

Trends of Thought in the Early Nineteenth Century

(Metaphysics) may be guided by a fundamental knowledge which governs the climate of thinking and carries immediate conviction because it supplies not only rationality but also its fulfillment. . . . Then thought, through an activity analogous to prayer, moves toward certainty at the source. Such meditation creates a contact with the grounds of being.

— Karl Jaspers, *The Great Philosophers*. Ralph Mannheim, trans. Vol. 2. New York, 1966, pp. 5-6.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

When, during the nineteenth century, the Ching dynasty, and with it the historical phenomenon of Imperial China, moved into its final phase, this move occurred in an intellectual atmosphere of great variety and amazing vitality. As in other spheres of endeavor of the human mind, Chinese thought had achieved and maintained during Ch'ing times, down to and including the last period, a degree of sophistication, a level of imagination, and a broad spectrum of intellectual choices which are reminiscent of the period of the "Hundred Schools" in late Chou times. To be sure, this vitality was exhibited mainly within the confines of the Confucianist tradition. The Confucianists had, however, during the past centuries absorbed, and taken on responsibility for, so much of the essence of the other schools that ideas, attitudes and intellectual and spiritual activities of the past all found representation within the framework of a very much broadened system of Confucianism. This extended tradition, lovingly transmitted, carefully sifted, and acutely maintained and developed, had brought Ch'ing thought up to a level of refinement and comprehensiveness rarely, if ever, achieved during earlier dynasties. The influence of the great masters of early and mid-Ch'ing, outstanding contributors to the flow of intellectual development, which was still alive or was revived during the last period, added to the armory of ideas and codetermined the intellectual climate within which the thinkers of the last period worked. The wealth and complexity of the tradition, and its emotional impact and compelling status, provided a set of premises which inescapably, conditioned the mind of nineteenth-century China. However, the specific configuration of circumstances under which the intellectuals had to live, to work, and to think afforded incentives to test what had been transmitted, to rethink the thoughts of the past, and to adapt

them to a kind of life which was new and challenging. In this process of rethinking the tradition has not unfrequently been asserted even though at times with a different and keener argumentation; at times, however, the tradition was developed to a point where it appeared trenchantly new and chillingly contemporary.

Some of the shifts from which resulted a change in the quality of life in China, including the life of the intellectuals, might be worth recapitulating here. The first which might be mentioned here is the tremendous population expansion which was not accompanied by a corresponding expansion in primary production. That meant that China was gradually changing from a rich country into a poor one and that the lavishness of the Ch'ien-lung 乾隆 era was fading into the past. The stratum of the population which lived on service activities (excluding official service) was hit equally hard if not harder. The gentry, here taken in the formal sense, that is to say exclusive of officials, of whom a sizable part had traditionally extracted a living from its so-called gentry activities which comprised the pursuit of scholarship and educational endeavors, was bound to feel the pinch. Austerity considerations, never lacking in the ideological makeup of the gentry, achieved thereby a greater relevance. Also those who had traditionally lived off their landholdings and their tenantry found out that agriculture was an undertaking less and less productive of income. The (non-serving) gentry had then to fall back more and more on official emoluments and the emoluments of relatives in official service, if they had any; in other words, their economic dependence on the government apparatus grew, and institutional controls of the size and the composition of the gentry gained in pertinence. This shift of balance was accompanied by a shift in government policies regarding these controls. Since the gentry's pride was not reduced proportionately to their income, the government found it expeditious to counterbalance the regular gentry, that is to say those who had achieved their status through the examinations, with greater numbers of irregular gentry, who had achieved their status by purchase. Considerations other than strictly ideological ones thus started to play a more incisive part. This trend was strengthened by the fact that more and more members of the gentry, both regular and irregular, started to supplement their income from such sources as banking and trading, hitherto despised even though never entirely avoided. These trends, which might have led to a dwindling of the ideological integrity of the gentry, of necessity called forth an agonizing reassessment of the position of the "scholar" both within society and, functionally and ontologically, as an individual.

The Chinese intellectual was confronted with his concerns by a political setup within which trends and attitudes in turn changed sharply during the early nineteenth century. To be sure, it was the same group of foreigners as before who were at the helm of the state. The Imperial House, officials in the most decisive policy-making positions and the most status-providing units of the army, consisted of Manchus, not Chinese. It can be observed, however, that the political aims of this group switched directions during this period. It appears that the group retreated to some degree from more strictly imperialistic and exploitative aims to aims of a kind which would support the conservation rather the expansion of their power. This switch might also have been determined by austerity considerations. It was strengthened by other reasons. The generations of imaginative and ambitious Manchu emperors had given way to a more pedestrian, more strictly bureaucratic type, of which the Tao-kuang 道光 Emperor might serve as a good example. The quest for expanded power and glamour which had characterized the Ch'ien-lung era lost some of its motivating force, actually the glamour contingent declined sharply. Glamour had been sought in the past not only by military exploits but also by aspiring to a dominant role in the fields of the scholarly, the literary, and the artistic. These aspirations had drawn the emperors and their group closer to the strictly Chinese tradition, as it was within this tradition only that they could be satisfied. This had meant, if not a commitment to the main tenets of the Chinese intellectual and artistic tradition, at least a recognition of the rules of the game and an attempt to master these rules at least on the technical level. Imperial sponsorship of scholarship and the arts and imperial participation in scholarly and artistic activities had then been a issue of high priority. The glamour contingent lost this priority after the demise of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor. The preservation of power alone and not any more the achievement of glamour determined imperial predilections. The sharp decline in the quality of imperially sponsored arts and crafts exemplifies this change; there was no more poet-emperor occupying the throne, and the promotion of scholarship for its own sake was relegated to a rather secondary role. This meant that the marriage of convenience between the Manchus and the Chinese tradition had outlived its validity, that the Manchu became more Manchu again, and that the usage of playing along with the Chinese ideological tradition lost its attractiveness. In other words, the Chinese intelligentsia with its sharper focus on ideological and metaphysical issues faced a much less ideology-minded court. The institutional, more precisely the bureaucratic, system had hardened. Arguments from ideological and metaphysical

grounds toward its implementation and modification had lost their conviction. The issues of the intellectuals were at best met by imperial "neutrality" or imperial disconcern. The scholars found their intellectual concerns sequestered within non-political confines.

We shall have to emphasize, though, that this confinement refers to the intellectual concerns only, or, more succinctly, to the activities and developments of the human mind. In the realm of the service aspect of the Confucianist vocation the dependence of the ruling group on the Chinese gentry was maintained and eventually even expanded, even though here, too, changes occurred within the government-gentry relationship. Of the two realms of endeavor of Confucianist postulates, the mental and the practical, the latter had still to be discharged within the existing institutional patterns which were, as mentioned, less ideology oriented than in other periods of Chinese history. This meant a lesser degree of stringency for the Confucianist in the dominance of one over the other, loosening, as it were, the continuum of the mental and the practical. The choice had to be made, though, if the body politic was to be kept going. The situation was acerbated by the fact that this was a period during which the degree of efficiency of government services was comparatively low and deteriorated further. Many of the service functions which the Confucianist would have discharged in his role as a government servant were to be discharged by him as a member of the gentry, to a larger extent than ever before independent of government decision. This added responsibility of, and for that matter opportunity for, the Confucianists in the field of practical endeavors, in the field of institutional activities and decisions, tended to widen the cleavage between the realms of the mental and the practical, a cleavage that then took on at times almost schizoid dimensions.

It also has to be emphasized that this was not the only period of Chinese history during which an intellectual impact of the Chinese scholar on the conduct of government was low or absent. These periods, particularly when both intellectual and service relationships were severed, have occasionally demonstrated the vitality and versatility of the Chinese mind, even though some of the most decisive advances of Chinese thought took place at times when the philosophers were also intellectually deeply involved in the political sphere. What gives our period its specific color are the then prevailing circumstances and even more so the quality of the then active Chinese minds.

It finally has to be emphasized that this period of Chinese intellectual history coincided with the beginnings and the first phase of the Great

Encounter. The emotional impact of this renewed and intensified meeting with the West imparted another distinctive quality to the conditions under which the Chinese mind had to work, and as time went on this impact grew in strength. Its intellectual and spiritual impact influenced directly the character of the thinking process and of thought. Most of the intellectual and spiritual messages from the West which had flowed into China during the earlier period of the Jesuits had by that time faded out of Chinese consciousness; some, however, had taken root, in the fields of mathematics and astronomy, for instance, and had been independently developed. The rationale of these survivals had to be tested against the inflow of, rather ill-presented and frequently muddled, concepts and ideas which then made their appearance, under outward conditions which were as humiliating as they were compelling. The urgency of contingency thinking thus grew alongside fundamental thought, damaged and mutilated the latter, and eventually made an end to an intellectual development which might have taken the Chinese mind into the modern world on its own terms.

This, then, is the situation in which the thinker worked. With the court disconcerned, or, not necessarily benevolently, neutral, he stood alone in his task. He had to, and did, respond to the configuration of circumstances and he had to, and did, respond to the exigencies of the tradition. Of this he selected parts which he asserted often unquestioningly; others he expanded and developed as continuator and as initiator, Confucianist in his traditionalism as well as in his vision.

A very general survey of the trends which then emerged might observe that:

The ethical and the institutional systems as such were generally accepted as given premises and were not, or rather not yet, drawn into question.

There was a decline of interest in speculative systematics of philosophy. Whereas in Ming times we still find speculative, frequently ingeniously speculative, minds, this branch of philosophy had already received less attention in early Ch'ing times and, after a brilliant short revival in mid-Ch'ing, faded out almost entirely in the nineteenth century.

There was a decline of emphasis on educational theory, the field which had been brought to such proud heights in early Ch'ing times.

There was a narrowing of the contents of rational and pragmatic thinking for which also early Ch'ing was so representative.

There were the beginnings of a renewed institutional utopianism and, concomitantly, theoretical reevaluations of existing institutions including the imperial establishment itself.

More importantly, there was a renewed emphasis on the concept of change and a strengthened insight in the necessity of change. The change concept did, however, move more and more away from the cyclical pattern established by the *yin-yang* philosophers and Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒 and reasserted and developed the idea of change inherent in the older layers of the *Book of Changes*. With this, the validity of the cyclical theory of history also dwindled.

There was, within ethics, a trend toward emphasizing individual over social values, and attempts to justify these argued from the nature of man rather than from the force of tradition.

And there was finally and most importantly, an overwhelming emphasis of those trends within metaphysics that sought new certainties, particularly certainties about and within the human mind, the postulate *gnothi seauton* being carried to new and surprising dimensions.

THE CONFIGURATION OF SCHOOLS

It appears pleasingly appropriate that these issues were discussed and advanced in definable and cohesive schools of thought. School pride, school loyalty, and school eristics contributed to the formation and the maintenance of these institutions. Actually the phenomenon of definable and self-defined schools was of comparatively recent date. The school of Wang Yang-ming 王陽明—Wangyangmingian influences direct or indirect can be found in several disparately different schools—did not outlast the Ming dynasty for long. Of the great masters of early Ch'ing, such as Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武, Wang Fu-chih 王夫之, Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲, and Yen Yüan 顏元, only the last left behind what can be called a school, a rather short-lived affair which was not maintained into our period, and for which an ephemeral attempt at revival in the early twentieth century did not find many takers. Even though some of them were claimed as patriarchs by certain later Ch'ing schools, this was a posthumous and somewhat artificial construction. Their influence was, however, by no means lost; it appears to a greater or lesser degree in several, if not all of the schools of the day. Only the orthodoxy, then called the School of Sung Learning 宋學, could look back on a more consistent ancestry. However the main contribution of early-Ch'ing orthodoxy, educational philosophy, was not any more a prime concern of the School of Sung Learning during the nineteenth century.

Only a few of the issues mentioned above were the exclusive property of one of these schools. Most of them can be observed as the concerns of

several, and they were discussed within these schools occasionally along parallel, more often however along mutually opposing, arguments. These issues circumscribed the body of contemporary problems linked to the contemporary reality. They had to be faced in pure as well as in pragmatic thought. In both of these instances the tradition was, of course, one of the given premises. All of the schools, however, including the orthodox school, reinterpreted, controverted, or circumvented the tenets of the tradition to an extent which adds to their pronouncements a highly contemporary, even modern, ring.

It was these issues and positions taken on these issues, then, which gave color and flavor, but also coherence to these schools. It can be observed, however, that these positions were rarely chosen on the strength of strictly intellectual and spiritual deliberations only. The spectrum of these positions also seems to reflect a spectrum of attitudes toward the body politic, so that it can be vaguely compared to a spread of political parties. This suggestion will have to be advanced with great caution. Ch'ing government was too strong and too shrewd to tolerate "parties" or "cliques" within which the political outweighed strictly intellectual or spiritual activities. Such "parties" had occasionally emerged in earlier periods of Chinese history, always with disastrous, mostly catastrophically disastrous, results for the participants. No such power competition was possible in Ch'ing times; it was never attempted until the very end of the imperial period when one such attempt again led to catastrophe and others finally brought to a close the imperial establishment.

If analyzed cautiously along the lines of argument offered by the sociology of knowledge one might, however, discover certain affinities between intellectual and political positions. I want to warn against representing these affinities as too close, as one to one equations, so to speak, between a certain school and a certain social class. Such attempts have been numerous and vociferous recently. They all overlook the fact that all these schools were primarily intellectual and spiritual entities and that they rarely meant to deal with the nakedly political. Their very level of existence kept them removed from such considerations. Nevertheless their choice of positions and the quality and the essence of their argument might well have, covertly, even unconsciously, been codetermined by political convictions. The possible range of these convictions was, of course, limited. One should be careful not to label them with terms such as "liberal" or "conservative" (all schools of Confucianism were to a degree "conservative"), which are taken from a context vastly different from the one then prevailing in China.

If, then, the creative tension between the intellectual and the political

establishment, or more concretely between gentry and government, is taken as the focus of attention, one might try to discover within the several branches of the School of Han Learning 漢學 indications of an emphasis on the gentry pole of this tension. Since this tension presupposed the existence of both poles, and since involvement in government service was a basic proposition for the very existence of the gentry, this emphasis was never negative or combative in principle. It was, however, assertive of its own role within the framework of traditional institutions, social and political, as might have been the case of the Kiangsu branch of this school, or independent of it, an assertion which might be considered as underlying much of the arguments of the Anhui branch. This assertion, and the social responsibility attaching to it, seems to have helped to differentiate the branches of this school from orthodoxy.

The orthodox school, or School of Sung Learning, has frequently been, and, it appears to me, with some reason, represented as emphasizing the other pole. Again the responsibility accruing from this position will have to be stressed. It permitted, even demanded, and in our period achieved, an underpinning of this position in metaphysical and psychological terms in which the Han School scholars were not involved.

The New Text 今學 School, finally, claimed to be "neither Han nor Sung" in an attempt to break out of this tension and its responsibilities and to discover in, or adapt from, tradition new absolutes hitherto undiscovered, an attempt which made them the great utopians both theoretically and in social practice.

All schools faced however the court's ideological disconcert. To belong to one or the other of these schools did not enhance or impede political careers. In the eighteenth century and also in our period Han School scholars fared well, frequently better than their Sung School colleagues in political positions of every description. And it was only the most combative branch of the Sung School, the so-called Tung-ch'eng 桐城 School, which became famous for its stylistic rather than its philosophical endeavors, which was able to make room for its adherents on a wider scale.

THE SCHOOL OF HAN LEARNING

The School of Han Learning has been most commonly defined as the one which represents the main contribution to thought and science during Ch'ing times. By the end of the eighteenth century this school had already passed its zenith; it was however still a strong intellectual unit with a school cohesiveness which might have even been stronger than in the earlier

periods, with a greater loyalty than ever to their tradition, and with ongoing intellectual offerings of a high level of excellence and relevance. The school had derived its name from the fact that its members had broken away from the dominance of, and eventually opposed themselves to, the orthodoxy of the Ch'eng-Chu 程朱 tradition, and that many of them had, to sustain their position, taken the scholarship of Han times for evidence and authority. The name as such is actually recent. It gained currency only after Chiang Fan 江藩 (1761-1831) had published in 1818 his *Record of the School Tradition of the Han School* (*Han-hsüeh shih-ch'eng chi* 漢學師承記). Otherwise the school is known as the School of Research or the School of Plain Science (P'u-hsüeh 樸學). Strictly speaking the name would fit only Chiang's own branch of the Han School, the so-called Kiangsu Branch and its master Hui Tung 惠棟 (1697-1758), to whom "anything old was genuine and anything Han was good." Other members of this school did not work under such limitations, but it has become the fashion to include posthumously early-Ch'ing thinkers, particularly Ku Yen-wu, among the founding fathers of this school. Hui's indebtedness to Ku is evident, and Hui's positions and attitudes constituted a continued strand within this school. By the nineteenth century its several branches, never in opposition to each other, had been welded into one comprehensive unit which worked and fought together.

Chiang's above-mentioned *Record* shows that by that time the Han School was already in its harvest reaping period. Chiang's contemporary and friend, the great scholar-statesman Juan Yüan 阮元 (1764-1849), worked along similar lines. Mainly interested in philology and textual criticism, he compiled a voluminous and enormously useful glossary based to a large extent on the research done by his school; he furthermore compiled a new edition of the Thirteen Classics in which the earlier commentaries were supplemented by more recent ones; and finally he compiled the collection of works dealing with the interpretations of the classics, the *Huang-Ch'ing ching-chieh* 皇清經解. From his major publications it might appear that he was interested in the classics exclusively. This, however, is not the case; he was equally fascinated by epigraphical documents, was a great art collector, and also published a collection of biographies of astronomers. His career kept him during most of his life in the provinces. After several governorships he was made Governor-General of Liang-kuang and then of Yünnan and Kueichow. He held a court position only during the last year of his career when he was already over seventy. The personal influence of this towering figure on the budding young scholars at the capital was thus possibly not as immediate as it would have deserved to be.

Collecting and recording its past activities was not the only matter engaging the Han School, creative research was still one of its ongoing concerns. The spirit in which this research was conducted and its special range of topics contributed considerably to the intellectual climate of the time. For the sobriety of this research spirit Hui Tung had undoubtedly been indebted to Ku Yen-wu. From him he might also have inherited some of what has been called the aristocratic attitude of his branch of the Han School, which involved pride not only in personal school accomplishments but also in personal, family, and school traditions which he invested with an unusual degree of authority. Statements on scholarly questions were based on these authoritative traditions as much, possibly even more than, on the facts which the data might present. The right or wrong of these statements was an ethical as well as a scholarly affair. By reason of his penetrating judgment it was the eminent scholar to whom also decisions in mundane affairs should advert.

In one point Hui went, however, much beyond what Ku Yen-wu and the Ku tradition could be taken as a model for. I am referring to his attitude toward competing schools, particularly the orthodoxy, or the School of Sung Learning as it came to be known by this time. Ku had never ranked Chu Hsi 朱熹 down, on the contrary Ku held Chu in high esteem and frequently quotes him as an authority. Hui, on the other hand, had not much use for the Sung School even in issues on which they fought shoulder to shoulder. Thus the lines of battle between the schools were drawn. Hui himself did not indulge very much in polemics, instead he set his disciples and friends on the trail, most importantly Tai Chen 戴震 (1724-1777), and the school controversy then eventually reached a degree of acerbity which is reminiscent of late-Sung or late-Chou times.

Topically Hui's research was not limited to, but largely concentrated on, philology, especially classical philology, problems of textual transmission, and classics interpretations. The classic which occupied him most was the *Book of Changes*. This preference was again imprinted on the later activities of his school and reached new heights of perfection in the nineteenth century. Latter day social scientists have remarked on the sterility of these studies using an argument closely related to the currently fashionable argument from relevance. Now, philology is never a sterile discipline. It is a science with its own necessities and its own fascination. In the context of the Chinese textual tradition it is furthermore a science which is indispensable also from the historian and the social scientist. And it is finally a field of endeavor in which the "research spirit" could be developed and exercised, a

field in which the arts of the unbiased approach, of the clean and stringent argument, and of the weighing of evidence could be and have been cultivated. The creation and maintenance of this scientific spirit is undoubtedly the foremost single contribution of the Han School including its representatives in the nineteenth century. Modern Chinese science is unthinkable without this training and without this integrity.

Hui Tung's emphasis on scholastic traditions gave his school a spirit of cohesion which lasted well into the middle of the nineteenth century. His disciples were numerous and prolific and widened the topics of studies considerably. From among them, Ch'ien Ta-hsin 錢大昕 (1728-1804) might be mentioned. His main field of interest appears to have been history. His voluminous *Critical Notes on the Twenty-two Dynastic Histories* (*Nien-erh shih k'ao-i* 廿二史考異) is still today an indispensable tool of historical research, and his *Record of Uncertain Dates* (*I nien lu* 疑年錄) set the pace for a whole new genre of historical studies. It might be considered reflective of the spirit of his school that he worked intensively on the history of the Mongols, an interest which again created a trend among later scholars who worked on customs and history of the Mongols, specifically also on the *Secret History of the Mongols*. He thereby prepared the ground for, and frequently anticipated, the results of contemporary scholarship. In the mid-nineteenth century the best known representative of this trend was Chang Mu 張穆 (1805-1849), the biographer of Ku Yen-wu. Ch'ien is furthermore known as the compiler of a number of chronological biographies (*nien-p'u* 年譜) including his own, and of a number of local gazetteers.

Among Ch'ien's students Sun Hsing-yen 孫星衍 (1753-1818) stands out; he extended his philological and linguistic acumen from the classics to such non-Confucianist writings as the militarist *Sun-tzu* and the Taoist *Pao-p'u tzu* and to books in the field of history, geography, and law; he even studied Buddhist classics intensively, using them as a source for his lexicographical and phonological researches. Also to this school belongs Ku Kuang-ch'i 顧廣圻 (1766-1835), the famous collator of Confucianist and non-Confucianist writings of antiquity. Even though the skills of these two were mainly in the field of philology, the vast range of books for which they prepared new and reliable editions added to the intellectual climate of the period.

Hui Tung's influence on the Anhui branch of the School of Han Learning perhaps in the long run was of an importance equal to that of the founding of his own school. Tai Chen, the protagonist of the Anhui branch, acknowledged freely that he had received from Hui the directives for his

polemics against the system of Chu Hsi and for a foundation of his own philosophy. Before he had met Hui, Tai had based himself largely on Chuhsist orthodoxy, particularly those aspects of it which prevailed in the orthodox school from which Tai had received his basic training. The aspect of Chu Hsi's system which was emphasized there was the "investigation of things (*ko-wu* 格物)," and this encyclopedic approach remained with Tai for the rest of his life. For institutional and scientific studies he had already expressed that the data provided within the Chu Hsi tradition were insufficient and that they should be complemented by the insights of Han scholars; he had already justified scientific, especially textual, studies by declaring the texts as the only means of recognition of the *tao* of the classics. It was however Hui who opened his eyes to the fact that Chu Hsi's system could not just be complemented but that the system as such had to go if one wanted to establish a foundation for a new intellectual approach. Thereafter Tai demonstrated in passage after passage that Chu Hsi's dualism was a logical fallacy and an arbitrary prop for authoritarianism and that it would disappear if only proper attention be paid to the essential nature of things, especially to human nature, including human emotions and human desires. These passages are worded in a way which is reminiscent of and undoubtedly derived from similar passages in Huang Tsung-hsi. An indirect influence of Wang Yang-ming can thus be discovered in Tai's philosophy and in his ideological stance.

At a time when Ch'ing power was at its height Tai's philosophical position had, of course, a somewhat unrealistic ring, and his philosophy went at that time almost entirely unnoticed. It is only his most intimate disciples who occasionally make mention of it. Tai's position showed, however, the same partisan strength of a period of ideological battle and the same ardor which Huang had shown. Thus, although his school later emphasized his scientific merits more than his philosophy, all of his disciples showed overtones of a specific zeal that grew out of these neglected foundations of Tai's system and made them arrogate to themselves the right to be considered not merely accurate scientists but fighters for the truth.

Tai's own scholarly contributions were really encyclopedic. Those of his disciples also came from a variety of fields, the most outstanding among them from the field of linguistics and philology. Here is found Tuan Yü-ts'ai 段玉裁 (1735-1815), the famous etymologist and creator of a long tradition of scholarship based on the Han dictionary *Shuo-wen* 說文, Wang Nien-sun 王念孫 (1744-1832), also mainly interested in phonology and etymology, Wang's son Wang Yin-chih 引之 (1766-1834), the great

philologue, and many others. They are generally considered the ancestors of modern Chinese phonology, philology, and textual criticism. There were, however, among his students also famous mathematicians and those engaged in institutional studies.

What we find, then, in the Han School of the nineteenth century are skilled, frequently brilliant, craftsmen of scholarship, ingenious and inventive in their methods, far flung and free from bias in their interests, sober and thorough in their approach. Their scholarly attitude as such, the frequently praised "research spirit," was one of the determinants of the intellectual climate of the time and to a degree imposed itself even on competing schools. As far as the metaphysical, and also the ideological, foundations of their science go, they were dependent upon the founders of a previous generation. They were epigones who prodded along successfully in the field of application where their teachers had broken new ground in the field of essence. In this period it is to schools which strive along different lines, the Orthodoxy and the New Text School, that we have to look for the advancement of, and a potential breakthrough in, the cause of the human mind. It has to be remembered, though, that these schools had to work in an intellectual context within which the Han School was a well-established and widely respected unit, coherent and assertive, at times even combative, without whose firm stand in matters of the intellect the innovative lines of development of the other schools might not have taken the direction which they did, and had to, assume.

THE ORTHODOXY

The term "orthodoxy" is applied here to the school of thought which derived its basic positions from the great neo-Confucianists of Sung times, particularly from Ch'eng I 程頤 and Chu Hsi. It is thus also frequently referred to as the Ch'eng-Chu School and in our period, in contrast to the Han School, as the School of Sung Learning. That this school was officially considered, and considered itself, as the only orthodox one is due to several reasons among which the fact that it is the school with the longest unbroken tradition is certainly one. Imperial recognition as the only correct doctrine had, however, come to this school already in previous dynasties, and the early Manchu emperors had taken the same position. This imperial decision, especially in the case of the Manchu emperors, was certainly due to political rather than philosophical considerations. From the wide store of Chu Hsi's system slogans could be derived and incorporated into a "Sacred Edict,"

which was of great usefulness for the ideological support of imperial control. No intellectual or spiritual commitment was involved in this established imperially sanctioned ideology. The fact remains, however, that this sanction existed and that Ch'eng-Chu Confucianism was thereby transformed into what Legge has termed Imperial Confucianism. Members of this school could, and occasionally did, borrow imperial thunder in their controversies with competing schools, whose adherents had always to be aware of the implication that their positions bordered on the at least ideologically heretical. This added at times a tinge of defensiveness, at times aggressive defensiveness, to the promulgations of the Han scholars but also a greater cohesiveness to their school. They always were, and knew they were, innovators when compared with the orthodoxy.

The more prominent among the orthodox scholars made little, if any, use of this imperial sanction. Their orthodox conviction, that is to say the conviction that they were in possession and had to guard the only correct doctrine, was based on intellectual rather than political considerations. This conviction was accompanied by a strong sense of responsibility for the heritage of the past, its maintenance and its development. The heritage thus guarded did include the imperial establishment in all its manifestations, with which the orthodoxy identified more unquestioningly than any other school. Thoughts about the imperial person and imperial institutions thus always came from within the system and not from without. Even when modifications were suggested or approaches to the foundations of such institutions were differently qualified, this was never done in a critical sense, as was the case, for instance, with Tai Chen, but in support of, rather than as an attack on, the emperor and the way in which his power was revealed. Born out of orthodox responsibility, thoughts concerning the development of the heritage were thus characterized by a different kind of conviction than were the critical attitudes of the outsiders. It will be seen that the special emphases of the orthodox school in our period and the depth to which these emphases were carried almost, but not quite, went to the point of destroying the foundations of an orthodox creed.

The flow of developments within the Ch'eng-Chu tradition had been quite dramatic since Sung times. Never again did the school attain the comprehensiveness which Chu Hsi had established. Later periods as a rule contented themselves with accepting as authoritative major portions of Chu Hsi's doctrine without submitting them to any creative expansion. This is particularly evident with regard to Chu's systematic metaphysics and its dualistic foundation. In Ming times we find occasionally still sophisticated

and quite ingenious elaborations within this discipline, but during the last dynasty interests and emphases shifted elsewhere. This is also evident with regard to Chu's encyclopedic phenomenology which came under the heading "the investigation of things." Chu himself had achieved the status of a major scientist in his time; no later Chuhsist could approach him in this field. Here, too, interest in the "things," taken as phenomena, waned. What was maintained was a sharp focus on the "principles" (*li* 理) of things, a focus which Chu Hsi's system does not lack, but which now provided one of the main and most exciting contributions of nineteenth-century orthodoxy. More about this will have to be said below. Nor did practical ethics attract much creative thought: here the focus during the nineteenth century was also on the foundation of ethics rather than on virtues and tenets. What was maintained and intensified was educational philosophy and educational practice. All through Ch'ing times, but again particularly in the nineteenth century, we find educational philosophers reverting to the older Ch'eng I rather than the younger Chu Hsi concerning educational methods which would influence the unconscious reaches of the students' minds. Under the heading "cultivation of the personality," this interest shifted more and more from the students' education to self-education, preceding which an intensive exploration of the self and of the human mind as the seat of the self contributed probably the single most important result of nineteenth-century orthodoxy.

If these trends are taken together it appears that the emphasis of the early nineteenth century was on the fundamentals more than on the externals, on the contemplative more than on the rational, and on the unconscious more than on the conscious. These trends had, of course, existed before within orthodoxy; they had, however, never before reached the same degree of urgency and, I would like to add, intentionally or not, of insight. With this "internalization" then the thinkers of the early nineteenth century reacted to the situation and the problems of their time, which, after all, did not only show the dynastic cycle in decline but which, more than that, had reached the point where it had become necessary to question and, if possible, to reassert and to develop the essence of the Chinese tradition and the character of the men who were called upon to sustain it.

T'ang Chien 唐鑑 (1778-1861) was the man who dominated the intellectual climate at the capital and whom many, not only of the writers but also of the politicians of the period, revered as their teacher. He reissued Chu Hsi's *Complete Works*, wrote on Chu Hsi's philosophical system, and worked on Chu Hsi's biography. He furthermore is the historian of the Chu

Hsi school in Ch'ing times who traced his own philosophy back to the revered masters of the beginning of the dynasty. He reintroduced, or at least strengthened, the trend among young scholars to submit themselves to a number of self-disciplinary methods reminiscent of Ignatian exercises. And he finally wrote on a number of Classics, especially again the *Book of Changes*. In his career he made a reputation for himself by suppressing a Yao rebellion (in 1832) through a mixture of physical force and ideological means, and later in his life by impeaching Ch'i-shan 琦善 and Ch'i-ying 耆英. Among his policy proposals the ones concerning irrigational matters are of interest. His last official position, after several periods of imperial disgrace, was Director of the Court of Sacrificial Worship.

T'ang's philosophy is indebted to the great neo-Confucianists of Sung, in addition to Chu Hsi especially to Ch'eng I, to Ming orthodoxy, especially Wu Yü-pi 吳與弼, but to a certain extent also to the writers of the Tung-lin Academy, and finally to early-Ch'ing orthodoxy. It might be worth mentioning that this period brought a new wave of Buddhist influences on Confucian orthodoxy. Several of the Ch'eng-Chu scholars of this time had originally been Buddhist and reverted to neo-Confucianism only after some kind of a conversion or sudden enlightenment. They did, however, carry along certain attitudes toward, and observant considerations of, issues close to the heart of a Buddhist, particularly concerning the workings of the individual human mind. Of the great masters of early Ch'ing, Lu Lung-ch'i 陸隴其 (1630-1692) seems to be the one from whom T'ang learned most.

T'ang did not leave any systematic or extensive philosophical writings. His philosophy may be gleaned from a number of essays, prefaces, and letters contained in his *Collected Writings* but most intimately from his *Inverted Breviary* (*Ssu-pien-chai hsing-shen jih-k'o*) 四砭齋省身日課, a collection of disconnected notes and sayings originally intended as one of the then current self-disciplinary exercises.

The most pertinent portions of T'ang Chien's philosophy are subsumed, as they were in early Ch'ing, under the two connected concepts "abiding in reverence" and "exhausting the principles." T'ang derives both from Chu Hsi's *ko-wu* (investigation of things) concept, the first prescribing how to investigate and the second what to investigate. The Chinese term "*ching* 敬" translated as reverence here, has been rendered differently, for example as "concentration" or "seriousness." In the context of Chu Hsi's writings and also still in the context of Ku Yen-wu, who had emphasized the concept strongly, such renderings might well serve the purpose. I would like to suggest, however, that in the context of Ch'ing orthodoxy the more old-

fashioned word "reverence" be maintained in order to express its strongly devotional connotations. Also the term "principles" (*li*) is hard to translate unambiguously. Renderings such as "law," "organic law," or "the law of reason" have been proposed. In Ch'ing times the term seems to comprise both: the principles inherent in things and the principles of the rational mind, the immanent as well as the transcendent, in other words it approaches the realms of both the Platonian and the Kantian idea.

T'ang's philosophy, then, bestrides the disciplines of ethics and epistemology, trying to lay new foundations for both and occasionally also borrowing from both. This was done under the perennial Confucian tenet of "the cultivation of the personality" (*hsiu-shen* 修身), which for T'ang, however, was not an exclusively, not even a basically ethical problem; ethical attitudes and works of moral endeavor, much as they were on T'ang's mind, had to be derived from a fundamental knowledge and understanding of the self. Self-cultivation did also mean, but did not mean only derivatively, self-criticism and the adherence to an ethical system, it meant to begin with self-realization. And thus he explores intensely and with loving care layer after layer of the human mind until, analogous to a descent into hell, he reaches rock bottom.

What he found there was fear (Angst).

Earlier Confucianists, especially Lu Lung-ch'i, had already occasionally hinted at the possibility that fear was at the bottom of things. The specific uncertainties which led to this finding might, however, have been different in early- and in late-Ch'ing times. In the case of Lu it might be surmised that they were institutional. The urgency of institutional pressure was, however, not any more and not yet again as great in T'ang's time. His uncertainties most definitely were ontological. Since T'ang's realization took place in the time context of the early nineteenth century and since he has to be credited with an at least intuitional understanding of the contemporary situation, one is tempted to say that these uncertainties were also existentialist. His realization involved uncertainties about the self, about the calling of his social group, and about the very essence of his cultural tradition. Complacency was not an attitude sported by T'ang.

The consequences of this realization led T'ang, as is seen from every aspect of his teachings, very far. They did, however, not lead him to that fateful step of an unlimited consummation of his insight. They came very close to dismembering Chu Hsi's basic dualism, they also came very close to establishing within an orthodox creed the autonomy of the human mind, a postulate at which the "heretics" had arrived with great ease within the

context of their utopian thought. His orthodox responsibility, however, stood in the way of an essential criticism of the tradition: his criticism pertained, and fiercely so, to the self only. He thus fell just short of achieving a new phase in the self-realization of the human mind which might have led China into modernity on her own terms. History did not provide the time for a logical and rational continuation of T'ang's thought, and thus T'ang was passed by as the frustrated initiator, justifying, more probably than he himself realized, his existentialist fear.

THE NEW TEXT SCHOOL

In a letter to Chiang Fan, Kung Tzu-chen 龔自珍 (1792-1841), the foremost representative of the New Text School in our period, once defined the attitude of his group in the following words: "In our dynasty there is (a group of) select scholars. They roam around in the uncommentated texts and newly discover the classics. They are not Han and they are not Sung, they are just out for reality and nothing else."

This "not Han not Sung" attitude does not mean that the New Text scholars did not receive influences from both these sides. Relationships with the Sung School were maintained by Ho Ch'ang-ling 賀長齡 (1785-1848), a crew mate and close friend of T'ang Chien with whom he entertained a running correspondence especially on T'ang's writings on the *Book of Changes*, and who on the other hand, together with Wei Yüan 魏源 (1794-1856), compiled the *Collected Essays on Statesmanship from Our Dynasty* (*Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* 皇朝經世文編, completed 1826), one of the foremost contributions of the New Text School. Kung Tzu-chen had studied with profit under his maternal grandfather Tuan Yü-ts'ai, and furthermore Chang Hui-yen 張惠言 (1761-1802) owed much to Hui Tung in his extensive *I-ching* studies. Thus school relationships were on the whole amiable and only occasionally some barbs were exchanged. Wei Yüan once called the Sung scholars "courtyard Confucianists" and the Han scholars "dirtroad track Confucianists."

The New Text School owes much of its stature to its philological acumen, attention to which is expressed in its name. Their approach to textual studies differs, however, somewhat from that of the Han scholars. About one of the forerunners, Chuang Ts'un-yü 莊存與 (1719-1788), Juan Yüan once said: "He alone grasped the subtleties and the great meaning of the Saint by reading between the lines." The grasping of the subtleties and the great meaning remained one of the leading tenets of this

school. Both were, as Wei Yüan once put it, to be discovered "for the sake of politics" and that means contemporary politics. This search for an understanding of reality and the means of handling it lent a great amount of excitement to the procedures of this school, and their textual studies opened new frontiers. Their name was thus not only the borrowing of a term current in Han times, what they offered was new in the context of their own time. Among their ranks, then, we find not only the philologues but also the theoretical and practical reformers and eventually the creative utopians. Working with the same methods as the Han scholars, they offered a new foundation to scholarship, and proceeding from the same sources as the Sung scholars they reversed their direction by a re-externalization of thought. They have been accused of having wanted to help their own time under the cloak of antiquity, a reproach which they might not have resented.

There is more than the name that connects the New Text School with its predecessor in Han times. The New Texters received from Tung Chung-shu (second century BC) and Ho Hsiu 何休 (129-182 AD) and their favorite classic, the *Kung-yang Commentary*, the concepts of the three reigns (*san-t'ung* 三同, which had different calendars), the three periods (*san-shih* 三世), and the moving from the within to the without (*nei-wai* 內外). All these doctrines involve the idea of progressing from chaos to order and proceeding from what is close to what is far, in other words they are based on the concept of change, which is time-given and with which man has to keep pace. Their change concept was, however, considerably deepened by their *I-ching* expertise.

There is then a distinct affinity between the ideas of the New Texters and the teachings of Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692), himself a great *I-ching* expert. This affinity might in the beginning have been coincidental since Wang's writings do not seem to have been widely known before they were printed or reprinted, first by Teng Hsien-ho 鄧顯鶴 (in 1849-1851) and then by Tseng Kuo-fan 曾國藩 (in 1865). For the later stages of the school direct influences from Wang can be easily traced.

Kung Tzu-chen did, however, choose his authorities with circumspection and did occasionally side with a man as ill reputed as Wang Yang-ming against Chu Hsi and, for that matter, Wang Fu-chih. This was done in a passage which exposes another one of the pillars of the New Texters' doctrine. In its social and economic realities and responsibilities are faced squarely, within his change concept these had to be dealt with. In a fascinating passage Yün Ching 惲敬 (1757-1817) once developed the idea that

social change comes spontaneously, institutional change however is man's responsibility. He who grasps the necessity of institutional change indicated by the prevailing stage of social change at a time when the situation has sufficiently matured will not only be able to base his position on flawlessly fitting institutions, but will in turn be able to influence the direction of social change.

It might be worth mentioning that among the New Texters there were some who are generally considered the foremost writers and poets of the day. Chang Hui-yen and Yün Ching established, among other things, a new school of prose writing, the so-called Yang-hu 陽湖 School, and Kung Tzu-chen, both in his poems and in his songs, set the pace for the emergence of modern Chinese poetry. They were familiar with all the torments of the creative process and their experiences with literary creativity might have helped to condition the way along which their creative thought proceeded.

CONCLUSION: THE DEFLECTED DEVELOPMENT

By mid-century it was the great ideological strategist Tseng Kuo-fan (1811-1872) who pulled these different trends together. Tseng was a disciple and friend of Tang Chien, from whom he received his soul-searching and self-criticizing attitude. He was also a friend of, and shared some concepts with, the staunchest defender of traditionalist attitudes, Wo-jen 倭仁 (died 1871), particularly his concept of emperorology. He was an admirer and expander of the offerings of the most aggressive branch of the Sung scholars, the so-called Tung-ch'eng School. For a time he lived at the Hall of Reverence for Ku Yen-wu where he consorted with Han School scholars. Some of his essays show to what extent the teachings of Huang Tsung-hsi had filtered down into his time, and he was the one who made Wang Fuchih's works available to the world. He was also a lover of the literary heritage, a great creative writer himself, and in his period the undisputed arbiter litterarum. As such he had words of high praise particularly for Chang Hui-yen. He was, however, above all, a man of action with well-laid plans in the fields of the political and the military as well as in the intellectual field, slow moving at times, rarely ever impetuous, and with the patience, and the hope, to let a situation mature before reacting to it. In addition to time conditions it was mainly due to the efforts of Tseng that school differences lost much of their sting and that, during the second half of the century, Confucianism fought its battles as a more or less united front.

If the move toward modernity is considered in correlation to the devel-

opment of human consciousness it appears that the preconditions for such a move were rather propitious at mid-century. There had been prevailing on the one side a trenchantly critical and tormentingly self-critical attitude which almost amounted to a malaise; there had been soul-searching and the frightening confrontation with the unconscious. There had been on the other side a sober realization of changing times and of the necessity of change, a realization of the interrelatedness of economic conditions and social, institutional and ideological change and, most importantly, a realization of man's social responsibility and his responsibility for bringing about change. These intellectual developments might well have led, one would like to assume, to an organic development of the tradition which could have accommodated a new era of Chinese existence.

Alas, es hat nicht sollen sein. Events outside of the control of the Chinese mind interfered and brought about conditions which not only deprived Confucianist thought of the necessary time for maturing but also confronted the Confucianists with choices with which they were not, or not yet, able to cope, even if they had the power to do so, which of course, they had not. These choices, appealing to emotional rather than intellectual considerations, pulled out of kilter developing Confucianist positions and distorted them into shapes which appeared as compelling as they were superficial. Thus was an indigenous development deflected from its course, and subsequent Chinese history, intellectual as well as political, is determined by the changing phases of this Great Encounter.