moved to Shou-ch'ang 壽昌, far away from Liu Tsung-chou's home, when Liu was twelve. Liu's mother nevertheless urged him to go to study with him. The long journey to Shou-ch'ang caused problems with his feet. After his feet were cured, before long he had an eye ailment for a whole year. Despite his weak health he traveled to Shou-ch'ang three times during the next five years. Other people were shaken, but his

⁴ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 87.

⁵ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 88.

⁶ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 118-9.

⁷ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 90-1.

mother never relinquished her pressure on him to study.⁹ It is remarked by Yao Ming-ta 姚名達, one modern editor of his biography, that Liu's profound Confucianism was greatly indebted to his mother's harsh discipline.¹⁰

Liu Tsung-chou's decision to attend the civil service examinations also can be traced to his family tradition. According to his ancestral records, Liu's family had been literati for the previous three hundred years.¹¹ It was said that his father, Liu Ch'in-t'ai 劉秦臺 [1548-1577], was known for his intelligence from an early age. Liu Ch'in-tai's father, Liu Chien-feng 劉兼峰 [1225-1605], had such a weak constitution that he ceased to study while he was still a young man. When he realized that his son was clever, he told him: "You will accomplish my ambition." His great wish was that Liu Ch'in-t'ai would win degrees in the civil service examinations. In order to educate Liu Ch'in-t'ai he engaged famous teachers at great expense. All the family property, including the estate where they lived, was sold to raise money for the boy's education.¹² Liu Ch'in-t'ai's grandfather, Liu Mao-shan 劉茅山 [1498-1576], also had confidence in his grandson. He said: "Here is a good descendant who will rebuild our family." He earnestly hoped that Ch'in-t'ai would win degrees in the civil service examinations.¹³ Ch'in-t'ai's grandmother prayed for him day and night: "May he win degrees in the civil service examinations to glorify

⁸ Ibid., p. 91.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 92-3.

¹⁰ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 91.

¹¹ *Shui-ch'eng Liu shih chia-p'u* 水澄劉氏家譜 [The genealogy of Liu Tsung-chou's family], vol. 1, Preface, in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, p. 438.

¹² "Ling-shan chu-mu lei-chuang" 菱山祖墓類狀 [A narrative of Liu Tsung-chou's ancestors], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b, pp. 977-8.

¹³ Ibid., p. 976.

our family.”¹⁴ However, Liu Ch’in-t’ai attended the civil service examinations three times but failed on each attempt. Though Liu Chien-feng never lost his confidence in him, Liu Ch’in-t’ai died before he could get any degree. Liu Chien-feng became depressed, regarding his son’s death as the biggest failure of his life. For three years, he lived in solitude in a cabin, casually dressed and shunning social intercourse.¹⁵

Liu Tsung-chou’s maternal grandfather, Chang Ying, was one of Liu Ch’in-t’ai’s teachers. Liu Ch’in-t’ai was so brilliant that Chang Ying let his own daughter marry him. However, by the time the couple married, the Liu family property was nearly all sold. Chang Ying certainly realized to what extent the Liu family pinned their hopes on Liu Ch’in-t’ai. When his daughter, carrying her unborn child, decided to commit suicide immediately after her husband’s death, he reminded her that Liu would have no descendants.¹⁶ Persuaded by his reasoning, she took on the responsibility of raising Liu Ch’in-t’ai’s heir to achieve the Liu family’s hopes. After Liu Tsung-chou was born, while disciplining the boy harshly, she often reminded him of his role: “Work hard! Strive to be a credit to your father and to have a glorious future. That’s what I wish of you.”¹⁷

Under these circumstances Liu Tsung-chou had no other choice but to work hard in preparing for the examinations. However, his initial contempt for those who sought office through the civil service examinations was still significant. For most students of Neo-Confucianism, “learning for the sake of one’s self” was their highest

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 977.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 978.

¹⁶ “Hsien-k’ao kao-tseng t’ung-i-tai-fu shun-t’ien-fu fu-yin ch’in-t’ai fu-chüan chi hsien-pi kao-tseng shu-jen chen-chieh chang-t’ai-shu-jen hsiang-chuang” 顯考誥贈通議大夫順天府府尹秦臺府君暨顯妣誥贈淑人貞節章太淑人行狀 [A narrative of the life of Liu Tsung-chou’s mother], *ibid.*, pp. 987-8.

priority. For example, “Chu Hsi had put the moral and spiritual ‘learning’ as a genuine alternative to the spurious literary learning for the civil service examinations.”¹⁸ Many Neo-Confucian scholars, although they may not have publicly refuted the civil service examinations, had criticized the scholars’ overemphasis on this branch of learning.¹⁹ In this sense, Liu Tsung-chou’s initial attitude towards the civil service examinations revealed his potential for becoming a typical Neo-Confucian.

Liu’s wife *née* Chang was great source of help and comfort to him. Liu Tsung-chou married her in 1596. *Née* Chang was a member of his maternal family. He was so poor that he could not even afford a normal marriage ceremony. But his wife was capable and virtuous: she helped him to raise a family and cared for his ageing mother.²⁰ Because he concentrated on his career, politics and studies, he did not spend much time on his family’s economic welfare; his wife was in charge of all such matters. She passed away in 1636 he wept and declared that he had lost his best friend.²¹

Liu Tsung-chou won the *chü-jen* 舉人 degree in Chekiang at the age of twenty. When he returned, his native people celebrated him. It was said that he received gifts from some of them. Hearing of this gossip, his mother said in anger: “Did you do that for your mother? Your mother has enough food to survive. I am afraid that your

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 989.

¹⁸ Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Liberal Tradition in China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1983), p. 24.

¹⁹ Two Neo-Confucian Masters Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming’s attitudes are typical. See Wang Mao-hung 王懋竑, *Chu-tzu nei-p’u* 朱子年譜 [Chronological biography of Chu Hsi] (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1962), p. 2 and p. 6; Ch’ien Te-hung 錢德洪, et al., *Wang Yang-ming nien-p’u* 王陽明年譜 [Chronological Biography of Wang Yang-ming], in *WYMCC*, p. 1221 and pp. 1223-4.

²⁰ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 99.

fortunes will not last for long if you do that.” Liu Tsung-chou felt ashamed and admitted his wrong behaviour. She advised him to be serious in words and deeds, and to live on his own. As Liu Tsung-chou recorded after her death, she was a serious woman herself. She was always careful and reticent in her behaviour. She was successful in persuading others to reconcile their differences. She did not reveal her own feelings, be they happy or sad. Even when she was distressed she kept quiet. For thirty years, in order to save money, she never wore silk clothes. She only had one plain cotton outfit for the cold season. She raised her family by weaving cloth. When she had extra money, she asked her brother to invest it for her. Aided by her brother’s investments, she even bought ten acres (*mu* 畝) of good field to pass on to her son when she died.²²

At the age of twenty-four Liu Tsung-chou went to Peking, the capital of the Ming dynasty, to attend the metropolitan and palace examination. He won a *chin-shih* 進士 degree.²³ The following day, he was informed of his mother’s death. Heartbroken he returned home to mourn for the next three years, not accepting any official post.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., p. 355.

²² *YNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 108-9.

²³ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 106.

²⁴ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 109-10.

3.2 Political career

After three years of mourning, Liu Tsung-chou departed for Peking in 1604, at the age of twenty-seven, to start his career in politics. On arrival, he was appointed a messenger in the Messenger Office [*Hsing-jen ssu hsing-jen* 行人司行人],¹ a minor job of low status. Because there were many books in the Office, he turned his back on social intercourse and spent much of his time studying. He became friendly with a colleague, Liu Yung-ch'eng 劉永澄 [*Ching-chih* 靜之, 1576-1612], sharing a common interest in moral cultivation.² Liu Yung-ch'eng later became a member of the Tung-lin party.³ It was through Liu Yung-ch'eng that Liu Tsung-chou started to become acquainted with other members of the Tung-lin party.⁴

Liu soon became critical of court politics. After the Grand Secretary [*Nei-k'o ta hsüeh-shih* 內閣大學士]⁵ Shen I-kuan 沈一貫 [*Ssu-ming* 四明, 1531-1615] came to power, Liu once tried to submit a memorial to point out Shen's faults. After considering his responsibility to care for his aged grandfather, however, he withdrew it.⁶ For a while his official life became passive. He did only the minimum required by the law and tired of having social intercourse with other officials. He even spent his leisure time in a Taoist temple playing the lute and singing songs, disregarding

¹ The English translation of the official title is from Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (hereafter abbreviated as *DOTIC*) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 245.

² *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 113.

³ See the appendix of a list of the partisans of the Tung-lin party in Lin Li-yüeh 林麗月, *Ming mo Tung-lin yün-tung hsin-t'an* 明末東林運動新探 [A new exploration on the Tung-lin movement of the late Ming period] (Taipei: Ph.D. Dissertation of National Taiwan Normal University, 1984), p. 411.

⁴ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 125; p. 127.

⁵ *DOTIC*, p. 347.

⁶ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 116.

events in the political centre.⁷ In November 1604, less than a year after he started his career in politics, he asked to resign to go home to care for his aged grandfather.⁸

Though Liu did not submit his memorial in the end, his attitude shows his sense of responsibility and his sensitivity to current politics. His temporary retreat to a semi-Taoist artistic life reflected a traditional Chinese literati stance: in circumstances where, though having mastered learning for “sageliness inside” (*nei-sheng* 內聖), they were unable to realize the way of “kingliness outside” (*wai-wang* 外王), they often chose to retreat, adopting a relaxed, artistic perspective while maintaining an attitude of serious moral grief.⁹ As we will see below, Liu chose to retreat again and again when he felt dissatisfied with political life, his later behaviour showing this exemplary model more vividly.

Court politics were in a state of crisis at the time Liu Tsung-chou stepped onto the scene. Shen I-kuan contributed to the crisis by flattering the emperor Wan-li 萬曆 [r. 1573-1620] and doing little for the country.¹⁰ However, the Wan-li emperor was chiefly responsible. It was in the early period of the Wan-li reign, when the emperor began to take control of imperial affairs after the Grand Secretary Chang Chü-cheng 張居正 [Chiang-ling 江陵, 1525-82] died, that the country started to get into

⁷ LNP, in *ibid.*, p. 113.

⁸ YNP, in *ibid.*, p. 116.

⁹ Mou Tsung-san 牟宗三, *Cheng-tao yü chih-tao* 政道與治道 [Essays on political theory] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1980), pp. 18-9. “Sageliness inside and kingliness outside” is a Confucian ideal for ordering the world. It refers to the combination of interior wisdom and exterior administrative skills that is required for a sage-king. “Sageliness inside” and “kingliness outside” are supposed to be consistent and equally important. See Julia Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China: The Heart of Chinese Wisdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 106; Ch'en Jo-shui 陳弱水, “Nei-sheng wai-wang kuan-nien te yaün-shih chiu-chieh yü Ju-chia cheng-chih ssu-hsiang te ken-pen i-nan” 內聖外王觀念的原始糾結與儒家政治思想的根本疑難 [The origins of the idea “sageliness inside and kingliness outside” and the basic predicament of Confucian political thought], *Shih-hsüeh p'ing-lun* 史學評論 [Historical review], vol. 3 (April, 1981), p. 83.

trouble.¹¹ Upset by a fundamental organizational deficiency within the government, such that there was no orderly way to reach a consensus among the bureaucrats on any matters of policy or appointment, the emperor himself became the major target of criticism after 1585. The emperor began to leave remonstrating memorials unanswered.¹² By the time Shen I-kuan entered the Grand Secretariat in 1594, the court had already been suffering from several years of misrule and the situation continued to deteriorate. Eunuch emissaries who collected taxes on mines went through the country causing serious disturbances; officials generally received no response to their memorials submitted to the throne, many of them being punished and detained in jail owing to the outspokenness of their remonstrance.¹³ This was the basic predicament of Liu Tsung-chou's political life.

After he was allowed to resign in 1605,¹⁴ Liu went back home and began to teach for a living. Although he still cared about court politics, he kept away from officials, refusing to meet any who came to visit him.¹⁵ Even when Liu Yung-ch'eng once came to visit him and strongly criticized the current state of affairs, while the debates around the issue of Tung-lin party had just begun, Liu Tsung-chou replied that as a commoner he was not qualified to comment on politics, and that he would rather talk about the moral cultivation of the self.¹⁶

Liu resumed his official career in 1612. On his way to Peking he went to Wu-hsi

¹⁰ *Ming-shih*, chüan 218, p. 5756.

¹¹ Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 1-38.

¹² Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China* vol., 7, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Part I, pp. 515-6.

¹³ *Ming-shih*, chüan 218, p. 5756.

¹⁴ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 116.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

無錫 in Kiangsu 江蘇, intending to make the acquaintance of the leaders of the Tung-lin party, Ku Hsien-ch'eng 顧憲成 [Ching-yang 涇陽, 1550-1612] and Kao P'an-lung 高攀龍 [Ching-i 景逸, 1562-1626]. Ku died that year, and Liu met only Kao. They got on so well that Liu became an ally of the party from then on. His biography reports that "throughout the Master's [i.e., Liu Tsung-chou's] life only Chou Ying-chung 周應中 [Ling-yü 寧宇, ?-?], Kao P'an-lung, Ting Ch'ang-ju 丁長孺 [?-?], Liu Yung-ch'eng and Wei Ta-chung 魏大中 [K'ung-shih 孔時, 1575-1625] became his friends in the pursuit of the Way."¹⁷ Except for Chou, all of these men were members of the Tung-lin party.¹⁸

Liu Tsung-chou's intimate relations with the Tung-lin party were reflected immediately in the next year when he resumed his official status. Engaging in the debate on the Tung-lin party that had begun in Peking, when members of the Tung-lin party were accused of monopolizing authority to appoint and dismiss officials, Liu submitted a memorial in defense of the members of the Tung-lin party. This act unleashed an attack from the members of the factions opposed to the Tung-lin, including the factions known as K'un 崑, Hsüan 宣 and Che 浙.¹⁹ With this unhappy experience, he felt that politics was dominated by inferior men, and he decided to retreat again. He resigned in 1614 and returned home to teach again for another seven years.²⁰

In 1621, when the emperor T'ien-ch'i 天啓 [r. 1621-28] succeeded to the throne, Liu Tsung-chou was promoted to Supplementary Secretary in the Bureau of

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 127-8.

¹⁸ See Lin Li-yüeh, *op. cit.*, pp. 411-34.

Ceremonies in the Ministry of Rites [*Li-pu i-chih ssu t'ien-chu chu-shih* 禮部儀制司
添註主事].²¹ After taking this new post, his moral enthusiasm made him impatient
to criticize the current state of affairs. Only nine days after taking office, he submitted
a memorial to urge impeachment of the powerful eunuch Wei Chung-hsien 魏忠賢
[1568-1627] and his accomplice, Madam K'o 客氏 [?-?], the royal nurse of the
emperor T'ien-ch'i.²² This act incurred the emperor's wrath. It was said that Liu
would be given a beating at court. It was only because of the help of the Senior Grand
Secretary Yeh Hsiang-ko 葉向高 [Chin-ch'ing 進卿, 1562-1627] that he escaped
this punishment. However, he was fined his salary for six months. It was said that he
was the first person who dared to impeach Wei Chung-hsien, and that his brave act,
though not enough to challenge Wei's power, had inspired the court officials'
praise.²³ When the Manchus invaded Liao-tung 遼東 in 1622, Liu submitted a
memorial to suggest that the emperor punish those generals who were responsible for
losing territory, including the famous general Hsiung T'ing-pi 熊廷弼 [Fei-pai 飛百,
1569-1625]. Many officials supported this memorial, and the generals were
eventually punished. From then on, for the next five months, Liu submitted
memorials many times to discuss many affairs of the country. When any significant
juridical event occurred, he would express his opinion in pursuit of justice, and
government officials sought his judgment. It was under his direction that Tsou
Yüan-piao 鄒元標 [Nan-ko 南皋, 1551-1624] and Feng Ts'ung-wu 馮從吾

¹⁹ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 133.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176; *DOTIC*, p. 183; p. 266; p. 306.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 182.

[Shao-hsü 少墟, 1556-1627(?)] opened the Shou-shan 首善 Academy in Peking to instruct and encourage scholars not to be fearful about the Manchu invasion.²⁴

Despite Wei Chung-hsien's enmity, Liu was promoted to Supplementary Aide in the Court of Imperial Entertainments [*Kuang-lu ssu t'ien-chu ssu-ch'eng* 光祿寺添註寺丞] in 1622,²⁵ and subsequently Vice Minister of the Seals Office [*Shang-pao ssu shao-ch'ing* 尙寶司少卿]²⁶ and Supplementary Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Stud [*T'ai-p'u ssu t'ien-chu shao-ch'ing* 太僕寺添註少卿] in 1623.²⁷ However, thinking that successive promotion was detrimental to the efficient discharge of his duties, and mindful that Wei Chung-Hsien and Madam K'o were still in power, Liu resigned again on the pretext of illness.²⁸ However, not long after he resigned, he was recommended for promotion to the Right President of the Office of Transmission [*T'ung-cheng ssu yu t'ung-cheng* 通政司右通政] in 1624.²⁹ About the time when he received this appointment, his Tung-lin comrade Yang Lien 楊漣 [Wen-ju 文孺, 1571-1625] was impeached by Wei Chung-hsien, and many of the Tung-lin partisans were also expelled. He was so dismayed that he not only declined the post but also submitted two memorials to intercede on behalf of the Tung-lin partisans, accusing Wei Chung-hsien of various crimes.³⁰ Liu's memorials certainly caused great offence at court. He was finally accused of insulting the court through

²⁴ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 186-8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 188; *DOTIC*, p. 288.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194; *DOTIC*, p. 410; P. 414.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195; *DOTIC*, p. 481.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 199; *DOTIC*, p. 553.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

self-aggrandizement and was degraded to the status of commoner in 1625.³¹

Later the same year, Wei Chung-hsien's allies started to attack their political opposites. First, in May, the Tung-lin partisans, Yang Lien, Tso Kuang-tou 左光斗 [I-chih 遺直, 1575-1625], Yüan Hua-chung 袁化中 [Min-hsieh 民諧, ?-1625], Wei Ta-chung, Chou Ch'ao-jui 周朝瑞 [Ssu-yung 思永, ?-1625] and Ku Ta-chang 顧大章 [Po-chin 伯欽, 1576-1625] were arrested and tortured to death. Next, in July the Shou-shan Academy was dismantled on the emperor's order, and the Tung-lin partisans Li San-ts'ai 李三才 [?-1623] and Ku Hsien-ch'en were posthumously stripped of all titles and honours. Then, in August, the Tung-lin Academy was abolished on the emperor's order. Finally, in September, a list of the Tung-lin partisans was published so that they could be denounced.³² Liu Tsung-chou was so angry that he composed a *fu* 賦 (rhymed prose) to mourn them and sent a letter to Kao P'an-lung to express his anger. Kao wrote back expressing his determination to die in defence of his virtue, telling him that it was time to shut his door to the outside world. It was from then on that Liu decided to become a recluse.³³

However, political disorder did not lessen. A second major wave of anti-Tung-lin terror took place in February the following year. Seven of the Tung-lin partisans, including Kao P'an-lung himself, were on the list of people to be arrested. Six of them, Chou Ch'i-yüan 周起元 [1572-1626], Chou Tsung-chien 周宗建 [1582-1626], Chou Shun-ch'ang 周順昌 [1584-1626], Miu Ch'ang-ch'i 繆昌期 [1562-1626], Li Ying-shen 李應昇 [1593-1626] and Huang Tsun-su 黃尊素

³¹ Ibid., p. 205.

³² *Ming-shih*, chüan 22, pp. 303-4.

[1584-1626], like their 1625 predecessors, died under torture in the palace prison.³⁴

Kao P'an-lung drowned himself in a pond on his family estate.³⁵ It was said that Liu Tsung-chou was on the list of those to be arrested. Although this proved to be false, Liu did feel under threat for a while. While he was living in retreat, a rumour that he was being sought for was still current later the same year. It seems that he sent his two sons to be cared for by friends in order to be ready for arrest. Fortunately, a friend from his hometown rescued him. Also because of the resistance to Wei Chung-hsien's allies which occurred in Wu 吳 and Peking, the arrests ceased, and Liu was free from impending disaster.³⁶

In 1628, when the emperor Ch'ung-chen 崇禎 [reign dates 1628-45] came to the throne, Wei Chung-hsien heard of a proclamation branding him a criminal and ordering his arrest. He committed suicide by hanging, and many of his allies were executed.³⁷ It seemed that a new political age was coming. However, after the allies of the eunuchs were expelled from office and the Tung-lin partisans and their allies were recalled in 1629, the former continued to plot revenge. When the Grand Secretary Wen T'i-jen 溫體仁 [Ch'ang-ch'ing 長卿, ?-1638] seized power in 1630,³⁸ they were recalled to office again and reopened the conflict. The emperor Ch'ung-chen eventually chose to trust the allies of the eunuchs, who became the most powerful force once again.³⁹

In 1628, Liu Tsung-chou resumed office as the Governor [*Fu-yin* 府尹] of

³³ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 206-7.

³⁴ *Ming-shih*, chüan 22, p. 304.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, chüan 131, p. 6315.

³⁶ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 214-5.

³⁷ *Ming-shih*, chüan 305, p. 7824.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, chüan 308, p. 7933.

Shun-t'ien 順天 prefecture.⁴⁰ He optimistically assumed Ch'ung-chen to be a good emperor, and submitted a memorial in the following year to suggest that Ch'ung-chen learn by the example of Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 how to rule the country through benevolence (*jen* 仁) and righteousness (*i* 義). Liu considered benevolence and righteousness crucially important in all political affairs, asserting that military, financial and domestic problems would be resolved if the emperor were to keep benevolence and righteousness in his mind. However, this memorial annoyed the emperor. He considered Liu pedantic and ignored his advice.⁴¹

Despite the emperor's indifference, Liu Tsung-chou took a great interest in his new position. The governor of Shun-t'ien prefecture had been the mayor of the capital. In Liu's time, however, the position was shared by five governors and so the power of a governor became smaller than before. People often simply took it as a sinecure. However, Liu Tsung-chou took this post so seriously that he asked the emperor to give it more duties and powers. Though the emperor ignored his request again, he tried his best to fulfill the duties befitting this status. He started his mission by worshipping at Confucius's temple and holding a meeting with scholars. Not only did Liu lecture the scholars on the ancient learning, he also protected them. After an incident when a group of scholars were injured in a street brawl with a relative of the emperor, Liu is recorded to have argued in their support, regardless of the danger of offending the emperor.⁴² Liu's efforts to teach and protect the scholars reflected a

³⁹ Ibid., chüan 305, p. 7825.

⁴⁰ LNP, in LTCCC, vol. 5, p. 233; DOTIC, p. 581.

⁴¹ YNP, in ibid., pp. 250-4; *Ch'ung-chen shih-lu* 崇禎實錄 [Veritable records of the Ming: the part of the reign of emperor Ch'ung-chen] (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966), chüan 2, pp. 9-10 (61-62).

⁴² LNP, in ibid., pp. 237-8.

typical Confucian idea of politics, which considered the conduct of the scholars as the model of the common people.⁴³

In December 1629, the Ming dynasty's great enemy, the Manchu, unexpectedly broke through the Great Wall at Shan-hai kuan 山海關 [Shan-hai Pass] and began to rampage throughout Pei Chihli 北直隸 [northern Chih-li]. In January 1630, Manchu units took the city of Ku-an 固安, only thirty miles south of Peking.⁴⁴ The capital was in danger. While Liu attempted to calm the frightened people, he heard the rumour that the emperor intended to escape. He went to bow in front of the gate of the palace to persuade the emperor to perform his duty to save the country. Without getting any positive response from the emperor, he assembled local officials, scholars, gentry and common people, and set up the tablet of a minister Yü Ch'ien 于謙 [T'ing-i 廷益, 1398-1457], who had successfully dissuaded the court from moving the administration from Peking to Nanking when Peking was under siege by the Oirat in 1449.⁴⁵ They vowed in Yü's name to protect the country.⁴⁶ It appeared that as the country became more endangered, Liu Tsung-chou's acts became more radical.

Nonetheless, Liu's intervention did not improve the situation. The Senior Guardian of the Heir Apparent [T'ai-tzu t'ai-pao 太子太保] Yüan Ch'ung-huan 袁崇煥 [Yüan-su 元素, 1584-1630], who had had great success in resisting the Manchu

⁴³ This idea typically expressed in *The Analects*. While being asked about government, in his answer, Confucius referred to his famous maxim "The virtue of the gentleman is like wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend." See *The Analects* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1979), D. C. Lau trans. Book XII: 19, pp.115-6.

⁴⁴ *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, p. 616.

⁴⁵ *Ming-shih, chüan* 170, pp. 4544-8.

⁴⁶ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 242.

invasion in Liao-tung 遼東, was arrested and sent to jail in January 1630.⁴⁷ Many of his colleagues were interrogated. The emperor, becoming doubtful about his officials' loyalty, appointed the eunuchs to supervise the army. Under these circumstances, Liu Tsung-chou once again submitted a memorial to persuade the emperor to open his mind and treat the officials like his family, arguing that any problem would then be resolved through their cooperation. He also reminded the emperor of the risks of letting eunuchs supervise the army; according to him, such acts, without exception, had caused the declines of whole dynasties. Not only did Liu get no reply, as usual, but also when the army was defeated again, just two days later, the emperor did not even ask about the situation.⁴⁸

Liu's warnings against the eunuchs soon got him into trouble again. Later in the same month, after the Manchu troops temporarily withdrew, another factional conflict started. Liu submitted a memorial to defend the allies of the Tung-lin by referring to the discrimination between good and evil, right and wrong as the standard for the emperor to appoint his officials.⁴⁹ This kind of memorial would certainly offend the officials who were in power, who, in Liu's eyes, were easily categorized as inferior men. By the time Wen T'i-jen became the Grand Secretary, Liu met such trouble from him that he finally resigned on the pretext of illness at the end of the year.⁵⁰

From 1630 until 1635 Liu spent most of his time lecturing and writing.⁵¹ He

⁴⁷ *Ming-shih*, chüan 259, pp. 6714-9; Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 954-5.

⁴⁸ *YNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 263-5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 277-8.

⁵⁰ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 271-4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-342.

rejected the opportunity when he was recommended for an official post in 1632.⁵² In 1635 minor political reforms took place in Peking. Wen T'i-jen was attacked by the Censorate officials for his policies, which his opponents claimed had caused increased poverty and the spread of banditry. The emperor tried to improve the political situation by asking for recommendations for new officials outside the normal procedure for appointment. Liu Tsung-chou was recommended for an official post again.⁵³ In 1636 he also had a chance to meet the emperor Ch'ung-chen personally at court. At this meeting, when asked about the problems of freebooters and military affairs at the frontier, he answered that the freebooters were originally ordinary people that should be pacified, and that the basic policy to resist the foreign invaders should be to start by improving domestic affairs. He once again advised the emperor to follow the example of Yao and Shun to assure eternal peace for the country. It seems that the emperor was more desirous of an effective and speedy way to resolve his problems rather than adopt some fundamental political reforms, which, although they might lead to eternal peace in the long run, would have little immediate effect. The emperor therefore was not satisfied with Liu's answer.⁵⁴ However, he was appointed the Left Attendant Gentleman of the Ministry of Works [*Kung-pu tso shih-lang* 工部左侍郎].⁵⁵ However, Liu still tried many times to submit memorials to re-emphasize his ideas on political reform, although he never received a positive response. Further, when he criticized the military failure on the northeastern frontier, which he traced to the faults of Wen T'i-jen, the emperor degraded Liu once again to

⁵² *YNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 316.

⁵³ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 335.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 342-3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 343; *DOTIC*, p. 294; 426.

be a commoner.⁵⁶

1636 to 1641 was thus another period of retreat for Liu. Although he did not hold any official post in this period, he devoted part of his time to social welfare such as relieving famine and the poverty.⁵⁷

In 1641, he was once again recommended an official post. The emperor, rejecting the recommendation once, later considered Liu's bravery in remonstrating and permitted him to take an official post again. He was appointed the Left Attendant Gentleman of the Ministry of Personnel [*Li-pu tso shih-lang* 吏部左侍郎].⁵⁸ In the next year, although Liu initially tried to turn down the post because of illness, when he heard the news that the Manchu army and the rebels had occupied more cities on the northeastern and northwestern frontiers, he thought it time to serve the country once again. Therefore he finally accepted promotion to Left Censor-in-chief [*Tu-ch'a yüan tso tu-yü-shih* 都察院左都御史].⁵⁹ But his resumption of office was once again short-lived. Before he accepted the post, he had started to submit memorials to suggest again that the emperor model himself on Yao and Shun, memorializing strongly on dynastic reform and defense. He was opposed to the employment of the Jesuit Johann Adam Schall von Bell [1592-1666], because of the latter's recommendation of the mastery of firearms, which Liu thought was definitely against the policy of Yao and Shun. His opinions seemed to antagonize the emperor, who wanted to face the deteriorating military situation on the frontier. Liu was dismissed

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 344-9.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 381; p. 424.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 432; *DOTIC*, p. 306.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 440; *DOTIC*, p. 536; p. 546.

and degraded to a commoner for the third time.⁶⁰

The fortunes of the Ming continued to decline, and by 1644, it was on the brink of collapse. In April, the leader of the freebooters, Li Tzu-ch'eng 李自成 [Hung-chi 鴻基, 1605(?)–1645], had occupied Shanhsi 山西 and marched on Peking. The capital was in serious danger.⁶¹ Liu Tsung-chou was then in Chekiang. Sensing that the dynasty was facing extinction he immediately sent a letter to the Guard General of Chekiang to ask him to recruit an army to save the emperor. He also invited the gentry to donate money for the army. But his invitation got little response.⁶²

When Peking fell in May, Liu was again appointed the Left Censor-in-chief at the Nanking Court under the reign of the Prince of Fu [Fu-Wang 福王] for having proved his loyalty to the dynasty.⁶³ The Grand Secretary Ma Shih-ying 馬士英 [Yao-ts'ao 瑤草, 1591–1646] and Vice Minister of War [Shao ssu-ma 少司馬]⁶⁴ Juan Ta-ch'eng 阮大鍼 [Chi-chih 集之, 1587–1646 (47)], former allies of the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien, dominated the court in Nanking, however, reputedly through extortion, bribery, and the sale of degrees and offices.⁶⁵ Liu kept on submitting memorials to attack the corrupt practices of Ma Shih-ying and Juan Ta-ch'eng, but got no positive response from the Prince. So he finally resigned again in September,⁶⁶ terminating a turbulent official career of forty years during which he had held office for six and a half years, been in active service for four years and had been degraded to the status of

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 438–50; *Ch'ung-chen shih-lu*, chüan 15, pp. 18–9 (455–456).

⁶¹ *Ming-shih*, chüan 309, p. 7964.

⁶² *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 491.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 494.

⁶⁴ *DOTIC*, p. 416.

⁶⁵ Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 398; p. 558.

⁶⁶ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 499–507.

commoner three times.⁶⁷

Once again retreating from official life, this time he saw that the Ming dynasty was coming to an end. He returned home to live as a recluse, even refusing to tutor, despite the pleas of his disciples.⁶⁸ Despite his disappointment with the political situation, he still managed to finish a book named *Chung-hsing chin-chien* 中興金鑑 [A golden mirror for revival] in February 1645. The work, containing Liu's collection of the records of the thoughts of ancient emperors and their ways of ruling the country, was initially written for submission to the Prince of Fu to encourage him to restore the dynasty.⁶⁹ This work was of no use to the Ming dynasty, but it shows Liu's political idealism.

In May of 1645, after the Manchu troops took over Nanking, the Prince of Fu escaped from the court and the Prince of Lu [Lu-Wang 潞王] succeeded to the throne in Hangzhou 杭州. Liu Tsung-chou, angry with those officials and gentries who had surrendered to the Manchu, was still hoping to preserve the Ming dynasty. Hearing Manchu troops had taken Hangzhou and the Prince had surrendered, Liu demonstrated his loyalty to the Ming dynasty by refusing food. Dissuaded by his disciples from committing suicide, he became involved in acts of resistance against the Manchus. However, after hearing that one of his disciples had committed suicide, he again made a decision to die.⁷⁰ Having failed to drown himself, he finally refused food for twenty days and drink for thirteen. He passed away aged sixty-seven on 30

⁶⁷ Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 532.

⁶⁸ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 507-8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 515-6.

⁷⁰ Ho Kuan-piao 何冠彪, *Sheng yü ssu: Ming-chi shih-ta-fu te chüeh-tse* 生與死:明季士大夫的抉擇 [Life and death: the choices of literati in late Ming China] (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1997), pp. 54-5.

July 1645.⁷¹

⁷¹ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 517-26; Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 532.

3.3 Intellectual achievements

Throughout his life, although he eagerly expressed his enthusiasm for politics, Liu Tsung-chou seemed dissatisfied with political life, and was conspicuously unsuccessful in it. As a scholar, on the other hand, he was an acknowledged Neo-Confucian master. The aim and content of his academic research were interrelated with his moral cultivation in everyday life.

From this standpoint, Liu's enthusiasm for scholarship may be traced to his period of mourning for his mother. During this time, following the rites, he built with his own hand a small cabin near the tomb. He stayed there for three years without leaving except to receive guests who came to pay their respects. He was so distressed that he could not stand without a stick. Seeing his filial behaviour, his friend T'ao Wang-ling 陶望齡 [Shih-k'uei 石簣, 1562-?] sighed: "It has been a long time since morality declined and the rites were abandoned. I have never seen anyone understand the rite of mourning as well as Mr. Liu."¹ Liu not only practised the rite of mourning, he also read the *Book of Rites* [Li-chi 禮記] and the *Six Classics* [Liu-ching 六經]. Possibly through comparison with his own experience of mourning, he started to doubt the authenticity of the *Li-chi*. Liu was not only sincere in practicing the rites, but also had a serious urge to investigate their authenticity. From this point of view, it is also worthwhile to note that Liu's practices seemed exactly to express those kinds of "fundamentalism" and "restorationism", which were persistent and probably

¹ *YNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 109-10.

essential elements in Neo-Confucianism.²

During his period of mourning, Liu was introduced to the famous Neo-Confucian scholar Hsü Fu-yüan.³ Hsü probably agreed to meet Liu because Hsü himself was greatly concerned about the realization of rites as social rules in his time, and had written an essay on the drinking rituals for village feasts.⁴ Specifically for the rites of mourning, he praised the custom of building a cabin to accompany the tomb as genuinely filial, while others wondered about this practice.⁵ Liu's observance of this rite might have been the cause of Hsü's appreciation.

Hsü Fu-yüan was a disciple of the Kan-ch'üan 甘泉 School,⁶ founded by Chan Jo-shui. Chan Jo-shui was a famous Neo-Confucian in Wang Yang-ming's time. Chan and Wang were close friends. Huang Tsung-hsi compared the schools of Chan and Wang to those of Chu Hsi and Lu Hsiang-shan.⁷ They were so close that the famous late Ming historian, T'an Ch'ien 談遷 [Ju-mu 孺木, 1594-1658], mistakenly considered Chan a disciple of Wang.⁸ Chan was a disciple of Ch'en Hsien-chang. Ch'en Hsien-chang, as mentioned in the introduction, was considered a forerunner of Wang Yang-ming. Although Chan had played a role as a transmitter between the two

² Wm. Theodore de Bary, "Some common tendencies in Neo-Confucianism", in David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (California: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 25-50; p. 34.

³ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p.106.

⁴ Regarding to Hsü Fu-yüan's emphasizing the realization of rites and its influence on Liu Tsung-chou also see Sun Chung-tseng 孫中曾, *Liu Tsung-chou te tao-te shih-chieh* 劉宗周的道德世界 [Liu Tsung-chou's sense of morality], (MA thesis of Taiwan Ch'ing-hua University, 1990), pp. 45-59.

⁵ Hsü Fu-yüan 許孚遠, "Tsou-hsiao-tzu ch'uan" 鄒孝子傳 [A story of Tsou: a filial son], in Hsü Fu-yüan, *Ching-ho-t'ang chi* 敬和堂集 [The works of Hsü Fu-yüan] (A 1594 edition, preserved in the Taipei National Central Library), vol. 9, pp. 3-4.

⁶ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu" 甘泉學案五 [The Kan-ch'üan School: part five], in *MJHA*, chüan 41, p. 975.

⁷ *Ibid.*, chüan 37. p. 876.

⁸ T'an Ch'ien 談遷, *Kuo-chüeh* 國權 [Chronology of the Ming dynasty] (Taipei: Ting-wen shu-chü, 1978), chüan 55, p. 3455.

masters and did exert some influence on Wang Yang-ming's inner evolution, his philosophy was inclined towards the Ch'eng-Chu School.⁹ Therefore he had some doubts on Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" and the "Four Sentences of Teaching".¹⁰

Inheriting from the intellectual tradition an inclination towards the Ch'eng-Chu School, Hsü Fu-yüan, though living in a time when Wang Yang-ming's influence was widespread, was always alert against it. It was said that he "believed in innate knowledge and disliked those who used it to preach Buddhism."¹¹ Also, as I have mentioned in section 3 of chapter 2, he had a famous debate with Chou Ju-teng on Wang Chi's doctrine of "the absence of good and evil" of the mind and human nature, which was from Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching". Chou Ju-teng's "Nine Explanations" were presented as a response to, and protest against Hsü's "Nine Inquiries", which proposed the idea of the highest goodness of the human mind.¹²

When Liu Tsung-chou met Hsü in 1601 and asked him about the essence of learning, Hsü only answered "to preserve the principle of Heaven, and erase human desires", which was so popular a maxim that most Neo-Confucian scholars would accept it. We can certainly not get any clue from this record of their conversation

⁹ Li Chih 李贄, *Hsü fen-shu* 續焚書 [A sequel to the book to be burned] (Taipei: Han-ching wen-hua shih-yeh yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1984), chüan 1, "Ta Ma Li-shan" 答馬歷山, p. 2. See also, Wing-tsit Chan, "Chan Jo-shui's influence on Wang Yang-ming", *Philosophy East and West* (January-April, 1973), vol., pp. 9-30; Tu Wei-ming, *Neo-Confucian thought in Action: Wang Yang-ming's Youth (1472-1529)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 91-2; Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom: The Way of Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 41.

¹⁰ Tang Chün-i 唐君毅, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun: yüan-chiao p'ien* 中國哲學原論: 原教篇 [A fundamental exposition of Chinese philosophy: on doctrines] (Taipei: Hsüeh-shen shu-chü, 1984), pp. 356-59.

¹¹ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu", in *MJHA*, chüan 41, p. 976; *Records*, p. 205.

¹² Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an wu" 泰州學案五 [The T'ai-chou School: part five], in

how Hsü really influenced Liu at this meeting. However, under the same year in Liu's biography, it says that "in his early years he disliked the learning of [Lu] Hsiang-shan and [Wang] Yang-ming".¹³ It probably was Hsü Fu-yüan's inclination towards the Ch'eng-Chu School that influenced Liu to have this feeling.

After three years of mourning, Liu Tsung-chou departed for Peking to start his civil service career at the age of twenty-seven. On his way to Peking, he visited Hsü Fu-yüan again. Hsü told him that learning was not for unrealistic knowledge but for practice, and that therefore one should trace every act in everyday life, including indulgence in drink, beauty, money and anger, to see how much these acts grew within one person. From tracing these acts one can observe the progress or regression of one's own potential for morality. It was said that Liu was suddenly enlightened by Hsü's tutoring.¹⁴ In his later years, Liu wrote the *Jen-p'u* [Schematic of Man] 人譜, a guide to the cultivation of a sense of morality. In it he elaborates many kinds of faults people might have in daily life and suggests ways for correcting them.¹⁵ Liu's ideas in the *Jen-p'u* can probably be traced to Hsü's inspiration here.

Besides the influence of Hsü Fu-yüan, Liu's enthusiasm for scholarship was boosted by the influence of the Tung-lin party. As mentioned above, Liu went to Wu-hsi 無錫 in 1612, intending to make the acquaintance of the leaders of the party, Ku Hsien-ch'eng and Kao P'an-lung. His desire to meet them was partly because of Liu Yung-ch'eng and probably also was because of Ku and Kao's opinions on Neo-Confucianism. In Liu Tsung-chou's biography, Ku and Kao are mentioned in

MJHA, chüan 36; "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu", in *MJHA*, chüan 41, p. 976; *Records*, p. 200; p. 206.

¹³ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 107.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁵ See "Jen-p'u", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 1-26.

the following context: “Since Wang Yang-ming died, scholars have indulged in empty talk. All studies in the world are Ch’an Buddhism, but the two masters [i.e. Ku and Kao] worship the learning of Ch’eng-Chu.”¹⁶ Thus Liu’s earlier contact with Hsü Fu-yüan, which inclined him towards the Ch’eng-Chu School, may well have inclined him to wish to meet Ku and Kao. Though Ku and Kao were not in total agreement with Chu Hsi’s doctrine of moral cultivation, they shared a similar philosophical standpoint with Hsü Fu-yüan, in the sense that they had some doubts about Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”, and that they strongly reaffirmed the Mencian doctrine that man’s nature is essentially good.¹⁷

As Ku died the same year, Liu only met Kao. It is said that Liu wrote three letters to Kao to ask about learning for moral cultivation. Liu benefited so much from these discussions that he put more effort into the cultivation of the mind from then on.¹⁸ Liu’s letters to Kao are not extant. From Kao’s replies, we find that Kao mainly talks about the subjects of fathoming principle and the function of holding fast to seriousness,¹⁹ both main subjects of the Ch’eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism.²⁰ In this sense, Kao P’an-lung influenced Liu in edging closer to the Ch’eng-Chu School.

Liu’s disastrous political career was reflected in his scholarship. It was in 1625, three months after he was degraded to the status of commoner, that Liu heard that Wei Chung-hsien’s allies had started to attack their political opposites by framing

¹⁶ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 127.

¹⁷ Charles O. Hucker, “The Tung-lin movement of the late Ming period”, in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 145-6.

¹⁸ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp.127-8.

¹⁹ See Kao P’an-lung 高攀龍, “Ta Liu Nien-t’ai i” 答劉念臺一 [Reply to Liu Tsung-chou: the first one], “Fu Nien-t’ai erh” 覆念臺二 [Reply to Liu Tsung-chou: the second one], and “Ta Nien-t’ai san” 答念臺三 [Reply to Liu Tsung-chou: the third one], in *Kao-tzu i-shu* 高子遺書 [The posthumous work of Kao Pan-lung] (A 1632 edition, preserved in Taipei National Central Library), chüan 8a, pp. 26b-29b.

them. He felt that the world was dominated by inferior men and the essence of the human mind had been polluted. He therefore gave a speech to some scholars, in which he told them to strive to revive the essence of the human mind, and attributed the political decay to the worsening of human mind. His biography reports that it was at this time that he invented his famous doctrine of “being vigilant in solitude” (*shen tu* 慎獨).²¹

In the following year it was rumoured that Liu was in the list of those who would be arrested. Although this was false, Liu did feel threatened. He told his disciples that he had thought that he could ignore fate, but in reality, when he perceived the threat of death, he still felt a thrill. This led to realization of the necessity of emergency training for the mind, and he began to work on the cultivation of “being vigilant in solitude”. He also pointed out the importance of the practice of sitting in meditation for moral cultivation. At his retreat at Han-shan 韓山 in his native province, he lectured on Confucius, Mencius and the Sung Neo-Confucians, and developed his practice of spending half of each day in study, half in sitting in meditation.²²

Liu also paid attention to the works of Ming Confucians. He intended to edit a collection of these works to show the transmission of the Way in Ming history. This volume, entitled *Huang-Ming Tao-t'ung lu* 皇明道統錄 [The orthodox transmission of the Way in imperial Ming], was finished in 1627. It is an imitation of Chu Hsi's *Ming-ch'en yen-hsing lu* 名臣言行錄 [The records of the words and deeds of famous

²⁰ See Ch'ien Mu, *Chu-tzu hsin hsieh-an*, vol. 2, pp. 328-30.

²¹ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 206.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 214-5.

officials], containing the life, the words and the deeds of each Confucian included in the volume, appended by Liu's criticism of each one. His edition is full of his own opinions, differing from popular opinions.²³ This collection seems to have influenced Huang Tsung-hsi's *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*. Huang even used some of Liu's criticisms, named "Shih shuo" 師說 [the teacher's sayings], as the preface to his work.²⁴

It was also in 1627, Liu's biography reports, that Liu read an edition of Wang Yang-ming's collected works and started to change his attitude toward him. He especially paid attention to Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge", considering it the essence of the learning of moral cultivation.²⁵ However, he was not satisfied with Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching" and condemned Wang's disciple Wang Chi for assimilating Wang Yang-ming's doctrine with Buddhism. Later in the same year he also wrote an essay on learning from books for the purpose of teaching his son Liu Chou 劉洵 [Po-sheng 伯繩, 1613-?], expressing his disagreement with those who considered the knowledge obtained through the senses of hearing and seeing as of minor importance. He tried to refute Wang's famous essay "*Pa-pen sai-yüan lun*" 拔本塞源論 [On pulling up the root and stopping up the source], which belittled the erudite knowledge of everything of ancient and modern times.²⁶ Here Liu expresses ambivalence towards some aspects of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine.

From 1629 to 1636, Liu spent more time on lecturing and writing. In 1631, he

²³ Ibid., p. 225.

²⁴ YNP, in *ibid.*, p. 228.

²⁵ LNP, in *ibid.*, p. 226.

collaborated with T'ao Shih-ling 陶爽齡 [Shih-liang 石梁, ?-?] and some of his academic comrades to set up the Cheng-jen hui 證人會 [Association for realizing humanity], which advocated Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge".²⁷ But Liu's interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge", which emphasized the cultivation of innate knowledge, was different from T'ao Shih-ling's, which emphasized the perception of the original substance of innate knowledge itself. Dozens of Liu's disciples moved closer to T'ao and left Liu to set up a new academic society in Mount Po-ma [Po-ma yen 白馬巖] the next year. They followed T'ao's teaching and later had arguments with Liu.²⁸

Liu also worked on re-editing family rules, produced in 1632, the Hsiang-yüeh 鄉約 (contract for villages) for the countryside, produced in 1633, and the Tsung-yüeh 宗約 (contract for clans) for his clan, produced in 1634.²⁹ In addition, he produced nine essays on searching for the original mind, sitting in meditation, learning from books and so on for the doctrine of moral cultivation in 1632.³⁰ Another two masterpieces, *Sheng-hsüeh tsung-yao* 聖學宗要 [The essential themes of the learning of sages] and *Jen-p'u*, were produced in 1634. In the former, he edited the major works of five Neo-Confucian masters Chou Tun-i, Chang Tsai 張載 [Heng-ch'ü 橫渠, 1020-1077], Ch'eng Hao, Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming, summarizing the gist of Neo-Confucianism. In the latter, he worked on explaining

²⁶ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 230-1.

²⁷ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 294-5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 311-2 and *YNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 314.

²⁹ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 310, p. 323 and p. 325.

³⁰ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 317-20

the moral structure of the human mind, with which he intended to correct the moral utilitarian inclination of Ch'in Hung-yu's 秦弘祐 [Lü-ssu 履思, ?-?] *Ch'ien-kai ko* 遷改格 (The ledgers of correctness), which was an imitation of Yüan Huang's 袁黃 [Liao-fan 了凡, 1533-1606] *Kung-kuo ko* 功過格 (The ledgers of merit and demerit), contending that good behaviour can make redemption for evil.³¹

In 1636, after his brief resumption of office, Liu managed to produce yet another scholarly work. "Tu cheng pien" 獨證篇 [A essay with self-verification] was a collection of ideas from the books he read in his leisure time while in his official post. In this work he expressed his interpretations of the *Great Learning* [*Ta-hsüeh* 大學] and the *Doctrine of the Mean* [*Chung-yung* 中庸], which were different from Chu Hsi's and Ch'eng I's respectively.³²

In another period of retreat from 1636 to 1641, Liu developed his interpretation of the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*,³³ and finished the *Yang-ming hsien-sheng ch'uan-hsin lu* 陽明先生傳信錄 [The authentic record of master Yang-ming] to refute Wang Chi's "T'ien-ch'üan cheng-tao chi" 天泉證道記 [The Record of Confirmation of the Way at T'ien-ch'üan], arguing that Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" can not be confused with Buddhism.³⁴ Liu also concentrated on verifying the ancient Confucian classics, starting from his doubt about the disorder of the *Book of Rites*.³⁵

³¹ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, pp. 326-7.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 352-3.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 384-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

After his third dismissal in 1642,³⁶ besides continuing on classical studies, specifically studies on the *Book of Changes* [I-ching 易經],³⁷ Liu wrote another essay on “making the will sincere” in the *Great Learning*, in which he studies the interpretations of Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming and the *Ta-hsüeh shih-ching* 大學石經 [Stone-inscribed *Great Learning*], which was considered to be an old version written in the Ts’ao-Wei 曹魏 dynasty [approximately 300 A.D.].³⁸ This essay strongly reflected Liu’s confidence in his own interpretation of the meaning of “making the will sincere” in the *Great Learning*. Deploing the intellectual decline of his times, he wrote “Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh” [Miscellaneous notes on verifying learning] 證學雜解, which contains twenty-five lists of his opinions on Confucianism. This was written in order to try to save scholars from lapsing into moral decay. He also wrote an essay “Liang-chih shuo” 良知說 [On innate knowledge], where he argues against the faults of Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”.³⁹

In 1645, Liu spent his last months on a work of interpretation of the *Great Learning*, “Ta-hsüeh ts’an-i” 大學參疑 [Doubts on the *Great Learning*], which was finished only three months before his suicide. He also revised his *Jen-p’u* one month before his death. For the former, he reconsidered many versions of the *Great Learning*, including the ancient version from the *Book of Rites* of approximately the

³⁶ Ibid., p. 450.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 477-8.

³⁸ *Ta-hsüeh shih-ching* was a forgery fabricated by Feng Fang 豐坊 (1500-1570). However Liu Tsung-chou showed his positive attitude toward it. See Wang Fan-sen, “The ‘Darling Fool’ Feng Fang (1500-1570) and his ink rubbing of the Stone-inscribed Great Learning”, *Ming Studies*, Number 35 (August 1995), pp. 74-95.

³⁹ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 480.

first century B.C., and those of Ch'eng Hao, Ch'eng I, Chu Hsi as well as the *Ta-hsüeh shih-ching*, to confirm the authenticity of the ancient version of the *Great Learning*.⁴⁰ For the latter, after revising it three times, he also added some words and deeds of ancient people to increase its advisory function.⁴¹ Both represented parts of his ultimate concerns on Confucianism.

⁴⁰ Regarding to the problems of the different versions of the *Great Learning*, see Li Chi-hsiang 李紀祥, *Liang-Sung i-lai ta-hsüeh kai-pen chih yen-chiu* 兩宋以來大學改本之研究 [A study on the revised versions of the *Great Learning* since the two Sung periods] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1988).

⁴¹ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 516-7.

CHAPTER FOUR

Liu Tsung-chou and the Doctrine of Mind

4.1 “Emphasizing tranquillity” and sitting in meditation: from Ch’en Hsien-chang to Liu Tsung-chou

(A) The doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the teaching of sitting in meditation in the Ch’en Hsien-chang School

The doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation for moral cultivation became fashionable after Ch’en Hsien-chang. However, because of their closeness to Ch’an Buddhist meditation, some scholars were cautious, even Ch’en Hsien-chang himself. In a letter to one of his disciples, Ch’en showed an attitude of compromise to the Ch’eng-Chu School regarding the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation and Chu Hsi’s doctrine of “emphasizing reverence”. He said:

Master Ch’eng I praised people as well-accomplished in study whenever he saw them practising sitting in meditation (*ching-tso*). The word “*ching*” 靜 (tranquillity) in this term originates from master Chou Tun-i’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”. Later, Ch’eng I and his disciples inherited and transmitted it. Even later, masters Lo Yü-chang and Li T’ung adopted it to teach students. Their students also benefited by practising it. However, master Chu Hsi was worried that students would mistake it for Ch’an Buddhism, and he rarely talked about “tranquillity”. Instead, he talked more about “reverence”, which accorded to the teaching of Ch’eng I in his late life. This is really the way of prevention [from indulging in Ch’an Buddhism].¹

Although Ch'en traced the practice of sitting in meditation to many of his Neo-Confucian forerunners in order to find support for his own position, he nonetheless admitted that Chu Hsi's doctrine of "emphasizing reverence" was a remedy for excessive sitting in meditation, saving students from indulging in Ch'an Buddhism. This shows that Ch'en had tried to reemphasize the "reverence" of the teaching of the Ch'eng-Chu School to preempt attacks on his "emphasizing tranquillity" as Ch'an Buddhism.

It is under the pressure of the criticism by the Ch'eng-Chu School that the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the teaching of sitting in meditation in the Ch'en Hsien-chang School are driven away from Ch'en's paradigm. Although Ch'en's teaching of sitting in meditation became a fashion in later generations, his school gradually declined after his death.² Only his main disciple Chan Jo-shui endeavoured to develop the school. Chan, therefore, can be seen as a major representative of the Ch'en Hsien-chang School after Ch'en's death.³

As a faithful disciple of Ch'en, Chan practised sitting in meditation sincerely. It was said that he used to sit in meditation with eyes closed every night until dawn.⁴ He also expressed his own opinion on a special method of sitting in meditation as follows: "to adjust the breath is the prime method for the way of sitting in meditation. If we can master it, we can possibly know how to cultivate in tranquillity."⁵ He not

¹ Ch'en Hsien-chang, "Yü Lo I-feng" 與羅一峰 [A letter to Lo I-feng], in Ch'en Hsien-chang, *Ch'en Hsien-chang chi*, chüan 3, p. 157.

² See *Ming-shih*, chüan 282, p. 7229.

³ See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Kan-chüan hsüeh-an i", in *MJHA*, chüan 37, p. 876.

⁴ "Mu-chih-ming" 墓誌銘 [Tomb script], in Chan Jo-shui, *Chan Kan-ch'üan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 湛甘泉先生文集 [The literary works of Chan Jo-shui], in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu ts'un-mu ts'ung-shu* 四庫全書存目叢書 [Collection of the preserved titles from the Complete Books of the Four Treasuries] (Tainan: Chuang-yen wen-hua shih-yeh yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1997), vol. 57, chüan 32, p. 12a.

⁵ Chan Jo-shui, "Yü-lu", in *ibid.*, chüan 23, p. 67a.

only practised sitting in meditation himself, but also set a rule for his disciples to practise it in the academy he founded,⁶ and praised his disciples for practising it.⁷

However, Chan's idea of the practice of sitting in meditation is close to Chu Hsi's. In an essay entitled "Ching-kuan-t'ang chi" 靜觀堂記 [A note on the hall "Ching-kuan"], he said:

The name "Ching-kuan" means to use the time of stillness and tranquillity and the time during sitting in meditation to observe things, i.e. to use the time with the mind in stillness without being disturbed to observe things. How can we observe things when our mind is fully occupied by disturbing matters? Therefore the "tranquillity" here is not the "tranquillity" that contradicts action. ... For the observation is an activity.⁸

In Chan's opinion in this essay, the function of sitting in meditation is simply to keep the mind in stillness, to permit clear thinking for observing things. Chu Hsi expressed a similar idea. Chu said:

How can we see the point [of observing things] when the mind is noisy. It must be tranquil so that we can see the point. The function of sitting in meditation is simply for training the mind not to be disturbed by outer matters.⁹

In brief, Chan's idea of sitting in meditation is close to Chu Hsi's in that they both considered it a way for making the mind clearer for observing things, which is totally different from Ch'en Hsien-chang's doctrine of "fostering a starting point by sitting

⁶ In his "Ta-k'o hsün-kui" 大科訓規 [discipline rule of Ta-k'o academy], he asked his disciples "to sit in silence for meditation at the time of Shen 申 (i.e. five to six pm.) and Yu 酉 (i.e. seven to eight pm.) everyday". See Chan Jo-shui, "Ta-k'o hsün-kui", in *ibid.*, chüan 6, p. 4b.

⁷ See Chan Jo-shui, "Wen-i hsü lu" 問疑續錄 [A sequential record of enquiry], in *ibid.*, chüan 11, p. 22a.

⁸ Chan Jo-shui, "Ching-kuan-t'ang chi" 靜觀堂記 [A note on the hall "Ching-kuan"], in Chan Jo-shui, *Chan Kan-ch'üan hsien-sheng wen-chi*, chüan 18, pp. 48a-b.

in tranquillity.” Ch’an saw the practice of sitting in meditation as simply a complementary method for moral cultivation. Unlike Ch’en, he did not take “fostering a starting point by sitting in tranquillity” as the purpose of the practice of sitting in meditation.

In his defense of Ch’en’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” Chan was enthusiastic in combining it with the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” of the Ch’eng-Chu School. Chan maintained:

Master Ch’en’s doctrine is based on ‘reverence’ and has been helped by “emphasizing tranquillity”. He can practise cultivation no matter whether he is active or tranquil. This full function of ‘emphasizing tranquillity’ is nothing but the mind staying in ‘reverence’. People who had not examined the origins of his doctrine therefore defamed him as a Ch’an Buddhist.”¹⁰

This passage reflects Chan’s eagerness in compromising the conflict between Ch’en’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” in the Ch’eng-Chu School. Also revealed in this passage are two sorts of worries in Chan’s mind. First is that Chan implicitly worried that Ch’en’s advocating “emphasizing tranquillity” might invite a misunderstanding that he preferred tranquillity to activity. Second is that Chan knew that Ch’en’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” was accused of being close to Ch’an Buddhism. It probably is because of these basic worries that Chan took Ch’en’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and his teaching of sitting in meditation to return to the Ch’eng-Chu paradigm. He took Ch’eng I as the paradigm of the practice of sitting in meditation:

⁹ Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu yü-lei*, chüan 103, p. 2062.

It was Ch'eng I who started talking about sitting in meditation. This, in fact, opened a new door for moral cultivation. It is for this reason that I worshipped it and described it in the tomb script of my teacher master Ch'en as "the other door [for entering the learning of the sages] since Confucius and Mencius' [teachings]."¹¹

With this passage, Chan again related Ch'en's teaching of sitting in meditation to the paradigm of Ch'eng-Chu School.

Furthermore, Chan appeared to express a negative attitude toward Ch'en's expression of mystical experience in his sitting in meditation. Ch'en himself was so confident of his teaching of sitting in meditation that he once said:

After sitting in meditation for a long time, I saw my mind-in-itself emerging dimly, as though it were a thing. It was just like the experience of Yen Hui 顏回 (a disciple of Confucius): "seeing it before him and suddenly it is behind him" (*chan ch'ien hu hou* 瞻前忽後). I felt I really had seen something substantive, not simply sophisticated words.¹²

The phrase "seeing it before him and suddenly it is behind him" (*chan ch'ien hu hou*) was used by Yen Hui to describe his view of Confucius' greatness.¹³ Ch'en seemed to intend to relate the enlightening experience of sitting in meditation to Yen Hui's experience of being inspired by Confucius' teaching. To this description Chan expressed his disagreement straightforwardly. He said:

¹⁰ Chan Jo-shui, "Pai-sha tsu ku-shih chiao chieh", pp. 701-702.

¹¹ Chan Jo-shui, "Ta Nieh Wen-wei" 答聶文尉 [Reply to Nieh Wen-wei], in Chan Jo-shui, *Chan Kan-ch'üan hsien-sheng wen-chi*, chüan 7, pp. 29b-30a.

¹² Quoted by a disciple of Chan Jo-shui, see Chan Jo-shui, "Hsin-ch'üan wen-pien-lu" 新泉問辨錄 [A record of the discussion of learning in Hsin-ch'üan], in Chan Jo-shui, *Chan Kan-ch'üan hsien-sheng wen-chi*, chüan 8, p. 25a

Fictional seeing and real seeing is different. ... Yen Hui's "seeing it before him and suddenly it is behind him" means that he saw fictional scenery.¹⁴

Chan appears to be doubtful about Ch'en's mystical experience. This, without any doubt, constitutes a serious challenge to the latter's claim.

To sum up Chan's interpretation of the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation, we find that Chan was enthusiastic in defending Ch'en's position. Like Ch'en, Chan was under pressure of the criticism of incompatibility between the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the doctrine of "emphasizing reverence" of the Ch'eng-Chu School. Chan therefore interpreted the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation in favour of the Ch'eng-Chu paradigm. In this interpretation Chan intended to ward off any suggestion that Ch'en preferred tranquillity to activity, or was close to Ch'an Buddhism. It is in this regard he also expressed his negative attitude towards Ch'en's expression of the mystical experience in his sitting in meditation.

(B) The arguments on the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the teaching of sitting in meditation in the Wang Yang-ming School

It was not only Chan Jo-shui who reconsidered Ch'en Hsien-chang's teaching of sitting in meditation. Wang Yang-ming, although he had the experience of enlightenment through sitting in meditation at Lung-ch'ang and once took it as his main teaching, was cautious about it. Wang once said of the practice of sitting in

¹³ See *The Analects*, Book IX: 11, p. 97.

¹⁴ Chan Jo-shui, "Hsin-ch'üan wen-pien-lu", in Chan Jo-shui, *Chan Kan-ch'üan hsien-sheng wen-chi*,

meditation:

What I said earlier in the temple about sitting in meditation was not meant for the sake of your attaining *samadhi* (intent meditation) of Ch'an Buddhism (*tso-Ch'an ju-ting* 坐禪入定).¹⁵ Rather, since we are usually distracted by many objects and affairs and do not know how to take care of ourselves, I wished to recommend such a remedy to our lack of learning by an effort of chasing the strayed mind.¹⁶

Wang particularly emphasized the difference between his teaching of sitting in meditation and the intent meditation of Ch'an Buddhism. This shows his basic position on Confucianism to avoid the critiques of his being close to Ch'an Buddhism. However, the practice of sitting in meditation is still important in Wang's teaching. A record of his *Ch'uan-hsi lu* says:

A friend who was engaging in sitting in meditation attained some insight. He ran to make an inquiry of the teacher (i.e. Wang Yang-ming). The teacher said, "Formerly, when I stayed in Ch'u-chou, seeing that students were mostly occupied with intellectual explanations and debates on similarities and differences, which did them no good, I therefore taught them sitting in meditation. For a time they realized the situation a little bit [they saw the true Way] and achieved some immediate results. In time, however, they gradually developed the defect of fondness for tranquillity and disgust with activity and degenerated into lifelessness like dry wood. Others purposely advocated abstruse and subtle theories to amaze people. For this reason I have recently expounded only the doctrine of the extension of innate knowledge. If one's innate knowledge is clear, it will be all right either to try to obtain truth through personal realization in a quiet place or to discover it through training and polishing in the actual affairs of life. The original substance of innate knowledge is neither tranquil nor active. Recognition of this fact is the basis of learning.

chüan 8, p. 26a.

¹⁵ The Chinese word *ting* 定 is a translation of the Sanskrit *samadhi* rendered into English by Derk Bodde as "intent meditation". See Julia Ching, *The Philosophical Letters of Wang Yang-ming*, p. 7; Derk Bodde tran., Feng Yu-lan's *History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), vol. II, p. 395.

¹⁶ Wang Yang-ming, "Yü Ch'en-chung chu sheng" 與辰中諸生 [To students at Ch'en-chung], in *WYMCC*, chüan 4, p. 144. English translation based on Julia Ching, *The Philosophical Letters of Wang Yang-ming* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972), p. 6.

From the time of Ch'u-chou until now, I have tested what I said several times. The point is that the phrase 'the extension of innate knowledge' is free from any defect. Only a physician who has broken his own arm can understand the causes of human disease."¹⁷

This record clearly shows Wang's reason for his once taking sitting in meditation as his main teaching, his worry about its being abused, and his continuing, predicated, support of it. First, his reason for taking sitting in meditation as his main teaching was to save his disciples from pedantic studies. Secondly, the teaching of sitting in meditation was susceptible to abuse, incurring "the defect of fondness for tranquillity and disgust with activity", about which Wang worried so much. Thirdly, Wang expounded the doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge", which he regarded transcendent over the relativity of tranquillity and activity, to substitute for the teaching of sitting in meditation. To sum up, sitting in meditation was for Wang simply a complementary method for moral cultivation.

However, the pursuit of tranquillity was still attractive to Wang's disciples, and Wang himself also praised it. Conversations between Wang and his disciples are full of commendations on pursuing tranquillity.¹⁸ After Wang died, it remained a popular issue among his disciples, as demonstrated by Nieh Pao's practice of sitting in meditation and the ensuing debate among Wang's disciples.

As we have mentioned in section 1 of chapter 2, Nieh Pao took sitting in meditation as his teaching method after his release from prison. Although there is no evidence to show that Nieh's practice of sitting in meditation was directly based on

¹⁷ *CHL*, p. 324; *Instructions*, Part III: 262, pp. 216-7.

¹⁸ See *Instructions*, Part I: 17, p. 26; Part I: 23, p. 28; Part I: 28, pp. 30-1; Part II: 151, pp. 131-132; Part II: 156, pp. 134-135; Part II: 157, pp. 135-136; Part III: 202, p. 190; Part III: 203, p. 191; Part III: 204, pp. 191-192; Part III: 231, p. 203.

Ch'en Hsien-chang's teaching, Nieh praised Ch'en's doctrine of "fostering a starting point by sitting in tranquillity," which was changed into "fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity" (*ts'ung ching chung yang-ch'u tuan-ni* 從靜中養出端倪) in his quotation:

[It is based on Ch'en's saying,] "fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity" ... we can be sure that the starting points of goodness are all cultivated from tranquillity.¹⁹

It appears that Nieh had Ch'en's doctrine in mind when he talked about the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity".

A scholar of Nieh's time summarized his studies as follows, "The studies of master Nieh take returning to tranquillity (*kui chi* 歸寂) as essential, and take attaining vacuity and maintaining tranquillity (*chih hsü shou ching* 致虛守靜) as the changeless entrance to moral cultivation."²⁰ Because the phrases "returning to tranquillity" and "attaining vacuity and maintaining tranquillity" can be traced to Taoism and Buddhism respectively, many of Nieh's contemporaries therefore assumed that his doctrine must be influenced by Taoism and Buddhism.²¹ Facing this accusation, Nieh was very careful in response. He said:

To extend knowledge is to represent the vacuously intelligent (*hsü ling* 虛靈) substance of the mind and to keep it in tranquillity without moving. There is no

¹⁹ Nieh Pao 聶豹, "K'un-pien-lu" 困辨錄 [Record of painful discernment], in Nieh Pao, *Shuang-chiang Nieh hsien-sheng wen-chi* 雙江聶先生文集 [The works of Nieh Pao] in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu ts'un-mu ts'ung-shu*, vol. 72, chüan 14, pp. 18a-b.

²⁰ Yin T'ai 尹臺, "Shuang-chiang Nieh hsien-sheng wen-chi hsü" 雙江聶先生文集序 [A preface to the works of master Nieh Pao], in *ibid.*, p. 2b.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3a.

difference between Confucians and Buddhists [on this subject]. [However,] we Confucians extend knowledge for investigating things, while Buddhists regard the sensation of things as illusions of our faculty, and advocate their abolition. Compared to Confucians' endeavour to penetrate all things, it is very different.²²

This passage shows that Nieh, though admitting the similarity between Buddhists and Confucians on keeping the mind in tranquillity, also was very careful about the danger of being accused of being close to Buddhism, just as Chan Jo-shui and Wang Yang-ming were in their references to the teaching of sitting in meditation.

Nieh was not only cautious about the above accusation, he also tried to connect his doctrine of "returning to tranquillity" to his Neo-Confucian forerunners to legitimize the doctrine. First, he traced it to Chou Tun-i's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity". He said:

Chou Tun-i said: "[Once one] is without desire, [he] will be tranquil." Without desire, one will attain a state of absolute tranquillity and inactivity. The state of absolute tranquillity and inactivity is the mind of Heaven and Earth. Only this is right: the expression of the moment before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy are aroused. However, how can an apprentice imagine reaching this goal at the first attempt? People should make efforts by starting from sitting in meditation. After long enough sitting in meditation, the spirit will be stable. Once the spirit is stable, one can see the mind of Heaven and Earth. Only when one sees the mind of Heaven and Earth can he be qualified to talk about learning.²³

Nieh maintained that it is from practising sitting in meditation that one can attain the state of what Chou Tun-i said "[Once one] is without desire (*wu yü* 無欲), [he] will be tranquil." Chou's saying is from his *T'ai-chi-tu shuo* 太極圖說 [An explanation

²² Nieh Pao, "Ta Ou-yang Nan-yeh" 答歐陽南野 [Reply to Ou-yang Nan-yeh], in *ibid.*, chüan 8, p. 22b.

²³ Nieh Pao, "Ta K'ang Tzu-i wen-hsüeh" 答亢子益問學 [Reply to K'ang Tzu-i's enquiry on learning], in *ibid.*, p. 31b.

of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate]. In it Chou said:

The sage settles affairs by the principles of the Mean, correctness, humanity, and righteousness, emphasizing tranquillity. [Once one] is without desire, [he] will be tranquil. Thus he establishes the human ultimate.²⁴

It is from this passage that Chou Tun-i's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" was particularly noticed.²⁵ Considering the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity", Taoists and Buddhists both emphasized the pursuit of tranquillity. It was Chou Tun-i who first compounded the doctrines and established his doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity", which had a great influence on later Neo-Confucians. Both the Ch'eng-Chu School and the Lu-Wang School, though assuming it essentially important to make activity and tranquillity into one without demarcation and avoid the defects of overemphasizing tranquillity, paid much attention to pursuing tranquillity.²⁶ It is no wonder that Nieh traced his doctrine to Chou.

Besides Chou Tun-i, Nieh also connected his doctrine to Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge". In a letter to Wang Chi, he explained his doctrine of "retuning to tranquillity", saying that the "substance of tranquillity" is "the supreme meaning of Yang-ming school."²⁷ He maintained,

To extend knowledge is to extend the knowledge of the substance of tranquillity.

²⁴ Chou Tun-i 周敦頤, *T'ai-chi tu shuo* 太極圖說 [A explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate], in Chou Tun-i, *Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu* 周子全書 [Complete works of Master Chou] (Taipei: Kuang-hsüeh-she yin-shu kuan, 1975), chüan 2, p. 23; *Source Book*, p. 463.

²⁵ *Source Book*, p. 465.

²⁶ Chang Tai-nien 張岱年, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh ta-kang* 中國哲學大綱 [A outline of Chinese philosophy] (Peking: Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1994), pp. 439-43.

²⁷ Nieh Pao, "Chi Wang Lung-hsi" 寄王龍溪 [A letter to Wang Lung-hsi], in Nieh Pao, *Shuang-chiang Nieh hsien-sheng wen-chi*, chüan 8, p. 47a.

If [the mind] is empty and intelligent, not being affected by a thing, when acted on, immediately penetrate all things, this is the meaning of the investigation of things.²⁸

Nieh was a famous member of the Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School. Influenced by Nieh, many of his Chiang-yu comrades were also enthusiastic about the practice of sitting in meditation. They also took Chou Tun-i's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" as their supports. One of them, Tsou Shou-i 鄒守益 [Tung-k'uo 東廓, 1491-1562], said:

[What Chou Tun-i said of] "emphasizing tranquillity" and "having no desire" are both the other names of innate knowledge. If we maintain "extending innate knowledge", there is no need to say "emphasizing tranquillity" any more. If we maintain "emphasizing tranquillity", there is no need to say "having no desire".²⁹

In Tsou's mind, "emphasizing tranquillity" is identical to "extending innate knowledge".

The other, Lo Hung-hsien, who "regarded Chou Tun-i's teaching on absence of desire and tranquillity as the true transmission of the teaching of the sages,"³⁰ also said:

By nature man is tranquil at birth. No one is not good in nature. It is only when one acts recklessly that he becomes evil. Emphasizing tranquillity can return

²⁸ Nieh Pao, "Ta Ou-yang Nan-yeh", in *ibid.*, p. 16b.

²⁹ Tsou Shou-i 鄒守益, "Fu Huang Chih-chai shih-chün" 覆黃致齋使君 [Reply to Huang Chih-chai], in Tsou Shou-i, *Tung-k'uo Tsou hsien-sheng wen-chi* 東廓鄒先生文集 [The works of Tsou Shou-i] in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu ts'un-mu ts'ung-shu*, vol. 66, chüan 5, p. 9a-b.

³⁰ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Chiang-yu Wang-men hsüeh-an san" 江右王門學案三 [Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part three], in *MJHA*, chüan 18, p. 389; *Records*, p. 134.

him back to goodness. The Way will therefore be kept and not lost. ... Innate knowledge is tranquil and clear. Once it is polluted by reckless action, the activating force (*chi* 幾) will be lost and can not return easily.³¹

Lo was saying that through emphasizing tranquillity one can recover innate knowledge from pollution by outrageous action.

Although Nieh Pao's position on the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" incurred opposition among many of Wang Yang-ming's disciples, gradually his doctrine became popular.³² The doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation in the Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School was so popular that Huang Tsung-hsi even concluded in his *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* as follows:

Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of the extension of innate knowledge came from his later life. In the beginning he had taught his disciples sitting in meditation to purify the mind. He found that they tended to prefer tranquillity to activity. Knowing the source and what flows from that, one tends to take too much from it. But to say that innate knowledge is the Mean [of consciousness] before emotions are manifest and to say that practising vigilance in solitude is the same as extending innate knowledge is to continue to regard inner composure as essential. That is why Tsou Shou-i's caution and apprehension and Lo Hung-hsien's tranquillity both represent Wang Yang-ming's true transmission.³³

Huang considered the practice of sitting in meditation only a temporary method of moral cultivation in Wang Yang-ming's early teaching, cognisant of the danger of its

³¹ Ibid., p. 416.

³² Lü Miao-fen [Lu Miaw-fen] 呂妙芬, *Yang-ming-hsüeh shih-jen she-ch'ün: li-shih, ssu-hsian yü shih-chien* 陽明學士人社群: 歷史、思想與實踐 [The Yang-ming School during the Ming dynasty: history, thought, and practice] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2003), pp. 392-4. Mou Tsung-san made a long study of three other members of the Chiang-yu school, Liu Wen-min 劉文敏 [Liang-feng 兩峰, ?-?], Liu Pang-ts'ai 劉邦采 [Shih-ch'üan 師泉, ?-?], and Wang Shih-huai 王時槐 [T'ang-nan 塘南, 1522-?], who also had doctrines similar to Nieh Pao's doctrine of "returning to tranquillity". See Mou, *Ts'ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan*, pp. 399-447.

lapsing into the preference of tranquillity above activity. But he still agreed that extending innate knowledge is to continue to regard inner composure as essential, and praised the inclination to emphasize tranquillity among the members of the Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School, considering them to be true representatives of Wang Yang-ming's transmission. He even maintained:

The Chiang-yu (Kiang-si) school alone acquired the true transmission of Wang Yang-ming. ... At this time, the Shao-hsing (Chekiang) school had developed many errors, and the members appealed to their master's authority as support for their own opinions in the face of their critics. Only the Chiang-yu school could point that out, thus preventing the Way of Wang Yang-ming from decaying.³⁴

Huang Tsung-hsi's comment on the role of the Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School is controversial.³⁵ However, it shows that the members of the Chiang-yu section did have great influence on their contemporaries. We can, then, be sure that the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation was also influential in the Wang Yang-ming School.

As I have mentioned, since Nieh Pao regulated a method of sitting in meditation and guided students to return to tranquillity, he invited many attacks from his comrades in the Wang Yang-ming School. Huang Tsung-hsi formulated three kinds of doubt about Nieh's doctrine of "returning to tranquility", as follows:

³³ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Che-chung Wang-men hsüeh-an i" 浙中王門學案一 [Che-chung section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part one], in *MJHA*, chüan 11, p. 226; *Records*, p. 112.

³⁴ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Chiang-yu Wang-men hsüeh-an i" 江右王門學案一 [Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part one], in *ibid.*, chüan 16, p. 333; *Records*, p. 118.

³⁵ Mou Tsung-san held an opposite opinion to Huang Tsung-hsi's. Mou considered the development of the doctrine of "returning to tranquillity" and its similar doctrine from Nieh Pao, through Liu Wen-min and Liu Pang-ts'ai, to Wang Shih-huai, had drawn the Chiang-yu school away from the essence of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine. See Mou, *Ts'ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan*, pp.

First, if the Tao were that which should not be abandoned even for one instant, then to say that no effort need be applied to activity would be to abandon it. Second, if the Tao were beyond activity and tranquillity, then the effort of maintaining tranquillity would separate it into two modes. Third, if mind and affairs ought to be one, and mind ought to be present everywhere, in every affair, to say then that one might forgo efforts in one's conscious responses while these are in the flow of process would be to abandon affairs and to draw near to Ch'an Buddhist doctrines of enlightenment."³⁶

In general, these doubts reveal the worries of those who kept a cautious attitude towards the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation. In brief, the first and the second doubts, which can be seen as one, are the worry of lapsing into preferring tranquillity to activity. The third doubt is a worry of straying towards *samadhi* (intent meditation) of Ch'an Buddhism.

Besides these worries, there is another point in the arguments between Nieh and his opponents, best shown in a debate between Nieh Pao and two of his major opponents, Ou-yang Te 歐陽德 [Ch'ung-i 崇一, 1496-1554] and Wang Chi.

The debate is encapsulated by Nieh's concluding comments on his contemporaries' opinions on Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge". As mentioned in section 2 of chapter 3, many interpretations of the idea of innate knowledge emerged among Wang Yang-ming's disciples after Wang died. Wang Chi divided them into eight kinds of interpretations, while in Nieh's eyes, there were only two kinds, as follows:

One of them says: "Innate knowledge is nothing but consciousness. Except consciousness there is no innate knowledge. If a scholar accords to what he has known [in his consciousness] to the utmost and extends them, then he will

399-447.

³⁶ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Chiang-yu Wang-men erh" 江右王門學案二 [Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part two], in *MJHA*, chüan 17, pp. 372-3; *Records*, p. 129.

acquire knowledge. Therefore, there is no distinction between tranquillity and action, inward and outward. They are completely within one body.” The other says: “Innate knowledge is a substance of tranquillity with vacuous intelligence (*hsü-ling* 虛靈). Only if it acts to penetrate things can there be knowledge. Knowledge is its output. Extending innate knowledge is simply returning to tranquillity for penetrating action, and maintaining substance for applying for function.”³⁷

In brief, the former kind considered that innate knowledge is nothing but sensational consciousness. Sensational consciousness cannot be divided into “tranquil/inward” part and “active/outward” part. Extending innate knowledge is simply extending the sensational consciousness to its utmost. The latter kind considered that innate knowledge is a substance of tranquillity. Only by returning to tranquillity can innate knowledge be extended.

Although Nieh did not attribute these two kinds of sayings to any specific contemporary, he seems to adhere to the latter, and his opponents, like Ou-yang Te and Wang Chi, appeared to adhere to the former. Nieh once described innate knowledge as follows:

The vacuous intelligence and consciousness (*chih-chüeh* 知覺) of the mind are both innate knowledge. However, vacuous intelligence refers to substance, and consciousness refers to function. Substance and function come from the same source. Once substance is established, function naturally emerges. The effort of extending knowledge is simply establishing substance to attain function.³⁸

To sum up the above two passages, we find that Nieh was pronouncing a “substance/tranquillity/intelligence” and “function/activity/consciousness” dualism.

³⁷ Nieh Pao, “Tseng Wang hsüeh-cheng chih su-ch’ien hsü” 贈王學正之宿遷序 [A preface as a gift for congratulating Mr. Wang’s promotion], in Nieh Pao, *Shuang-chiang Nieh hsien-sheng wen-chi*, chüan 4, pp. 24b-25a.

³⁸ Nieh Pao, “Ta Sung-chiang Wu Chieh-tui” 答松江吳節推 [Reply to Wu Chieh-tui of

In this dualism, once the “substance/tranquillity/intelligence” is established, “function/activity/consciousness” naturally emerges. It is by way of this dualism that we can say that Nieh’s emphasis on making effort to cultivate vacuous intelligence can be seen as an expression of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”. He also used this position to criticize those who stressed consciousness. He said:

Those who take consciousness as innate knowledge and [make efforts to] extend it are straining themselves to suit [consciousness] and to drift along with things. Even the supreme master of this kind can only become a wild-fox Ch’an Buddhist outsider of the Way. This is so heartbreaking.”³⁹

Nieh did not attribute the wild-fox Ch’an Buddhist to any definite Ch’an Buddhist philosophy in his text. It can be seen as simply a word for criticizing his opponents for straying from the Confucian Way.

The “substance/tranquillity/intelligence” and “function/activity/consciousness” dualism is so crucial that before depicting the responses of Nieh’s opponents’ to it, we will elaborate the concept further.

The terms of Nieh’s dualism might be related to two separate concepts of the relation between “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity”. One is featured in the *Book of Changes*, the other is by Wang Yang-ming. In Nieh’s description of the two kinds of interpretations of Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine of “extending innate knowledge”, he said, “innate knowledge (a substance of tranquillity) ... acts to penetrate things,” and “returning to tranquillity for penetrating action.” This might be related to the *Book of Changes*. According to the *Book of Changes*:

Sung-chiang], in Nieh Pao, *Shuang-chiang Nieh hsien-sheng wen-chi*, chüan 8, pp. 59b-60a.

³⁹ Ibid.

Change has neither thought nor action, because it is in the state of absolute quiet (tranquil) and inactivity, and when acted on, it immediately penetrates all things.⁴⁰

Ch'en Jung-chieh comments as follows: "What is quiet (tranquil) is substance and what penetrates things is function. This sets the pattern for the Neo-Confucian theory of substance and function."⁴¹ From the above passage, we can assert that there was a "substance/tranquillity" and "function/activity" dualism in the *Book of Changes*. In this dualism, "substance/tranquillity" is considered the womb from which "function/activity" was born. In this sense Nieh's dualism is similar to the position of the *Book of Changes*.

In addition, in Nieh's description of innate knowledge, he said, "substance and the function come from the same source." This might be related to Wang Yang-ming's statement that:

When we speak of substance as substance, function is already involved in it, and when we speak of function as function, substance is already involved in it. This is what is called "Substance and function coming from the same source."⁴²

It appears that Wang Yang-ming basically did not agree with the "substance/tranquillity" and "function/activity" dualism in the *Book of Changes*. With his saying "substance and function come from the same source", he was emphasizing that "substance/tranquillity" and "function/activity" are involved in each

⁴⁰ *Book of Changes*, chapter 10; in *Source Book*, p. 267.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *CHL*, p. 130; *Instruction*, Part I: 108, p. 69.

other, and that therefore, both of them should be seen as equally important.⁴³

Differing from Wang by saying “substance and the function come from the same source,” Nieh was emphasizing that “once substance is established, function naturally emerges. The effort of extending knowledge is simply establishing substance to attain function.” In this sense, Nieh was not obedient to Wang Yang-ming’s teaching. It is probably because of this discrepancy that Nieh’s opponents disagreed with him.

Ou-yang Te took a position that considered tranquillity and activity as equally important to criticize Nieh. He said:

Innate knowledge cannot be divided into activity and tranquillity, therefore it always active and tranquil, not relying on emphasizing activity or emphasizing tranquillity.”⁴⁴

This position was generally taken by Nieh’s opponents. Wang Chi criticized Nieh by saying:

Right in activity, there exists tranquillity. Tranquillity is identical to activity. Right in knowing right and wrong, there exists vacuous tranquillity. Substance is just the same as function. ... If it is said: “Only according to vacuous tranquillity can there be knowing right and wrong”, it becomes a divergent opinion. A divergent opinion will cause [the truth] to vanish.⁴⁵

Obviously both Ou-yang Te and Wang Chi took a similar position to Wang

⁴³ This basic position shows in most of Wang’s conversations on tranquillity. See *Instruction*, Part I: 23, p. 28; Part I: 28, pp. 30-1; Part II:151, pp. 131-132; Part II: 156, pp. 134-135; Part:157, pp.135-136; Part III: 202, p.190; Part III: 204, pp.191-192; Part III :231, p. 203.

⁴⁴ Ou-yang Te 歐陽德, “Ta Chou Lu-t’ien” 答周陸田 [Reply to Chou Lu-t’ien], in Ou-yang Te, *Ou-yang Nan-yeh hsien-sheng wen-chi* 歐陽南野先生文集 [The works of Ou-yang Te], in *Ssu-k’u ch’üan-shu ts’un-mu ts’ung-shu*, vol. 81, chüan 4, p. 11a.

⁴⁵ Wang Chi, “Pieh Tseng Chien-t’ai man-yü chai-lueh” 別曾見臺謾語摘略 [An abbreviated record of the dialogue with Tseng Chien-t’ai at his departing], in Wang Chi, *Wang Lung-hsi ch’üan-chi*, chüan 16, p. 23a.

Yang-ming. They both challenged the “substance/tranquility/intelligence” and “function/activity/consciousness” dualism, and opposed Nieh’s doctrine of “returning to tranquillity”.

To sum up the arguments between Nieh Pao and his two major opponents, Ou-yang Te and Wang Chi, it is clear that the “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity” dualism is a crucial point, which incurred Nieh’s opponents’ doubts on the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation.

(C) Liu Tsung-chou’s views on the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation

(i) Kao P’an-lung’s experience of practising of sitting in meditation

Apart from the scholars of the Wang Yang-ming School, the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation also was advocated by other scholars among Liu Tsung-chou’s contemporaries. Kao P’an-lung’s experience of sitting in meditation is especially outstanding and was a direct influence on Liu Tsung-chou.⁴⁶

Although Kao was a follower of the Ch’eng-Chu School, he was also an adherent of Chou Tun-i’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”, and tried to use it to

⁴⁶ Ch’ien Mu, “Tu Liu Chi-shan chi” 讀劉戡山集 [Reading the collected works of Liu Tsung-chou], in *Chung-kuo hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang shih lun-ts’ung* 中國學術思想史論叢 [Miscellaneous essays on Chinese scholarship and thought] (Taipei: Tung-ta t’u-shu kung-ssu, 1978), vol. 7, p. 302.

revise Chu Hsi's doctrine.⁴⁷ Kao was famous for advocating the practice of sitting in meditation.⁴⁸ He had once come in contact with a scholar Lu Ku-ch'iao 陸古樵 [?-?], who was an adherent of Ch'en Hsien-chang's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity". Inspired by Lu, Kao took to sitting in meditation as a regular practice for moral cultivation.⁴⁹ He described his experience of sitting in meditation as follows:

The next day [after meeting with Lu] I arranged thick mats in the boat, and set up a strict daily order. I practiced "sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half" (*pan-jih ching-tso pan-jih tu-shu* 半日靜坐半日讀書). Whenever I felt ill at ease while sitting in meditation, I would follow the instructions of Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi, in all that concerns "[making the will] sincere", "[emphasizing] reverence", "emphasizing tranquillity", "observing feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy before they are aroused", and "sitting in meditation with a purified mind to comprehend the principle of Heaven". I practiced these points one by one. Whether standing or sitting, eating or resting, I would not forget these thoughts. At night I did not undress and only fell asleep when dead tired. Upon waking I returned to meditation, repeating and alternating these various practices.⁵⁰

The expression "sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half" is from Chu Hsi. However, this expression was previously considered only suitable for a particular disciple at a specific time, and it was not a general rule for cultivation.⁵¹ Kao was criticized by later scholars for misunderstanding Chu

⁴⁷ See Ch'en Chien-huang 陳劍鏗, "Kao P'an-lung tui ching te t'i-jen chien chi tui Chu Hsi wei-fa i-fa shuo te hsiu-cheng" 高攀龍對靜的體認兼及對朱熹未發已發說的修正 [Kao P'an-lung's comprehension of "silence" (tranquillity): A revision of Chu Hsi's expressed and unexpressed theories], *E-hu hsüeh-chih* 鵝湖學誌 [Goose Lake magazine], 28 (June, 2002), pp. 119-47.

⁴⁸ Ting Fu-pao 丁福保, *Ching-tsoo-fa ching-yao* 靜坐法精要 [The essential methods for sitting in meditation] (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1990), p. 4.

⁴⁹ Kao P'an-lung, "K'un-hsüeh chi" 困學記 [Records of painfully learning], in Kao P'an-lung, *Kao-tzu i-shu*, chüan 3, pp. 14b-15a.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15a.

⁵¹ Ch'en Chien-huang 陳劍鏗, "Ming Ch'ing li-hsüeh-chia tui pan-jih ching-tso pan-jih tu-shu ti

Hsi.⁵² Nevertheless, Kao's use of this expression created a new perspective on the practice.

Kao also urged his friends to adopt this practice. In a letter to a friend he said:

In our daily life for cultivation, we should take "sitting in meditation for half day and book learning for the other half" as standard.⁵³

He once also said:

Chu-tzu told students to "sit in meditation for half day and learn from books for the other half". If one does this for three years, he will definitely make progress. I myself have tried it only for one or two months, and I saw the effect. If scholars do not make efforts on this, their life will be totally wasted. It is a great pity.⁵⁴

Kao succeeded in persuading his disciple, Ch'en Lung-cheng 陳龍正 [Chi-t'ing 幾亭, 1585-1645]. Ch'en confirmed that the expression was ultimately the essence of learning.⁵⁵

Kao's new perspective was probably inspired by Ch'en Hsien-chang. Besides his contact with Lu Ku-ch'iao, who was influenced by Ch'en, Kao related "sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half" to Ch'en's doctrine of "fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity". He once

cheng-i chi ch'i yün-yung" 明清理學家對半日靜坐半日讀書的爭議及其運用 [Ming and Ch'ing Neo-Confucians' disputations and practices with respect to "sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half"], *E-hu yüeh-k'an* 鵝湖月刊 [Goose Lake monthly], 28: 3 (September 2002), pp. 16-8.

⁵² Ch'en Jung-chieh, *Chu-tzu hsin t'an-shuo*, p. 312.

⁵³ Kao P'an-lung, "Yü Lu Ch'üeh-chai i" 與遠確齋一 [Letters to Lu Ch'üeh-chai: the first one], in Kao P'an-lung, *Kao-tzu i-shu*, chüan 8a, p. 25b.

⁵⁴ Kao P'an-lung, "Yü" 語 [Words], in *ibid.*, chüan 1, p. 10b.

⁵⁵ Ch'en Lung-cheng 陳龍正, "Hsüeh-yen hsiang-ch'i er" 學言詳記一 [Words of learning in details:

asked a friend, “How do you practise cultivation? [In my opinion,] you should practise ‘sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half’. Once you have practised this, you can achieve what Ch’en Hsien-chang said of ‘fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity.’”⁵⁶

It is with Ch’en Hsien-chang’s doctrine in mind that Kao made a special interpretation of the expression “To sit in meditation with a purified mind to comprehend the principle of Heaven” (*mo-tso ch’eng-hsin t’i-jen t’ien-li* 默坐澄心體認天理). He said:

“To sit in meditation with a purified mind to comprehend the principle of Heaven” means that while in sitting in meditation the mind is purified without being intertwined with outer affairs, which is the so-called principle of Heaven. In brief, it is saying that one should silently comprehend the substance of the mind [which is the principle of Heaven itself] while sitting in meditation. It is not saying that there is another principle of Heaven which is outside of the mind that needs to be comprehended after the mind is purified while sitting in meditation.⁵⁷

The expression “To sit in meditation with a purified mind to comprehend the principle of Heaven” is from Chu Hsi’s teacher Li T’ung. Kao maintained that this is the ultimate theme of Li T’ung’s teaching.⁵⁸ Li’s original words are as follows:

The Way of learning does not reside in erudite discourse. It only resides in sitting in meditation with a purified mind to comprehend the principle of Heaven. Once there is a slight selfish desire emerging, it will be diminished immediately. After one makes effort in this cultivation, he gradually will get a

part one], in Ch’en Lung-cheng, *Chi-t’ing ch’üan-chi* 幾亭全集 [The complete works of Ch’en Lung-cheng] (A 1683 edition, preserved in Taipei National Central Library), chüan 5, p. 15a.

⁵⁶ Kao P’an-lung, “Yü An Wo-su i” 與安我素一 [Letters to An Wo-su: the first one], in Kao P’an-lung, *Kao-tzu i-shu*, chüan 8a, p. 29b.

⁵⁷ Kao P’an-lung, “Yü”, in *ibid.*, chüan 1, p. 11b.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

clear mind, and his discussing of learning will start getting better.⁵⁹

Obviously, in Li's mind, the purpose of sitting in meditation is to diminish selfish desire and make the mind clear, thus aiding learning. Li T'ung took sitting in meditation as a complementary method of cultivation. Kao's explanation of Li's expression gives it a new perspective. Firstly, Kao identified the substance of the mind with the principle of Heaven. Secondly, Kao considered the purification of the mind the aim of sitting in meditation. In brief, sitting in meditation to comprehend the substance of the mind was the only aim of cultivation. In this sense, Kao's position is very close to Ch'en Hsien-chang's.

However, Kao's attitude is not always so definite. He sometimes expressed an attitude similar to Chu Hsi's. He once said:

To sit in meditation is to think about those books we learn. To learn is to examine the essential of what we thought [in sitting in meditation].⁶⁰

Here it appears that Kao, like Chu Hsi, considered sitting in meditation as only a complementary way for cultivation. In this sense, Kao's idea of the practice of sitting in meditation is different from Ch'en Hsien-chang's.

Kao's ambivalence toward Ch'en Hsien-chang's paradigm of sitting in meditation is perhaps connected to Kao's general position. Kao's doctrine were generally in accordance with the doctrines of the Ch'eng-Chu School and he always

⁵⁹ Li T'ung 李侗, *Yen-p'ing ta-wen* 延平答問 [Li T'ung's answers to enquiries] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1972), p. 114.

⁶⁰ Kao P'ang-lung, "Yü Lu Ch'üeh-chai i", in Kao P'an-lung, *Kao-tzu i-shu*, chüan 8a, p. 25b.

kept the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” in his mind.⁶¹ He worried about the incompatibility between the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence”.

(ii) Liu Tsung-chou’s critiques on the Neo-Confucian doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation

In one of Liu Tsung-chou’s essays on the essence of the learning of the sages, he took the following Neo-Confucian doctrines as examples to explain how to get achievement in learning:

Master Chou Tun-i postulated the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity to establish the human ultimate”. According to Chou, master Ch’eng I taught people to practise sitting in meditation. Li T’ung, too, taught people to “observe the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy before they arise.” In our dynasty, master Ch’en Hsien-chang, too, took the doctrine of “fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity” as essential. He built up the Ch’un-yang t’ai 春陽台, and practised sitting in meditation there for years. Master Wang Yang-ming, however, said that sitting in meditation was not meant for the sake of attaining the *samadhi* of Ch’an Buddhism. It is a remedy to our lack of learning by an effort of chasing the strayed mind. He also maintained that the doctrine of “extending innate knowledge” must be learned in the moment before the feelings arise. Lo Hung-hsien also adopted Chou Tun-i’s doctrine of “absence of desire” for pursuing a starting point in tranquillity. ... All of them had attained the state of “abiding in the highest goodness”⁶²

In Liu’s opinion, the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation are the basic methods for attaining the state of “abiding in the highest

⁶¹ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Tung-lin hsüeh-an i” 東林學案一 [The Tung-lin School: part one], in *MJHA*, chüan 58, pp. 1402-4.

⁶² “Ken-chih shuo” 艮止說 [Essay on the meaning of “stop” in the hexagram Ken of the *Book of Change*], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 377-8.

goodness”, depicted in the *Great Learning*.⁶³ It shows that Liu was greatly concerned with the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation.

Although Liu generally praised his Neo-Confucian forerunners for advocating the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation, elsewhere he did make critiques of some of them. Ch’en Hsien-chang was one of the primary objects of his critiques. Liu Tsung-chou’s teacher Hsü Fu-yüan was a disciple of Chan Jo-shui. Chan Jo-shui was a disciple of Ch’en Hsien-chang. Therefore Liu can be said to be a beneficiary of Ch’en.⁶⁴ However, Liu’s attitude toward Ch’en seems to be ambivalent. In Huang Tsung-hsi’s *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, he presented Liu’s general position on Ch’en’s doctrine as follows:

[Liu said that] Ch’en’s philosophy is based on nature (*tzu-jan* 自然); its essentials consist in acquiring insights for oneself (*tzu-te* 自得). Because he emphasizes acquiring insights for himself, he can draw deeply upon this and find its source where he returns, being as lively as the hawk and the fish (*yü yüan yü t’ung i huo p’o* 與鳶魚同一活潑) and returning to himself by grasping hold of the pivot that controls the creative processes.⁶⁵

Liu appeared to praise Ch’en for his emphasis on acquiring insights for oneself. He therefore maintained: “He (Ch’en) may be said to have started a new school of

⁶³ Ibid., p. 376.

⁶⁴ See Huang Hsün-min 黃宣民, “Chi-shan hsin-hsüeh yü wan-Ming ssu-ch’ao” 蕺山心學與晚明思潮 [Liu Tsung-chou’s School of Mind and the intellectual climate of late Ming], in Chung Ts’ai-chün 鍾彩鈞, ed., *Liu Chi-shan hsüeh-shu shih-hsian lun-chi* 劉蕺山學術思想論集 [The symposia essays on Liu Tsung-chou’s thought] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1998), pp. 214-5.

⁶⁵ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Shih shuo” 師說 [The teacher’s sayings], in *MJHA*, p. 4; The English translation is based on *Records*, p. 55.

thought by himself, standing out among his fellows.”⁶⁶ However, when enquiring further, Liu became negative:

When asked what is meant by the word *te* 得 (acquire), he (Ch'en) replied that it referred to the “starting point” (*tuan-ni* 端倪) which is fostered from the cultivation of tranquillity. He had earlier sought this [“starting point”] in classical texts for years without success, but acquired it one day in sitting in meditation. This seems to differ from what the ancients said about *tzu-te*. Mencius has said: “The gentleman steeps himself in the Way because he wishes to acquire it in himself.” We have not heard Mencius say that he acquired it naturally. Is the subtle technique of sitting in meditation not perhaps a superficial method and a shortcut?⁶⁷

Here Liu expressed his doubt about Ch'en's teaching of sitting in meditation. In Liu's opinion, Ch'en's experience of “fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity” seemed to be too superficial and simplified in comparison with the ancient sages. Liu continued his criticism as follows:

To acquire [the Way] naturally (*tzu-jan er te* 自然而得) is to acquire it without exercising thought, to hit the mark without effort, and to embody the Way naturally and with ease. Only sages can acquire it naturally like that. We have not heard that it is acquired by sitting in meditation.⁶⁸

Here, Liu pointed out that although to acquire the Way naturally is an ideal way, which is the way the sages cultivated themselves, it cannot be achieved by sitting in meditation. Liu therefore concluded: “After all, Ch'en has acquired what he has acquired. That is all.”⁶⁹

Liu seems to criticize Ch'en for having acquired nothing at all. Liu furthermore

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5; *Records*, p. 55.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 5; *Records*, p. 55.

explained:

The Way is rooted in nature (*tao pen tzu-jan* 道本自然); no one can acquire it with artifice. The moment one desires to be natural, one has become artificial. Hence it is said: “if you know how to acquire it, you can do so in an active manner; if you do not know how to acquire it, you will only play mind games (*nung ching hun* 弄精魂).⁷⁰

Here Liu appeared to praise acquiring the Way naturally. However, it is not so easy to be natural. Therefore, in Liu’s opinion, to claim that one can acquire the Way naturally is so subtle and difficult to understand that it is easy to fall into the trap of “playing mind games”. The expression “playing mind games” (*nung ching hun*) seems to suggest that one is using his imagination to figure out a fictional thing as the Way but not devote himself to substantive moral cultivation. Based on this idea, Liu had a further critique on Ch’en’s doctrine of “fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity”:

As to the starting point which is fostered from the cultivation of tranquillity, I do not know what it really is. [In his idea] this starting point is what the mind is able to acquire but it is not describable. It is after all not so different from playing mind games.⁷¹

Liu appeared to accuse Ch’en for indulging in imagination, or a variety of mysticism, and being devoid of substantive moral cultivation. He then criticized Ch’en as follows:

⁶⁹ Ibid.; *Records*, pp. 55-6.

⁷⁰ Ibid.; *Records*, p. 56.

⁷¹ Ibid.

When tested against the school of sages, he cannot avoid the defects of being desirous of quick results and of looking for small advantages. He appears to be a Ch'an Buddhist but is not a Ch'an Buddhist; that is all.⁷²

Although Liu does not consider Ch'en a Ch'an Buddhist, he still worries about Ch'en's being assimilated to Ch'an Buddhism.

To sum up the above passages quoted by Huang Tsung-hsi, although Liu Tsung-chou admitted that Ch'en Hsien-chang started a new school, he criticized Ch'en's teachings on sitting in meditation for being contrary to Mencius' teaching. The crucial point is that Liu did not believe that people could acquire the Way naturally or through the practice of sitting in meditation. It seems that Liu did not experience the mystical experience of sitting in meditation which Ch'en claimed to have and on which he based his doctrine.

However, this seems not to be Liu's definitive comment on Ch'en Hsien-chang's doctrine. There are some direct references to Ch'en's doctrine in Liu's own works. They reflect the similar ambivalence of Huang Tsung-hsi's quotation in his *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* with some differences. In expressing his negative attitude, Liu said:

“Without concentration, there is no possibility for dispersion.” To speak from the point of view of the substance of mind, this saying is not without fault. Ch'en Hsien-chang said: “Only with storing first can one express [his feelings].” Hu Chu-chen teased him and said: “If it is the case, the principle of matter will be mistaken.” Hu's criticism is quite true.⁷³

Although in this passage Liu does not explicitly mention Ch'en's doctrine, he seems

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “Hui-lu” 會錄 [Records of meetings], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 625.

to criticize Ch'en for overestimating the cultivation of tranquillity before feelings arise.

However, elsewhere, Liu indicated positive appraisal of Ch'en's doctrine by saying:

[In Ch'en's saying], "fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity", the starting point is the will. It is also solitariness. It is also Heaven.⁷⁴

Here, Liu expresses a different attitude from that quoted by Huang Tsung-hsi in *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*. In Huang's quotation, Liu says that he does not know what the starting point really is. The above passage, in contrast, shows Liu not only elaborating on the meaning of the starting point, but also giving it a positive appraisal by associating it with the will and the solitariness, which are both very important in his doctrines of "making the will sincere" and "being vigilant in solitude". Liu also compared Ch'en's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" with Chou Tun-i's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity." He said:

Once one keeps the two words *wu yü* 無欲 (having no desires) in his mind, he can become a sage immediately. Chou Tun-i is an earlier good example of this truth, Ch'en Hsien-chang is a later one. Ch'en said in one of his poems: "The more I cherish master Chou Tun-i's teaching of having no desires, the more I feel refreshed."⁷⁵

As it is shown above, in talking about his doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity", Chou confirmed: "[Once one] is without desire, [he] will be tranquil." Having no

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 611.

⁷⁵ "Hsüeh-yen shang" 學言上 [Words on learning: part one], in *ibid.*, p. 471.

desires can be seen as the basic principle of his doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”.

It appears that Liu held this principle and praised Ch'en for subscribing to it.

Although Liu did not endorse Ch'en Hsien-chang's teaching on sitting in meditation, like Ch'en, he considered tranquillity as essential for moral cultivation.

He once even said: “The doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” directly relates to issues concerning life and death.”⁷⁶ He also related the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” to sitting in meditation. In an essay named “Ching-tso shuo” 靜坐說

[On sitting in meditation] Liu said:

The main theme of learning is simply to emphasize tranquillity. The method here [for emphasizing tranquillity] is very difficult. For students to find a way to start working on it, I ask them to sit in meditation.⁷⁷

Liu also gave Chu Hsi's doctrine on sitting in meditation his support, but gave it a different emphasis, to confirm its importance. In an essay entitled “Tu-shu shuo” 讀書說 [On learning from books] Liu said:

Master Chu once said: “Students who practise ‘sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half’ for three to five years will see a visible achievement.” Nowadays we should take this as a method. However, apart from the effort of sitting in meditation there is no other method for learning from books. Therefore, there is no difference between the effort of sitting in meditation and that of learning from books. Once students really find their way to sitting in meditation, when studying the books by ancients they can feel that the ancients are right in front of them. All the inspiration of books can be acquired, and the benefit of learning from books is founded without any problem.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ “I-pien hsüeh-yen” 遺編學言 [Words of learning: a sequential edition], in *ibid.*, p. 561.

⁷⁷ “Ching-tso shuo”, in *ibid.*, p. 357.

The most important point here is that Liu considered the practice of sitting in meditation as much more important than Chu Hsi did. In the above passage, Chu, though he took sitting in meditation seriously, appeared to give equal importance to learning from books. To Liu, sitting in meditation became the most crucial process for moral cultivation, so that even the efficacy of learning from books is dependent on it. Liu went on to say:

Students who intend to realize the mind of the sages and to follow the Way in a right process cannot but learn the *Four Books* and *Six Classics*. However, the mind of the sages is identical to our own mind. One who masters learning from books does so by pursuing [the Way] in his own mind. To forsake one's own mind and pursue the mind of the sages, even though he has learned thousands of words [of the sages], is worthless.⁷⁹

This passage brings Liu close to Ch'en Hsien-chang on learning from books. Ch'en, as mentioned in section 1 of chapter 2, felt unable to converge the mind and principle in learning from books, and therefore, he forsook learning from books for sitting in meditation. Liu, like Ch'en, showed his doubts about learning without the purpose of pursuing the Way in one's own mind. In this sense, the similarity between Liu and Ch'en is that they both emphasized the importance of pursuing the Way in one's own mind in cultivation.

However, in general, Liu expressed a more positive attitude toward learning from books than Ch'en. He quoted Wang Yang-ming's words to explain his own position as follows:

⁷⁸ "Tu-shu shuo", in *ibid.*, p. 358.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Master Yang-ming did not like students to emphasize learning from books but asked them to verify things directly with their mind in its original state. He said that simply because [he considered that] those who do not know how to learn would forsake their own mind to pursue the mind of the sages, which would make them like beggars in front of others' doors [without knowing what they really want]. He does not mean that we may totally forsake learning from books. The master also said: "To study extensively is to study nothing but principle. To inquire accurately is to inquire about nothing but principle. To think carefully is to think of nothing but principle. To sift clearly is to sift nothing but principle. To practise earnestly is to practise nothing but principle." "The mind is principle."⁸⁰

Here Liu considered that learning should be for pursuing principle, which is identical to the mind. In other words, if the purpose of learning is to pursue principle, we do not need to forsake learning from books for sitting in meditation. It reveals that, compare to Ch'en, Liu is positive about learning from books.

On the other hand, given Liu's belief that the purpose of learning is to pursue the Way in the mind and also to pursue principle, Liu appears to share Ch'en's ultimate concern for converging mind and principle. It is based on this common concern that, although Liu criticized Ch'en's practice of sitting in meditation as playing mind games, he did not totally dismiss the practice of sitting in meditation, in the sense that it is a way of converging mind and principle. He interpreted sitting in meditation as follows:

Ch'eng I praised those who practised sitting in meditation as excellent in study. Excellence in study simply refers to mastery of *ch'iu fang-hsin* 求放心 (chasing the strayed mind). To begin in this way is taking the road toward the ultimate truth. It is not simply an insignificant expedient way. Once one realizes this, he is immediately at the entrance to the sagely sanctuary. When one does not yet realize it, he is busy searching without a goal, not knowing the way to enter [the sagely sanctuary]. If one does not know how to sit in meditation, one should

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 358-9.

simply learn how to sit first. If one does not know how to sit, how can he talk about study?⁸¹

The term “*ch’iu fang-hsin*” is from Mencius. Mencius considered it a basic way to realize *jen* 仁 (benevolence).⁸² By connecting the practice of sitting in meditation to the realization of *jen*, Liu showed his high regard for the former.

Given Liu’s high regard for sitting in meditation, it is no wonder he still showed his respect to Ch’en Hsien-chang’s doctrine. He once concluded his comments on it as follows:

Master Ch’en Hsien-chang takes acquiring insights for oneself (*tzu-te* 自得) as essential for learning. He claims that it is easy [to acquire insights for oneself] without spending any effort. However, in my opinion, in order to reach that stage one should put enough effort into moral cultivation. What did he do during the period of practising sitting in meditation in Ch’un-yang t’ai for three years? We should think about how we can spend as much effort as he has. If we cannot spend as much effort as him, we will miss the chance to acquire great insights ourselves.⁸³

To Liu, Ch’en Hsien-chang’s taking acquiring insights for oneself as essential for learning and his teaching of sitting in meditation are deserving of high respect.

However, Liu maintained that Ch’en was incapable of revealing the necessary steps for achieving the stage he himself had attained. Therefore Liu was enthusiastic in modifying Ch’en’s teaching.

The second Neo-Confucian forerunner of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation that Liu Tsung-chou commented on was Wang Yang-ming. However, Liu’s comments on Wang are few, probably

⁸¹ “Ching-tso shuo”, in *ibid.*, pp. 357-8.

because, though Wang once had taken the practice of sitting in meditation as his main teaching, he later changed it to the doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”.⁸⁴ Liu basically agreed with Wang’s opinion that “sitting in meditation was not meant for the sake of your attaining the *samadhi* of Ch’an Buddhism, it is a remedy to our lack of learning by an effort of chasing the strayed mind.”⁸⁵ Liu, like Wang, was cautious to distinguish between the Neo-Confucian practice of sitting in meditation and Ch’an Buddhist intent meditation.

The third Neo-Confucian forerunner of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation that Liu Tsung-chou commented on is Lo Hung-hsien. Liu considered Lo’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” to be Confucian. When some people accused Lo’s emphasis on tranquillity of being close to Ch’an Buddhism, Liu defended him, saying: “The ancients have always taught ‘contingent doctrines’. After Wang Yang-ming, Lo Hung-hsien is absolutely necessary. I prefer his having been able to sustain this Way from further falls.”⁸⁶ However, Liu criticized Lo’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” for over-emphasizing the pursuit of tranquillity.⁸⁷ It seems that Liu, besides having concerns about closeness to Ch’an Buddhism, was cautious about the danger of the doctrine lapsing into preferring tranquillity over activity.

Kao P’an-lung is the final Neo-Confucian forerunner to the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation. As we have

⁸² See *Mencius*, Book VI, Part A: 11, p. 167.

⁸³ “I-pien wen-ta” 遺編問答 [Inquiries and replies: a sequential edition], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 420.

⁸⁴ See Ch’ien Te-hung, “K’o wen-lu hsü-shuo”, in *WYMCC*, chüan 41, p. 1574.

⁸⁵ The saying is from a letter Wang Yang-ming written to his students. See Wang Yang-ming, “Yü Ch’en-chung chu sheng”, in *WYMCC*, chüan 4, p. 144. Liu Tsung-chou quoted it at least twice to show his agreement. See “Jen-p’u”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 19; “Ken-chih shuo”, in *ibid.*, p. 377.

⁸⁶ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Shih shuo”, in *MJHA*, p. 12; *Records*, p. 67.

mentioned, Kao P'an-lung was one of Liu's good friends. Kao's experience of practising sitting in meditation also influenced Liu. Liu took Kao's opinion on distinguishing between two kinds of sitting in meditation to refer to the difference between Confucian sitting in meditation and Ch'an Buddhist intent meditation.⁸⁸ However, Liu was very aware that Kao was influenced by Ch'an Buddhism.⁸⁹ Liu was very serious about maintaining the distinction between Confucianism and Ch'an Buddhism.

(iii) The doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting meditation in Liu Tsung-chou's life and thought

Although Liu Tsung-chou made critiques on some of his Neo-Confucian forerunners on the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation, he still saw them as good ways for moral cultivation. It is said that influenced by Kao P'an-lung, Liu took "sitting in meditation for half a day and learning from books for the other half" as a regular practice for cultivation.⁹⁰ He often emphasized tranquillity and practised sitting in meditation. It was even said that this habit benefited his health.⁹¹ According to Liu Chuo,

Master [Liu Tsung-chou] had been weak and thin ever since he was born. He often suffered from illness during his adulthood. It was only in his later years

⁸⁷ "Ken-chih shuo", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 378.

⁸⁸ "Jen-p'u", in *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Chi-shan hsüeh-an" 蕺山學案 [The Chi-shan School], in *MJHA*, chüan 62, p. 1507.

⁹⁰ Ch'ien Mu, "Tu Liu Chi-shan chi", p. 302.

⁹¹ Huang Min-hao, *Liu Tsung-chou chi ch'i shen-tu che-hsüeh*, pp. 14-22.

that his health became better because of his maturity on cultivation. He could [then] write all day without feeling tired. He ate simply throughout his life, and after the calamitous change [of the fall of Ming in 1644] took only vegetarian food. He remained energetic and vigorous during twenty days of fasting. This is all due to his efforts in cultivating tranquillity (*ching yang* 靜養).⁹²

Liu Chuo does not offer any medical explanation for this.⁹³ Although the relation between cause and effect could be questioned, the passage reveals that Liu devoted himself to the cultivation of tranquillity throughout his life.

In Liu's biography we find many references to his doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and sitting in meditation. First is a record from 1611, saying that he and Liu Yung-ch'eng had a philosophical discussion in summer of that year. They discussed the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" among other issues. It was at this time that Liu started learning how to cultivate tranquillity.⁹⁴ Liu probably also started his philosophical investigation on cultivating tranquillity in this year.

A record of 1626 says that, hearing of the arrests of many of his comrades in the Tung-lin party, Liu decided to live as a hermit, "being vigilant in solitude". He said that "'solitariness' can only be preserved in tranquillity. If one does not know how to practise cultivation while he is tranquil, what can he do while he is active?" It was at this time he began to accept Chou Tun-i's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity to establish the human ultimate" and to practise "sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half".⁹⁵ A record dating from the following year

⁹² "Liu p'u i-lu" 劉譜遺錄 [Records not compiled in Liu Tsung-chou's biography], in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 568.

⁹³ Huang Min-hao [Wong, Simon Man-ho] has a more detailed study on this relationship. However, like Liu Chuo's record, Wong is not able to present any medical evidence to justify Liu's health being due simply to his cultivation of tranquillity. See Huang, *Liu Tsung-chou chi ch'i shen-tu che-hsüeh*, pp. 14-22.

⁹⁴ See *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 125.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

says that from spring to summer, Liu practised sitting in meditation whenever he had free time.⁹⁶ It seems that the practice of sitting in meditation became a regular practice with him then.

Liu also tried to transmit this practice to his students. In 1631, in a lecture to the Cheng-jen hui, which he founded with T'ao Shih-ling that year, he concentrated on the doctrine of "being vigilant in solitude". When he was asked how to start, he answered: "You can practise sitting in meditation first."⁹⁷ It appears that Liu believed in the general effect of the practice of sitting in meditation for moral cultivation.

Liu's practice of sitting in meditation seems to have been maintained until his death. It is said that during the time he refused food in order to commit suicide, he practised sitting in meditation in a small room, undisturbed by worldly affairs. He considered himself totally merged in the whole universe spiritually.⁹⁸

From the above records, we can conclude that Liu was consistent and sincere in his belief in the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation in his life. Besides that, the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" is closely related to Liu's doctrine of "being vigilant in solitude".

In his introduction to the teaching of Liu Tsung-chou, Huang Tsung-hsi wrote: "Liu's teaching takes 'being vigilant in solitude' as its essential doctrine."⁹⁹ Liu explained the doctrine of "being vigilant in solitude" as follows:

⁹⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 226.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

⁹⁸ See "Hui-lu", in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 645.

⁹⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Chi-shan hsüeh-an", in *MJHA*, chüan 62, p. 1512; *Records*, p. 262.

The core of the learning of sagehood resides only in “being vigilant in solitude”. Solitariness is the spirit of tranquillity and the incipient force for activity. To act without being reckless is called tranquillity. It is the ultimate of vigilance. It is called “emphasizing tranquillity to establish the ultimate”.¹⁰⁰

In Liu’s opinion, “being vigilant in solitude” is the ultimate expression of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”. It is also noteworthy that Liu maintained that the purpose of “being vigilant in solitude” is “to emphasize tranquillity to establish the ultimate”. In this sense, we can be sure that the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” played an important part in Liu’s thought.

(iv) Liu Tsung-chou’s response to doubts on the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation

Despite his confidence, Liu still needed to face doubts on the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation. These doubts fall into four categories. First, there was a doubt about the compatibility between them and the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” of the Ch’eng-Chu School. Secondly, there was doubt about their closeness to Ch’an Buddhism. Thirdly, there was doubt about the “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity” dualism on which they were based. Lastly, there was doubt about their lapsing into a preference of tranquillity over activity. Liu spent much effort in dealing with them.

On the first point, there does not seem to be any significant contradiction between the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” in Liu’s mind. In his description of his father’s learning, Liu Chuo said:

¹⁰⁰ “Hsüeh-yen shang”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 424.₁₂₃

What my father learnt about the sincerity (*ch'eng* 誠) of the learning of the sages started from the effort of “emphasizing reverence”, and, then, spending energy on “being vigilant in solitude” in the middle of his life, he finally got to the essential [of the learning of the sages] by “making the will sincere”. “Reverence” is the access to “sincerity”.¹⁰¹

It is noteworthy that Liu Chuo appears to regard “making the will sincere” the major achievement in Liu Tsung-chou’s learning. It is commonly agreed among modern scholars that the emphasis on “making the will sincere” is one of Liu’s major ideas on moral cultivation.¹⁰² In this sense, “reverence” is also important to Liu, as the access to sincerity, and it played a crucial role in Liu’s early life of moral cultivation. At the age of twenty-four, after he met Hsü Fu-yüan, Liu made up his mind to pursue the learning of the sages. It was also under Hsü’s influence that Liu first mentioned the importance of “reverence” for moral cultivation by saying,

There is no other ethic than “reverence” that is crucial for access to the Way. It starts from behaving properly and seriously. It ranges from the trivial details of appearance and words to the manifest aspects of every human affair. It ranges from vigilance on any tiny thought at any time to learning to preserve the principle of Heaven and erase human desires. Every time when a selfish intention arises one must fight strenuously to overcome it, discover where it comes from, and find out what he can do if it does emerge and lead to damaging consequences.¹⁰³

“Reverence” in this passage can be seen as serious attitude generally towards

¹⁰¹ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 528.

¹⁰² T’ang Chün-i, “Liu Tsung-chou’s doctrine of moral mind and practice and his critique of Wang Yang-ming”, pp. 313-5; Wong, Man-ho Simon, *Liu Tsung-chou: his doctrine of vigilant solitude*, pp. 116-97; Okada Takehiko 岡田武彦, *Liu Nientai no shōkai to shisō* 劉念台の生涯と思想 [The life and thought of Liu Tsung-chou], presented as a preface to Liu Tsung-chou, *Liu-tzu ch’üan-shu chi i-pien* 劉子全書及遺編 [The complete works of Liu Tsung-chou and a sequential edition] (Kyoto: Chübün Shuppansha, 1981), p. 17.

¹⁰³ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 106-7.

everything in daily life irrespective of any special philosophical meaning. Therefore, there cannot be any contradiction between the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” and Liu’s two main doctrines, “being vigilant in solitude” and “making the will sincere”.¹⁰⁴ This is the reason that Liu not only regarded “reverence” as important in his early life, but also took “emphasizing reverence” very seriously at the very end of his life. He said during the time he refused food in order to commit suicide:

The essence of learning is nothing but sincerity. The effort of sincerity resides in “emphasizing reverence”. After reverence is realized there comes the realization of sincerity. After sincerity is realized comes the realization of the principle of Heaven.¹⁰⁵

He also gave a general description of “reverence” as follows:

Ever since one is born, his mind senses things and is led astray by things. The five sense organs are the door for temptation. The mind is always straying outside, and whenever one wants to search for the original mind inside, one can only use the strayed mind to search for the original one. The word “reverence” can be the only clue for preserving the original mind. [One should practise it] whenever he is in activity or in tranquillity. [“Reverence” can be taken as essential] no matter whether one is active or tranquil, or [dealing with matters that are] manifested or hidden, in the past or in the future, giant or minute. It is the law of the mind that is transmitted by thousands of sages.¹⁰⁶

From this description, we know that Liu saw “reverence” as a common factor in moral cultivation in every aspect of human life. From this perspective, it is no wonder that Liu also did not see any contradiction between the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” and that of “emphasizing tranquillity”. He even said:

¹⁰⁴ Huang Min-hao, *Liu Tsung-chou chi ch’i shen-tu che-hsüeh*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ “Hui-lu”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 645.

¹⁰⁶ “Hsüeh-yen shang”, in *ibid.*, p. 441.

“Emphasizing tranquillity is reverence.”¹⁰⁷ This shows that, in his mind, emphasizing tranquillity is suited to the ethic of reverence.

However, because “reverence” is too general, Liu ultimately expressed dissatisfaction with the term. He said:

It is inspired by [the terms] “caution” (*chieh-shen* 戒慎) and “apprehension” (*k’ung-chü* 恐懼) in the *Doctrine of the Mean*. Ch’eng I postulated the word “reverence” [for moral cultivation]. But reverence is a rigid effort, which is not so effective and substantial as “caution” and “apprehension” as mentioned in the *Doctrine of the Mean*. [In the *Doctrine of the Mean*,] “caution” means “being cautious of what cannot be seen”, and “apprehension” means “being apprehensive of what cannot be heard”. That is all. It does not maintain that one should keep the word “reverence” in mind. Therefore, it is “emphasizing tranquillity to establish the ultimate” that is the least defective [for moral cultivation].¹⁰⁸

The doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” thus ultimately overwhelmingly takes the lead in Liu’s moral philosophy. Nevertheless, again, it cannot be said that the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” has any contradiction with the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” in Liu’s moral philosophy. Rather, it appears that Liu is using the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” to refine the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence”. In this sense, Liu’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” is not incompatible with the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence”.

Secondly, on the similarities between the Confucian practice of sitting in meditation and the Ch’an Buddhist practice of sitting in meditation, we can start with a discussion of Liu’s text on the practice of sitting in meditation in his *Jen-p’u*. In the section entitled “Sung kuo fa” 訟過法 (A method for the prosecution of bad deeds),

¹⁰⁷ “Hsüeh-yen hsia” 學言下 [Words on learning: part three], in *ibid.*, p. 512.

Liu created a special ritual for moral cultivation as follows:

I put a bowl of water and a stick of burning incense on a clean table. In front of it I place a rush mat. After dawn, I sit on the mat facing the table in the lotus position, erect and reverent. I hold back my breath and assume a serious mien, as if there were a majestic and awesome presence to whom I confess my misdeeds without concealment. I proceed to accuse myself, saying: "You certainly have the appearance of a human being. But once you have stumbled, you act like a beast. Degradation after degradation, you never stop." I reply, "Yes! Yes!" I then imagine that the above accusations are repeated by ten voices, while ten eyes and ten hands are beholding and pointing (*shih mu shih chih, kung chih kung shih* 十目十指，共指共視)¹⁰⁹ at me. I again reply, "Yes! Yes!" At this moment my heart throbs. Bitter sweat begins to flow and my face flushes, as if my body were being tortured in a court of law. Thereupon I leap up and shout, "I am guilty!" I then accuse myself further, "You are making an insincere confession!" To that I reply, "No! No!" Thereupon a thread of bright *ch'i* 氣 [air] comes slowly, as if proceeding to the Great Void, and I know that everything preceding was [due to] false causes. If false, then it is not real. [I then realize that] my original, true face is profound and pure, and it may emerge at any moment without any difficulty. This is just the right time to persevere with it. Suddenly a mote of dust arises; blow it away. Persevere again. Once more a mote of dust rises; blow it away. It will be like this several times. Neither forget it nor force it (*wu-wang wu-chu* 勿忘勿助),¹¹⁰ also do not ask what the effect will be. [At the end of the ritual,] tidy yourself instantly and rise. Stay shut in your chamber all day.¹¹¹

This ritual, Liu admitted, was accused of being close to Ch'an Buddhism. After considering this criticism, Liu confidently defined the above ritual as the "Ching-tso fa" 靜坐法 (the method of sitting in meditation).¹¹² Some modern scholars have pointed out that this ritual is indeed similar to a Buddhist confession rite, as recorded

¹⁰⁸ "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *ibid.*, p. 466.

¹⁰⁹ The term "ten eyes and ten hands are beholding and pointing at me" is from the *Great Learning*. See *Source Book*, p. 90.

¹¹⁰ See *Mencius*, Book II, part A: 2, p. 78.

¹¹¹ "Jen-p'u", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 18-9. The English translation is based on Pei-yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writing in Traditional China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 223-4; Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, pp. 135-6.

¹¹² "Jen-p'u", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 19.

in the *Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i* 法華三昧懺儀 [A manual for the Lotus *Samadhi*].¹¹³

The Lotus *Samadhi* [*Fa-hua san-mei* 法華三昧] is a twenty-one day practice based on the twenty-eighth chapter of the *Lotus Scripture* [*Fa-hua ching* 法華經].¹¹⁴

Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i was written by Chih-i 智顓 [538-597], the founder of the T'ien-t'ai 天台 School of Chinese Buddhism.¹¹⁵ It describes the Buddhist rite of confession as follows:

[The practitioner should] find a quiet place to build a room as sanctuary, build another room next to the sanctuary for seated meditation, and set up a high throne in the sanctuary, on which to enshrine a single copy of the *Lotus Scripture*. No other images, relics, or scriptures of any kind may be added. A canopy is placed over the altar, and banners are hung about the room. At dawn on the day one enters the sanctuary, he should clean and sweep the floor of the sanctuary, sprinkle it with perfumed water, and scour it with perfumed mud. On the altar [the practitioner should] arrange oil lamps and flowers and burn rare incense powders as offerings to the *San pao* 三寶 (Three Precious Ones: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, i.e. Buddha, the Law, and the Ecclesia or Order¹¹⁶). [The practitioner should] practise this rite with elaborate invocations. Why should [he] have to practise like that? For how can people, who sincerely revere the *San pao*, wishing to escape from the *San chieh* 三界 (three realms of the world: world of sensuous desire, form, and formless world of pure spirit¹¹⁷), be careless on the rite. If one won't spend his wealth on offering the *Ta-sheng* 大乘 (Mahayana¹¹⁸), he shall never acquire the wisdom and his heavy sins shall

¹¹³ See Mou Tsung-san, *Ts'ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan*, p. 533; Ku Ch'ing-mei 古清美, "Chi-shan hsüeh te Ju Shih chih pien" 截山學的儒釋之辨 [Liu Tsung-chou's interpretation of Confucianism and Buddhism], *Fo-hsüeh yen-chiu chung-hsin hsüeh-pao* 佛學研究中心學報 [Journal of the center for Buddhist studies], No. 2 (July 1997), pp. 193-9.

¹¹⁴ Daniel B. Stevenson, "The four kinds of *Samadhi* in early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Tradition of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), p. 67.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68. The T'ien-t'ai school can be traced to Kumarajiva 鳩摩羅什 [334-413], but the founder was Chi-i, who lived and taught in the T'ien-t'ai Mountain in Chekiang. The philosophical ideas of the school underlie the basic scriptures of the school but they are not expressed in lengthy passages. Chi-i's works are mostly devoted to spiritual cultivation. See Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 397-8.

¹¹⁶ William E. Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: With Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & co., LTD., 1937), p. 63.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

never be erased.¹¹⁹

In the rite of the sanctuary, the practitioner is asked to expose his faults and make confessions, hiding nothing.¹²⁰ In the final part of the rite, one should realize that:

mind is insubstantial, like a dream or an illusion of magic. Being quiescent, it is like empty space. It is without name, without distinguishing characteristics, and it defies discrimination. At this point the practitioner does not even see the mind of birth and death; how could he yet [expect to] find a mind of nirvana (nieh-p'an 涅槃, liberation)? As he does not [apprehend] any object of discernment or retain any notion of [a subjective] discerner, he does not grasp hold of anything, does not abandon anything, does not depend on anything, and does not adhere to anything. No mental activity whatsoever arises. His mind is ever quiescent, yet he does not dwell in stillness. Beyond the reach of words and speech, it is indescribable.¹²¹

One similarity between Liu's confession ritual and this Buddhist confession rite is firstly that sitting in meditation plays an important role in both cases. In Liu's ritual, the whole process of the moral cultivation appears to be realized during sitting in meditation, while in the Buddhist rite, sitting in meditation was the necessary requirement for the preparation for cultivation. Secondly, they both tried to formalize moral cultivation. In other words, through the rigorously formal ritual, they intended to persuade people to cultivate their moral life.¹²² Lastly, they both need a supervisor

¹¹⁹ Chih-i 智顓, "Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i" 法華三昧懺儀 [The confession rite in accordance to *Lotus Scripture*], in *Taisho shinshu daizokyo* 大正新修大藏經 [Taisho edition of the Buddhist canon] (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng ch'u-pan ku-fen yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1983), vol. 46, pp. 950a-b. The English translation is based on Daniel B. Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 952a-953b.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 954a. For the English translation see Daniel B. Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹²² Ku Ch'ing-mei suggests that Liu's ritual seems to have a regular process similar to the one held in the sanctuary of the Buddhist rite. See Ku, *op. cit.*, p. 195. Cynthia J. Brokow's study of Liu's "Sung kuo fa" (A method for the prosecution of bad deeds), which is the record of Liu's ritual, points out that this essay "explains how, through a form of quiet-sitting [sitting in meditation], one can make oneself aware of one's tendencies to transgress", and "Liu believed that a rigorous practice of confession and self-criticism was a prerequisite for the correction of faults and ultimately the attainment of moral

for the whole process of cultivation. In Liu's case, the supervisor was another self, which appears to be an imaginary self,¹²³ while, in the Buddhist case, the supervisor was the *Lotus Scripture*, which is a real object.

However, scholars also point out that there are some basic differences between these two cases of confession rites. First, in Liu's case, the aim of the ritual is to help people to realize their moral autonomy into moral realities in actual life, while in the Buddhist case the aim of the rite is to help people to understand the empty nature of this worldly life.¹²⁴ Secondly, in Liu's case, the mind of the main actor of the ritual is, in accordance with Confucian doctrine, ultimately good in nature, while in the Buddhist case, the mind is empty, neither good nor evil.¹²⁵

Despite the differences, the similarities between the two cases are obvious. It is also noteworthy that the author of the *Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i*, Chih-i, frequently used the terms "sudden or gradual" (*tun chien* 頓漸), which are part of the basic terminology later adopted by the Ch'an Buddhists,¹²⁶ in both his doctrinal and his practical works. Chih-i, therefore, had a pronounced influence on Ch'an Buddhism.¹²⁷ In this sense, although there is no evidence to prove that Liu Tsung-chou intended to imitate the *Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i*, it is no wonder that Liu was criticised as being

perfection." See Brokaw, *op. cit.*, p. 135; p. 136.

¹²³ Pei-yi Wu suggests that Liu's ritual "corresponds point for point with the Western theme of the soul on trial," allowing for the difference that, with Liu, "the self is not divided into conscience and soul but plays the twin roles alternately." See Wu, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

¹²⁴ See Mou, *Ts'ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan*, p. 533.

¹²⁵ See Ku Ch'ing-mei, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-8.

¹²⁶ The Ch'an school was divided into two schools, the Northern school and the Southern school. The two schools are usually distinguished by the fact that while the Northern school advocates gradual enlightenment (*chien-wu* 漸悟), the Southern school advocates sudden enlightenment (*tun-wu* 頓悟). See *Source Book*, p. 427.

¹²⁷ Neal Donner, "Sudden and gradual intimately conjoined: Chih-i's T'ien-t'ai view," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978), p. 201.

close to Ch'an Buddhism.¹²⁸

It was the pressure of this type of criticism that made Liu very concerned to distinguish between the Confucian sitting in meditation and Ch'an Buddhist intent meditation. Liu explained:

Isn't sitting in meditation the learning [of sages]? Ch'eng I praised people as well-accomplished in study whenever he saw them sitting in meditation. Someone after Ch'eng I explained: "[what Confucians said of sitting in meditation] was not meant to teach people to sit in meditation for the sake of attaining *samadhi* of Ch'an Buddhism. They simply wished to recommend such a remedy to our lack of learning by an effort of chasing the strayed mind." This explanation is absolutely right.¹²⁹

Liu's quotation of the explanation for Ch'eng I is from Wang Yang-ming.¹³⁰

Like Wang Yang-ming, Liu was careful to distinguish between the Confucian sitting in meditation and Ch'an Buddhist intent meditation. Following the above passage, Liu also cited Kao P'an-lung's distinction between two kinds of sitting in meditation in order to explain the difference between Confucian sitting in meditation and Ch'an Buddhist meditation. He said:

Recently master Kao P'an-lung has divided sitting in meditation into two kinds. One is a method [to teach people how] to forsake everything ultimately. The other one is a method [to teach people how] to settle down carefully in their real life. The master considered the latter one is the right practice of sitting in meditation.¹³¹

From the context, we can reasonably assume the former kind of sitting in meditation

¹²⁸ See Ch'ien Mu, *Sung Ming li-hsüeh kai-shu*, p. 434.

¹²⁹ "Jen-p'u", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 19.

¹³⁰ Wang Yang-ming, "Yü Ch'en-chung chu sheng", in *WYMCC*, chüan 4, p. 144.

¹³¹ "Jen-p'u", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 19.

refers to Ch'an Buddhist practice, the latter to Confucian practice.

Liu made a similar distinction in another essay. He said: "Ch'an Buddhism considers emptiness the substance [of the mind], while Confucianism considers goodness the substance [of the mind]". Liu maintained that, unlike the Confucian practice, Ch'an Buddhist intent meditation is aimless and meaningless.¹³²

It is clear that Liu tried to make a distinction between Confucian sitting in meditation and Ch'an Buddhist meditation in order to avoid criticism that his teaching was too close to Ch'an Buddhism. In an essay on sitting in meditation, Liu gave a further explanation. He said:

The method during this time [of sitting in meditation] is neither closing the eyes, nor covering the ears, nor sitting cross-legged, nor *shu hsi* 數息 (breathing exercises), nor *ts'an hua-tou* 參話頭 (analyzing the saying of a *kung-an* 公案¹³³). We may rise to our feet when we feel tired and respond to stimulus in our ordinary daily routines. Whether walking, standing, sitting or lying [in bed], we treat all as sitting in meditation.¹³⁴

Here, Liu seems to dismiss a regulated form for sitting in meditation. He particularly mentions that the effort of his method of sitting in meditation is not "breathing exercises", characteristic of Taoist cultivation,¹³⁵ or "analyzing the saying of a *kung-an*", characteristic of Ch'an Buddhist meditation.¹³⁶ With this explanation, Liu draws a definite line distinguishing his teaching of sitting in meditation from those of

¹³² "Ken-chih shuo", in *ibid.*, pp. 377-8.

¹³³ *Kung-an* is known as *koan* in Japanese. Literally it means an official document on the desk, connoting a sense of important decision and the final determination of truth and falsehood. To this end Ch'an masters made use of any story, problem, or situation as a *kung-an* for their pupils to explore the truth behind it. See *Source Book*, p. 429.

¹³⁴ "Chin-tso shuo", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 357.

¹³⁵ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), vol. 2, pp. 143-4.

¹³⁶ Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism (second series)* (Boston: The Beacon Press,

Taoism and Buddhism.

Thirdly, on the doubt about the “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity” dualism behind the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation, Liu, though an adherent of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”, expressed his opposition to this dualism. He said:

To acquire tranquillity in activity is the true substance of tranquillity; to acquire activity in tranquillity is the true function of activity. Substance and function come from the same source.¹³⁷

In saying “substance and function come from the same source”, Liu was emphasizing that “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity” can be truly realized in each other. Liu appears to take a position close to Wang Yang-ming, and even to those who, like Ou-yang Te and Wang Chi, opposed the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”.

Liu’s idea of the relation between “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity” seems to damage the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation. However, it does not influence Liu’s belief in these things. In place of the “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity” dualism, Liu had his own theory on the relation of tranquillity and activity to support his belief. This theory can be explicated from the two passages below. The first is Liu’s explanation of Chou Tun-i’s doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”:

[A student asked:] “Master Chou [Tun-i] held that it is the activity and

1952), p. 15.

¹³⁷ “Hsüeh-yen shang”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 440.

tranquillity of the Great Ultimate that bear *yin* 陰 (the passive cosmic force) and *yang* 陽 (the active cosmic force). But when he referred to the sage establishing the Ultimate, [he] emphasized ‘tranquillity’. Why?” [Liu] answered: “To be in accordance with principle is tranquillity. It is not the tranquillity in the relativity of activity and tranquillity.”¹³⁸

The second passage is a further explanation. Liu said:

The “tranquillity” of Chou Tun-i’s “emphasizing tranquillity” is totally different from the tranquillity in the relativity of activity and tranquillity. For *yin* and *yang* were born from activity and tranquillity. Both activity and tranquillity are necessary for the birth of *yin* and *yang*. If only one of them is emphasized, how can they be taken as the foundation of all existence? ... We know that activity and tranquillity are simply the same principle, and that *yin*, *yang* and the Ultimate are simply the same thing.”¹³⁹

In the last lines of the first of these passages, Liu used the word “tranquillity” in two different meanings. One has an experiential meaning, i.e. tranquillity in the duality of activity and tranquillity, which are the two major elements that give birth to *yin* and *yang*. The other has a metaphysical meaning, i.e. the tranquillity that is in accordance with principle. Liu also held that “The principle of Heaven is a subtle unity because in it there exist tranquillity in activity and activity in tranquillity.”¹⁴⁰ In this sense, Liu believed that the metaphysical tranquillity is transcendental to the experiential tranquillity and activity.

In the second passage, Liu also found no contradiction between tranquillity and activity in metaphysical tranquillity. It is clearly the metaphysical tranquillity that is the tranquillity that both Chou Tun-i’s and Liu’s doctrines of “emphasizing tranquillity” refer to.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 471.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 444.

Lastly, in regard to Liu's ideas on the duality between "substance/tranquillity" and "function/activity", we now turn to his concern that the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation might mislead some people into preferring tranquillity to activity.

Huang Tsung-hsi summarised one of Liu's doctrines as "there is no examining in action outside of abiding in tranquillity".¹⁴¹ This doctrine is so pronounced in Liu's moral philosophy that it invites questioning. One of his disciples asked Liu: "If 'being vigilant in solitude' resides exclusively in tranquillity, then is the effort during activity totally useless?"¹⁴² Liu answered:

It is just like a tree having its roots first and then its branches and leaves. The efforts of cultivation and irrigation all should apply to the roots. Why bother with efforts on the branches and leaves? If one cannot concentrate his effort in tranquillity, once he is in pleasure or anger, he will be indulging in emotion. How can he make any effort at that moment?¹⁴³

It is noteworthy that in Liu's answer, he used the metaphor of root-branch polarity to describe the relation between effort in tranquillity and that made in the feelings of pleasure or anger. This metaphor can be traced to the *Great Learning*. In describing the relation between cultivation of personal life and the management of social and political world, the *Great Learning* maintains:

Things have their roots and branches. Affairs have their beginnings and their

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 442.

¹⁴¹ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Tzu Liu-tzu hsing-chuang" 子劉子行狀 [A narrative of the life of master Liu Tsung-chuo], in Huang Tsung-hsi, *Huang Tsung-hsi ch'üan-chi* 黃宗羲全集 [The complete works of Huang Tsung-hsi] (Hangzhou: Chekiang ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1993), vol. 1, p. 250.

¹⁴² "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 437.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

end. To know what is first and what is last will lead one near the Way. ... There is never a case when the root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order.¹⁴⁴

For centuries, the *Great Learning* was an important classic for Neo-Confucians. Although they debated certain issues in it, they all agreed on the root-branch polarity.¹⁴⁵ The use of this metaphor, aligning tranquillity with roots, confirms the essential role of “emphasizing tranquillity” in Liu’s moral philosophy. Naturally, the metaphor of root-branch polarity does not mean that either is contradictory to the other.¹⁴⁶ It is here that Liu’s idea of the metaphysical tranquillity and the experiential tranquillity and activity plays an important role. In brief, the reason that the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” is essential is because the “tranquillity” to be emphasized is metaphysical tranquillity. In metaphysical tranquillity, there is no contradiction between experiential tranquillity and activity. In other words, in metaphysical tranquillity, tranquillity can be acquired in activity and activity can be achieved in tranquillity.

Therefore the realization of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” cannot be limited to the tranquil state. This is why Liu maintained that “The effort in tranquillity should be realized during managing daily affairs: it can be perfectly

¹⁴⁴ The *Great Learning*, in *Source Book*, pp. 86-7.

¹⁴⁵ Wing-tsit Chan, “Moral and social programs: the *Great Learning*”, in *ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁴⁶ In his studies of Confucian thought, Benjamin Schwartz has used three metaphors of polarities to deal with certain themes: self-cultivation and the ordering of society, the inner and outer realms, and knowledge and action, which seem to have an enduring importance within the tradition as a whole. He considered that we cannot use words such as antithesis, contradiction, and dichotomy because the alternatives in question were regarded by most orthodox Confucians not as antithetical but as inseparably complementary. See Benjamin Schwartz, “Some polarities in Confucian thought”, in David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 50-62. The root and branch polarity in the *Great Learning* and the Neo-Confucian terminology has similar characteristics to the three polarities discussed in Schwartz’s study.

effective.”¹⁴⁷ This shows that the tranquillity in the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” is transcendental to experiential tranquillity and activity, and therefore it can be realized in daily affairs.

However, it is difficult to discern the difference between metaphysical tranquillity and experiential tranquillity in the real life of experiences. This is why Liu’s students raised the questions: “Master Chou [Tun-i] held that it is activity and tranquillity of the Great Ultimate that bear *yin* and *yang*. But when mentioning about the sage’s establishing the Ultimate, [he] emphasized simply the word “tranquillity.” Why?”; “If ‘being vigilant in solitude’ resides exclusively in tranquillity, then will the effort during activity totally useless?” as mentioned above. Liu himself struggled with this problem, too, as Liu Chuo recorded:

The master (Liu Tsung-chou) concentrated on the effort of “being vigilant in solitude.” [He regarded] *tu-t’i* 獨體 (the substance of solitariness) as no more than *wei* 微 (subtlety). The effort of “being vigilant in solitude” resides in subtlety. Therefore, he concentrated on searching for the substance of solitariness in tranquillity. After searching for a long time in vain, he began to realize that the solitariness cannot be described by the word *ching* 靜 (tranquillity).¹⁴⁸

Ching in this context can be seen as experiential tranquillity. The substance of solitariness is regarded as an important element in Liu’s moral philosophy. Liu said: “Solitariness is *t’ai-chi* 太極 (the Great Ultimate). The feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are *yang* activity and *yin* tranquillity.”¹⁴⁹ To Liu, solitariness can be related to metaphysical tranquillity, which transcends experiential activity and

¹⁴⁷ “Hui-lu”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 612.

¹⁴⁸ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 313-4.

tranquillity and gives birth to them, just like *t'ai-chi* in relation to *yin* and *yang*.¹⁵⁰

Liu Chuo's record shows that Liu Tsung-chou had been indulging in experiential tranquillity in order to pursue or search for metaphysical tranquillity.

It is not only Liu Chuo who shows this. Liu Tsung-chou himself admitted to his students that he was wrong in saying "In learning one should pursue [the Way] in the state of tranquillity".¹⁵¹ Correcting himself, he maintained that: "The Way cannot be divided into an activity part and a tranquillity part; the mind cannot be divided into an activity part and a tranquillity part. Therefore, we know that learning also cannot be divided into an activity part and a tranquillity part."¹⁵²

In this connection there is another similar account in which Liu criticizes a student for indulging in cultivating experiential tranquillity:

The mind cannot be divided into an activity part and a tranquillity part. Therefore, learning cannot be divided into an activity part and a tranquillity part either. If [we] particularly pursue [the Way] in tranquillity, we will have the defect of preferring tranquillity to activity.¹⁵³

It appears that Liu was aware of the danger that the pursuit of experiential tranquillity would lapse into preferring tranquillity to activity. Liu went on:

In the crystal-clear tranquillity there exist volitions that need to be considered and things that need to be attended to. No matter whether these are about

¹⁴⁹ "I-pien hsüeh-yen", in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 567.

¹⁵⁰ Liu's parallel between the relation of *t'ai-chi* to *yin* and *yang* and the relation of solitariness to experiential activity and tranquillity is probably inspired by Chou Tun-i's *T'ai-chi tu-shuo*: "*T'ai-chi* through movement generates *yang*. ... Through tranquillity generates *yin*." See Chou, *Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu*, chüan 2, p. 23; *Source Book*, p. 463.

¹⁵¹ "Shih Chin Pao erh sheng" 示金鮑二生 [A letter to students Chin and Pao], in *ibid.*, vol. 3a, p. 396.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ "Hui-lu", in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 615.

financial management or military strategy, all of them can be done in tranquillity. This is the true cultivation of tranquillity. ... Learning without seizing the skill but empty talking about “emphasizing tranquillity” is worthless.¹⁵⁴

The crystal-clear tranquillity can be seen as metaphysical tranquillity. Liu was reemphasizing here that there is no contradiction between tranquillity and activity in metaphysical tranquility, since any kind of activity can be done in metaphysical tranquillity. Also, Liu was reemphasizing that, to use his own words, “to acquire activity in tranquillity is the true function of activity”. Liu appears to regard “to acquire activity in tranquillity” as the necessity for learning the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity”. In this sense Liu appeared to combine metaphysical tranquillity with experiential activities.¹⁵⁵ It is clear that, according to Liu, his doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” would never prefer tranquillity to activity.

To sum up the doctrines on “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practices of sitting in meditation from Ch’en Hsien-chang’s day to Liu Tsung-chou’s day, since Ch’en created the new paradigm of sitting in meditation, the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation became popular among Ming Neo-Confucians. Ch’en’s paradigm is characterized as a variety of mysticism because of his promoting the mystical experience of the state of tranquillity attained by sitting in meditation. This sort of mystical experience reemerged in the later Neo-Confucian generation, which included Wang Yang-ming, Nien Pao, Lo Hung-hsien, and Kao P’an-lung.¹⁵⁶ This mysticism is generally seen as

¹⁵⁴ “Hsüeh-yen shang”, in *ibid.*, p. 425.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Wang Fan-sen, “Ch’ing ch’u ssu-hsiang chung hsiang-shang hsüan-yüan chih hsüeh te mo-lo”, p. 560.

¹⁵⁶ Ch’en Lai 陳來, “Ju-hsüeh ch’uan-t’ung chung te shen-mi chu-i” 儒學傳統中的神秘主義 [Mysticism in Confucian tradition], in Ch’en Lai, *Chung-kuo chin-shih ssu-hsiang shih yen-chiu* 中國

a heresy in Neo-Confucian circles.¹⁵⁷ It especially was a target of the criticism of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation by scholars in the early Ch’ing, such as Ch’en Ch’üeh and Yen Yüan,¹⁵⁸ who are also known as the anti-Neo-Confucian scholars.¹⁵⁹ To some extent, in the arguments between the defenders and the critics of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation, they were endeavouring to prevent the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation from being accused of heresy, and trying to restore Confucian orthodoxy. Evidence of this may be seen in Ch’en Hsien-chang’s, Chan Jo-shui’s and Kao P’an-lung’s cases in reconfirming the compatibility between the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the doctrine of “emphasizing reverence” of the Ch’eng-Chu School; in Chan Jo-shui’s and Wang Yang-ming’s cases in distinguishing the difference between Neo-Confucian sitting in meditation and Ch’an Buddhist intent meditation; in Wang Chi’s and Ou-yang Te’s cases in challenging the “substance/tranquillity” and “function/activity” dualism; and, finally, in Chan Jo-shui’s and Wang Yang-ming’s cases in warning of the lapsing into a preference of tranquillity over activity. Liu Tsung-chou’s views on the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation reflect his ideas of dealing with the four doubts on the doctrine

近世思想史研究 [Studies of intellectual history of modern China] (Peking: Peking Commercial Press, 2003), pp. 310-20.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 329-32.

¹⁵⁸ See Ch’en Ch’üeh 陳確, “Yüan chiao” 原教 [On teaching], in Ch’en Ch’üeh, *Ch’en Ch’üeh chi* 陳確集 [The works of Ch’en Ch’üeh] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1979), p. 457; Yen Yüan 顏元, “Chu-tsu yü-lei p’ing” 朱子語類評 [Comments on Classified conversations of master Chu Hsi], in Yen Yüan and Li Kung 李塉, *Yen Li ts’ung-shu* 顏李叢書 [The works of Yen Yüan and Li Kung] (Peking: Ssu-ch’un hsüeh-hui, 1923), vol. 6, p. 24a.

¹⁵⁹ See Hou Wai-lu, et al., *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t’ung-shih*, vol. 5, pp. 191-8; pp. 324-81; Cheng Tsung-i, *Ming Ch’ing ju-hsüeh chuan-hsing t’an-hsi: ts’ung Liu Chi-shan tao Tai Tung-yüan*, pp. 153-63; pp. 189-223.

of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation. With the solution of the above four doubts, like his Neo-Confucian forerunners as mentioned above, Liu endeavoured to prevent the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation from being accused of heresy and sought to restore them to Confucian orthodoxy. In this sense his ideas display his reconsideration of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation; and they anticipate the criticism of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation by the anti-Neo-Confucian scholars in the early Ch’ing.

4.2 Liu Tsung-chou's revision of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine

(A) Liu Tsung-chou's changing attitudes toward Wang Yang-ming's doctrine

The second issue which concerned Liu Tsung-chou greatly in his intellectual career was that of how to deal with Wang Yang-ming's doctrine. Living in a period in which Wang's influence was widespread, Liu changed his attitude towards it several times. According to his son, Liu Chuo:

There have been three changes in the master's [Liu Tsung-chou's] attitude towards Yang-ming's doctrine: [he] doubted it at the beginning, then believed it, and then did everything he could to check its defects at the end.¹

The "three changes" in Liu Tsung-chou's attitude towards Wang Yang-ming's doctrine can be compared with Wang's "three changes" in his intellectual career.² Wang's "three changes" are concerned with his attitude towards Chu Hsi, as he transformed himself from a faithful student of the Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism to bearing a strong philosophical affinity to its opposite, the Lu Hsiang-shan School.³ A demarcation in the tradition of Neo-Confucianism between Chu's school and Wang's school is thus recognized by modern scholars.⁴ While the changes in Wang's beliefs throughout his career were dramatic, in Liu's case they were less so, and his final stance was not very different from Wang. Furthermore, while confirming Liu's "three

¹ *YNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 488.

² Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, p. 43.

³ *Ibid*, p. 55.

⁴ Wing-tsit Chan, "The *Hsing-li ching-i* and the Cheng-Chu School of the seventeenth century", p. 543.

changes”, his faithful disciple Huang Tsung-hsi even claimed that because of these changes “Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine became more conspicuous than ever.”⁵ It is probably for this reason that after describing his father’s “three changes”, Liu Chuo immediately makes a comment excusing the changes, saying:

Alas, it was only because he had some doubts [about the teaching of Wang Yang-ming], that he believed [it] then; alas, it was only because he believed it so sincerely, that he argued against it so eagerly. Who knows whether people who compete to be more abstruse than each other in their explications of Yang-ming’s doctrine are wise enough to understand Yang-ming?⁶

Liu Chuo also considered Liu Tsung-chou to be a true inheritor of Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine.

Wang’s “three changes” represented a significant shift away from Chu Hsi’s Neo-Confucianism, and Liu’s “three changes” brought him close to Wang Yang-ming’s position. If Wang’s doctrine represents a paradigm-shift in the mid-Ming Neo-Confucian academic community, Liu’s closeness to Wang represents the maturity of the Wang Yang-ming paradigm in late Ming Neo-Confucianism. Nevertheless, although Liu ultimately took up a position which brought him close to Wang, to some modern scholars it is more accurate to regard him as a revisionist of Wang’s doctrine.⁷ It is therefore useful to investigate Liu’s “three changes” to

⁵ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Tzu Liu-tzu hsiung-chuang”, p. 254.

⁶ *YNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 488.

⁷ Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962), vol. 2, p. 173; Mou Tsung-san, *Ts’ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan*, pp. 453-457; Lao Ssu-kuang, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih*, vol. 3b, p. 604; Tu Wei-ming, “Subjectivity in Liu Tsung-chou’s philosophical anthropology”, p. 106; Okada Takehiko, *Ô Yōmei to Minmatsu no Jūgaku*, p. 459; Thomé H. Fang, *Chinese Philosophy: Its Spirit and Its Development* (Taipei: Linking Publishing Co. Ltd., 1981), p. 475; Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Learning for One’s Self: Essays on the Individual in Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 165; Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, Ch’iu Han-sheng 邱漢生 and Chang Ch’i-chih 張豈之, eds., *Sung-Ming li-hsüeh shih*

establish where exactly he agreed and disagreed with Wang.

Liu's attitude towards Wang's doctrine is first seen in 1613. In a letter to one of his friends that year, Liu expressed his dissatisfaction with Wang's doctrine as follows:

[Lu] Hsiang-shan and [Wang] Yang-ming's doctrines both straightforwardly believed [that] *pen-hsin* 本心 (the mind of its original state) is the guarantee for [man becoming a] sage. They did not like to talk about the task of *k'o chi* 克己 (overcoming the self).⁸

The idea of *k'o chi* (overcoming the self) is from the *Analects* and referred to overcoming selfish human desires.⁹ In this sense, Liu was concerned that Lu and Wang underestimated the task of overcoming selfish human desires for moral cultivation.

Liu's emphasis on overcoming the self had been revealed in two earlier letters to a friend in the same year. In the first letter Liu said: "The acquisition of the essence of the learning of the sages starts from overcoming the self."¹⁰ This shows that for Liu, overcoming the self is fundamental for moral cultivation. In the second letter he had more to say about the effort of overcoming the self. He said:

宋明理學史 [A history of Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism] (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1987), vol. 2, p. 634.

⁸ "Yü Lu I-chien erh" 與陸以建二 [Letters to Lu I-chien: the second one], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 354. However, the above passage, with a slight difference, was recorded in Liu Chuo's edition of the biography of Liu Tsung-chou under the year 1601. See *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 106. Liu Chuo's edition did not present the origin of the passage in Liu Tsung-chou's works. According to Yao Ming-ta, a modern editor of Liu Tsung-chou's biography, the passage was found in detail in the letter to Lu I-chien in 1613. See *YNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 112. Liu Chuo's edition nevertheless indicates that Liu began to have doubts about Wang Yang-ming and Lu Hsiang-shan's doctrines after his first meeting with his teacher Hsü Fu-yüan in 1603, since it is known that Hsü also had such doubts.

⁹ *The Analects*, Book XII: 1, p. 112.

The gentleman searches for [returning to] the heavenly gifted nature in his words and deeds, and exerts himself to be *chieh chü* 戒懼 (cautious and apprehensive). The effort [of being *chieh chü*] in the *Yü shu* 虞書 (The book of Yü) is called *ching i* 精一 (mastering oneness); in the school of Confucius it is called *k'o chi* (overcoming of the self); in the *Book of Changes* it is called *hsi hsin* 洗心 (cleaning the mind); in the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of Mean* it is called *shen tu* 慎獨 (being vigilant in solitude). All of these efforts amount to the same thing.¹¹

In tracing this tradition back to the classics, Liu stressed the importance of the effort of overcoming the self, whether it goes under the name of mastering oneness, cleaning the mind, or being vigilant in solitude. It is in this regard that he criticised the corruption and lack of moral cultivation of his contemporaries. He said in the same letter:

The corruption of normal people nowadays is that they talk about returning the mind to its original state but not about overcoming the self ... ; they talk about the extension of knowledge but not about the investigation of things. Therefore, it is inevitable that they will pursue enlightenment in the mind with ignorance of objects, take emptiness as the Way, take erasing everything as learning; and take wordless immediate response as the true nature. How popular these weird doctrines are!¹²

All the faults of his contemporaries, in Liu's mind, reside in their neglect of overcoming the self. These defects are relevant to Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge".

Another of Liu's criticisms was that because Lu and Wang overestimated the reliability of the mind in its original state, "[they] furthermore did not make any effort to practise the tasks of studying (*hsüeh* 學), inquiring (*wen* 問), thinking (*ssu* 思)

¹⁰ "Yü Lu I-chien i" 與陸以建一 [Letters to Lu I-chien: the first one], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 351.

¹¹ "Yü I-chien erh" 與以建二 [Letters to I-chien: the second one], in *ibid.*, p. 352.

and sifting (*pien* 辨).”¹³ To Liu, Lu Hsiang-shan and Wang Yang-ming’s doctrines not only underestimated moral effort, but also were devoid of motivation for extensive learning for moral cultivation. In light of these defects, Liu remarked,

the teachings of Hsiang-shan and Yang-ming contain [instruction] for people at a high level but nothing for people at a low level. The main concepts [of their teaching] are extremely dangerous, similar to Wang Chi’s “Four Negatives”. If we follow their teachings and transmit them again and again, we will inevitably be corrupted. We can see the result in Yang Chien 楊簡 [T’zu-hu 慈湖, 1141-1226] and Wang Chi, not to mention people in later generations.¹⁴

This passage brings us back to the disagreement about Wang Yang-ming’s famous “Four Sentences of Teaching” between Wang’s two disciples, Ch’ien Te-hung and Wang Chi, as mentioned in section 3 of chapter 2. Wang Yang-ming tried to combine the opinions of both sides by singling out two ways of moral cultivation for the man of acute intelligence and the man of average and low intelligence. However, Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine of moral cultivation became controversial after his death.

From Liu Tsung-chou’s point of view, because Wang Yang-ming and Lu Hsiang-shan despised “the task of studying, inquiring, thinking and sifting”, it has made their doctrines of moral cultivation as nihilistic as Wang Chi’s “Four Negatives”, which maintains that there is no distinction between good and evil in the mind, the will, the knowledge and things.

At the end of this letter, Liu’s reference to Yang Chien, by comparing him with Wang Chi, is also significant. Yang Chien was the most famous follower of Lu Hsiang-shan in the Sung dynasty. Although Yang followed Lu closely, he differed

¹² Ibid.

from Lu in many important respects. For example, whereas Lu considered the development of the mind as the most important, Yang focused on the mind itself. On this count, he has been sometimes regarded as a Buddhist.¹⁵ It seems to Liu that the similarity between Lu Hsiang-shan and Wang Yang-ming's doctrines and that of Yang Chien and Wang Chi also implies that they are in danger of straying into Buddhism. To sum up, Liu suspected that Lu and Wang indulged in moral nihilism and Buddhism.

Liu's doubts seem to diminish slightly four years later. In 1617, in a letter to another friend, he tried to excuse Wang Yang-ming's involvement in Buddhism and Taoism. He said:

The ways [to pursue the truth] between Confucians and Buddhists are different. Although master Yang-ming was once involved in the two religions (i.e. Buddhism and Taoism), he ultimately openly rejected them, and considered Lu Hsiang-shan not to be a Ch'an Buddhist. It is obvious that he had sensed the faults of Ch'an Buddhism. However, people after him often intend to synthesize the three religions (Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism) to talk about the doctrine about innate knowledge. I am afraid that this is not the master's intention.¹⁶

The relation between Buddhism, Taoism and Neo-Confucianism is very complicated. In its embryonic form, Neo-Confucianism has intimate connections with Buddhism and Taoism. There are many Sung forerunners of Neo-Confucianism who were involved with Buddhism and Taoism before they created their own doctrines of

¹³ "Yü Lu I-chien erh", in *ibid.*, p. 354.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Herbert Frank, ed., *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976), p. 1221.

¹⁶ "Yü Wang Hung-tai nien-yü" 與王弘臺年友 [A letter to Wang Hung-t'ai], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 357.

Neo-Confucianism.¹⁷ Wang Yang-ming had also been involved in Buddhism and Taoism in his spiritual quest.¹⁸ It seems that Buddhism and Taoism provided the impulse to inspire scholars to rethink the intellectual problems of their time. However, the orthodox Neo-Confucians had always considered their metaphysics and worldviews to be different from those of the Buddhists and Taoists,¹⁹ so that many broke away from Buddhism and Taoism. This is probably the reason why Wang rejected Buddhism and Taoism and attempted to excuse his forerunner Lu Hsiang-shan. By confirming Wang's rejection of Buddhism and Taoism, Liu maintained that Wang had realized their faults. However, in Liu's time the syncretism of the three religions was very popular, especially in the circle of Wang Yang-ming's disciples.²⁰ This seemed to bother Liu so much that he felt obliged to rescue Wang's doctrine from this connection. In this regard, Liu did not believe that connecting the doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" to Buddhism and Taoism was Wang's original intention, and so attributed this defect to Wang's disciples.

Although Liu showed some sympathy in his evaluation of Wang's intention, he showed no such mercy in dealing with Wang's doctrine itself. In the same letter he said:

¹⁷ Chiang I-pin 蔣義斌, *Sung Ju yü Fo-chiao* 宋儒與佛教 [Sung Confucians and Buddhism] (Taipei: Tung-ta t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1997), pp. 24-8.

¹⁸ Tu Wei-ming, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action*, p. 43.

¹⁹ Kenneth K. Ch'ien, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 394-8; Edward T. Ch'ien, *Chiao Hung and the Restructuring of Neo-Confucianism in the Late Ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 92-3. Mou Tsung-san 牟宗三, *Hsin-t'i yü hsing-t'i* 心體與性體 [Mind and human nature] (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1987), vol. 2, pp. 129-31.

²⁰ Edward T. Ch'ien, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Master Yang-ming raised [the doctrine concerning] innate knowledge as the main issue, considering the investigation of things a secondary issue. This seems to be different from the main theme of the *Great Learning*. The difference between Confucianism and Buddhism actually resides in this point. The master did not discriminate between them with precision or talk about the difference with clarity. How can we blame people after him for starting [to synthesize the three religions]?²¹

Liu basically took Chu Hsi's paradigm, which regards "the investigation of things" as essential in the *Great Learning*, as the criterion for criticism. In this regard he could not agree with Wang in taking "the extension of innate knowledge" as essential for moral cultivation. Liu appears to conclude that it is Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" itself that led to the syncretism of the three religions. In this sense, Liu still had doubts about Wang's doctrine.

Liu's attitude towards Wang's doctrine seemed to change from doubt to belief after he finished editing *Huang-Ming tao-t'ung lu* in 1627. In this book, as mentioned in section 3 of chapter 3, Liu imitated Chu Hsi's *Ming-ch'en yen-hsing lu* to record the words and deeds of Ming scholars, with his own conclusion as an appendix. According to Liu Chuo, Liu Tsung-chou takes Confucius and Mencius' doctrine as the only criterion to decide whose words and deeds deserved recording. Liu clearly differed from popular opinion, even criticising those whom he himself had designated as 'worthies' in his selection. Only eight of these scholars, including Wang Yang-ming, escaped criticism.²²

As recorded by Liu Chuo, it was probably during the editing of this book that Liu Tsung-chou undertook further reading of Wang Yang-ming's works, and began

²¹ "Yü Wang Hung-tai nien-yu", in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 357.

²² *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 225-6.

to believe Wang's doctrine.²³ In this book, Liu Tsung-chou expressed approval of Wang's doctrine on three points. First, Liu praised Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" for "rescuing scholars from the defects of a teaching that was fragmented, distracting, and superficial."²⁴ Secondly, Liu confirmed: "Actually he (Wang) had been for a time associated with Ch'an Buddhist circles, but later, discovering the mistakes of Ch'an Buddhism, he abandoned it."²⁵ Thirdly, Liu claimed that Wang in "seeking the original mind in *liang-chih* (innate knowledge), makes the instruction more personally relevant and in joining the extension of knowledge to the investigation of things, makes the exertion more balanced and reliable."²⁶ Here he appears to differ from his earlier criticism of Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge".

With this new attitude towards Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge", Liu also tried to relate it to his own doctrine of "being vigilant in solitude", which he formally expounded in 1625.²⁷ In 1631, in his comment on the "Cheng-jen hui yüeh" 證人會約 [Constitution for members of the association for realizing humanity], Liu maintained:

The main theme of the Confucian school can be summed up as "being vigilant in solitude". Master Yang-ming said: "Innate knowledge is the knowledge of self in solitude." Both are saying the same thing. "Being vigilant in solitude" is identical to "extending innate knowledge."²⁸

²³ Ibid., p. 226.

²⁴ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Shih shuo", in *MJHA*, p. 7; *Records*, p. 58. *Huang-Ming tao-t'ung lu* is no longer extant. According to Yao Ming-ta and Julia Ching's studies, Huang Tsung-hsi's "Shih shuo" in *MJHA* is taken out of Liu's *Huang-Ming tao-t'ung lu*. See *YNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 228; Julia Ching, "Introduction", in *Records*, p. 16.

²⁵ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Shih shuo", in *MJHA*, p. 7; *Records*, p. 59.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 206.

²⁸ "Cheng-jen hui-yüeh shu hou" 證人會約書後 [A comment on the contract for the member of the

A similar opinion also is expressed in a letter to one of Liu's students in 1632.²⁹

Liu's positive attitude towards Wang's doctrine appears to reach its zenith when he edited *Sheng-hsüeh tsung-yao* in 1634. In this book, as mentioned in section 3 of chapter 3, only five Neo-Confucians, including Chou Tun-i, Chang Tsai, Ch'eng Hao, Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming, are chosen as examples for introducing the essence of Confucian doctrine. Liu even compared Wang to Mencius.³⁰ He praised Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" by saying: "the three words *chih liang chih* (the extension of innate knowledge) straightforwardly run through all doctrines from ancient times till now."³¹

However, while Liu came to accept Wang's doctrine, it seems that he still was not totally convinced of Wang's teaching. Together with his praise for Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge", Liu criticized Wang as follows:

He (Wang) was impatient in desiring to make manifest the Way, often instructing others lightly in the subtle doctrines that concern the higher level of the truth. This has opened the floodgates for later scholars to attempt [to attain the goal by] missing intervening steps.³²

It seems that Liu still blamed Wang for ignoring the fundamental task of studying, inquiring, thinking and sifting, while concentrating on the task of seeking the original mind in *liang-chih* (innate knowledge) for moral cultivation.

Association for realizing humanity], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 589.

²⁹ "Ta Lü-ssu liu" 答履思六 [Letters to Lü-ssu: the six one], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 370.

³⁰ "Sheng-hsüeh tsung-yao" 聖學宗要 [The essential themes of the learning of the sages], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 265.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

³² Huang Tsung-hsi, "Shih shuo", in *MJHA*, p. 7; *Records*, p. 59.

It probably is because Liu still harboured some doubts about Wang's doctrine that his third change of attitude came about. A letter from Liu to one of his students written in 1640 first shows this attitude. It says:

The saying of innate knowledge basically does not need to be hidden. ... But his interpretation of the *Great Learning* not only erred in being unnatural, but also had never examined the idea of "knowing what to abide in" (*chih chih* 知止), merely teaching people to make efforts to do good and erase evil while *nien* 念 (thoughts) arise. This indeed is not a fundamental way [of teaching].³³

Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" can be traced to the *Great Learning*.³⁴ Although Liu expressed a positive attitude towards Wang's expression of innate knowledge, he showed his basic opposition to Wang's interpretation of the *Great Learning* in the light of his doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge". "Knowing what to abide in" (*chih chih*) refers to the idea of "abiding in the highest good" (*chih yü chih shan* 止於至善). "Abiding in the highest good" is one of the three constituents of the Way of learning to be great depicted in the *Great Learning*.³⁵ In this regard, Liu suggested that Wang did not realize the basic truth of the *Great Learning*. The defect concerning Wang's "merely teaching people to make efforts to do good and erase evil while thoughts arise" refers to the different interpretations of *i* 意 (the will) and *nien* 念 (thought) in the *Great Learning* between Wang and Liu. This issue is complicated and will be discussed later.

³³ "Ta Han Tsan-fu" 答韓參夫 [Reply to Han Tsan-fu], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 422.

³⁴ Wing-tsit Chan, "Dynamic idealism in Wang Yang-ming," in *Source Book*, p. 656.

³⁵ The other two are "manifesting the clear character of man" and "loving the people". See the *Great Learning*, in *Source Book*, p. 86.

In 1643, in his “Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh”, Liu not only pointed out again this defect in Wang’s doctrine, he also took the doctrine of “making the will sincere” as its remedy. He wrote:

Yang-ming’s [propounding the doctrine of the extension of] innate knowledge was for rescuing recent scholars from being fragmented [in studies]. He thus used the *Great Learning* to attain to this purpose, though not perfectly in accordance with the essence of the *Great Learning*. ... Those who are responsible for education would like to expound the doctrine of “making the will sincere” to recover the truth of the *Great Learning*.³⁶

Despite this praise for Wang’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”, Liu still considered it not in accordance with the essence of the *Great Learning*. In place of “the extension of innate knowledge”, Liu regarded “making the will sincere” as essential to the *Great Learning*. Furthermore, Liu tried to relate Wang’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” and the doctrine of “making the will sincere”. He said:

Those who oppose [me] would argue: “the will is a weed.” I would answer: “It is good corn.” They would argue again: “the will is a branch.” I would answer: “It is the root.” [In my opinion,] to know the root is to know what is to be attained. To know what is to be attained is to know what to abide in. To know what to abide in is the so-called extension of innate knowledge. This is the main theme of Yang-ming’s doctrine.³⁷

It appears that Liu was trying to interpret Wang’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” in the light of the doctrine of “making the will sincere”.

Although Liu tried to excuse Wang’s doctrine of “the extension of innate

³⁶ “Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 325.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

knowledge” and even interpret it in the light of his doctrine of “making the will sincere”, he never ceased to worry about its shortcomings. At the very end of his life, just a few days before he died, Liu said:

The essence of learning is nothing but sincerity (*ch'eng* 誠). Remaining reverent is the main effort [for cultivation]. To remain reverent is to be sincere. To be sincere is to be close to the heavenly truth. Innate knowledge can barely escape from becoming Ch'an Buddhism. I would like to keep away from it from now on.³⁸

While he still did not specify whether it was Wang Yang-ming's doctrine or the people who transmit it that incur the danger of straying towards Buddhism, he was obviously doubtful about it. The only doctrine he could accept was “making the will sincere.”

To sum up, Liu regarded Wang's doctrine as the true transmission of the learning of the sages but was still less than satisfied with it. Three issues concerned him. The first was the task of overcoming selfish human desires for moral cultivation. The second was Wang's attitude towards extensive learning for moral cultivation. The third was the interpretations of the *Great Learning*.

(B) Differences in attitude towards overcoming selfish human desires between Wang Yang-ming and Liu Tsung-chou

For Confucians, to overcome selfish human desires of the self is a vital procedure in the pursuit of sagehood. The idea can be traced to Confucius' teaching.

When answering his disciple Yen Hui's question about benevolence (*jen* 仁),

Confucius said:

To return to the observance of the rites (*li* 禮) through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites through overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider benevolence to be his. However, the practice of benevolence depends on oneself alone, and not on others.³⁹

Here, both overcoming the self and returning to the observance of the rites are crucial.

In Confucius' opinion, in the process of moral cultivation for the realization of benevolence, overcoming the self is the main task, while the rite is the objective norm for realization.⁴⁰

To Neo-Confucians, as they take selfish human desires as the source of all kinds of evil, to overcome selfish human desire is crucial to their moral cultivation.⁴¹

³⁸ "Hui-lu", in *ibid.*, p. 645.

³⁹ *The Analects*, Book XII: 1, p. 112.

⁴⁰ The rite plays a sacred role in Confucian tradition. It connects an individual to society. To return to the observance of the rites is a crucial procedure in moral cultivation. A modern interpreter of Confucius' doctrine, Herbert Fingarette, states: "Rite brings out forcefully not only the harmony and beauty of social forms, the inherent and ultimate dignity of human intercourse; it brings out also the moral perfection implicit in achieving one's ends by dealing with others as beings of equal dignity, as free coparticipants in *li* 禮 (rite)." See Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 16. Another modern interpreter, Benjamin I. Schwartz, despite criticizing Fingarette's interpretation of Confucius' idea of *li* in many respects, also maintains that "If the word *tao* 道 (the Way) seems to refer to an all-encompassing state of affairs embracing the 'outer' sociopolitical order and the 'inner' moral life of the individual, the word *li* on the most concrete level refers to all those 'objective' prescriptions of behavior, whether involving rite, ceremony, manners, or general deportment, that bind human being and the spirits together in networks of interacting roles within the family, within human society, and within the numinous realm beyond." See Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1985), p. 67. For criticism of Fingarette's interpretation, see Schwartz, *ibid.*, pp. 67-75.

⁴¹ Chai Chih-ch'eng 翟志成, "Sung-Ming li-hsüeh te kung ssu chih pien chi ch'i hsien-tai i-han" 宋明理學的公私之辨及其現代意涵 [The discourses about "public" and "private" in Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism and their modern meaning], in Huang K'o-wu 黃克武 and Chang Che-chia 張哲嘉, eds., *Kung yü ssu: chin-tai Chung-kuo ko-t'i yü ch'ün-t'i chih ch'ung-chien* 公與私近代中國個體與群體之重建 [Public and private: reconstructing individual and collective bodies in modern China] (Taipei: The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2000), pp. 14-39.

Wang Yang-ming also talks positively about overcoming selfish human desires. Once in discussion with a disciple on the task of learning for moral cultivation, Wang warns him about the effect of selfish human desires. He considers the “thoughts and deliberations” of a young scholar “mostly tend to the side of selfish human desires”.⁴² He suggests that others should “teach him to sit in meditation and to stop those thoughts and deliberations”.⁴³ “Wait a long time till his mind becomes somewhat settled”, he suggests, to teach him “self-examination and self-mastery”.⁴⁴ He maintains that there is no letup in the work of self-examination and self-mastery, and says:

It is like getting rid of robbers and thieves. There must be the determination to wipe them out thoroughly and completely. Before things happen, each and every selfish desire for sex, wealth, and fame must be discovered. The root of the trouble must be pulled up and thrown away so that it will never sprout again. Only then can we feel fine. At all times be like a cat trying to catch a rat, with eyes single-mindedly watching and ears single-mindedly listening. As soon as an evil thought begins to arise, overcome it and cast it away. Be as decisive as in cutting a nail or slicing a piece of iron. Do not tolerate it or give it any consideration. Do not harbour it and do not allow it any way out. Only efforts such as these can be considered serious and concrete. Only then can selfish desires be thoroughly and completely wiped out.⁴⁵

Liu Tsung-chou displays a similar attitude. He once told in a letter to a friend his dream of promotion, criticizing himself for being tempted by the thought. He concluded that, in general, “Our minds are fully occupied by [the temptations] of beautiful sounds, beautiful colours, money and benefits. For example, we pursue gourmet food, elegant residences and beautiful clothes. In all of our activities in daily

⁴² *CHL*, p. 75; *Instructions*, Part I: 39, p. 35.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

life we are constantly occupied by selfish human desires.”⁴⁶ Like Wang Yang-ming,

Liu urges dealing with selfish human desires. He said:

The places the self hides in are extremely difficult to find. They flee away in all directions. It seems that there is no way to overcome them. [To overcome them] is like chasing robbers and thieves. [We should] chase them away in all directions without leaving them any place to hide. It is only by this way all the major and subsidiary parts can be put under arrest.⁴⁷

Like Wang, Liu also uses the metaphor of chasing robbers and thieves to describe overcoming selfish human desires. Both of them consider selfish human desires a serious problem and are anxious to overcome them. However, they take different standpoints on how to overcome them.

Wang takes a less active position. Asked about how to overcome the self, Wang replies firstly how desires harm human beings in general:

Beautiful colours make man's eyes blind. Beautiful sounds make his ears deaf. Good tastes injure his palate, and riding and hunting make him go wild with excitement.⁴⁸ All these are harmful to your ears, eyes, mouth, nose, and four limbs.⁴⁹

In this passage, Wang implicitly affirms that there is a physical self, which consists of human desires for such things as beautiful colours, beautiful sounds, delicious food, and racing and hunting. He then states:

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ “Yü I-chien wu” 與以建五 [Letters to I-chien: the fifth one], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 356.

⁴⁷ “Lun-yü hsüeh-an san” 論語學案三 [The study of *The Analects*: part three], in *LTTCC*, vol. 1, p. 501.

⁴⁸ Paraphrasing Lao-tzu's *Tao te ching*, ch. 12. See D. C Lau, trans., Lao-tzu, *Tao te ching* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Book Ltd, 1963), Chapter XII, p. 16

⁴⁹ *CHL*, p. 146; *Instructions*, Part I: 122, p. 80.

When you want to do something for your ears, eyes, mouth, nose, and four limbs, and will not look, listen, speak, move out of accord with the rules of propriety, are your ears, eyes, mouth, nose, and four limbs themselves capable of not doing so? The ability must come from your mind. These activities of seeing, listening, speaking, and moving are all of your mind. The sight of your mind emanates through the channel of the eyes, the hearing of your mind through the channel of the ears, the speech of your mind through the channel of the mouth, and the movement of your mind through the channel of your four limbs. If there were no mind, there would be no ears, eyes, mouth, or nose. ... What is called your mind is that which makes seeing, listening, and moving possible. It is the nature of man and things; it is the principle of Heaven. ... This is your true self. This true self is the master of the body.⁵⁰

This passage shows that, in Wang's opinion, there is another self: the self that is mastered by the mind. Only when the self is mastered by the mind can one fully realize the function of eyes, ears, mouth, nose and the four limbs. This self is what Wang defines as the true self.

Wang seems to keep a balance paying attention to both these aspects of the self, i.e., preserving the true self and getting rid of the desires of the physical self.

However, in his conclusion to this discussion, Wang appears to put more emphasis on preserving the true self. Wang urges his disciple to

make use of this true self, always preserve its original substance, and be cautious over things not yet seen and apprehensive over things not yet heard of, for fear that the true self be injured even slightly. Then whenever the least desire to act out of accord with the rules of propriety germinates and becomes active, you will feel as though cut with a knife and stuck with a needle; the feeling will be unbearable, and will not stop until the knife and the needle are removed. Only then may you said to have the determination to do something for yourself. Only then can you overcome the self.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid.; *Instructions*, Part I: 122, pp. 80-1.

⁵¹ Ibid., *Instructions*, Part I: 122, p. 81.

Wang was always concerned about selfish human desires, but his method for eliminating or overcoming them is dependent on the realization of the true self. He is less interested in how to overcome the physical self in detail.

When talking about rites, the objective norm for moral cultivation in Confucian ethics as mentioned above, Wang interpreted the rites in terms of principle as follows:

The word *li* 禮 (meaning rites) means the same as *li* 理 (meaning principle). When principles become manifested and can be seen, we call them patterns (*wen* 文, also meaning literature) and when patterns are hidden and abstruse and cannot be seen, we call them *li* (principle). They are the same thing. Restraining oneself with rules of rites means that this mind must become completely identified with the principle of Heaven. In order to become completely identified with the principle of Heaven, one must direct one's effort to where principle is manifested. For example, if principle is manifested in the serving of one's parents, one should learn to preserve it in the very act of serving one's parents. If principle is manifested in the serving of one's ruler, one should learn to preserve it in the very act of serving one's ruler. If principle is manifested in one living in riches or poverty or in noble or humble station, one should learn to preserve it in these situations. And if principle is manifested in one's being in difficulty and danger or being in the midst of barbarous tribes, one should learn to preserve it in these situations. And one should do the same whether working or resting, speaking or silent. No matter where principle may be manifested, one should learn right then and there to preserve it.⁵²

In Confucian ethics, rites not only stand as outward standards for regulating people's behaviour, they also stand as inward inspirations for cultivating people's minds. In his consistent endeavour to reestablish the feudal rites of the previous Chou dynasty, Confucius emphasizes not only the preservation of the rites on every occasion, but also urges people to realize them with sincerity. Therefore he insists: "Surely when one says 'The rites, the rites,' it is not enough merely to mean presents of jade and

silk.”⁵³ This shows that he remained consistently in pursuit of the meaning behind the rites, rather than simply being eager to replicate the rites in a formalistic way. He also insists that “Unless I take part in a sacrifice, it is as if I did not sacrifice”.⁵⁴ Both these quotes show that Confucius has implicitly depicted the role of the mind in the observance of the rites. Although Confucius never went any further in discussing the role of the mind in moral cultivation, his emphasis on the sincerity of the self in realizing the rites appeared to anticipate Mencius’ emphasis on the primacy of the mind in moral cultivation.⁵⁵ Mencius’ idea of the mind especially influenced Lu Hsiang-shan and Wang Yang-ming.⁵⁶ However, Confucius also emphasizes outward standards for the observance of the rites. He asks questions about everything when he goes inside the Grand Temple, expressing his eagerness to learn the rules of the rites.⁵⁷ He rebukes a noble family for performing rites which were the prerogative of the Emperor, saying “If this can be tolerated, what cannot be tolerated.”⁵⁸ In contrast, Wang Yang-ming appears to emphasize preserving principle, which is more abstract, rather than the details of the rites, which are more objective as rules for regulating people’s behaviours in different situations.⁵⁹ The following examples show Wang’s attitude more clearly in this respect.

One of Wang’s disciples queried the idea that “the mind is principle”. He asked:

⁵² Ibid., p. 41; *Instructions*, Part I: 9, p. 16.

⁵³ *The Analects*, Book XVII: 11, p. 145.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Book III: 12, p. 69.

⁵⁵ Chang Tai-nien, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh ta-kang*, p. 233.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 245.

⁵⁷ See *The Analects*, Book III: 15, p. 69.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Book III: 1, p. 67.

⁵⁹ In Neo-Confucian terminology, the rites are considered more objective than principles because the rites contain concrete rules for regulating people’s behaviours and principles are abstract in comparison. See Wang Fan-sen, “Hsin chi li shuo te tung-yao yü Ming mo Ch’ing ch’u hsüeh-feng chih chuan-pien”, p. 371.

“If the highest good is to be sought only in the mind, I am afraid not at all principles of things in the world will be covered.”⁶⁰ “In filial piety in serving one’s parents, in loyalty in serving one’s ruler, in faithfulness in intercourse with friends, or in humanity in governing people, there are many principles which I believe should not be left unexamined.”⁶¹ Furthermore he asked about the actual details of proper behaviours in different situations by saying: “Take, for example, the matter of serving one’s parents. The filial son is to care for their comfort both in winter and summer, and to inquire after their health every morning and evening. These things involve many actual details. Should we not endeavour to investigate them?”⁶² Wang answered that there is nothing in the world outside the mind, and there are no principles outside of the mind.⁶³ He said:

For instance, in the matter of serving one’s parents, one cannot seek for the principle of filial piety in the parent. In serving one’s ruler, one cannot seek for the principle of loyalty in the ruler. In the intercourse with friends and in governing the people, one cannot seek principle of faithfulness and humanity in friends and people. They are all in the mind, that is all, for the mind and principle are identical. When the mind is free from the obscuration of selfish desires, it is the embodiment of the principle of Heaven, which requires not an iota added from the outside. When this mind, which has become completely identical with the principle of Heaven, is applied and arises to serve parents, there is filial piety; when it arises to serve the ruler, there is loyalty; when it arises to deal with friends or to govern the people, there are faithfulness and humanity.⁶⁴

Wang’s answer is characterized by his idealist position, which regards the mind and

⁶⁰ *CHL*, p. 30; *Instructions*, Part I: 3, p. 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*; *Instructions*, Part I: 3, p. 8.

⁶³ *Ibid.*; *Instructions*, Part I: 3, p. 7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

everything in the universe as a single body.⁶⁵ In this view, material things and affairs or events are not external either, for they are likewise inside the mind. By the mind Wang essentially means the will. Therefore there would be no principle or things unless the mind were determined to realize it.⁶⁶ Therefore, to Wang, the principle of everything is nothing but the exercise of the mind, all concerning the mind's determination to realize it.

Wang's idea of the mind's determination to realize principle is very optimistic. He maintained: "Knowledge is the original substance of the mind. The mind is naturally able to know. When it perceives the parents, it naturally knows that one should be filial. When it perceives the elder brother, it naturally knows that one should be respectful. And when it perceives a child fall into a well, it naturally knows that one should be commiserative. This is innate knowledge of good (*liang-chih*) and need not be sought outside."⁶⁷

Although Wang did not oppose endeavouring to investigate the actual details of proper behaviour in different situations, he emphasized in general ridding the mind of selfish human desires and preserving the principle of Heaven. He said:

Why not endeavour to investigate them? The main thing is to have a basis. The

⁶⁵ See Hou Wai-lu et al., *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih*, vol. 4b, pp. 882-904; Wing-tsit Chan, "Dynamic idealism in Wang Yang-ming," in Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 654-9; Liu Shu-hsien 劉述先, "Wang hsüeh yü Chu hsüeh: Yang-ming hsin-hsüeh chih tsai ch'an-shih," 王學與朱學：陽明心學之再闡釋 [The learning of Wang Yang-ming and the learning of Chu Hsi: a reinterpretation of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of the mind], in Liu Shu-hsien, *Chu-tzu che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang te fa-ch'an yü wan-ch'eng* 朱子哲學思想的發展與完成 [The development and accomplishment of Chu Hsi's philosophy] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1982), pp. 489-511; David S. Nivison, "Moral decision in Wang Yang-ming: the problem of Chinese 'existentialism'", in Bryan W. Van Norden, ed., *The Ways of Confucianism: investigations in Chinese philosophy* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1996), p. 242.

⁶⁶ Wing-tsit Chan, "Dynamic idealism in Wang Yang-ming," in *Source Book*, p. 655.

⁶⁷ *CHL*, p. 40; *Instructions*, Part I: 8, p. 15.

main thing is to endeavour to investigate them by ridding the mind of selfish human desires and preserving the principle of Heaven. ... If the mind is free from selfish human desires and has become completely identical with the principle of Heaven, and if it is the mind that is sincere in its filial piety to parents, then in the winter it will naturally think of the cold of the parents and seek a way to provide warmth for them, and in the summer it will naturally think of the heat of the parents and seek a way to provide coolness for them. These are all offshoots of the mind that is sincere in its filial piety. Nevertheless, there must first be such a mind before there can be these offshoots.⁶⁸

In Wang's idea, once the mind is free from any selfish human desires, the actual details of proper behaviours in different situations will naturally be known and realized in each situation. In brief, although Wang is very concerned about selfish human desires, given his strong belief in the idea "the mind is principle", he suggested only a general rule, "ridding the mind of selfish human desires and preserving the principle of Heaven", to answer his disciple's question.

On how to rid the mind of selfish human desires and preserve the principle of Heaven, Wang even sometimes expressed a negative attitude toward objective norms. He said:

Innate knowledge is to minute details and varying circumstances as compasses and measures are to areas and lengths. Details and circumstances cannot be predetermined, just as areas and lengths are infinite in number and cannot be entirely covered. If compasses and squares are truly set, there cannot be any deception regarding areas, and the possibility of correct areas in the world cannot be exhausted. If measures are well exhibited, there cannot be any deception regarding lengths, and the possibility of correct lengths in the world cannot be exhausted. If innate knowledge is truly extended, there cannot be any deception regarding minute details and varying circumstances, and the possibility of minute details and varying circumstances in the world cannot be exhausted.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 30; *Instructions*, Part I: 3, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 182; *Instructions*, Part II: 139, p. 109.

Wang appears to take innate knowledge as the only standard that can judge all moral behaviour. He took the stories of the ancient sages, Shun 舜 and King Wu 武 of Chou, as examples of the extension of innate knowledge. He said:

As for Shun's marrying without first telling his parents, was there someone before him who did the same thing and served as an example for him, which he could find out by looking into certain records and asking certain people, after which he did as he did? Or did he search into the innate knowledge in an instant of thought in his own mind and weigh all factors as to what was proper, after which he could not help doing what he did? Similarly, in the case of King Wu's launching a military expedition before burying his father, was there someone before him who did the same thing and served as an example for him, which he could find out by looking into certain records or asking certain people, after which he did as he did? Or did he search into the innate knowledge in an instant of thought in his own mind and weigh all factors as to what was proper, after which he could not help doing what he did?⁷⁰

In general, Wang maintained that when there is no one before us who did the same thing and served as an example for us, which we can find out by looking into records or asking people, we can only search into the innate knowledge in an instant of thought in our own mind and weigh all factors as to what is proper, after which we will do what we should do. In short, in Wang's idea, innate knowledge is supposed to be *priori* to any objective norm. He expressed his negative attitude towards studying rites by saying: "It is clear that such things as the names and varieties of rites and music have nothing to do with the effort to become a sage."⁷¹

Compared with Wang Yang-ming, Liu Tsung-chou appears to be more positive about objective norms for overcoming selfish human desires. First of all, Liu's idea of the mind is different in some way from Wang's. Although Liu agreed that "there is

⁷⁰ Ibid.; *Instructions*, Part II: 139, pp. 109-10.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 191; *Instructions*, Part II: 141, p. 117.

no principle in the world outside the mind and, therefore, there is no knowledge outside of the mind,”⁷² he did not reach Wang’s optimistic conclusion that “knowledge is the original substance of the mind”. Liu expressed his idea of the mind in a conversation with a student as follows:

The teacher (Liu Tsung-chou) says: “The mind is able to know. However, it consists of a bright side and a dark side. When [you feel that] the mind is completely full of knowledge, it actually is only bright in its appearance and absolutely dark in its inner depths.” ... [The student] asked: “If the mind has knowledge, why is it that it consists of a bright side and a dark side, and is bright in appearance and dark inside?” The teacher said: “It is just like an eye which has a little dirt in it. The eyesight is blurred.” [The student] asked: “Is that little dirt produced by external things?” The teacher said: “The mind consists of nothing in its original state. Only because of being obstructed by a little selfish desire it may be in a mess. ...” [The student]: “Even if it (the mind) is disturbed, is it still the mind-in-itself?” The teacher said: “You may, as you wish, see it as the mind-in-itself.”⁷³

It appears that Liu considered that the mind is half good and half evil. Although he considered that the evil half is just like dirt in the eye, he did not consider it as produced by outward things but by selfish desire, which he considered a part of the mind-in-itself.

In one of Liu’s criticisms of Lu Hsiang-shan, Liu commented that Lu “simply mentioning the mind-in-itself” showed that he “only knows about the mind-in-itself but does not know about the habitual mind [*hsi hsin* 習心].”⁷⁴ In brief, Liu believed that besides the mind-in-itself, which is half good and half evil, there is also a mind which is always influenced by habits, being more changeable without definite

⁷² “Yü Wang Yu-chung wen-ta” 與王右仲問答 [A conversation with Wang Yu-chung], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 394.

⁷³ “Ch’in Lü-ssu wen chih-chih chih shuo” 秦履思問致知之說 [Ch’in Lü-ssu’s inquiries on the doctrine of the extension of knowledge], in *ibid.*, pp. 387-8.

character. In other words, the habitual mind can be good or evil.

It appears that Liu, in comparison to Wang Yang-ming, is more concerned about the evil side of the mind. This leads him to urge the correction of faulty behaviour in moral cultivation. He said:

In the operation of the heavenly mandate, all things in it [behave] without recklessness. What man is gifted from the Heavenly mandate is the mind. It is the so-called mind-in-itself. How can there be fault [in the mind-in-itself]? It is simply [because] in the circumstances of the changing of the emotions and situations it is inevitable for man to commit the faults of doing too much or doing not enough.⁷⁵

It seems to Liu that, although the mind is good in its original state, it is constantly in danger of doing too much or not doing enough in the circumstance when one's emotion is changing at the time when the situation is changing.

Furthermore, Liu divided faults into six categories. The first kind is "the subtle fault" (*wei kuo* 微過), which exists in solitary knowing (*tu chih* 獨知), including desire for profit and fame and attachment to life and death. Its crude expression is indulgence in liquor, sexual desire, greed, and anger. The second kind is "the concealed fault" (*yin kuo* 隱過), which lies in the realm of seven emotions, including excessive joy, hidden anger or resentment, sadness, excessive fearfulness, excessive love for one's wife and children, cruelty to those not related to one or to those of low status, and indulgence in physical desires. The third kind is "obvious faults" (*hsien kuo* 顯過), which are manifest in the nine appearances, including outrageous postures or expressions in appearances of foot, hand, eye, mouth, voice, head, manner,

⁷⁴ "Yü Wang Yu-chung wen-ta", in *ibid.*, p. 394.

standing and face. The fourth kind is “great faults” (*ta kuo* 大過), which lie in the realm of the five relationships, including twenty-one examples of fathers and sons, sixteen of rulers and ministers, seven of husbands and wives, nineteen of elder and younger brothers, and sixteen of friends. The fifth kind is “miscellaneous faults” (*ts’ung kuo* 叢過), which occur in the day-to-day practices, including ninety-three examples in ordinary life, such as fantasizing, loitering alone, excesses in eating, sexual intercourse, and spending on luxuries and entertainment; faults of character; errors in study in private field of life, and litigation, vengeance, theft, usury, greed, toadying for advancement, false business practices, oppression of the poor, cruelty to animals, and straying close to heterodox teachings, such as Taoism and Buddhism in public field of life. The last kind is “completed faults” (*ch’eng kuo* 成過), which are the above five faults in their completed states, which become the “doors that lead to evils”. The completion of the subtle fault is the “subtle evil” (*wei o* 微惡); this is the “door of the demon” (*sui men* 祟門). The completion of the concealed faults are the “concealed evil” (*yin o* 隱惡); these are the “doors of monsters” (*yao men* 妖門). The completion of the obvious faults are the “obvious evils” (*hsien o* 顯惡); these are the “doors of criminals” (*li men* 戾門). the completion of the great faults are the “great evils” (*ta o* 大惡); these are the “doors of beasts” (*shou men* 獸門). The completion of the miscellaneous faults are the “miscellaneous evils” (*ts’ung o* 叢惡); these are the “doors of bandits” (*tsei men* 賊門).⁷⁶

In contrast to the above categories, Liu presented six steps for the correction of

⁷⁵ “Jen-p’u”, in *ibid.*, p. 20.

faults.⁷⁷ He concluded with the sixth step for the correction of faults: “A student who has not yet passed the above five steps of correction has his body full of sins. Even if he has passed the above five steps, his body is still full of sins.”⁷⁸ This shows that Liu is constantly concerned about sins committed by the mind. In this respect, Liu’s sense of sin is regarded as the clearest in the history of Neo-Confucianism.⁷⁹ His devotion to categorizing the various faults and to presenting the ways to correct them shows the difference between him and Wang Yang-ming in their attitudes towards endeavouring to investigate the actual details of proper behaviours in different situations.

Not only does Liu hold a different idea of the mind from Wang Yang-ming. Liu’s idea of the relation of the rites and the self is also somehow different from Wang’s. In his interpretation of what *k’o chi* (overcoming the self) means in *The Analects*, Liu explains the words *jen* (benevolence), *li* (rite), and *chi* (the self) as follows:

Benevolence characterizes human nature. The rites are the distinctive rules of benevolence. The rites are distinctive because they distinguish human nature far apart from [selfish human desires of] the self. That which is in accordance with order is the rites. That which is imbued with impurity is the self. They are the different names of the principle of Heaven and human desires respectively.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 11-8. The English translation is based on Cynthia J. Brokow, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-5; Man-ho Simon. Wong, *Liu Tsung-chou: His Doctrine of Vigilant Solitude*, pp. 201-2.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 5-11.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁹ Chang Hao 張灝 observes that the sense of sin reveals in “Jen-p’u” can be compared to the sense of sin in western Puritanism. In perceiving the darkness of human nature, Liu is outstanding in comparison to his Neo-Confucian forerunners, who only suggest implicitly the existence of evil in human nature. See Chang Hao, “Ch’ao-yüeh i-shih yü yu-an i-shih” 超越意識與憂闇意識 [The sense of transcendental and the sense of darkness of human nature], in Chang Hao, *Yu-an i-shih yü min-chu ch’uan-t’ung* 憂闇意識與民主傳統 [The sense of darkness of human nature and the tradition of democracy] (Taipei: Lien-ching ch’u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1989), p. 73.

⁸⁰ “Lun-yü hsüeh-an san” 論語學案三 [The study of *The Analects*: part three], in *LITCC*, vol. 1, pp.

In Liu's idea, it is only by the observance of the rites that man can keep away from selfish human desires and the benevolence of human nature can be realized. Liu considers the observance of the rites crucial to moral cultivation. He also said:

Benevolence is only an undifferentiated spirit. There are no signs of the division of good and evil in it. Ritual is another name for benevolence. Therefore, to talk about benevolence without also talking about the rites is not accurate.⁸¹

In Liu's idea, benevolence is a general concept of morality. It supplies no objective rules for distinguishing good from evil in reality. Ritual, as another name for benevolence, with its special characteristic of distinguishing human nature apart from selfish human desires, is rather practical in distinguishing good from evil. Liu therefore considers the observance of the rites as necessary for the realization of benevolence. The following dialogue between Liu and his disciple shows this argument in more detail.

[The disciple asks:] "Why did not Confucius tell Yen Hui: 'to be cautious over what he does not see and apprehensive over what he does not hear. Be respectable without action. Be trustworthy without word.'" [Liu answers:] "What is manifested and what is subtle are undifferentiated [in saying that]. However, when mentioning looking, listening, speaking and moving, there must be a distinctive rule for each of them."⁸²

It appears that Liu emphasizes the detailed rules for behaviour rather than the general principle for moral cultivation. With this concern, Liu reached a special interpretation

500-1.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 503.

⁸² Ibid.

of “returning to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self” as follows:

Ritual is the starting point for and the embodiment of benevolence. Benevolence is invisible, while ritual has substance [that can be seen]. With substance in it ritual can distinguish human nature from the self. The self therefore cannot ruin benevolence. To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self is to thoroughly erase all the obstacles of impurity and recover innate goodness. By returning to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self one can therefore fulfill his nature and realize benevolence.⁸³

This shows that Liu considered the observance of the rites essential in moral cultivation.

There were similarities between Liu and Wang on ritual and self. Both of them consider that there is a physical self, which consists of selfish human desires, and both are concerned about these selfish human desires and eager to get rid of them. However, there were also differences. Wang considered that there is a true self, whose master was the mind, which is principle. He then interpreted the rites in terms of principle. Taking the preservation of principle in the mind as essential, he considered that returning to the observance of the rites was less important in moral cultivation. By contrast, Liu considered that the mind is half good and half evil. He therefore paid more attention to correcting the faults produced by the mind. With respect to returning to the observance of the rites, Liu considered that, as a general concept of morality, benevolence is too ambiguous to be verified in reality. It is only by returning to the observance of the rites, which is the embodiment of benevolence, that benevolence can be realized. Liu therefore put more emphasis on the observance of the rites.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 501.

Liu's emphasis on the observance of the rites was not merely a theoretical discussion. In his daily life, he tried to observe and realize the rites sincerely. Liu not only practised the rite of mourning his mother sincerely but also tried to practise it in accordance with ancient tradition.⁸⁴ In his retreat from his official life, he also spent time editing the rites for his family and his hometown.⁸⁵ Late in his life, since the ancient version of the *Book of Rites* was no longer extant and there was still no consensus as to its authenticity, following the steps of Chu Hsi and Wu Ch'eng 吳澄 [Ts'ao-lu 草廬, 1249-1333], Liu devoted himself to evidential study on the *Book of Rites*.⁸⁶

Liu's attitude to selfish human desire and his remarkable awareness of sin made him a significant thinker in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing. Studies of the intellectual history of this period show that, with the growth of the economy, scholars of this period started to regard human desire as positive in human nature and therefore encouraged the emancipation of human desires.⁸⁷ Contrary to this way of thought, a variety of moral Puritanism also emerged in this period. Liu, with his acute awareness of human desires, is considered a representative of this moral Puritanism.⁸⁸ Liu's emphasis on returning to the observance of the rites to realize benevolence is also noteworthy in that it represents a starting point of another intellectual transformation in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing. Scholars of

⁸⁴ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 106.

⁸⁵ *LNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 310, p. 323, p. 325.

⁸⁶ "Li-ching k'ao-tz'u hsü" 禮經考次序 [The preface to the evidential study of the *Book of Rites*], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b, pp. 729-32.

⁸⁷ Hou Wai-lu, et al., *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih*, vol. 4b, p. 1106, pp. 1067-71; vol. 5, p. 99; Yamonoi Yū, *Min Shin shisōshi no kenkyū*, pp. 371-4; Yü Ying-shih 余英時, *Chung-kuo chin-shih tsung-chiao lun-li yü shang-jen ching-shen* 中國近世宗教倫理與商人精神 [The religious ethic and the commercial spirit in modern China] (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1987), p. 103.

this period found it more important to emphasize the rites, which were considered more concrete by them, rather than principle, which was less concrete, for moral cultivation. Study of the rites gradually began to increase,⁸⁹ and even became a mainstream of mid-Ch'ing intellectual history.⁹⁰

(C) Differences in attitude towards extensive learning between Wang

Yang-ming and Liu Tsung-chou

The next issue relates to Liu Tsung-chou's attitude towards Wang Yang-ming's doctrine on extensive learning for moral cultivation. As mentioned earlier, Liu criticized Wang for neglecting the tasks of studying, inquiring, thinking and sifting. Such tasks can be referred to the issue of *tu shu* 讀書 (learning from books or book-learning), or extensive learning in general, in Neo-Confucianism. As Chu Hsi points out:

It is of course true that in high antiquity, before the writing system had been invented, learners had no books to read. Moreover, it is also true that people with above-average intelligence sometimes can attain to the Way through self-realization and without book-learning. However, ever since the sages and worthies began their creative work, a good deal of the Way has been preserved in the Classics. Therefore, even a sage like Confucius could not have possibly pursued learning apart from them.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Wang Fan-sen, "Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u te i-chung tao-te yen-ke chu-i," p. 72.

⁸⁹ Wang Fan-sen, "Hsin chi li shuo te tung-yao yü Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u hsüeh-feng chih chuan-pien", p. 371.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 372; Chang Shou-an 張壽安, *I li tai li: Ling T'ing-k'an yü Ch'ing chung-yeh ju-hsüeh ssu-hsiang chih chuan-pien* 以禮代理: 凌廷堪與清中葉儒學思想之轉變 [Taking the rite as substitute for principle: Ling T'ing-k'an (1755-1809) and the transition of Confucian philosophy in the mid-Ch'ing period] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1994), pp. 75-114.

⁹¹ Chu Hsi 朱熹, "Ta Ch'en Ming-chung" 答陳明仲 [Reply to Ch'en Ming-chung], in Chu Hsi, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 晦庵先生朱文公文集 [Collected writings of master Chu Hsi] (Kyoto: Jubun Shuppansha, 1977), chüan 43, p. 7b. The English is from Ying-shih Yü, "Morality

In this sense, extensive learning became increasingly relevant to moral cultivation in Neo-Confucianism.

Wang's attitude towards extensive learning for cultivation is connected to his idea of knowledge. Therefore, first of all, we should understand what Wang means by knowledge. Wang said:

Knowledge is principle made intelligent. In terms of its position as master [of the body], it is called the mind. In terms of its position as endowment, it is called our nature. All infants know how to love their parents and respect their elder brothers.⁹²

What Wang Yang-ming means by knowledge is the natural disposition or knowing the way of doing good. He therefore claimed definitively: "Innate knowledge of our nature does not come from hearing and seeing."⁹³ If the knowledge is naturally endowed, what, then, needs to be learnt? Wang said:

The simple truth is that when the intelligent faculty is not obstructed by selfish desires, but is developed and extended to the limit, it is then completely the original substance of the mind and can identify its character with that of Heaven and Earth. From the sage downward, none can be without obstruction. Therefore all need to investigate things so as to extend their knowledge.⁹⁴

Although knowledge is naturally endowed, it can be obstructed by selfish desires, which are inevitable in all men, including sages. He therefore maintained: "To learn

and knowledge in Chu Hsi's philosophical system", in Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 246-7.

⁹² *CHL*, p. 140; *Instructions*, Part I: 118, p. 76.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 187; *Instructions*, Part II: 140, p. 111.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140; *Instructions*, Part I: 118, p. 76.

is to get rid of selfish human desires and to preserve the principle of Heaven.”⁹⁵

Specifically on the extensive study of literature, he said:

No matter where principle may be manifested, one should learn right then and there to preserve it. This is what is meant by the extensive study of literature.⁹⁶

Wang is not totally dismissive of the extensive study of literature, but he emphasized that “to learn is to get rid of selfish human desires and to preserve the principle of Heaven”.

Based on this idea of learning, Wang’s comments on the history of Confucianism show his basic attitude towards extensive learning for moral cultivation. He said:

The great disorder of the world is due to the popularity of conventional, meaningless literature and the decline of actual practice of moral values. If the doctrine [of the Way] had been illuminated throughout the world, there would have been no need to transmit the Six Classics. Confucius abridged and transmitted them only because he had to. From the time of Fu-hsi 伏羲 who devised the Eight Trigrams to the time of King Wen 文 [1171-1122 B.C.] and Duke Chou [d. 1094 B.C.], a countless number of books ... was written on the doctrine of Changes, and consequently the doctrine of Changes became highly confused. Believing that the atmosphere of superficial writing was becoming thicker and realizing there would be no end to theorizing, Confucius took hold of the doctrine of King Wen and Duke Chou and clarified it as the only way of getting at its foundation. As a result, the various theories were all overthrown and an unanimity of interpretation was reached among the expositors of the *Book of Changes*. It was the same with the cases of the books of *History*, *Odes*, *Rites*, and *Music*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. ... When Confucius transmitted the Six Classics, he feared that superfluous writing was creating a chaos in the world, and he lost no time in making the Classics simple so that people might avoid the superfluous words and find out the real meaning; he did not intend to teach through mere words.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 132; *Instructions*, Part I: 111, p. 70.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 41; *Instructions*, Part I: 9, p. 16.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 44-5; *Instructions*, Part I: 11, pp. 18-9.

Wang believed that there are essential moral values that need not be over-interpreted by superfluous words but need to be discovered through their real meanings with words which are as simple as possible. In accordance with this, Wang maintains: “If the doctrine [of the Way] had been illuminated throughout the world, there would have been no need to transmit the Six Classics,” and praises Confucius for abridging the Six Classics.⁹⁸ Wang also commented on the burning of the books in the reign of the First Emperor of Ch’in 秦 [r.246-210 B.C.]. He said:

After the Ch’un-ch’iu 春秋 period [722-481 B.C.] superfluous writing became more abundant and the world became more chaotic. The First Emperor of Ch’in burned the books and has been condemned because he did so from a selfish motive, and he should not have burned the Six Classics. Had his intention been to illuminate the doctrine [of the Way], and to burn all those books opposed to the Classics and violating principle, it would have conformed, by implication, to Confucius’ intention of editing and transmitting the Classics.⁹⁹

The burning of the books is generally condemned as a calamity in Chinese cultural history. Risking public opinion, Wang maintained that burning those books opposed to the Classics and violating principle was acceptable and conformed to Confucius’ intention in editing and transmitting the Classics. He concluded: “The reason the world is not in order is because superficial writing is growing and concrete practice is declining.”¹⁰⁰

Some modern scholars have claimed that Wang’s comments and conclusion can

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 45; *Instructions*, Part I: 11, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

be considered anti-intellectual.¹⁰¹ Although it is not easy to determine how anti-intellectual Wang is, there is no doubt that he held a less positive attitude towards writing in the investigation of moral principle. He also held a less positive attitude towards extensive learning for moral cultivation.

Taking this stance, Wang criticizes many of his Confucian forerunners for wasting too much time on writing and extensive learning. Believing that Chu Hsi failed to understand the real meaning of “the investigation of things” in the *Great Learning*, Wang maintained that it was because, from Chu’s youth, “all along he directed his efforts only to intellectual investigation and writing. Naturally he would have had no time for these if he had given priority to self-cultivation with a sense of genuine and personal concern.”¹⁰² Wang furthermore considered that Chu repented in his old age and realized that “book learning did not help his task and that his task had nothing to do with holding on to books or adhering rigidly to words.”¹⁰³ In his comments on the two famous disciples of Confucius, Yen Hui and Tzu-kung 子貢 [520 B.C.-?], Wang praised the former for “devoting his effort to the mind” and condemned the latter for “devoting his effort to what was to be seen and heard.”¹⁰⁴ Another disciple of Confucius, Tzu-chang 子張 [503 B.C.-?], was also criticized by Wang for “defect of hearing and seeing much”.¹⁰⁵

Wang’s negative attitude towards extensive learning was most extreme in his famous essay entitled “Pa pen sai yüan” 拔本塞源 [Pulling up the root and stopping

¹⁰¹ See David S. Nivison, “The Philosophy of Wang Yang-ming”, in Bryan W. Van Norden ed., *The Ways of Confucianism: investigations in Chinese philosophy*, p. 217; Yü Ying-shih, “Ts’ung Sung Ming ju-hsüeh te fa-chan lun Ch’ing-tai ssu-hsiang shih”, pp. 93-6.

¹⁰² *CHL*, p. 121; *Instructions*, Part I: 100, p. 62.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*; *Instructions*, Part I: 100, p. 63.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 135; *Instructions*, Part I: 113, p. 72.

up the source]. In this essay, Wang vigorously attacks four tendencies that dominated the social and political scene for many years: namely, the stress on “hearing and seeing,” the habit of “memorization and recitation,” “indulgence in flowery compositions,” and the philosophy of “success and profit.”¹⁰⁶ The first three tendencies refer to extensive learning. Wang said:

Since Confucian doctrines were discarded, ... as a result, the door of Confucianism was blocked, and it was no longer to be seen. Therefore the learning of textual criticism developed and those perpetuating it were regarded as famous. The practice of memorization and recitation developed and those advocating it were regarded as extensively learned. The writing of flowery compositions developed and those indulging in it were regarded as elegant.”¹⁰⁷

He therefore condemned them as follows:

Extensive memorization and recitation merely served to increase people’s pride, substantial and abundant knowledge merely served to help them do evil, enormous information merely served to help them indulge in argumentation, and wealth in flowery compositions merely served to cover up their artificiality.¹⁰⁸

This shows Wang’s dismay at the development of tendencies concerning extensive learning, and thus his negative attitude towards extensive learning for moral cultivation.

Compared to Wang Yang-ming, Liu Tsung-chou adopts a more positive stance towards extensive learning. In general, influenced by Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine that “the mind is principle”, Liu also considered “there is no principle in the world

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 187; *Instructions*, Part II: 140, p. 111.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 194-8; *Instructions*, Part II: 142-3, pp. 117-24.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 197; *Instructions*, Part II: 143, p. 122.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 198; *Instructions*, Part II: 143, p. 123.

outside the mind and, therefore, there is no knowledge outside of the mind.”¹⁰⁹ Liu believed it was wrong to separate the pursuit of the Way through the sayings of the ancient sages and the pursuit of the Way in one’s own mind. He said:

The ancient sages are sages simply because they manifest the same mind that we have. Therefore, all the thousands of words they spoke were simply to ask people to pursue the mind which had gone astray. With repeated practising of the task of pursuing the mind, the mind may return to its body. What we called the Way of learning is simply this.¹¹⁰

Obviously Liu believed that pursuing the Way in the mind is essential for learning. In this sense, Liu is in accordance with Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine that “the mind is principle”. However, Liu reached a conclusion that is different from Wang’s. Liu continued:

Therefore, if you do not intend to pursue the Way in the mind, I have no further comment for you. Once you pursue the Way in your own mind, the sayings of the ancient sages may be useful no matter what form they take.¹¹¹

In Liu’s opinion, extensive learning of the words of ancient sages is necessary because they supply the experiences of manifesting the mind for people to learn from them.

Liu also wrote essays on learning and specifically on learning from books to emphasize their importance in moral cultivation.¹¹² In his essay entitled “Yüan

¹⁰⁹ “Yü Wang Yu-chung wen ta”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 394.

¹¹⁰ “Ta Chao Chün-fa” 答趙君法 [Reply to Chao Chün-fa], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 383.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Liu wrote one essay in three parts on learning and three essays on learning from books. See “Yüan hsüeh shang chung hsia” 原學上中下 [On the principle of learning: parts one, two, and three], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 332-8, “Tu-shu shuo shih erh” 讀書說示兒 [An essay on learning from books as

hsüeh” 原學 [On the principle of learning], Liu said:

The mind is ultimately good. ... The principle of goodness is one. However, its manifestations are many. The investigation of things and the extension of knowledge are to realize them (the manifestations).¹¹³

“Principle is one but its manifestations are many” (*li i fen shu* 理一分殊) is basically a Neo-Confucian doctrine developed by Chu Hsi.¹¹⁴ Wang Yang-ming considered it wrong. According to Wang, “in insisting that every blade of grass and every tree possesses principle and therefore should be investigated, the theory diverted people from the basic principles of things and the fundamentals of life. Moreover, by saying that the mind should go to things to investigate the principles inherent in them, the theory considered things as external and separated the mind and principle.”¹¹⁵ Liu, who differs from Wang in this respect, furthermore said: “Goodness manifests itself in the myriad things of the world. Therefore, in learning, one cannot but study extensively.”¹¹⁶

Liu’s attitude towards extensive learning is so positive that he opposed the thought of taking a single guideline as essential. In criticizing a friend who “considers taking a single guideline as essential in learning and dislikes to talk about the effort of cultivation, and dismisses everything referring to overcoming the

an instruction to his son], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 347-50, “Tu-shu shuo” 讀書說 [An essay on learning from books], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 358-9, and “Tu-shu yao-i shuo” 讀書要義說 [An essay on the essence of learning from books], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 366-8.

¹¹³ “Yüan hsüeh shang” 原學上 [On the principle of learning: part one], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 332-3.

¹¹⁴ Ch’ien Mu, *Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an*, vol. 3, pp. 34-5.

¹¹⁵ Wing-tsit Chan, “Dynamic idealism in Wang Yang-ming”, in *Source Book*, p. 655.

¹¹⁶ “Yüan hsüeh shang”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 333.

self,”¹¹⁷ Liu advises him that the tasks of studying, asking, thinking, and sifting cannot cease to be followed throughout one’s whole life. Even Confucius and Yen Hui had to devote themselves to the tasks of studying, asking, thinking and sifting. Liu believed that taking a single guideline as essential is an attempt to attain goodness without taking the necessary intervening steps.¹¹⁸

When one of Liu’s friends criticized Chu Hsi for his extensive learning, considering it had nothing to do with moral cultivation, and praised Confucius for his concept of “a single thread that run through all” (*i-kuan* 一貫),¹¹⁹ considering it has nothing to do with extensive learning, Liu answered:

We should get knowledge from learning as much as possible. The reason why we should get much knowledge from learning is right for “honouring the moral nature”. All Confucius’ words concerning “following the path of inquiry and study” are concerned with “honouring the moral nature”. If someone says that ‘the single thread that runs through everything’ is the proof of the moral nature, he shows that he has no idea about “the thread that runs through everything”.¹²⁰

This again shows Liu’s difference with Wang Yang-ming. In contrast to Liu, when mentioning Confucius’ “single thread”, Wang took it as evidence to prove that Confucius regarded knowledge from extensive learning as secondary.¹²¹

Liu wrote an essay entitled “Tu-shu shuo” 讀書說 [An essay on learning from books] to instruct his son to devote his efforts towards learning from books. In the appendix of the essay Liu noted:

¹¹⁷ “Yü Lu I-chien i”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 351.

¹¹⁸ See “Yü I-chien erh”, in *ibid*, pp. 352-3.

¹¹⁹ The term *i-k’uan* is from *The Analects*, Book XV: 3, p. 132. In his conversation with his disciple Tzu-kung, who was known for his erudite learning, Confucius denied that he himself was erudite and said that he had a single thread that ran through everything.

¹²⁰ “Yü Wang Yu-chung wen ta”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 396.

I have been following master Yang-ming in study. However, when I find that in his essay “Pa pen sai yüan” he considered that substantial and abundant knowledge about the changing events of past and present merely serves to help people ruin the world, I doubt the truth of this. If this point of view is extended to its utmost, it will inevitably lead people to forsake learning from books. The reason that people dare not do evil is simply because the classical learning provides the basic blockade to stop the flood of evil. Once people forsake learning from books, the flood of evil will flow everywhere.¹²²

Liu considered that the knowledge obtained from learning from books provides objective norms for regulating people’s behaviours and preventing them from doing evil. To prove his point, he gave an example of an incident in Ming politics that was inspired by Wang’s doctrine. He said:

I have read a book that mentions Chang Chü-cheng’s determination not to observe traditional mourning rites [for the death of his father]. Chang attacked those who criticized him. He blamed them for not being able to present any better reason but simply relying on old clichés. He maintained that only Wang Yang-ming could understand what he had done. Alas! The case that Chang Chü-cheng intended to not to observe traditional mourning rites, in fact, has nothing to do with Wang Yang-ming. How can it be possible that people as intelligent as Wang Yang-ming would make an excuse for such a rebellious subject as Chang Chü-cheng? It is the doctrine concerning innate knowledge that gave him the inspiration to do that. Therefore gentlemen who propagate doctrines cannot but be vigilant. This is the reason why I am writing this essay on learning from books.¹²³

Chang Chü-cheng’s determination not to observe traditional mourning rites caused a great debate in mid-Ming politics. Chang’s father died in 1577, when Chang was at the height of his power as the Grand Secretary and his program of reforms was beginning to take hold. In accordance with the conventions, Chang should have

¹²¹ See *CHL*, p. 187; *Instructions*, Part II: 140, p. 112.

¹²² “Tu-shu shuo shih erh”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 350.

returned home to mourn for twenty-seven months. Wanting to continue the program of reforms without interruption, numerous people at court, including the emperor, begged Chang to remain, while a similar number considered this impermissible in the light of time-worn precedent. Many of the latter who criticized Chang were flogged severely and either demoted or exiled. The emperor decreed that all criticism should cease on pain of condign punishment.¹²⁴

Since Liu did not show the source of his information, we cannot be sure that Chang actually drew on Wang Yang-ming to strengthen his determination. What we can be sure of is that Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" might have given Chang an excuse to revolt against time-worn conventions. As mentioned above, Wang took innate knowledge as the only standard that can judge all moral behaviour. To Wang, innate knowledge is a priori to any objective norm: "The thoughts of the sages are all passing shadows; it is innate knowledge alone that is my teacher,"¹²⁵ and "The important thing in learning is to acquire learning through the exercise of the mind. If words are examined in the mind and found to be wrong, although they have come from the mouth of Confucius, I dare not accept them as correct."¹²⁶

When Chang Chü-cheng faced criticism in the light of precedent, it is possible that he considered his deciding not to observe traditional mourning rites in favour of continuing his program of reforms as a behaviour which was in accordance with

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ See Chu Tung-jun 朱東潤, *Chang Chü-cheng ta chuan* 張居正大傳 [A grand biography of Chang Chü-cheng], (Shanghai: Shanghai shu-chü, 1947), pp. 260-79; Carrington L. Goodrich and Fang Chao-ying, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 85.

¹²⁵ Wang Yang-ming, "Ch'ang-sheng" 長生 [Long life (poem)], in *WYMCC*, chüan 20, p. 796.

Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge". In this sense, Liu appears to accuse Wang's doctrine of potential moral nihilism. It is noteworthy that Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" had invited this sort of accusation in the intervening period prior to Liu's time.

As his doctrine challenging Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy became widespread, Wang Yang-ming and his disciples came under serious criticism,¹²⁷ especially for their supposed moral nihilism. A memorial by an official of the Ministry of Rites, Chang Ch'iao 章僑 [?-?], in 1522 started this criticism by saying:

Ever since the Three Dynasties till now, there has been no other doctrine that can compare to the teaching of Chu Hsi. However, recently a man (referring to Wang Yang-ming) who is so intelligent that he can inspire the whole world has propounded a divergent doctrine. Those who aimed high for fame without doing the fundamental work worshipped him in huge numbers. They mostly adopted the easier way propounded by Lu Hsiang-shan and resented Chu Hsi, for what they deemed his triviality.¹²⁸

Chang Ch'iao appeared to accuse Wang and his followers of being inclined to taking Lu Hsiang-shan's easier way and forsaking Chu Hsi's harder way for moral cultivation.

The Minister of Personnel Kuei O 桂萼 [Tsu-shih 子實, ?-1531], after Wang's death, presented a memorial in 1529 criticizing Wang as follows:

¹²⁶ *CHL*, p. 248; *Instructions*, Part II: 173, p. 159.

¹²⁷ Chu Hung-lam, "The debate over recognition of Wang Yang-ming," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 48-1 (1988), pp. 47-70.

¹²⁸ *Ming Shih-tsung shih-lu* 明世宗實錄 [Veritable records of the Ming: the part of the reign of emperor Chia-ching] (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966), chüan 19, pp. 5b-6a (568-569); Wu Chen 吳震, *Ming-tai chih-shih-chieh chiang-hsüeh huo-tung hsi-nien* (1522-1602) 明代知識界講學活動繫年 [Lecturing activities in Ming intellectual circles

Wang Yang-ming did not behave in accordance with the instructions of the ancients and he spoke with no respect to Confucius. In order to acquire fame, he dissented from Chu Hsi's doctrine of the investigation of things. He knew that others did not agree with him. Therefore, he wrote the book *Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun* to [defame Chu] and summoned his disciples to make them his accomplices. Those who are intelligent are happy in behaving without being restricted by morality. Some of them indulge in empty talk. Those who are mediocre, counting on his fame, dare to behave wildly.¹²⁹

This accusation, which appears to blame Wang for encouraging moral nihilism in academia, was one of many.¹³⁰ Even in Liu's time some scholars of the Wang Yang-ming School were still accused of moral nihilism.¹³¹ Some of these charges against Wang and his followers were politically motivated.¹³² In this sense, condemning Chang Chü-cheng and blaming Wang for Chang's misdeeds show both Liu's concern that Wang's doctrine was infected by moral nihilism and also his own response to this political reality.

In the beginning of "Tu-shu shuo", Liu claims: "The purpose of learning from books is to pursue the Way in our mind."¹³³ He explains:

Since the birth of the universe, there have been the birth of myriad things. Then, the principles of human relation appear. The results of myriad affairs and myriad changes are refined within the mind without exception. The sages therefore had investigations into them and used them to teach people. Scholars of later generations collected and preserved the teachings of the sages. The scholarship of Confucianism emerged under such circumstances. Therefore learning from

(1522-1602)] (Shanghai: Hsüeh-lin ch'u-pan she, 2003), p. 6.

¹²⁹ Ibid, chüan 98, p. 7a (2299); Wu Chen, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-4.

¹³⁰ Chu Hung-lin [Chu Hung-lam] 朱鴻林, "Yang-ming ts'ung-ssu tien-li te cheng-i ho ts'o-che" 陽明從祀典禮的爭議和挫折 [The final decision for the official recognition of Wang Yang-ming], *Chung-kuo wen-hua yen-chiu-suo hsüeh-pao* 中國文化研究所學報 [Journal of Chinese studies], n.s. no. 5 (1996), pp. 167-81.

¹³¹ Wang Fan-sen, "Ch'ing ch'u te Chiang-ching hui", pp. 515-24.

¹³² Chu Hung-lin, "Yang-ming ts'ung-ssu tien-li te cheng-i ho ts'o-che", p. 180; Wang Fan-sen, "Ch'ing ch'u te Chiang-ching hui", pp. 522-4.

¹³³ "Tu-shu shuo shih erh", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 347.

books is the duty of a Confucian.¹³⁴

In this passage, Liu adopts the same position as Wang Yang-ming in regarding the mind to be identical to principle. However, unlike Wang, Liu emphasized the importance of learning from books in order to preserve the sages' experiences of searching for the principle in the mind.

Also, Liu pointed out that even though everyone has a mind, it is possible that one may fail to realize what it is. In this circumstance, one needs others' help in pointing out what the mind is. Books are the most useful aid for teaching people what the mind is.¹³⁵ He then describes in detail which books are beneficial for moral cultivation. He said:

First of all, one should read the *Hsiao-hsüeh* 小學 [Elementary studies] to establish the basics. Then, read the *Great Learning* to grasp the outlines. Then, read the *Doctrine of the Mean* to investigate the implied meaning. Then, read the *Analects* to learn to practise. Then, read the *Mencius* to refine the main theme. It is from then on that one realizes what the mind is. Then, one should read the *Book of Changes* to acquire [the truth of] the changes of *yin* and *yang* in the mind. Then read the *Book of Odes* to acquire [the truth of] the nature and emotions of the mind. Then read the *Book of Documents* to acquire [the truth of] the ability of the mind in [dealing with] politics. Then read the *Book of Rites* to acquire [the truth of] the ability of the mind in [dealing with] the rules of propriety. Then read the *Ch'un-ch'iu* 春秋 [The history of the Ch'un-ch'iu period] to acquire [the truth of] the ability of the mind in [dealing with] affairs concerning social status.¹³⁶

After listing these books, Liu states that extensive studying, accurate inquiring, careful thinking, clear sifting and earnest practising are supposed to be used in learning from these books. It is by devoting effort to studying, inquiring, thinking,

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 348-9.

sifting and practising in learning that one can control things ranging from the subtlest aspect of human nature and emotions, through the affairs of the family, the country, and all-under-heaven, to the myriad things in the universe. Liu concluded that this is the function of learning from books.¹³⁷

In contrast to Liu's detailed elaboration, Wang referred to these efforts in a very general way. For example, Wang simply said that they are used "in order for the mind to be completely identified with the principle of Heaven,"¹³⁸ and they "are all efforts of refinement for the sake of singleness of mind."¹³⁹ It is based on this difference that Liu's following criticism probably took Wang's opinion as his main target.

Like Wang, Liu also criticized those who are not good in learning from books.

He condemned:

They regard merely the memorization, recitation, and flowery compositions as learning. They therefore are lacking in that they only know about knowledge concerning speaking and memorizing. Furthermore, there are some of them who even use this kind of knowledge to do evil."¹⁴⁰

Thus he seemed to praise people who intended to save scholars from these defects.

He said:

Therefore there are some knowledgeable people who have started to oppose this climate. They creatively depict that the mind is the only thing that can prove the existence of the sageliness of human nature.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Ibid., 349.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ *CHL*, p. 32; *Instructions*, Part I: 4, p. 9.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 64; *Instructions*, Part I: 25, p. 29.

¹⁴⁰ "Tu-shu shuo shih erh", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 349.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

However, he observed:

They [, therefore,] consider the knowledge from hearing and seeing as secondary knowledge. Following their steps, the Buddhists and Taoists therefore extend their theory. To their utmost, some of them even become frenzied and arrogant and are bad enough to ruin the world.¹⁴²

Although Liu had shown his respect to these “knowledgeable people” for their determination to save scholars from learning by rote memorization, recitation and flowery compositions, he blamed them for inspiring the frenzy and arrogance of the Buddhists and Taoists. “Knowledgeable people” may be directed at Wang Yang-ming, because Wang claimed that the knowledge from hearing and seeing is secondary knowledge.¹⁴³

Basically Liu is dissatisfied with Wang Yang-ming’s negative attitude towards learning from books. However, in another essay, also entitled “Tu-shu shuo”, Liu excuses Wang’s negative attitude:

Master Yang-ming did not like students to emphasize learning from books but asked them to verify things directly with their mind in its original state. He said that simply because [he considered that] those who do not know how to learn from books would forsake [the pursuit of the Way in] their own mind to pursue [the Way in] the mind of the sages, which would make them like beggars taking their bowls in front of others’ doors to beg for food [without knowing what they really want]. He does not mean that we may totally forsake learning from books.¹⁴⁴

Liu considered that Wang’s negative attitude towards learning from books was meant to admonish scholars who simply pursue the Way in the mind of the sages without

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ See *CHL*, p. 187; *Instructions*, Part II: 140, p. 111.

verifying things in their own mind. However, Liu, again, presented argument to show that learning from books is necessary. Liu states:

Master Yang-ming also said: “To study extensively is to study nothing but principle. To inquire accurately is to inquire about nothing but principle. To think carefully is to think of nothing but principle. To sift clearly is to sift nothing but principle. To practise earnestly is to practise nothing but principle.” [He also said:] “The mind is principle.” It is difficult to understand the mind and principle. As he said, it needs studying, inquiring, thinking, sifting and practising to understand the mind and principle. What, then, can we do in studying, inquiring, thinking, sifting and practising? I said: “The ancients are like a light for me. Isn’t learning from books a good way to lead me? Even though [as Wang Yang-ming said] there are those who do not know how to learn from books who would forsake their own mind to pursue the mind of the sages, which would make them like beggars taking their bowls in front of others’ doors to beg for food [without knowing what they really want], if they can actually get some food in their bowls, what harm is there in being a beggar?”¹⁴⁵

It appears that although Liu agrees with Wang’s doctrine that “the mind is principle”, he preferred to stress studying, inquiring, thinking, sifting, and practising. In this respect, Liu expressed a more practical position. Even though forsaking the pursuit of the Way in one’s mind to pursue the Way in the mind of the sages in learning from books was in his estimation essentially wrong, he saw it as acceptable if one can at least really learn something from books.

Liu Tsung-chou played an important part in the switch from the pursuit of the learning of “honouring the moral nature” to the pursuit of the learning of “following the path of inquiry and study”, which characterizes the rise of Confucian intellectualism in the period from late Ming to early Ch’ing.¹⁴⁶ Many scholars of this

¹⁴⁴ “Tu-shu shuo”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 358-9.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

¹⁴⁶ Yü Ying-shih 余英時, “Ju-chia chih-shih chu-i te hsing-ch’i: ts’un Ch’ing ch’u tao Tai

period considered pursuing the Way in the mind to be too subjective. They preferred to take learning from books as the basic standard for moral cultivation. They therefore founded the Classics Discussion Societies [*Chiang-ching hui* 講經會] to gather scholars together for discussions of the classics instead of abstract moral principles.¹⁴⁷ To some extent, Liu's emphasis on extensive learning for moral cultivation was influential on the founding of the Classics Discussion Societies in this period.¹⁴⁸ Liu also devoted a great effort to recording the words and deeds of ancient Confucians and his Neo-Confucian forerunners. His *Lun-yü hsüeh-an* 論語學案 [The study of *The Analects*] and *Sheng-hsüeh chung-yao* play an important part in the historiography of intellectual history.¹⁴⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi's *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* was particularly influenced by Liu.¹⁵⁰

Tung-yüan," 儒家知識主義的興起: 從清初到戴東原 [The rise of Confucian intellectualism: from the period of early Ch'ing to the time of Tai Chen], in Yü Ying-shih, *Lun Tai Chen yü Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng: Ch'ing-tai hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang-shih yen-chiu* 論戴震與章學誠: 清代中期學術思想史研究 [Essays on Tai Chen and Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng: studies of the intellectual history of the middle Ch'ing] (Taipei: Tung-tai t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1997), pp. 21-2.

¹⁴⁷ Wang Fan-sen, "Ch'ing ch'u te Chiang-ching hui", pp. 515-35.

¹⁴⁸ Wang Fan-sen, "Hsin chi li shuo te tung-yao yü Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u hsüeh-feng chih chuan-pien" p. 363.

¹⁴⁹ Ch'en Tsu-wu 陳祖武, *Chung-kuo hsüeh-an shih* 中國學案史 [A history of Chinese case studies of scholars] (Taipei: Wen-chin ch'u-pan she, 1994), p. 156.

¹⁵⁰ Yao Ming-ta maintains that Huang Tsung-hsi's *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* is based on Liu Tsung-chou's *Huang-Ming tao-t'ung lu*. See YNP, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 228. Cheng Tsu-wu agrees with Yao. See Ch'en Tsu-wu, *op. cit.*, p. 154. Julia Ching maintained that the "teacher's saying" of Huang's *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* is taken out of Liu's *Huang-Ming tao-t'ung lu*. See Julia Ching, "Introduction", in *Records*, p. 16. Many modern studies also confirm Liu's influence on Huang's historiography. See Chang Kao-p'ing 張高評, *Huang Li-chou chi ch'i shih-hsüeh* 黃梨洲及其史學 [Huang Tsung-hsi and his historiography] (Taipei: Wen-chin ch'u-pan she, 1989), p. 29; Chiang Nien-fang 蔣年豐, "Ts'ung Chu-tzu tao Liu Chi-shan te hsin hsing lun fen-hsi ch'i shih-hsüeh ching-shen" 從朱子到劉戡山的心性論分析其史學精神 [An analysis of the ideas of history in theories on the mind and human nature: from Chu Hsi to Liu Tsung-chou], in Chung Ts'ai-chün 鍾彩鈞, ed., *Kuo-chi Chu-tzu hsüeh hui-i lun-wen chi* 國際朱子學會會議論文集 [Collective essays from international conference on the studies of Chu Hsi's scholarship] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1993), pp. 1136-7; Tungfang Shuo, *Liu Tsung-chou p'ing-chuan*, pp. 392-5. Some modern scholars doubt the actual influence of *Huang-Ming tao-t'ung lu* on *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*. See Ch'en Jung-chieh 陳榮捷, "Lun Ming-ju hsüeh-an chih shih shuo" 論明儒學案之師說 [On the "teacher's sayings" in *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*], *Yu-shih yüeh-k'an* 幼獅月刊 [Yu-shih monthly], no. 48 (July 1978), pp. 6-9;

(D) Differences in the interpretation of the *Great Learning* between Wang Yang-ming and Liu Tsung-chou

The last issue concerning Liu Tsung-chou's attitude towards Wang Yang-ming's doctrine is Liu's criticism of Wang's interpretation of the *Great Learning*. The discussion of this issue can focus on Wang's interpretation of the meaning of "the rectification of the mind", "making the will sincere", "the extension of innate knowledge" and "the investigation of things", four of the eight steps of moral cultivation depicted in the *Great Learning*.

In his essay entitled "Ta-hsüeh wen" 大學問 [An inquiry on the *Great Learning*] Wang interpreted the meaning of "the rectification of the mind", "making the will sincere", "the extension of innate knowledge" and "the investigation of things", as follows:

The original substance of the mind is man's nature. Human nature being universally good, the original substance of the mind is correct. How is it that any effort is required to rectify the mind? The reason is that, while the original substance of the mind is originally correct, incorrectness enters when one's will and thoughts (*i nien* 意念) are in operation. Therefore he who wishes to rectify his mind must rectify it in connection with the operation of his will and thoughts.¹⁵¹

Huang Chin-hsing 黃進興, "Hsüeh-an t'i-ts'ai te ssu-hsiang pei-ching: ts'ung Li Fu te Lu-tzu hsüeh-p'u t'an ch'i" 學案題裁的思想背景: 從李紱的陸子學譜談起 [The emergence of an historical genre: the background to the "philosophical records" (hsüeh-an): starting from a discussion of Li Fu's Lu-tzu hsüeh-p'u], *Han-hsüeh yen-chiu* 漢學研究 [Chinese Studies], vol. 2, no. 1 (June 1984), p. 215. Nonetheless, Huang Tsung-hsi himself admitted that in writing *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* he was inspired by and wrote in accordance with Liu's teaching. See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Huang Li-chou hsien-sheng yüan hsü" 黃梨洲先生原序 [The original preface by Huang Tsung-hsi] in *MJHA*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵¹ Wang Yang-ming, "Ta-hsüeh wen" 大學問 [A inquiry on the *Great Learning*], in *WYMCC*, chü

With his belief that human nature is universally good, Wang maintained that the original substance of the mind, by which human nature is characterized, is good. The evil is from *i nien* or *i* (these are used almost interchangeably in Wang's interpretation of the *Great Learning*), which, as will be shown below, consists of good and evil in operation. Wang explains the method by which to distinguish good from evil:

However, what arises from the will (*i* 意) may be good or evil, and unless there is a way to make clear the distinction between good and evil, there will be a confusion of truth and untruth. In that case, even if one wants to make his will sincere, he cannot do so. Therefore he who wishes to make his will sincere must extend his knowledge (*chih* 知).¹⁵²

To Wang, knowledge (*chih*) is an ability to distinguish good from evil. It appears that, in Wang's interpretation, the extension of knowledge is the most crucial of the four steps of moral cultivation. Wang therefore provides a more detailed explanation of "the extension of knowledge" as follows:

The extension of knowledge is not what later scholars understand as enriching and widening knowledge. It is simply extending one's innate knowledge of the good to the utmost. This innate knowledge of good is what Mencius meant when he said, "The sense of right and wrong is common to all men." The sense of right and wrong requires no deliberation to know, nor does it depend on learning to function. This is why it is called innate knowledge. It is my nature endowed by Heaven, the original substance of my mind, naturally intelligent, shining, clear, and understanding.¹⁵³

an 5, p. 971; *Source Book*, p. 664.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.; *Source Book*, pp. 664-5.

Wang appears to challenge Chu Hsi's doctrine on "the extension of knowledge". To Chu Hsi, "the investigation of things" and "the extension of knowledge" are two different descriptions of the same operation seeking to discover the principle of things.¹⁵⁴ Therefore Chu Hsi maintained: "If we wish to extend our knowledge to the utmost, we must investigate the principle of all things we come into contact with."¹⁵⁵ He therefore shows a great interest in enriching knowledge of various sorts of things, ranging from social and ethical problems to natural phenomena.¹⁵⁶ By contrast, Wang, in the light of his Mencian belief that man is born with the innate knowledge of good, regards enriching knowledge of various sorts of things irrelevant to the extension of innate knowledge.¹⁵⁷ Wang explains the function of innate knowledge as follows:

Whenever a thought or a wish arises, my mind's faculty of innate knowledge itself is always conscious of it. Whether it is good or evil, my mind's innate knowing faculty itself also knows it. It has nothing to do with others.¹⁵⁸

In Wang's opinion, the guarantee of human goodness is the mind's innate knowing faculty. With his confidence in the mind's innate knowing faculty, Wang optimistically remarks:

Therefore, although an inferior man may have done all manners of evil, when he sees a superior man he will surely try to disguise this fact, concealing what is

¹⁵⁴ Ying-shih Yü, "Morality and knowledge in Chu Hsi's philosophical system," p. 231.

¹⁵⁵ Chu Hsi, *Ssu-shu chi-chu*, p. 8; *Source Book*, p. 89.

¹⁵⁶ Kim Yung-sik, *The World-view of Chu Hsi (1130-1200): Knowledge about the Natural World in "Chu-Tzu Ch'üan-shu"* (Princeton: PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1980), pp. 28-40.

¹⁵⁷ Tang Chün-i 唐君毅, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun: tao-lun p'ien* 中國哲學原論: 導論篇 [A fundamental exposition of Chinese philosophy: introduction] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1984), pp. 344-6.

¹⁵⁸ Wang Yang-ming, "Ta-hsüeh wen", in *WYMCC*, chüan 5, p. 971; *Source Book*, p. 665.

evil and displaying what is good in himself. This shows that innate knowledge of the good does not permit any self-deception.¹⁵⁹

Because he believes that man cannot possibly deceive himself, he maintains:

The only way to distinguish good and evil in order to make the will sincere is to extend to the utmost the knowledge of the innate faculty. ...If what the innate faculty knows to be good or evil is sincerely loved or hated, one's innate knowing faculty is not deceived and the will can be made sincere.¹⁶⁰

In Wang's belief, the goodness or evil of the will will be exposed by extending innate knowledge. Lastly, Wang explains the function of innate knowledge in reality:

Now when one sets out to extend his innate knowledge to the utmost, does this mean something illusory, hazy, in a vacuum, and unreal? No, it means something real. Therefore, the extension of knowledge must consist in the investigation of things. A thing is an event. For every emanation of the will there must be an event corresponding to it. The event to which the will is directed is a thing. To investigate is to rectify. It is to rectify that which is incorrect so it can return to its original correctness. To rectify that which is not correct is to get rid of evil, and to return to correctness is to do good. This is what is meant by investigation.¹⁶¹

In Wang's idea, the event is the entity in which the will manifests and innate knowledge functions. With innate knowledge functioning, man can rectify the incorrectness emanated by the will, i.e., get rid of evil, and recover the goodness of the mind. To sum up, to Wang, "the extension of innate knowledge" is the most crucial one among the four steps.

In light of the above interpretation Wang sums up the relations between the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 971-2; *Source Book*, p. 665.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 972; *Source Book*, p. 665.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 972; *Source Book*, pp. 665-6.

mind, the will, knowledge and things as follows:

The master of the body is the mind. What emanates from the mind is the will. The original substance of the will is knowledge, and wherever the will is directed is a thing. For example, when the will is directed toward serving one's parents, then serving one's parents is a "thing". When the will is directed toward serving one's ruler, then serving one's ruler is a "thing". When the will is directed toward being humane to all people and feeling love toward things, then being humane to all people and feeling love toward things are "things", and when the will is directed toward seeing, hearing, speaking, and acting, then each of these is a "thing".¹⁶²

In contrast to Wang's emphasis on "the extension of innate knowledge", Liu considered "making the will sincere" more crucial. He states:

[In the chapters of commentary of the eight steps,] the ancient version of the *Great Learning* starts by explaining "making the will sincere". Previous to it there is no chapter of commentary to explain "the extension of knowledge" [and "the investigation of things"]. Next to it there is no chapter of commentary to explain only "the rectification of the mind". [The author] elicits it alone and in a straightforward manner, taking it to include the other three steps. As to the end of the chapter, [He] also said: "Therefore the superior man always makes his will sincere." How seriously [he sees] it is!¹⁶³

Of the chapters of commentary on the eight steps in the *Great Learning*, only five chapters were extant by Chu Hsi's time. The chapters of commentary that explained "the investigation of things" and "the extension of knowledge" had been lost and "the rectification of the mind" was combined with "cultivation of the personal life" as a single chapter. Chu Hsi adopted Ch'eng I's suggestion to make a supplementary chapter to explain "the investigation of things" and "the extension of knowledge".¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² *CHL*, p. 37; *Instructions*, part I: 6, p. 14.

¹⁶³ "Hsüeh-yen hsia", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 524.

¹⁶⁴ See *The Great Learning*, in *Source Book*, pp. 89-90.

Liu chose to believe that there was no chapter of commentary on “the investigation of things” and “the extension of knowledge” in the original version of the *Great Learning*.¹⁶⁵ He therefore concluded that the author of the *Great Learning* might only have elicited “making the will sincere” in order to take it as the major step in which the other three steps were included and, thus, had no intention at all to explain them in the text.

Therefore Liu gave the word “*i*” (the will) a different interpretation from Wang. In contrast to Wang’s maintaining that the will, which may be good or evil, emanates from the mind, Liu maintained: “*I* (the will) is what is preserved in the mind, not what emanates from the mind.”¹⁶⁶ Liu furthermore borrowed the expression from the chapter of commentary on “making the will sincere” in the old version of the *Great Learning* comparing the will to “when we abhor a bad smell or admire a beautiful colour” to describe the absolute goodness of the will.¹⁶⁷ He said:

What [this expression] means here is that the will’s liking good and disliking evil is [like we abhor a bad smell or admire a beautiful colour] so is absolutely without any compromise. From this point of view, we know that the presence of good and the absence of evil characterize the will, as what is preserved in the

¹⁶⁵ It is in this belief Liu Tsung-chou even adopted a forged version of the *Great Learning*, *Ta-hsüeh shih-ching* 大學石經 [Stone-inscribed *Great Learning*], which also did not include a chapter of commentary on the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge, into his “*Ta-hsüeh ts’an-i*” 大學參疑 [Doubts on the *Great Learning*], which was finished only three months before his suicide. See Wang Fan-sen 王汎森, “Ming-tai ho-ch’i te tsao-wei yü ssu-hsiang cheng-lun: Feng Fang yü Ta-hsüeh shih-ching” 明代後期的造偽與思想爭論: 豐坊與大學石經 [The ‘Darling Fool’ Feng Fang (1500-1570) and his ink rubbing of the Stone-inscribed Great Learning], *Hsin shih-hsüeh* 新史學 [New history], vol. VI, no. 4 (December 1995), pp. 17-8.

¹⁶⁶ “*Hsüeh-yen shang*”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 459. It is noteworthy that the idea “the will emanates from the mind” originates in Chu Hsi. Wang Yang-ming accepted Chu Hsi’s opinion. Liu also challenged Chu Hsi’s opinion. Liu’s challenge caused wide disagreements among his disciples in the early Ch’ing. They tried to make some amendments to Liu’s works intending to prevent Liu from being accused of revolting against the Ch’eng-Chu paradigm, which was the official orthodoxy in the early Ch’ing. See Wang Fan-sen, “Ch’ing ch’u ssu-hsiang ch’ü-hsiang yü *Liu-tzu chieh-yao*: chien lun Ch’ing ch’u Ching-shan hsüeh-pai te fun-lieh”, pp. 417-25.

¹⁶⁷ The *Great Learning*, in *Source Book*, p. 89.

mind.¹⁶⁸

Like Wang Yang-ming, Liu believed that human nature is definitely good. The difference is that, while Wang, as mentioned earlier, took the mind's innate knowing faculty as the guarantee of the goodness of human nature, Liu took the goodness of the will as the guarantee. Liu said: "The will is the master of the mind."¹⁶⁹ He also used the metaphor of a compass to describe the relation between the will and the mind, taking the will to be the needle which guides the mind.¹⁷⁰ Talking about the goodness of the will, Liu said: "The will is good in its original state, it does not merely become good after being made sincere. To recover the original state of the will is what is known as making [the will] sincere."¹⁷¹ To sum up, to Liu, it is the will, which is definitely good, that characterizes human nature.¹⁷²

In addition to his elaboration of the word *i* (the will), Liu also had a special definition of the word *nien* 念 (thought). Liu said:

The *chin hsin* 今心 (present mind) is known as *nien* 念 (thought). It is the mind's residual material force (*yü ch'i* 餘氣). The residual material force is the material force in action. In its action it is remote from the accordance of the principle of Heaven. Therefore, the arising of the thought is a disease of the

¹⁶⁸ "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 459.

¹⁶⁹ "Hsüeh-yen hsia", in *ibid.*, p. 522. The same idea also is expressed as "the master of the mind is called the will." See "Hsüeh-yen hsia", in *ibid.*, p. 528.

¹⁷⁰ "Ta Tung sheng hsin i shih wen" 答董生心意十問 [Reply to student Tung's ten inquiries on the ideas of the mind and the will], in *ibid.*, p. 397, p. 399.

¹⁷¹ "Hsüeh-yen hsia", in *ibid.*, p. 521.

¹⁷² Tang Chün-i observes that in Liu's critique of Wang Yang-ming's thought, he tried to elicit that the will is priori to the knowing function in an ontological order. See Tang Chün-i, "Liu Tsung-chou's doctrine of moral mind", p. 313. See also Tang Chün-i 唐君毅, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun: yüan-hsing-p'ien* 中國哲學原論：原性篇 [A fundamental exposition of Chinese philosophy: on human nature] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1989), p. 494. Mou Tsung-san also maintains that Liu Tsung-chou tried to emphasize the absolute goodness of the will. See Mou Tsung-san, *Ts'ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan*, pp. 465-6.

mind.¹⁷³

Liu was using the etymological tactic of splitting the character *nien* into two graphic components to define thought (念) as the present mind (今心).¹⁷⁴ In this sense, Liu seemed to suggest that thought is the expression of the mind in reality. In saying “the arising of the thought is a disease of the mind,” Liu appeared to mean that the thought itself approximates to evil. With this special definition of *nien*, Liu took the effort to eliminate it as crucial for moral cultivation. He even wrote an essay entitled “Chih nien shuo” 治念說 [On the elimination of *nien* (thought)] at the age of sixty-five.¹⁷⁵ In it he concluded that the purpose of learning is simply to eliminate thought, and doing good and erasing evil resides in eliminating thought.¹⁷⁶

Liu was dissatisfied with Wang’s interpretation of the word *i*. He said: “Master Wang always takes the words *nien* (thought) and *i* (the will) together [to mean the same thing]. I am afraid that they are different in reality.”¹⁷⁷ His dissatisfaction is so strong that whenever he thought of Wang’s confusion on the will as thought, he “always wanted to wake the master [Wang Yang-ming] up from death to ask him about it”.¹⁷⁸

Liu also criticizes Wang’s idea of *chih* 知 (knowledge). Liu says: “It is because Yang-ming misunderstood the word *i* (the will) that he could not but pursue goodness

¹⁷³ “Hsüeh-yen chung” 學言中 [Words of learning: part two], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 491.

¹⁷⁴ Tu Wei-ming, “Subjectivity in Liu Tsung-chou’s philosophy anthropology,” p. 112.

¹⁷⁵ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 438.

¹⁷⁶ “Chih nien shuo” 治念說 [On the elimination of *nien* (thought)], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 372.

¹⁷⁷ “Yang-ming ch’uan-hsin lu san” 陽明傳信錄三 [The authentic record of master Yang-ming: part three], in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, p. 85.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.

in *chih* (knowledge). However, he also misunderstood the word *chih*.¹⁷⁹ As mentioned above, Wang regarded knowledge (*chih*) as an ability to distinguish good from evil. Liu criticises this idea as follows:

What [Wang Yang-ming] said about innate knowledge is not right. Knowing good and knowing evil are similar to but different from knowing love and knowing reverence. In knowing love and knowing reverence, knowledge manifests itself in loving and reverencing. In knowing good and knowing evil, knowledge is external to good and evil. The knowledge that is manifest in loving and reverencing allows no extra space for motions of non-loving and non-reverencing. It is the so-called innate knowledge of good. The knowledge that is external to good and evil is nothing but the knowledge of recognizing the distinction between good and evil.¹⁸⁰

Liu seems not to dismiss the knowledge of distinguishing good from evil. However, by saying, “In knowing good and knowing evil, the knowledge is external to good and evil,” he appeared to regard this sort of knowledge to be amoral. In this sense, Liu seems to criticize Wang for advocating a sort of amoral knowledge.

Liu’s criticism of Wang in this regard may not be well grounded. In his doctrine of “the unity of knowledge and action” (*chih hsing ho i* 知行合一), Wang said, for example:

The *Great Learning* points to true knowledge and action for people to see, saying, they are “like loving beautiful colours and hating bad odours.” Seeing beautiful colours appertains to knowledge, while loving beautiful colours appertains to action. However, as soon as one sees that beautiful colour, he has already loved it. It is not that he sees it first and then makes up his mind to love it. Smelling a bad odour appertains to knowledge, while hating a bad odour appertains to action. However, as soon as one smells a bad odour, he has already hated it. It is not that he smells it first and then makes up his mind to hate it. ...

¹⁷⁹ “Liang-chih shuo” 良知說 [An essay on innate knowledge], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 373.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

Suppose we say that so-and-so knows filial piety and so-and-so knows brotherly respect. They must have actually practised filial piety and brotherly respect before they can be said to know them.”¹⁸¹

It appears that besides the aspect of the knowledge that knows good and evil, Wang also emphasized the aspect of the knowledge that is manifest in loving and reverencing.

Liu is not unaware of Wang’s emphasis on the latter aspect of knowledge. In his commentary on the above passage, Liu affirms: “This saying is a crystallization of the depiction [of the substance of the mind]. In this regard, master Wang truly perceives the substance of the mind.”¹⁸² However, it is because Liu was more concerned about Wang’s expression of the former aspect of knowledge that he sometimes ignored Wang’s emphasis on the latter. In this sense, Liu’s criticism only shows his preference of the latter aspect over the former in interpreting the idea of knowledge.

Based on his different idea of *i* (the will) and this preference in interpreting the idea of *chih* (knowledge), Liu took “making the will sincere” as the main purpose (*tsung-chih* 宗旨)¹⁸³ of his doctrine and criticized Wang’s taking “the extension of innate knowledge” as the main purpose. Liu said:

¹⁸¹ *CHL*, p. 33; *Instructions*, part I: 5, p. 10.

¹⁸² “Yang-ming ch’uan-hsin lu san”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, pp. 63-4.

¹⁸³ Selecting a dictum, either created by themselves or extracted from classics, as the *tsung-chih* (main purpose) of their doctrines to help scholars grasp the essence of their doctrines, was very popular among the Ming academic community. Ch’en Hsien-chang’s “fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity”, Chan Jo-shui’s “experiencing heavenly principle everywhere”, Wang Yang-ming’s “the extension of innate knowledge” and Liu Tsung-chou’s “making the will sincere” are famous examples. See Wang Fan-sen 王汎森, “Ming mo Ch’ing ch’u ssu-hsiang chung chih tsung-chih” 明末清初思想中之「宗旨」 [Changing perspectives on the notion of “tsung-chih” in the late Ming and early Ch’ing], *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 大陸雜誌 [The continent magazine], vol. 94, no. 4 (April

[Wang Yang-ming] says something like “when your *i* is on serving your parents,” by that he regards *nien* (thought) as *i* (the will). ... Consequently [Wang Yang-ming’s] interpretation of the *Doctrine of the Mean* stated: “There is no effort needed for attaining the state of *chung* (equilibrium). All efforts needed are simply for attaining the state of *ho* (harmony).” Wang Yang-ming takes the extension of innate knowledge as the main purpose of his doctrine without mentioning attaining the state of *chung*. He concentrates only on pursuing the knowledge of knowing which is good and which is evil at the moment when thoughts arise. I am afraid that he was wrong in seeing innate knowledge in this way.¹⁸⁴

According to the *Doctrine of the Mean*: “Before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused it is called ‘*chung*’ (equilibrium). When these feelings are aroused and each and all attain due measure and degree, it is called ‘*ho*’ (harmony)”.¹⁸⁵ In Liu’s opinion, Wang’s doctrine did not seize the moment before the feelings are aroused and only counted on using knowledge, which is amoral, to ward off evil when these feelings or thoughts are aroused. To Liu, this is wrong. The proper moment to get rid of evil should be the moment before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy are aroused. In his answer to the question “Does the will refer to the moment when the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy are aroused and the mind refer to the moment before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy are aroused?”, Liu states: “the moment before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy are aroused refers to what is preserved [in the mind],”¹⁸⁶ thus confirming that the moment before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy are aroused refers to the will. Consequently Liu also appears to maintain that it is “making the will sincere” that can seize the moment before feelings are aroused and can be sure to get rid of

1997), pp. 1-4.

¹⁸⁴ “Hsüeh-yen chung”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 498.

¹⁸⁵ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, in *Source Book*, p. 98.

¹⁸⁶ “Ta Tung sheng hsin i shih wen”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 398.

evil.

It is also noteworthy that, in Liu's moral philosophy, the moment before the feelings are aroused is most crucial for moral cultivation. In his *Jen-p'u*, talking about the correction of faults, Liu considers the *wei kuo* 微過 (the subtle fault) the first category for every sort of faults. He said: "*Wei kuo* exists in solitary knowing."¹⁸⁷ Under the category of the subtle fault there is only one item named *wang* 妄 (recklessness). He said:

The fault of *wang* actually is present in every sort of fault that is described below. *Wang* is hidden in the moment before *nien* (thought) arises. *Wang* is formless. This is the reason why it is considered to be a slight fault. The fault of *wang* is supposed to be recognized from the moment when no fault happens.¹⁸⁸

Liu appears to take *wang* as the birthplace of evil. He furthermore describes *wang* as follows:

The word *wang* is extremely difficult to explain. There is no sign of pain from which it can be recognized. Just as in the case when once one loses his essential *ch'i* 氣 (pneuma) all kinds of diseases will easily invade his body, once one suffers from this disease he will live in sickness for his whole life and be incurable. This sort of fault is the most frightening.¹⁸⁹

To Neo-Confucians, *ch'i* is considered to be the material sources of all things in the world. It functions as the most crucial element in influencing the life and death of things.¹⁹⁰ By taking the metaphor of *ch'i* Liu is emphasizing that *wang* is the most

¹⁸⁷ "Jen-p'u", in *ibid.*, p. 11

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Yamanoi Yū 山井湧, "Li ki tetsugaku ni okeru ki no gainen: hoku Sō kara Shindai mate: sōron" 理氣哲學における氣の概念:北宋から清代まで: 総論 [The concepts of *ch'i* in the philosophy

crucial determinate to influence the success or failure of moral cultivation. He states:

Ch'eng I said: "To act without recklessness is called 'sincerity'." Sincerity even comes after non-recklessness. Sincerity exists in opposition to hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is borne by *wang*.¹⁹¹

From this description, we know that Liu takes the formless recklessness so seriously that he even considers non-recklessness more essential than sincerity.

Moreover, in the second category of the faults, Liu defines it as follows:

Yin kuo 隱過 (the concealed fault) lies in the realm of the seven emotions.¹⁹²

In this category, Liu lists joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, cruelty, and desire as the seven emotions. He describes them as follows:

The faults listed above are all stored in the mind. They are hidden and invisible. This is why they are called concealed faults. They all come from the subtle fault. One sort of fault therefore turns out to become two sorts of faults. The subtle fault is invisible. However, once it is activated by joy, it becomes [a fault] of excessive joy. Once it is activated by anger, it becomes [a fault] of outrageous anger. All the other kinds of the seven kinds of feelings activate with faults likewise. The true face of the subtle fault can be seen from them.¹⁹³

It is next to the second category of fault that Liu first mentions visible faults,

concerning principle and material in the period from northern Sung to Ch'ing: an introduction], in Onozawa Seiichi 小野澤精一, Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司, and Yamanoi Yū eds., *Ki no shisō: Chūgoku ni okeru shizenkan to ningenkan no tenkai* 氣の思想: 中國における自然觀と人間觀の展開 [The thought of *ch'i*: the unfolding of the views on nature and human beings in China] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1978), p. 356.

¹⁹¹ "Jen-p'u", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 11.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

including all kinds of evil behaviours, ranging from private habits to social crimes.¹⁹⁴

To sum up Liu's idea of faults, he basically considers the first two categories as the most crucial. The subtle fault exists before thoughts arise. The concealed fault emerges at the moment when the seven kinds of feelings arise. Liu is anxious to erase the subtle fault, which is the birthplace of evil, at the moment before thoughts arise. To him it is not fast or good enough to deal with the concealed fault, which is the beginning of visible faults, by the time feelings arise. This is why he is dissatisfied with Wang Yang-ming, as Liu said above, "Wang Yang-ming takes the extension of innate knowledge as the main purpose of his doctrine without mentioning attaining the state of *chung* (equilibrium)" and "concentrates only on pursuing the knowledge of knowing which is good and which is evil on the moment when thoughts arise". To Liu it is only "making the will sincere" that can get rid of evil that emerges at the moment before thoughts arise and attain the state of equilibrium.

By taking "making the will sincere" as the main purpose of his doctrine, Liu considered everything in the world to be the expression of the will. Liu transformed the Confucian idealism of "sageliness inside and kingliness outside" into a concentration on the learning of "sageliness inside" only.¹⁹⁵ Like many of his late Ming contemporaries, Liu believed that a rigorous practice of confession and self-criticism was a prerequisite for the correction of faults and ultimately the attainment of moral perfection.¹⁹⁶ With his systematic work on the practice of confession and self-criticism, Liu also led a trend towards moral self-scrutiny in the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 13-8.

¹⁹⁵ Tang Chün-i 唐君毅, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun: yüan-chiao pien* 中國哲學原論: 原教篇 [A fundamental exposition of Chinese philosophy: on doctrines] (Taipei: Hsüeh-shen shu-chü, 1984), p. 490.

period from late Ming to early Ch'ing.¹⁹⁷ Liu's idea of the correction of faults presented an extremely high standard for moral cultivation. It has even been described as the most rigorous standard ever seen in the Confucian doctrine of moral cultivation.¹⁹⁸ This emphasis on the correction of faults became popular throughout the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing, and its residual influence can even be found in the era of the May Fourth movement in the early twentieth century.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Pei-yi Wu, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-5.

¹⁹⁷ Wang Fan-sen, "Jih-p'u yü Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u ssu-hsiang chia", pp. 249-54.

¹⁹⁸ Wang Fan-sen, "Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u te jen-p'u yü hsing-kuo-hui", p. 710.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 711-2.

4.3 Liu Tsung-chou's criticism of Wang Yang-ming's followers

(A) Liu Tsung-chou's sense of the degeneration of Wang Yang-ming's followers

Although Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind stood firm as a new intellectual paradigm in Neo-Confucianism, different interpretations of his doctrine emerged as it became popular, and thus the factionalization of this School of Mind also occurred. To Liu Tsung-chou, accompanied with this factionalization there came the degeneration of Wang Yang-ming's followers. Liu believed that there were two defects in Wang's followers' interpretations of Wang's doctrine:

Nowadays everyone competes in discussing innate knowledge. This incurs some dangers. Arrogant men confuse it with emotions and consciousness. Therefore, they consider any behaviour equally moral. Prudish men mistake it for mysticism. Therefore, they make morality more complicated than it should be.¹

In brief, the two defects in Wang's followers' interpretations are moral nihilism and mysticism. Quoting Mencius, Liu regarded these tendencies as "heresy," "extreme action," and "excessive views."² To Liu, they are signs of the moral decay of his time. This opinion is exposed in his "Ch'eng-hsüeh tsa-chieh", written in 1643, only two years before his death.³ It can be seen as the final summary of his opinions on the degeneration of Wang's followers.

Liu's criticism may be inspired by Wang Yeh-hsün 王業洵 [Shih-meì 士

¹ "Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 325.

² *Ibid.*

³ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 480.

美, ?-?), Wang Yang-ming's grandson. Four years before Liu expressed the above criticism, he was invited by Wang Yeh-hsün to write a preface to a reprint of Wang Yang-ming's *Ch'uan-hsi lu*.⁴ In this preface, Liu said that Wang Yeh-hsün had told him his concerns about the degeneration of Wang Yang-ming's followers. Wang Yeh-hsün said:

The doctrine of [the extension of] innate knowledge is propounded to save scholars from the defects of Sung scholars' over emphasizing textual exegesis. It is a prescription for curing disease. [However,] since it was distorted, people often either consider innate knowledge ready-made or use innate knowledge too flexibly. It made men of high level become mystical and men of low level arrogant. The defects are worse than that of [Sung scholars' over-emphasizing] textual exegesis.⁵

The two defects of moral mysticism and nihilism were exposed in Wang Yeh-hsün's above quotation, too. In this sense, Wang Yeh-hsün was expressing the same concern about moral decay in the circle of Wang Yang-ming's followers.

Another contemporary of Liu who might also have inspired him to detect moral nihilism and mysticism is Kao P'an-lung. In his preface to a publication of Liu's teacher Hsü Fu-yüan's works, Kao criticized Wang Yang-ming's followers for pursuing a special method of making the mind concentrate on recognizing a thing that is neither good nor evil and forsaking all things concerning moral principles.⁶ Kao's criticism of Wang's followers seemed also to be directed at moral mysticism and nihilism. Although Liu did not mention this preface in his works, given his close

⁴ "Ch'ung k'o Wang Yang-ming hsien-sheng Ch'uan-hsi lu hsü" 重刻王陽明先生傳習錄序 [Preface to the reprint of Wang Yang-ming's *Ch'uan-hsi lu*] was written in 1639. See "Ch'ung k'o Wang Yang-ming hsien-sheng Ch'uan-hsi lu hsü", in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b, p. 726.

⁵ Quoted by Liu Tsung-chou, *ibid.*, p. 728.

⁶ See Kao P'an-lung, "Hsü Ching-an hsien-sheng yü-yao hsü" 許敬菴先生語要序 [Preface to

relation to Kao and Hsü, we may assume that Liu might have noticed it.

This sense of moral decay in the circle of Wang Yang-ming's followers can also be seen earlier in another member of the Tung-lin party. In his criticism of philosophical conferences where scholars of the Wang Yang-ming School like Wang Chi and Chou Ju-teng participated, Ku Hsien-ch'eng, the leader of the party, criticized them for failing to express approval or disapproval in regard to political questions of the day.⁷ He remarked:

If the thoughts of the official at the capital are not of the ruler, and the thoughts of the official in the provinces are not of the people, and if [private citizens] group together in retirement to discuss questions of nature and destiny, to help one another cultivate virtue without thought of the needs of the world, then even though they have other qualities, they are not to be approved of by gentlemen.⁸

Although Ku did not use similar words to criticize scholars of the Wang Yang-ming School, he deplored their habit of indulging in empty discussion of moral issues without caring about the world. Another member of the Tung-lin party, Shih Meng-lin 史孟麟 [Yü-ch'ih 玉池, ?-?], also said:

Nowadays professors of philosophy point out only 'the momentary' to students. If one asks: 'What do you mean by the momentary?' the answer is 'Something you do at the moment that is required, such as eating when you feel hungry, or sleeping when you feel tired.' This kind of behaviour goes on so naturally that no discipline is required. According to this popular teaching, emphasis on discipline is superfluous because it runs counter to reality. Such naturalism can only lead to spiritual flabbiness, and it is a pit for people to fall into.⁹

master Hsü Ching-an's selected words], in Kao P'an-lung, *Kao-tzu i-shu*, chüan 9a, p. 14b.

⁷ See Carsun Chang, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Tung-lin hsüeh-an i" 東林學案一 [The Tung-lin School: part one], in *MJHA*, chüan 58, p. 1377; *Records*, p. 228.

⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Tung-lin hsüeh-an san" 東林學案三 [The Tung-lin School: part three], in *MJHA*, chüan 60, p. 1473. The English translation is from Carsun Chang, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

Shih's critique of moral decay is also aimed at Wang Yang-ming's followers such as Li Chih,¹⁰ Wang Chi and the members of the T'ai-chou School.¹¹

Lastly, Hsü Fu-yüan, Liu Tsung-chou's teacher, also had the same impression of the members of the T'ai-chou School. According to Huang Tsung-hsi: "Hsü Fu-yüan believed in *liang-chih* and disliked those who used it to preach Buddhism. He once cautioned Lo Ju-fang 羅汝芳 [Chin-hsi 近溪, 1515-88] (a member of the T'ai-chou School) about the danger of setting a bad example to younger scholars, saying that a few flippant persons speaking recklessly of ridiculous things and confusing the listeners could lead to the disapproval and disgust of correct and earnest scholars, who would then refuse to believe in the teaching [of *liang-chih*]. [He thought that] this might bring about serious consequences."¹² In conclusion, the view of the degeneration of Wang Yang-ming's followers was a common belief shared by most critics of Wang's followers in the late Ming period.

One of Huang Tsung-hsi's disciples, Ch'en I-ch'ang 陳奕昌 [?-?], attributed the reason for the emergence of moral nihilism and mysticism to Wang's teaching itself. He said:

After Wang Yang-ming died, some of his disciples expressed their opinions without any limitation. They could not reach an agreement upon his teaching of the "Four Sentences". Therefore, they were defective either in regarding emotions and consciousness as innate knowing or regarding imagination as the

¹⁰ See *ibid.*

¹¹ See Carsun Chang, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

¹² Huang Tsung-hsi, "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu", in *MJHA*, chüan 41, p. 976; *Records*, pp. 205-6.

pen-t'i 本體 (original substance) [of innate knowing].¹³

Ch'en's observantion shows a basic truth about the influence of Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" on the emergence of moral nihilism and mysticism among his followers. Most of the above-mentioned critics of Wang Yang-ming's followers referred their criticism to the influence of Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching".¹⁴ Ch'en also claimed that moral nihilism and mysticism are the defects Liu Tsung-chou meant to correct in his introduction to Wang Yang-ming's doctrine.¹⁵ In this sense, the degeneration of Wang Yang-ming's followers can be traced to Wang's "Four Sentences of Teaching".

(B) The debate on Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching"

Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" is considered one of the most controversial issues in his doctrine. There were even doubts if it was really by Wang Yang-ming himself.¹⁶ Liu Tsung-chou was one of the people who had such doubts. He said: "According to my research, the teaching of the Four Sentences is not found in Yang-ming's writings. Its articulation really came from Wang Chi. The Four Sentences may have represented Yang-ming's inconclusive opinions, something he

¹³ "Yang-ming ch'uan-hsin lu san", in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, p. 108.

¹⁴ See Huang Tsung-hsi, "Tung-lin hsüeh-an i", in *MJHA*, chüan 58, p. 1379; "Tung-lin hsüeh-an san", in *ibid.*, chüan 60, p. 1473; "Kan-ch'üan hsüeh-an wu", in *ibid.*, chüan 41, p. 976.

¹⁵ "Yang-ming ch'uan-hsin lu san", in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, p. 108.

¹⁶ Ch'en Lai 陳來, *Yu wu chih ching: Wang Yang-ming che-hsüeh te ching-shen* 有無之境：王陽明哲學的精神 [Positive and negative: the essentials of the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming] (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1991), p. 194; Chung-ying Ch'eng, "The consistency and meaning of the Four-Sentence teaching in *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*", in Chung-ying Ch'eng, *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 1991), p. 484; Simon Man-ho Wong, "A critique of Huang Tsung-hsi's interpretation of the 'Four Maxims'", *Tsing Hua*

discussed at some time but did not dare to put in writing for fear of confusing scholars.”¹⁷ It is noteworthy that Liu is not the only one who attributed Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences of Teaching” to Wang Chi. A member of the T’ai-chou school, Fang Hsüeh-chien 方學漸 [Pen-an 本菴, 1540-1615], had expressed the same opinion.¹⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi had another explanation. He said: “My teacher Liu Tsung-chou used to suspect that what Wang Yang-ming said at T’ien-ch’üan [i.e. the Four Sentences] differed from his ordinary teachings. Wang usually referred to mind-in-itself as being characterized by the good, and this good means fulfilling to the utmost the principle of Heaven, without a speck of human passion. He also said *liang-chih* is the principle of Heaven. And the *Ch’uan-hsi lu* refers many times to the principle of Heaven. Even if there is a reference to *li* (principle) in tranquillity being neither good nor evil, Wang Yang-ming never said there that the mind-in-itself was neither good nor evil.”¹⁹

However, Liu and others’ doubts are not grounded because there is enough evidence that can verify that the “Four Sentences of Teaching” was indeed by Wang Yang-ming.²⁰ Nonetheless the “Four Sentences of Teaching” is “ambiguous enough to allow a wide diversity of interpretation and left behind a legacy of controversy that

Journal of Chinese Studies, n.s., vol. 28, no. 4 (December 1998), p. 489.

¹⁷ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Shih shuo”, in *MJHA*, p. 8; *Records*, p. 61.

¹⁸ See Kao P’an-lung, “Fang Pen-an hsien-sheng Hsing shan i hsü” 方本菴先生性善釋序 [Preface to master Fang Hsüeh-ch’ien’s “Interpretation of the theory of the goodness of human nature”], in Kao P’an-lung, *Kao-tzu i-shu*, chüan 9a, p. 15b.

¹⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Chiang-yu Wang-men hsüeh-an i”, in *MJHA*, chüan 16, pp. 334-5; *Records*, p. 120.

²⁰ See Ch’en Lai, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-203. Tang Chün-i also considers the “Four Sentences” as “rightly a very concise summary of Wang Yang-ming’s teaching.” See Tang Chün-i, “The development of the concept of moral mind from Wang Yang-ming to Wang Chi,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, p. 112. Chung-ying Ch’eng also maintains it “gives an organized unity to Wang’s philosophy.” See Chung-ying Ch’eng, “The consistency and meaning of the Four-Sentence teaching in *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*”, p. 484.

continued long after his death.”²¹ At least three debates had happened since Wang’s “Four Sentences of Teaching” was propounded: the debate between Wang Chi and Ch’ien Te-hung in 1527, the debate on the “Nine Inquiries and Nine Explanations” between Hsü Fu-yüan and Chou Ju-teng in 1592, and the debate between Ku Hsien-ch’eng and Kuan Chih-tao 管志道 [Tung-ming 東溟, 1537-1608] in 1598.²² Liu was so impressed by the first and the second ones that he commented on them.²³

As is mentioned in section 3 of chapter 2, in the debate between Wang Chi and Ch’ien Te-hung, Wang Chi was so overwhelmingly impressed by Wang Yang-ming’s description of the nature of “the absence of good and evil” in the mind that he denied the other three sentences of his “Four Sentences of Teaching”, which emphasize the existence of good and evil and the tasks of discriminating good from evil and doing good and removing evil. He therefore concentrated on realizing the fact that there is no distinction between good and evil in the mind, the will, knowledge and things. Ch’ien Te-hung argued that although the human mind was originally neither good nor evil, it is dominated by habits, which might put good and evil thoughts into it. He therefore emphasized the effort to recover that original nature and substance of the mind through discriminating good from evil. Wang Yang-ming in response to this debate proposed two ways of teaching: one for men of acute intelligence, and one for men of average and low intelligence. He saw Wang

²¹ Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, pp. 149-50.

²² See Ch’en Li-sheng 陳立勝, “Wang Yang-ming ssu-chü-chiao te san ts’u pien-nan chi ch’i ch’üan-shih-hsüeh i-yün” 王陽明四句教的三次辯難及其詮釋學義蘊 [Three debates on Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences of Teaching” and their hermeneutic significances], in *T’ai-ta li-shih hsüeh-pao* 臺大歷史學報 [Bulletin of the Department of History of National Taiwan University], no. 29 (June 2002), pp. 1-27.

²³ Liu Tsung-chou’s comment on the debate between Wang Chi and Ch’ien Te-hung is in his “Ch’ien Hsü-shan hsien-sheng yao-yü hsü” 錢緒山先生要語序 [Preface to master Ch’ien Te-hung’s essential

Chi's view as appropriate for dealing with men of acute intelligence, Ch'ien Te-hung's view as appropriate for men of average and low intelligence, and suggested that a combination of their views would lead all people to the truth.

Based on Wang Yang-ming's response, Wang Chi, with his confidence in his "Four Negatives", concluded the debate: "The 'Four Negatives' is for teaching men of acute intelligence, while the 'Four Positives' (*ssu yu* 四有) is for teaching men of average and low intelligence."²⁴ What Wang Chi referred to as the "Four Negatives" is his own doctrine and the "Four Positives" is Ch'ien Te-hung's interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teachings".²⁵ However, it seems that Ch'ien never provided a theory to confirm that the mind, the will, knowledge, and things are all characterized by the presence of good or evil: a "Four Positives" which can be contrasted to Wang Chi's "Four Negatives".²⁶ Only an indirect record of the debate between Wang Chi and Ch'ien Te-hung by Wang Yang-ming's other disciple Tsou Shou-i, which presents a different version from Wang Yang-ming's *Ch'uan-hsi lu*, notes that in contrast to Wang Chi's "Four Negatives", Ch'ien Te-hung said: "The presence of the highest good and the absence of evil characterized the mind. The presence of good and evil characterized the will. The knowledge of good and evil is *liang-chih* (innate knowledge). The doing of good and ridding of evil is the investigation of things."²⁷ This is considered the only evidence to verify that Ch'ien

words], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b, p. 698. His commend of the debate on the "Nine Inquiries and Nine Explanations" between Hsü Fu-yüan and Chou Ju-teng is in his "Hui-lu", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 643.

²⁴ Wang Chi, "T'ien-ch'üan cheng tao chi", in Wang Chi, *Wang Lung-hsi ch'üan-chi*, chüan 1, p. 2a.

²⁵ Ch'en Lai, *op. cit.*, p. 300; Ch'en Li-sheng, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²⁶ Ch'en Li-sheng, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²⁷ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Chiang-yu Wang-men hsüeh-an i" 江右王門學案一 [The Chiang-yu section of the Wang Yang-ming School: part one], in *MJHA*, chüan 16, p. 341.

Te-hung advocates “Four Positives”.²⁸ To some extent, the debate between Wang Chi and Ch’ien Te-hung can be characterized by the difference between the “Four Negatives” and the “Four Positives”. In brief, Ch’ien emphasized the relativity of good and evil, while Wang Chi emphasized the non-relativity of good and evil.

The debate on “Nine Inquiries and Nine Explanations” between Hsü Fu-yüan and Chou Ju-teng may be summarized as follows:²⁹

Hsü’s first inquiry: The classics all maintained that human nature is good and the notion that human nature is neither good nor evil was only prompted by Kao-tzu 告子, which was effectively refuted by Mencius. The theory of “the absence of good and evil” is contrary to what is written in the classics.

Chou’s first explanation: The “highest good” the sages sought to learn refers to the “original substance” that defies dichotomization. Although in the classics, the word “good” often appears in the context of the good-evil polarity, “the good which is ultimately manifested in the mind and human nature is the good which is not pitted against evil.”

Hsü’s second inquiry: There are objective good and evil that cannot be altered by subjective opinion. Just as in the universe what is upright is good and that which is partial is evil, the distinction between good and evil is as clear-cut as that between

²⁸ Ch’ien Lai, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

²⁹ Hsü Fu-yüan’s “Nine Inquiries” and Chou Ju-teng’s “Nine Explanations” are recorded in Huang Tsung-hsi, “T’ai-chou hsüeh-an wu”, in *MJHA*, chüan 36, pp. 862-8. The English summary of the “Nine Inquires” and “Nine Explanations” below are based on Carsun Chang, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-41; On-cho Ng, *Cheng-zhu Confucianism in the Early Qing: Li Guangdi (1642-1718) and Qing Learning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 15-21. For a detailed philosophical discussion of the debate, see Ts’ai Jen-hou 蔡仁厚, “Wang men T’ien-ch’üan ssu-wu tsung-chih chih lun-p’ien: Chou Hai-men Chiu-ti Chiu-chieh te shu-chieh” 王門天泉四無宗旨之論辯：周海門「九諦九解之辨」的疏解 [A debate on Wang Chi’s doctrine of “Four Negatives”: a discussion on the debate on “Nine Inquiries” and “Nine Explanations” recorded by Chou Ju-teng], in Ts’ai Jen-hou, *Hsin-ju chia te ching-shen fang-hsiang* 新儒家的精神方向 [The philosophy of Neo-Confucianism]

ice and coal, or black and white. People who accumulate good actions will be rewarded, while those who do evil things will suffer from misfortune. If people believe in the theory of “the absence of good and evil”, they will not know what to do and what not to do.

Chou’s second explanation: “Uprightness” and “partiality” are descriptions and views created by individuals. They have nothing to do with the existence of objective good and evil. The theory of reward to the virtuous and punishment to the wicked is applicable only to fools who need to be instructed.

Hsü’s third inquiry: “The human mind is like a great vacuum, which is spotless. Yet there exists in essence what can be established as the standard. The standard is also called the upright, the ultimate, the goodness and so on.” With the theory of “the absence of good and evil”, what can the cosmic standard be?

Chou’s third explanation: Since the human mind is like a great vacuum, therefore it cannot be “rendered into a thing”, may it be the “highest goodness” or its opposite.

Hsü’s fourth inquiry: “The original state of human nature is good.” All the sages tried in many ways to instruct people simply to bring them back to their original state. If *hsin* (the mind), *i* (the will), *chih* (knowledge) and *wu* (things) mentioned in the *Great Learning*, are all neither good nor evil, there will be no secure point of departure for moral cultivation.

Chou’s fourth explanation: The innate goodness of human nature is the highest good. But as long as there is misapprehension of this highest good, evil is generated. To return to the original state of human nature is not to lose one’s innocence. In the

innocence of the infant there is neither good nor evil. The same principle of innocence may be applied to adults.

Hsü's fifth inquiry: The ancient sages, who had charge of moulding the moral climate and of awakening human hearts, depended upon the innate goodness of human nature. Because of the indestructible goodness of human nature those who are foolish and ignorant can be educated, those who are violent can be moderated, the whole moral atmosphere can be changed from bad to good. This is the key to reform.

Chou's fifth explanation: A mind which is not attached to the doing of either good or evil is the perfect paradigm for human nature's innate goodness. To educate the ignorant, to make gentle the violent, or to transform the moral climate is to lead the community on the basis of what one knows to be good. Knowledge of the good, in turn, is founded on the idea of the highest good in the non-relative sense.

Hsü's sixth inquiry: According to Confucius, moral cultivation requires endless study and rigorous discipline. But, with the influence of the theory of "the absence of good and evil", scholars nowadays instead of hard and steady work wish to realize the principle of instantaneous enlightenment in non-goodness.

Chou's sixth explanation: The theory of "the absence of good and evil" also maintains that moral cultivation requires a lifetime of self-discipline. Disciplinary work itself, consisting in the performance of virtuous acts and the avoidance of wickedness, without a trace of anything else, is the only real chastisement.

Hsü's seventh inquiry: Indeed, as revealed in many classics, authentic virtuous deeds require not doing good for the sake of appearances. However, one cannot jump to the conclusion that because contrivance to do good is undesirable, there is no

goodness as such at all.

Chou's seventh explanation: The evidence from the classics that authentic virtuous deeds require not doing good for the sake of appearances are reasonable enough to verify the theory of non-existence of good. The virtuous deeds which genuine gentlemen perform are good in the non-relative sense, and are good without purpose behind them.

Hsü's eighth inquiry: Wang Yang-ming himself explicitly states that "there is no nature that is not good, and so there is no knowing that is not good." His saying that "the absence of good and evil characterized the mind-in-itself" simply refers to the state of tranquillity of the mind before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy are aroused.

Chou's eighth explanation: If the saying of Wang Yang-ming, "the absence of good and evil characterized the mind-in-itself", alludes to the state of tranquillity of the mind before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy are aroused, why should the mind become something different after the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy are aroused. If it is tranquil before these feelings are aroused, it should be the same after they are aroused.

Hsü's ninth inquiry: Wang Chi wrongly divided his doctrine of "Four Negatives" and his opponent Ch'ien Te-hung's doctrine of "Four Positives" into two separate ways for men endowed with acute intelligence and with dull intelligence respectively.

Chou's ninth explanation: The method of dividing men into two kinds, one above average, the other below, and teaching them differently was started by

Confucius. The so-called two different methods with two different languages are really one. The self-same linguistic expression may be understood by one who has confidence in the source of the words, and misunderstood by one who is suspicious.

To sum up this debate, although Hsü and Chou did not reach agreement in appearance,³⁰ there are many ideas that were common to both. First of all, they both agree that the original state of the mind and human nature is good. Secondly, they both require authentic virtuous deeds not to do good for the sake of appearances. Thirdly, they both accept that the expression “the absence of good and evil” can be seen as a description of the “highest goodness” of the mind and human nature. Fourthly, they both maintain that moral cultivation requires rigorous self-discipline.

Despite these common ideas, the significant disagreement between them can be summarized as follows: Hsü insisted that there are objective good and evil. In confirming this, he maintained that the sages therefore advise people to do good and remove evil in order to return to the original state of goodness of human nature. He considered the teaching of the sages convincing because, in accordance with the principle of Heaven, people who accumulate good actions will be rewarded, while those who do evil things will suffer from misfortune. This appears to involve the theory of causation and retribution (*karma*, *yin kuo* 因果), which will be discussed later. He doubted that the doctrine of “the absence of good and evil” will make people think that there is no definite good or evil and render them incapable of distinguishing good from evil, and ignorant of what to do and what not to do.

In contrast to Hsü, Chou insisted that as long as there is misapprehension of the

³⁰ According to Huang Tsung-hsi, after this debate “the disciples of the two masters (Hsü and Chou) also had their own disputes.” See Huang Tsung-hsi, “Kan-ch’üan hsüeh-an wu”, in *MJHA*, chüan 41, p.

highest good, evil is generated. The “highest good” defies dichotomization. In this sense, doing good and removing evil can only be genuine when there is the realization that there is neither good nor evil. Therefore, to educate the ignorant, to make gentle the violent, or to transform the moral climate is to lead the community on the basis of what one knows to be good in the non-relative sense. He therefore maintained that, in order to fully understand human nature, it is necessary to grasp the ultimate truth and for that one must believe the theory of “the absence of good and evil”.

(C) Liu Tsung-chou’s criticism of Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences of Teaching” and the debates on it

It appears that the most controversial point of the debates on Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences of Teaching” resides in the first sentence. Wang’s contemporaries, such as Chan Jo-shui, Lo Ch’in-shun and Huang Tso 黃佐 [泰泉 T’ai-ch’üan, 1490-1566], also criticized it for contradicting the Mencian doctrine of the highest good of human nature and its closeness to Buddhist theory.³¹ This kind of criticism continued after Wang’s death. The members of the Tung-lin party were especially critical of this idea. As Huang Tsung-hsi observed: “Ku [Hsien-ch’eng] is especially diligent in pointing out the difficulties inherent in Wang Yang-ming’s statement regarding ‘the absence of good and evil,’ considering this to be the occasion of ruin

976; *Records*, p. 206.

³¹ See Tang Chün i, “The criticisms of Wang Yang-ming’s teachings as raised by his contemporaries”, *Philosophy East and West*, nos. 1 and 2 (January and April, 1973), p. 174; p. 176; Chung Hung-lam, “Huang Zuo [Ts’uo]’s meeting with Wang Yang-ming and the debate over the unity of knowledge and

for the world.”³² Shih Meng-lin put forward a theory of the goodness of human nature to resist the spread of this idea.³³ Lastly, Ka’o P’an-lung also believed that the theory of “the absence of good and evil” can corrupt the teaching of the theory of “the presence of goodness”.³⁴ Even a member of the T’ai-chou School, Fang Hsüeh-chien, considered it better to promote the theory of the goodness of human nature rather than the theory of “the absence of good and evil” in persuading people to do good.³⁵

In this sense, Liu is no exception. Liu criticized the first sentence of Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences” as follows:

If the mind-in-itself is really characterized by the absence of good and evil, then where does the thought that is characterized by the presence of good and evil come from? Where does the knowing that has the knowledge of good and evil come from? Where does the effort of doing good and removing evil come from? ... How straightforward was [Wang Chi’s] theory of “Four Negatives”! How can Master [Wang Yang-ming] answer him?³⁶

The main point of Liu’s criticism is that Wang misunderstood the mind-in-itself as amoral. If it is true that the mind-in-itself is neither good nor evil, there is no reason to argue against Wang Chi’s “Four Negatives”. In that case, everything is amoral and there will be no guarantee for the goodness of the mind and human nature. At the end of the passage, Liu appeared to blame Wang Yang-ming for being incapable of stopping Wang Chi’s over-extending the first sentence of his “Four Sentences of

action”, *Ming Studies*, 35 (1995), pp. 53-73.

³² Huang Tsung-hsi, “Tung-lin hsüeh-an i”, in *MJHA*, chüan 58, p. 1379; *Records*, p. 230.

³³ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Tung-lin hsüeh-an san”, in *MJHA*, chüan 60, p. 1473.

³⁴ Kao P’an-lung, “Fang Pen-an hsien-sheng Hsing shan i hsü”, in Kao P’an-lung, *Kao-tzu i-shu*, chüan 9a, p. 16a.

³⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 16b.

Teaching.”

Therefore Liu re-worded Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences” as follows: “The presence of good and evil characterizes the movement of the mind. The liking of good and disliking of evil characterize the tranquillity of the will. The knowledge of good and evil is innate knowledge. The doing of good and removing of evil characterizes the principles of things.”³⁷

The main differences between these two “Four Sentences” reside in their first two sentences. Liu does not directly challenge Wang’s description of the nature of the mind as good or evil. He rather asserts that the movement of the mind is characterized by the presence of good and evil. Liu himself uses a similar expression to describe the mind. In his *Jen-p’u*, Liu said: “That which has no goodness yet is highest goodness is the substance of the mind.”³⁸ In his “Hsüeh yen” 學言 [Words on learning], he said: “The mind is neither good nor evil. Only through the movement as liking and disliking, i.e., liking good and disliking evil just like the heat of fire and the coldness of water, can we see the goodness [of the mind].”³⁹ Liu believed that “the absence of good and evil” meant the “highest goodness” of the mind.

Although in Liu’s opinion the mind is the highest good, it does not mean that all of the movement of the mind is definitely good. Only in movement such as liking good and disliking evil can the goodness of the mind be seen. In that case, Liu continues in the second sentence of his “Four Sentences”, “The liking of good and disliking of evil characterize the tranquillity of the will.” It is the original substance

³⁶ “Yang-ming ch’uan-hsin lu san”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, p. 107.

³⁷ “Hsüeh-yen shang”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 459.

³⁸ “Jen-p’u”, in *ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁹ “Hsüeh-yen hsia,” in *ibid.*, p. 519.

of the will that can be seen as the guarantee for keeping the “highest goodness” without being ruined. This is the reason that elsewhere Liu remarked: “The will is the place where the highest goodness abides. ... There is no goodness outside the will.”⁴⁰

Although Liu agreed that the highest good of the mind could be described as “the absence of good and evil,” he tried to persuade scholars not to use this description. He said:

Scholars of the Wang Yang-ming School advocate the theory of “the absence of good and evil.” It after all is incompatible with [the theory of] “highest good.” Some explain it as follows: “It is the absence of good and evil that is the highest good.” I am afraid that all this achieves is to add a burdensome statement [for explaining the mind]. There is only one *shan* 善 (goodness). But [according to them] there is a *shan* that is having goodness and there is a *shan* that is having no goodness. The ancient sages never thought like that.⁴¹

Liu considered “the absence of good and evil” was an obstacle to his theory of “the highest good.” He therefore asserted: “The highest goodness is the substance of human nature. There is no extra bit of goodness that can be added in it.”⁴²

It is with his main concern on presenting the guarantee of the goodness of the mind and human nature that Liu comments on the debates on Wang Yang-ming’s “Four Sentences of Teaching”. He not only considered that the articulation of the “Four Sentences of Teaching” was by Wang Chi but also maintained that Wang Yang-ming emphasized the “goodness” of human nature. He says:

What master [Wang Yang-ming] would like to emphasize is simply innate knowledge. He also says: “Innate knowledge is the principle of Heaven,”

⁴⁰ “Tu Ta-hsüeh” 讀大學 [Reading the *Great Learning*], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b, p. 1182.

⁴¹ “Hsüeh-yen hsia”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 518-9.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 519.

because it (innate knowledge) is characterized by the presence of good and the absence of evil. [Therefore,] there is no doubt that the knowledge is the knowledge that is characterized by the presence of good and the absence of evil, the things is the things that are characterized the presence of good and the absence of evil, the will is the will that is characterized by the presence of good and the absence of evil, and the mind is the mind that is characterized by the presence of good and the absence of evil.⁴³

Liu considered that Wang Yang-ming only intended to elucidate the goodness of human nature. To Liu, the mind, the will, knowledge and things and are all characterized by the presence of good and the absence of evil. Compared with Ch'ien Te-hung's "Four Positives", Liu presents a much more positive description of the goodness of the mind, the will, knowledge and things.

Liu believed that Wang Chi's "Four Negatives" is based on the Buddhist doctrine: "To recognize one's original state at the time of thinking of neither good nor evil."⁴⁴ Wang Chi's closeness to Ch'an Buddhism is verified by modern scholars of Ming Neo-Confucianism.⁴⁵ Wang Chi's interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" and thus his "Four Negatives" also appear to be influenced by Ch'an Buddhism.⁴⁶

The expression "To recognize one's original state at the time of thinking of neither good nor evil" is founded in a Ch'an Buddhist canon *Liu-tsu t'an-ching* 六祖壇經 [The platform scripture].⁴⁷ Despite its Buddhist origins, it is considered the

⁴³ "Ch'ien Hsü-shan hsien-sheng yao-yü hsü", in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b, p. 698.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See P'eng Kuo-hsiang, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-328.

⁴⁶ Tu Wei-ming 杜維明, "Wang Yang-ming ssu-chü-chiao t'an-chiu" 王陽明四句教探究 [A survey on Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching"], in Tu Wei-ming, *Jen-hsing yü tzu-wo hsiu-yang* 人性與自我修養 [Human nature and self-cultivation] (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1992), pp. 215-33.

⁴⁷ See Hui-neng 慧能, *Liu-tsu t'an-ching* 六祖壇經 [The platform scripture], in *Taisho shinshu daizokyo*, vol. 48, p. 349b.

highest level of moral cultivation by some Neo-Confucians, including Wang Yang-ming. He said: “[What the Ch’an Buddhist calls] the original state is what our Confucian school calls innate knowledge.”⁴⁸ To Liu, it is only through the basic steps of cultivation that one can achieve this highest level.⁴⁹ Without passing through these steps of moral cultivation but only thinking about achieving this highest level by sudden enlightenment is to miss the intervening steps.⁵⁰ Liu therefore concluded his criticism of Wang Chi’s “Four Negatives” as follows:

According to Wang Chi’s “Four Negatives”, the mind is the mind that is neither good nor evil. This sort of mind is a mind of nothing. The will is the will that is neither good nor evil. This sort of will is a will of nothing. The knowing is the knowing that is neither good nor evil. This sort of knowing is a knowing of nothing. The thing is the thing that is neither good nor evil. This sort of thing is a thing of nothing. Therefore, there is no [need for] such tasks as “investigating things”, “extending knowledge”, “making the will sincere”, “rectifying the mind”, “cultivating the personal life”, “regulating the family”, “ordering the state” and “pacifying the world”. There is no consideration of [what is depicted in the *Great Learning*:] “Things have their roots and branches. Affairs have their beginnings and their ends. To know what is first and what is last will lead one near the Way.” [Has he thought about] what is the essence of *Great Learning*? He said: “To recognize one’s original state at the time of thinking of neither good nor evil.” Is he not intending to expose the secret of Heaven (*t’ien-chi* 天機)?⁵¹

In Liu’s opinion, Wang Chi’s “Four Negatives” not only becomes epistemologically agonistic, but also leaves no room for the eight steps of moral cultivation in the *Great Learning*. To Liu, these eight steps are not only basic but also should be fulfilled step by step in the order given in the *Great Learning*. It is in this sense that Liu concludes

⁴⁸ *CHL*, p. 228; *Instructions*, Part II: 162, p. 142.

⁴⁹ See “Ch’ien Hsü-shan hsien-sheng yao-yü hsü”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b, p. 699.

⁵⁰ See Huang Tsung-hsi, “Shih shuo”, in *MJHA*, p. 7.

⁵¹ “Hsüeh-yen shang”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 427.

that Wang Chi's "Four Negatives" will inevitably become heresy.⁵²

In commenting on the debate on the "Nine Inquiries and Nine Explanations" between Hsü Fu-yüan and Chou Ju-teng, Liu also emphasizes the goodness of the mind and human nature. Taking the side of the former, he criticized the latter as follows:

Even if [we admit that] Chou Ju-teng had profound explanations, they can simply be taken as footnotes [to the explanations of] "the highest goodness" and cannot be separated from the word *shan*.⁵³

To Liu, Chou Ju-teng's explanations of the "Four Negatives" verify the existence of the "highest goodness" of the mind and human nature. Besides this general comment, on many other occasions Liu also expresses opinions on the mind and human nature that concern the ideas exposed in the debate on the "Nine Inquiries" and the "Nine Explanations".

In brief, Liu expresses his close position to Hsü Fu-yüan and opposition to Chou Ju-teng's position in three ways. First of all, Liu criticized the expression "The absence of good and evil characterizes the highest goodness." He said:

Kao-tzu regarded human nature as neither good nor evil. Mencius effectively rebutted him with the theory of "goodness". It is a definite conclusion [about human nature] that has been well accepted for thousands of years. But nowadays [how odd it is] that those people advocating the theory of "the absence of good and evil" take Mencius' theory as their footnote.⁵⁴

Obviously Liu took Hsü Fu-yüan's first inquiry as his assistance. He accused the

⁵² See *ibid.*

⁵³ "Hui-lu", in *ibid.*, p. 643.

advocates of the theory of “the absence of good and evil” of contradicting Mencius’ theory of “the goodness of human nature”.

Secondly, Liu emphasizes that there are objective good and evil. Liu said:

The moral principles in the world are all characterized by the presence of good and the absence of evil. What we Confucians learn is simply to learn to do good and get rid of evil. What we call the presence of good is the same as the absence of evil, and vice versa.⁵⁵

In Liu’s opinion, not only are there objective good and evil, good and evil are basically incompatible.

Thirdly, Liu considered that the doctrine of “the absence of good and evil” will make the effort of doing good and getting rid of evil meaningless. Liu said:

Since [, as it is said,] there is no good, there is nothing deserving of doing good. Since [, as it is said,] there is no evil, there is nothing deserving of getting rid of evil. ... This will lead people in the world to lapse into frenzy and arrogance. Even those who are determined to study are upset because they do not know where to start [the process of moral cultivation]. They might lapse into Buddhism or Taoism.⁵⁶

In Liu’s opinion, the theory of “the absence of good and evil” makes people wrongly believe that there are no definite good and evil and renders them incapable of distinguishing good from evil. They therefore will not know what to do and what not to do. They are in danger of lapsing into Buddhism and Taoism for their nihilistic attitude towards moral matters.

Although Liu took Hsü’s side in the debate, he intended to make a

⁵⁴ “Hsüeh-yen hsia”, in *ibid.*, p. 519.

⁵⁵ “Yü Lü-ssu shih” 與履思十 [Letters to Lü-ssu: the tenth one], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 376.

compromise between Hsü and Chou.⁵⁷ This shows that there are some of Chou's points Liu could agree with. First, as mentioned earlier, Liu agreed that the highest goodness of the mind and human nature can be described as "the absence of good and evil," though he considered the theory of "the absence of good and evil" as an obstacle to his theory of "the highest good". Secondly, Liu agreed that doing good for the sake of appearances is not right. He said:

It is always easy for us to raise a good *nien* 念 (thought) in the mind. Once we consider it seriously, we will find that it is burdensome.⁵⁸

Not only did he consider the arising of a good *nien* (thought) burdensome, he also considered it evil. Using the metaphor of sand in the eye, Liu commented:

Not the tiniest speck of gold or silver should be allowed to enter the eye. Anything that enters the eye is evil. What difference does it make if it be gold or silver? Is this the reason that people advocate the theory of "the absence of good"?⁵⁹

Liu left the last question without an answer. Wang Yang-ming used the same metaphor to describe doing good for the sake of appearances and his opposition to it.⁶⁰ Liu might have been inspired by Wang. Although Liu did not go so far as to use the metaphor to sustain the doctrine of "the absence of good and evil", he agreed with Wang in regarding doing good for the sake of appearances as evil. Therefore he had a general comment on doing good for the sake of appearances as follows:

⁵⁶ "Ta Lü-ssu erh" 答履思二 [Reply to Lü-ssu: the second one], in *ibid.*, p. 364.

⁵⁷ See "Yü Lü-ssu shih", in *ibid.*, pp. 376-7.

⁵⁸ "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 428.

⁵⁹ "Hsüeh-yen hsia", in *ibid.*, p. 532.

The Way originally consists of nothing. If it contains anything, it is merely an obstruction. In learning there is originally nothing that needs to be seized. If [you think that] there is one thing that needs to be seized, it must be something that will hurt your mind. For example, if one is learning simply in order to be benevolent, he is not benevolent at all. If one is learning simply in order to be righteous, he is not righteous at all. If one is learning simply in order to be in a state of equilibrium, he is not in a state of equilibrium at all. If one is learning simply in order to be tranquil, he is not tranquil at all.⁶¹

It is in this sense that he once asserted: “The sage has no *nien* (thought). Once he has *nien*, he is reckless.” A student asked him immediately: “Is thinking of doing good a *nien*, too?” Liu answers: “[Yes, for example,] thinking of becoming a sage is [a *nien*, too].”⁶² In Liu’s opinion, even the thought of becoming a sage is better to be prevented.

To sum up Liu’s comment on the debate on the “Nine Inquiries and Nine Explanations” between Hsü Fu-yüan and Chou Ju-teng, Liu emphasizes the highest goodness of the mind and human nature and shows concern about the confusion of the distinction between good and evil which might be caused by the theory of “the absence of good and evil.” However, Liu also disapproved of mistaking the highest goodness as doing good for the sake of appearances.

(D) Liu Tsung-chou’s criticism of moral decay in the circle of Wang Yang-ming’s followers

(i) General criticism

⁶⁰ See *CHL*, p. 380; *Instructions*, Part III: 336, pp. 256-7.

⁶¹ “Hsüeh-yen shang”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 434.

Most modern scholars agree that the “arrogant men” advocating moral nihilism Liu referred to are the members of the T’ai-chou School and the “prudish men” advocating the mysticism Liu referred to are people like Wang Chi’s followers.⁶³ In mentioning the roles Wan Ken, the leader of the T’ai-chou School, and Wang Chi play in transmitting Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine, Liu said:

In Yang-ming’s school, both Wang Ken and Wang Chi preferred enlightenment in their teachings and were called the Two Wangs. Although Wang Ken spoke of enlightenment in an exalted and transcendent language, he did not depart from the master’s essential teachings. But Wang Chi regarded *liang-chih* virtually as the Buddha-nature, desiring enlightenment in a vacuum, and ended up playing mind games. It is possible to describe him as a man who carries a spear into his own house.”⁶⁴

To Liu, the common characteristic of Wang Ken and Wang Chi is that they both “preferred enlightenment in their teachings”. Liu appeared to be in opposition to this philosophical position. As mentioned in section 3 of chapter 3, in 1622 under Liu’s direction Tsou Yüan-piao and Feng Ts’ung-wu opened the Shou-shan Academy in Peking. In lectures, Liu got involved in philosophical discussion with Tsou Yüan-piao and Feng Ts’ung-wu. Tsou believed that the ability of understanding and enlightening (*chieh wu* 解悟) was most important for moral cultivation, whereas Feng emphasized personal practice (*kung-hsing* 躬行) as essential. Liu was on Feng’s side

⁶² “Hsüeh-yen hsia”, in *ibid.*, p. 511.

⁶³ Mou Tsung-san, *Ts’ung Liu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan*, pp. 297-8; Liu Shu-hsien 劉述先, “Lun Wang Yang-ming te tsui-hou ting-lun” 論王陽明的最後定論 [On Wang Yang-ming’s final conclusion], in Liu Shu-hsien, *Ju-chia ssu-hsiang i-han chih hsien-tai ch’an-shih lun-chi* 儒家思想意涵之現代闡釋論集 [Essays of modern interpretations of the meaning of Confucian thought], (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 2000), p. 53; Huang Min-hao, *Liu Tsung-chou chi ch’i shen-tu che-hsüeh*, pp. 100-3.

and wrote a preface to his sayings.⁶⁵ Liu's opposition to the enlightenment approach for moral cultivation was shown in this earlier experience. In this light, Liu seems to be criticizing Wang Ken and Wang Chi for preferring enlightenment. However, to Liu, it appears that Wang Chi deserved more criticism than Wang Ken, because Wang Chi's concept of enlightenment was close to the Buddhist way.

(ii) Liu's criticism of Wang Chi

Liu condemned Wang Chi's transformation of Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" as follows:

Wang Chi said: "The teaching of the "Four Positives" is a complex and fragmented one." He had to transform the ["Four Sentences"] into the "Four Negatives" before he could become content. But if there was no distinction between good and evil, how could there be the mind, the will, knowledge, and things? So he had also to move to the denial of the mind, the will, knowledge, and things before he could consider this a profound teaching. But then, where are the three words *chih liang-chih* (extending innate knowledge) made manifest? Wang Chi alone awakened to the fact that nothingness referred to a separate transmission outside the original teaching. Actually even this nothingness was nothing.⁶⁶

Liu seems to blame Wang Chi's doctrine of "Four Negatives" for bringing a mystical interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge".

To Liu, Wang Chi's mystical interpretation led to moral nihilism:

⁶⁴ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Shih shuo", in *MJHA*, p. 8; *Records*, p. 61.

⁶⁵ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 187-8; "Feng Shao-hsü hsien-sheng chiao-yen hsü" 馮少墟先生教言序 [A preface to the words of teaching of master Feng Ts'ung-wu], in *LTCCC*, p. 3b, pp. 693-4.

⁶⁶ Huang Tsung-hsi, "Shih shuo", in *MJHA*, p. 8; *Records*, p. 61.

Without establishing being and nothingness, good and evil also disappeared. All that remained was the *ch'i* 氣 (pneuma) of an empty spiritual consciousness, which moves without being attached or detached to any one place. How could this not make him fall into the trap of Buddhism? For the Buddhists have abandoned worldly cares to concentrate only on *samsara* (transmigration). [For them,] there is no evil to avoid and no good to perform. All that remains is the really empty ground of nature where real consciousness may become manifest. To gain enlightenment from this point of entry is the teaching of Ch'an Buddhism. As for us Confucians who daily seek to understand nature and destiny in the dharmas (Law) of this world, we are full of desires that appear and disappear. In such a situation, if we speak of the absence of good and evil, we are only making it easier for evil to become dominant.⁶⁷

In Liu's idea, Wang Chi's interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" not only distorted Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" but also led the doctrine close to Ch'an Buddhism, which considers that good and evil do not exist objectively.

Liu once also elucidated the influence of Wang Chi's idea of the enlightenment of the mind in general as follows:

To take the enlightenment of the mind as the essential of the investigation of things ... will inevitably make people overestimate the inwardness and underestimate the outwardness. ... The thing he investigated is the one of nothingness not the one we mean by the thing. The knowledge he extended is the one of nothingness not the one we mean by the knowledge. Furthermore, the will he made sincere and the mind he rectified are the will of nothingness and the mind of nothingness not what we mean by the will and the mind. [And so] the tasks of cultivating personal life, regulating the family, ordering the state, and pacifying the world are all become empty.⁶⁸

Liu blamed Wang Chi's emphasis on mental enlightenment for encouraging in others a tendency to empty thinking without aiming at the real things and knowledge in the world. He also found Wang Chi's influence among his contemporaries:

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Nowadays, scholars who decide to concentrate on thinking are mostly defective in imagination. They regard moral principle as the reflection of a flower in a mirror or the moon in water (*ching-hua shui-yüeh* 鏡花水月). They consider this imagination a subtle enlightenment. [In reality] their fault is like those who cherish fragmentary studies.⁶⁹

In other words, people who regard moral principle as something unsubstantial indulge in moral nihilism, while people who are defective in imagination indulge in mysticism.

(iii) Liu's criticism of Wang Ken

In some ways, Liu was not as harsh on Wang Ken as he was on Wang Chi. Liu praised Wang Ken's "Lo hsüeh ko" 樂學歌 [Paeon to enjoyment of learning] for its passages on the experience of joyfulness shared by Confucius and Yen Hui (*K'ung Yen lo ch'u* 孔顏樂處).⁷⁰ This joyfulness is an important issue in Neo-Confucianism, starting from Chou Tun-i. As Ch'eng Hao recorded: "Formerly when [we] received instructions from Chou Mao-shu 周茂叔 (Chou Tun-i), he often told [us] to find out wherein Confucius and Yen-tzu [Yen Hui] found their joy."⁷¹ As Wing-tsit Chan [Ch'en Jung-chieh] 陳榮捷 comments, "Neither Chou nor the Ch'eng brothers ever indicated where Confucius or Yen-tzu found his joy. Neo-Confucianists were

⁶⁸ "Yü Wang Hung-t'ai nien-yu", in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 357.

⁶⁹ "Ta Lü-ssu wu" 答履思五 [Replies to Lü-ssu: the fifth one], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, pp. 367-8.

⁷⁰ "Hsün lo shuo" 尋樂說 [Essay on searching for joy], in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 339-41; "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *ibid.*, pp. 440-1.

⁷¹ Ch'eng Hao 程顥 and Ch'eng I 程頤, *Erh Ch'eng chi* 二程集 [The works of the two Ch'eng brothers] (Taipei: Han-ching wen-hua shih-yeh yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1983), chüan 2a, p. 16; *Source*

enthusiastic in describing it in their own ways, such as extensive study of literature and self-restraint with rules of conduct, self mastery, enjoying the Way, complete elimination of selfish desires, following the principle of Heaven, and so forth.”⁷²

Wang Yang-ming also emphasized the transmission by Confucius and Yen Hui of sages’ learning. Many of Wang’s disciples maintained that Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” was the direct transmission of Confucius and Yen Hui’s learning since it was lost two thousand years before.⁷³

As a Neo-Confucian master, Liu, like his forerunners, put forward his interpretation on Confucius and Yen Hui’s joyfulness in his essay entitled “Hsün lo shuo” 尋樂說 [Essay on searching for joy]:⁷⁴

The ancient Confucians often told students to find out the source of Confucius and Yen Hui’s joyfulness. Where do they find joy? Some people said: “They find joy in poverty.” [I said:] “There is no joy in poverty.” Some people said: “They find joy in [pursuing] the Way.” [I said:] “To say that Confucius and Yen Hui find joy in [pursuing] the Way is to misunderstand them.” There is no joy in the Way after all. The secret (i.e. the source of Confucius and Yen Hui’s joyfulness) is extremely subtle. In master Wang Ken’s “Lo hsüeh ko” he said: “The human heart naturally enjoys itself, but one binds oneself by selfish desires. When a selfish desire makes its appearance, innate knowing is still self-conscious. Once there is consciousness of it, the selfish desire forthwith disappears, so that the heart returns to its former joy.” He also said: “Without this joy it is not true learning; without this learning it is not true joy.” He also said: “To enjoy is to learn, to learn is to enjoy. Among the joys of this world what compares to learning! What learning in the world compares to this joy!” This can be called “killing two birds with one arrow”. Enjoying and learning are both achieved at the same time.⁷⁵

Liu regarded Wang Ken as the best interpreter of the source of Confucius and Yen

Book, p. 531.

⁷² *Source Book*, p. 531.

⁷³ Lü Miao-fen, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-80.

⁷⁴ “Hsün lo shuo”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 339-41.

Hui's joyfulness.⁷⁶

Liu pointed out that the most important aspect of Wang Ken's paean is the word *liang-chih* (innate knowing).⁷⁷ Liu said that Confucius and Yen Hui found their joy in learning to distinguish rightness from non-rightness.⁷⁸ However, "there is no definite distinction between rightness and non-rightness. Only innate knowing is the judge."⁷⁹ He concluded: "Everybody has innate knowing. Everybody knows the principle of Heaven. Everybody can enjoy this joy. Only those who are able to be self-reflective and acquire the Way themselves can realize its secret."⁸⁰ Liu also said: "I think that it is easy to find the source of Confucius and Yen Hui's joyfulness, but it is not easy to find joy in our own mind. Students should try to pursue in their own mind to find their own joyfulness. To think about what is different between their own joyfulness and Confucius and Yen Hui's joyfulness. After distinguishing the difference we can clearly find our own joyfulness."⁸¹ In this way, Liu praised Wang Ken's "Lo hsüeh ko" for pursuing "learning to get the Way oneself" (*tzu-te chih hsüeh* 自得之學).

Wang Ken is regarded as "the one who carries forward most vigorously the idea of the common man as sage in Confucian history."⁸² Although he was the son of a salt maker and only had five years of instruction at the village school, and although he never sought or attained the status of a Confucian scholar-official, Wang Ken was

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 339.

⁷⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 340.

⁷⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 339.

⁷⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 339-40.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 340-1.

⁸¹ "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *ibid.*, p. 440.

⁸² Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Learning for One's Self*, p. 155.

full of interest in learning and had self-confidence in becoming a sage.⁸³ His doctrine has been characterized as “learning to get the Way oneself” (*tzu-te chih hsüeh*).⁸⁴ Wang Ken’s praise of enjoyment in learning can be seen as advocating learning for the sake of the self. In contrast to most scholars, who learn in pursuit of an official status, Wang Ken is very unusual. As mentioned in section 1 of chapter 3, Liu had intended to refuse taking the civil service examination in his youth, and he also advocated learning for the sake of the self.

Liu also praised Wang Ken’s interpretation of “the investigation of things” of the *Great Learning*.⁸⁵ According to Wang Ken:

The investigation of things refers to the fact that things have roots and branches. One’s self (*shen* 身), the world, the state and the family all make up one substance. In the doctrine of the investigation of things for extending knowledge, the self is the root and the family, the state and the world are the branches. Therefore, if in one’s actions there is some deficiency, one must turn and look for it within oneself. This reflexive moment is the fundamental effort in the investigation of things. Should one wish to regulate one’s family, order the state and give peace to the world, one must first make the self secure. According to the *Book of Changes*, “When the self is secure, the world, the state and the family can be preserved.” But when the self has yet to be made secure, the root is not firmly established. Now, one who knows how to give security to the self cannot but love and respect his self. One who loves and respects his self cannot fail to love and respect others. If I am able to love and respect others, others must love and respect me, and my self should be secure. In the same way, if the entire family loves and respects me, then the family will be regulated. If the entire state loves and respects me, then the state will be ordered. If the whole world loves and respects me, then the world will be at peace. Therefore, should others fail to love and respect me, it is not particularly a case of others’ lacking humanity (*jen*) or respect. Rather, it is my own lack of humanity and respect that may be discerned.⁸⁶

⁸³ See Huang Tsung-hsi, “T’ai-chou hsüeh-an i”, in *MJHA*, chüan 32, pp. 709-10; Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Learning for One’s Self*, pp. 155-9.

⁸⁴ Shimada Kenji, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁸⁵ Huang Tsung-hsi, “T’ai-chou hsüeh-an i”, in *MJHA*, chüan 32, p. 710.

Wang Ken's interpretation is special in that he emphasized the role of the self as the most important element in the doctrine of "the investigation of things". In his opinion, the security of the self is the basis for regulating the family, ordering the family, and pacifying the world.

This interpretation of "the investigation of things" was proposed in a lecture in an academic conference held in Huai-nan 淮南.⁸⁷ It became known to Huang Tsung-hsi as the Huai-nan doctrine of "the investigation of things" [Huai-nan ko-wu 淮南格物].⁸⁸ This doctrine appears to be Wang Ken's most definitive theory on learning and was quoted as such by Huang Tsung-hsi in his conclusion to his essay on Wang Ken's life and learning in the *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*.⁸⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi made a serious criticism of the Huai-nan doctrine as follows:

Wang Ken said, "To make secure both one's self and the mind is best. To make secure only one's mind and not one's whole self is less good. To fail to make secure either self or mind is worst." [In this sense] he is taking the singing bird as model for securing the self. This will inevitably leave people to establish opportunities for escaping from danger simply for securing life [without caring about the rightness]."⁹⁰

In Huang's opinion, Wang Ken appeared to put too much emphasis on securing the bodily self and less on cultivating the mind of the self. According to Huang, this way encouraged people to be selfish. Huang's comment may be related to his impression

⁸⁶ Ibid.; *Records*, p. 176.

⁸⁷ Lao Ssu-kuang, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih*, vol. 3a, p. 512.

⁸⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an i", in *MJHA*, chüan 32, p. 710.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 709-11.

⁹⁰ Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an i", in *MJHA*, chüan 32, p. 711. The English translation is based on Julia Ching, *Records*, p. 177. However, Ching has punctuated the passage incorrectly. Cf. Chu Hung-lin [Chu Hung-lam] 朱鴻林, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an tien chiao shih wu* 明儒學案點校釋誤 [An explanation of corrections to wrong punctuations in *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*] (Taipei: The Institute of

of the behaviour of Wang Ken's disciples. In his introduction to the T'ai-chou School Huang said: "Many of his (Wang Ken's) disciples could fight dragons and snakes with their bare hands. By the time his teaching passed down to men like Yen Chün and Ho Hsin-yin, it was no longer within the boundaries of Confucian moral philosophy."⁹¹

Further evidence to substantiate Huang's concerns about the Huai-nan doctrine is Wang's essay entitled "Ming-che pao-shen lun" 明哲保身論 [On clear wisdom and self-preservation]:

Clear wisdom is innate knowing. To clarify wisdom and preserve the self (*shen* 身) is innate knowing and innate ability. Those who know how to preserve the self will love the self like a treasure. If I can love the self, I cannot but love other people; if I can love other people, they will surely love me; and if they love me, my self will be preserved. ... If I respect my self, I dare not but respect other people; if I respect other people, they will surely respect me; and if they respect me, my self is preserved. If by this means I regulate the family, then I can love the whole family, and if I love that family, they will love me; and if they love me, my self is preserved. If by this means I rule a state, I can love the whole state; if I love that state, the state will love me; and if the state loves me, my self is preserved. Only when my self is preserved can I preserve the state. If I only know how to preserve my self and do not know to love other men, then I will surely seek only to satisfy my self, pursue my own selfish gain, and harm others, whereupon they will retaliate and my self can no longer be preserved. ... If I only know how to love others and do not know how to love my self, then it will come to my body being cooked alive or the flesh being sliced off my thighs, or to throwing away my life and killing my self, and then my self cannot be preserved. And if my self cannot be preserved, with what shall I preserve my prince and father?⁹²

Lao Sze-kwang [Lao Ssu-kuang] 勞思光 observes that Wang Ken confused the two

History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1991), pp. 194-5.

⁹¹ Huang Tsung-hsi, "T'ai-chou hsüeh-an i", in *MJHA*, chüan 32, p. 703; *Records*, p. 165.

⁹² Wang Ken, "Ming-che pao-shen lun" 明哲保身論 [On clear wisdom and self-preservation], in Wang Ken, *Wang Hsin-chai ch'üan-chi*, chüan 4, pp. 4a-5a. The English translation is from Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia

meanings of the self, one meaning the bodily self and the other meaning the moral self. Wang Ken intended to emphasize the latter but was prone to refer it to the former. This provoked criticism by Huang Tsung-hsi and others.⁹³ Wm. Theodore de Bary remarks: “When Wang Ken speaks of ‘my body being cooked alive or the flesh being sliced off my own thighs, throwing my life away’, etc., he alludes to extravagant gestures of self-sacrifice, and protests against a highly idealized view of the self which called for heroic self-denial and an almost religious dedication to one’s ruler or parents, so contrary to man’s natural instinct for self-preservation.”⁹⁴ He also observes “a difference between Wang Ken and Wang Yang-ming which has important implications for those who follow them. Wang Ken’s conception of the self is strongly physical—the bodily self or person. Wang Yang-ming’s emphasis in innate knowledge is on the mind, especially the identity with principle or nature.”⁹⁵ He concludes: “Liu Tsung-chou noted the crucial difference between Wang Ken and Wang Yang-ming on this point and asked whether it did not portend the abandonment of mind control and of the restraining influence of the mind over the bodily desires.”⁹⁶

These observations explain the reason Huang Tsung-hsi criticized Wang Ken’s Huai-nan doctrine of “the investigation of things.” However, these observations may be modified by the following evidence, which exposes Wang Ken’s reason for writing the essay “Ming-che Pao-shen lun”. In 1526, one of his friends Wang Yao-hu

University Press, 1999), vol. 1, p. 862.

⁹³ Lao Ssu-kuang, *Chung-kuo che-hsiieh shih*, vol. 3a, p. 513.

⁹⁴ Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Learning for One’s Self*, p. 164.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

王瑤湖 [?-?] was heading for Peking to take office in the government.⁹⁷ One of his

biographies reports:

In October of the winter [of 1526], [Wang Ken] wrote “Ming-che pao-shen lun”. By then, most of his comrades in serving the government were either killed for remonstrating or being exiled afar. The master [i.e. Wang Ken] thought that if one cannot preserve one’s self, he cannot take care of all things in the world. Mainly because Yao-hu was heading for Peking, he wrote it as a present for him.”⁹⁸

This record reveals that “Ming-che pao-shen lun” was written as advice for his friend who was heading for Peking to take office in the government. In writing this treatise, Wang Ken depicted friends who sacrificed themselves in serving the ruler. As someone who had never sought or attained official status, Wang Ken doubted the worth of being sacrificed in civil service. He said:

To participate in civil service is to pursue the Way. Some people have sacrificed themselves in civil service. How good can it be for pursuing the Way if one participates in civil service and sacrifices his self?⁹⁹

Based on this view of civil service he also expressed his idea of political activity. He said:

The self is a measure, and the world, states and families are each a square, We adjust the measure to know whether the square is straight. Therefore we should only care about the measure and certainly not seek the measure in the square.

⁹⁷ Wang Ken, *Wang Hsin-chai ch'üan-chi*, chüan 1, “Nien-p'u”, p. 7b.

⁹⁸ Wang Ken, *Ch'ung-chüan Hsin-chai Wang hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi* 重鐫心齋王先生全集 [A reprint of the complete books of Wang Ken] (A 1631 version preserved in Taipei National Central Library), chüan 2, “Nien-p'u”, p. 19b.

⁹⁹ Wang Ken, “Yü-lu”, in Wang Ken, *Wang Hsin-chai ch'üan-chi*, chüan 2, p. 8a.

Once the measure is correct the square is straight.¹⁰⁰

In his using this metaphor Wang Ken expressed a typical Confucian moral idealism, which insists that the establishment of political order starts from the moral cultivation of the self and that a good society is based on the goodness of the self.¹⁰¹ To some extent, Wang Ken's idea of political activity can be seen as an extreme expression of this moral idealism.

Based on this moral idealism Wang Ken had a naive concept of *ching-shih* 經世 (statecraft). He said: "The statecraft of the sage is like normal matters in daily life. The rulers and the ministers in Yao and Shun's courts simply engaged in the 'discussion of learning' (*chiang-hsüeh* 講學)."¹⁰² In Neo-Confucianism the "discussion of learning" is an important term. Chu Hsi "emphasized that learning should proceed by discussion. He also applied this principle to the education of the ruler. He considered that there is no better method than the discussion of all matters and issues so that their good and evil implications are brought to light before

¹⁰⁰ Wang Ken, "Yü-lu", in *ibid.*, chüan 3, pp. 3a-b. The English translation is based on Carsun Chang, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

¹⁰¹ The term "moral idealism" (*tao-te te li-hsiang chu-i* 道德的理想主義) is first expounded by Professor Mou Tsung-san. See Mou Tsung-san, "Tao-te te li-hsiang chu-i yü jen-hsing lun" 道德的理想主義與人性論 [Moral idealism and theories of human nature], in Mou Tsung-san, *Tao-te te li-hsiang chu-i* 道德的理想主義 [Moral idealism] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1978), pp. 24-38. For the further interpretation of Confucian moral idealism, see Chang Hao 張灝, "Sung Ming i lai ju-chia ching-shih ssu-hsiang shih shih" 宋明以來儒家經世思想試釋 [An tentative interpretation of the theories of statecraft since Sung and Ming dynasties], in *Chin-shih Chung-kuo ching-shih ssu-hsiang yen-t'ao hui lun-wen chi* 近世中國經世思想研討會論文集 [Proceedings of the conference on the theory of statecraft of modern China] (Taipei: The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1984), p. 12. See also Chang Hao, "The heritage of the ideal of *ching-shih*", in Tu Wei-ming, ed., *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 72-91; Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 69.

¹⁰² Wang Ken, "Yü-lu", in Wang Ken, *Wang Hsin-chai ch'üan-chi*, chüan 2, p. 7a.

decisions are made.”¹⁰³ Wang Ken inherited this idea from Chu Hsi and appeared to extend it so far that he considered politics at court as identical to the “discussion of learning”. He therefore persuaded students to “learn before participating in politics”.¹⁰⁴

He also believed that learning means to learn to be a teacher, to be a leader and even to be a ruler.¹⁰⁵ To Neo-Confucians, “the authority to which they gave adherence was higher than the state, which saw itself as guardian of classical exegesis, higher even than the classics. They relied primarily on their own authority, as self-appointed interpreters of the sacred message. ... For this reason, in the political realm, they acted as moral judges of their sovereigns rather than as dutiful ministers.”¹⁰⁶ Wang Ken, like his fellow Neo-Confucians, believed that a scholar-official should be a moral judge to the ruler, and that the ruler and the officials should be like partners. As he advised his disciple:

The personality of the ruler and ours are supposed to be different. This is very natural without doubt. However, it is all up to us [whether we participate in civil service or not]. There is a regular way to it. We should consider it (the regular way) before we decide to participate in, not the opposite. If the ruler and the ministers beg us, and hundreds of the officers recommend us, we can therefore participate in civil service. ... The Way I am pursuing can therefore be realized and my participation in civil service is wise. ... If the ruler and the ministers do not employ us, even if there are hundreds of officials recommending us, we may participate in civil service by doing a job suitable to our status. ... Many scholar-officials before us ignored this regular way. They participated in civil service before considering this regular way. They therefore suffered punishments. How can you not take it as advice?¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Liberal Tradition in China*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ Wang Ken, “Yü-lu”, in Wang Ken, *Wang Hsin-chai ch’üan-chi*, chüan 2, p. 6a.

¹⁰⁵ Wang Ken, “Yü-lu”, in *ibid.*, chüan 3, p. 7a.

¹⁰⁶ Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Liberal Tradition in China*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁷ Wang Ken, “Ta Lin Tzu-jen” 答林子仁 [Reply to Lin Tzu-jen], in Wang Ken, *Wang Hsin-chai ch’üan-chi*, chüan 5, pp. 12b-13a.

To Wang Ken, participation in civil service should be for the realization of the Way. The Way can only be realized under the condition that the scholar-officials and the ruler are partners, and the scholar-official who is sacrificed without realizing the Way is totally worthless. This is the reason why Wang Ken urged scholar-officials to cultivate wisdom and practise self-preservation. To regard him as putting too much emphasis on securing the bodily self seems to an over-simplification.

Wang Ken is a realist in taking self-preservation as a basis for ordering the world. It is his moral idealism that brings Wang Ken close to Liu Tsung-chou. Like Wang Ken, Liu believed that a scholar-official should be a moral judge to the ruler. As mentioned in section 2 of chapter 3, in the reign of the Emperor Ch'ung-chen, Liu tried many times to submit memorials or to advise the emperor in their meetings that the emperor learn by the example of Yao and Shun how to rule the country through benevolence and righteousness. He considered benevolence and righteousness crucially important in all political affairs, claiming that military, financial and domestic problems would be resolved if the emperor were to keep benevolence and righteousness in mind. Ignoring the emperor's irritation, Liu tried to persuade him to enact political reform through his own moral cultivation. To some extent, Liu acted as a moral teacher to the emperor. Also, in his memorials he urged the emperor to share power with the officials.¹⁰⁸ Like Wang Ken, Liu saw the scholar-officials and the ruler as partners. In this sense, Liu's ideal of political activity is very similar to

¹⁰⁸ See "Tse nan chih i i chih chün Yao Shun shu" 責難之義以致君堯舜疏 [A memorial to ask the emperor to pursuit the Way of Yao and Shun], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. pp. 61-7; "Mao ssu ch'en yen k'ai kuang sheng hsin shu" 冒死陳言開廣聖心疏 [A memorial to persuade the emperor to open his mind], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, pp. 83-6.

Wang Ken's. Thus Liu gave high praise to Wang Ken's Huai-nan doctrine of the investigation of things. As Liu commented:

Among the doctrines of the investigation of things propounded by Confucian scholars, the Huai-nan doctrine ought to be regarded as the most correct one. [Wang Ken] said: "In the doctrine of the investigation of things for extending knowledge the self is the root and the family, the state and the world are the branches." I would like to develop it as follows: "In the doctrine of the investigation of things for extending knowledge making the will sincere is the root, and rectifying the mind, regulating the family, ordering the state and pacifying the world are the branches."¹⁰⁹

Where Liu agrees with Wang Ken appears to be Wang's considering the self and the whole world as one substance and taking the cultivation of the self as the starting point for ordering the world. In this regard, Liu appeared to have no concern, as Huang Tsung-hsi did, that the Huai-nan doctrine of "the investigation of things" encouraged people to be selfish.

Once in a letter to one of his disciples Liu talked about the relation between *shen* 身 (the self) and the mind as follows:

Wherever *shen* 身 lives in the mind is right there. This is absolutely right. You should know that *shen* is not simply a body of seven inches. That which fills the world is the mind. That which fills the world is *shen*. ... How can it be simply to get knowledge from the bodily self of seven inches? Those who believe it is, I am afraid that their intelligence is limited by their bodies. They will therefore gradually bear selfish opinions in their minds.¹¹⁰

Liu obviously knew that the word "*shen*" means the bodily self to many people.

However, he would rather emphasize the intimate relation between "*shen*" and the

¹⁰⁹ "Hsüeh-yen hsia", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 529.

mind, believing that *shen*, the mind and all things in the world are one substance.

This brings his idea of *shen* very close to Wang Ken's.

However, there is still a significant difference between Liu and Wang Ken on the idea of *shen*. Given his own sacrifice for the fall of the Ming dynasty, Liu appears to agree with the notion of sacrifice of the self in civil service. The reason that Liu agreed with the notion of sacrifice of the self in civil service is probably because of his concept of *shen*. Liu said: "*Shen* is situated inside the myriad things of the world. It cannot be taken as one's private property."¹¹¹ Given its emphasis on not regarding *shen* as one's private property, Liu's idea of *shen* appeared to lead him away from Wang Ken's position on the preservation of the self. Liu expressed his position more clearly in an essay entitled "Sheng ssu shuo" 生死說 [On life and death]. After condemning his contemporaries for preferring life to honour, Liu said:

Confucian learning takes all things in the universe as one substance. We [therefore] see it (the one substance) as a great self (*Ta shen-tzu* 大身子). The birth of all things in the universe is the birth of my self. The death of all things in the universe is the death of my self.¹¹²

By using the idea of the "great self", Liu was expressing the self-fulfillment of a person in the universe. In this sense, Liu took the personal life as a part of the universe.¹¹³ At the end of the essay, Liu urged people not to care about preserving

¹¹⁰ "Yü K'ai-mei erh" 與開美二 [Letters to K'ai-mei: the second], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 448.

¹¹¹ "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 463.

¹¹² "Sheng ssu shuo", in *ibid.*, p. 379.

¹¹³ Tungfang Shuo and Tu Wei-ming, *op. cit.*, p. 49; pp. 77-87. Yang Ju-pin 楊儒賓, "Ssu-sheng yü i-li: Liu Tsung-chou yü Kao P'an-lung te ch'eng-no" 死生與義理：劉宗周與高攀龍的承諾 [Life, death, and moral principle: the promise between Liu Tsung-chou and Kao P'an-lung], in *Liu Chi-shan hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang lun-chi*, pp. 547-9.

their personal life but to care about pursuing the Way.¹¹⁴ This shows the basic difference between Liu and Wang Ken on the preservation of the self. This basic difference is also exposed in Liu's interpretation of the *Great Learning*. Liu said:

The teaching of the *Great Learning* is simply to teach people to know the root. The root of the state and the world resides in *shen*. The root of *shen* resides in the mind. The root of the mind resides in the will. The will is what the highest good abides in.¹¹⁵

What Liu emphasized about the self is, again, the will of the self. This also explains why, after praising the Huai-nan doctrine of "the investigation of things" as the most correct among other competing doctrines, Liu developed it with taking "making the will sincere" as the root for the doctrine of "the investigation of things". In Liu's opinion, the will is more essential than the self in the doctrine of "the investigation of things." It is "making the will sincere" not the preservation of the self that is essential for the teaching of the *Great Learning*. What Liu agreed with regarding Wang Ken's taking the self so seriously was his taking the self as the responsibility of the family, the state and the world.

To sum up, Liu praised Wang Ken for seeing the self and all things in the world as one substance. However, as a man without experience in civil service, Wang Ken naively considered that scholar-officials, in serving the ruler, can order the world through the cultivation of the self and the discussion of learning, believing that since the self is the basis for ordering the world, clear wisdom and self-preservation should be taken as essential. Thus there is no need, and it is unwise, to sacrifice oneself in

¹¹⁴ "Sheng ssu shuo", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 379.

¹¹⁵ "Hsüeh-yen shang", in *ibid.*, p. 458.

civil service. In contrast, Liu, as an experienced scholar-official, was deeply immersed in the political movement initiated by the Tung-lin party. He was much influenced by the passion of the members of the Tung-lin party “giving their blood to purify Heaven and Earth.”¹¹⁶ Liu’s belief in the self and the world as one substance takes him in the opposite direction from Wang Ken. In contrast to Wang Ken, Liu took the Way as essential in ordering the world. He himself practised self-sacrifice by refusing food after the fall of the Ming dynasty, claiming that his death was “seeking benevolence and getting benevolence.”¹¹⁷

Although Liu gave great praise to Wang Ken’s Huai-nan doctrine, he criticized it as flawed, because it failed in seeing the mind, the will, knowledge, things, the self, the family, the state and the world as a whole.¹¹⁸ This comment appears to be at odds with Liu’s former appraisal. It probably is based on the above-mentioned difference between Liu and Wang Ken that Liu showed his dissatisfaction with Wang Ken’s doctrine sometimes.

Given this dissatisfaction, Liu thought about the bad influence Wang Ken’s doctrine might have on his T’ai-chou followers. Liu said:

Among Wang Yang-ming’s disciples, Wang Ken in particular propagated his teaching far and wide. Starting from the teaching of “without learning, without reflection” he moved to the subject of the natural and then of the joy of learning. The latter-day followers of his school increased in number. However, they were mediocre men without inhibitions.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ This is an expression used by Huang Tsung-hsi to describe the sacrifice of the members of the Tung-lin party in politics. See Huang Tsung-hsi, “Tung-lin hsüeh-an i”, in *MJHA*, chüan 58, p. 1375; *Records*, p. 224.

¹¹⁷ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 522.

¹¹⁸ See “Hsüeh-yen chung”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 481-2.

¹¹⁹ Huang Tsung-chou, *MJHA*, “Shih shuo”, p. 12; *Records*, p. 67.

The term “without learning, without reflection” is from Mencius. It originally refers to an innate moral intuition and an innate moral ability.¹²⁰ “But Wang Ken interpreted this to mean that learning and reflection are superfluous in self-cultivation.”¹²¹ What Liu condemned as “mediocre men without inhibitions” might be the same as the arrogant men he criticized in his “Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh”.

(iv) Liu’s criticism of T’ao Shih-ling and the scholars of Mount Po-ma

In 1631, Liu shared the instructors’ chair with T’ao Shih-ling in the Cheng-jen Hui 證人會 [Association for realizing humanity] to promote Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”. It assembled over two hundred scholars.¹²² However, “their teachings were not the same,”¹²³ and the assembly was therefore divided into two parties. According to Huang Tsung-hsi:

T’ao’s disciples studied Buddhism, meeting separately on Mount Po-ma, and went into such things as causation and retribution (*karma*, *yin kuo* 因果). ... I did not like what T’ao said, so together with Wang Yeh-hsün and Wang Yü-ch’i 王毓耆 [?-?] I gathered together some forty choice scholars of the time, to become Liu’s disciples. Although these forty or more people liked to attack Buddhism, they did not have much foundation for their learning and remained superficial. Thus they only provided excuses for those who studied Buddhism to do so. Liu

¹²⁰ See *Mencius*, Book VII, Part A: 15, p. 184; *Records*, p. 67.

¹²¹ *Records*, p. 67.

¹²² *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 296-8.

¹²³ Huang Tsung-hsi, “Chi-shan hsüeh-an”, in *MJHA*, chüan 62, p. 1512.

was anxious about this. As the two factions mocked each other, there were only one or two persons who really transmitted his teachings.¹²⁴

This indicates that most of Liu's contemporaries were influenced by Buddhism, Liu being an exception. Liu's resistance to the trend was weak, as shown in the following passage:

Master T'ao Shih-ling of my hometown is well respected by our comrades. However, he starts his learning with the aid of Buddhism. [Therefore] most of those who follow his teaching regard Ch'an Buddhism as the basis [of their learning]. It turns out that they cannot return to the right way in the end. This is a defect of [T'ao's teaching]. I often have different opinions from master T'ao. Maybe by the time his theory reaches a dead end he may return to the right way. I am not sure [if it will happen like that].¹²⁵

Liu appeared to regret the difference between himself and T'ao Shih-ling. Although he expected that T'ao and his followers might change their opinions, he did not see himself as able to persuade them to change.¹²⁶

The basic difference between the teaching of T'ao and Liu is that T'ao considered recognizing the original substance of the mind as essential in moral cultivation, while Liu considered the effort of cultivation as more essential.¹²⁷ In

¹²⁴ Ibid.; *Records*, pp. 261-2.

¹²⁵ "Ta Wang-sheng Shih-mei" 答王生士美 [Reply to student Wang Shih-mei], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 413.

¹²⁶ For detailed studies of Liu's interaction with T'ao Shih-ling and his followers, see Wang Fan-sen, "Ch'ing ch'u te Chiang-ching hui", pp. 515-35; Sun Chung-tseng 孫中曾, "Cheng-jen hui Pai-ma pieh-hui chi Liu Tsung-chou ssu-hsiang chih fa-chan" 證人會、白馬別會及劉宗周思想之發展 [The Cheng-jen association, the Pai-ma association and the development of Liu Tsung-chou's thought], in *Liu Chi-shan hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang lun-chi*, pp. 457-522.

¹²⁷ See "Hui-lu", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 600.

criticizing T'ao's doctrine, Liu said:

Indeed, if one cannot recognize the original substance, how can he make an effort? But once one recognizes the original substance, one should seize it firmly and make an effort. The more delicate one make his effort, the more bright and clear his original substance become. Now [T'ao] said that after recognizing the original substance one has nothing to do and may behave without any limitation. In that case, [people in following his teaching] will become wild and arrogant. They will be afraid of nothing at all.¹²⁸

In Liu's opinion, T'ao's teaching will lead people to the moral nihilism mentioned in his "Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh." Liu also criticized T'ao's teaching as a sort of mysticism. In his response to one of T'ao's disciples, who, in defense of T'ao's doctrine, insisted that recognizing the original substance is itself a sort of effort towards cultivation, Liu said:

Recognizing [the original substance] after all belongs to imagination. Even though one may sometimes acquire something in recognizing, the thing he acquires is only a mirage. One should not consider it a definite truth. Furthermore, the original substance only exists in normal activities in daily life. If one dismisses normal activities and considers that there is a thing elsewhere that needs to be recognized, he is merely searching for the Way in emptiness.¹²⁹

To Liu, what we can acquire from recognizing the original substance of the mind is simply a mirage, which also proves that T'ao's doctrine is prone to lapse into

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid, pp. 601-2.

mysticism.

To Liu, moral nihilism and mysticism are connected to Ch'an Buddhism. Liu said:

Ch'an Buddhists take "the absence of good and evil" as the main theme of their doctrines. Moral principles, such as loyalty, filiality, honour and rightness belong to the part of goodness. They consider them as obstacles to their doctrines and intend to erase them to return to the scene of emptiness.¹³⁰

In this passage, Liu claimed that the Ch'an Buddhist doctrine of "the absence of good and evil" is responsible for moral nihilism in dismissing moral principles and for mysticism in intending to return to a mystical scene of emptiness. As mentioned earlier, Liu considered that Wang Chi's doctrine of "the absence of good and evil" came from Ch'an Buddhism. Wang Chi's doctrine of "the absence of good and evil" again became the focus of Liu's attacks on moral nihilism and mysticism of T'ao Shih-ling and the scholars of Mount Po-ma.

Although T'ao Shih-ling never expressed his opinion on the doctrine of "the absence of good and evil" and the debates on it, there is indirect evidence to show that he believed in it. According to Tung Huang-t'ing 董黃庭 [?-?], one of T'ao's disciples, T'ao once told him: "You, Huang-t'ing, are originally a sage as a human being. What good can you do? What evil can you get rid of?"¹³¹ He said this in order to persuade Tung to recognize the original substance of the mind, rather than doing

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 640.

good and getting rid of evil, as essential for cultivation.¹³² T'ao's comment can be regarded as an expression of the doctrine of "the absence of good and evil". Also, according to Liu Chuo and Huang Tsung-hsi, T'ao had a direct relation with the transmission of Wang Chi's and Chou Ju-teng's doctrines.¹³³ One of T'ao's main disciples, Chin Hung-yu, showed his agreement with Chou Ju-teng on the debate on "Nine Inquiries and Nine Explanations".¹³⁴

The above shows that T'ao and his disciples were prone to accept the doctrine of "the absence of good and evil." In this sense, Liu's criticism of moral nihilism and mysticism referred to a trend of thought that lasted from Wang Chi through Chou Ju-teng to T'ao Shih-ling and the scholars of Mount Po-ma.

As mentioned in section 3 of chapter 2, some early Ch'ing scholars, such as Ku Yen-wu and Fang I-chih, confronted with the tragedy of the decline of the Ming dynasty, considered the development of Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind as a cause of Ming dynastic decline. To some extent, Liu Tsung-chou's criticism of Wang Yang-ming's followers for indulging in moral nihilism and mysticism anticipated the criticisms of these early Ch'ing scholars.

(E) Liu Tsung-chou's scheme for moral reformation

In his criticism of "arrogant men" and "prudish men" in his "Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh" Liu concluded: "[They] are defective in being not sincere and are careless

¹³¹ Quoted by Liu Tsung-chou in "Ta Lü-ssu erh", in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 363.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ See *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 311; Huang Tsung-hsi, "Tzu Liu-tzu hsing-chuang", p. 253.

in pursuing [the Way] in *i-ken* 意根 (the root of the will).”¹³⁵ Liu defined the term *i-ken* by relating it to the cultivation of the highest goodness of human nature as follows:

The root of the will (*i ken*) is the subtlest [element of the mind]. The substance of sincerity is in accordance with the principle of Heaven. What is in accordance with the principle of Heaven is the highest goodness. It is in making the subtlest [element] become the highest good that we achieve the state of “abiding in the highest goodness” [in the *Great Learning*].¹³⁶

Liu emphasized that the goodness of the will is the guarantee of the goodness of human nature. It is through the cultivation of the root of the will that one can realize the highest goodness of his nature. Liu also tries to take his doctrine of “making the will sincere” to interpret and substitute Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge”. Liu said:

The task of “extending innate knowledge” is not different from that of “making the will sincere”. It can only be accomplished through the task of “making the will sincere”. Once it is a step away from the root of the will (*i ken*), there cannot be any possibility of “extending innate knowledge”.¹³⁷

With this interpretation of “the extension of innate knowledge”, Liu regarded the root of the will as the most important element in realizing Wang’s doctrine. Liu believed that both the arrogant men, who confused innate knowledge with emotions and consciousness, and the prudish men, who mistook innate knowledge for mysticism, disregarded the root of the will. He considered this as a sign of distortion of Wang

¹³⁴ See “Yü Lü-ssu shih”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 376.

¹³⁵ “Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 325.

¹³⁶ “Hsüeh-yen hsia”, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 535.

Yang-ming's doctrine. To defend against the moral decay induced by these men, the cultivation of the root of the will, or "making the will sincere", becomes the most essential task.

The task of "making the will sincere" closely relates to the task of "being vigilant in solitude" in Liu's moral philosophy. According to Liu: "The Way of the *Great Learning* resides only in 'making the will sincere.' The effort of 'making the will sincere' resides only in 'being vigilant in solitude.' The will is the place where the highest goodness abides. It is so unique without any distraction that it is called solitariness."¹³⁸ As Tu Wei-ming 杜維明 observes: "Liu considers 'vigilant solitariness' the best approach to self-cultivation. The elaborate project of correcting mistakes in his seminal treatise, *Schematic of Man (Jen-p'u)*, can thus be interpreted as his strategy for learning to be human by putting 'vigilant solitariness' into practice as a daily ritual."¹³⁹ In other words, Liu's *Jen-p'u* can be seen as his basic project for achieving moral reformation.

Jen-p'u starts with a chart named "Jen-chi t'u" 人極圖 [The Diagram of the Human Ultimate], which was based on Chou Tun-i's "T'ai-chi t'u" to describe the important role human beings play in the universe.¹⁴⁰ After the general description of human beings' basic moral ability, Liu stated the essential theme of realizing humanity [Cheng-jen yao-chih 證人要旨], including: "Dwelling in secluded retirement in order to experience the self in solitude"; "Divining the movement of thought in order to recognize incipient tendencies"; "Exercising caution in one's

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 525.

¹³⁸ "Tu Ta-hsüeh", in *LTCCC*, vol. 3b. p. 1182

¹³⁹ Tu Wei-ming, "Subjectivity in Liu Tsung-chou's philosophical anthropology", p. 114.

bearing in order to follow the decree of Heaven” ; “Strengthening the basic human relationship in order to crystallize the Way”; “Making complete the hundred practices in order to investigate one’s conduct comprehensively”; and “Changing to good and reforming faults in order to become a sage.”¹⁴¹ All the six themes concentrate on personal cultivation. With the realization of these six essential themes one can scrutinize one’s daily behaviour and correct faults. Next to these six essential themes, Liu provided only one method for the prosecution of bad deeds. That is the practice of sitting in meditation. In this sense, *Jen-p’u* can be seen as the basic guide for personal cultivation.

Liu also urged scholars to attend lectures to cultivate morality collectively. The Cheng-jen hui was founded by Liu for this purpose. He wrote a constitution for the Cheng-jen hui to set out the rules for its operation and regulate the members’ behaviour.¹⁴² According to Liu’s biography, *Jen-p’u* was originally named *Cheng-jen shiao p’u* 證人小譜 [Pamphlet for realizing humanity],¹⁴³ and is said to be used as a guide to self-cultivation for the members of Cheng-jen hui.¹⁴⁴ Given *Jen-p’u* as the basic guide for personal cultivation, *Cheng-jen hui yüeh* 證人會約 [Constitution for the members of the association for realizing humanity] can be seen as moral rules in public life.

The *Cheng-jen hui yüeh* consists of five parts: the main theme of learning, the rules of the association, the main contracts, the main prohibitions, and a note on the

¹⁴⁰ See “Jen-p’u”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-11. The English translation is from Tu Wei-ming, “Subjectivity in Liu Tsung-chou’s philosophical anthropology”, p. 115.

¹⁴² *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 295.

¹⁴³ *YNP*, in *ibid.*, p. 332.

¹⁴⁴ See Cynthia Brokaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-9.

constitution.

(1) The main theme of learning describes the purpose of learning as realizing humanity through learning the classics.¹⁴⁵

(2) The rules of the association are divided into seven parts. The first part is the timetable of meetings. According to the timetable, the members meet three days a month. The meeting begins at nine in the morning and ends at twelve noon. It also describes the basic qualification for joining the association. Basically it welcomes people of all sorts of occupations and classes. However, it divides the members into long-term members and occasional participants. The second part is the ritual for the meeting. An altar is set up for worshipping Confucius. At the beginning of the ritual, they pay homage to Confucius first and then to many ancient worthies. After the ritual, members are seated according to age. Then the lecture starts. The third part is the lectures. Two special seating areas are set aside: one for the lecturer and recorder and the other for appointed questioners. A public seating area is set aside for the general audience. The fourth part is membership fees. They allow members to contribute as they please in order to keep a meeting running. Normally the fees are paid at each meeting for the necessary appliances, like joss sticks and candles, for the ritual and tea, cakes and fruits as refreshments. The fifth part is the record of the meetings. At every meeting, they elect one member as the recorder to record the general content of the lecture and the questions. The sixth part is the prohibitions of the meeting. They prohibit nonsense talk, grinning cheekily, sitting cross-footed, whispering to each other, mentioning personal promotion or demotion, and rumours about the society. The seventh part is about the staff. Ten members are elected as

staff for keeping the association in operation.¹⁴⁶

(3) The main contracts are ten in number. The first one urges the members to have confidence in their own potential to be a sage. This confidence also implies psychological tension in the self because Liu emphasized in this contract that “once one is not able to become a sage there is no other level of man he can become except a mean person. [In brief,] Once one is away from sagehood, he is close to madness. Once one is not human, he becomes a beast. There is not a hair’s breadth in between.”¹⁴⁷ Liu also emphasized learning from books as essential for learning to be a sage. In answering a question “on what basis can one have confidence of the self’s potential to be a sage?” Liu said: “Learning from books is the basis. It is from learning from books we know that every sage and worthy become what they are simply because they devote their efforts to learning from books.” In a further elaboration of the importance of learning from books Liu said:

The ancient Confucians took learning from books as the essential for the task of “the investigation of things” and “the extension of knowledge”. The Confucians of recent generations avoid this counsel and only count on innate knowing. ... Can learning from books be dismissed? It certainly cannot be dismissed. Although innate knowing cannot be limited by hearing and seeing, it cannot be separated from hearing and seeing. Learning from books is the best of the activities of hearing and seeing. When you ask what good is and what evil is, everybody knows what they are in some sense. As to how to do good and get rid of evil, nobody knows exactly how to do this. One day I was reading a book by an ancient sage, and I found that the ancient sage also worried about this question. Suddenly I was inspired and burst out into tears. I realize that I was not qualified to be human previously. [With this reflection] I then realized that the task of doing good and getting rid of evil is very easy for everybody.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ “Cheng-jen hui-yüeh”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 571-3.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 573-5.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 575-6.

Although Liu asked members to be confident about their potential to be sages, he did not assure that they would definitely become sages in reality. Confucian believers of the Mencian theory of “the goodness of human nature” basically have this regard in their mind.¹⁴⁹ Liu is no exception to this. This is the reason that, in urging members to have confidence in their own potential, Liu also emphasized the importance of learning from books as essential for cultivation.

The second contract urges members to realize that innate knowledge as the basis for learning to be a sage resembles the natural feeling of an infant’s love for its family. Liu concluded: “Scholars who intend to realize the essence of human nature should simply and practically cultivate it (innate knowledge) rather than pursuing something mystic. The word *liang-chih* is the main theme of Mencius’ theory of the goodness of human nature.”¹⁵⁰

The third contract urges members to extend their love of their family to their relatives, friends, neighbours and step by step to all people in the world. Liu reminds members not to have selfish minds. He suggests that once one can recall innate knowledge the selfish mind will be under control.¹⁵¹

The fourth contract urges members to distinguish righteousness from profit. Liu insisted that once one can distinguish the difference between human and beast whenever a *nien* (thought) arises, he can naturally distinguish righteousness from profit.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 576.

¹⁴⁹ See Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, pp. 72-3; Benjamin I Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, pp. 275-6; Chang Hao, “The heritage of the ideal of *ching-shih*”, pp. 72-3.

¹⁵⁰ “Cheng-jen hui-yüeh”, in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 577.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 577-8.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 578.

The fifth contract urges members be cautious of material temptations. In this regard Liu suggested that overcoming the self was essential. He believed that overcoming the self was a ceaseless task for moral cultivation. He says: "There is someone I know who even took as long as twenty years simply to overcome the word 'anger'." He therefore suggests that members should patiently practise overcoming the self.¹⁵³

The sixth contract urges members to learn the rites. Liu maintained that it is learning the rites that distinguishes humans from beasts. He believed that there are countless rites that need to be learned. One should start from the rites for children and go on to those for adults in order to become a complete person.¹⁵⁴

The seventh contract urges members to be cognizant of their status as scholars, and always to keep their honour in mind.¹⁵⁵

The eighth contract urges members to be careful about the influence of bad habits. Liu observed that thousands of evils come from bad habits.¹⁵⁶

The ninth contract urges members to act as they say they mean to do.¹⁵⁷

The tenth contract urges members to have the courage to admit their faults. Liu asked members to supervise each other to correct faults. He hoped that people would correct their faults by mutual persuasion. Those who do not correct their faults by mutual persuasion will be deprived of their membership. Serious faults may be attacked by other members.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 578-9.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 579-80.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 580-1.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 581.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 581-2.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 582.

(4) There are twelve categories of prohibitions: unfiliality, unfriendliness, greediness, official corruption, over-tolerance to female relatives, licentiousness, reckless talking, irascibility, drunkenness, extravagance, debauchery, inappropriate appearance. Fifty types of evil deeds are also included in these twelve categories. Punishments are divided into three kinds. The most serious one is expulsion from the association. The second one is to be asked to stay at home refusing visitors, being barred from one meeting, and sitting in meditation to reflect on faults and correct them immediately. When the offender is allowed to return to meetings, he is asked to donate a book to the association, and supply soup and cakes as refreshment at one meeting. The third punishment is to be asked not to attend one meeting and sit in meditation to reflect on faults and correct them immediately. When allowed to return to the meetings, the offender is asked to donate a book to the association.¹⁵⁹

Under these categories of prohibition, many common activities are prohibited, such as going to the theatre, watching boat races, attending temple festivals, using slang, using nicknames, and writing folk songs, legends or fiction: these deserve the second punishment.¹⁶⁰ Prohibitions concerning women include allowing one's wife and daughters to enter a temple, to worship deities, to go to the theatre, to watch lantern festivals, to study poetry, to learn to write books, and to learn music and chess; such members deserve to be barred from the association.¹⁶¹ The prohibitions were

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 583-8.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 587.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 585. The prohibitions concerning women also can be seen in Liu's *Jen-p'u*. See "jen-p'u", in *ibid.*, pp. 11-6. For a studies of Liu's moral philosophy based on a point of view of modern women's studies, see Liu Jen-p'eng 劉人鵬, "Sheng-hsüeh lun-shu chung te tao-te wu-t'i: i Liu Tsung-chou Jen-p'u wei li" 聖學論述中的道德問題: 以劉宗周人譜為例 [The moral problem in discourse on the learning of the sage: Liu Tsung-chou's *Jen-p'u* as an example], in Lin Ch'ing-chang 林慶彰 and Chiang Ch'iu-hua 蔣秋華, eds., *Ming tai Ching-hsüeh kuo-chi yen-t'ao hui lun-wen chi* 明代經學國際研討會論文集 [Collective essays from international conference on the studies of

originally thirty in number. They were increased to fifty because Liu thought that the previous thirty were not strict enough.¹⁶² All of the prohibitions can be taken as evidence confirming Liu Tsung-chou's reputation for moral Puritanism, as some modern scholars have described.¹⁶³

(5) In the note on the constitution, Liu recorded the reason for founding the association. He considered that the association was a step in following Wang Yang-ming's teaching. Liu observed that T'ao Shih-ling was enthusiastic in propounding the theory that people have the potential to be sages. They therefore took the name Cheng-jen 證人 [realizing humanity] as the name of the association to encourage people to realize the potential for humanity to become a sage. At the end Liu said: "The scholars of the Confucian School refine their doctrines to 'being vigilant in solitude.' Master Yang-ming also said: 'innate knowledge is simply knowledge in solitude.' They are saying the same thing. 'Being vigilant in solitude' is 'extending innate knowledge'."¹⁶⁴ Liu was trying to merge Wang Yang-ming's doctrine and his own doctrine as a guide for members' moral cultivation.

To sum up, given his emphasis on the practice of sitting in meditation, overcoming the self, learning from books, learning the rites, promoting the theory of "the goodness of human nature" and so on in *Jen-p'u* and *Cheng-jen hui yüeh*, Liu's scheme for moral reformation reflects his revision of Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming's doctrines and his criticism of Wang Yang-ming's followers. The above

classics in Ming] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1996), pp. 485-516.

¹⁶² See "Hui-lu", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, p. 647.

¹⁶³ Chang Hao, "Ch'ao-yüeh i-shih yü yu-an i-shih", p. 73; Wang Fang-sen, "Ming mo Ch'ing ch'u te i-chung tao-te yen-ke chu-i", p. 72.

¹⁶⁴ "Cheng-jen hui-yüeh", in *LTCCC*, vol. 2, pp. 588-9.

practices encompass Liu Tsung-chou's reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism.

To some extent, given his reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism, Liu's scheme for moral reformation also can be seen as a plan to put Neo-Confucian moral philosophy into practice. In this sense Liu represented the end of the custom of philosophical discussion in late Ming Neo-Confucianism and the beginning of the popularization of practical learning in early Ch'ing scholarship, as mentioned in the introduction.

Besides the above-mentioned scheme of moral cultivation, a trend of thought, which Liu opposed, should be noticed as an obstacle to his scheme. As mentioned earlier, the scholars of Mount Po-ma studied Buddhism and went into such things as causation and retribution (*karma*). The Cheng-jen hui was thereby divided. These scholars especially were influenced by Yüan Huang's idea of the ledgers of merit and demerit for moral cultivation, which is the most popular form for promoting the Buddhist theory of *karma*.¹⁶⁵ The Buddhist theory of *karma* is a great challenge to Liu's scheme for moral reformation. Liu made the criticism that Yüan Huang's idea of the accumulation of merits was based on an utilitarian reason that is harmful to the Confucian Way.¹⁶⁶ Therefore "Liu wrote the *Jen-p'u* in alarm at the growing popularity of Yüan's work and the proliferation of new ledgers based on his system and sanctioned by other literati."¹⁶⁷ However, the influence of Buddhism on the scholars of Mount Po-ma was increasingly popular. Liu decided in the end not to argue with them.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ "Yü Lü-ssu shih", in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, p. 377.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

¹⁶⁷ *LNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, pp. 326-7; Cynthia Brokaw, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

¹⁶⁸ *YNP*, in *LTCCC*, vol. 5, p. 425.

Although Liu criticized the Buddhist theory of *karma*, he sometimes felt obliged to express a tolerant attitude towards it. One of Liu Tsung-chou's uncles, Liu Ch'i 劉圻 [?-?], wrote a "Ch'üan shan wen" 勸善文 [Essay to urge good deeds]. It was collected by Liu Tsung-chou as one of his family's "Tsu-hsün" 祖訓 [Ancestral instructions], and Liu wrote a postscript to it. In this "Ch'üan shan wen" Liu Ch'i recalled a story he heard from his teacher in his youth. A man named Lu Yen-shan 陸儼山 dreamt that he had been to hell and met the King of Hell [Yama], who turned out to be Wang Yang-ming. While Lu was chatting with Wang, a man was arrested by an armed King's runner. Lu discovered that the arrested man was one of his nephews. Lu asked the King to release him. The King replied that the nephew had done so much evil in his life that he deserved to be taken to hell. After Lu woke up the next morning, he wondered if the dream would come true. He therefore asked his son to visit the nephew. The son was told that the nephew had suddenly suffered a serious disease the previous night and died at noon. Liu Ch'i used this story to tell people in the world that doing good will be rewarded with good and evil with evil, and urged people to do good to protect themselves from evil consequences.¹⁶⁹

Liu Ch'i's story appeared to involve the Buddhist theory of *karma*. Liu Tsung-chou considered that Liu Ch'i's teaching is contradictory to the instructions of the first ancestor of the Liu family of the Ming dynasty Liu Chin 劉謹 [?-?].¹⁷⁰

According to the Liu family's "Tsu-hsün", Liu Chin admonished his family not to

¹⁶⁹ "Yü-yü fu-chün ch'üan shan wen" 玉宇府君勸善文 [Essay to urging good deeds by Liu Ch'i], in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, pp. 560-1.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 561.

become involved in Buddhism.¹⁷¹ Liu Tsung-chou felt that Liu Ch'i's story was strange, but since it was intended to urge people to do good, he decided to keep it as one of the instructions for the family. In his postscript, he made seven points to expose his reservations. First, he doubted the existence of the King of Hell and the notion of a division between Heaven and Hell. He suggested that they are made up by Buddhists. Secondly, Liu explained that the reason that Wang Yang-ming figured as the King of Hell was because Wang liked to talk about innate knowledge. Liu quoted Wang's saying "Innate knowledge is the spirit of creation,"¹⁷² and asserted that innate knowledge, rather than faith in spirits [*kuei shen* 鬼神], was the key to becoming master of one's destiny. According to Liu: "Since everybody has this innate knowledge, everybody is a spiritual being. Since everybody is a spiritual being, everybody is [the master of] *karma*." Thirdly, what Lu Yen-shan saw in his dream is not Wang Yang-ming. Because Lu, like everyone in the world, has innate knowledge, he thought he had seen Wang Yang-ming as the King of Hell. Fourthly, Liu assumed that by the time the nephew was dying he must also have seen Wang Yang-ming because everybody has innate knowledge. Fifthly, Liu quoted a popular saying that "God is watching three feet above everyone's head" [*chü t'o san ch'ih yu shen-ming* 舉頭三尺有神明]. Sixthly, Liu suggested people who have done evil should believe that the Buddhist theory of *karma* is true. Lastly, Liu concluded that in writing this "Ch'üan shan wen" Liu Ch'i provided instructions for moral cultivation. This is why he considered it worthy of preserving. However, he was still concerned that people

¹⁷¹ "Sui-an fu-chün chia-hsün" 遂安府君家訓 [The family instructions by Liu Chin], in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, p. 553.

¹⁷² *CHL*, p. 323; *Instructions*, Part III: 261, p. 216.

would put too much emphasis on the theory of *karma*.¹⁷³

To sum up, Liu was trying to use Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of knowledge" to give the story an explanation and deter people from believing the Buddhist theory of *karma*. However, Liu did not totally dismiss the theory in the end.

The reason that Liu tolerated the belief in the Buddhist theory of *karma* may be due to the influence of his teacher Hsü Fu-yüan. As mentioned earlier, in his debate on "Nine Inquiries and Nine Explanations" with Chou Ju-teng, Hsü adopted the theory of *karma* to strengthen his own position. Liu might have been influenced by Hsü. The other reason for Liu's tolerance may be his view on the similarity and differences between Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Liu accepted Wang Yang-ming's opinion on this issue and quoted his sayings:

[Wang Yang-ming said:] "What the Buddhist calls one's original state is what our Confucian school calls innate knowledge", "In broad outline the two methods [of Confucians and Buddhists on recognizing one's original state] are about the same. However, the Buddhists are different from us because their minds are motivated by selfishness", and "The Buddhist escapes from human relations and dismisses the principle of things. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as understanding the mind."¹⁷⁴

Liu agrees with Wang that Confucians and Buddhists share the same idea of the human's original state and the way to recognize it, and they are different in that Buddhists search for escape from worldly life while Confucians strive to deal with it.

With this basic point of view Liu sometimes was tolerant to those who indulging in Buddhism, take Wang's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge"

¹⁷³ "Yü-yü fu-chün ch'üan shan wen", in *LTCCC*, vol. 4, pp. 561-2.

¹⁷⁴ "Ta Wang Chin-ju san" 答王金如三 [Replies to Wang Chin-ju: the third], in *LTCCC*, vol. 3a, pp. 405-6.

as their counterpart. He said:

Nowadays, those who indulge in Buddhism like to talk about master Yang-ming simply because they think the doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” is close to the Buddhist doctrine of “[recognizing] the clear consciousness of human nature”. Therefore, they cannot help but believe in his doctrine in order to increase their number. This is why Buddhist adherents pretend to be fond of talking about innate knowledge, too. ... Once they realize the doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” and pursue [the Way] with innate knowing for a long time, they will probably see something substantial. By then, even though they never stop talking about Buddhist theory and never leave the Buddhist temple, their mind awakes and becomes a Confucian mind.¹⁷⁵

Liu appeared to be confident that Wang’s doctrine of “the extension of innate knowledge” could be the savior of Buddhist adherents. It is Liu’s confidence in Wang’s doctrine that makes him tolerate the popularization of Buddhism.

On the other hand, the popularization of Buddhism and Taoism was so powerful that Liu appeared to have sensed it. He lamented:

Asking scholars nowadays to learn the sagely Way is like asking them to enter through closed doors, if you do not allow them to learn Buddhism and Taoism. If you give a man who is drowning a gourd, the gourd can be seen as a piece of driftwood.¹⁷⁶

In Liu’s mind, Buddhism and Taoism, though not perfect, are temporary tools for helping scholars to access the Confucian Way. Therefore, to him, no Confucian of his time could afford to dismiss Buddhism and Taoism. However, he pointed out:

What is worrying is that scholars do not study the Buddhist canon sincerely.

¹⁷⁵ “Ta Hu Sung-kao Chu Mien-chih Chang Tien-fu chu sheng” 答胡嵩高朱絳之張夔夫諸生 [Reply to disciples Hu Sung-kao, Chu Mien-chih and Chang Tien-fu], in *ibid.*, pp. 410-1.

¹⁷⁶ “Ta Wang Chin-ju san”, in *ibid.*, p. 406.

Once they study the Buddhist canon sincerely, they will become dissatisfied with Buddhist doctrine. Then they will start to realize the greatness of the sagely Way. If this is so, how can Buddhism hurt Confucians? It is like treating a disease. If it is a small disease, it can be cured in a normal way, but if it is a serious disease, it must be treated seriously.¹⁷⁷

Liu was so confident about Confucianism that he could tolerate Buddhism. It is for this reason that he expected that the difference between himself and T'ao Shih-ling would be solved. In 1636, Liu even recommended T'ao for promotion, praising T'ao as a real master of Neo-Confucianism.¹⁷⁸ He also urged his disciples not to become involved in debate with T'ao's disciples:

[As my disciple] you must be full aware of the distinctions between Confucianism and Buddhism. It is up to others whether or not they choose to acknowledge them. If you [my disciples] behave in accordance with Confucianism and reject Buddhism, why bother worrying whether Buddhist adherents will escape from Buddhism and return to Confucianism?¹⁷⁹

However, the debate between his disciples and T'ao's did not reach any final agreement. Liu's attitude towards the debate, on the one hand exposes his confidence and open-mindedness, while on the other hand it reflects the situation of his time: Buddhism was popular that it seemed difficult to find a solution for both sides of the debate.

It appears that Liu could not afford to be in total opposition to Buddhism. Although he was worried about people's belief in *karma*, since it still had the effect of urging people to do good and remove evil, he tended to be tolerant of it on some

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ "Chien T'ao Shih-ling kung chieh" 薦陶爽齡公揭 [A memorial in recommending T'ao Shih-ling], in *ibid.*, pp. 347-9.

¹⁷⁹ "Ta Wang sheng Shih-mei", in *ibid.*, p. 413.

occasions. This tolerance can be seen as part of a trend of Liu's time. With Wang Ken's advocating the doctrine that common people can be sages and the rise of the T'ai-chou School, a kind of popularized Confucianism began to flourish.¹⁸⁰ To the members of the T'ai-chou School, as Wm. Theodore de Bary remarks, "Wang Yang-ming's innate knowing represented the fulfillment of 'getting it (the Way) oneself' and 'learning for the sake of the self,' and the obligation to propagate it among the uneducated mass was the personal responsibility of the heroic individual."¹⁸¹ Stimulated by this trend, many of the late Ming literati adopted responsibility for popular education. Figures such as Ho Hsin-yin, Lin Chao-en 林兆恩 [San-i chiao-chu 三一教主, 1517-98], Lü Kun 呂坤 [Shu-chien 叔簡, 1536-1618] and Yüan Huang were enthusiastic in spreading the Confucian ethic in accessible ways for lower social strata, although they all adopted different approaches.¹⁸² As mentioned earlier, although Liu Tsung-chou had criticized Wang Ken, he praised his ideas on the enjoyment of learning and pursuing "learning for the sake of the self." Liu was easily involved in this trend towards popularized Confucianism, and his

¹⁸⁰ Tso Tung-ling 左東嶺, *Wang-hsüeh yü chung-wan Ming shih-jen hsin-t'ai* 王學與中晚明士人心態 [Wang Yang-ming's doctrine and the mentality of the literati in the middle and late Ming] (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 2000), p. 360.

¹⁸¹ Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Liberal tradition in China*, p. 79.

¹⁸² For studies of these Confucian literati's activities in spreading the Confucian ethic, see Ronald Dimberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-118; Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 73-81; Joanna F. Handlin, *Action in Late Ming Thought: The Reorientation of Lü Kun and Other Scholar-Officials* (Berkeley: The University of California Press,

tolerance towards the Buddhist theory of *karma* can be seen as complementary.

1983), pp. 143-60; Cynthia Brokaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-109.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Throughout Liu Tsung-chou's life, as a Neo-Confucian master, he was enthusiastic in pursuing learning through self-cultivation. Most of his works were presented as philosophical discussions on the Doctrines of Mind. With his revisions of his Ming Neo-Confucian forerunners Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming, and his criticisms of Wang Yang-ming's followers, Liu established new trends in the academic community in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing. This has been more or less omitted in modern studies of Liu Tsung-chou's philosophy.¹ As Yü Ying-shih observes, many new intellectual trends, such as the switch from the pursuit of the learning of "honouring the moral nature" to the pursuit of the learning of "following the path of inquiry and study", the emphasis of "practical statemanship" and the switch from the pursuit of the "knowledge of moral nature" to the pursuit of the "knowledge of hearing and seeing" in Ch'ing intellectual history have their origins in Ming Neo-Confucianism.² In this regard, despite his major academic enterprises concentrated on reconstructing Ming Neo-Confucianism, Liu was partly responsible for the many new intellectual trends in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing.

From this study we find that Liu's reconstruction of Neo-Confucianism anticipates some elements for the new trends in the intellectual transition in the

¹ Wang Fan-sen is an exception. Most of his studies cited in this thesis have contributed greatly to the study of Liu Tsung-chou's influence on the intellectual transition in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing.

period from late Ming to early Ch'ing as follows: In response to Chang Hsien-chang's doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the teaching of sitting in meditation, Liu also considered them essential for moral cultivation. However, the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation faced four kinds of doubts since Ch'en Hsien-chang's paradigm was advocated. First, there was doubt about the compatibility between them and the doctrine of "emphasizing reverence" of the Ch'eng-Chu paradigm of Neo-Confucianism. Secondly, there was doubt about their closeness to Ch'an Buddhism. Thirdly, there was doubt about the "substance/tranquillity" and "function/activity" dualism on which they were based. Lastly, there was doubt about their lapsing into a preference of tranquillity over activity. Liu spent much effort in dealing with those.

Dealing with the first doubt, Liu saw "reverence" as a common factor of moral cultivation in every aspect of human life. Although the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" ultimately takes the lead in Liu's moral philosophy, Liu saw no contradiction between the doctrine of "emphasizing reverence" and his doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity". Furthermore, Liu tried to use the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" to refine the doctrine of "emphasizing reverence". In this sense, Liu was devoted to recovering the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the teaching of sitting in meditation, to bring them into accord with the Ch'eng-Chu paradigm.

As for the second doubt, although there are similarities between Liu's teaching of sitting in meditation in his confession ritual and that in the Ch'an Buddhist

² Yü Ying-shih, "Ch'ing-tai hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang shih chung-yao kuan-nien t'ung-shih", pp. 405-86.

confession rite, significant differences can be also found between them. Recognizing the criticism of him as close to Ch'an Buddhism, Liu tried to make a distinction between Confucian sitting in meditation and Ch'an Buddhist sitting in meditation. And finally he drew a definite line distinguishing his teaching of sitting in meditation from those of both Buddhism and Taoism.

As for the third doubt, although Liu was an adherent of the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the teaching of sitting in meditation, he opposed the "substance/tranquillity" and "function/activity" dualism. In place of this dualism, Liu created his own theory regarding the relationship between tranquillity and activity. Liu believed that there is a metaphysical tranquillity that transcends experiential tranquillity and activity, and that there is no contradiction between tranquillity and activity in metaphysical tranquillity.

Concerning the fourth doubt, given the belief in the existence of metaphysical tranquillity, Liu explained that the "tranquillity" to be emphasized in the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" is metaphysical tranquillity. In metaphysical tranquillity, tranquillity can be acquired in activity and activity can be achieved in tranquillity. Therefore the realization of the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" cannot be limited to the tranquil state. Furthermore, Liu regarded "to acquire activity in tranquillity" as a necessity for learning the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity". Liu appeared to combine metaphysical tranquillity with experiential activities.

With the solution of these four doubts Liu endeavoured to prevent the doctrine of "emphasizing tranquillity" and the practice of sitting in meditation from being accused of heresy and sought to restore them to Confucian orthodoxy. In this sense

his ideas display his reconsideration of the doctrine of “emphasizing tranquillity” and the practice of sitting in meditation and anticipate the criticism of them by the anti-Neo-Confucian scholars of the early Ch’ing.

Liu Tsung-chou also developed revisions of Wang Yang-ming’s doctrine. First, sharing Wang Yang-ming’s caution regarding selfish human desires, Liu took a more active position than Wang on how to overcome them. Thus he also appears more positive than Wang about objective norms for overcoming selfish human desires. Compared to Wang, he placed greater emphasis on the observance of the rites as objective norms for regulating people in different situations rather than the general principle of morality in moral cultivation. Liu’s attitude to selfish human desires makes him a representative of a variety of moral Puritanism which emerged in the period from late Ming to early Ch’ing. His emphasis on returning to the observance of the rites is also noteworthy in that it represents a starting point of another intellectual transformation, which took place in the same period, in which the study of the rites gradually increased and less attention was paid to abstract moral principle.

Secondly, with regard to his criticism of Wang Yang-ming for neglecting the tasks of studying, inquiring, thinking and sifting, Liu adopted a more positive stance than Wang towards learning from books, or extensive learning in general, in Neo-Confucianism. Wang regarded knowledge from extensive learning as secondary to moral cultivation, while Liu considered that the knowledge obtained from extensive learning provided objective norms for regulating people’s behaviour. Liu’s emphasis on extensive learning allowed him to play an important part in the switch from the pursuit of the learning of “honouring the moral nature” to the pursuit of the

learning of “following the path of inquiry and study” during the period from late Ming to early Ch’ing, and was influential on the founding of the Classics Discussion Societies, which preferred to take learning from books as the basic standard for moral cultivation. His works on recording the words and deeds of ancient Confucians and his Neo-Confucian forerunners also played an important part in the historiography of scholars of the same period on intellectual history.

Thirdly, based on his criticism of Wang Yang-ming’s interpretation of the *Great Learning*, Liu gave *i* (the will) a different interpretation from Wang. In contrast to Wang’s view that the will may be good or evil, Liu maintained that the will is definitely good. In Liu’s opinion, it is the goodness of the will that is the guarantee of the goodness of human nature. Liu was dissatisfied with Wang’s confusing the will with thought (*nien*), which obscured the goodness of the will as the guarantee of the goodness of human nature. Liu also criticizes Wang’s idea of *chih* (knowledge), which, in Liu’s opinion, can easily be regarded as advocating a sort of amoral knowledge. Thus, in contrast to Wang’s taking “the extension of innate knowledge” as the main purpose of his doctrine, Liu took “making the will sincere” as the main purpose. To Liu, it is only “making the will sincere”, rather than “the extension of innate knowledge”, that can get rid of evil in time. By taking “making the will sincere” as the main purpose of his doctrine, Liu considered everything in the world to be the expression of the will and transformed the Confucian idealism of “sageliness inside and kingliness outside” into a concentration on the learning of “sageliness inside” only. He thus devoted himself to rigorous practice of confession and self-criticism, which was considered a prerequisite for the correction of faults

and the attainment of moral perfection. With his systematic work on the practice of confession and self-criticism, Liu also led a trend towards moral self-scrutiny in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing.

In Liu's response to Wang Yang-ming's followers, in his criticism of the interpretations of Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of "the extension of innate knowledge" among Wang's followers in his time, Liu exposed two kinds of phenomena of the degeneration of Wang's followers: moral nihilism and mysticism. Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" were considered as the reason for the degeneration of his followers. Based on his criticism of Wang's "Four Sentences" Liu wrote his own "Four Sentences". Here, he criticized the theory of "the absence of good and evil" of the mind and human nature and, reconfirming the definite goodness of the will, presented the guarantee of the goodness of the mind and human nature. With his emphasis on the goodness of the mind and human nature, Liu criticized the advocators of the theory of "the absence of good and evil" among the debates on Wang's "Four Sentences" for confusing the distinction between good and evil.

Furthermore, in his criticism of moral decay among Wang Yang-ming's followers, Liu expresses his opposition to the enlightenment approach for moral cultivation advocated by two of Wang's main disciples, Wang Chi and Wang Ken. Liu blamed Wang Chi for his transformation of Wang Yang-ming's "Four Sentences of Teaching" thus causing moral nihilism and mysticism and Wang Ken for considering learning and reflection superfluous in self-cultivation thus causing moral nihilism. He did, however, share Wang Ken's ideas of "learning to get the Way oneself" and moral idealism. Besides criticizing Wang Chi and Wang Ken for their

influences in making moral nihilism and mysticism, Liu also criticized his contemporaries T'ao Shih-ling and scholars of Mount Po-ma for indulging in moral nihilism and mysticism and being involved in Ch'an Buddhism. Liu Tsung-chou's criticism of Wang Yang-ming's followers for indulging in moral nihilism and mysticism anticipated the criticisms by some early Ch'ing scholars who considered the developments of Wang Yang-ming's School of Mind a cause of the decline of the Ming dynasty.

Based on his criticism of moral decay in the circle of Wang Yang-ming's followers, Liu presented his scheme for moral reformation. In it Liu provides *Jen-p'u* as a guide to self-cultivation and *Cheng-jen hui yüeh* as the moral rules for public life. The scheme for moral reformation reflects Liu's revision of Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming's doctrines, and his criticism of Wang Yang-ming's followers. In this sense, Liu's scheme for moral reformation can be seen as the result of his reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism. It can also be seen as a plan to put Neo-Confucian moral philosophy into practice and a sign of the end of the custom of philosophical discussion in late Ming Neo-Confucianism and the beginning of the popularization of practical learning in early Ch'ing scholarships. Beside this, in facing the great influence of Buddhism, specifically the Buddhist theory of *karma*, as an obstacle to his scheme, Liu sometimes expressed a tolerant attitude towards it in order to persuade people to do good and get rid of evil. Liu's tolerance to the Buddhist theory of *karma* reflects a trend of popularized Confucianism of the late Ming period.

It is clear that Liu Tsung-chou's reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism

made a great contribution to the emergence of many new intellectual trends in the period from late Ming to early Ch'ing. In this sense, Liu can be seen as an early representative of the intellectual transition in this period. In his reconstruction of Ming Neo-Confucianism, we see the start of the contour of the Ming-Ch'ing intellectual transition.

Glossary

- Chan Jo-shui 湛若水 [Kan-ch'üan 甘泉, 1466-1560]
- Ch'an (or Zen) 禪
- Chang Ch'iao 章僑 [?-?]
- Chang Chü-cheng 張居正 [Chiang-ling 江陵, 1525-82]
- Chang Hsü 張詡 [T'ing-shih 廷實, 1455-1514]
- Chang Mao 章懋 [Feng-shan 楓山, 1437-1522]
- Chang Tsai 張載 [Heng-ch'ü 橫渠, 1020-1077]
- Chang Ying 章穎 [Nan-chou 南洲, 1514-1605]
- Che 浙
- Chekiang 浙江
- Che-chung 浙中
- Ch'en Ch'üeh 陳確 [Ch'ien-ch'u 乾初, 1604-77]
- Ch'en Hsien-chang 陳獻章 [Po-sha or Pai-sha 白沙, 1428-1500]
- Ch'en I-ch'ang 陳奕昌 [?-?]
- Ch'en Jung-chieh [Wing-tsit Chan] 陳榮捷
- Ch'en Lung-cheng 陳龍正 [Chi-t'ing 幾亭, 1585-1645]
- cheng hsin* (the rectification of the mind) 正心
- Cheng-hsüeh tsa-chieh (Miscellaneous notes on verifying learning) 證學雜解
- Cheng-jen (realizing humanity) 證人
- Cheng-jen hui (Association for realizing humanity) 證人會
- Cheng-jen hui yüeh* (Constitution for members of the association for realizing humanity) 證人會約
- Cheng-jen shiao p'u* (Pamphlet for realizing humanity) 證人小譜
- Cheng-jen yao-chih (the essential theme of realizing humanity) 證人要旨
- Cheng Tsung-i 鄭宗義
- ch'eng* (sincerity) 誠

Ch'eng Hao 程顥 [Ming-tao 明道, 1032-85]
 Ch'eng I 程頤 [I-ch'uan 伊川, 1033-1107]
ch'eng i (making the will sincere) 誠意
ch'eng kuo (completed faults) 成過
chi (a subtle, incipient, activating force) 幾
ch'i (pneuma or air) 氣
 Chia-ching 嘉靖
Chiang-ching hui (Classics Discussion Society) 講經會
chiang-hsüeh (discussion of learning) 講學
 Chiang-men 江門
 Chiang-yu 江右
chieh chü (cautious and apprehensive) 戒懼
chieh-shen (caution) 戒慎
chieh wu (understanding and enlightening) 解悟
Ch'ien-kai ko (The ledgers of correctness) 遷改格
 Ch'ien Mu 錢穆
 Ch'ien Te-hung 錢德洪 [Hsü-shan 緒山, 1497-1574]
chih (knowledge) 知
chih chih (the extension of knowledge) 致知
chih chih (knowing what to abide in) 知止
chih-chüeh (consciousness) 知覺
chih hsing ho i (the unity of knowledge and action) 知行合一
chih hsü shou ching (to attain vacuity and maintain tranquillity) 致虛守靜
 Chih-i 智顥 [538-597]
chih liang-chih (the extension of innate knowledge) 致良知
 Chih nien shuo (On the elimination of thought) 治念說
chih yü chih shan (abiding in the highest good) 止於至善
 Chin Kuan-t'ao 金觀濤

chin hsin (present mind) 今心

Ch'in 秦

Ch'in Hung-yu 秦弘祐 [Lü-ssu 履思, ?-?]]

chin-shih 進士

ching (reverence) 敬

ching (tranquillity) 靜

ching-hua shui-yüeh (the reflection of a follower in a mirror or the moon in water)

鏡花水月

Ching-kuan-t'ang chi (A note on the hall "Ching-kuan") 靜觀堂記

Ching-shih (statecraft) 經世

ching-shih chih-yung chih hsüeh (practical statemanship) 經世致用之學

ching-tso (sitting in meditation) 靜坐

Ching-tso fa (the method of sitting in meditation) 靜坐法

Ching-tso shuo (On sitting in meditation) 靜坐說

ching yang (cultivating tranquillity) 靜養

Chiu chieh (Nine Explanations) 九解

Ch'iu Chün 丘濬 [Chung-shen 仲深, 1420-1495]

ch'iu fang-hsin (to chase the strayed mind) 求放心

Chiu ti (Nine Inquiries) 九諦

Chou Ch'ao-jui 周朝瑞 [Ssu-yung 思永, ?-1625]

Chou Ch'i-yüan 周起元 [1572-1626]

Chou Shun-ch'ang 周順昌 [1584-1626]

Chou Tsung-chien 周宗建 [1582-1626]

Chou Ju-teng 周汝登 [Hai-men 海門, 1547-1629]

Chou Tun-i 周敦頤 [Lien-hsi 濂溪, 1017-73]

Chou Ying-chung 周應中 [Ling-yü 寧宇, ?-?]

chu ching (emphasizing tranquillity) 主靜

Chu Hsi 朱熹 [Yüan-hui 元晦, 1130-1200]

Chu-tzu wan-nien ting-lun (Chu Hsi's final conclusion arrived in his last years) 朱子
晚年定論
Chu Tzu-yang 朱紫陽 [Chu Hsi]
chü-jen 舉人
chü t'o san ch'ih yu shen-ming (God is watching three feet above everyone's head)
舉頭三尺有神明
Ch'uan-hsi lu (Instructions for practical living) 傳習錄
Ch'üan shan wen (Essay to urging good deeds) 勸善文
Ch'un-ch'iu 春秋
Ch'un-yang t'ai 春陽台
Chung-hsing chin-chien (A golden mirror for revival) 中興金鑑
Chung-yung (the *Doctrine of Mean*) 中庸
Ch'ung-chen 崇禎
Fa-hua ching (the *Lotus Scripture*) 法華經
Fa-hua san-mei (the *Lotus Samadhi*) 法華三昧
Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i (A manual for the *Lotus Samadhi*) 法華三昧懺儀
Fang Hsüeh-chien 方學漸 [Pen-an 本菴, 1540-1615]
Fang I-chih 方以智 [Mi-chih 密之, 1611-71]
Feng Ts'ung-wu 馮從吾 [Shao-hsü 少墟, 1556-1627(?)]
fu (rhymed prose) 賦
Fu-hsi 伏羲
Fu-Wang 福王
Hangchou 杭州
Han-shan 韓山
Ho Hsin-yin 何心隱 [Liang Fu-shan 梁夫山, 1517-79]
hsi hsin (cleaning the mind) 洗心
hsi hsin (the habitual mind) 習心
Hsiang-yüeh (contract for villages) 鄉約

Hsiao-hsüeh (Elementary studies) 小學
Hsieh Kuo-chen 謝國楨
hsien-chiao (explicit teaching) 顯教
hsien kuo (obvious faults) 顯過
hsien o (obvious evils) 顯惡
hsin (the mind) 心
hsin chi li (the mind is principle) 心即理
hsin-hsüeh (the School of Mind) 心學
hsin-hsüeh (the Doctrines of Mind) 心學

hsin-t'i (the mind-in-itself) 心體
hsing (action) 行
hsing chi li (the nature is principle) 性即理
Hsiung T'ing-pi 熊廷弼 [Fei-pai 飛百, 1569-1625]
Hsü Fu-yüan 許孚遠 [Ching-an 敬庵, 1535-1604]
hsü ling (vacuously intelligent) 虛靈
hsü-ling (vacuous intelligence) 虛靈
Hsüan 宣
hsüeh (studying) 學
Hsüeh yen (Words on learning) 學言
Hsüeh Hsüan 薛瑄 [Ching-hsüan 敬軒, 1392-1464]
Hsün lo shuo (Essay on searching for the joy) 尋樂說
Hu Chü-jen 胡居仁 [Ching-chai 敬齋, 1434-1486]
Hu Han 胡瀚 [Chin-shan 今山, 1381-?]
Huai-nan ko-wu (the Huai-nan doctrine of the investigation of things) 淮南格物
Huang-Ming Tao-t'ung lu (The orthodox transmission of the Way in imperial Ming)
皇明道統錄
Huang Tsun-su 黃尊素 [1584-1626]
Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲 [Li-chou 梨洲, 1610-95]

Huang Tso 黃佐 [泰泉 T'ai-ch'üan, 1490-1566]
Huai-nan 淮南
i (righteousness) 義
i (the will) 意
I ching (the *Book of Changes*) 易經
i-kuan (a single thread that run through all) 一貫
i-ken (the root of the will) 意根
jen (benevolence) 仁
Jen-chi t'u (The Diagram of the Human Ultimate) 人極圖
Jen-p'u (Schematic of man) 人譜
Juan Ta-ch'eng 阮大鍼 [Chi-chih 集之, 1587-1646 (47)]
Kao P'an-lung 高攀龍 [Ching-i 景逸, 1562-1626]
k'ao-chü chih hsüeh (evidential studies) 考據之學
K'ao-t'ing 考亭
Kensenha 現成派
Kiangsu 江蘇
Kijakuha 歸寂派
ko-wu (the investigation of things) 格物
k'o chi (overcoming the self) 克己
Ku-an 固安
Ku Hsien-ch'eng 顧憲成 [Ching-yang 涇陽, 1550-1612]
Ku Ta-chang 顧大章 [Po-chin 伯欽, 1576-1625]
Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 [T'ing-lin 亭林, 1613-82]
Kuan Chih-tao 管志道 [Tung-ming 東溟, 1537-1608]
kuei chi (returning to tranquillity) 歸寂
Kuei-chou 貴州
Kuei O 桂萼 [Tsu-shih 子實, ?-1531]
kuei shen (spiritual being) 鬼神

Kumarajiva 鳩摩羅什 [334-413]

K'un 崑

kung-an (A Ch'an Buddhist sort of puzzle) 公案

kung-hsing (personal practice) 躬行

Kung-kuo ko (The ledgers of merit and demerit) 功過格

k'ung-chü (apprehension) 恐懼

K'ung Yen lo ch'u (the experience of joyfulness shared by Confucius and Yen Hui)

孔顏樂處

Lao Ssu-kuang [Lao Sze-kuang] 勞思光

li (principle) 理

li (rites) 禮

li-hsüeh (the School of Principle) 理學

Li-chi (Book of rites) 禮記

Li Chih 李贄 [Ch'uo-wu 卓吾, 1527-1602]

li i fen shu (Principle is one but its manifestations are many) 理一分殊

li men (doors of criminals) 戾門

Li San-ts'ai 李三才 [?-1623]

Li T'ung 李侗 [Yen-p'ing 延平, 1088-1163]

Li Tzu-ch'eng 李自成 [Hung-chi 鴻基, 1605(?) -1645]

Li Ying-shen 李應昇 [1593-1626]

Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啓超

liang-chih (innate knowledge, innate knowledge of good, innate knowing) 良知

Liang-chih shuo (On innate knowledge) 良知說

Liao-tung 遼東

Lin Chao-en 林兆恩 [San-i chiao-chu 三一教主, 1517-98]

Liu Ch'i 劉圻 [?-?]

Liu Chien-feng 劉兼峰 [1225-1605]

Liu Chin 劉謹 [?-?]

Liu Ch'in-t'ai 劉秦臺 [1548-1577]
Liu-ching (the Six Classics) 六經
Liu Ch'ing-feng 劉青峰
Liu Chou 劉洵 [Po-sheng 伯繩, 1613-?]
Liu Mao-shan 劉茅山 [1498-1576]
Liu Tsung-chou 劉宗周 [Chi-shan 戢山, Nien-t'ai 念臺, 1578-1645]
Liu Shu-hsien 劉述先
Liu-tsu t'an-ching (The platform scripture) 六祖壇經
Liu Yung-ch'eng 劉永澄 [Ching-chih 靜之, 1576-1612]
Lo Ch'in-shun 羅欽順 [Cheng-an 整庵, 1465-1547]
Lo hsieh ko (Paeon to enjoyment of learning) 樂學歌
Lo Hung-hsien 羅洪先 [Lien-an 念菴, 1504-1564]
Lo Ju-fang 羅汝芳 [Chin-hsi 近溪, 1515-88]
Lo Ts'ung-yen 羅從彥 [Yü-chang 豫章, 1072-1135]
Lu Hsiang-shan 陸象山 [Chiu-yüan 九淵, 1139-93]
Lu Ku-ch'iao 陸古樵 [?/?]
Lu Yen-shan 陸儼山 [?/?]
Lu-Wang 潞王
Lü Kun 呂坤 [Shu-chien 叔簡, 1536-1618]
Lun-yü hsüeh-an (The study of *The Analects*) 論語學案
Lung-ch'ang 龍場
Ma Shih-ying 馬士英 [Yao-ts'ao 瑤草, 1591-1646]
Miu Ch'ang-ch'i 繆昌期 [1562-1626]
mi-chiao (esoteric teaching) 密教
Ming-che pao-shen lun (On clear wisdom and self-preservation) 明哲保身論
Ming-ch'en yen-hsing lu (The records of the words and deeds of famous officials) 名臣言行錄
Ming-ju hsüeh-an (A philosophical anthology of Ming Confucians) 明儒學案

Ming-shih (The history of the Ming dynasty) 明史
mo-tso ch'eng-hsin t'i-jen t'ien-li (to sit in meditation with a purified mind to comprehend the principle of Heaven) 默坐澄心體認天理
mu (an acre) 畝
nieh-p'an (nirvana, liberation) 涅槃
nien (thought) 念
nei-sheng wai-wang (sageliness inside kingliness outside) 內聖外王
Nieh Pao 聶豹 [Wen-wei 文蔚, 1487-1563]
nien (thought) 念
nung ching hun (play mind games) 弄精魂
Ou-yang Te 歐陽德 [Ch'ung-i 崇一, 1496-1554]
Pa-pen sai-yüan lun (On pulling up the root and stopping up the source) 拔本塞源論
pan-jih ching-tso pan-jih tu-shu (sitting in meditation for half day and learning from books for the other half) 半日靜坐半日讀書
Pei Chihli 北直隸
pen-t'i (original substance) 本體
pien (sifting) 辨
Po-ma yen 白馬巖
San chieh (three realms of the world: world of sensuous desire, form, and formless world of pure spirit) 三界
San pao (Three Precious Ones: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, i.e. Buddha, the Law, and the Ecclesia or Order) 三寶
shan (goodness) 善
Shan-hai kuan 山海關
Shanhsi 山西
Shan-yin 山陰
Shao-hsing 紹興

shen (the self) 身
 Shen I-kuan 沈一貫 [Ssu-ming 四明, 1531-1615]
shen tu (being vigilant in solitude) 慎獨
Sheng-hsüeh tsung-yao (The essential themes of the learning of sages) 聖學宗要
 Sheng ssu shuo (On life and death) 生死說
Shih-ching (Stone classics) 石經
shih-hsüeh (practical learning) 實學
 Shih Meng-lin 史孟麟 [Yü-ch'ih 玉池, ?-?]
shih-mu shih-chih kung-chih kung-shih (ten eyes and ten hands are beholding and pointing) 十目十指，共指共視
shih shuo (the teacher's sayings) 師說
 Shou-ch'ang 壽昌
shou men (doors of beasts) 獸門
 Shou-shan 首善
shu hsi (breathing exercises) 數息
 Shui-ch'eng 水澄
 Shun 舜
 Shun-t'ien 順天
ssu (thinking) 思
ssu-chü chiao (Four Sentences of Teaching) 四句教
Ssu shu chi-chu (Comprehensive commentary on the Four Books) 四書集註
Ssu shu huo-wen (Questions and answers on the Four Books) 四書或問
ssu-wu (Four Negatives) 四無
ssu yu (Four Positives) 四有
sui-ch'u t'i-jen t'ien-li (experiencing heavenly principle everywhere) 隨處體認天理
sui men (door of the demon) 崇門
 Sung kuo fa (A method for the prosecution of bad deeds) 訟過法
 Syujoha 修証派

Ta-hsüeh (the *Great Learning*) 大學
Ta-hsüeh ku pen (Ancient version of the *Great Learning*) 大學古本
Ta-hsüeh ts'an-i (Doubts on the *Great Learning*) 大學參疑
Ta-hsüeh wen (An inquiry on the *Great Learning*) 大學問
ta kuo (great faults) 大過
ta o (great evils) 大惡
Ta shen-tzu (a great self) 大身子
Ta-sheng (Mahayana, the great yana, or conveyance, or the great vehicle in comparison with the Hinayana) 大乘

Tai Chen 戴震 [Tung-yüan 東原, 1723-77]
t'ai-chi (the Great Ultimate) 太極
T'ai-chi tu shuo (An explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate) 太極圖說
T'ai-chou 泰州
T'an Ch'ien 談遷 [Ju-mu 孺木, 1594-1658]
Tao (the Way) 道
tao pen tzu-jan (The Way is rooted in nature) 道本自然
tao wen hsüeh (following the path of inquiry and study) 道問學
T'ao Shih-ling 陶奭齡 [Shih-liang 石梁, ?-?]
T'ao Wang-ling 陶望齡 [Shih-k'uei 石簣, 1562-?]
te (acquire) 得
te hsing chih chih (knowledge of moral nature) 德性之知
t'ien-chi (the secret of Heaven) 天機
T'ien-ch'i 天啓
T'ien-ch'üan cheng-tao chi (The Record of Confirmation of the Way at T'ien-chüan)
天泉證道記
t'ien-li (the principle of Heaven) 天理
T'ien-t'ai 天臺
Ting Ch'ang-ju 丁長孺 [?/?]

ts'an hua-tou (analyzing the saying of a *kung-an*) 參話頭
 Ts'ao Tuan 曹端 [Yüeh-ch'uan 月川, 1376-1434]
tsei men (doors of bandits) 賊門
 Tso Kuang-tou 左光斗 [I-chih 遺直, 1575-1625]
tso-ch'an ju-ting (to attain intent meditation of Ch'an Buddhism) 坐禪入定
tso-p'ai 左派
 Tsou Shou-i 鄒守益 [Tung-k'uo 東廓, 1491-1562]
 Tsou Yüan-piao 鄒元標 [Nan-kao 南皋, 1551-1624]
 Tsu-hsün (Ancestral instructions) 祖訓
tsun te hsing (honouring the moral nature) 尊德性
tsung-chih (main purpose) 宗旨
 Tsung-yüeh (contract for clan) 宗約
ts'ung ching chung yang-ch'u tuan-ni (fostering a starting point from the cultivation of tranquillity) 從靜中養出端倪
ts'ung ching-tso chung yang-ch'u ke tuan-ni lai." (fostering a starting point by sitting in meditation) 從靜坐中養出個端倪來
ts'ung kuo (miscellaneous faults) 叢過
ts'ung o (miscellaneous evils) 叢惡
 Tu-cheng-pien (A essay with self-verification) 獨證篇
tu chih (solitary knowing) 獨知
tu shu (learning from books or book-learning) 讀書
 Tu-shu shuo (An essay on learning from books) 讀書說
 Tu Wei-ming 杜維明
tuan-ni (starting point) 端倪
tun chien (sudden or gradual) 頓漸
 Tung-lin 東林
 Tu-shu shuo (On book-learning) 讀書說
tu-t'i (the substance of solitariness) 獨體

Tung Huang-t'ing 董黃庭 [?-?]
Tzu-chang 子張 [503 B.C.-?]
tzu-jan (nature) 自然
tzu-jan er te (to acquire [the Way] naturally) 自然而得
Tzu-kung 子貢 [520 B.C.-?]
tzu-te (to get the Way oneself, to acquire insights for oneself) 自得
tzu-te chih hsüeh (learning to get the Way oneself) 自得之學
Wan-li 萬曆
Wan T'ing yen 萬廷言 [Ssu-mo 思默, ?-?]
wang (recklessness) 妄
Wang An-shih 王安石 [Chieh-fu 介甫, 1021-86]
Wang Chi 王畿 [Lung-hsi 龍溪, 1498-1583]
Wang Fan-sen 王汎森
Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 [Ch'uan-shan 船山, 1619-1692]
Wang Ken 王艮 [Hsin-chai 心齋, 1483-1541]
Wang Yang-ming 王陽明 [Shou-jen 守仁, 1472-1529]
Wang Yao-hu 王瑤湖 [?-?]
Wang Yeh-hsün 王業洵 [Shih-mei 士美, ?-?]
Wang Yen 王衍 [I-fu 夷甫, 256-311]
Wang Yü-ch'i 王毓耆
wei (subtlety) 微
Wei Chung-hsien 魏忠賢 [1568-1627]
wei kuo (the subtle fault) 微過
wei o (subtle evil) 微惡
Wei Ta-chung 魏大中 [K'ung-shih 孔時, 1575-1625]
wen (patterns or literature) 文
wen (inquiring) 問
wen chien chih chih (knowledge of hearing and seeing) 聞見之知

Wen T'i-jen 溫體仁 [Ch'ang-ch'ing 長卿, ?-1638]

wu (things) 物

Wu Ch'eng 吳澄 [Ts'ao-lu 草廬, 1249-1333]

Wu-ching (the Five Classics) 五經

Wu-ching i-shu (A speculation on the Five Classics) 五經臆說

Wu-hsi 無錫

wu-wang wu-chu (never let it out of your mind and never forcibly help it grow either)

勿忘勿助

wu yü (having no desires) 無欲

Wu Yü-pi 吳與弼 [K'ang-chai 康齋, 1391-1469]

yang (the active cosmic force) 陽

Yang Chien 楊簡 [T'zu-hu 慈湖, 1141-1226]

yang-ch'u (to foster) 養出

Yang Lien 楊漣 [Wen-ju 文孺, 1571-1625]

Yang-ming hsien-sheng ch'uan-hsin lu (The authentic record of master Yang-ming)

陽明先生傳信錄

Yao 堯

Yao-chiang 姚江

yao men (doors of monsters) 妖門

Yeh Hsiang-kao 葉向高 [Chin-ch'ing 進卿, 1562-1627]

Yen Chün 顏鈞 [Shan-nung 山農, 1504-96]

Yen Hui 顏回 [Yüan 淵, ?-?]

Yen Yüan 顏元 [Hsi-chai 習齋, 1635-1704]

yin (the passive cosmic force) 陰

yin kuo (the concealed fault) 隱過

yin kuo (*karma*, causation and retribution) 因果

yin o (concealed evil) 隱惡

yu-p'ai (the right wing) 右派

yü ch'i (residual material force) 餘氣

Yü Ch'ien 于謙 [T'ing-i 廷益, 1398-1457]

Yü shu (The book of Yü) 虞書

yü yüan yü t'ung i huó p'o (being as lively as the hawk and the fish) 與鳶魚同一活潑

Yüan Ch'ung-huan 袁崇煥 [Yüan-su 元素, 1584-1630]

Yüan hsüeh (On the principle of learning) 原學

Yüan Hua-chung 袁化中 [Min-hsieh 民諧, ?-1625]

Yüan Huang 袁黃 [Liao fan 了凡, 1533 1606]

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