

THE UNRAVELLING OF NEO-CONFUCIANISM:
FROM PHILOSOPHY TO PHILOLOGY
IN LATE IMPERIAL CHINA*

BENJAMIN A. ELMAN

道學之末流——從宋明道學至清朝
考證學的轉變

艾 爾 曼

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Historians gradually have recognized that an important shift in intellectual and philosophical orientation began in seventeenth-century China. The decisive impact of the fall of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) in 1644 was for many Chinese literati who lived through this tragic period confirmation rightly or wrongly of the sterility and uselessness of the forms of Confucian discourse that had preceded the Ming collapse. They vigorously attacked what they considered the heterodox ideals and doctrines of their predecessors.⁽¹⁾

In Sung (960-1279) and Ming dynasty Confucianism, emphasis was usually placed on introspection and the cultivation of moral perfection. In western scholarship, this mode of philosophy is called "Neo-Confucianism." Only if every literatus was an exemplar of virtue could Confucian society survive and prosper. Knowledge and action were equated. Political and cultural stability depended on the moral rigor of each individual.

To buttress their moral claims, Sung and Ming Confucians developed an elaborate and often systematic account of the interaction between heaven and earth, the role of cosmological patterns of differentiation and organization in the creation of all things in the world, and the place of man and his mental capacities in a universe of orderly and determinable change. Sagehood was their ideal. To

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- (1) Jonathan Spence and John Wills (eds.), *From Ming To Ch'ing. Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), *passim*, and Willard Peterson, *Bitter Gourd. Fang I-chih and the Impetus For Intellectual Change* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 1-17. For negative appraisals of Ch'ing scholarship, see, for example, Wm. Theodore de Bary, *et al.*, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (N. Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964, 2 vols.), I/559ff., Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, *Chin-tai Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang hsueh-shuo shih* 近代中國思想學說史 [History of Modern Chinese Thought and Theories] (Shanghai: Sheng-huo shu-tien, 1947, 2 vols.), I/355-79, and Hsu Fu-kuan 徐復觀, "Ch'ing-tai Han-hsueh heng-lun 清代漢學衡論 [Reassessment of Han Learning in the Ch'ing Period], *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 大陸雜誌, LIV, 4 (April 1977): 1-22.

become a sage was to achieve a vision of the highest, a vision of the cosmos in which man was a pivotal part of a morally just and perfectly rational cosmos.

By 1750, however, the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911) heirs of the Neo-Confucian legacy had become members of a secular academic community, which encouraged, and rewarded with livelihoods, original and critical scholarship. In contrast to their predecessors, Ch'ing literati stressed exacting research, rigorous analysis, and the collection of impartial evidence drawn from ancient artifacts and historical documents and texts. Abstract ideas and emphasis on moral cultivation gave way as the primary objects of discussion among Confucian scholars to concrete facts, verifiable institutions, and historical events. Literati disenchantment with the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy entrenched in the official examination system since the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368) climaxed in the eighteenth century.⁽²⁾

Through the concentrated efforts of trained specialists, an almost autonomous subsystem of Ch'ing society with its own rubrics of status evolved in the Lower Yangtze Region. Committed to what Willard Peterson has aptly described as "building knowledge item by item," Ch'ing scholars constituted a social and intellectual community of inquirers devoted to related textual problems. Although the academic community upon which the philological movement in the Lower Yangtze Region depended perished during the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64), its intellectual legacy did not. The appeal to a more remote antiquity than that of Sung-Ming Confucianism initiated the gradual coming apart of the Neo-Confucian tradition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁽³⁾

Ch'ing dynasty scholarship represented a new and irreversible transition in traditional Chinese intellectual history. Through the revolution in scholarly discourse that took place during this time, we can observe the creation and evolution of a distinguished academic community in late imperial China, which represented the last great tradition of Confucian thought. The philological tradition of evidential research (*k'ao-cheng* 考證, lit., "search for evidence") created and maintained by these scholars will be the topic of my presentation. In the discussion that follows, we will first examine the general intentions and goals of evidential research scholars. Then, we will proceed to analyze the broader implications of their research vis-à-vis their Confucian predecessors, before turning to the revolution in academic discourse that ensued.

(2) See my dissertation entitled "The Unravelling of Neo-Confucianism: The Lower Yangtze Academic Community in Late Imperial China" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1980), *passim*, forthcoming in the Harvard East Asian Center Series under the title *From Philosophy to Philology: Social and Intellectual Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: 1984).

(3) Peterson, "Fang I-chih: Western Learning and the 'Investigation of Things,'" in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, edited by Wm. T. de Bary and others (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 400-01. Cf. Joseph Ben-David, "Scientific Growth: A Sociological View," *Minerva*, 3 (1964): 467, and Robert Merton, *The Sociology of Science*, edited by Norman Storer (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 343-70.

THE RETRIEVAL OF THE PAST

Among those who have tried to evaluate early Ch'ing intellectual history, it has become common to accuse the evidential scholars of creating a climate of textual criticism that was primarily destructive. Such detractors deny them the status of philosophers concerned with larger social and political issues and overlook the significance of their discoveries. The general view is that Confucianism since the Sung dynasty, i.e., Neo-Confucianism, was a synchronic ideology. Although it showed signs of change (or "unfolding" as the conventional wisdom has it), the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy during the Ming-Ch'ing period essentially was a reworking of themes and concepts set in place originally by Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and Wang Yang-ming 王陽明 (1472-1529).

Looked at from a twentieth-century viewpoint, many *k'ao-cheng* scholars appeared antiquarians to modern scholars. But if an antiquarian is a dryasdust pedant who buries himself in the study of a dead past, then evidential scholars were not antiquarians. The rediscovery of the ancients was for them an intellectual encounter with the ancients and not simply a collecting exercise. The delight of *k'ao-cheng* scholars in antiques, relics, and texts was not merely a fascination with unusual specimens. It was rather "philosophic" in the broadest sense. Many philosophers have technical interests that find expression in studies on precise points rather than theoretical constructions.⁽⁴⁾

Ch'ing scholarship, like its Neo-Confucian predecessor, had both public purposes and political consequences. To reconstruct the authentic *Mo-tzu* 墨子 or the historical Confucius, to rescue the *Poetry*, *Documents*, and *Rites Classics* from the contamination of Buddhist and Taoist interpretations, was to gain firm philological ground from which to criticize, reject, and overcome Neo-Confucian systems of thought—a political act. Philosophy was not so much a technical discipline for *k'ao-cheng* scholars as it was a stance toward the past, a critical freedom. The changes in literati attitudes toward the Confucian tradition arose from the perceived necessity of restoring it to its pre-Neo-Confucian form.

For the Ch'ing scholar, what was at stake in his commitment to a philological analysis of classical texts was both the validity of received opinion concerning the nature of the Confucian past and the relevance of the past for the present. Could textual scholars reconstruct the unadulterated truths of the sages before original Confucianism had been sullied with Taoist and Buddhist doctrines by over six centuries of Neo-Confucian scholarship? Could one throw a bridge across the Neo-Confucian era and resume the interrupted conversation with antiquity?

(4) See the essays collected in de Bary, *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, and Joshua Fogel, "On the 'Rediscovery' of the Chinese Past: Ts'ui Shu and Related Cases," in *Perspectives On a Changing China. Essays in Honor of C. Martin Wilbur*, edited by Fogel and William Rowe (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), pp. 234-35.

Evidential scholars said "yes."⁽⁵⁾

Ch'ing scholars were determined to pierce what they considered the thick veil of Sung and Ming metaphysical and cosmological systems of thought (known popularly as *Tao-hsueh* 道學 [Studies of the Tao, i.e., Neo-Confucianism]). They hoped thereby to recapture the pristine meaning formulated by the sage-kings of antiquity in the Confucian Classics. Theirs was not just an antiquarian interest. They were in effect calling into question the dominant Confucian ideology, i.e., the Chu Hsi school, which the Manchu rulers had enshrined as the proper norm in imperial examinations and official ideology.⁽⁶⁾

For the Ch'ing scholar, philology was therefore more than just an auxiliary tool. It was necessary to recover and relearn past structures of Confucian culture. The distinguished eighteenth-century classicist and evidential historian Wang Ming-sheng 王鳴盛 (1722-98) explained:⁽⁷⁾

The Classics are employed to understand the Tao. But those who seek the Tao should not cling vacuously to "meanings and principles" (*i-li* 義理) in order to find it. If only they will correct primary and derived characters, discern their pronunciation, read the explanations and glosses, and master the commentaries and notes, the "meanings and principles" will appear on their own, and the Tao within them.

The polymath Tai Chen 戴震 (1724-77) described philology as follows:⁽⁸⁾

The Classics provide the route to the Tao. What illuminates the Tao is their words. How words are formed can be grasped only through [a knowledge of] philology and paleography. From [the study of] primary and derived characters we can master the language. Through the language we can penetrate the mind and will of the ancient sages and worthies.

Philology, not philosophy, became the methodology to restore the past.

This process of rediscovery, when it was coupled with an increasingly

(5) Cf. Frank Kermode, *The Classic. Literary Images of Permanence and Change* (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1975), p. 16, and T.S. Eliot, "What Is a Classic," in *On Poetry and Poets* (N.Y.: Noonday Press, 1961), pp. 52-74.

(6) For discussion of the emergence of *Tao-hsueh* in the Sung period, see John Haeger, "The Intellectual Context of Neo-Confucian Syncretism," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 31 (1972): 499-513, James T.C. Liu, "How Did a Neo-Confucian School Become the State Orthodoxy?," *Philosophy East and West*, XXIII, 4 (1973): 483-505, and Conrad Schirokauer, "Neo-Confucians Under Attack: The Condemnation of wei-hsueh," in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, edited by John Haeger (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1975), pp. 163-98. Few 18th-century scholars paid attention to the Wang Yang-ming school.

(7) Wang Ming-sheng, "Hsu" 序 [Introduction], in *Shih-ch'i-shih shang-ch'ueh* 十七史商榷 [Critical Study of the Seventeen Dynastic Histories] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-ch'ü reprint, 1960), p. 2a.

(8) *Tai Chen wen-chi* 戴震文集 [Tai Chen's Essays] (Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-ch'ü, 1974), p. 146.

rigorous and critical approach to the Classics, awakened a critical consciousness that jeopardized the classical claim to unquestioned authority. The appeal to empirical criteria as the final arbiter of doctrine reveals the social and political implications inherent in philology. Sung Neo-Confucians had been concerned with building symbolic structures of meaning in which all human experience would be related in a system of metaphysical correspondences. This approach was perfectly respectable and gave little importance to philology. Sung scholars had thought that numerologically organized diagrams, for example, were revelations of the esoteric correspondences between heaven and earth.⁽⁹⁾

Neo-Confucian symbols of correspondence and political allegories did not require, and thus did not encourage, the development of critical thought. The charts of such symbolic correspondences, which John Henderson has called "cosmograms," had to be questioned before the historical foundations of the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy could be reevaluated. In Neo-Confucian discourse, all philosophic questions were first reduced to their universal rationalistic principles (*li* 理), before conclusions based on deductive norms could be drawn. Ch'ing philologists reversed this habit by stressing concrete verifiable facts instead of abstract conceptual categories of correspondence.

In the late seventeenth century, Yen Jo-chü 閻若璩 (1636-1704) dramatically demonstrated that the long questioned Old Text chapters of the *Documents Classic* were a later forgery and not the original chapters discovered in Confucius' residence in the second century B.C. Hu Wei 胡渭 (1633-1714), Yen's friend and colleague, exposed the Taoist origins of the Neo-Confucian cosmograms. Such studies brought in their wake corrosive implications that would not end in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

A form of criticism had emerged that would one day exceed the boundaries that early Ch'ing scholars attempted to impose. Eventually, to use Joseph Levenson's famous phrase, "the Classics were not classics any more." Movement toward this potentially dangerous level of criticism did not begin with the western impact in the nineteenth century or even with Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's 章學誠 (1738-1801) famous phrase "*liu-ching chieh shih*" 六經皆史 [the Six Classics are all Histories] in the eighteenth. Chang placed the timeless Classics within the framework of the endless flux of history, but even in the eighteenth century Chang was not unique in his appraisal.

(9) On the Han cosmograms and magic squares, see Schuyler Cammann, "The Evolution of Magic Squares in China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 80 (1960): 116-24, John Henderson, "The Ordering of the Heavens and Earth in Early Ch'ing Thought," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1977), pp. 1-13, Winston Lo, "Philology, An Aspect of Sung Rationalism," *Chinese Culture*, XVII, 4 (Dec. 1976): 17-26, and Joseph Needham and others, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1954-, 5 vols. to date), III/55-62. Cosmograms aside, the symbolic world-view of Sung Confucians may have been closer to that of the Classics as a whole than the views of Ch'ing philologists.

The historicization of important elements in the Confucian Canon was already well advanced by the seventeenth century. This alarming tendency was noted by Kuei Chuang 歸莊 (1613-73) in a revealing letter written in 1668 to his hometown friend and pioneer of *k'ao-cheng* scholarship Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 (1613-82):⁽¹⁰⁾

In your previous letter you wrote that you were concentrating on phonology. You have already completed books [on the subject], but I have not yet seen them. However, a friend told me in some detail that in your discussion of rhymes you necessarily emphasize the most ancient, saying that Confucius could not avoid making mistakes [in pronunciation]. These words are startling for people to hear. Because of such statements, it seems to me that as your scholarship broadens your eccentricities will deepen. In the future it will not be limited to rhymes. If your other discussions are anything like the discussion of phonology, won't they also [be regarded] as the [expression of] unrealistic and odd opinions?

Yen Jo-chü's *Shang-shu ku-wen shu-cheng* 尚書古文疏證 [Evidential Inquiry Into the Old Text Documents] caused a major sensation both when it was distributed privately in the late seventeenth century and when it was finally published posthumously in 1745. Yen stipulated how his philological principles related to the Classics:⁽¹¹⁾

What Classics? What Histories? What Commentaries? My concern is only with what is true. If the Classic is true and the History and Commentary false, then it is permissible to use the Classic to correct the History and Commentary. If the History and Commentary are true and the Classic false, then can it be impermissible to use the History and Commentary to correct the Classic?... What is not what it appears to be is what Confucius despised. What comes close to being true but in fact throws the true principles into disarray is what Chu Hsi despised. My detestation for the forged Old Text [chapters] is just as Confucius and Chu Hsi would have wanted it.

Yen Jo-chü and Ku Yen-wu intended no impiety, however. Although they were warned of the unorthodox implications of their philological conclusions, none of these *k'ao-cheng* pioneers, could have foreseen where their positions would eventually lead. There was no guaranty in the logic of their positions that a *k'ao-cheng* methodology, developed to weed out spurious parts of the Classics,

(10) Kuei Chuang 歸莊, *Kuei Chuang chi* 歸莊集 [Collected Writings of Kuei Chuang] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1962, 2 vols.), II/323-24. Cf. John Henderson, "The Ordering of the Heavens and Earth in Early Ch'ing Thought," pp. 98, 117.

(11) Yen, *Shang-shu ku-wen shu-cheng*, in the *Huang-Ch'ing ching-chieh hsu-pien* 皇清經解續編 [Ch'ing Exegesis of the Classics, Supplement], edited by Wang Hsien-ch'ien 王先謙 and others (Taipei: Fu-hsing shu-chü reprint, 20 vols.), 2/2a-2b.

would not lead to an historicist reinterpretation of all the Classics and the Confucian tradition itself. The epistemological premises of their positions, as they can be traced in the rise of *k'ao-cheng* scholarship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, proved inseparable from what Charles Gillispie has described in the history of western science as the cutting "edge of objectivity."⁽¹²⁾

Classical Confucianism was effectively reinvented among Lower Yangtze scholars as a relief from the Taoist and Buddhist notions that they felt plagued the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy in official life. The tense interplay of an admired Confucian antiquity with an increasingly discredited Neo-Confucianism—whether the official Ch'eng-Chu (Ch'eng I 程頤, 1033–1107, and Chu Hsi) school or the Lu-Wang (Lu Hsiang-shan 陸象山, 1139–92, and Wang Yang-ming) school—suggests that classicism in late imperial China was not a cult but an adaptation of classical antiquity. What the *k'ao-cheng* scholars thought they had found in archaic writings was a critical sense and secular spirit congenial to their own age. Although they often injected their own philosophic presuppositions into the texts they studied, the early evidential scholars had every right to think they had resumed the interrupted conversation with antiquity.

ANCIENTS AND MODERNS

Conflict between the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and the ancient orthodoxy that was recreated indicates that the return to antiquity (*fu-ku* 復古) was in part an emerging secularism. There were few scholars of any consequence during the eighteenth century who cared to uphold the doctrines associated with the Wang Yang-ming school, for example. Wang's doctrines were thought to contain too many elements of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. Widespread interest in evidential scholarship—a technical vocation in which the critically trained mind did much destructive work—did not necessarily signify intentional impiety. The seventeenth-century works of Yen Jo-chü, Hu Wei, and Mao Ch'i-ling 毛奇齡 (1623–1716), who also challenged the legitimacy of the Neo-Confucian cosmograms, were brilliant examples of scholarly detection, and they damaged Neo-Confucian claims to orthodoxy. Their intent, however, was to reaffirm Confucianism, not condemn

(12) See also Yen's 1697 "Hsu" 序 [Introduction] to Tsang Lin's 臧琳 *Ching-i tsa-chi shu-lu* 經義雜記敘錄 [Writings From the Jottings on the Meaning of the Classics] (Taipei: Chung-ting wen-hua ch'u-pan kung-ssu reprint, 1967), p. 2a. See also the discussion of Ku's phonology in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu* 四庫全書總目 [Catalog of the Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries], compiled by Chi Yun 紀昀 and others (Taipei: I-wen yin-shu-kuan reprint, 1974, 10 vols.), 42/45a–45b and especially 44/50b for Chiang Yung's 江永 (1681–1762) continuation of Ku's approach. Cf. Charles Gillispie, *The Edge of Objectivity. An Essay in the History of Scientific Ideas*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1960), *passim*. The parallel should be qualified somewhat. Gillispie describes a technical transition within the physical sciences to purely mathematical or otherwise objective descriptions with no moral implications remaining in scientific explanations. Ch'ing philology never reached that point.

it. Secularization in the Ch'ing period was not anti-Confucian. It was anti-Neo-Confucian and grew out of the recovery of classical Confucianism.

Tai Chen and Ch'ien Ta-hsin 錢大昕 (1728-1804), the greatest of the eighteenth-century *k'ao-cheng* scholars, had much in common with their seventeenth-century predecessors. They were all operating under the cumulative pressure of *k'ao-cheng* scholarship and criticism, a pressure that, in Yü Ying-shih's terms, displaced Ming anti-intellectualism from the center of literati life and replaced it with a firm commitment to intellectualism. Erudite critical discourse displaced moral speculation.

The *fu-ku* movement was in no sense a conscious current of secularism or skepticism. In the long run, however, the *k'ao-cheng* identity that developed won breathing space for both skeptical and pious Confucians. Textual scholars used an empirical methodology that called for suspension of the established "praise and blame" approach to historical interpretation, i.e., the obligatory use of moral norms to judge the actions of all historical figures.

The efforts of Wang Ming-sheng, Ch'ien Ta-hsin, and Chao I 趙翼 (1727-1814) placed the historical disciplines in China on a firm base of impartial inquiry. The credo of Ch'ing dynasty impartial historiography was enunciated by Wang Ming-sheng in the 1787 introduction to his study of the *Seventeen Dynastic Histories*:

Historical facts and clues reveal what [should be] praised and what [should be] deplored. Readers of the [*Dynastic*] *Histories* ideally should not force the words and arbitrarily draw out [notions of] praise and blame. They must consider the reality to which all facts and clues point. ...Generally, the way of scholarship is best sought in solid [research] and not in empty [speculation]. Debates on praise and blame are all empty words.

In complete agreement with his colleague Wang Ming-sheng's assessment, Ch'ien Ta-hsin maintained that historical facts themselves should reveal whom to praise and whom to blame. According to Ch'ien, the process of laying blame should be analogous to the deliberations involved in deciding court cases. There must be no forced or self-serving use of historical evidence to support political and dynastic prejudices.⁽¹³⁾

In this way, evidential scholars advanced the front of objectivity and the cause of unbelief. Unbelief, in a preliminary form, was the unspoken position lurking in Ts'ui Shu's 崔述 (1740-1816) meticulous excavation of ancient strata of beliefs and myths. Ts'ui's commitment to uncovering the beliefs and not just the

(13) See Wang Ming-sheng, "Hsu" 序 [Introduction], in *Shih-ch'i-shih shang-ch'ueh*, pp. 1a-2a. See also Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Ch'ien-yen T'ang wen-chi* 潛研堂文集 [Collected Essays From the Hall of Subtle Research] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1968, 8 vols.), II/224-25 (*chüan* 16).

words or written characters of the past was clearly indicated in the title of his tour de force—*K'ao-hsin lu* 考信錄 [Record of the Examination of Beliefs].⁽¹⁴⁾

Textual recovery, collation, and reconstruction occasioned the revival of unorthodox and non-Confucian texts overlooked for centuries. The reasoning that led Ch'ing scholars back to the Later Han (A.D. 25-220) and Former Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 8) dynasties as sources for the beginnings of the Confucian tradition also led eighteenth-century scholars back to the *chu-tzu* 諸子 [pre-Han masters] texts from the earlier Warring States period (403-221 B.C.). Ku Yen-wu in the seventeenth century had already emphasized use of pre-Han philosophical texts to explicate the Classics, but the full implications of this approach were not worked out until the eighteenth century when Wang Chung 汪中 (1745-94), Chiao Hsun 焦循 (1763-1820), and Chang Hsueh-ch'eng left Later Han dynasty sources behind and turned instead to Former Han and pre-Han texts. The revival of the *Mo-tzu*, *Hsun-tzu* 荀子, and *Kung-yang* 公羊 texts in particular presented serious threats to the Old Text Confucianism in Later Han sources.

Wang Chung and Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, although antagonists, played key roles in attempting to dethrone Confucius from his supreme position at the heart of Confucian culture. The question of who was the major figure in the origin of Confucianism reflected the growing rejection in the eighteenth century of the Neo-Confucian *Tao-t'ung* 道統 [orthodox transmission of the Tao] doctrine, which stressed Confucius and Mencius. According to Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, the Duke of Chou, not Confucius, had been the last of the world-ordering sages. This point of view also opened for reexamination the preeminent position of the Sung and Ming Neo-Confucians as the orthodox continuators of the Confucian orthodoxy. Ch'ing philologists rejected Sung dynasty sources because of their questionable authority and much later date.⁽¹⁵⁾

Articulate and self-critical, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars sensed that their devotion to scholarship and their love of classical antiquity had led them in new and dangerous directions. Some remained hesitant to follow, as if unsure where such research would lead. Neither Weng Fang-kang 翁方綱 (1733-

(14) Hu Shih 胡適, "K'e-hsueh-te ku-shih-chia Ts'ui Shu" 科學的古史家崔述 [The Scientific Historian of Ancient China—Ts'ui Shu], in *Ts'ui Tung-pi i-shu* 崔東壁遺書 [Ts'ui Shu's Bequeathed Writings], compiled by Ku Chieh-kang 顧頡剛 (Shanghai: Ya-tung t'u-shu kuan, 1936), Vol. 2, pp. 1-13.

(15) Wang Chung 汪中, *Shu-hsueh* 述學 [Discourses on Learning] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-ch'ü reprint, 1963), *pu-i* 補遺 [supplement], pp. 5b-8a. See Hou Wai-lu, *Chin-tai Chung-kuo*, 1/524, David Nivison, *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsueh-ch'eng (1738-1801)* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 227, and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啟超, *Chung-kuo chin san-pai-nien hsueh-shu-shih* 中國近三百年學術史 [Intellectual History of China During the Last 300 Years] (Taipei: Chung-hua shu-ch'ü, 1955), pp. 224-47. See also Shimada Kenji 島田虔次, "Rekishi teki risei hihan" 歴史的理性批判 [Criticism of Historical Reason], *Iwanami kôza: tetsugaku* 岩波講座哲學, 4 (1969): 140-41, 151, and Takada Atsushi 高田淳, "Sho Gakusei no rekishi shisô ni tsuite" 章學誠の史學思想について [Concerning Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's Historical Thought], *Tôyôgaku* 東洋學報, XLVII, 1 (June 1964): 73, 87.

1818) nor Fang Tung-shu 方東樹 (1772-1851), for example, felt comfortable with what the evidential scholars were writing. The fundamentalist thrust behind the return to the ancients threatened to demolish the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy without satisfying the need for some moral order and certainty.⁽¹⁶⁾

As a precondition for a change in styles of thinking, the search for pure classical and historical texts exercised the critical mind not only by what it found, but also by the way it was found. Critical methods could potentially take on their own autonomy. Hence the intentions and consequences of *k'ao-cheng* research are analytically distinct. The thin line between critical freedom and cultural subversion was eventually breached.⁽¹⁷⁾

The philological rebellion unintentionally added impetus to a philosophic rebellion. Tai Chen, for example, systematically demonstrated how philological methods could be employed to analyze key concepts in Confucian philosophy. He began with careful definitions of *li* 理 [principle, reason, inherent pattern, law, etc.], *ch'i* 氣 [variously rendered by modern sinologists as "material force," "ether," "stuff"]; in order to encompass all these meanings I will use the Chinese term], *hsing* 性 [nature, especially, but not exclusively, human nature], and *ch'ing* 情 [quality, especially human qualities, i.e., emotions] in his *Meng-tzu tzu-i shu-cheng* 孟子字義疏證 [Evidential Analysis of the Meanings of Terms in the *Mencius*]. In a larger sense, Tai Chen's writings reveal that the Chinese language and native strategies for conceptualization and organization could be employed to advance a systematic philosophic position, in this case a commitment to a philosophy of *ch'i*. *Ch'i* for Tai Chen provided the metaphysical substratum within which *li* could be observed and defined. Tai's position was not new, but how he defended it was.⁽¹⁸⁾

Moreover, Tai Chen's formidable role as a social critic has been overlooked for too long in western scholarship. His use of the *Mencius* as a foil for the articulation of a philosophy antithetical to the Ch'eng-Chu school had important political implications. It was in the *Mencius* after all that the right to revolt was justified and the power of the people lauded. In fact, Ming emperors had had such passages expurgated from the official text of the *Mencius*. Although he had to be cautious, Tai Chen was free to distribute his denunciations of the Ch'ing

(16) Yü Ying-shih, "Some Preliminary Observations on the Rise of Ch'ing Confucian Intellectualism," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, 11 (1975): 105-44. See also Lawrence Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1971), pp. 195-200. Ts'ui had no doubts about the status of the Classics themselves, however. See also Hu Shih, "K'e-hsueh te ku-shih-chia Ts'ui Shu," pp. 1-13.

(17) Cf. Robert Merton, *The Sociology of Science*, p. 178.

(18) Paul Demiéville, "The First Philosophic Contacts Between Europe and China," *Diogenes*, 58 (Summer 1967): 81-85. Cf. Robert Merton, *The Sociology of Science*, p. 178. See also Yamanoi Yū 山井湧, "Mōshi jigi soshō no seikaku," 孟子字義疏證の性格 [The Nature of Tai Chen's *Evidential Analysis of the Meanings of Terms in the Mencius*], *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 日本中國學會報, 12 (1960): 108-26.

orthodoxy. His remarks were made while he was working on the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 四庫全書 [Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries] project in Peking and in the midst of the Ch'ien-lung (r. 1736-95) inquisition. Tai wrote:⁽¹⁹⁾

The high and mighty use *li* 理 [moral principles] to blame the lowly. The old use *li* to blame the young. The exalted use *li* to blame the down-trodden. Even if they are mistaken, [the ruling groups] call [what they have done] proper. If the lowly, the young, and the down-trodden use *li* to struggle, even if they are right they are labelled rebellious. As a result, the people on the bottom cannot make their shared emotions and desires [in all persons] in the world understood by those on top. Those on top use *li* to blame them for their lowly position. For these uncoun-table throngs of people, their only crime is their lowly position. When a person dies under the law, there are those who pity him. Who pities those who die under [the aegis] of *li*?

Chang Hsueh-ch'eng and others of Tai's contemporaries were outraged by his attack. Chang thought that it was permissible "to correct the flagrant errors of Sung Confucians," but Tai was going too far in his dismissal of Sung moral teachings. Chang accused Tai of "forgetting where his ideas ultimately came from." Later, Fang Tung-shu, a staunch advocate of Sung Learning from T'ung-ch'eng in Anhwei, wrote:⁽²⁰⁾

[To say] that the principles of heaven are not dependable and that one should rely on the emotions and desires of the people, that they should have an outlet and be allowed to follow their desires, implies that *li* [read "moral ideals"] is attained at the expense of *ch'i* [read "human

(19) Tai Chen, *Meng-tzu tzu-i shu-cheng* 孟子字義疏證 [Evidential Analysis of the Meanings of Terms in the Mencius], appended to Hu Shih's *Tai Tung-yuan te che-hsueh* 戴東原的哲學 [The Philosophy of Tai Chen] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1967), pp. 55-56. Kent Guy in his "The Scholar and State in Late Imperial China: The Politics of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* Project" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1981), *passim*, has pointed out that the editors of the project were motivated, for the most part, by a narrow concern with anti-Manchu references when they banned certain works. Hence, Manchu rulers, unlike other contemporary upholders of the Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy, did not seem to find Tai's remarks really censorable. Remarkably, Ch'ing rulers were more lenient in this respect than were their Ming dynasty predecessors.

(20) *Chang-shih i-shu* 章氏遺書 [Bequeathed Writings of Chang Hsueh-ch'eng] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936, 8 vols.), 8/25 (*pu-i* 補遺), and Fang Tung-shu 方東樹, *Han-hsueh shang-tui* 漢學商兌 [An Assessment of Han Learning] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü reprint, 1963), 2A/19a. For an account of Chang's reactions to Tai's attack on Chu Hsi, see Kawata Teiichi 河田梯一, "Dōjidaijin no nemuri—Sho Gakusei no Tai Shin kan" 同時代人の眠——章學誠の戴震觀 [The Sense of Contemporaries for Each Other—Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's View of Tai Chen], *Chūgoku tetsugaku shi no tembō to mosaku* 中國哲學史の展望と摸索 [Prospects and Directions in the History of Chinese Philosophy], compiled by the Committee in Commemoration of Professor Kimura Eiichi (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1976) pp. 777-83.

desires"] and brings disorder to the Tao. However, [Tai Chen] is merely trying to make it difficult for the Ch'eng I-Chu Hsi [school] without realizing that his is the way of great disorder.

In his philosophic works, Tai Chen was writing for a very limited audience in the late eighteenth century. The same was true of Chang Hsueh-ch'eng and his philosophy of history. Tai's philosophic innovations did not go entirely unnoticed, however. The distinguished evidential scholar and patron Juan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849) composed three major essays on Confucian philosophy between 1801-23. Modelled after Tai's philological approach to philosophic terms, Juan's best known treatise, entitled *Hsing-ming ku-hsun* 性命古訓 [Ancient Glosses on "Nature" and "External Necessity"], made use of etymology and phonology to analyze key Confucian concepts.

In the twentieth century, the impact of Tai Chen's philosophy was acknowledged by erstwhile radicals such as Chang Ping-lin 章炳麟 (1868-1936) and Liu Shih-p'ei 劉師培 (1884-1919). Before his infatuation with anarchism in 1907, Liu admired Tai's critique of the oppressive aspects of the Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy. Comparing Tai to Rousseau, Liu contended that Tai had liberated himself from the autocratic ideals of Sung Learning. Both Chang Ping-lin and Liu Shih-p'ei, in addition to their radical political activities, became two of the most distinguished textual scholars who continued the *k'ao-cheng* tradition in the twentieth century.⁽²¹⁾

The philosophic rebellion spawned by the *k'ao-cheng* movement also set the stage for the social and political conclusions that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century New Text (*chin-wen* 今文, lit., "modern script") scholars drew from their research and scholarship. In the process, the political and philosophic impact of Ch'ing classicism, which occasioned the rise of radical New Text Confucianism, became more and more pronounced. New Text Confucianism did not arise in the Ch'ing period as a rationalization for westernization. Rather, New Text studies arose as respectable Confucian scholarship in mainstream centers of learning before they were linked to problems of reform in the nineteenth century. Moreover, New Text scholars promoted traditional forms of Confucian reform before they initiated a radical call for westernization in 1898.⁽²²⁾

(21) Yü Ying-shih 余英時, *Lun Tai Chen yü Chang Hsueh-ch'eng* 論戴震與章學誠 [On Tai Chen and Chang Hsueh-ch'eng] (Hong Kong: Lung-men shu-tien, 1976), pp. 63-76.

(22) See my "The Hsueh-hai T'ang and the Rise of New Text Scholarship in Canton," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, IV, 2 (Dec. 1979): 51-82, and Chou Yü-t'ung 周予同, *Ching chin-ku-wen hsueh* 經今古文學 [Study of the New and Old Text Classics] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1967), *passim*. Joseph Levenson and more recently Thomas Metzger have described only the nineteenth-century aspects of the revival of New Text Confucianism. See Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1968), I/79-94, and Thomas Metzger, *Escape From Predicament. Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture*, (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 218-20. See Hou Wai-lu, *Chin-tai Chung-kuo*, II/599, and *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, compiled by Arthur Hummel and others (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen reprint, 1972), p. 519.

Reconstruction—and it had to be philologically and historically reconstructed—of the Han dynasty Old Text-New Text debate in the eighteenth century initiated a new perspective on the Old Text tradition. The ideological implications of this reconstruction were not fully articulated until the nineteenth century. By then, the Old Text view of Confucius as a venerable teacher openly clashed with Ho Hsiu's 何休 (129-82) Later Han portrayal of Confucius as a messianic figure, who had enunciated sacred social and moral principles in his *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Because it was a Han and not a Sung dynasty source, Ho's commentary to the *Kung-yang chuan* received new respect and attention in the eighteenth century. His views provided the foundation for Ch'ang-chou 常州 scholars in Kiangsu to recover the New Text tradition of the Former Han dynasty.

K'ao-cheng scholars such as Yen Jo-chü and Hui Tung 惠棟 (1697-1758), the founder of the Han-Learning movement in Soochow, had begun to demolish the orthodox position of the Old Text Classics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their writings on the Old Text *Documents* opened the way for criticism of other Old Text Classics, facilitating the emergence of a philologically tenable New Text position. The heterodox implications contained in Yen's attack on the authenticity of the Old Text *Documents* had come full circle in K'ang Yu-wei's 康有為 (1858-1927) New Text Confucianism. This outcome was a turn that Yen had neither anticipated nor intended; his philological conclusions, however, paved the way for the unexpected political results. The evidential "search for the truth in actual facts" (*shih-shih ch'iu-shih* 實事求是) evolved into a nativist rhetoric in favor of western-style parliaments and constitutions.⁽²³⁾

CHANGES IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

In the movement from Sung-Ming *Tao-hsueh* to *k'ao-cheng* scholarship, academic

- Chang Shou-an 張壽安 discusses the differences in Kung Tzu-ch'en's 龔自珍 (1792-1841) *Kung-yang* studies from those of Liu Feng-lu 劉逢祿 (1776-1841) and Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1856). See his article "Kung Ting-an yü Ch'ang-chou Kung-yang-hsueh" 龔定庵與常州公羊學 [Kung Tzu-ch'en and the Ch'ang-chou *Kung-yang* School], *Shu-mu chi-k'an* 書目季刊, XIII, 2 (Sept. 1979): 3-21. For further discussion, see the recent findings of Huang Chang-chien 黃彰健 in his article "Ching chin-ku-wen-hsueh wen-t'i hsin-lun (shang)" 經今古文學問題新論上 [New Views On Questions Concerning the Study of New and Old Text Classics, Part I], *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 大陸雜誌, LVIII, 2 (Feb. 1979): 49-87, and Yang Hsiang-k'uei 楊向奎, "Ch'ing-tai te chin-wen ching-hsueh" 清代的今文經學 [Ch'ing Dynasty New Text Classical Studies], *Ch'ing-shih lun-ts'ung*, 清史論叢 (Peking), 1, (1979): 177-209.
- (23) Ch'i Ssu-ho 齊思和, "Wei Yuan yü wan-Ch'ing hsueh-feng" 魏源與晚清學風 [Wei Yuan and Late Ch'ing Intellectual Currents], *Yen-ching hsueh-pao* 燕京學報, 39 (1950): 177-226, and Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*, I/79-94. See also Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A Modern China and a New World. K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1975), pp. 41-189. For the origins of the expression *shih-shih ch'iu-shih*, see the *Han-shu* 漢書 [History of the Former Han Dynasty] (Taipei: Shih-hsueh ch'u-pan-she, 1974, 7 vols.), 5/2410 (53/1a), where it is said that "[Liu] Te 劉德 when he took the throne as King Hsien of Ho-chien in 155 B.C., restored scholarship and honored antiquity. He sought the truth in actual facts."

discourse did not change overnight. The lingering traces of Neo-Confucian language and habits of thought in the writings of Tai Chen and Chang Hsueh-ch'eng in the eighteenth century indicate that evidential scholarship resulted in part from the historical development of Neo-Confucianism itself.⁽²⁴⁾

Ku Yen-wu, Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲 (1610-95), Yen Jo-chü, and Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 (1619-92), writing in the seventeenth century, were all conscious of their debt to Neo-Confucian scholarship. Yen Jo-chü's respect for Chu Hsi's textual scholarship was, to give but one example, a major feature in Yen's research on the *Documents*. In many ways Yen Jo-chü and the others marked the last major attempt to integrate a broad range of exact scholarship into the Neo-Confucian framework. Although they repudiated what they considered the heterodox teachings of the Wang Yang-ming school, they did not explicitly deny the connection between precise philological scholarship and the Chu Hsi tradition.⁽²⁵⁾

By the eighteenth century, however, many of these associations were conveniently overlooked. Seventeenth-century scholars had acknowledged their links to the Neo-Confucian tradition; eighteenth-century *k'ao-cheng* scholars often ignored or denied their debt to Sung and Ming scholarship. The editors of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, for instance, analyzed Wang Fu-chih's research on the Classics by employing the *k'ao-cheng* criteria of verification, organization, and rigorous use of sources. Similarly, Fang I-chih 方以智 (1611-71) was described as a forerunner of *k'ao-cheng* scholarship during the Ming dynasty, and the editors all but disregarded Fang's Neo-Confucian speculations. Chu Yun 朱筠 (1792-81), a patron of Han Learning, was upset enough with Tai Chen's excursion into Neo-Confucian philosophy—although Tai had been critical of Chu Hsi—to rebuke him by warning: "[Tai] need not have written this sort of thing. What he will be remembered for will have nothing to do with such writing."⁽²⁶⁾

Although the early evidential scholars continued to discuss Neo-Confucian issues, the Ming-Ch'ing transformation of exegesis signalled a remarkable change in academic discourse. Evidential scholars rejected a philosophic, i.e., *i-li* 義理 [meanings and principles], orientation to the Classics in favor of a critical

(24) Yü Ying-shih, "Some Preliminary Observations on the Rise of Ch'ing Confucian Intellectualism," pp. 126-29, and Shimada Kenji 島田虔次, "Sho Gakusei no ichi" 章學誠の位置 [Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's Position], *Tōhōgaku hō* 東方學報, 41 (March 1970): 519-30.

(25) See the Preface to the 1796 Tientsin edition of the *Shang-shu ku-wen shu-cheng* by Yen Jo-chü's son Yen Yung 閻詠 (fl. ca. 1709), p. 1a. See also Henderson, pp. 38ff, and my "Yen Jo-chü's Debt to Sung and Ming Scholarship," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, III, 7 (Nov. 1977): 105-13.

(26) Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, *Wen-shih t'ung-i* 文史通義 [Comprehensive Meaning of Literature and History] (Taipei: Han-shang ch'u-pan-she, 1973), pp. 52, 55. See also *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu*, 6/7b-8b, 14/13a-13b, 119/11b-12b, and Henderson, pp. 38-41. Chu Yun's remarks are from Chiang Fan's 江藩, *Kuo-ch'ao Han-hsueh shih-ch'eng chi* 國朝漢學師承記 [Record of Han-Learning Masters During the Ch'ing Dynasty] (Taipei: *Ssu-pu pei-yao* 四部備要 edition), 6/6a.

analysis of the scholia, i.e., *chu-shu* 注疏, prepared by Han through T'ang dynasty Confucians. The evidential scholars felt that a careful and systematic analysis of earlier exegeses, i.e., *k'ao-cheng* (or *shu-cheng* 疏證 [verifications of annotations]), would provide a firm basis for elucidating the Classics themselves. A precise, technical vocabulary evolved, which reflected different linguistic strategies and protocols in the *k'ao-cheng* analysis of the past. Arguments and analysis of scholia replaced glosses and annotations themselves.⁽²⁷⁾

The emergence of evidential discourse involved the placing of *cheng* 證 [proof] and *cheng* 徵 [verification] at the center of the organization and analysis of the classical tradition. Verification became a central problem in the emerging *k'ao-cheng* theory of knowledge. This orientation to knowledge represented not merely new knowledge of and appreciation for antiquity, but a major reorientation in thought as well. Rejecting the philosophical speculations of Neo-Confucianism, the early evidential scholars favored a return to the most ancient sources available in order to reconstruct the classical tradition. Philology determined doctrine.

In contrast to Neo-Confucian discourse, which stressed discursive moral philosophy, the early *k'ao-cheng* scholars exhibited in their work an almost complete rejection of their predecessors' *chiang-hsueh* 講學 [lecturing] and *wen-ta* 問答 [questions and answers] styles of teaching and writing. Writings based on *p'u-hsueh* 樸學 [solid learning], which required the dedication of a specialist rather than a moralist, replaced the *yü-lu* 語錄 [record of spoken words] genre. Notation books (*cha-chi ts'e-tzu* 割記冊子) became the sine qua non of "solid learning."⁽²⁸⁾

Records of oral scholarly discussions were rejected by Kiangnan evidential scholars in favor of written findings that relied on precise scholarship. Ku Yen-wu linked the Sung-Ming penchant for a dialogue style to the impact Ch'an Buddhism had on *Tao-hsueh*. He equated emphasis on oral discourse of the type

(27) See Pi Hsi-jui 皮錫瑞, *Ching-hsueh li-shih* 經學歷史 [History of Classical Studies], annotated by Chou Yü-t'ung 周予同 (Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1961), pp. 220-21, James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu. An Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 85-99. See also Conrad Shirokauer, "Neo-Confucianism Under Attack: The Condemnation of wei-hsueh," pp. 184-87, and Nakamura Kyūshirō 中村久四郎, "Shinchō gakujutsu shisō shi (1)" 清朝學術思想史一 [History of Thought and Scholarship in the Ch'ing Dynasty, Part 1], *Tō A kenkyū* 東亞研究, II, 11 (Nov. 1912): 51. This change in exegesis can readily be seen in any chronological listing of Chinese texts related to the Classics written from the Han to the Ch'ing periods.

(28) *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu*, 119/16b-17a. See Nivison, *Chang*, pp. 14-15, Peterson, *Bitter Gourd*, p. 1, and Naitō Konan 内藤湖南, *Shinchōshi tsūron* 清朝史通論 [Outline of Ch'ing Dynasty History], in *Naitō Konan zenshū* 全集 [Complete Works of Naitō Konan] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1969-74, 13 vols.), VIII/355-56. See also Tu Wei-yun 杜維運, "Huang Tsung-hsi yü Ch'ing-tai Che-tung shih-hsueh-p'ai chih hsing-ch'i (shang)" 黃宗羲與清代浙東史學派之興起 (上) [Huang Tsung-hsi and the Rise of the Che-tung Historical School, Part 1], *Ku-kung wen-hsien* 故宮文獻, II, 3 (June 1971): 7, and Ono Kazuko 小野和子, "Jukyō no itanshatachi" 儒教の異端者たち [Heterodox Confucian Scholars], in *Taidō suru Ajia* 胎動するアジア (Asia in Transition), edited by Matsumoto Sannosuke 松本三之介 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1966): 22-23.

associated with the fourth-century A.D. Neo-Taoists and Buddhists with speculative discussion that would lead nowhere. Traditionally such discussions were referred to as *ch'ing-t'an* 清談 [pure discussion]. Ku argued that the Confucian adoption of this approach was not only evidence of the connection to empty Ch'an speculation but was also phony *li-hsueh* 理學 [studies of principles]. Only through extensive study of the Classics—not the Four Books—could one discover and delineate classical norms.⁽²⁹⁾

Although the roots of the shift from Neo-Confucian philosophy to *k'ao-cheng* research can be discerned in the late Ming, the acceleration of the shift depended on the dramatic rupture in the history of Confucian discourse due to the fall of the Ming dynasty. The cumulative effects of the Manchu triumph as an external factor were decisive for the internal form and direction of evidential research during the Ch'ing dynasty. Ming forerunners of *k'ao-cheng* scholarship, however important they may seem through hindsight, were not dominant during their own time.

The question "why did the Ming dynasty fall?" became the dominating point of departure for Chinese intellectuals. All had survived the fall of a Chinese dynasty to a foreign army, which had taken advantage of the bitter and debilitating factionalism that had torn the Ming dynasty apart. Shock among Confucian loyalists in Kiangnan and elsewhere led to a cognitive reorganization on a scale that far exceeded the changes of the late Ming. This formative political and cultural crisis, as it was manifested in thought, education, art, and behavior, shook Chinese society. The very eccentricity, for instance, of Ch'ing dynasty individualist styles of painting and calligraphy reflected this tragedy.⁽³⁰⁾

Ku Yen-wu, rightly or wrongly, blamed what he called the "pure discussion" style of learning popular during the Ming for the collapse of the dynasty and its fall to the Manchus. In particular, Li Chih 李贄 (1527-1602), a prominent member of the "left-wing" T'ai-chou 泰州 school, bore the brunt of the Ch'ing attack. Ku's contemporaries, again rightly or wrongly, interpreted the debacle as the result of the moral decline and intellectual disorder brought on by what they considered

(29) Ku Yen-wu, *Ku T'ing-lin shih-wen chi* 顧亭林詩文集 [Ku Yen-wu's Collected Essays and Poems] (Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1976), p. 62 (*chüan* 3). Cf. Yü Ying-shih, *Lun Tai Chen*, p. 189, and P'i Hsi-jui, *Ching-hsueh li-shih*, pp. 289-90.

(30) Yü Ying-shih, "Ts'ung Sung-Ming Ju-hsueh te fa-chan lun Ch'ing-tai ssu-hsiang-shih" 從宋明儒學的發展論清代思想史 [Discussion of Ch'ing History of Thought From the Perspective of Sung-Ming Confucianism], *Chung-kuo hsueh-jen* 中國學人, 2 (Sept. 1970): 26-37, and Nathan Sivin, "Wang Hsi-shan," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1970-78, 15 vols.), XIV/163. See also Edward Ch'ien, "Chiao Hung and the Revolt Against Ch'eng-Chu Orthodoxy," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, edited by Wm. T. de Bary and others (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 271-72, and Jonathan Spence, "Tao-chi, An Historical Introduction," in *The Painting of Tao-chi* (Ann Arbor: Museum of Art, Univ. of Michigan, 1967), p. 17. For the impact on painting, see Michael Sullivan, "Art and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China," *Apollo*, CIII, 170 (March 1976): 231-35.

airy and superficial *Tao-hsueh* speculation. They immediately recognized conditions during the Ming that were similar to the decadence that had preceded the fall of the Later Han dynasty in A.D. 220.

Yen Yuan 顏元 (1635-1704) in the late seventeenth century went further and placed the blame for the Ming collapse squarely on the shoulders of Chu Hsi and his school of *li-hsueh*. Yen was convinced that the *Tao-hsueh* orthodoxy, sullied as it was with Buddhist notions, was misleading and heterodox. The emphasis on moral cultivation at the expense of physical and mental training had clearly been proven stultifying. A class of literati incapable of decisive pragmatic action and thought had emerged. In the eighteenth century, the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* editors, sympathetic with Yen Yuan's rejection of Sung-Ming speculative philosophy, nevertheless criticized him for overreacting and in effect denying the basis for Confucian discourse as well.⁽³¹⁾

Witnesses to the deficiencies of the Ming state and the failure of the elite to prevent the Ming collapse, seventeenth-century scholars doubted that self-cultivation alone could inspire effective statesmanship and vigorous government. Sagehood was no longer their goal. Revulsion from political involvement is a frequently overlooked legacy of the Ming collapse. The views seventeenth-century scholars had of the recent past in turn structured and delimited the intellectual interests of their successors. On the one hand, seventeenth-century evidential scholars broke through the limitations they perceived in the Neo-Confucian discourse of their immediate predecessors. On the other hand, however, by limiting academic discourse to certain verifiable topics they placed powerful constraints on their eighteenth-century followers not to go very far afield.

Different strategies for constituting reality gave promise of yielding new grounds for certainty. With *Tao-hsueh* scholars on the defensive, the very fact that the Manchu rulers employed Chu Hsi's school of *li-hsueh* as the dominant Confucian ideology widened the rift between imperial Confucianism and what was being taught and discussed in progressive *k'ao-cheng* circles in Kiangnan. By 1750, orthodox views on the Classics (still necessary for success on official examinations) were no longer taken seriously by many scholarly Confucians and seem to have survived mainly as an acceptable—even for evidential scholars—instrument of indoctrination. The scholarly hegemony of Neo-Confucianism was broken.

(31) Ku Yen-wu, *Jih-chih lu* 日知錄 [Record of Knowledge Gained Day By Day] (Taipei: P'ing-p'ing ch'u-pan-she, 1974), pp. 540-41. See also Yen Yuan 顏元, *Ssu-shu cheng-wu* 四書正誤 [Correction of Errors on the Four Books], 1/2b, in *Yen-Li ts'ung-shu* 顏李叢書 [Collectanea of Yen Yuan and Li Kung] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü reprint, 1965, 4 vols.), I/47. See also Ono Kazuko 小野和子, "Gan Gen no gakumon ron," 顏元の學問論 [Yen Yuan's View of Learning], *Tôhōgakuhō* 東方學報, 41 (March 1970): 469-87, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, p. 914, and *Yen-Li ts'ung-shu*, I/199ff. See *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu*, 97/9b-11b, especially 11a.

Politically enshrined in Peking, *Tao-hsueh* was philologically dismantled in Kiangnan.⁽³²⁾

In the late eighteenth century, scholars routinely associated *k'ao-cheng* with the ascendancy of Han Learning over Sung Learning. Although it is accurate to describe scholars such as Yen Jo-chü and Hu Wei as precursors of Han Learning because they rejected Neo-Confucian sources in favor of earlier Han dynasty materials, the label "Han Learning" tends to obfuscate as much as it reveals. Strictly speaking, Han Learning denotes a school of scholarship that came into fashion in Soochow in the eighteenth century. Although such scholarship played a significant role in the rise of evidential studies in Kiangnan, Han Learning did not monopolize the *k'ao-cheng* identity. New Text scholars in Ch'ang-chou were certainly part of the movement that stressed evidential research and Han dynasty sources.

The turn toward a *k'ao-cheng* methodology was evident not only in Han Learning—as is well-known—but also in the Sung-Learning scholarship of the Ch'ing dynasty. Fumoto Yasutaka has described the achievements in Sung studies that resulted from the application of evidential techniques to Sung sources. In addition to the members of the orthodox Ch'eng-Chu school, there was a group of scholars who can be described as evidential, Sung-Learning scholars. They provided the impetus for a syncretic movement in the nineteenth century, centering in Canton and elsewhere, that attempted to synthesize Han-Learning research with Sung-Learning theory.⁽³³⁾

K'ao-cheng was no one's monopoly. This aspect of evidential studies should not surprise us when we remember that Sung dynasty scholars such as Wang Ying-lin 王應麟 (1223-96), in their textual research and archaeological studies, had been important precursors to Ch'ing exact scholarship. The roots of a *k'ao-cheng* methodology could easily be traced to the Sung dynasty.⁽³⁴⁾

Such efforts in textual scholarship carried over into the study of the native scientific and technical tradition. Spurred on by the challenge of European science, Tai Chen among others had been committed to a recovery of ancient

(32) Henderson, p. 20, and Peterson, *Bitter Gourd*, p. 10n. See also Kung-chuan Hsiao, *Rural China. Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1967), pp. 184-258.

(33) Chiang Fan 江藩 (1761-1831), for example, gave Yen and Hu first and second place in his genealogy of Han Learning entitled *Kuo-ch'ao Han-hsueh shih-ch'eng chi*, 國朝漢學師承記 [Record of Han-Learning Masters in the Ch'ing Dynasty]. See also Fumoto 麓保孝, *Sō Gen Min Shin kinsei Jugaku henshin shiron* 宋元明清近世儒學變遷史論 [Historical Essays on Changes in Sung, Yuan, Ming, and Ch'ing Early Modern Confucianism] (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1976), pp. 133-67.

(34) Fang Tung-shu, a Sung-Learning scholar, was effusive in his praise for Wang Yin-chih's 王引之 (1766-1834) *k'ao-cheng* studies. See Hu Shih 胡適, "Ch'ing-tai hsueh-che chih chih-hsueh fang-fa" 清代學者的治學方法 [Methods of Scholarship Used by Scholars in the Ch'ing Period], in *Hu Shih wen-ts'un* 胡適文存 [Abiding Essays by Hu Shih] (Taipei: Yuan-tung t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1968, 4 vols.), I/401-02.

mathematical and astronomical texts that would demonstrate the depth and sophistication of native expertise in calendrical studies. Tai was ecstatic when he rediscovered five ancient mathematical texts from the *Yung-lo ta-tien* 永樂大典 [Great Compendium of the Yung-lo Era, 1403-25] while he was serving on the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* commission. His accounts of these works in the astronomy and mathematics section of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* catalog indicated the importance that recovery of the earliest mathematical texts had for *k'ao-cheng* scholarship.⁽³⁵⁾

Jesuit impact on the study of the native scientific tradition can also be discerned later in Juan Yuan's and Ch'ien Ta-hsin's scholarship. Juan's efforts in astronomy culminated with the publication of the *Ch'ou-jen chuan* 疇人傳 [Biographies of Mathematical Astronomers] in 1799. The latter, compiled with the help of Ch'ien Ta-hsin, Chiao Hsun, and Ling T'ing-k'an 凌廷堪 (1757-1809), was, according to Nathan Sivin, "a programmatic synthesis of traditional and Western astronomy designed to encourage the study of the latter in order to improve the former." Juan Yuan's scientific interests were extremely influential because of his status as a patron of evidential scholarship in Peking, Kiangnan, and elsewhere. In addition, Juan served in 1799 as director of the mathematics section of the *Kuo-tzu chien* 國子監 [National University] in Peking. His efforts marked the culmination of an ongoing process whereby the value of mathematics and astronomy was reaffirmed as part of a Confucian education.

Animated by a restorationist concern, Tai Chen, Ch'ien Ta-hsin, and Juan Yuan successfully incorporated technical aspects of western astronomy and mathematics into the Confucian framework. At the same time, they criticized the western sciences. The Jesuit challenge in astronomy and mathematics was taken seriously, however, by Ch'ing scholars and spilled over into other *k'ao-cheng* disciplines as well. Ch'ien Ta-hsin acknowledged this broadening of the Confucian tradition, which he saw as the reversal of centuries of focus on moral and philosophical problems:⁽³⁶⁾

Comparing lands of the eastern seas with those of the western, we note that their spoken languages are mutually unintelligible and that their written forms are each different. Nonetheless, once a computation has been completed, [no matter where,] there will not be the most minute discrepancy when it is checked. This result can be for no other reason

(35) Nathan Sivin, "Copernicus in China," in *Colloquia Copernica II: Études sur l'audience de la théorie héliocentrique* (Warsaw: Union Internationale d'Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences), p. 72, and Kondo Mitsuo 近藤光男, "Shinchō keishi ni okeru kagaku ishiki," 清朝經師における科學意識 [The Scientific Consciousness of Ch'ing Classicists], *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 日本中國學會報, 4 (1952): 99, 106. See also *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu*, 107/1a-2a, 107/10a-11a.

(36) Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Ch'ien-yen T'ang wen-chi*, III/335 (*chüan* 23), and Juan Yuan 阮元, *Yen-ching-shih chi* 研經室集 [Collection From the Studio for the Investigation of the Classics] (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chū, 1964, 3 vols.), III/94-95. Cf. Henderson, p. 216.

than the identity of human minds, the identity of patterns of phenomena, and the identity of numbers [everywhere]. It is not possible that the ingenuity of Europeans surpasses that of the Chinese. It is only that Europeans have transmitted [their findings] systematically from father to son and from master to disciple for generations. Hence, after a long period [of progress] their knowledge has become increasingly precise. Confucian scholars have, on the other hand, usually denigrated those who were good mathematicians as petty technicians.... In ancient times, no one could be a Confucian who did not know mathematics.... Chinese methods [now] lag behind Europe's because Confucians do not know mathematics.

Emphasis on mathematics, astronomy, and geography before the Opium War (1839-42) was part of a commitment among scholars at prestigious academies in Kiangnan and elsewhere to train competent men for responsible positions. To reconstruct antiquity was to recreate the wide range of theoretical and practical domains of knowledge that had existed in the Chinese tradition.⁽³⁷⁾

With the compiling of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* in the 1770's and 1780's, *k'ao-cheng* scholarship was for all intents and purposes established as the standard for the evaluation of all available writings produced before that time. The linguistic self-consciousness of *k'ao-cheng* as a scholarly discourse reflected itself in tacit standards that were employed by the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* editors to discuss, evaluate, and criticize works handed in to the commission. They saw their task as a chance to supersede irrevocably the scholarship that had preceded the Ch'ing dynasty and thus bring honor to the scholars of their own time.

The overriding concern of the editors was the proper use of sources and principles of verification.⁽³⁸⁾ To be worthy of consideration as a *k'ao-cheng* work (*k'ao-cheng chih tzu* 考證之資, 12/21b), and hence receive the editors' praise, a book was expected to make use a broad variety of sources, employ evidential techniques to analyze those sources, and stress studies of institutions, terms,

(37) Sivin, "Copernicus," pp. 99-100. See also Leung Man-kam, "Juan Yuan (1764-1949). The Life, Works, and Career of a Chinese Scholar-Bureaucrat" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Univ. of Hawaii, 1977), pp. 61, 67-79, 169. Juan Yuan's Cantonese friend Wu Lansi 吳蘭修, director of the Hsueh-hai T'ang 學海堂 academy in Canton, was an accomplished mathematician. His treatise *Fang-ch'eng k'ao* 方程考 [On Equations, lit., "square table method"; an allusion to the matrix calculation performed on the counting board to solve simultaneous linear equations] was included in the *Hsueh-hai T'ang chi* 學海堂集 [Collected Writings from the Hsueh-hai T'ang]. Also included were student essays on anything from sundials to the use of mathematics to study the movement of stars.

(38) My findings for the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* are based on a careful reading of the *Documents*, philology, bibliography, encyclopedias, and astronomy and mathematics subsections of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu*. In order to summarize the results, I focus here only on the *Documents* section because I have found it representative of the kind of evaluation that made itself felt among the editors and their staffs. In the discussion that follows, the citations from the catalog will be given in parentheses in the text itself.

and rituals in ancient texts. If it failed to do this, the work was criticized for being deficient in evidential research (*shih yü k'ao-cheng* 失於考證, 11/9a) or for not constituting a contribution to evidential research (*wu tsu-i tzu k'ao-cheng* 無足以資考證, 14/8a).

In the process, novel discoveries (*fa-ming* 發明, 12/17b) were praised and pointed out, whereas phrases such as *wu so fa-ming* 無所發明 [made no discoveries] (14/4b) were used to describe Ming dynasty works that contributed little to the accumulation of knowledge. Concrete studies (*shih-hsueh* 實學, 11/28a) were viewed as an attempt to get at the bottom of and thereby illuminate affairs and phenomena (11/28a). Such efforts at precise scholarship were contrasted with the *hsu-t'an* 虛談 [empty discussions] (12/4b) that dominated the Sung explications of the Classics, according to the editors.

Similar climates of opinion were reflected in Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's often cited opposition to piecemeal, philological research. It is for this reason that Chang's theoretical writings on history and the nature of historiography were not highly regarded until the twentieth century, when interest in Chang was revived by Naitō Konan and Hu Shih. Writing on his arrival in Peking in 1775, Chang noted:

Those who submitted writings to high officials [in hopes of patronage] usually no longer claimed skill in poetry and examination-essay writing, but claimed instead to be expert in philology, text-criticism, phonology, or paleography, trotting along with changing popular fashion.

However much he disagreed, Chang understood the basic commitments of his age.⁽³⁹⁾

* * *

These developments demonstrate that the so-called failure of Chinese traditional scholarship to evolve scientific premises for questioning and research is largely the result of our ignorance of the contributions that evidential scholarship brought to bear on Confucian philology and historiography during the eighteenth century (although David Nivison revealed many of these contributions fifteen years ago). In fact, this movement in precise scholarship and historical research was also transmitted to Yi Korea (1392-1910) and Tokugawa Japan (1600-1867).⁽⁴⁰⁾

Impartiality and precise scholarship did not emerge as a sudden growth in China, planted by nineteenth-century imperialists and opium traffickers on the South China coast. Without wishing to play down the influence of the "western impact," I would suggest that, as our understanding of the intellectual conditions

(39) *Chang-shih i-shu*, III/149 (*chüan* 18), and translated by Nivison in *Chang*, p. 51.

(40) I am presently preparing a study of the impact of Ch'ing scholarship in 18th- and 19th-century Korea and Japan.

internal to Ch'ing China before the Opium War deepens, we will achieve a more balanced appraisal of the scope and limits of nineteenth-century western pressures as the catalyst in modern Chinese history. The roots of modern thought and scholarship in contemporary China are certainly complicated and diverse. It is clear, however, that two of those sources are the humanistic Neo-Confucian studies begun in the Sung period and the critical philology initiated by *k'ao-cheng* scholars during the Ch'ing dynasty.⁽⁴¹⁾

(41) 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, 1970), pp. 4-5.

道學之末流——從宋明道學至清朝 考證學的轉變

艾 爾 曼

在中國學術思想方面，十七、十八世紀顯示了一個很重要的轉變。滿州人滅亡明朝之後，宋明以來的道學思想遭受激烈的批評。清初儒家以為明朝滅亡之原因，是由於宋明道學的虛談。顧炎武等以為，除非能夠再實行儒家傳統的思想，不然道學以前的儒學將會永遠失傳。為使儒家之真精神、真面目復活，清朝學者覺得非得「復古」不可。復古只有一條路，就是用客觀的方法再學習宋明之前的經學與史學。閻若璩等說，若不按照歷史的證據來重建漢唐的經學（所謂注疏學），那麼儒學的真面目就看不到。所謂清朝考證學（又叫考據學）的目的，就是要達到恢復儒學的原貌。清朝學者的考證學不只是為了學問而學問。我們應該了解，清朝儒者用考證學的方法，跟他們走向復古之路的思想，有分不開的關係。

清朝學術思想，在中國思想史裏，顯示了一個新的階段。從很多方面來看，十七、十八世紀的考證學不但是學問的新風氣、新格調，而且是儒家知識的新組織。考證學的知識組織是歸納的及經驗的。這種尋求知識的方法，和宋明理學家或心學家尋求知識的方法根本不同。宋明道學家，一般來說，用了演繹的及合理的方法來整理他們所得到的學問和知識。他們以自然或是心裏的「理」來組織道學的學問。考證學家不是這樣的。戴震，錢大昕等清朝有名的學者都用「證」和「徵」來證明他們所得到的知識。如果缺少了「證」，就沒有可靠的知識。根據此種看法，考證學家認為理學家和心學家所得到的知識是不可靠的，是空虛的。王鳴盛等又以為道學家作主觀的學問，比不上考證學家用客觀的方法所獲取的實證的知識。

在這篇文章裏，我提到了考證學的發展和意義，又說到宋明道學及考證學的關係和不同處，但並沒有討論考證學家的儒學是否比宋明的儒學更確實或者更可靠。至於儒學古代的真面目如何，考證學所重建的儒學「真面目」是否可靠，這一類問題的探討也需待之來日。因此，在這篇文章裏，我主要是表達清代儒學家的立場。我以為至少我們應當了解考證學是中國歷史上很有意義的思想階段之一。無論如何，我們都應該承認清朝考證學家給與傳統儒學的貢獻是很有價值的。