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

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道學之末流——從宋明道學至清朝考證學的轉變

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

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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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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exacting research, rigorous analysis, and the collection of impartial evidence drawn from ancient artifacts and historical documents and texts.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'an-cheng 知證; lit., "search for evidence") created and maintained by these scholars will be the topic of this 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.


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 drysudust 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. (1)

Ch’ing scholarship, like its Neo-Confucian predecessor, had both public purposes and political consequences. To reconstruct the authentic Mencius 孟子 or the historical Confucius, to rescue the Poetry, Documents, and Rites Classics from the contamination of Buddhist and Taoist interpretations, was to gain firm philosophical 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?

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 王鸣盛 (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 [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...


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 (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-chu 阮若璩 (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 胡維 (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 Hsu-ch'eng's 昌迪誠 (1738-1801) famous phrase "wu-ch'ing 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.

The historicization of important elements in the Confucian Canon was already well advanced by the seventeenth century. This alarming tendency was noted by Kwei Chuang 畢莊 (1613-73) in a revealing letter written in 1668 to his hometown friend and pioneer of kuo-cheng scholarship Ku Yen-wu 魯炎武 (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-chu's Shang-shu ku-wen shu-cheng 誉書古文疏證 [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 Confucious and Chu Hsi would have wanted it.

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

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would not lead to an historianist 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 Kuo-ch'eng 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."

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 蔡闓, 1036-1107, and Chu Hsi) school or the Lu-Wang (Lu Hsiang-shan 魯象山, 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 Kuo-ch'eng 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-hsu 見古) 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 it.

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 太新 (1728-1894), the greatest of the eighteenth-
century K'ao-ch'eng scholars, had much in common with their seventeenth-century 
prefessor. They were all operating under the cumulative pressure of K'ao-ch'eng 
scholarship and criticism, a pressure that, in Yu 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-kun movement was in no sense a conscious current of secularism or 
skepticism. In the long run, however, the K'ao-ch'eng identity that developed wen 
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 翁詧 (1727-1834) 
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] decried. 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.

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'ai Shu's 櫻壇 (1740-1816) meticulous excavation of ancient strata of 
beliefs and myths. Ts'ai's commitment to uncovering the beliefs and not just the

(13) See Wang Ming-sheng, "Hou" 序 [Introduction], in Shih-ch'eh-shih ch'eng k'ao, pp. 1a-2a. 
See also Ch'ien Ta-hsin, Ch'ien-yen T'ang wen-chi 欽賢文集 [Collected Essays From 
the Hall of Subtle Research] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1988, 8 vols.), II/224-25 (ch'iao
16).
words or written characters of the past was clearly indicated in the title of his tour de force—Kuo-hsin tu 謹信錄 [Record of the Examination of Beliefs].

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 誠子 [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 (1745-84), Chiao Hsun 蕭鈞 (1763-1820), and Chang Huaeh-ch'eng left Later Han dynasty sources behind and turned instead to Former Han and pre-Han texts. The revival of the Mo-tzu, Hsueh-tzu 訝子, and Kung-yung 公羊 texts in particular presented serious threats to the Old Text Confucianism in Later Han sources.

Wang Chung and Chang Huaeh-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 Tung-ch'ing 儒經 [orthodox transmission of the Tao] doctrine, which stressed Confucius and Mencius. According to Chang Huaeh-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.

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 王方銘 (1723-)


(15) Wang Chung 汪中, Shou-shu-ch'ing 教學 [Discourses on Learning] (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chi reprint, 1983), p. 1; see also, Lee Mou, Shih-t'ou ch'ing-hua 聲討 華 (Supplement), pp. 59-63. See also, Shih Mou, T'ai T'ou ch'ing-hua 聲會 退 (August), p. 227, and Liang Ch'ih-ao 梁超超, Chang-huaeh-ch'eng shih-ch'ing-shih 蔡開華 湖歴 (Critic of Historical Reason), p. 227-231, and see also Shinoda Kenji 冬田佳, "Kei-chi teki rinri kihan" 慶喜的理性批判 [Critic of Historical Reason], Kenji 冬田, "Kei-chi teki rinri kihan" 慶喜的理性批判 [Critic of Historical Reason], Kenji 冬田, "Kei-chi teki rinri kihan" 慶喜的理性批判 [Critic of Historical Reason], Kenji 冬田, "Kei-chi teki rinri kihan" 慶喜的理性批判 [Critic of Historical Reason], 4 (1965): 100-103. See also, Takada Atsushi 高田安, "Kanbun no kishu to kishu ni tsuite" 近世の史学について [Concerning Chang Huaeh-ch'eng's Historical Thoughts], Tōyōgakushi 道研究, XLVII, 1 (June 1965): 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-ch'eng 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-zi t'ou-shu cheng 莊子字義校譔 [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 philosophic 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 original text of the Mencius. Although he had to be cautious, Tai Chen was free to distribute his denunciations of the Ch'ing


orthodoxy. His remarks were made while he was working on the Shu-k'un ch'ien-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: (20)

The high and mighty use li 禮 [moral principles] to blame the lowly. The old use li to blame the young. The exalted use li to blame the downtrodden. Even if they are mistaken. [the ruling groups] call what they have done] proper. If the lowly, the young, and the downtrodden 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 Tung-
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-tsu tsu-i shu-cheng 五行學術論 (Evidential Analysis of the Meanings of Terms in the Men-tzu), appended to Hsia Shih's Tai Tung-yuan li ch'iao-hsien 戴震學術評 (The Philosophy of Tai Chen) (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1987), pp. 55–56. Kent Guy in his "The Scholar and State in Late Imperial China: The Politics of the Shu-k'un ch'ien-shu Project" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1981), passes, 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-chih ch'i-shu 長吉集詩 [Dequathed Writings of Chang Hsueh-ch'eng] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936, 8 vols.), 8/25 (ju-i 楚辭), and Fang Tung-shu 方濬典, Han-hoeh sheng-t'ai 漢學詩選 [An Assessment of Han Learning] (Taipei: Kuang wen shu-ch'i reprint, 1985), 2A/95a. For an account of Chang's reactions to Tai's attack on Chu Hsi, see Kawata Tetsuki 賀谷一 (The Scene of Contemporaries for Each Other—Chang Hsueh-

ch'eng's View of Tai Chen], Chügoku tetsugaku shi no tenbō to mosubu 中國哲學史的展望

dōshi (Prospects and Directions in the History of Chinese Philosophy), compiled by the

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 Hsieh-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 (1764-1849) composed three major essays on Confucian philosophy between 1801-23. Modelled after Tai's philosophic approach to philosophic terms, Juan's best known treatise, entitled Hsien-ming hu-hsun [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 (1868-1936) and Liu Shih-p'ei (1884-1929). 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 kuo-chung tradition in the twentieth century. (21)

The philosophic rebellion spawned by the kuo-chung movement also set the stage for the social and political conclusions that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century New Text (ch'un-wen 文, i.e., "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)

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 Hsin’s Anhui (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 Kang-yang chuán received new respect and attention in the eighteenth century. His views provided the foundation for Ch’ang-ch’ou Neo Confucian scholars in Kiangsu to recover the New Text tradition of the Former Han dynasty.

Kao-cheng scholars such as Yen Jo-chi and Hui Tung Hsin (1697–1758), the father 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 philosophically 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 Kang Yu-wei’s 荒亭 (1858–1927) New Text Confucianism. This outcome was a turn that Yen had neither anticipated nor intended; his philosophical conclusions, however, paved the way for the unexpected political results. The evidential “search for the truth in actual facts” (shih-shih ch’i-i-shih 實事求是) evolved into a nativist rhetoric in favor of western-style parliaments and constitutions.

CHANGES IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

In the movement from Sung-Ming T’ou-hsueh to Kao-cheng scholarship, academic


(23) Chi Shu-ho 齊思政, “Wei Yuan yû wan-Ch’ang hseh-heng” 魏源與晚清學術 [Wei Yuan and Late Ch’ing Intellectual Currents]. Yen-ch’ing kung-hao 彰音學報, 39 (1950): 177–226, and Joseph Levenson, Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy, I, 7/39, 94. See also Hisao Kung-ch’uan, A Modern China and a New World, Kang Yu-wei, Reformers and Utopians (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1975), pp. 41–189. For the origins of the expression shih-shih ch’i-i-shih, see the Han-shu 漢書 [History of the Former Han Dynasty] (Taipei: Shih-hsueh ch’uan-p’an-shu, 1974, 7 vols.), 5/2410 (53/14), where it is said that “[Liu] Te-kuang when he took the throne as King Hsien of Ho-chia in 125 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.14

Ku Yen-wu, Huang Tsang-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.15

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 Shu-k'u ch'ü-an-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 中流 (1732-81), 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."16

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


16. Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, Wen shih t'ung-chi 文史通義 [Comprehensive Meaning of Literature and History] (Taipei: Han-shang ch'u-pan-shù, 1973), pp. 53, 55. See also Shu-k'u ch'ü-an-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 徐幹, Kao-chü Hsiao hsien-shih ch'eng chu 處詩載詩集記 [Record of Han-Learning Masters During the Ch'ing Dynasty] (Taipei: Shiu-pu shih-yü 出版事业部, 6/4a).
analysis of the scholia, i.e., chu-shu 註疏, 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 證說 [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 誉 [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 recollection 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 閣答 [questions and answers] styles of teaching and writing. Writings based on yu-hsueh 撰學 [solid learning], which required the dedication of a specialist rather than a moralist, replaced the yu-li 撰鉄 [record of spoken words] genre. Notation books (che-chi 契記 契記) 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’uan Buddhism had on T’ao-hsueh. He equated emphasis on oral discourse of the type


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-ch'an 詩話 [pure discussion]. Ku argued that the Confucian
adoption of this approach was not only evidence of the connection to empty Ch'an
speculation but 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 debili-
tating factionalism that had torn the Ming dynasty apart. Shock among Confuc-
ian 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,
shocked Chinese society. The very eccentricity, for instance, of Ch'ing dynasty
individualist styles of painting and calligraphy reflected this tragedy.\(^{(29)}\)

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 李贇 (1597–1662), a prominent member
of the “left-wing” Tai-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 虚亭林詩文集 [Ku Yen-wu's Collected Essays and

\(^{(30)}\) Yü Ying-shih, “Ts'ang Sung-Ming Ju-hueh to fu-ch'an hao Ch'ing-tai ssu-hsing-shih”
(Dissection of Ch'ing History of Thought: From the Perspective of Sung-Ming Confucianism), Ch'ung-hsiao hsueh-jei 中學學刊, 2 (Sept. 1979): 26–37,
 Scribner's Sons, 1970–78, 15 vols.), XIV/163. See also Edward Ch'ien, “Chiao Hung and
the Revolt Against Ch'ing-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,
(Ann Arbor: Museum of Art, Univ. of Michigan, 1967), p. 17. For the impact on paint-
ing, see Michael Sullivan, “Art and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China,” Apollo, CIII,
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 領元 (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-khsueh*. 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 *Shih-k'u ch'ien-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.21

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 of 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-khsueh* as the dominant Confucian ideology widened the rift between imperial Confucianism and what was being taught and discussed in progressive *kuo-cheng* circles in Kiangan. 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.

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Politically enshrined in Peking, Tao-hsuch was philologically dismantled in Kiang-nan.\(^{(32)}\)

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.\(^{(32)}\)

K’ao-cheng was far from being the exclusive methodological approach. 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.\(^{(33)}\)

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. 29, and Peterson, Bitter Guard, p. 10n. See also Kang-chuan Hsiao, Rural China, Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1967), pp. 184-258.

\(^{(33)}\) Chiang Fan 章凡 (1701–1831), for example, gave Yeo and Hu first and second place in his genealogy of Han Learning entitled K’ao-ch’ao Han-hsuch shih-ch‘eng chi. 鄭明信編 經典 [Record of Han-Learning Masters in the Ch‘ing Dynasty]. See also Fumoto Yasutaka, So Gen Min Shin kinsen jugaku henmen shiron 足立喜隆 三代明信近世學者筆記 [Historical Essays on Changes in Sung, Yuan, Ming, and Ch‘ing Early Modern Confucianism] (Tokyo: Kokusho kankokai, 1976), pp. 133-67.

\(^{(34)}\) Fang Tung-shu, a Sung-Learning scholar, was effusive in his praise for Wang Yin-chi’s 王引之 (1769-1834) K‘ao-cheng studies, See Hu Shih 胡適, “Ch‘ing-tai hsueh-che chih chih-hsuch fang-ta” 清代學術治學方法 [Methods of Scholarship Used by Scholars in the Ch‘ing Period], in Hu Shih wen-pien 胡適文集 [Abiding Essays by Hu Shih] (Taipei: Yuan-tung t‘u-shu kung-ssu, 1968, 4 vols.), 1/601-62.
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 to-tien* 永樂大典 [Great Compendium of the Yung-lo Era, 1403-25] while he was serving on the *Suw-k'un ch'iu-an-shu* commission, His accounts of these works in the astronomy and mathematics section of the *Suw-k'un ch'iu-an-shu* catalog indicated the importance that recovery of the earliest mathematical texts had for *Kuo-cheng* scholarship. 

Jesuit impact on the study of the native scientific tradition can also be discerned later in Jua Yuan's and Ch'ien Ta-hsin's scholarship, Jian's efforts in astronomy culminated with the publication of the *Ch'ien-jen ch'un* 前人星 [Biographies of Mathematical Astronomers] in 1799, The latter, compiled with the help of Ch'ien Ta-hsin, Chiao Hsun, and Ling T'ing-k'un 陸廷 Khan (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." Jian Yuan's scientific interests were extremely influential because of his status as a patron of evidential scholarship in Peking, Kiangnan, and elsewhere. In addition, Jian served in 1799 as director of the mathematics section of the *Kuo-tzu ch'iu* 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 Jian 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'ien scholars and spilled over into other *Kuo-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. 

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.


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 Sun-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 Sun-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. To be worthy of consideration as a k'ao-cheng work (k'ao-cheng chih ts'ao 講義之譜, 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, 67-78, 109. Juan Yuan's Cantonese friend Wu Lan-sen 吳蘭森, director of the Hioeh-hai T'ang 學海堂 academy in Canton, was an accomplished mathematician. His treatise Fung-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 Hioeh-hai T'ang ch'i 學海堂集 [Collected Writings from the Hioeh-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 Sun-k'u ch'üan-shu are based on a careful reading of the Documents, philology, bibliography, encyclopedia, and astronomy and mathematics subsections of the Sun-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-ssu. 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 discussions 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 t'ao-ch'eng 矣於考證, 11/9a) or for not constituting a contribution to evidential research (wu ts'ai tzu t'ao-ch'eng 無足以考辨, 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 hsun-tsan 讀談 [empty discussions] (12/4b) that dominated the Sung explications of the Classics, according to the editors.

Similar climates of opinion were reflected in Chang Houch-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 Naito 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 palaeography, trotting along with changing popular fashion.

However much he disagreed, Chang understood the basic commitments of his age. *(30)*

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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). *(41)*

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/169 (ch'uan 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-ch'eng scholars during the Ch'ing dynasty.\footnote{Shimada Kenji 荻原藤次, Chūgoku ni shikō kindai shi no sansei [The Frustration of Modern Thought in China] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 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。漢儒人滅亡
明朝之後，宋明以來的道學思想遭受激烈的批評。這時儒學已成為明確滅亡之原因，
是因為宋明學的貶斥。饒益等以為，除非能夠再實行儒家傳統的規範，不然道
學以前的儒學斷會永遠失傳。為使儒家之真精神、真面目復活，清儒學者覺得非得
「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
。偏西派等說，若不按照歷史的證據來重建漢唐的經學（所謂考據學），那麼儒學
的真面目就看不到。所謂清朝考據學（又名考據學）的目的，就是要在恢復儒學
的原貌。清朝學者的考據學不只是為了學問而學問。他們應該了解，清朝學者用考
據學的方法。跟他們走向復古之路的思潮，有分不同的關係。

清代學術思想，在中國思想史上，顯示了一個新的階段。從很多方面來看，十
七、十八世紀的考據學不但是學問的新風氣、新格調，而且是儒學知識的新組織。
考據學的知識組織是最細的又最準確的，這就是知識的方法。如宋明理學家或心學家
所求知識的方法根本不同。宋明道學家，一般來說，用了辯證的及合理的的方法來整
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
據學家不是這樣的。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。根據此种看法，考據學
家認為理學家和心學家所得到的知識是不可靠的，是虛證的。王鳴憲等又以考據學
家作主體的學問，比不上考據學家用客觀的方法所獲取的實證的知識。

在這篇文章裡，我提出考據學的發展和意義，又談到宋明道學及考據學的關
係和不同處，但並沒有討論考據學家的儒學是否比宋明的儒學更確切或者更可靠。
至於儒學古代的真面目如何，考據學所重建的儒學「真面目」是否可靠，這一個問
題的探討也寫於末末章。因此，在這篇文章裡，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據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據學家的貢獻是很有價值的。