

陳榮捷：宋明理學家詩譯

Neo-Confucian Philosophical Poems

By Wing-tsit Chan

Neo-Confucianism was new partly because it developed a systematic cosmology and put its ethics on a metaphysical basis. The one who laid the foundation for this was **Chou Tun-i** 周敦頤 (1017-1073). According to his *Description of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*,¹ there is in the beginning the Ultimate of Non-being which is also the Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate engenders the two forms of yin or the weak and yang or the strong forces, which engender the four minor forms and thence all things. Whether Chou received the diagram from the Taoist priest Ch'en Tuan 陳搏 (Hsi-i 希夷, c 906-989) has been a hot debate among Neo-Confucianists, most of whom did not want to acknowledge any Taoist debt. But Chou himself did so both in terminology and ideas. We read:

On Reading Ying-chen's² Secret Alchemy

*As soon as I read the Secret of Alchemy,³ I believe in
Hsi-i
For in it is found the activating forces of yin and
yang in the process of creation.
The Son is born of the Mother⁴ and thus can find its
master.
The semen and the spirit having been united, the
subtlety (of creation) can further be known.⁵*

讀英真君丹訣

始觀丹訣信希夷
蓋得陰陽造化幾
子自母生能致主
精神合後更知微

The poem is thoroughly Taoistic. But instead of directing the philosophy to a life of tranquility and quietude, Chou channeled it to daily activity and human concern which Taoism undermines and Buddhism almost avoids altogether. For this reason he criticized Han Yü 韓愈 (768-824), perhaps the greatest Confucianist in the first millenium, for showing favor to a Buddhist monk.

¹Chou Tzu ch'üan-shu 周子全書 (Complete works of Master Chou), ch. 1.

²Master Ying-chen is referred to as Master Yin-chün 陰君 in the *Chu Tzu wen-chi* 朱子文集 (Collection of literary works of Master Chu), *Ssu-pu pei-yao* 四部備要 (Essentials of the Four Libraries) ed. entitled *Chu Tzu ta-ch'üan* 朱子大全 (Complete works by Mas-

ter Chu), 3/4b.

³This work no longer exists.

⁴The Mother is the material force before Heaven and Earth and the son is that after Heaven and Earth.

⁵Chou Tzu ch'üan-shu, *Wan-yu wen-k'u* 萬有文庫 (Universal library) ed., 17/134.



THE SUNG PHILOSOPHER CHOU TUN-I, from the Ming woodcut album Portraits and Eulogies of Historical Figures (歷代古人像贊, dated 1475). The portraits in this series, from the knife of an anonymous artist, have been regarded as among the earliest as well as the finest of their genre. Classical Literature Press, Shanghai, 1958.

Inscribing on the Wall of the Ta-tien Hall after
Arriving at Ch'ao-chou on an Inspection Trip

*T'ui-chih said of himself as resembling Confucius.
In his Inquiry on the Way⁶ he strongly attacked the
errors of Buddhism and Taoism.
I do not know what kind of a person Ta-tien was
(That made Han Yü) repeatedly wrote him to send
regards, and, furthermore, left some clothing.⁷*

按部至潮州題
大顛堂壁

退之自謂如夫子
原道深排釋老非
不識大顛何似者
數書珍重更留衣

Chou wrote few poems but this is very well known. But both Taoism and Buddhism have left their mark on Neo-Confucianism. The Taoist imprint is especially noticeable in Shao Yung 邵雍 (Shao Yao-fu 邵堯夫 1011-1077). Like Chou, Shao Yung was a master among the Northern Sung (960-1126) Neo-Confucian philosophers. His philosophy is based on forms and numbers. In viewing the universe as

⁶ *Yüan Tao* 原道 (Inquiry on the Way), in *Han Ch'ang-li ch'üan-chi* 韓昌黎全集 (Complete works of Han Yü), *Ssu-pu pei-yao* ed., 11/1a-4b. For an English translation, see Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 454-456.

⁷ *Chou Tzu ch'üan-shu*, 17/346. In 819, Vice Minister of the Department of Justice Han Yü was banished to Ch'ao-chou Prefecture in Kwangtung because he protested the Emperor's welcome of the Buddha's bones to the palace. Upon arrival he heard of the fame of the Buddhist priest Pao-t'ung 寶通 (Ta-

tien). At his invitation the priest came to stay for more than ten days. When Han was transferred to another post, he left some clothing for the priest as farewell. See the *Ch'üan-chi*, 18/7a-b. There is no letter to Ta-tien in the *Ch'üan-chi* but Chu Hsi in the *Chu Tzu yü-lei* 朱子語類 (Classified conversations of Master Chu), 1880 ed., 137/24a, commented on one of them, and Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), *Chi-ku lu* 集古錄 (Records of collection of antiquities), 9/6b, mentions the carving of three letters. For Ta-tien, see the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Records of the transmission of the lamp during the Ching-te era), ch. 14.



NEO-CONFUCIANIST SHAO YUNG, a contemporary of Chou Tun-i. Also from Portraits and Eulogies of Historical Figures.

strictly natural, regular, and almost mechanical, and in viewing things objectively as things, he seems to subordinate human interest to natural events. The following poem is naturalism pure and simple:

Observation of Things

*The earth is square because it is tranquil.
 Heaven is round because it is active.
 The substance of squareness and roundness having
 been rectified,
 The function of activity and tranquility also becomes
 clear.
 What is tranquil for long necessarily becomes moist.
 What is active to the limit necessarily reaches the
 burning point.
 Being moist, the substance of water is total.
 Reaching the burning point, the function of fire is
 complete.
 The substance of water is received in a utensil.⁸
 The function of fire is transmitted through fuel wood.
 Substance exists after (the creation of) heaven and
 earth.
 Function arose before heaven and earth began.⁹*

觀物吟

地以靜而方
 天以動而圓
 既正方圓體
 還明動靜權
 靜久必成潤
 動極遂成然
 潤則水體具
 然則火用全
 水體以器受
 火用以薪傳
 體在天地後
 用起天地先

⁸Ch'i 器 here is utensil in the narrow sense but in the broad sense it means any concrete, particular object as opposed to Tao, the universal principle.

⁹I-ch'uan chi-jang chi 伊川擊壤集 (Songs of slapping an earthen piece by the I River), *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊 (Four Libraries Series) ed., 14/54b-55a.

More than any other scholar writing in English, Wing-tsit Chan has been responsible for introducing the ideas and writings of the Sung and Ming philosophers known to the West as Neo-Confucianists. He translated Chu Hsi's Reflections on Things at Hand (近思錄) and Wang Yang-ming's Instructions for Practical Living (傳習錄), both published by Columbia. In his Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton University Press, 1963), he devoted eleven chapters to Neo-Confucianism, covering the great metaphysical speculations on the meaning of human life as represented in the School of Principle (理學) and the School of the Mind (心學). There he made translations from the prose writings of Chou Tun-i, Shao Yung, the two Ch'eng brothers, Chu Hsi, Lu Hsiang-shan, and Wang Yang-ming, to which the poetic translations from the same masters presented here may serve as a kind of coda.

To his 11 books and more than 90 articles (including contributions to 34 other books, the Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Encyclopaedia Britannica) on philosophical and religious subjects Professor Chan has added a lifetime of teaching and lecturing. He has taught at Lingnan, Hawaii, Dartmouth College (where he was Professor of Chinese Philosophy and Culture, 1942-66), and since retiring from Dartmouth, at Chatham College, Pittsburgh, Pa. (where he has been Gillespie Professor of Philosophy since 1966).

The doctrine of substance and function, though of Taoist origin, has played a key role in Neo-Confucian philosophy. According to it, Principle (理 *li*) is the substance but it functions in history and human affairs as well as in Nature. Under Taoist influence, just as substance and function should become one, so Nature and man should form a unity. No Neo-Confucian philosopher has expressed this feeling in poetry better than Shao Yung. He wrote poems almost daily and often after many cups of wine. He wrote in big Chinese characters and gave them away. People in all parts of China competed for them. He was a happy man, always at leisure and at ease. When he went out in a cart in Loyang, people would affectionately say, "Here comes our own master." He would visit various families and stay for days. He called his own abode "Nest of Happiness". He was happy with himself, with all people, and with the universe. In him, Nature and man rolled into one.

All Else

*The body is produced after heaven and earth.
The mind exists before heaven and earth.
Heaven and earth proceed from me.
Nothing needs be said about all else.¹⁰*

自餘吟

身生天地後
心在天地前
天地自我出
自餘何足言

A Clear Night

*When the moon reaches the heart of heaven,
And the wind comes to the surface of water,
The over-all meaning of clearness,
I imagine, few will realize.¹¹*

清夜吟

月到天心處
風來水面時
一般清意味
料得少人知

¹⁰ *Chi-jang chi*, 19/125b.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12/9b.

A Bottle of Wine in the Nest of Happiness

*A bottle of wine in the Nest of Happiness
Nourishes not only the vital power but also the true
nature.
Again and again the wine reaches the mouth and I
become mildly drunk.
I slap and slap my bosom which is full of spring.
Looked at from the tall tower, flowers look like
tapestry.
Wherever the small cart goes, the grass is like a cushion.
Expansion and contraction are the hands of rise and
fall from time immemorial.¹²
Appearance and disappearance are the bodies of
layers¹³ of cloud and water¹⁴*

安樂窩中酒一樽

安樂窩中酒一樽
非唯養氣又頤真
頻頻到口微成醉
拍拍滿懷都是春

高閣望時花似錦
小車行處草如茵
卷舒萬古興亡手
出入幾重雲水身

In commenting on the last line of the first verse and the last two lines of the second, Ch'eng Hao 程顥 (Ch'eng Ming-tao 程明道, 1032-1085) said that Chuang Tzu 莊子 wanted to equalize all rises and falls and appearances and disappearances¹⁵ but Confucianism regards them as natural operations according to Principle. In the eyes of Shao Yung, Ch'eng Hao said, "All things proceed from Principle. Because he regards all things as Principle, he could let himself loose."¹⁶ We may add that because of Principle, all is spring, for the character of Principle is to create and re-create (*sheng-sheng* 生生). What comes to the bosom and to the face, as in the following poem which Ch'eng Hao also quoted, is the creative impulse of spring. The ideal achievement is not only unity of man and Nature as in Taoism but also the spirit of life and joy.

Poems of Identical Beginning and Ending Lines

*It is not that Yao-fu loves to sing poems.
[There is poetry] when Yao-fu is old but his spirit is
not yet wasted.
The leisure of water and bamboo I have already
possessed.
The wealth and nobility of flowers and birds I also
share.
The moon from the wu-t'ung¹⁷ tree shines on my
bosom.
The wind from the willow blows on my face.
There is plenty of cover which I casually wrap.
It is not that Yao-fu loves to sing poems.*

首尾吟

堯夫非是愛吟詩
雖老精神未耗時
水竹清閑先據了
鶯花富貴又兼之
梧桐月向懷中照
楊柳風來面上吹
被有許多閑捧擁
堯夫非是愛吟詩

¹²Some texts have *wan-shih* 萬世 (ten thousand generations) instead of *wan-ku* 萬古 (time immemorial).

¹³Some texts have *ch'ien-ch'ung* 千重 (a thousand layers) instead of *ch-ch'ung* 幾重 (several layers).

¹⁴*Chi-jang chi*, 9/129a.

¹⁵See Chuang Tzu, ch. 2.

¹⁶Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng I, *I-shu* 遺書 (Surviving works), in the *Erh-Ch'eng ch'üan-shu* 二程全書 (Complete works of the two Ch'engs), *Ssu-pu pei-yao* ed., 2A/15a.

¹⁷According to legend, this is the only tree a phoenix would rest in. Some texts have *fu-yung* 芙蓉 (hibiscus) instead of *wu-t'ung* 梧桐.

*It is not that Yao-fu loves to sing poems.
There is poetry when Yao-fu fully realizes his nature.
Although I dare not aspire to become a sage or a man
of humanity,¹⁸
Without doubt, I enjoy Nature and know my destiny.
While my mind, broad and extensive, is at leisure,
My feelings, ample and rich, are truly at ease.
The situation of a restful mind and a quiet day is
indescribable.
It is not that Yao-fu loves to sing poems.¹⁹*

堯夫非是愛吟詩
詩是堯夫盡性時
若聖與仁雖不敢
樂天知命又何疑
恢恢意志方閑暇
綽綽情懷正坦夷
心逸日休難狀處
堯夫非是愛吟詩

These are two of 135 poems with identical beginning and concluding lines. There is poetry not only when Yao-fu realizes his nature, but also when he "is at ease", "is at middle age", "is half drunk", "goes in and out", "is half awake", "takes an evening walk", "talks and laughs", "has nothing to do", "feels ashamed", "visits friends", "sits quiet". All is Principle and all is spring.

¹⁸Paraphrasing the *Analects*, 7/33.

¹⁹*Chi-jang chi*, 20/128b, 156a.



THE BROTHERS CH'ENG HAO and CH'ENG I, representatives of the Sung Neo-Confucian Movement. These figure drawings are taken from Illustrated Biographies from Wan Hsiao T'ang (晚笑堂畫傳) by the early Ch'ing painter Shang-kuan Chou (上官周). Shao Hua Cultural Service Press, Hong Kong.

The feeling of ease, serenity, and harmony with Nature is equally strong in Ch'eng Hao. Both he and his younger brother Ch'eng I 程頤 (1033-1107) built their philosophy on the concept of Principle and were the key philosophers of the Sung Neo-Confucian movement. To him, Principle is not merely an abstract concept but a living reality found in the wind and flowers. Below are two of his poems among the most celebrated in Chinese history.

Composed Casually

*Near midday the clouds are light and the wind gentle.
Standing²⁰ by the flowers and following the willow,
I look across the river.
Bystanders do not understand the joy of my heart.
They will say that I seek to be lazy like young
people.²¹*

Composed Casually on an Autumn Day

*With leisure, everything²² is relaxed.²³
When I awake the sun shining through the eastern
window is already red.
All things viewed in tranquility are at ease with
themselves.
The delightful spirit in the four seasons I share with
all.
Tao penetrates through the physical limits of heaven
and earth.
My thoughts enter into the changing atmosphere of
wind and cloud.
When one's heart is not dissipated by wealth and
honor²⁴ and one is happy with poverty and low
station,
When one reaches this point, one is a hero.²⁵*

偶成

雲淡風輕近午天
傍花隨柳過前川
旁人不識予心樂
將謂偷閑學少年

秋日偶成

閑來無事不從容
睡覺東窗日已紅
萬物靜觀皆自得
四時佳興與人同
道通天地有形外
思入風雲變態中
富貴不淫貧賤樂
男兒到此是豪雄

Among the poems here translated, this is surely the most popular and most often quoted. In addition to the sense of peace, love, and joy, Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200) saw in this poem that Ch'eng Hao understood Principle, or Tao, to be in all things, irresistible, and necessary.²⁶ It may be added that at the same time Ch'eng Hao was intimately involved in all changing events in both Nature and human society. The distinction between things and the self are forgotten. All things merge into one and are at ease, and joy is shared by all. True to the Confucian spirit, the moral tone is strongly struck in the concluding lines.

²⁰Some texts have *wang* 望 (to look toward) instead of *pang* 傍 (to stand by).

²¹*Ming-tao wen-chi* 明道文集 (Collection of literary works by Ch'eng Hao) (in the *Erh-Ch'eng ch'üan-shu*), 1/1a. The poem was written in 1057 when Ch'eng Hao was a magistrate at the age of 26.

²²Some texts have *ho-shih* 何事 (which thing) instead of *wu-shih* 無事 (nothing).

²³Some texts have *shu-yung* 疏慵 (lazy) instead.

²⁴Referring to the *Book of Mencius*, 3B/2.

²⁵*Ming-tao wen-chi*, 1/6b.

²⁶*Chu Tzu yü-lei*, 18/25b.

The moral note is equally strong in Ch'eng I. He was as stern as his brother was warm. He regarded textual studies and literary compositions as a waste of the spirit. There are only three poems in the collection of his literary works. The one below shows his attitude toward Taoist elixir.

Thanking Wang Ch'uan-ch'i²⁷ for Sending Elixir

謝王仝期寄藥

*Perfect sincerity penetrates sageliness²⁸ and medicine
penetrates the spirit.
Sent from afar to a declining old man to save his life.
Do you believe I also have an elixir?
When it is used, we shall also understand that it gives
people long life.²⁹*

至誠通聖藥通神
遠寄衰翁濟病身
我亦有丹君信否
用時還解壽斯民

It goes without saying, Ch'eng I's elixir is Principle.

Like Ch'eng I, Chu Hsi was more a philosopher than a poet. However, in the following poems Chu Hsi reaffirmed the Neo-Confucian conviction that the universe is full of life impulse and fragrance, that one is merged with the universe in a delightful harmony, and that the foundation of all this is Confucianism.

Spring Day

春日

*I looked for flowers along the edge of the Ssu River
on this excellent day.
The bright scene, infinite in extent, is suddenly new.
With perfect ease, as the east wind blows on my face,
I come to a realization.
The ten thousand purples and the thousand reds are
all spring.³⁰*

勝日尋芳泗水濱
無邊光景一時新
等閑識得東風面
萬紫千紅總是春

Chu Hsi was far away from the Ssu River in Confucius' native place in Shantung, but he was seeking the fragrance of Confucian teaching. When he found it, every thing became new.

Feelings Arising from Reading Books

觀書有感

*The square pond of half a mou³¹ opens up like a
mirror.
Sky light and cloud shadows move together to and fro.
Let us ask: How can it be clear to such a degree?
Because there is living water coming from the
fountainhead.³²*

半畝方塘一鑑開
天光雲影共徘徊
問渠那得清如許
爲有源頭活水來

²⁷ Nothing is known of him.

²⁸ Other texts have *hua* 化 (transformation) instead of *sheng* 聖 (sageliness).

²⁹ *I-ch'uan wen-chi* 伊川文集 (Collection of literary works by Ch'eng I) (in the *Erh-Ch'eng ch'üan-shu*),

4/7a.

³⁰ *Chu Tzu wen-chi*, 2/10b.

³¹ One third of an acre.

³² Referring to the *Book of Mencius*, 4B/18.

*Last night spring water rose at river's edge.
The big junk like a warship is as light as a feather.
All along I have wasted my strength pushing it.
Today it moves freely in midstream.³³*

昨夜江邊春水生
蒙衝巨艦一毛輕
向來枉費推移力
此日中流自在行

This is the most famous of Chu Hsi's 1000-odd poems. Mencius and Confucius praised water because of its inexhaustible fountainhead. Chu Hsi may be describing nothing but the physical phenomenon, but most scholars believe that he was thinking of Principle which is the source of all things. Since its outstanding characteristic is creation and re-creation, its life-giving process is continuous and inexhaustible. In Chu Hsi's more philosophical poems, Neo-Confucian ideas are more explicit.

Feelings Aroused while Sitting in the Study

齋居興感

*The Undifferentiated Continuum³⁴ is big and without limit.
Merged into one, what is below is deep and broad.
The operation of yin and yang never ceases.
Winter and summer succeed each other.
Fu-hsi, a divine sage of antiquity,
Perfectly understood with one look up and down.
Without waiting to see the chart on the dragon-horse's back,
Human civilization was already manifest and clear.
Undifferentiated, the One Principle penetrates all.
Clear and distinct, it is not neither-form-nor-nothing.³⁵
My high respect to the Gentleman of the Great Ultimate.³⁶
Once more he makes this clear to me.
I watch the transformation of yin and yang,
As they rise and fall in the universe.³⁷
Since there was no beginning in the past,
How can there be an end in the future?
I believe herein exists the Ultimate Principle,
Which is the same at present as in the ten thousand generations.
Who says Primordial Universe is dead?
Deceptive talk shocks the blind and deaf.³⁸*

昆侖大無外
旁薄下深廣
陰陽無停機
寒暑互來往
皇犧古神聖
妙契一俯仰
不待窺馬圖
人文已宣朗
渾然一理貫
昭晰非象罔
珍重無極翁
爲我重指掌

吾觀陰陽化
升降八絃中
前瞻既無始
後際那有終
至理諒斯存
萬世與今同
誰言混沌死
幻語驚盲聾

³³ Chu Tzu wen-chi, 2/10b.

³⁴ Kun-lun 昆侖 does not refer to the largest mountain range in China but is interchangeable with hun-lun 渾淪 (Primordial Universe) below.

³⁵ The term hsiang-wang 象罔 comes from the Chuang Tzu, ch. 12, Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed., 5/5a. Commentators agree that hsiang (form) seems to be but not really form and wang (nothingness) seems to

be but not really nothingness.

³⁶ Referring to Chou Tun-i and his Diagram of the Great Ultimate.

³⁷ Pa-hung 八絃 (eight cords). In the Huai-nan Tzu 淮南子 Ssu-pu pei-yao ed., 4/3b, it is said that eight cords wrap around a layer of the universe.

³⁸ Chu Tzu wen-chi, 4/6b-7a.

The One Principle or the Ultimate Principle is the basis of all transformation and the reason for all existence. It needs no revelation from a dragon. According to legend, when Emperor Fu-hsi 伏羲 began his reign, a dragon in the shape of a horse emerged from the river bearing a chart according to which the emperor drew the Eight Trigrams. These trigrams have been regarded as the basic elements of human civilization and historical events. But Neo-Confucianism looked upon history and civilization as a rational process. They are the flower of the Primordial Universe and not a degeneration from it. Chuang Tzu told the story of the Emperor of the South Sea and the Emperor of the North Sea, both products of Primordial Universe who was the Emperor of the Center. They were sorry because the Primordial Universe did not have the seven apertures a human being has. Each day they bored one hole into Emperor Primordial Universe. After seven days, Primordial Universe died.³⁹ But the idea that human activities are detrimental to original existence is utterly unacceptable to Neo-Confucianists. Chuang Tzu may have been criticizing interference with Nature rather than deprecating civilization but Chu Hsi feared the implications. More important, to Neo-Confucianists, nothing is more natural than Principle.

Principle, being universal and eternal, prevails in all space and time. Understanding it requires the study of both past and present. This emphasis on "following the path of inquiry and study" was strongly opposed by Lu Hsiang-shan 陸象山 (1139-1193) who preferred to "honor the moral nature,"⁴⁰ that is, relying on the innate knowledge of the good. In 1173, a meeting was arranged at the Goose Lake Temple in present Kiangsi to resolve their differences. On the way there, Lu Hsiang-shan's elder brother, Lu Chiu-ling 陸九齡 (1132-1180), composed a poem:

*Children know how to love and grown-ups know how to respect.*⁴¹

The ancient sages successively transmitted nothing but this mind.

Generally speaking, only when there is foundation can a house be built.

I have never heard that without a base a high mountain is suddenly formed.

Attention to commentaries turns out to be blocks with thickets.

*Attachment to details, paradoxically, will cause one to "drown in land".*⁴²

Let us value friendship and diligently cultivate each other.

*We must know that perfect happiness lies at the present moment.*⁴³

孩提知愛長知欽
古聖相傳只此心
大抵有基方築室
未聞無址忽成岑
留情傳註翻藜塞
著意精微轉陸沉
珍重友朋勤切磋
須知至樂在于今

³⁹ *Chuang Tzu*, ch. 7 (3/36a-b).

⁴⁰ The two phrases come from the *Doctrine of the Mean*, ch. 27.

⁴¹ *Book of Mencius*, 7A/15.

⁴² The phrase comes from the *Chuang Tzu*, ch. 25

(8/51a), meaning drowning in dry land, that is, to collapse where one shouldn't.

⁴³ *Hsiang-shan ch'üan-chi* 象山全集 (Complete works of Lu Hsiang-shan), *Ssu-pu pei-yao* ed., 34/24a.

The criticism on commentaries and details was directed at Chu Hsi, a criticism both brothers shared. They also insisted on instantaneous understanding of Principle "at the present moment." But Lu Hsiang-shan said that the second line of the poem, the line about the mind, was unsatisfactory. It is not because the brothers differed in the understanding of the mind. The issue here is not the division of the mind into the "human mind" which is liable to error and the "moral mind" which is always good. Chu Hsi made such a division but the Lu brothers would not. What Lu Hsiang-shan objected to was the view that the mind could be transmitted from one person to another like an object. To him, mind is Principle and the mind is one's own. So he wrote a poem in the same rhyme:

Written at Goose Lake Temple to Match
the Poem of the Professor My Brother

*Graves arouse sorrow and ancestral halls arouse respect*⁴⁴
This is man's imperishable mind from time immemorial.
Small streams will flow to become a deep ocean.
*Handfuls of stones will build the mountains of T'ai and Hua.*⁴⁵
Work that is easy and simple will in the end be lasting and great.
Understanding that is devoted to isolated details will end up in aimless drifting.
*To know how to ascend from the low to the high, We must first of all distinguish truth and falsehood at the present moment.*⁴⁶

鵝湖寺和
教授兄韻

墟墓興哀宗廟欽
斯人千古不磨心
涓流滴到滄溟水
拳石崇成泰華岑
易簡工夫終久大
支離事業竟浮沈
欲知自下升高處
真偽先須辯只今

According to Lu Hsiang-shan himself, as they, Chu Hsi, and others gathered, when he recited his poem to the fifth and sixth lines about simple work versus details, Chu Hsi's face turned pale.⁴⁷ About a week later the conference disbanded without resolving their differences. Lu became the champion of direct and simple understanding and he and his followers looked upon Chu Hsi as bound up in details. This is not exactly correct but the opposition between the two different emphases on "following the path of inquiry and study" and "honoring the moral nature" was real.

In 1179 Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-ling met again at Hsin-chou 信州 in Kiangsi. Chu Hsi wrote this poem to match those of the Lu brothers several years before:

⁴⁴*Book of Rites, T'an-kung* 檀弓 chapter, pt. 2, respectively.
sec. 56.

⁴⁵*Doctrine of the Mean*, ch. 26. T'ai and Hua are high mountains in Shantung and Shensi Provinces,

⁴⁶*Hsiang-shan ch'üan-chi*, 25/2a, also 34/24b.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) strong reaction arose against Chu Hsi's rationalistic tendency in favor of the intuitive understanding of the mind. Among the first independent thinker was Ch'en Hsien-chang 陳獻章 (1428-1500), an outstanding poet in his own right. He wrote:

Presented to Hu Hsi-jen⁵⁰

*The ancients discarded dregs.
Dregs are not objects of true transmission.
How tiny are drops of water!
Accumulated, they become a big river.
But there is something that is not accumulation.
The fountainhead itself brings forth stream after
stream.
Ultimate nothingness has the greatest activity,
The nearest is the most mysterious and spiritual.*⁵¹

呈胡希仁

古人棄糟粕
糟粕非真傳
眇哉一勺水
積累成大川
亦有非積累
源泉自涓涓
至無有至動
至近至神焉

The fountainhead here is Principle as revealed in the universal mind. It unfolds from within rather than accumulating from outside. But reality is not Buddhist Emptiness or Taoist Ultimate Non-being which is absolutely quiet. Instead, ultimate nothingness, originally a Taoist concept, is here seen as possessing the greatest activity. Spirit is not transcendent and far away but right here.

Instruction for Chan Yü⁵²

*In the operation of the Mandate of Heaven,
The true activating power is lively and dynamic.
When water arrives, a watercourse is formed.⁵³
The flying of the hawk and the leaping of the fishes.*⁵⁴

示湛雨

天命流天
真機活潑
水到渠成
鳶飛魚躍

Matching Chiang Jen-fu's⁵⁵ Farewell Poems

*When we come to the situation of the hawk flying
and the fishes leaping,
It is time to follow the willow and stand by the
flowers.
People today do not see Ch'eng Ming-tao.
They only hold the Doctrine of the Mean and talk
about Tzu-ssu.*⁵⁶

次韻姜仁夫留別

進到鳶飛魚躍處
正當隨柳傍花時
今人不見程明道
只把中庸話子思

These poems bring us back to Ch'eng Hao who saw the flying of the hawk and the leaping of the fishes as dynamic and creative manifestations of Principle and saw in the willow and flowers the spirit of spring. Ancient Confucianism, as in the case

⁵⁰No information on him.

⁵¹*Pai-sha Tzu ch'üan-chi* 白沙子全集 (Complete works of Ch'en Hsien-chang), 6/2b.

⁵²He was Chan Jo-shui 湛若水 (1466-1560), Ch'en's pupil. Also called Ming-te and Yüan-ming below.

⁵³Quoting Su Shih 蘇軾 (1036-1101), letter to Ch'in T'ai-hsü 秦太虛, the first letter in ch. 30 of the *Su Tung-po ch'üan-chi* 蘇東坡全集 (Complete works of

Su Shih).

⁵⁴*Pai-sha Tzu ch'üan-chi*, 6/1b. The reference to the hawk and fishes is to the *Doctrine of the Mean*, ch. 12, which quotes the *Book of Odes*, ode no. 239.

⁵⁵Chiang obtained a *chin-shih* 進士 degree in the Ch'eng-hua 成化 (1465-1487) period.

⁵⁶*Pai-sha Tzu ch'üan-chi*, 10/60a. The poem was written in 1489.

of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, traditionally believed to have been written by Confucius' grandson Tzu-ssu 子思 (492-431 B.C.), taught us how to know Tao, the Confucian Principle, but Neo-Confucianism teaches personal realization of Tao, the embodiment of Tao in oneself, and the merging of oneself with Tao in a harmonious and united existence. There should no longer be any distinction between things and the self. With the hawk flying, fishes leaping, the willow swinging, and flowers blooming, life is at once tranquil and lively, variegated and yet one. In this situation the mind can be united, life fulfilled, and Principle realized.

To Ming-tse

*The learning of the Sage
Consists in seeking to fully realize the nature.
Nature is Principle.
To fully realize the nature is to fulfill destiny.
Principle varies according to transformations,
And transformations are settled by Principle.
Transformations cannot be described in words.
The way to adhere to Principle lies in seriousness.⁵⁷
Concentrate on one thing in the mind.
Cultivate my moral nature.⁵⁸*

與民澤

聖人之學
惟求盡性
性即理也
盡性至命
理由化遷
化以理定
化不可言
守之在敬
有一其中
養吾德性

Practically all the basic Neo-Confucian concepts are included in this poem. While the emphasis on the mind is central, Principle, nature, destiny, and seriousness are all fundamental. After all, the break between Sung Neo-Confucianism and Ming Neo-Confucianism is not as sharp as people believe.

The doctrine of the mind culminated in Wang Yang-ming 王陽明 (1472-1529). Following Lu Hsiang-shan, he declared that the mind is identical with Principle, but he added the idea of extending the innate knowledge of the good (*chih liang-chih* 致良知), that is, carrying it out into actual practice, for to him knowledge and action are one and the same.

Written in Response to Chan Yüan-ming's
Farewell Poems for My Trip to the South

*After all, the mind is identical with Principle.
Why distinguish the self and the other?
[Heaven and earth] from time immemorial are one
breath.⁵⁹
Who shall lament separating from human com-
munity?⁶⁰
Within vast heaven and earth,
What is not a part of spring?⁶¹*

答湛元明

此心還此理
寧論己與人
千古一嘯吸
誰爲嘆離羣
浩浩天地內
何物非同春

⁵⁷ *Ching* 敬 is often translated as reverence.

⁵⁸ *Pai-sha Tzu ch'üan-chi*, 6/1b.

⁵⁹ Chuang Tzu's idea. See the *Chuang Tzu*, ch. 14 (5/35b).

⁶⁰ Referring to the *Book of Rites*, *T'an-kung*, pt. 1,

sec. 35.

⁶¹ *Yang-ming ch'üan-shu* 陽明全書 (Complete works of Wang Yang-ming), *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed. entitled *Wang Wen-ch'eng Kung ch'üan-shu* 王文成公全書 (Complete works of the Duke of Wen-ch'eng), 19/26a.

Farewell to Students

別諸生

*The learning of the Sage has continued for a thousand
years.
The two words, innate knowledge, are its oral trans-
mission.
If we want to understand why Primordial Universe
should not be bored into,
We must derive circles and squares out of the compass
and the square.
Without departing from daily activities,
Go straight to what was before heaven and earth when
the trigrams had not been drawn.
What can we say as we grasp hands about to separate?
Take care and don't fail the farewell banquet.⁶²*

綿綿聖學已千年
兩字良知是口傳
欲識渾淪無斧鑿
須從規矩出方圓
不離日用常行內
直造先天未畫前
握手臨歧更何語
慇懃莫媿別離筵

⁶²Ibid., 20/74a.



SCHOLAR-STATESMAN WANG
YANG-MING, defender of Neo-
Confucianism in the Ming dynasty.
From Illustrated Biographies from
Wan Hsiao T'ang.

Four Poems on Innate Knowledge to
Instruct the Several Students

詠良知四首
示諸生

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>There is Confucius in every one's heart.
But one strenuously covers and blocks it with sensuous
knowledge.
I shall now point out to you the true face.
It is innate knowledge without a doubt.</i></p> | <p>箇箇人心有仲尼
自將聞見苦遮迷
而今指與真頭面
只是良知更莫疑</p> |
| <p>2. <i>Let me ask you gentlemen why you are unsettled in
your ceaseless movements every day?
You are wasting your effort in the arena of trouble.
Don't say that the School of the Sage has no oral
secret.
The two words, innate knowledge, are the secret of
unity and harmony.⁶³</i></p> | <p>問君何事日憧憧
煩惱場中錯用功
莫道聖門無口訣
良知兩字是參同</p> |
| <p>3. <i>In everyone there is a compass needle.
The root and conditions of the ten thousand trans-
formations are all in the mind.
I laugh at myself for looking at things upside down,
And seeking branches and leaves outside.</i></p> | <p>人人自有定盤針
萬化根緣總在心
却笑從前顛倒見
枝枝葉葉外頭尋</p> |
| <p>4. <i>When there is neither sound nor odor and only oneself
can know,
That is the foundation of Heaven and Earth and all
things.
[We must not] throw away our own boundless
treasure
And move from door to door with a bowl in hand
like a beggar.⁶⁴</i></p> | <p>無聲無臭獨知時
此是乾坤萬有基
拋却自家無盡藏
沿門持鉢效貧兒</p> |

The denunciation of sense knowledge and the stress on the internal tend to be onesided. The technique of "oral secret" is too Buddhistic, and "oral transmission" sounds too much like the Ch'an 禪 transmission "from mind to mind". Nevertheless, the Neo-Confucian doctrines that Principle is the compass and square of all things, that man and Heaven form a unity, that life consists of daily activities, and that the world is all spring are all reaffirmed in these poems. The central point is that all is in the mind, which can only be known by oneself—that is, the true substance of one's nature.

⁶³The Taoist classic, the *Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i* 參同契 (Three ways unified and harmonized), is considered by Taoists to contain secrets for everlasting life.

⁶⁴*Yang-ming ch'üan-shu*, 20/72a-73b. It has been a practice of Buddhist monks to beg from door to door.

Answer to Questions on Innate Knowledge

*There is innate knowledge when one knows it himself.
Outside of this knowledge there is none.
Who is there without innate knowledge?
Yet who is it that knows innate knowledge?*

*Who is it that knows innate knowledge?
One's pain is known to oneself.
If one asks others what the pain is,
Since he already has the pain, why ask?⁶⁵*

Instructions to Students

*Each of you possesses a true nature.
You need not beseech or ask others.
Merely extend your innate knowledge to complete
the moral task,
And don't waste your energy on old texts.
The operation of heaven and earth is Change and
basically not the hexagrams.
How can the mind and nature, being without physical
form, gather dust?
Don't say your teacher imitates Ch'an slogans.
These words are uttered precisely for you.⁶⁶*

答人問良知

良知却是獨知時
此知之外更無知
誰人不有良知在
知得良知却是誰
知得良知却是誰
自家痛癢自家知
若將痛癢從人問
痛癢何須更問為

示諸生

爾身各各自天真
不用求人更問人
但致良知成德業
謾從故紙費精神
乾坤是易原非畫
心性何形得有塵
莫道先生學禪語
此言端的為君陳

The Ch'an patriarch, Shen-hsiu 神秀 (605?-706), the Fifth Patriarch of Ch'an Buddhism, regarded the world as dust and urged people to wipe it off the mirror, that is, the mind, and Hui-neng 慧能 (638-713), the Sixth Patriarch, maintained that there is originally nothing to gather dust.⁶⁷ Neo-Confucianism, however, looked upon life as neither dust nor nothing but the natural process of transformation of yin and yang, and man's mind and nature are embodiment of Principle. Thus mind knows Principle itself. Furthermore, because of its inherent character of activity, the mind applies this knowledge to daily living. Pain is real to oneself. One knows itself instantly and tries to remove it. Similarly, one intuitively knows to love one's parents and immediately acts out in serving the parents. Thus filial piety and respect are at once knowledge of the good and the practice of the good. Here Wang's philosophy reaches its peak, namely, the unity of knowledge and action. With it, Neo-Confucian philosophical poetry also reached its summit.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 20/73b. In Wang's *Ch'uan-hsi lu* 傳習錄, sec. 5, Wang argues that one knows how to love one's parents just as intuitively as one knows one's own pain. See translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming*, Columbia University Press, 1963.

⁶⁶*Yang-ming ch'uan-shu*, 20/73a.

⁶⁷See Hui-neng, *The Platform Scripture*, trans. by Wing-tsit Chan, St. John's University Press, 1963, pp. 35, 41.