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POLITICS AND MORALITY IN NORTHERN SUNG CHINA: EARLY NEO-CONFUCIAN VIEWS ON OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

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Politics and Morality in Northern Sung China: Early Neo-Confucian Views on Obedience to Authority

by

Alan Thomas Wood

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Signature Alan J Wood

Date 5/28/81

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHR	American Historical Review
CCC	Ch'un-ch'iu chuan, by Liu Ch'ang.
CCCC	Ch'un-ch'iu ching-chieh, by Sun Chüeh.
CCFL	Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu, by Tung Chung-shu.
CCHC	Tsung Kung-yang-hsüeh lun Ch'un-ch'iu ti hsing-chih, by Juan Chih-sheng.
CCTWFW	Ch'un-ch'iu tsun-wang fa-wei, by Sun Fu.
CHY	"Sung-ju Ch'un-ch'iu tsun-wang yao-yi ti fa-wei yü ch'i cheng-chih ssu-hsiang," by Ch'en Ch'ing-hsin.
CYK	Ching-yi k'ao, compiled by Chu-Yi-tsun.
FEQ	Far Eastern Quarterly
HJAS	Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies
IESS	International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JAS	Journal of Asian Studies
LSCY	Ch'un-ch'iu chi-yi, compiled by Li Ming-fu.
PEW	Philosophy East and West
SKTY	Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao
SMFHC	Sun Ming-fu hsiao-chi, by Sun Fu.

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I would like also to thank the American taxpayer, who has through the G.I. Bill and Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 underwritten a good part of my graduate education. I am also grateful to Mr. David Hsiao for his generosity in establishing a scholarship at the University of Washington in the name of his father, Professor Hsiao Kung-ch'üan. Although Professor Hsiao had already retired before I began graduate school, his scholarship, integrity, and sense of humor have been a great inspiration. He is living proof that the values of the Confucian tradition have not yet been totally lost.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most frequently addressed moral dilemmas in the history of human civilizations and one of the most elusive of resolution is the dilemma which arises when the individual citizen of a state is confronted with a choice between two irreconcilable courses of action. One requires him to obey political authority as an indispensable condition of securing the civil order of society, and the other to remain loyal to moral values which are believed to be absolute and universal. These two courses of action may not necessarily, of course, be in opposition to each other--obeying a just law will not in the normal course of affairs require one to disobey a higher moral code. On the other hand, obedience to an unjust law or an unjust order does require a compromise, to some degree, of one's moral principles. What is one then to do? In order to preserve one's integrity it would be necessary to disobey the unjust law. But it becomes immediately clear to anyone willing to reflect on the problem that disobedience brings in its wake all kinds of unwelcome possibilities. Among the most important of them is the risk that disobedience will set into motion a train of circumstances which could conceivably under-

mine the very foundations of the social order itself, foundations on which all civilized life, including habits of moral behavior, depends.

There are ways out of this dilemma, but the price is high. One avenue of escape is to deny the existence or relevance of absolute moral values altogether, and argue that right and wrong are defined entirely by the exigencies of a particular set of circumstances, without any reference to a transcendent principle at all. This has been the route followed by the secular West in the last several centuries (beginning in political thought with Machiavelli and continuing into the present in the form of moral theories based on utilitarianism and pragmatism). One unintended and paradoxical consequence of this argument, which suspends the possibility of moral judgment about the nature of the means, especially when those means are placed in the service of noble ends, has been the fascination of idealists ever since the French Revolution with terrorism as an instrument of general moral improvement.

Another avenue of escape, in some ways a variant of the above, is to define moral authority in such a way that it becomes synonymous with the power of the state. For this apparently innocuous little twist the modern world is indebted to Jean Jacques Rousseau, among others.[1]

In the West the rise of the nation-state system (beginning in the middle of the 17th century, for want of a better date) coincided with and in turn accelerated the decline of ecclesiastical authority.[2] In an increasingly secular and self-confident world intellectuals grew impatient with the orthodox Christian doctrine of the imperfectibility of man and began to turn to the newly conceived institution of the modern state to bring about in this life the paradise which they had hitherto believed would come only in the next. The religious impulse was diverted into new channels, some deep, and some, like the one that led to Rousseau, shallow but well-travelled. Rousseau, finding himself in increasingly open rebellion against the rationalist forces of the Enlightenment, gave to the state a new significance by claiming it to be the embodiment of a nebulous substance which he described vaguely as the "general will" of the people. In Rousseau's thought the state became simply the outward manifestation and instrumentality of an inward consensus among the whole people of a given country, which was regarded, without the benefit of any systematic process of thinking, as by nature good, pure, and just. The result was that intellectuals who might have been expected in the past to regard the exercise of temporal power with a jaundiced eye, alert to the abuses which its

practitioners (flawed creatures as all men were assumed to be) were so easily led to commit, swallowed their reservations whole. Having thus disposed of their own critical faculties, they were easily induced to surrender to the state their liberties as well, and committed themselves thereafter entirely to its service.

Insofar as these intellectuals defined authority only in terms of its outward manifestation, that is, in terms of power, they produced some undesirable consequences. One was that the natural suspicion of all power entertained by those conscious of its potential for abuse was transferred to include all authority as well, since the two had become synonymous in their minds. The great danger was that this attitude could eventually sweep into oblivion whatever feeble obstacles to moral and political anarchy a given society might once have been protected by. Another consequence, at the other end of the spectrum, and equally dangerous, was that those individuals whose concern for the welfare of the community had persuaded them of the importance of authority would, carried away by their enthusiasm for authority and failing to see the distinction between authority and power, abandon altogether their suspicions of power and produce in the end a tyranny. Such mental distinctions were by no means without their practical consequences. We in the West

have in fact largely succumbed to the temptations of the former condition, while China and Russia have succumbed to the latter.

It is important to note, however, that even though these two solutions to the moral dilemma discussed above continue to dominate the prevailing mode of thinking in the modern age, they represent a substantial departure from the tradition of medieval natural law which preceded them. This subject will be treated further in Chapter Four; suffice it here to say that those who held to a medieval understanding of natural law affirmed the existence of absolute moral values which transcended the positive laws of any particular ruler and thereby opposed the claims to absolute authority put forth by European rulers in the 17th and 18th centuries. They did so, however, by affirming the ambiguities of moral choice rather than denying them.

But what precisely was the context of authority, within which this moral dilemma existed? Since the significance of this dissertation will not become fully apparent without a clear understanding of the meaning which I attach to the term "authority," it would be desirable to turn our attention for a moment to a brief consideration of what is a very complex concept indeed. The modern social sciences are far from unanimous in their

definition of the term authority.[3] Most, however, seem to argue that it represents a form of "legitimate power," by which is meant an acknowledgment by the governed that the government has in fact the right to rule and be obeyed.[4] That legitimacy may, according to the social scientists, derive from several possible sources. Max Weber believed that there were three--legal-rational, traditional, and charismatic.[5] More recently, Carl Friedrich has located the seat of authority in the rational nature of a communication between people.[6] For these thinkers, heirs of the developments in Western political theory from Hobbes through Locke to the 19th century utilitarians and liberals, authority in government is understood in the modern world to be the result of a voluntary relationship entered into between the citizens of a state and a "ruler" in order to protect certain rights which they may regard for any number of reasons as valuable.

To the extent that such a view of authority made it a function of the human will, either in the form of a legal-rational, traditional, or charismatic formulation, it departed from previous Western tradition, which regarded the world, both natural and human, as inherently and fundamentally hierarchical. Hannah Arendt, writing in the 1950's, has perhaps best expressed this traditional

understanding. She argues that authority is not to be mistaken for coercion or persuasion, and that it is intimately connected with a hierarchical interpretation of the social order:[7]

> Since authority always demands obedience, it is commonly mistaken for some form of power or violence. Yet authority precludes the use of external means of coercion; where force is used, authority itself has failed. Authority, on the other hand, is incompatible with persuasion, which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation. Where arguments are used, authority is left in abeyance. Against the egalitarian order of persuasion stands the authoritarian order, which is always hierarchical. If authority is to be defined at all, then, it must be in contradistinction to both coercion by force and persuasion through arguments. (The authoritarian relation between the one who commands and the one who obeys rests neither on common reason nor on the power of the one who commands; what they have in common is the hierarchy itself, whose rightness and legitimacy both recognize and where both have their predetermined stable place.)

She concludes that the egalitarian assumptions about the nature of man prevalent in the last few centuries in the West and the belief that history is a progressive unfolding of freedom have made it difficult for the modern mind to see the difference in kind, not only in degree, between the total loss of freedom in totalitarian governments and the limitations on freedom in authoritarian government. It has become equally difficult to understand how an "authoritarian" government, which restricts freedom, must also be committed to the preservation of freedom, and indeed cannot survive without

freedom (without becoming a tyranny), while a totalitarian government must, equally in order to survive, destroy freedom and spontaneity. What in fact is the difference between a tyranny and an authoritarian government? A tyrant rules by means of the arbitrary exercise of whatever means of power he may have at his disposal, legitimate or otherwise. In authoritarian governments, however, the source of authority "is always a force external and superior to its own power; it is always this source, this external force which transcends the political realm, from which the authorities derive their 'authority,' that is, their legitimacy, and against which their power can be checked."[8]

There can be few who would deny the importance of having a standard of moral reference against which actions and beliefs can be measured and which can command the allegiance of the intellectual leaders of any particular age. In fact it is only in terms of such reference that freedom and obedience have any meaning. The British historian of philosophy Peter Winch put it this way:[9]

> ...Authority...is not by any means a curtailment of liberty but is, on the contrary, a precondition of it. The liberty in question is the liberty to choose. Now choice, as Hobbes (though in a misleading way) emphasized, goes together with deliberation (Leviathan, Ch. 6). To be able to choose is to be able to consider reasons for and against. But to consider reasons is not, as Hobbes supposed, to be subject to the influence of forces. Considering reasons is a function of acting

> according to rules; reasons are intelligible only in the context of the rules governing the kind of activity in which one is participating. Only human beings are capable of participating in rule-governed activities, hence other animals cannot be said to deliberate and choose, though Hobbes, consistently with his premises, maintained otherwise. Thus it is only in the context of rule-governed activities that it makes sense to speak of freedom of choice; to eschew all rules--supposing for a moment that we understood what that meant--would not be to gain perfect freedom, but to create a situation in which the notion of freedom could no longer find a foothold. But I have already tried to show that the acceptance of authority is conceptually inseparable from participation in rule-governed activities. It follows that this acceptance is a precondition of the possibility of freedom of choice. Somebody who said that he was going to renounce all authority in order to insure that he had perfect freedom of choice would thus be contradicting himself. (A conceptual version of the man who thought that he could fly more easily if only he could escape the inhibiting pressure of the atmosphere.)

Nevertheless the term obedience carries with it for many a derogatory connotation of intellectual servitude and even oppression. This difficulty arises among those who associate the abuse of obedience to authority by those in various periods of history who have used it as an instrument of narrow and self-centered ends, with its true nature, and in wishing to rid themselves of the former reject also the latter. There is no doubt that an appeal to absolute authority of one sort or another has been the cause of much misfortune in the world, as those who attack Christianity by alluding to the excesses of the Inquisition never tire of pointing out, but it would

be a mistake to conclude that the primary fault lies with the fact of obedience itself, rather than with those who misuse its prerogatives. Obedience ought not to be used as a device to shove down the throats of an unwilling victim a rigid formulaic dogma, but to encourage a commitment to certain truths which are considered to be unalterable in their essential substance. These truths may require periodic restatement in order that their message may be more readily apprehended by new generations (whose special problems may even tempt some of them to dismiss the orthodoxy of the past as irrelevant). Their durability is a result not of the stagnation or failure to change of a particular historical period, but rather of their capacity to distinguish between essentials and accidentals, compromising on the latter as times change while clinging tenaciously to the former. The impulse to make this distinction, and the relative success or failure of those who try, very largely determines the intellectual vitality and often the political stability of any period of history.

Having sketched briefly the general problem let us turn now to a consideration of its relevance to Chinese political thought and further to the subject of this dissertation. The purpose of this dissertation is to adduce evidence in support of the proposition that the

full significance of the Neo-Confucian advocacy of obedience to the ruler in Northern Sung China (960-1127) emerges only after we place it in the context of a simultaneous advocacy of obedience to absolute moral values which transcended the interests of any particular ruler. The importance of those absolute values, in turn, can be fully comprehended only by placing them in the context of the metaphysical and cosmological explanation of the universe which was the hallmark of the Neo-Confucian movement. The assertion that political thought becomes fully intelligible only when the metaphysical assumptions on which it is based are made explicit has not commanded general assent in the 20th century. On the contrary, the Western (and particularly the English) tradition of empiricism has rejected the relevance of metaphysics altogether, simply by denying the possibility that the human mind is capable of arriving at any form of absolute or transcendent moral truth. This, combined with the modern Western views of individualism and freedom which have exercised such a profound influence on modern Chinese intellectuals as well as their Western colleagues who study Chinese history, has done much to cloud our understanding of the authoritarian political ideas and ideals of the Confucian tradition. In fact, in their rush to demonstrate how far short of their noble ideals the

Confucianists fell in actual practice, scholars may have come greatly to underestimate the beneficial role which ideas have played through the long course of Chinese history.

Chinese thinkers and practical statesmen, in fact, have wrestled with the dilemma of conflicting loyalties to authority from very early times. One of the earliest classical examples appears in the Shu-ching, where it is recorded that the pillar of Confucian virtue, the great Duke of Chou 周公, executed his own brother Kuan Shu 管叔 in order to suppress a rebellion against King Ch'eng 成王. This has been taken to imply the primacy of loyalty to the state over loyalty to family relations. Later, however, under differing circumstances, Confucius took a position which subordinated loyalty to the state to filial piety:[10]

> The Governor of She said to Confucius, 'In our village there is a man nicknamed "Straight Body." When his father stole a sheep, he gave evidence against him.' Confucius answered, 'In our village those who are straight are quite different. Fathers cover up for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. Straightness is to be found in such behavior.'

These two examples were used in the later Confucian tradition to illustrate the complexities of moral choice and the impossibility of arriving at a definition which would apply to all cases. Each particular situation was thus held to embody a unique configuration of costs and

benefits, the final moral decision being reached by a process of elimination in which the priorities were by no means clear.

Confucius believed that society was best ordered in conformity with certain principles which were hierarchical in nature. In the early Han this belief was harnessed to the purposes of a centralized bureaucratic state to elevate the position of the emperor to a higher level of importance than before.[11] The ruler's authority, however, was not understood to be absolute but to be contingent upon the bestowal of heaven's mandate (t'ien-ming 天命). Heaven, perceived in the early Chou as theistic and only gradually becoming viewed as naturalistic, was thought to grant or withdraw this mandate in accordance with whether or not the welfare of the people was being properly served.[12] In the words of the Shu-ching, "Heaven sees as my people see; Heaven hears as my people hear."[13] Mencius, who affirmed Confucius's conception of society as inherently hierarchical, had said that, "If the prince have great faults, they (his ministers) ought to remonstrate with him, and if he do not listen to them after they have done so again and again, they ought to dethrone him (yi-wei 易位)."[14] He also said, "Those who accord with heaven are preserved, and they who rebel against Heaven perish."[15] Hsün-tzu, though regarded by some as

leaning toward Legalism because of his emphasis on the importance of the ruler, also emphasized the importance of the people. He said, "when the people are satisfied with his government, then only is a prince secure in his position. It is said, 'The prince is the boat, the common people are the water. The water can support the boat or the water can capsize the boat.'"[16] These ideas were not rejected by later Confucianism, but were incorporated into it, as we shall see.

Confucianism became the dominant ideology of the Chinese state in the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C.--A.D. 8) partly because its emphasis on the natural hierarchy of the social order was attractive to rulers concerned about the legitimacy of their own authority. But Han Confucianism was not simply an ideological justification for the ruler's authority. The most important of the Han scholars, Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.), attempted to curb the arbitrary exercise of the ruler's power by threatening the intervention of heaven in the form of natural portents and disasters if the ruler should stray too far from the path of righteous and responsible behavior. Such a theory, of course, was based upon an assumption that heaven and earth were very closely related. This belief in the interaction of heaven and earth (t'ien-jen kan-ying 天人感應), however, became dis-

credited in the Later Han (A.D. 25-220) when sycophantic scholars used the theory not to limit the power of the ruler but enhance it (by interpreting natural portents as indications of heaven's favor toward a particular ruler).

The breakup of China following the end of the Han, together with the growing influence of Buddhism and Taoism on Chinese scholars from the Six Dynasties period (A.D. 222-589) to the T'ang (618-906) greatly affected the content of political thought. During the Wei-Chin period (220-317), for example, Lao-Chuang Taoist thought, which emphasized either a passive role for the ruler or no ruler at all, was the dominant influence on political thought.[17] Even later Confucian scholars were greatly influenced by this Taoist current. Wang T'ung 王通 (584-617), for example, took non-action as the keystone of his political ideas, and following Mencius placed great emphasis on the importance of ministering to the needs of the common people.[18] Han Yü 韓愈 (768-824), the T'ang Confucian most exalted by the early Sung Neo-Confucians (especially Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) tended to exalt the ruler and downplay the importance of the people, adhering more closely to the ideas of Hsün Tzu than Mencius.[19] Such a position was understandable in someone born not long after the An Lu-shan rebellion (755-757) had demonstrated the devastating consequences of weakened central rule and

civil war. But the destruction of civil order which caused Han Yü to reassert the importance of a strong ruler caused others to return once more to the solace of Lao-Chuang Taoism, and indeed the dominant influence on political thought during the troubled times from the An Lu-shan rebellion to the end of the Five Dynasties period (907-960) was Taoism.[20]

When we bring the story down to the Sung, what changes do we find? What is new in the political ideas of the Neo-Confucianists? Have they simply renovated an old tradition or have they added any striking innovations? The answer is a composite one. It arises from the observation that change in history is often not the consequence of the introduction of a radically new ingredient to a given set of circumstances, but of an alteration in the relative proportion of the ingredients, an increase or adjustment in the importance of one at the expense of others, such that the old ingredients act upon each other in a novel and unpredictable way. The major categories of thought which formed the currency of early Sung intellectual and political speculation grew out of ideas which had already had a long history. There were of course many concepts which underwent changes in definition as they were called upon to perform new tasks, but for the most part the children bear a remarkable resemblance to

their parents. The concept of li 理 , or principle, for example, which was one of the most significant ideas of the Neo-Confucian movement, owes its importance more to a shift in emphasis than to a radical departure in definition.[21]

The same is true of Neo-Confucian attitudes toward the ruler. There is a change in emphasis, an elevation of the ruler to a degree of supremacy which was unprecedented. On a practical level, this change was due to a desire to avoid the anarchism which had prevailed before the Sung, and originated not with the intellectuals but with the first Sung emperor, T'ai-tsu 太祖 (reigned 960-976). T'ai-tsu, having once been a general in the Later Chou 後周 dynasty (951-960), the last of the Five Dynasties, and having seized the throne himself, was more than moderately aware of the need to reduce the power of the military and reassert the authority of a strong central ruler. He did this by retiring on generous terms his own top generals, and replacing them either with civilian officials or with military men whose authority over strictly non-military matters such as tax collection was carefully circumscribed. In general the best troops were moved to the area around the capital where they could be carefully supervised (unless of course they were involved in a specific military campaign, which was in any case

closely directed by the emperor). The examination system was gradually revived and expanded, and supplemented by a program of sponsorship, so that the governing bureaucracy by the middle of the 11th century was dominated by civilians trained in the Confucian classics and owing their positions to a system presided over and controlled by the emperor himself. The aristocracy of the T'ang dynasty (618-907) has for the most part disappeared, removing one of the previous checks on the ruler's (and the officials') own power. Thus both the ruler and the officials found themselves in possession of a degree of power which had not been enjoyed by their counterparts for many centuries.

Non-Confucian political theory, beginning in the 11th century, emphasized the importance of revering the ruler, tsun-wang 尊王, both for the reasons just outlined, and because the Sung from the very beginning was menaced by the threat of invasion from two barbarian peoples in the north, the Khitan Liao in the northeast and the Tangut Hsi-hsia in the northwest. The threat was not an idle one, and after a century and a half of intermittent fighting the Northern Sung was ultimately brought to an end at the hands of a third northern tribe from Manchuria, the Jurchen, in 1127. This preoccupation on the part of the Northern Sung thinkers with expelling the barbarians, jang-yi 攘夷, caused them for the most part to favor a

strong centralized Chinese state.

At the same time, however, the ruler's authority was integrated into a rational view of the universal order which clearly transcended the position of the ruler and to which in fact the ruler himself was made subordinate. The contribution of the Neo-Confucians to the history of Chinese political thought lay in the way in which they incorporated their views on political authority into a metaphysical explanation of the universe. Such a conception as they developed of the nature of the universe, in which moral values were held to be absolute and unchanging, but in which the ruler nevertheless played the role of an indispensable intermediary between heaven and man, could only serve to intensify, not repudiate, the fundamental moral dilemma alluded to above.

In endeavoring to grapple with this dilemma in their effort to integrate the often conflicting demands of life and thought, the Neo-Confucians returned to the classics for guidance, especially to the Ch'un-ch'iu 春秋, the Spring and Autumn Annals of Confucius. This ancient classic had been considered from early times the quintessential handbook for those interested in putting Confucian political principles into practice. The views of two commentators on the Ch'un-ch'iu, Sun Fu 孫復 (992-1057)[22] and Ch'eng I 程頤 (1033-1107),[23] exercised

a profound influence on both their contemporaries and later generations. Because of this influence their commentaries will serve as the major focus of this dissertation. For reasons which will become more apparent in Chapter One, dealing with the background of the Neo-Confucian movement, the Northern Sung Neo-Confucianists, spearheaded by Sun Fu and followed by others with more metaphysical inclinations such as Ch'eng I, all shared a basic optimism in their ability to change the practical order. They also shared an assumption that the ultimate ends to be served by the political order were moral not material. Their fundamental concern, as suggested above, was to form a view of authority which would serve as a basis for civil order and national unity but which would also contain within it an acknowledgment of the moral purposes of human social life, serving indirectly to restrain the arbitrary exercise of imperial power and to prevent government from degenerating into tyranny.

Modern scholarship on Neo-Confucian thought, however, has tended to emphasize the practical at the expense of the speculative, perhaps reflecting in part the general orientation of traditional Confucianism itself.[24] One of the consequences of this, with respect to the specific subject at hand, has been a tendency to downplay the relationship between Neo-Confucian metaphysical speculation

and Northern Sung political thought. Thus the author of the definitive work in the 20th century on the history of Chinese political thought, Professor Hsiao Kung-ch'üan, says:[25]

> Neo-Confucianism, with the help of Buddhism, evolved into a magnificent philosophical system which had never existed in China before, but its contribution to political thought was extremely minuscule (極細微). Although the philosophical thought of each school had its own points of novel distinction, their main political ideas simply continued the ideas of rectifying the mind (正心) and making the intentions sincere (誠意) contained in the Ta-hsüeh and the Chung-yung, and the old theories of exalting the ruler (尊王) and rejecting the hegemon (黜霸), as well as the cyclical view of order and disorder (一治一亂), derived from Mencius.

Along the same lines, Professor F.W. Mote, in his critique of Wittfogel's Oriental Despotism, writes that the metaphysical thinkers "...did not on the whole produce any important or highly original theories of government. In the main they merely re-hashed old concepts from the pre-imperial age...."[26] Those old concepts he refers to were the revival of the well-field system and the feudal system, the former to "overcome the fault of inequality in poverty and wealth," and the latter "the fault of over-centralization of authority."[27] In comparison with other aspects of their political thought, however, I would argue that these are relatively insignificant, and even somewhat misleading, since they tend to obscure the real concern of the metaphysical thinkers with more fundamental, and

eminently practical, matters of political authority and moral conduct. Professor Mote continues:[28]

> Yet the li-hsüeh school also made its contribution to the growth of Chinese despotism, in particular, in promoting the exaltation of the ruler to new heights of unquestioned authority, and the demands upon the servitor to new degrees of unquestioned loyalty. The philosophical foundations for this were prepared by the Northern Sung li-hsüeh cosmologists.

Although he later says that "obedience to the ruler even in the Neo-Confucian age could be countered by Confucian emphasis on individual moral responsibility, and the many who refused to serve unworthy rulers were more apt to justify themselves by Confucian than by Taoist or Buddhist or any other set of standards,"[29] his wording implies a more complete separation, even an opposition, between the loyalty owed to one's ruler and the obligation to obey a higher moral law than I think justified. If such a separation were in fact the case, then there would be no moral dilemma--one who was compelled to do something contrary to one's integrity could simply leave public office with no regrets. But if the impulse to contribute to the common good through public service (which includes the obligation to obey the ruler) were understood to be rooted in man's nature and the moral order of the universe itself, then one could not escape the responsibilities of public office without denying a fundamental aspect of one's own nature. The choice thus becomes infinitely more

difficult and complex.

On the other side of the question, those who have concentrated on studying the metaphysical ideas of the Neo-Confucianists have rarely addressed themselves to the political ideas which those thinkers held. Nowhere, for example, has Professor Wing-tsit Chan turned in his many scholarly writings on Neo-Confucianism to the subject of Ch'eng I's commentary on the Ch'un-ch'iu. Those who specialize in Neo-Confucian metaphysics have been more likely to concentrate exclusively on the ideas themselves than on the relationship between those ideas and the times in which the thinkers lived.[30]

This dissertation is a modest effort to bridge that gap. It is not a history of ideas, in so far as it does not deal with ideas isolated from the social and political milieu in which they were conceived. At the same time it is not a history of political ideology, concentrating or even considering the uses to which certain ideas were put in the formation and execution of specific political policies. There is of course a place for both of these approaches, but this dissertation is intended to be a history of political thought, which takes as its principal focus the way in which certain fundamental, even universal, political and moral questions were interpreted in the light of the most important political problems of, in

this case, the Northern Sung. I am aware of the argument of the skeptic who doubts the relevance of an idea unless it can be shown to exercise an immediate and undeniable influence on actual events, and in many cases such an attitude can be a useful restraint on those who tend to overexaggerate the importance of any particular intellectual construct on the practical affairs of practical men. Nevertheless, when the leading philosophers of any period achieve a certain unanimity of belief in a particular group of ideas, and those ideas are understood by common consent to have set the intellectual tone for the next several centuries of a country's history, one can reasonably assume that they did in fact influence practical policies. Thus one does not have to feel constrained, in the course of discussing the origin and substance of those beliefs, to justify such discussion in terms of whether or not a particular official on a particular date did a particular thing because he was influenced by a particular paragraph in a particular theoretical work.

Professor Theodore de Bary has commented on the relationship between Northern Sung classical studies and political thought in the following way:[31]

> ...the classics were to be studied as deposits of eternal truth rather than as antiquarian repositories, and the true aim of classical studies was to bring these enduring principles, valid for any

> place or time, to bear upon both the conduct of life and the solution of contemporary problems.

Because of this emphasis by the Neo-Confucians on synthesizing classical thought and practical problems, and because a full understanding of ideas must take into account how they reflect the conditions of their times, the body of the dissertation has been divided into two main parts. The first part concentrates on providing the historical background of the Neo-Confucian movement and of Sung Ch'un-ch'iu studies. The second part then moves on to consider the content of the commentaries themselves and their relation to the fundamental question of political authority.

Chapter One is devoted to a consideration of the main social, political, economic, and intellectual forces which formed the backdrop of Northern Sung Neo-Confucianism. The consideration in this chapter of forces which, taken individually, did not always directly influence Neo-Confucian ideas on authority, is deliberate. Taken as a whole, these various forces integrated Chinese society and fostered social mobility to a degree that had never been achieved before in Chinese history. No one, of course, would be rash enough to describe Chinese society in any period as free. It was always, in comparison with its Western counterparts, a single-centered society in which the vast preponderance of power lay in

the hands of the state. Nevertheless, within the last two or three millennia of Chinese history there have been some periods in which society was, relatively speaking, more open than others. The Sung, especially the Northern Sung, was one of those periods, and this had a profound impact on Sung attitudes toward political authority. Thus the way in which authority is understood in any society, that is, whether it is seen as the instrument of an oppressive government cut off from the real needs of the people, or whether it is seen as a necessary and potentially beneficial means of organizing the activities of the community to a mutually agreed upon common goal, will be greatly influenced by such factors as social integration and, paradoxically, freedom. The greater one's freedom the more likely one is to recognize the value of authority, and conversely.

Take, for example, late 19th century intellectuals in Russia, who for a variety of reasons felt estranged from their own society and utterly powerless to influence the course of practical affairs. Their ideals seemed impossible of realization, and many were driven to the brink of despair and beyond. For them, according to Mikhail Gershenzon writing in Vekhi in 1909, life and thought "had almost nothing in common."[32] The result of this separation was to push the intelligentsia, in a

misguided effort to compensate in one realm for weakness in the other, to extremities of both theory and practice which were destructive both to themselves and to Russian society. Some, like Mikhail Bakunin, dispensed with authority altogether and became anarchists; others, indeed the majority, turned to the other extreme and embraced socialist doctrines of one form or another. This example is not intended to show that ideas are simply the products of their times; rather it is intended to demonstrate that the circumstances in which a given thinker may live will often predispose him to look favorably on some ideas and unfavorably on others. Thus the approving way in which the Sung thinkers discussed authority stems in part (and only in part) from the relatively open society in which they lived, and the disapproving way in which thinkers in the late Ming and Ch'ing discussed the same subject is influenced equally by the very different conditions in which they found themselves.

Chapter Two then presents a brief sketch of Ch'un-ch'iu studies from the late Chou down to the Northern Sung, in order to place the Sung commentators in the context of the classical exegetical tradition. Turning to the second part of the dissertation, the ideological dimension, Chapters Three and Four demonstrate how Northern Sung commentators of the Ch'un-ch'iu sought to

unify the disparate worlds of knowledge and action (chih-hsing ho-yi 知行合一, to borrow the felicitous term of the Ming Neo-Confucian Wang Yang-ming, 王陽明(1462-1529). These chapters utilize a category of literary analysis which was first clearly stated in the West by Thomas Aquinas and Dante Alighieri in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Adopting a system of interpretation which had grown out of biblical hermeneutics and had probably been fully developed already by the 5th century, they believed that there were several levels on which a work of art could be interpreted. Of these, according to Dante:[33]

> The first is called literal, and this is that sense which does not go beyond the strict limits of the letter; the second is called the allegorical, and this is disguised under the cloak of such stories, and is a truth hidden under a beautiful fiction.... The third sense is called moral; and this sense is that for which teachers ought as they go through writings intently to watch for their own profit and that of their hearers.... The fourth sense is called anagogic, that is, above the senses; and this occurs when a writing is spiritually expounded which even in the literal sense by the things signified likewise gives intimation of higher matters belonging to the eternal glory....

The last phase, the anagogic (or the metaphysical) seeks then to say something universally true, and has often been associated in the West with specifically religious issues. It was believed, and still is by some, that a well-integrated work of art lent itself to meaningful interpretation on several of the above levels. This arose out of

an implicit assumption that the truth about man and nature was not to be found in one narrowly limited category of action or existence but in an attempt to grasp them as a whole, recognizing the value of each part but refusing to become fixated on any one of them to the exclusion of the others.

It seems to me that these categories of literary analysis offer a most fruitful way to understand the place of the Ch'un-ch'iu both in the history of Chinese political thought in general and in the Northern Sung in particular. As a result I have devoted one chapter, Chapter Three, specifically to a consideration of the literal level on which the Ch'un-ch'iu can be interpreted. This chapter concentrates on the practical imperative of obedience to the ruler (tsun-wang 尊王), which in part reflected the desire to avoid the reappearance of the decentralization of the late T'ang and Five Dynasties periods. It focuses on Sun Fu (992-1057), who was very concerned about the chaos of the pre-Sung period, and shows how Sun tied in his concept of authority with the absolute moral values expressed by the term li 禮.

Chapter Four then turns to a combination of the moral and anagogical levels (the allegorical level is not considered separately, since the whole Ch'un-ch'iu was thought to have allegorical overtones conveying moral

messages), by which means the significance of the literal level is fully revealed. It is in this chapter that the shift in emphasis from a concentration on li 禮 in the earlier Ch'un-ch'iu commentaries to a concentration on li 理 in the later commentaries is discussed. In doing so I deal primarily with the commentary by Ch'eng I (1033-1107). Evidence in this chapter supports the conclusion that those Neo-Confucian thinkers whose belief in absolute moral values was integrated into a cohesive metaphysical system were likely to have a much more complex and ambivalent attitude toward centralized political authority than many modern scholars have suspected. Chapter Five, the Conclusion, then relates these Sung views on authority to wider issues of both Western and Chinese political thought.

In pursuing this subject I have, as mentioned above, focused on commentaries by Sun Fu and the great Sung metaphysical thinker Ch'eng I. Sun's commentary, written in the late 1030's and entitled Ch'un-ch'iu tsun-wang fa-wei 春秋尊王發微 (An Exposition on the Subtle Concept of Exalting the Ruler in the Ch'un-ch'iu), was regarded even in the Northern Sung as the single most influential commentary of the period. Ch'eng I's commentary, written a generation later and entitled Ch'un-ch'iu chuan 春秋傳 (Commentary on the Ch'un-ch'iu), not unexpectedly contains

many of Ch'eng's metaphysical ideas, and exerted great influence on political thought in the Southern Sung (1127-1279). Two other primary sources have been particularly valuable in collecting the comments of other prominent scholars in the Ch'un-ch'iu during the period covered by this dissertation. One is the Ch'un-ch'iu chi-yi 春秋集義 compiled by the Southern Sung scholar Li Ming-fu 李明復.[34] The other is the Ching-yi k'ao 經義考, compiled by the Ch'ing scholar Chu Yi-tsun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709), which is a copiously annotated bibliography of works dealing with the classics in 300 chüan (of which chüan 168-210 are concerned with the Ch'un-ch'iu) from the Han (202 B.C.--A.D. 220) to the end of the K'ang-hsi 康熙 reign (1622-1722) in the Ch'ing.[35] It also contains prefaces of works which have been lost.

There are no studies in English which focus specifically on Ch'un-ch'iu studies in the Northern Sung. De Bary in his early work on Neo-Confucianism dealt in passing with some of the important issues and figures of the period,[36] as has James T.C. Liu in his monographic studies on Fan Chung-yen 范仲淹 (989-1052) Wang An-shih 王安石 (1021-1086), and Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072). There is, of course, a long and distinguished tradition of commentary in Western languages on the Ch'un-ch'iu and its three commentaries, which include the work of such

pioneers as Henri Maspero, Bernard Kalgren, and more recently, Goran Malmquist. These works, however, concern themselves with textual questions and are of little assistance in dealing with questions of political theory during the Sung dynasty. Outside of these few safe havens of scholarship the waters are all uncharted.

The best coverage of the subject in Japanese is in Morohashi Tetsuji's 諸橋轍次 work on Sung Neo-Confucianism, published originally as his dissertation in the late 1920's.[37] There is also an article published in 1943 by Sanaka Sō 佐中壯 dealing with the rise of a critical attitude toward the classics in the Sung, which covers in part the work of Sun Fu.[38] More recently, Fumoto Yasutaka's 麓保孝 book on the development of Confucianism in the Northern Sung also deals in part with Ch'un-ch'iu scholarship.[39] These works, however, do not depart substantially from the mainstream of traditional Chinese historical interpretation and are therefore of limited value for my purposes.

Major secondary literature in Chinese on the role of the Ch'un-ch'iu in Northern Sung China is confined principally to two articles written by Chinese scholars in Hong Kong, Ch'en Ch'ing-hsin 陳慶新[40] and Mou Jun-sun 牟潤孫.[41] Professor Juan Chih-sheng 阮之生 of Taiwan National University published his dissertation on the Kung-yang

tradition, entitled Ts'ung Kung-yang hsüeh-lun Ch'un-ch'iu ti hsing-chih 從公羊學論春秋的性質 , and this has been very helpful. Of course for background on the classical tradition P'i Hsi-jui's 皮錫瑞 (1850-1908) Ching-hsüeh li-shih 經學歷史 , written in the 19th century, with notes by the 20th century scholar Chou Yü-t'ung , remains unsurpassed.

REFERENCES

1. Talmon, Totalitarian Democracy, pp. 38-49.

2. Sabine, History of Political Theory, pp. 331-336.

3. IESS, s.v. "authority."

4. Amitai Etzioni, for example, defines authority as legitimate power (Complex Organizations, p. 14). It is clear from Etzioni's discussion of the term, in which he describes authority (normative, remunerative, and coercive) in terms strictly "of the kind of power employed" (p. 15), that he is interested primarily in those aspects of authority which can be measured empirically. This is further illustrated by his remark in the introduction (p. xv) that "sociology was born out of the intellectual search for a secular and empirical explanation of social order."

5. See Peter Winch's discussion ("Authority," pp. 107-108) of Max Weber's three categories of authority (traditional, legal-rational, and charismatic), in which he argues that Weber's categories are not conceptually distinct at all, and that the effort to see them as such is misleading.

6. See Friedrich's article, "Authority, Reason, and Discretion," in the series of studies he edited entitled Authority.

7. Arendt, "What is Authority," pp. 92-93.

8. Ibid., p. 97. She goes on to say, prophetically: "Modern spokesmen of authority, who, even in the short intervals when public opinion provides a favorable climate for neo-conservatism, remain well aware that theirs is an almost lost cause, are of course eager to point to this distinction between tyranny and authority. Where the liberal writer sees an essentially assured progress in the direction of freedom, which is only temporarily interrupted by some dark forces of the past, the conservative sees a process of doom which started with the

dwindling of authority, so that freedom, after it lost the restricting limitations which protected its boundaries, became helpless, defenseless, and bound to be destroyed. (It is hardly fair to say that only liberal political thought is primarily interested in freedom; there is hardly a school of political thought in our history which is not centered around the idea of freedom, much as the concept of liberty may vary with different writers and in different political circumstances. The only exception of any consequence to this statement seems to me to be the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, who, of course, was anything but a conservative.)"

9. Winch, "Authority," p. 102.

10. The Analects, translated by D.C. Lau, 13:18.

11. See Lei Tsung-hai, "Rise of the Emperor System."

12. See Creel's chapter entitled "The Mandate of Heaven" in Origins of Statecraft, pp. 81-100.

13. Legge, The Shoo King, p. 292. "天視自我民視，天聽自我民聽。"

14. Legge, Mencius, p. 392.

15 Ibid., p. 296.

16. Homer Dubs, Works of Hsün Tzu, p. 125. Hsün Tzu also said "Heaven does not beget the people for the sake of the ruler; Heaven institutes the ruler for the sake of the people." See Hsün tzu, 27, "Ta-lüeh"大略. Quoted in Kung-chuan Hsiao, "Legalism and Autocracy in Traditional China," p. 114.

17. Hsiao/Mote, Chinese Political Thought, p. 602.

18. Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, p. 405.

19. Ibid., p. 406.

20. Ibid., p. 423.

21. Chan, "Neo-Confucian Concept of Li," esp. pp. 137-142.

22. Tzu was Ming-fu 明復. He was from P'ing-yang 平陽 in Chin-chou 晉州 in present-day Shansi province.

23. Tzu was Cheng-shu 正叔. He was also known as I-ch'uan hsien-sheng 伊川先生. He was from Lo-yang 洛陽 in present-day Honan province.

24. Hsiao/Mote, Chinese Political Thought, p. 8.

25. Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, p. 449.

26. Mote, "Oriental Despotism," p. 13.

27. Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, p. 503.

28. Mote, "Oriental Despotism," p. 13.

29. Ibid., p. 36.

30. Fung Yu-lan, in the discussion of Neo-Confucianism contained in his History of Chinese Philosophy, deals exclusively with ideas. Carsun Chang, who was one of the driving forces of a movement, still in existence, to bring Neo-Confucianism alive for Chinese in the 20th century, does not deal at all with the relationship between Neo-Confucianism and life in the Sung dynasty in his The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought. Those interested in his ideas on the relevance of Neo-Confucian ideas to the modern world should consult the "Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture" which appears at the end of his second volume on Neo-Confucian thought. The manifesto was also signed by T'ang Chün-yi, Mou Tsung-san, and Hsü Fu-kuan. It mixes great insight with surprisingly simplistic cliches.

31. De Bary, "Reappraisal," p. 90.

32. Quoted in Treadgold, The West in Russia and China, vol. 2, Russia, p. 243.

33. The translation is W.W. Jackson's, from Dante's Convivio, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), quoted in Hazard Adam's anthology Critical Theory Since Plato (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), p. 121.

34. The work consists of 50 chüan preceded by an introduction (kang-ling 綱領) of 3 chüan, with a preface by Li dated 1220. It is a compilation of comments on the Ch'un-ch'iu by Chou Tun-yi 周敦頤 (1017-1073), Ch'eng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085), Ch'eng I 程頤 (1033-1107), Fan Tsu-yü 范祖禹 (1041-1098), Hsieh Liang-tso 謝良佐 (1050-1103), Yang Shih 楊時 (1053-1135), Hou Chung-liang 侯仲良 (fl. 1100), Yin T'un 尹焞 (1071-1142), Liu Hsüan 劉絢 (1045-1087), Hsieh Shih 謝諟, Hu An-kuo 胡安國 (1074-1138), Lü Tsu-ch'ien 呂祖謙 (1137-1181), Hu Hung 胡宏 (1105-1155), Li T'ung 李侗 (1088-1158), Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), and Chang Shih 張栻 (1133-1180).

35. Included in Teng and Biggerstaff, Annotated Bibliography, 3rd edition, pp. 41-42.

36. See de Bary, "Reappraisal" and "Common Tendencies."

37. Jugaku no mokuteki to Sō-ju no katsudō 儒學の目的と宋儒の活動. In Morohashi Tetsuji chosaku shū 諸橋轍次著作集, vol. 1, pp. 161-557. Tokyo, 1975. Pages 199-279 deal with the ch'un-ch'iu.

38. "Sōgaku ni okeru iwayuru hihan-teki kenkyū no tancho ni tsuite 宋學に於ける所謂批判的研究の端緒に就いて." In Shigaku Zasshi 史學雜誌 54 (October, 1943): 1124-1141.

39. Hokusō ni okeru Jugaku no tenkai 北宋に於ける儒學の展開, Tokyo, 1968. See esp. pp. 61-79.

40. Ch'en Ch'ing-hsin 陳慶新, "Sung-ju Ch'un-ch'iu yao-yi ti fa-wei yü cheng-chih ssu-hsiang" 宋儒春秋要義的發微與其政治思想, Hsin-ya hsüeh-pao 新亞學報 10 (1971): 270-368.

41. Mou Jun-sun 牟潤孫, "Liang Sung Ch'un-ch'iu hsüeh chih chu-liu" 兩宋春秋學之主流, Sung-shih yen-chiu chi 宋史研究集, vol. 3, Taipei: Chung-hua tsung-shu 中華叢書, 1966, pp. 103-121.

PART ONE THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION

CHAPTER ONE

THE BACKGROUND OF NEO-CONFUCIANISM

Introduction

The period in which Neo-Confucianism rose in China has been compared by Theodore de Bary to the Renaissance in Europe because of the qualities of secularism, humanism, rationalism, and classicism which both shared.[1] The comparison is particularly useful because of the insight it offers into the way in which the self-confidence responsible (in the manner of a necessary but not a sufficient condition) for the heroic achievements of individuals in both these periods was itself partly a product of new developments in a variety of realms, in society, in the economy, and in political life. A wide range of institutions were in a state of rapid change and the leading intellects of both periods were filled with a new sense of mission and with a new faith in their ability to influence those changes through the use of reason.

Just as the Neo-Confucian movement must be understood in relation to the historical circumstances of the Northern Sung period in China, the significance of the

commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu written during the Northern Sung can be understood only as they also reflect, and in turn influence, the wider currents of thought running through the period. A full explanation of the ways in which the commentaries and their times are related will appear in later chapters. It suffices to note here that the Ch'un-ch'iu commentators and other major Neo-Confucianists were driven by a common impulse to place absolute Confucian moral values in a new metaphysical system susceptible to rational apprehension by the properly cultivated human mind. They all understood human nature in such a way that its ultimate fulfilment was perceived to lie in the active pursuit of the common good through public service. Because of this concern for the practical application of Confucian moral values, the Sung thinkers were sensitive to the dilemma of moral choice in an imperfect world. Therefore they turned to the classics, and expecially the Ch'un-ch'iu, which since the early Han had been accepted as the principal fountain of Confucian wisdom on the subject of political morality, for guidance in these choices. This chapter and the following one will be concerned with defining and clarifying the relationship between Neo-Confucianism, the Ch'un-ch'iu tradition, and the times of which they were a part.

The political history of the Sung is generally

characterized by historians as manifesting two related qualities, a civilistic form of government and a centralization of the institutions of governance in the hands of an increasingly autocratic ruler. What was the purpose of these two developments, and what means were employed to achieve their realization? Broadly speaking, the early emperors wished to avoid the military challenges to central authority which had carved up China like a melon into a number of military satrapies from the time of the An Lu-shan rebellion in 755 to the establishment of the Northern Sung in 960 (or more precisely, until the final defeat or surrender of all the rival states in 979). They were also worried that the continual threat of invasion from the Hsi-hsia tribesmen in the northwest and the Khitan Liao in the northeast would cause local military commanders to acquire too much power and again undermine the central authority of the emperor, as they had in the T'ang. These two phenomena, the regionalism of the late T'ang and the Five Dynasties period, and the threat of foreign invasion from the north, were also largely responsible for the preoccupation of Sung Ch'un-ch'iu scholars with the concepts tsun-wang 尊王 (revere the ruler) and jang-yi 攘夷 (expel the barbarians), as we shall see in the following chapter.

The manner in which the Sung state responded to

these problems greatly influenced many social and economic institutions in the Sung, and created in large part the conditions in which the revival of Confucian thought took place. The interrelationship of all these factors, which for the sake of analysis are considered separately, will become more apparent in the following sections of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the important role of the state in Sung dynasty affairs was in part both a response to certain social, economic, and political conditions, and a cause of others. Insofar as a study of intellectual history, in this case focusing on political thought, seeks to understand the relationship between ideas and the society which gave birth to them, this chapter shows how the integration of China on the political level, in response to both internal and external threats, was paralleled by equivalent integrating trends in both the society and the economy. Much of this change was guided by the state; some was the result of trends already under way before the Sung.

The appearance of these new forces and the way in which they now exerted their various influences on each other at the national level called for, or to put it another way, created a need for, an intellectual synthesis capable of relating the new parts to the new whole. Political thought in the T'ang and the Five Dynasties

period, such as it was, had been influenced more by Buddhist and Taoist ideas than by Confucian ideas. Now China was entering a new period of economic prosperity and social integration, centralized under a strong ruler and governed by a bureaucracy which promised (partly because of the demise of the aristocracy and partly because of the civilistic policies of the early emperors) to give new and unprecedented opportunities to the scholar-officials. The other-worldly preoccupations of Buddhism and the concept of non-action associated with Taoism could hardly provide a persuasive stimulus in the face of these new responsibilities and opportunities which now confronted the scholar-officials. Some new statement of principles was required which would serve as a guide to purposive action on the one hand but which would also answer the intellectual needs fulfilled for so many centuries by Buddhism and Taoism on the other hand. The Neo-Confucian synthesis, which began in the Northern Sung and culminated in the grand synthesis of Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200) in the Southern Sung, arose in response to this demand. Just as the revival of learning in the European Renaissance took a variety of forms, including the fine arts and literature as well as science and philosophy, Sung Neo-Confucianism flowed principally in three divergent currents, politics, metaphysics, and aesthetics.[2]

Such a broad interpretation of Neo-Confucianism goes beyond the traditional Chinese definition. There is a good reason for this. Like the legs of a tripod, metaphysics, aesthetics, and politics each constitute a vital support for the phenomenon of the Confucian revival in the Sung, and the want of any one of them would create an imbalanced understanding of the whole. If, in fact, Neo-Confucianism had been limited in its scope to one of these areas only, it could never have exerted the influence it did on subsequent Chinese history. It was the very comprehensive nature of the movement that recommended itself to thinkers who were desperately looking for an underlying principle capable of reconciling the disturbing inconsistencies of change, and integrating life and thought. But before dealing with these substantive aspects of Neo-Confucianism itself it is necessary to review the major political, economic, and social conditions of the Northern Sung that set the stage for this major re-thinking of the Confucian tradition.

Sung Government

We have already noted that the emperors' desire in the Sung to solidify the unity of the state necessitated the accumulation of greater power in their own hands. This object was pursued in two major ways, by curtailing the authority of the military, both in the field and in the

government bureaucracy, and by reducing the power of the prime minister to act independently of the emperor's wishes.[3] There were a number of policies implemented by Sung T'ai-tsu and continued for the most part by his successor and younger brother T'ai-tsung 太宗 (reigned 976-997), which had as their goal the domestication of the military establishment.[4] Care was taken to concentrate the best troops at the capital (which may partially account for the poor performance of Sung troops in the field against the Liao and the Hsi-hsia). Commanders were rotated frequently from post to post (although border commanders enjoyed much longer tenure in the early years) and from the field to the capital, preventing the growth of loyal feelings between the troops and their commanders. Measures were adopted to acquire control of local revenue, which had fallen into the hands of local military leaders, by sending out officials from the central government (ch'ang-ts'an kuan 常參官) to local areas, both at the provincial level (where they were known as chuan-yün shih 轉運使) and at the prefectural level and below (known as p'an kuan 判官), to take over direct control of taxation and transportation of goods to the capital. Military promotions were gradually centralized in the hands of the emperor. After 962, cases involving the death penalty were ordered to be forwarded to the capital for

final review, and in the same year the office of sheriff (hsien-wei 縣尉) was reestablished, removing responsibility for law and order from the hands of the local garrison commanders.

The authority of the military in the central government was also undermined by a deliberate policy of removing from the office of the shu-mi yüan 樞密院 the authority over the civil functions of government which it had enjoyed during the Five Dynasties period, and confining its responsibilities to military matters only. In the second half of the 10th century it was placed officially on an equal footing with the civilian bureaucracy.[5] As its authority declined, that of the civilian arm of government rose, especially after the examination system was reestablished by T'ai-tsung and rapidly became the principal means of entry to positions of power in the bureaucracy. In fact the annual average number of chin-shih degrees conferred between 1020 and 1057 was larger than in any other comparable period in Chinese history, and as we have noted above, the total number of civil officials staffing the government bureaucracy rose dramatically during the 11th century.[6]

While the body of the civil bureaucracy was expanding its influence, its head, in the form of the prime minister, found its own traditional authority shrinking

rapidly.[7] Military affairs, over which the prime minister had once exercised considerable authority, were now (following the precedent of the Five Dynasties period) controlled by either the shu-mi yüan or the emperor himself. The emperor now took an active role in drafting edicts, instead of merely initialing those which had been drawn up by the office of the prime minister. The first and second emperors further trimmed the minister's feathers by withdrawing his authority to issue executive orders which did not first meet the approval of the emperor. Assistant prime ministers, ts'an-chih cheng-shih 參知政事, were appointed with the intention of diluting the power of the office by spreading it more thinly among more people. Financial affairs, which were more centralized in the early Sung in the hands of the Finance Commission (san-ssu 三司), were also taken out of the control of the prime minister and made directly responsible to the emperor.[8] Personnel decisions relating to the higher level of the bureaucracy were shifted to another office.[9] Censors and policy-criticism officials, once under the exclusive authority of the prime minister, were also made more independent, and often directed their criticism at the very offices to which they were once subordinate (serving the interests, thereby, of the emperor).[10]

Other institutional devices were established to foster the emperor's own control of the government. A spy system, known as the huang-ch'eng ssu 皇城司, was established within the imperial palace as a means of obtaining information which was completely outside official channels. Even ritual was used to enhance the authority of the emperor, so that prime ministers who had been accustomed to chatting about affairs of state with the emperor over a cup of tea were now required to stand in the emperor's presence. The city of Kaifeng, rebuilt by the Sung as its central capital, was designed in such a way as to emphasize the ritual functions and importance of the emperor as the bearer of heaven's mandate.[11] Nevertheless, the scholar-officials of the Northern Sung (and the Southern as well) were fortunate in that the emperors under which they served actively supported the Confucian intellectual tradition and treated the officials with respect (exemplified by the phrase, "(the emperor) does not kill the literati," pu-sha wen-jen 不殺文人).

What was the significance of these political developments, both to later political history and to the rise of Neo-Confucianism? What place do they have in a discussion of the rise of Neo-Confucianism, which after all has been regarded as primarily an intellectual movement? Politically speaking they set into motion a trend toward

autocratic power which was to accelerate during the Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing dynasties (not only because of these Sung precedents but also because of factors entirely accidental to these antecedents). This movement did not, however, advance through time in an uninterrupted series of stages, each more autocratic than its predecessor until finally the entire population was reduced to a state of cringing obedience. In China there were many false starts, and much slippage. The power of the prime minister, for example, always tended to increase when the emperor was personally weak or uninterested in affairs of state, and in fact this was the case during much of the Sung dynasty. Nevertheless many of the centralizing changes implemented by T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung became institutionalized, with the result that the potential for the exercise of autocratic power was always there, though it sometimes lay dormant. But more important to our topic, these changes set the stage for and provided a partial stimulus to the rise of Neo-Confucianism, whose ideological tone was in many ways a response to the forces discussed above. They influenced both the practical programs of reform and the metaphysical speculations of the 11th century Neo-Confucianists.

Sung Economy

Economically, China had reached a level of develop-

ment in the 11th and 12th centuries that was not equalled in Europe until about the 18th century. There were a number of reasons for this, among the most important of which was a sudden increase in population following 200 years of political unrest and intermittent warfare. It is estimated that by the end of the 11th century the population had grown to about 100,000,000.[12] This increased population permitted the cultivation of formerly neglected land, approximately doubling the amount of arable land in the north and greatly increasing the acreage devoted to crops such as rice, tea, and mulberry trees in the south (especially in the Yangtze delta).[13] New strains of more rapidly maturing rice were introduced from Champa (now central Vietnam), beginning in the 11th century, which made it possible to plant two (and in the south, three) crops in areas previously able to support only one (in the south, two).[14] The stability of the dynasty permitted the repair of dikes and other water control projects, so that land once abandoned was once more brought under irrigated cultivation. Technological improvements such as the yang-ma 秧馬 (a device used in wet rice cultivation for the transplanting of rice seedlings), and the yün-chua 耘爪 (for weeding), also made their appearance.[15]

An increase in regional trade was made possible by the peaceful conditions of the early Sung, and was further

encouraged by the repair of old and construction of new inland water routes and the growth of maritime shipping, so that goods traveled from one area to another more inexpensively and more quickly than before. This, in turn, was one of the factors responsible for the greater regional specialization in crops which took place in the early Sung.[16] Farmers whose ancestors had had to be relatively self-sufficient in order to survive could now plant crops which were better suited to their own climate and soil, and supply their other needs with cash earned from selling the crop to middlemen who participated in a nation-wide market network.

This growth of regional specialization and the rise of a national market system was further enhanced by a number of additional developments, including the growth in importance of merchant and craft guilds, hang 行,[17] which were no longer restricted, as were their T'ang counterparts, to certain sections of the capital, but spread throughout all the major cities and served to protect the commercial interests of their members against outside interference (except, of course, interference by the government, which was considerable and often ruinous). Restrictive regulations, which had the effect of discouraging inter-regional trade practices, were mitigated, especially as the government gradually came to realize

that a flourishing commercial trade could be a very promising source of tax revenue. Thus no official measures were taken to inhibit a growing trade with other countries, which consisted of exporting Chinese tea, silks, salt, porcelain, lacquer-ware, and books, and importing products such as Japanese sulphur, Vietnamese garn-wood, Arabian frankincense, Javanese sandalwood, Malayan sappanwood, spices, Indo-Chinese African ivory, Indian pearls, camphor from Borneo and Sumatra, and Korean ginseng. A favorable balance of trade during the Northern Sung made the government sympathetic to trading interests, since it acquired a lucrative source of tax revenue while at the same time bolstering its currency with increasing reserves of precious metals.[18] It was not until the middle of the 12th century, in the early part of the Southern Sung, that international trade was actively discouraged by the government in order to preserve a stable value for domestic currency, which it linked, rightly or wrongly, with the vagaries of foreign trade.[19]

Paper currency in China reached its highest level of development during the Northern Sung, when the government in 1024 started issuing paper currency and backing it up with reserves of precious metals.[21] During the 11th century the system worked successfully, but confidence in the currency was later eroded when the government, acting

under the pressure of increasing expenditures and decreasing revenues, destroyed confidence in the currency by printing more than could be supported by metal reserves. Thereafter China returned in the main to the use of minted coins as the most common medium of exchange, which lasted until the end of the Ch'ing dynasty. During the Northern Sung, however, the adoption and widespread use of paper currency greatly facilitated the transfer of goods and services from region to region, and encouraged the regional specialization and capital investment in agriculture which contributed greatly to the general level of prosperity in the Northern Sung.

During the early Sung the state became much more involved than before in a wide variety of economic activities. It continued a practice already instituted during the T'ang of encouraging specialized training of government officials in economic matters. Financial expertise was made the condition of appointment and promotion in certain assignments.[21] Agencies of the central government concerned with economic questions were brought together under one roof by the reforms of Wang An-shih 王安石(1069-1085), so that policies could be more efficiently formed and executed. The government actively promoted agricultural development and sponsored the publication of agricultural treatises which were then disseminated among the

owners of larger land-holdings, who were not only literate in most cases but also in a position to afford both the capital investment and risk of experimentation involved in introducing new equipment and techniques. Former classics on agriculture, such as Chia Ssu-hsieh's 賈思勰 Ch'i-min yao-shu 齊民要術 (Essential Techniques for the Common People), written in the 6th century, were reprinted.[27] The new seeds from Champa mentioned above were introduced as a result of government initiative. The central government did not always confine itself to advice on how to increase production in various industries, however, and exercised a monopoly over at least the sale if not the production itself of staple commodities such as porcelain, textile, wine, tea, and salt. In some of these enterprises the central government in the Northern Sung significantly increased its control over all administrative aspects,[23] with the result that by 1078 salt revenue amounted to 37% of the government's cash income, and wine 20%.[24] Technological advances in these industries as well as in agriculture also played an important role in increasing production.

The state was not the only vehicle of industrial development, however. Robert Hartwell has documented the remarkable rise of the coal and iron industries in the northern provinces of Honan and Hopei during the 11th

century, and their subsequent decline.[25] A number of favorable circumstances appeared, including innovations in ferrous metallurgy, the growing use of coal to feed the blast furnaces used in making steel (due to the scarcity of wood resulting from the deforestation of much of northern China), and the rapidly rising demand emanating from the urban centers of the north, particularly Kaifeng. In fact the growth of the city of Kaifeng, presenting a tremendous stimulus for economic growth in the form of an easily accessible market, was probably the most significant stimulant to this industrial growth, and it was the decline in population of Kaifeng following the loss of the north to the Jürchen in 1127 that brought an end to the prosperity of the coal and iron industry. Shipbuilding is another example of an industry which remained principally in private hands and underwent a period of considerable prosperity in the Northern Sung.[26]

Many of the factors mentioned above, including population growth, commercial development, improvement of communication and transportation facilities, and increase in agricultural production, contributed to the rise of major new urban centers in the Sung. This urbanization was accelerated by the migration of rural people who were either escaping the growing burden of taxation and corvee services levied on the small landholder, or who had lost

a crop to some natural disaster or other and no longer had the resources to sustain them until the next harvest.[27] The rise of the major Sung urban centers such as Ch'in-chou, Ch'ien-chou, Chen-chou, Ch'eng-tu, Ch'u-chou, Hangchou, Kuangchou, Su-chou, and Yang-chou, differed from the prominent T'ang urban areas in that the Sung cities owed their rapid growth to commercial rather than political factors.[28] Although they may have already existed as centers of administration, it was their position as a transportation and communication node in the national market network that explains their explosive growth.

The economic conditions which have been touched upon briefly thus far have been cast in a rather favorable light. Indeed their influence on what is now, in the parlance of the times, called the "quality of life," was largely positive. There was greater scope for individual initiative; fewer people suffered under the unpredictable ravages of war and natural disaster; there was a greater variety and accessibility of the material resources of pleasure and enjoyment, such as food. It was, all things considered, a good time to be alive and doing business. But the shadows of future misfortune were already beginning to lengthen by the middle of the 11th century. As their implications became more clear they became the focus of attention of most of the scholars whom we now

refer to as Neo-Confucians. In many cases the problems grew paradoxically out of developments which are normally regarded as a mark of success and prosperity. The growth in population, for example, was not only the natural consequence of a restoration of peace and stability, but also contributed greatly to the economic prosperity of the early Sung period. There was a point, however, when this growth in population exceeded the capacity of the economic and political institutions to absorb it, so that what was once a sign of affluence gradually came to assume the form of a burden.

Exactly at what point this transmutation took place cannot of course be established, for the simple reason that demographic factors (which can be adduced only from highly unreliable information anyway) form only a partial explanation of the circumstances. There seems little doubt that a much larger population could have been supported by existing resources, had the political and economic institutions been available to utilize them efficiently. What then were some of these other factors? One of the most important seems to have been the failure of the government, from the founding of the dynasty on, to deal effectively with the problem of land tenure. This oversight became serious only when the growth in population began to strain existing resources. As families

grew in size and descendants multiplied, they naturally consumed a greater portion of the annual crop production. By the middle of the 11th century, however, the percentage of the crop available to the average farming family was already on the decline. For farmers who owned their own land, this was because they were being forced to pay more taxes in order to compensate for others who for one reason or another were able to evade full payment. On the other hand, farmers who did not own their own land were often required to pay exorbitant rent, leaving them with little or no margin of profit and little chance to save up for hard times. By the end of the 11th century, a large percentage of land was owned, in the form of manors, chuang-yüan 莊園, by officials, monasteries, or merchants, and was managed by bailiffs, chuang-li 莊吏.[29] The landowners found it convenient to manipulate connections in order to avoid their share of the tax load, and one scholar has estimated that by the middle of the 11th century, 70% of the cultivated land was not taxed.[30] Government revenues declined from 150,850,000 units of cash in 1021 to 116,138,405 units in 1065.[31] The consequence of population growth and concentration of land was that the well-being of the farmer did not increase at all.[32] Dissatisfaction erupted in the form of open revolt, as in the Wang Tse 王則 rebellion of 1047-48.

The declining income and rising expenditures of the farmer by the middle of the Northern Sung were duplicated at the national level, where shrinking revenues, due to a declining rural tax base, were accompanied by an alarming increase in government expenditures.[33] This was due principally to the cost of maintaining a huge standing army whose appetite for money grew even faster than its size, and ultimately came to absorb more than 75% of the total budget. In 1064, for example, the scholar-official (and great calligrapher) Ts'ai Hsiang 蔡襄 (1012-1067) estimated that 60% to 70% of government revenue was spent on support of active and old soldiers alone, not including other military expenditures.[34] In addition, the civilian bureaucracy expanded throughout the 11th century, requiring a progressively larger piece of the fiscal pie.

There is no doubt that the favorable circumstances for economic growth which obtained in the early Northern Sung resulted in an increase in the total wealth of the country. Some have noted that this wealth tended to gravitate into the hands of an increasingly smaller number of landowners (often members of the imperial household or court officials) and merchants. But this development may not have been a uniformly bad thing--often it was the availability of large amounts of capital which persuaded the more enterprising of the landowners and merchants to

invest in innovative techniques and new (and risky) projects.

Be that as it may, the overwhelming impression of the Sung economy is one of general prosperity. The importance of this growth and prosperity for Neo-Confucianism in general lies in the degree to which it helped to integrate China as never before. Peace, prosperity, and economic cohesion were the outward, visible supports for the synthesizing edifice built by the great Sung thinkers. The relationship was certainly not so strong that economic forces constituted a sufficient condition for the rise of Neo-Confucianism. It is enough to say that, taken with other considerations, they encouraged the thinkers to believe that life and thought could be brought into some measure of harmony. One does not have to claim, for example, that the intellectual creations of the Renaissance were caused entirely by the vast changes taking place in the European economy, in order to demonstrate that the Renaissance cannot be fully understood without considering to some degree the commercial revolution. All these developments, to put it simply, were closely related.

Sung Society

Such sweeping changes in the economic landscape of the country were bound to have important social consequences, one of which was the growth of a merchant class

whose influence was much greater than that of their counterparts in the T'ang dynasty and the Five Dynasties period. The reasons are complex. Factors which, for the purposes of analysis, acquire an independent quality of their own, are in reality so closely related to each other that it is impossible to discern them clearly. It is not disputed, for example, that the rise of the merchants was a partial response to the economic opportunities available during the early part of the Sung. But one might argue in many cases those opportunities were in part created by the very merchants whom we originally understood to be the passive benefactors of this change. Certainly merchants contributed as much to the use of more convenient forms of currency, and to the great process of urbanization, as they benefitted.

There are a number of developments in the early Sung which, although they did not make the rise of the merchant class inevitable, certainly facilitated it. One of the most important was the decline of the old aristocracy. This aristocracy, the cultivation of whose support had once been indispensable to the political survival of the emperor, had been decimated by the revolts and sporadic but destructive wars in the late T'ang and Five Dynasties period. By the end of the 10th century it was possible for the emperor to act independently of the great families;

officials, even those who were descendants of these families, owed their position to the discretion of the emperor and not to their pedigree. The actual figures for the increase in the number of officials can only be estimated. One source cites a doubling every four years before Shen-tsung's reign (1067-1085).[35] The important point is that a very significant increase in numbers had in fact taken place, and was frequently remarked upon by commentators of the period as representing something of a problem. In many ways the departure of the aristocracy created a vacuum in both urban and rural society, into which the merchants were able to enter by a judicious manipulation of wealth, and in time accumulate much of the same kind of influence formerly enjoyed by the aristocracy.

Another development which aided the growth of the merchant was the abolition of the restrictive system of dividing urban areas into separate walled conclaves (fang 坊) with access and egress limited to certain periods of the day and with a large number of confining regulations regarding commercial transactions. Cities such as Kaifeng became more open and both business and people were able to flow more freely in response to their own inclinations and the needs of the city. Guilds, which had previously existed in prescribed areas of a city as informal monopolistic associations, grew in geographical

scope and in the services which they provided to their members (to become the proto-type of the later hui-kuan 會館.[36] They were not, however, as free from government control as their European counterparts, and often suffered dearly (as well as prospered) as a result of their close association with the state bureaucracy.

The attitude of the government toward the merchants during this early period was somewhat ambivalent. The traditional attitude of deprecation toward the commercial occupations in general did not change, and the state was not always quick to realize the potential advantages which might result from a prosperous commercial economy. The interests of the merchants were almost always thought to be subordinate to those of the farmers, and when foreign trade began to be frowned upon at the end of the 11th century it was partly because of a perceived threat to the stability of agricultural prices. Nevertheless, during the early Sung the government pursued a permissive policy toward the merchants and many of the former sumptuary laws were relaxed or even rescinded, so that the outward appearance of the merchants began to correspond more accurately with their increased share of political and social prestige.[37]

This development was paralleled by the tremendous growth in number and importance of the civilian bureau-

cracy in the Northern Sung. The reasons for this are partly political and partly social. Politically, it was the result of a deliberate policy on the part of the first emperors to control the potentially disruptive power of the military commanders by undermining their authority in government and replacing them with civilian officials whose selection and promotion was controlled by the emperors themselves. Socially, the civilian officials, together with the merchants, merely stepped in to fill the vacuum created by the decline in the aristocracy.

The decline of the aristocracy and the military, and the rise of the merchant and official class, represent major changes in Chinese society, and have been used by the famous Japanese scholar Naitō Tōrajirō to buttress his theory that the Sung represented the beginning of the "modern" period in Chinese history.[38] Since the validity of his argument depends greatly on one's definition of "modernity," a topic whose complexity requires that it be considered at a length not possible in this dissertation, I mention it only to point out that the breakup of the older social order made possible more channels of social mobility, reminiscent in some ways of the new opportunities for men of merit which appeared during the late Ch'un-ch'iu and early Chan-kuo periods. Then, as in the late T'ang, Five Dynasties, and the Sung, the influence of

the families of many of the smaller states was beginning to erode in favor of ministers who rose to power on the basis of their own merit. One study has concluded that 46.1% of the officials in the Northern Sung (whose biographies were included in the Sung-shih 宋史) came from humble origins (han-tsu 寒族), as opposed to only 13.8% in the late T'ang (of those whose biographies appeared in the two T'ang histories).[39] Clearly the confidence placed by the Neo-Confucians in education as a road to public service had a substantial basis in fact and was not merely a product of their own wishful thinking.

The rise and fall of social classes must also be seen in their relation to other changes taking place in the Sung, some of which have already been mentioned in passing, and all of which might be made to fit under the category of demographic change. Among these was a shift in population from the northern plains to the area south of the Yangtze river, concentrating particularly around the mouth of the Yangtze and along the coast. This dramatic shift had of course been underway for some time before the Sung, and in fact was stimulated in large part by the political uncertainties and physical destruction in the north which prevailed from the An Lu-shan rebellion until the rise of the Sung. In 650, the population south of the Yangtze valley was estimated to contain only 40-45%

of the nation's population, but by the end of the 13th century it had risen to 85 or 90%.[40] The advent of advanced techniques in wet rice cultivation and the use of the new seeds from Champa also encouraged rapid population growth in the south. This shift in population was accompanied by a shift in wealth and influence, with the result that the nouveaux riches of the Yangtze delta began to overwhelm their more conservative counterparts in the north by sheer numbers, giving rise to friction and jealousy which sometimes crystallized in the form of political cliques within the bureaucracy.

Sung people were on the move, not only south, but to the cities as well. Urbanization proceeded apace, both in the north and the south, as we have already seen. Sung cities were much more lively than their T'ang ancestors. Suburbs grew helter-skelter outside the walls of the old cities; the restrictive fang were abolished; merchants were allowed to organize themselves to protect their own interests, and their guilds added a new dimension to Sung urban life. The constant ebb and flow of merchants, artisans, scholars, and farmers between the countryside and the city accentuated a process of cultural integration which was already underway in the cities themselves. New forms of entertainment were encouraged by the large potential audiences now gathered in the urban centers.

Professional storytelling, for example, which had probably grown out of oral exegesis of difficult texts delivered by Buddhist proselytizers in the colloquial language (pien-wen 變文),[41] grew into a fully developed art of great literary richness and originality. While T'ang story-tellers had remained relatively faithful to written versions of their plots, during the Sung they added their own innovations freely, and their collective efforts became the core of such novels (written down during the Ming) as the Shui-hu chuan (Water Margin) and the Hsi-yu chi (Journey to the West). Storytelling became one of many developing channels of communication between the Confucian literary tradition and the common man and was important in encouraging a greater homogeneity of values in the Sung, a condition which is often regarded as one of the hallmarks of the modern age.[43]

This phenomenon of Confucianism trickling down the social pyramid was further enhanced by the great changes taking place in Sung education and scholarship. Fan Chung-yen 范仲淹(989-1052), for example, was responsible for the establishment of many private educational institutions. He was also responsible for the government establishing a system of local schools supported through state funds and open to children from all backgrounds. But the dominant institution of education in the Sung was

the private academy, shu-yüan 書院, supported either by wealthy officials, landlords, or merchants. This is where the greatest teachers and best students were to be found, and the best known of them was the White Deer Grotto (Pai-lu tung 白鹿洞) on the south side of Lu mountain in what is now Kiangsi province.[44] This tremendous growth in the field of education, made possible by many of the social and economic conditions sketched above, brought Confucian values to a wider audience, and broadened the scope of advancement for those who took advantage of the opportunity to go to school.[45]

This process was aided also by the full exploitation of the printing technology which had been developed in the T'ang dynasty, and the appearance in the early Sung of major encyclopedic works, among the most important of which were the T'ai-p'ing yü-lan 太平御覽, the T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi 太平廣記, the Wen-yüan ying-hua 文苑英華, and the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei 冊府元龜.[46] Making the Chinese literary and philosophical tradition available on such a massive scale at much less cost than was ever possible before could not fail to exercise a profound impact on the educational system. Instead of being exposed merely to the standard commentaries students now had greater access to a wide corpus of scholarship and literature. These technological innovations form one more ingredient,

together with those economic and social factors mentioned above, in the rise of the syncretic Neo-Confucian movement, to which we shall now turn.

Metaphysical Neo-Confucianism

Most of the Chinese terms for Neo-Confucianism emphasize its metaphysical content. The most commonly used of these terms is li-hsüeh 理學 (School of Principle), which by its emphasis on principle, li, concentrates on the metaphysical speculations of philosophers beginning in the Northern Sung and culminating in the thought of Chu Hsi in the late Southern Sung. Another term is tao-hsüeh 道學 (School of the Way), which originated in the Southern Sung as a term of abuse and, like the term "Impressionism" in 19th century France, only gradually shed its derogatory connotations with the passage of time. Tao-hsüeh, however, emphasizes the moral as well as the metaphysical preoccupations of the Sung thinkers. Another phrase is hsin-hsüeh 心學 (School of the Mind), which emphasizes the attraction of several Sung philosophers of both the Northern (Ch'eng Hao 程顥 [1032-1085]) and the Southern periods (Lu Hsiang-shan 陸象山 [1139-1193]) to questions of the mind, the development of which led to a philosophical current of idealism running parallel and often in competition with the orthodox school established by Chu Hsi.

The Neo-Confucian interest in metaphysics is traditionally thought to be a response to the great attraction of Confucian scholars after the Han to Buddhism and philosophical Taoism, an attraction to which traditional Confucianism had been unable to offer a sufficiently convincing alternative of its own until the Sung. This interpretation has been somewhat modified by Theodore de Bary, who argues that in fact Neo-Confucianism rose after Buddhism had already ceased to be a vibrant intellectual force in China, and furthermore that such an interpretation implies that there was no Confucian metaphysics prior to the arrival of Buddhism.[47] It is clear, however, that there were many elements in Buddhism and Taoism which were antinomical to the Confucian system. In Wing-tsit Chan's words:[48]

> Generally speaking, the Neo-Confucianists attacked the Buddhists for looking upon the world as illusory, for regarding everything as the mind, for failing to understand the nature of life and death and trying to undermine them, for their inability to handle human affairs, for escaping from the world and public responsibilities, for failing to fulfill human relations, for deserting parents, for leaving family life and thus eventually terminating the human race, for being lazy and selfish and aiming only at rebirth in Paradise, and for frightening people with transmigration.

Thus from the Buddhist point of view the written record, upon which the Confucian tradition placed so much emphasis, is nothing more than a catalogue of dreams, a chronicle of false appearances which is an impediment, not an

aid, to the search for the "true" reality. Scholarship thus loses significance, and the privileged role of the scholar-elite as purveyors of wisdom is undermined.

The response of the Neo-Confucians to Buddhism was characterized not only by rejection, however. They were greatly attracted to the rational (while rejecting the mystical) elements in Buddhist and Taoist metaphysics. In this regard the Hua-yen 華嚴 and Ch'an 禪 sects were particularly influential. The principle, li 理 (in Hua-yen Buddhism referring to noumena, as opposed to shih 事, which refers to phenomena) has been defined as "pattern, reason, truth, discernment, analysis,...being, reality, the principle of organization, that which is full of truth and goodness, the transcendent and normative principle of moral action."[49] In Neo-Confucianism it came to be placed in relation to ch'i 氣, "breath, ether, vital force, matter-energy,...the concrete, material, differentiating principle of things, that which together with li constitutes all beings, that which gives life to things."[50] But li 理 had earlier been given a metaphysical dimension by Neo-Taoists in the Six Dynasties Period, particularly Wang Pi 王弼 (226-249) and Kuo Hsiang 郭象 (d. 312).[51]

In addition, the concern for the cultivation of the mind (hsin 心) which came to occupy such a prominent place in Neo-Confucianism also owed much to the Taoist

pursuit of tranquillity and the Ch'an Buddhist emphasis on calmness and concentration. The Neo-Confucianists modified this by re-emphasizing the Confucian virtues of ch'eng 誠 (sincerity) and ching 敬 (reverence, seriousness) through the practice of quiet-sitting, ching-tso 靜坐. Differing interpretations as to precisely what hsin actually consisted in led to a later split in metaphysical Neo-Confucianism. This is seen in the polarity between those who adhered to Chu Hsi's emphasis on li, which implied that moral understanding was reached partly through a knowledge of the principles inherent in all things (hence the necessity to investigate things, ko-wu 格物), and those who, following Lu Hsiang-shan, concentrated more on hsin, the mind, as an avenue to enlightenment, arguing that the mind, already full of li, was sufficient unto itself. This latter stream led eventually to Wang Yang-ming's 王陽明(1472-1529) synthesis in the Ming dynasty.

It remains in this brief overview to consider one more fundamental concept of metaphysical Neo-Confucianism, the quintessential Confucian virtue of benevolence, jen 仁. Jen was integrated into the Neo-Confucian system by identifying it with the basic nature of heaven itself and by regarding it as representing the creative, productive force of nature. By elevating this virtue to the level of a cosmic principle it no longer became merely an ethical

goal but rather a fundamental quality of human nature itself inherent in man by virtue of his being a creature of the larger universal order. The pursuit of jen thus became a natural consequence of man striving to fulfill his basic nature.

These ideas were advanced in the Northern Sung by five philosophers, since regarded (by Chu Hsi) as the founders of orthodox Neo-Confucianism. All of the Northern Sung Neo-Confucians were preoccupied, in a way reminiscent of the pre-Socratic philosophers of Greece, with the problem of the one and the many--how to find in the bewildering confusion of constant change an underlying principle of order and meaning. Since the Confucian tradition had not previously emphasized this question, the Northern Sung thinkers were forced, in their search for a Confucian metaphysical explanation of the universe, to draw on many schools, not only Taoist but the early Yin-yang School, the Five Elements School, and the Book of Changes, as well as Buddhist philosophy. The first two philosophers (of the five Northern Sung founders) were particularly indebted to Taoism for the inspiration of many of their ideas, though they frequently modified the Taoist nature of certain concepts in order to make them fit into a fundamentally Confucian framework.

Chou Tun-i 周敦頤 (1017-1073), who is generally

regarded as being the first of the Neo-Confucian metaphysical thinkers, explained the creation of the material world and the phenomenon of change within it by borrowing the Taoist use of diagrams. His book, the T'ai-chi t'u-shuo 太極圖說 (Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate), begins with a statement positing the unity of t'ai-chi (supreme ultimate) and wu-chi 無極 (non-being), which is a Taoist term. In order to explain how they are related to each other, Chou then draws on the Book of Changes, and incorporates the principles of the movement of the yin and the yang, and the five agents. Shao Yung 邵雍 (1011-1077) located his principle of unity in a theory of numbers which he borrowed from Taoist cosmology and used to explain the origin and workings of the cosmological order. Again, the parallels with the Pre-Socratics, especially the Pythagorean School, are striking.

The third great thinker, Chang Tsai 張載 (1020-1078), found his unifying principle in the concept of ch'i 氣, which he argued was synonymous with the supreme ultimate, t'ai-chi, in which capacity it constituted the physical structure of the universe as well as the principles by which the universe operated. Insofar as benevolence, jen 仁, partook of the supreme ultimate it was universal in scope and inhered in all things. This ch'i was regarded by the fourth and fifth of the five thinkers,

the brothers Ch'eng I and Ch'eng Hao, as merely the material manifestations of certain external principles, which they called li 理, as I have already mentioned. Although the two brothers were in agreement as to the central place occupied by li in their philosophical system, their differing emphases resulted in the formation of two different schools of Neo-Confucian thought. Ch'eng Hao believed the mind, hsin 心, and principle, li 理, to be identical, thus making it possible to apprehend principle by concentrating on cultivating the mind. This produced a tendency to philosophical idealism which was carried on and developed later by Lu Hsiang-shan and led to Wang Yang-ming, as already mentioned. Ch'eng I, however, because of his emphasis on the investigation of things, ko-wu 格物, produced a rationalistic strain which culminated in the synthesis of Chu Hsi in the Southern Sung. According to Wing-tsit Chan, Chu Hsi:[52]

> ...synthesized Confucius' concept of jen (humanity), Mencius' doctrines of humanity and righteousness, the idea of the investigation of things in the Great Learning, the teaching of sincerity in the Doctrine of the Mean, the yin yang (passive and active cosmic forces) and the Five Agents (Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, Earth) doctrines of Han times (206 B.C.--A.D. 220), and practically all the important ideas of the Neo-Confucianists of early Sung.... His most radical innovation was to select and group the Analects, the Book of Mencius, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean (both of which are chapters in the Book of Rites), as the Four Books.

Because Chu Hsi's commentaries were made the basis of the

civil service examination from 1313 to 1905, they came to form the single most important influence on Neo-Confucian thought in the last 800 years.

Aesthetic Neo-Confucianism

The aesthetic mode of Neo-Confucianism expressed itself in prose, poetry, and painting. Prose and poetry have usually been regarded as part of a wider development known as the "Archaic Literature Movement" (Ku-wen yün-tung 古文運動), which was itself, among other things, another manifestation of the general Neo-Confucian drive to reconcile moral theory and practical application. The Ku-wen movement sought to use literature both in order to apprehend the tao and to put it into practice (wen-yi te-tao, wen-yi hsing-tao 文以得道,文以行道 ; ming-tao chih-yung 明道致用 .[53] It was partly the result of a reaction in both the T'ang and the Sung, led by Han Yü 韓愈 (786-824) in the T'ang and Liu K'ai 劉開 (947-1001) in the Sung, against the aridity of the prevailing form of textual criticism and the superficiality of the flowery form of literary composition known as parallel prose, p'ien-wen 駢文. But the Ku-wen movement was more than a revival of a simple and direct literary style. De Bary, for example, has formulated five major contributions of Han Yü to later Neo-Confucianism.[54] He attacked Buddhism and Taoism, vitalized Confucian ethical standards, rejected ideas

which he regarded as stemming from non-Chinese cultural tradition, formulated the idea of the orthodox transmission of the Confucian tao (tao-t'ung 道統), and, lastly, asserted the importance of upholding this orthodox tradition even in the face of strenuous opposition from contemporary political forces.

In general, the Ku-wen scholars felt confined by the prevailing methods of classical exegesis and sought to dispense with them and return to the classics themselves, even going to the extreme of doubting the authenticity of some classics (yi-ching 疑經). The Sung spirit of criticism was thus an outgrowth of a similar spirit in the T'ang, as we shall see in greater detail in Chapter Two. The concern by the participants of the Ku-wen movement with the question of orthodox transmission in a wide variety of activities is illustrated by the various terms which were in common use at the time. Tao-t'ung 道統 came to refer to philosophical orthodoxy, and cheng-t'ung 正統 to political orthodoxy. Both were different manifestations of the same driving impulse to relate the essence of the Confucian tradition to the practical world. The greatest figure in the Ku-wen movement in the Northern Sung was Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), and in fact six of the eight prose masters of the T'ang and Sung all belonged to this period of revival in the Northern Sung:

Ou-yang Hsiu, Su Hsün 蘇洵 (1009-1066), Su Shih 蘇軾 (1036-1101), Su Ch'e 蘇轍 (1039-1112), Tseng Kung 曾鞏 (1019-1083), and Wang An-shih.

Sung poetry has been described by one scholar as representing "...a new departure, not only from the poetry of the T'ang, but from all the poetry of the past."[55] This departure lay in the degree to which Sung poetry concerned itself with social and political issues, philosophical theories, and descriptions of common, everyday life. It was also illustrated by the fact that Sung poets were much less preoccupied with sorrow as a theme for their poetry than their T'ang predecessors; they were, on the whole, a more optimistic lot.[56] Su Shih, the optimist's optimist, wrote about history, philosophy, and morality.[57] Mei Yao-ch'en 梅堯臣 (1002-1060) wrote that "The basic purpose of literature is to aid the times."[58] In other words poetry was intended by the Sung poets to convey in an aesthetic mode an integrated view of the intellectual, moral, and practical worlds of human life.

Sung painting also underwent a major transformation in the Sung. In the 11th century painting began to be equated with poetry as an expressive device for the artist's inner vision.[59] Su Shih became the leading exponent of this idea, the first to use the term shih-jen hua 士人畫 to refer to paintings by scholars who were

amateurs and not professionals.[60] He was also the author of that famous phrase describing a painting by Wang Wei, "When one savors Mo-chieh's poems, there are paintings in them/ When one looks at Mo-chieh's pictures, there are poems."[61] The purpose of painting thus became not merely to represent nature accurately, as it had been in the T'ang, but to pass along insights into the tao of nature acquired by the painter in ways which had nothing to do with the technical skill of painting itself. Painting, along with prose and poetry, became something in the nature of a bridge between life and thought, over which it was possible to travel at will from one realm to the other.

Practical Statecraft

Practical statecraft (ching-shih 經世) is the third leg of the Neo-Confucian tripod. The Northern Sung paragons of practical statecraft were generally uninterested in metaphysical questions.[62] One must keep in mind, however, that although men of action are not often men of profound philosophical insight, it does not follow that men of thought are unaware of the practical limits under which men of action are constrained to operate. Nor does it follow that intellectual assumptions are any less important because they are not fully understood by the people who entertain them. In the case of the Sung statesmen, therefore, it is important to remember that although

they were not philosophers, their actions can only be understood in the light of their adherence to ideals which were given intellectual substance by their more metaphysically inclined colleagues. As James T.C. Liu has put it:[63]

> Many of them (Sung statesmen) came up from modest circumstances, remained true to their social origin, and served the empire only in accordance with their Confucian principles, often at great personal risk. Without such a fine crop of idealists in any given period, the Chinese bureaucracy, instead of maintaining an appreciably high standard of government administration, could hardly have functioned at all.

The attitude of these scholars was best characterized by Fan Chung-yen's famous maxim that "A scholar should be the first to become concerned with the world's troubles and the last to rejoice in its happiness."[64] Fan was the driving force behind the Ch'ing-li governmental reform of 1043-44, which became a model for the reforms later introduced by Wang An-shih under the emperor Shen-tsung 神宗 in 1069-85. Among other contributions Fan was instrumental in establishing educational institutions (through the founding of the charitable estate, yi-chuang 義莊, and the charitable school, yi-hsüeh 義學) and revitalizing the familial clan system. All of them became major institutions through which the Confucian value system was brought to bear on the daily living habits of an increasingly larger proportion of the population than ever before.

These ideals were further developed by the scholar-officials of the utilitarian kung-li 功利 school, of which the most notable were Ou-yang Hsiu, Li Kou 李覯 (1009-1059), and Wang An-shih.[65] These scholars were more frankly interested in pursuing the wealth and power (fu-ch'iang 富強) of the state (although still directed to Confucian, not Legalist, ends) and argued that only in such a way could the welfare (li 利) of the people be permanently secured. They generally refuted Mencius's criticism of the hegemon (pa 霸), believing that the hegemons ought to be praised for the contributions to unity and stability which they did make, whatever their motives may have been. Harkening back to Legalist precedents, they tended to emphasize the primacy of law and institutions in governing rather than moral cultivation. In Wang An-shih's words, "That which harmonizes the people is wealth (ts'ai 財); that which manages wealth is law (fa 法)."[66] Both Li Kou and Wang An-shih turned to the Chou-li 周禮. Not everybody, however, agreed with them. Ou-yang Hsiu, for example, was a great admirer of the Ch'un-ch'iu, which he regarded as having great practical value.[67]

In order to comprehend fully the extraordinary confidence which animated the Neo-Confucianists of the Northern Sung in their quest to bring the real world of practical experience into greater harmony with their intellectual

ideals, it is necessary to understand the economic, social, and political circumstances of the period. This is not to say that every development in the economy, for example, can be said to have exerted a direct and verifiable influence on specific ideas. At the same time, however, many of those developments, taken as a whole, had a very great impact on Sung thought, particularly political thought, and thus deserve some attention.

Conclusion

After having reviewed the political, economic, social, and intellectual threads which comprised the fabric of Northern Sung life, after having witnessed the rise of the scholar-officials to unprecedented political and social prominence, and after having noted the greater availability of the tools for disseminating the Confucian ethic to the common man (such as printing and educational institutions), one can now appreciate more fully than before the almost limitless faith which the early Neo-Confucianists placed in their own power to influence the moral development of "all under heaven." Since many of the conclusions reached by this dissertation rest upon the belief that Sung metaphysical thought and the problems of practical politics in the Northern Sung were intimately connected, indeed, were regarded as inseparable, it has been necessary to present the wider framework in which

those problems were encountered. It is this peculiar sympathy between ideas and action in the early Sung which prompts me to give to the term Neo-Confucianism the widest possible interpretation and which, in a larger sense, frames the small canvas of human experience sketched in this dissertation. This impulse to reconcile theory and practice led the Neo-Confucians, metaphysicians and reformers alike, to the classics, in much the same way that all questioning men turn to the record of the accumulated wisdom of those who have gone before them--partly as consolation and justification for actions already taken or beliefs already held, and partly as inspiration, as a guide in learning to deal with questions which are so fundamental to the human condition that they transcend the barriers of time and place, and are never answered with finality but only understood with greater profundity. These motives are not always as comfortably discrete as scholars often make them out to be and one can safely assume that in most individuals they were mixed.

The precise manner in which the Neo-Confucianists came to understand the overriding practical issue of obedience to a central ruler in terms of their long study of the Ch'un-ch'iu will be taken up in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will consider how the question of central authority was then fit into a cohesive and rational con-

ception of the moral universe. First, however, we must turn our attention to a brief history of the Ch'un-ch'iu textual tradition itself, without which it would be difficult to understand why the Ch'un-ch'iu became in the Northern Sung such an important vehicle for the discussion of these immensely complex practical and philosophical questions.

REFERENCES

1. De Bary, Principle and Practicality, pp. 4-12.

2. This is a variation of George Hatch's formulation. See his 1972 Ph.D. dissertation, "The Thought of Su Hsün," especially the introduction. Wing-tsit Chan's umbrella is even bigger. He speaks of the "all-inclusive character of Neo-Confucianism," which "embraces all essential phases of life--philosophy, ethics, religion, government, literature, mental discipline, etc." See "Integrative Force," p. 317.

3. Ch'ien Mu, Cheng-chih te-shih, p. 64.

4. Much of this paragraph is based on Edmund Worthy, "The Founding of Sung China," pp. 180-195, 264-294.

5. Ibid., pp. 213-214.

6. Kracke, Civil Service, p. 59.

7. Ch'ien Mu, Cheng-chih te-shih, pp. 63-72; and Worthy, "Founding of Sung China," pp. 245-253.

8. Kracke, Civil Service, pp. 40-41.

9. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

10. Ibid., p. 36.

11. Kracke, "Kaifeng," pp. 71-73.

12. Ping-ti Ho, "An Estimate of the Total Population," p. 50.

13. Ma, Commercial Development, p. 13.

14. Ping-ti Ho, "Early-Ripening Rice," pp. 200-218.

15. Ma, Commercial Development, p. 14.

16. Shiba Yoshinobu, "Urbanization," pp. 14, 30.

17. Ma, Commercial Development, pp. 82-91; and ibid., p. 42.

18. Robert Hartwell, "Northern Sung Monetary System," p. 285. Payments of silver to the Liao were offset by the increasing output of Chinese silver mines.

19. Robert Hartwell, "International Commerce and Monetary Policy in Sung China," paper for Seminar on Traditional China, Columbia University (November, 1971), p. 2.

20. Hartwell, "Northern Sung Monetary System," p. 288.

21. Hartwell, "Financial Expertise," pp. 309-310.

22. Elvin, Pattern of the Chinese Past, p. 13.

23. Edmund Worthy, "Southern Sung Salt Administration," p. 104.

24. Ibid., p. 110.

25. Hartwell, "Cycle of Economic Change," pp. 102-159.

26. Shiba Yoshinobu, Commerce and Society, pp. 4-40.

27. Ma, Commercial Development, pp. 161-162.

28. See map in ibid., p. 64.

29. Ibid., p. 19. Mark Elvin deals with this in Chapter Six of Pattern of the Chinese Past. The nature and conditions of land tenure in the Sung are a matter of some dispute. The arguments are dealt with in Myers, "Transformation and Continuity," esp. pp. 271-273.

30. Ma, Commercial Development, p. 23.

31. Edward Kracke, Civil Service, p. 17

32. Ma, Commercial Development, p. 11.

33. Kracke, Civil Service, pp. 11-18.

34. Wong, "Government Expenditures," p. 60.

35. Wong, ibid., p. 64.

36. Kato Shigeshi, "Associations of Merchants," pp. 66-67.

37. Kracke, "Sung Society," pp. 484-485.

38. Miyakawa Hisayuki, "Outline of the Naito Hypothesis," p. 537.

39. Ping-ti Ho, Ladder of Success, p. 260.

40. Kracke, "Sung Society," pp. 479-480.

41. Liu Wu-chi, Chinese Literature, pp. 151, 154; Ch'en Shou-yi, Chinese Literature, pp. 466-467.

42. Jaroslav Prusek, "Chinese Popular Novel," pp. 107-109.

43. Common people were exposed to history as well as fiction. Narrations of the histories of the Five Dynasties, for example, were very popular. See the continuation of Prusek's article, p. 640.

44. Liu Po-chi, Sung-tai cheng-chih shih, vol. 2, pp. 826-837.

45. Thomas Lee, "Education in Northern Sung China," pp. 13-14.

46. Ch'en Shou-yi, Chinese Literature, pp. 352-353. See also Goodrich, "Development of Printing in China."

47. Finally, de Bary notes that the Neo-Confucian reaction to Buddhism was initially based on moral and social grounds, to which a metaphysical "superstructure" was added only later. Having concluded that the early Neo-Confucianists Hu Yüan and Sun Fu were more interested in cosmological questions than we have previously suspected, I would tend to be more sympathetic now to the traditional Chinese interpretation. This will be pursued at greater length in the next chapter. See de Bary, "Neo-Confucian Cultivation," pp. 161-162.

48. Wing-tsit Chan, "Integrative Force," p. 328.

49. Julia Ching, Wang Yang-ming, p. 268. See also Kenneth Ch'en, Buddhism in China, pp. 316-319.

50. Julia Ching, ibid., p. 268.

51. Wing-tsit Chan, "Neo-Confucian Concept of Li," pp. 129-132. Of course the philosophical context of the Sung was different.

52. Chan, Sourcebook, p. 589.

53. Chin Chung-shu, "Ku-wen yün-tung," p. 98.

54. De Bary, "Reappraisal," p. 84.

55. Yoshikawa, Sung Poetry, p. 42.

56. Ibid., pp. 24-28, 43-44.

57. Liu Wu-chi, Chinese Literature, p. 133.

58. Chaves, Mei Yao-ch'en, p. 163.

59. Bush, The Chinese Literati on Painting, p. 22. See also James F. Cahill, "Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting," Confucian Persuasion, pp. 115-140.

60. Bush, ibid., p. 29.

61. Ibid., p. 25. "味摩詰之詩,詩中有畫,觀摩詰之畫,畫中有詩."

62. Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, p. 454.

63. James T.C. Liu, "An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen," p. 105.

64. Ibid., p. 111.

65. See discussion in Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, pp. 449-461.

66. Ibid., p. 460.

67. Liu, Ou-yang Hsiu, p. 100.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF THE CH'UN-CH'IU COMMENTARIES

Introduction

The Ch'un-ch'iu 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals) occupies a place in the history of Chinese political thought entirely out of proportion to the scale of the work itself. From early Han to the late Ch'ing, a period of more than two thousand years, it has been the single most important source of political ideas in all of classical literature. For questions of self-cultivation Chinese have gone for inspiration to the I-ching 易經 or the corpus of Confucian dialogues (the Lun-yü, the Ta-hsüeh, or the Chung-yung), but for questions of government they have usually gone to the Ch'un-ch'iu. More commentaries were written on the Ch'un-ch'iu in the Sung dynasty, for example, than on any other classic.[1] And yet the work itself, stripped of its embellishments in the form of numerous commentaries, presents a very barren prospect indeed, expecially to those whose interest is first stirred by its profound impact on Chinese political thought and who expect the cause to be as readily comprehensible as the effect. It is not.

The classic is basically a bare chronicle of events

pertaining to the state of Lu 魯 in the 242 years between 772 B.C. and 481 B.C. It is divided according to the reign periods of the rulers of Lu, of which there were twelve. It contains in its present form about 16,000 characters and for the sake of analysis has been broken down by various commentators into certain categories, into at least one of which all the events in the Ch'un-ch'iu can be made to fit, albeit occasionally with a little pushing and squeezing. One of the most useful such efforts was done by Mao Ch'i-ling 毛奇齡 (1623-1716), who compiled a list of 22 categories: changing of the first year of a ruler, the accession of a new ruler, the birth of a son to a ruler, the appointment of a ruler in another state, court and complimentary visits, covenants and meetings, incursions and invasions, removal and extinction of states, marriages, entertainments and condolences, deaths and burials, sacrifices, hunting, building, military arrangements, taxation, notation of good years and bad, ominous occurrences, departures from a city or state, arrivals at a city or state, notation of thieves and murders, and punishments.[2] Another traditional listing, which is more concerned with the method of analysis than with the classification of content, breaks the Ch'un-ch'iu into the following eleven subjects:[3] main purposes (chih 志), way (tao 道), specific purposes (chih 旨), method

(fa 法), system (chih 制), precepts (yi 義), conventions (li 例), incidents (shih 事), writing style (wen 文), diction (tz'u 辭), and moral instruction (chiao 教). Other states of the period also possessed annals, either of the same name (Ch'un-ch'iu), or of others, such as the Sheng 乘 of Chin 晉 or the T'ao-wu 檮杌 of Ch'u 楚, which were regarded as raw records only, not having been altered by the hand of any later historian. These other histories are no longer extant.

The Ch'un-ch'iu has traditionally been studied in conjunction with three commentaries, which provide greater historical background to the events listed in the Ch'un-ch'iu itself, and speculate in some cases about the meaning of the wording of certain events. Of these three commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu the Tso-chuan 左傳 is the most voluminous. However, the evidence now suggests that it was not originally written as a commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu at all, but was a separate historical chronicle drawn from the historical records of the states of Chin, Ch'u, and Wei 衛, as well as other sources. The text appears to have been written around 300 B.C., much later than the traditional Chinese interpretation, which ascribed its authorship to Tso Ch'iu-ming 左丘明, a disciple of Confucius. The Tso-chuan does not end with the appearance of the unicorn in

481, as do the Ch'un-ch'iu and the two other commentaries, but with the assassination of the Count of Chih (知伯) in 463. The Tso-chuan did not become an integral part of the Ch'un-ch'iu corpus until Liu Hsin 劉歆 (53 B.C.-A.D. 22) divided it up according to the chronology of the Ch'un-ch'iu and used it as a commentary on the Ch'un-ch'iu. It is in this form that it has come down to the present. While it does contain moral judgments, the Tso-chuan is primarily a narrative history, and frequently describes in great detail events which are only briefly alluded to in the Ch'un-ch'iu itself. Since it did not lend itself so readily to the kind of interpretation favored by court scholars, the Tso-chuan did not receive in the Han dynasty (except very briefly) the formal blessing of the official academic institutions. But by the end of the Later Han it had been adopted by the scholarly community as the most important of all the commentaries, because of its value as a historical document. This position was to remain unchallenged until the middle of the T'ang, when the Kung-yang rose in stature,[6] for reasons which are discussed in greater detail below.

Both the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang commentaries are products of different schools of Confucianism which originated in the differing interpretations of Confucius's students. Both commentaries trace their pedigree back to

Tzu-hsia 子夏 (520 B.C.--?), a student of Confucius, but then split. The Kung-yang has been identified with the state of Ch'i, and may have influenced Mencius.[7] The school of Ch'i emphasized the interaction of heaven and man, and texts were interpreted to show that heaven punishes man's improper deeds. For example, numerology and divination were used to interpret the I-ching, geomancy and yin-yang to interpret the Li-chi, the five periods (wu-chi 五際) to interpret the Ch'i-shih 齊詩, and calamities and prodigies (tsai-yi 災異) to interpret the Ch'un-ch'iu. Hu-mu Sheng 胡母生, a native of the state of Ch'i, is credited with being the first to commit the teachings of the Kung-yang school to writing, in the early years of the Han dynasty. Its first influential supporters were Tung Chung-shu and Kung-sun Hung 公孫弘 (200-127 B.C.). Tung was the first to refer to the Kung-yang text as a commentary and is supposed to have supported the Kung-yang and argued successfully against the Ku-liang scholar Hsia-ch'iu Chiang-kung 瑕丘江公 in debates conducted before Emperor Wu.[9]

The Ku-liang is slightly shorter than the Kung-yang.[10] There exists some dispute as to whether the Ku-liang is older or younger than the Kung-yang, but the preponderance of evidence suggests that it is the more recent.[11] Because it has traditionally been thought of as having descended

through the school of Confucius's disciples in Lu, it has been regarded by many scholars as representing a more authentic version of Confucius's teachings than the Kung-yang.[12] But it has always been overshadowed by the Kung-yang, partly because it did not attract the support of the early giants of Han Confucianism, Tung Chung-shu, Kung-sun Hung, and Hu-mu Sheng. Its brief triumph came during the reign of the Emperor Hsüan 宣帝 (73-49 B.C.), who was fond of it and supported Ku-liang scholars such as Wei Hsien 韋賢(148-60 B.C.) and Hsia-hou Sheng 夏侯勝. The Ku-liang was established as a part of the orthodox canon in the meetings at the Shih-ch'ü 石渠閣 pavilion held from 53 to 51 B.C.[13] The Ku-liang has also been more closely associated with Hsün-tzu than the Kung-yang,[14] suggesting a more authoritarian interpretation of the Ch'un-ch'iu.

The tremendous importance attached by Chinese political thinkers to the Ch'un-ch'iu rests on two fundamental assumptions. Neither of these assumptions is verifiable beyond all doubt, with the inevitable consequence that each has had its own proponents and detractors. The controversy has not yet been resolved, and probably never will be, unless new evidence of some incontrovertible nature is unearthed in the future. The first assumption is that Confucius himself compiled the Ch'un-ch'iu. Indeed, this

was the standard belief from the time of Mencius in the fourth century B.C. and was not brought into question until Tu Yü 杜預 (222-284) in the third century A.D. claimed that it was compiled according to principles established by the Duke of Chou and that Confucius did not add or subtract anything.[15] In the early twentieth century, the wave of skepticism with regard to the authenticity of classical texts which swept through the Chinese scholarly community caused such scholars as Ku Chieh-kang and William Hung to reject any tradition of authorship which could not be conclusively proven, including the attribution of the authorship of the Ch'un-ch'iu to Confucius. Archaeological evidence in the past several decades, however, has lent considerable support to the accuracy of many traditional interpretations, hitherto unproven, of classical texts. It now seems reasonable to accept the traditional interpretation of the authorship of the Ch'un-ch'iu, recognizing that we are never likely to have complete unanimity among students of the Ch'un-ch'iu.[16]

The second assumption is that Confucius conveyed judgments of praise and blame (pao-pien 褒貶) by selecting certain evidence, presenting it in a special way, and omitting other evidence, without ever making those judgments explicit. In such subtle twists and turns of the narrative were understood to reside the great principles

of the kingly way, wei-yen ta-yi 微言大義 (sublime words with deep meaning). If the title of a particular official, for example, is mentioned on one occasion but not on another, this may be interpreted as conveying Confucius's censure of that individual for unethical behavior.

Disagreements over these assumptions have often taken the form of a debate over whether the Ch'un-ch'iu is a classic or merely a primary document composed of records kept by generations of historiographers at Lu. Advocates of the Ch'un-ch'iu as a classic point to the statements of Mencius 孟子 (372-289 B.C.), who was the first to assert that Confucius compiled the Ch'un-ch'iu with a moral message:[17]

> Again the world fell into decay, and principles faded away. Perverse speakings and oppressive deeds waxed rife again. There were instances of ministers who murdered their sovereigns, and of sons who murdered their fathers. Confucius was afraid, and made the "Spring and Autumn." What the "Spring and Autumn" contains are matters proper to the sovereign. On this account Confucius said, "Yes! It is the Spring and Autumn which will make men know me, and it is the Spring and Autumn which will make men condemn me...." Confucius completed the "Spring and Autumn," and rebellious ministers and villainous sons were struck with terror.

Tung Chung-shu also accepted this interpretation, and about him more will be said later. The next commentator on the subject was Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (145 or 135--? B.C.), who approved of Tung's position and at one point in the Shih-chi quotes Confucius as having said, "If I wish to set

forth my theoretical judgments, nothing is as good as illustrating them through the depth and clarity of past affairs.[18] In fact, there were no scholars in the Han dynasty who questioned the authorship of Confucius.[19] Indeed, it seems unlikely that Confucius would have remarked that he will be known by the Ch'un-ch'iu if all he did was copy the existing records. This is not the place, however, to enter into a discussion of all the arguments which have been raised about this issue. It is enough for us to know that they exist, since for our purposes the important point is that the commentators of the Kung-yang tradition, which had the greatest influence on the Northern Sung commentaries (for reasons which will become more apparent later), were quite certain that Confucius wrote the Ch'in-ch'iu and that he conveyed his principles through the device of wei-yen.

The precise interpretation of those principles often varied from commentator to commentator and from age to age, depending on the particular problems which dominated each period. But there is general agreement among those who accept Confucius's authorship of the classic that Confucius wrote it as a guide to restore political order and stability to China by returning to an observance of fundamental moral principles. The Ch'un-ch'iu was thought to have been written to explain not only the facts of history but their

meaning as well. Tung Chung-shu put it this way:[20]

> The Ch'un-ch'iu, as an object of study, describes the past so as to illumine the future. Its phrases, however, embody the inscrutableness of Heaven and therefore are difficult to understand. To him who is incapable of proper examination it seems as if they contain nothing. To him, however, who is capable of examining, there is nothing they do not contain. Thus he who concerns himself with the Ch'un-ch'iu, on finding one fact in it, links it to many others; on seeing one omission in it, broadly connects it (with others). In this way he gains complete understanding of the world.

It has been argued that as a rule reformers preferred the classics while anti-reformers preferred historical texts.[21] In support of this assertion, one may note the New Text Movement for reform in the latter half of the nineteenth century, in which Confucius was portrayed as a political revolutionary. But it was perhaps a testimony to the ambiguity of the Ch'un-ch'iu that none of the Ch'un-ch'iu scholars of the Northern Sung supported the reforms of Wang An-shih.[22] Clearly the classic, by itself, does not commend itself either for or against reform uncritically, and we would be wise to disabuse ourselves of this misapprehension as early as possible. But regardless of how the text has been interpreted during the last two thousand years of Chinese history, there is universal agreement on its tremendous importance in Chinese political thought.

This chapter is devoted to a brief survey of the major commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu from the Han down to

the Northern Sung. The purpose of the chapter on the background of Neo-Confucianism was to place the commentators of the Northern Sung in the context of the political, social, economic, and intellectual events of their time. All of these factors influenced their interpretations. The purpose of this chapter is to present the exegetical tradition of the Ch'un-ch'iu itself, in order that the significance of the departures from that tradition made by commentators in the Sung can be fully appreciated.

Commentaries From the Han to the Five Dynasties Period

Since the major commentators on the Ch'un-ch'iu in the Northern Sung were more in line with the Kung-yang tradition of interpretation than either of the other two (although they claimed to reject all three) I am concentrating my attention on the Kung-yang. The first, and perhaps the most influential, of all the writers on the Ch'un-ch'iu from the Han to the present, was Tung Chung-shu. His work, the Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu 春秋繁露 (Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals), is important not only because it was a masterpiece of the Kung-yang tradition, but because, as Tung's major work, it represented a crystallization of the former Han belief in the interaction of heaven and man. Although Tung Chung-shu never occupied high political office for a long period of time, the

adoption of Confucianism by the Chinese state as its orthodox ideology, officially approved and taught in state schools, probably owes more to the persuasive arguments of Tung Chung-shu than any other single scholar.[23]

If there is one central thread running through early Han Confucian thought, it is that there is a close and inviolable relationship between heaven, earth, and man, a relationship characterized by a powerful underlying unity (expressed by the phrase "interaction of heaven and man," t'ien-jen kan-ying 天人感應 or t'ien-jen ho-yi 天人合一 . Their essential unity is a consequence not only of their being connected with each other through the instrumentality of the sage-ruler, but also of their being governed by the same universal forces. An action in any one of them was believed to provoke a response in the other, so that, in the words of Tung Chung-shu,[24]

> ...when the human world is well-governed and the people are at peace, or when the will (of the ruler) is equable and his character is correct, then the transforming influences of Heaven and Earth operate in a state of perfection and among the myriad things only the finest are produced. But when the human world is in disorder and the people become perverse, or when the (ruler's) will is depraved and his character is rebellious, then the transforming influences of Heaven and Earth suffer injury, so that their (yin and yang) ethers generate visitations and harm arises.

Tung's belief in the mutual interaction of heaven and man was also manifested in his use of the Kung-yang commentary as a guide to legal judgments. His Kung-yang

Tung Chung-shu chih-yü 公羊董仲舒治獄 (of which only fragments remain) included 232 legal judgments made by Tung on the basis of the principles of the Kung-yang commentary.[25] Once the essential unity of man, earth, and heaven were demonstrated and their common essence was shown to be moral in nature, it remained to find a place for the ruler which would, on the one hand, satisfy the obvious need for an agency of political stability and moral guidance, and, on the other hand, provide some avenue by which the power of such a ruler might be restrained within acceptable limits. The solution, taking into account the tremendous power which rulers after the Ch'in dynasty had unquestionably gathered into their own hands, was ingenious. Tung argued that heaven established the ruler in order to make man good, to enable them to fulfill the potential which lies latent in all human beings:[26]

> Heaven has produced mankind with natures containing the 'basic stuff' of goodness but unable to be good (in themselves). Therefore it has established kingship to make them good. This is Heaven's purpose. The people receive from Heaven this nature which is unable to be good (by itself) and conversely, receive from the king the instruction which gives completeness to their nature. The king, following Heaven's purpose, accepts as his charge the task of giving completeness to the people's nature.

The king, for his part, acts as an agency of heaven and constantly subordinates himself to it:[27]

> The king models himself on Heaven. He takes its seasons as his model and gives them completeness. He models himself on its commands and circulates

> them among all men. He models himself on its numerical (categories) and uses them when initiating affairs. He models himself on its course and thereby brings his administration into operation. He models himself on its will and with it attaches himself to love (jen).

In fact, a ruler should concern himself almost exclusively with this moral mission, and not bother himself with the trivial details of everyday affairs, which are better left to his Confucian officials:[28]

> ...He who acts as the ruler of men imitates Heaven's way, within hiding himself far from the world so that he may be holy, and abroad observing widely that he may be enlightened. He employs a host of worthy men that he may enjoy success, but does not weary himself with the conduct of affairs that he may remain exalted.... Therefore he who is the ruler of men takes non-action as his way and considers impartiality as his treasure. He sits upon the throne of non-action and rides upon the perfection of his officials. His feet do not move but are led by his ministers; his mouth utters no word but his chamberlains speak his praises; his mind does not scheme but his ministers effect what is proper. Therefore no one sees him act and yet he achieves success. This is how the ruler imitates the ways of Heaven.

Tung clearly drew on the Taoist tradition for this argument. The Huai-nan tzu, for example, contains the following passages:[29]

> The craft of the ruler consists in disposing of affairs without action and issuing orders without speaking.... Compliantly he delegates affairs to his subordinates and without troubling himself exacts success from them.

But if a ruler should disregard his moral responsibilities, and abuse his temporal power, Heaven would punish him. Now Tung again drew upon the yin-yang and wu-hsing

schools to argue that Heaven expressed its disapproval in the form of portents and omens, intended as warnings to the ruler to mend his ways. Should those be disregarded, then natural calamities would ensue announcing that the mandate of heaven had been withdrawn, paving the way for a change in rulers:[30]

> The genesis of all such portents and wonders is a direct result of errors in the state.... If... men still know no awe or fear, then calamity and misfortune will visit them.... We should not hate such signs, but stand in awe of them, considering that Heaven wished to repair our faults and save us from our errors. Therefore it takes this way to warn us.

This threat then, gave to the officials considerable leverage in influencing the ruler, and they used it often in the Former Han.[31]

Tung Chung-shu was by no means the only scholar to advocate these ideas. He was followed by a century of scholars who found support in Confucian works such as the "Hung-fan" chapter of the Shu-ching, the "Yüeh-ling" chapter of the Li-chi, and the I-ching, as well as the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang. They included such individuals as Sui Hung 眭弘 (active 80-70 B.C.), a fellow specialist in the Kung-yang; Liu Hsiang 劉向 (80-9 B.C.), whose specialty was the Ku-liang; Li Hsün 李尋 (died 5 B.C.), an expert in the Shu-ching; Meng Hsi 孟喜 (ca. 100-40 B.C.) and Ching Fang 京房 (77-37 B.C.), specialists in the I-ching, and Yi Feng 翼奉 (first century B.C.), a

specialist in the Shih-ching, who all had one point in common, "to restrain and correct the behavior of their contemporary rulers."[32]

By the end of the Former Han the tide was already turning, and the theory of natural portents was now being twisted by rulers to serve their own interests. Whereas Tung Chung-shu had used portents almost exclusively as a warning that the mandate of heaven was in danger of being revoked,[33] later scholars used them as evidence of heaven's approval of a particular ruler, thus concentrating on the bestowal of the mandate rather than its withdrawal. This was carried to its extremes in the apocryphal literature (ch'an-wei 讖緯) of the Later Han.[34] The attempts of scholars thus to ingratiate themselves with their rulers undermined the usefulness of the theory as a technique to restrain the ruler and provoked a reaction against it by scholars such as Yang Hsiung 楊雄 (53 B.C.--A.D. 18) and Wang Ch'ung 王充 (A.D. 27-ca. 100). Never again was it to be used to restrain the ruler's power as it had been in the Former Han.

What is the significance of Tung Chung-shu to Ch'un-ch'iu studies, and what impact did he have on developments in the Northern Sung? First of all, Tung was crucial in establishing classical studies as the focus of Han dynasty scholarly activity, and in particular with interpreting

those classics as sources of cosmological principles. He evolved a theory in which the hierarchical construction of government and society was tied directly to the fundamental principles of the entire universal order. The microcosm of man's nature was tied into the macrocosm of the universe by the subjection of both to the forces of yin and yang and the five elements.[35]

Tung thus achieved a major synthesis of Confucian moral principles of government and a developed body of metaphysical doctrine, and in the process also provided an instrument of restraining the power of the ruler. This, it should be remembered, took place in a society in which other institutional restraints (such as the feudal aristocracy) on the arbitrary exercise of the ruler's power were being steadily eroded by the centralizing policies of the early Han emperors (continuing those of Ch'in Shih Huang-ti 秦始皇帝 (r. 221-210 B.C.). Scholars, by virtue of owing their positions in government to individual merit (in theory if not always in practice), and not to an independent power base, were compelled to appeal to a transcendent moral force in order to influence the emperor's conduct of government. But they recognized, being men of some experience in practical affairs, that moral arguments could be more persuasive if they were supported by sanctions which included among them the overthrow of the ruler

himself. If that is the case, then, how does one explain the concept "revere the ruler and downgrade ministers" (tsun-chün yi-ch'en 尊君抑臣)?[36] Does it imply that Tung advocated surrendering absolute loyalty to the person of the ruler? From the context of his argument, in which loyalty to the ruler was placed in relation to loyalty to higher universal values, Tung avoided taking what would have been a strictly Legalist interpretation of authority, and, as we shall see, he established a precedent which was followed in the Sung.

As mentioned, however, the perversion of this theory led rapidly to its being discredited in the Later Han. It is my contention that no replacement for it, that is, no new synthesis of cosmological principles and Confucian political thought of a comparable magnitude, and with a comparable effect on the body of Confucian thought, appeared until the Northern Sung. During the Northern Sung a new effort was undertaken to unify man and heaven according to a rational perception of the natural order, which also focused on the ruler as the indispensable link and which also subordinated the ruler to heaven and evaluated his behavior in terms of absolute moral standards. After the Sung the political ideas of Neo-Confucianism were manipulated to serve the interests of the ruler in much the same way that Tung Chung-shu's theories had been appropriated

by rulers in the Later Han. It is not to be argued here that in all respects the two experiences were similar, but rather that the parallels which do present themselves offer a certain insight into the way in which the intentions of those who form a particular political doctrine are often very different from the actual consequences.

At this point we cannot avoid mentioning, because of its later influence, the dispute which arose in the Later Han between the scholars of what came to be known as the "New Text" (chin-wen 今文) School and those of the "Old Text" (ku-wen 古文) School. The former generally relied on texts which had been committed to writing only as late as the 2nd century B.C., and the latter relied on texts, written in a pre-Han form of calligraphy, which had allegedly been discovered in the walls of Confucius's home in Ch'ü-fu. Although these texts were discovered in the 2nd century B.C., the differing interpretations did not begin to harden into clearly defined positions until the textual debates which took place at the meeting in the Shih-ch'ü pavilion from 53-51 B.C. The Chin-wen school emphasized the importance of the yin-yang and wu-hsing concepts in establishing the interaction of heaven and earth, and of portents and calamities as evidence of heaven's judgments. The Chin-wen scholars tended, especially during and after the Later Han, to regard Confucius as an "uncrowned king"

(su-wang 素王) who received heaven's mandate in the form of the discovery of the unicorn in 481 B.C. The principal Chin-wen scholar of the Later Han who supported the Kung-yang interpretation was Ho Hsiu 何休 (129-182), whose major work, the Ch'un-ch'iu kung-yang chieh-ku 春秋公羊解詁, represents in most respects a continuation of Tung Chung-shu's interpretations,[37] though he tended to become preoccupied with some of the more fantastic notions of natural portents that were current in the Later Han.[38] His claim to a certain amount of originality lies chiefly in his interpretation of the "Three Ages," san-shih 三世 through which the world was supposed to have passed up to the time of Confucius. His theory, which suggests linear progression, is a departure from the traditional views of time characteristic of the pre-Ch'in era and the early Han which described the movement of time in a cyclical mode.[39]

Although Chinese historical convention has it that the Chin-wen school was not revived after the end of the Later Han until the Ch'ing dynasty, there are many similarities between the views on the Ch'un-ch'iu expressed by the Chin-wen school of the Han and those of the Northern Sung.[40] One of the most important of these similarities, which will be considered in greater detail below, is the conviction that heaven and earth form a unified whole operating according to principles capable of being apprehended

by the use of reason. Another is the belief that classics such as the Ch'un-ch'iu contain certain fundamental principles which, when properly interpreted, can serve as a guide to contemporary practical policies.[41]

The Ku-wen interpretation, stemming originally from the state of Lu (instead of Ch'i, as was the case with the Chin-wen school) claimed to represent a more pure and authentic form of Confucianism. It emphasized independent etymological research (chang-chü hsün-ku 章句訓詁) and rejected what it regarded as the frivolous theories of prognostication associated with the Chin-wen school. It regarded Confucius merely as a teacher, transmitting the knowledge of antiquity without any pretense of applying that knowledge in practical affairs. It emphasized the importance of the Duke of Chou, rather than Confucius, and the histories, rather than the classics.[42]

Although there were occasional signs of interest in Chin-wen ideas, the mainstream of classical scholarship from the Later Han to the Northern Sung flowed from the reservoir of Ku-wen interpretation established by such Han scholars, for instance, as Chia K'uei 賈逵 (30-101) and Fu Ch'ien 服虔 (d. ca. 200), both Tso-chuan specialists; Ma Jung 馬融 (76-166), the first to write commentaries on all five classics; and Cheng Hsüan 鄭玄 (127-200), who is still regarded as one of the most authoritative

interpreters of the classics.[43]

The two principal commentators of the Ch'un-ch'iu during the Six Dynasties Period were Tu Yü and Fan Ning 范寧 (ca. 320--ca. 418). Tu Yü's commentary on the Tso-chuan, the Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan chi-chieh 春秋左傳集解, remains standard even to the present day, and his views reflect those of the Ku-wen school with its emphasis on textual criticism (chang-chü 章句) and literary exposition (hsün-ku 訓詁). He claimed that the Ch'un-ch'iu did not contain even one word of praise or blame, and that Confucius merely assembled historical records which had already been preserved according to the standards of the Duke of Chou, to whom the real credit for the merits of the Ch'un-ch'iu ought to be given.[44] Fan Ning, on the other hand, who concentrated on the Ku-liang, and whose commentary on that text, the Ch'un-ch'iu Ku-liang chuan chu-shu 春秋穀梁傳注疏, is also the standard commentary today, drew on the Kung-yang and the Tso-chuan as well in his explications.[45] Generally, however, the unsettled political disunion of the Six Dynasties Period resulted in a spirit of enervating fatalism among the intellectuals, who became increasingly attracted to the consolations of Lao-Chuang Taoist thought and Buddhism.[46]

In the early T'ang the most important commentary on the Ch'un-ch'iu was written by K'ung Ying-ta (574-648),

whose Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan cheng-yi 春秋左傳正義, largely following Tu Yü, also rejected the praise-and-blame interpretation, and concerned itself primarily with textual criticism.[47] His sub-commentary (shu 疏) is added to the commentary of Tu Yü (chu 注) in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu edition of the Tso-chuan.

But it was not until a century later that there appeared a new spirit of criticism of the Ch'un-ch'iu which was to influence greatly the scholarship of the Northern Sung. The first scholar to express this new spirit was Tan Chu 啖助 (724-770), who after fleeing the chaos of the An Lu-shan rebellion in 755 in the north, spent the last ten years of his life working on a critical review of the Ch'un-ch'iu commentaries.[48] Tan was more critical of the Tso-chuan than the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang, which according to the Hsin-T'ang shu, were his favorites.[49] He was more concerned with the meaning (ta-yi 大義) of the Ch'un-ch'iu itself than he was with textual criticism of the commentaries. He concluded that much of Confucius's teaching had been lost in the process of oral transmission which had preceded the actual writing of the commentaries, and that the only way to recover that teaching was to return to the original writings of the great sage himself.[50]

Tan's work was carried on by two admirers, Chao K'uang 趙匡 and Lu Ch'un 陸淳 (d.806). Very little

is known of Chao K'uang, although fragments of his writings have survived.[51] Chao K'uang went further than Tan Chu in questioning the authenticity of the Tso-chuan, saying that there were too many inconsistencies of style and substance for it to have been written by one person.[52] Chao also regarded the praise-and-blame tradition of interpretation as more fully representing Confucius's intentions[53] and looked upon Tung Chung-shu as the foremost commentator of the Han dynasty.[54] Lu Ch'un's writings have survived, however, and include three major works on the Ch'un-ch'iu, the Ch'un-ch'iu chi-chuan tsuan-li[55] 春秋集傳纂例, the Ch'un-ch'iu wei-chih[56] 春秋微旨, and the Ch'un-ch'iu chi-chuan pien-yi 春秋集傳辨疑. It is Lu Ch'un's writings that exercised a profound influence on Ch'un-ch'iu studies in the Northern Sung. Their critical attitude is thought to have inspired the early Sung scholars such as Hu Yüan and Sun Fu to use the commentaries as a vehicle to express their own ideas on contemporary political affairs.[58]

There was one additional scholar in the late T'ang, Ch'en Yüeh 陳岳 (fl.899), who has not been highly rated in the secondary literature but who seems to have kept the critical spirit alive in the late 9th and early 10th centuries. A fragment of his foreword to a collection of the major commentaries to the Ch'un-ch'iu (along with his own of course) entitled the Ch'un-ch'iu che-chung lun 春秋

折衷論 , and parts of the work itself, have survived. Ch'en sets out to present all the strengths and weaknesses of the three main commentaries, but in reality clearly supports the praise-and-blame theory of interpretation.[60] The Yüan dynasty scholar Wu Lai 吳萊 (1297-1340) credits him with having preserved much of the traditional teachings on the Ch'un-ch'iu.[61] He also appears to foreshadow Sun Fu's emphasis on revering the ruler.[62] And well he might, since he lived at a time when the once-unified T'ang state was in the last stages of disintegration. The importance of a unified state was overwhelmingly apparent.

Nevertheless, even considering the rise of a more critical spirit in the T'ang which has been described above, Wang Ying-lin 王應麟 (1223-1296) has written that there were no major changes in classical studies from the Han to the Ch'ing-li 慶歷 period (1041-1048) of the Northern Sung.[63] The mainstream of criticism adhered very closely to the accepted patterns of textual criticism and literary exposition, as reflected in the commentaries of Tu Yü and K'ung Ying-ta, for example. The editors of the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu, without really disagreeing, say that before the mid-T'ang the Tso-chuan was the dominant commentary, but that after Tan Chu and Chao K'uang the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang began to demand more attention.[64]

Northern Sung Commentaries

If there is any single quality which the many varied expressions of early Sung culture share it is the impulse to unify, to synthesize, to bring together rather than to separate, to discern underlying essence rather than temporary accident. One of the best, certainly one of the most arresting, examples of this impulse is Chang Tsai's "Western Inscription" (Hsi-ming 西銘). In the words of de Bary, "Perhaps nowhere else in all Neo-Confucian literature does lofty metaphysical theory combine so effectively with the basic warmth, compassion, and humanism of ancient Confucianism as in this short passage."[65] As suggested in Chapter One there are many social, political, economic, and intellectual reasons for this effort to integrate the theoretical and the practical and it will not be necessary to repeat them here. C.S. Lewis, describing the medieval European model of the universe, has written:[66]

> Its contents, however rich and various, are in harmony. We see how everything links up with everything else; at one, not in flat equality, but in a hierarchical ladder. It might be supposed that this beauty of the Model was apparent chiefly to us who, no longer accepting it as true, are free to regard it--or reduced to regarding it--as if it were a work of art. But I believe this is not so. I think there is abundant evidence that it gave profound satisfaction while it was still believed in. I hope to persuade the reader not only that this Model of the Universe is a supreme medieval work of art but that it is in a sense the central work, that in which most particular works were embedded, to which they constantly referred, from which they drew a great deal of their strength.

The parallels between this unified vision in late medieval Europe and early Sung China are worth pointing out not merely because of its curiosity value but because we who live in an age which has lost this same sense of underlying unity are inclined to depreciate its significance as a driving force in thought as well as action. The parallel is made not in order to suggest a "comparative model" but merely to deepen our insight into the minds of other people.

In political terms this sense of unity was embodied in the doctrine of a strong central ruler capable of controlling local military commanders on the one hand, and on the other of protecting China's borders against the incursions of the northern barbarians. In support of these practical policies, scholar-officials argued that the principal meaning of the Ch'un-ch'iu was to revere the ruler and expel the barbarians (tsun-wang jang-yi), and wrote commentaries to expound and justify that argument. Their purpose, as P'i Hsi-jui rightly points out, was neither slavish obedience to the ruler nor expulsion of every last barbarian from China's border (about which more later).[67] But, as suggested in Chapter One, the Sung emphasis on unity also expressed itself in metaphysical form, and this in turn influenced political thought, which constituted in the minds of the Neo-Confucians but one part of an integrated whole. In the evolution of Ch'un-ch'iu scholarship

in the Northern Sung, this metaphysical interest proceeded in two stages. The first was represented by Sun Fu's emphasis on li 禮 as a unifying and absolute moral principle, but still within the mainstream of Confucian moral thought, and also by Ch'eng Yi's emphasis on li 理 and t'ien-li 天理 in interpreting the Ch'un-ch'iu, thus bringing the political theory of tsun-wang into line with a new formulation of the cosmic order. The influence of these two developments was very great, and they were united in the person of the Southern Sung commentator Hu An-kuo[68] 胡安國 (1074-1138). Hu's teacher was Chu Ch'ang-wen 朱長文 (1039-1098), who was a student of Sun Fu, and in terms of the traditional categorization of "school," he belongs to that of Sun Fu.[70] But Hu's commentary follows Ch'eng I more than Sun Fu, with Sun a close second.[71] The significance of this intellectual pedigree arises out of Hu's great influence on subsequent Ch'un-ch'iu studies. His commentary became during the Yüan 元 dynasty (1279-1368) the standard commentary used in preparation for the official examinations, and remained so throughout the Ming and until the K'ang-hsi 康熙 reign (1662-1723) in the Ch'ing 清 (1644-1911).[72] Since each of these two developments of Ch'un-ch'iu studies just mentioned will be treated in a separate chapter, suffice it here to introduce briefly the major commentators of the Northern Sung.

Hu Yüan[73] 胡瑗 (993-1059) is often regarded as having led the first wave of the Neo-Confucianists[74] and was distinguished for his conviction, alluded to above, that thought and action form an integrated whole. Liu Yi 劉彝, a student of Hu Yüan, was once asked by Emperor Shen-tsung 神宗 (r. 1069-1085) who was superior, Hu Yüan or Wang An-shih. He replied:[75]

> Our dynasty has not through its successive reigns made substance and function the basis for the selection of officials. Instead we have prized the embellishments of conventional versification, and thus have corrupted the standards of contemporary scholarship. My teacher (Hu Yüan) from the Ming-tao through the Pao-yüan periods (1032-1040), was greatly distressed over this evil and expounded to his students the teaching which aims at clarifying the substance (of the Way) and carrying out its function.... The fact that today scholars recognize the basic importance to government and education of the substance and function of the Way of the sages is all due to the efforts of my Master.

Hu required his students to demonstrate proficiency in two areas, the meaning of the classics (ching-yi 經義) and practical affairs (chih-shih 治事) and they were admonished to clarify substance in order to put it into practice. (In Chinese, the term for this is ming-t'i ta-yung 明體達用.) He exercised great influence as an instructor in the newly revived National University (T'ai-hsüeh 太學) during the 1050's (which, incidentally, adopted Hu's curriculum), and it was said that out of every ten candidates who passed the official examinations four or five were former students of his.[76] His writings reflect

the catholicity of his interests. He wrote commentaries on the I-ching, Chou-i k'ou-i 周易口義, and the "Hung-fan" chapter of the Shu-ching, Hung-fan k'ou-i 洪範口義, which survive,[77] and one on the Ch'un-ch'iu, the Ch'un-ch'iu k'ou-i 春秋口義, which has been lost.[78] His most influential students were Sun Chüeh 孫覺 (1028-1090) and Ch'eng I, and it is principally through their commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu that Hu's ideas on that text have been perpetuated.

Sun Fu[79] 孫復 (992-1057) failed to pass the chin-shih examination as a young man and retired to T'ai-shan in Shantung province (whence his sobriquet T'ai-shan 泰山), devoting himself to the study of the Ch'un-ch'iu for ten years. After being recommended by Fan Chung-yen and Fu Pi 富弼 (1004-1083) he was appointed as Collator of the Imperial Library (Mi-shu sheng chiao-shu lang 祕書省校書郎) and Auxiliary Lecturer of the Directorate of Education (Kuo-tzu-chien chih-chiang 國子監直講). Later he served as Executive Assistant of the Department of Palace Services (Tien-chung ch'eng 殿中丞). Along with Hu Yüan (with whom he did not get along) he taught also at the National University (T'ai-hsüeh). Sun's extant writings include the Ch'un-ch'iu tsun-wang fa-wei 春秋尊王發微 (which was written at least before the summer of 1040),[80] and a collection of essays on various subjects

entitled Sun Ming-fu hsiao-chi 孫明復小集 .[81]

Sun's influence and importance rest on his interpretation of the Ch'un-ch'iu, which was recognized even by those, such as Chu Hsi, who often differed with him.[82] Ou-yang Hsiu said in Sun Fu's epitaph (mu-chih-ming 墓誌銘) that he did not pay attention to the commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu but used the form of a commentary to examine contemporary events (through the medium of the accomplishments and shortcomings of the feudal lords and officials), and that by emphasizing the importance in governing of wang-tao 王道 he did the most to extract the basic meaning of the classic.[83] The modern scholar Mou Jun-sun argues in fact that the motives of Sun Fu and Ou-yang Hsiu, as expressed in Ou-yang's Hsin wu-tai shih 新五代史, are closely related in their interest in history as a practical moral guide to public affairs.[84]

Sun's purpose was to search in classical studies for insight into the practical problems of his own time. The Ch'un-ch'iu commentaries in the Northern Sung, following Sun's lead, focused on two important issues of contemporary affairs. There was, on the one hand, the internal threat of disunity and civil war posed by potentially autonomous military commanders, the fan-chen 藩鎮 or chieh-tu-shih 節度使 (who had destroyed the T'ang). On the other hand, there was the external threat represented by the growing

military power of the Khitan in the northeast and the Hsi-hsia in the northwest. In order to confront these problems, the first Sung emperors undertook a policy of centralization which took two forms, a deliberate reduction in the power of the military by replacing military commanders with civilian officials and institutional consolidation of decision-making power into the hands of the emperor or a staff under his direct supervision. The standard interpretation of Ch'un-ch'iu scholarship in the Northern Sung is that its primary purpose was to justify those policies by ignoring interpretations in later exegetical literature which did not support tsun-wang (thus the so-called "rejection of the three commentaries," yi san-chuan 抑三傳), and by forming a new interpretation (hsin-yi 新意) claiming to have penetrated to Confucius's real intentions. Their new interpretations can be grouped into two categories, in conformity with the centralizing preoccupations of the commentators. The first category attacked (by attributing to Confucius the intention of blame) the accumulation of power in the hands of the feudal lords (read local military commanders) at the expense of the Chou king. The second category attacked the usurpation of power by the class of officials (here read Sung factionalism) who by the end of the Ch'un-ch'iu period had wrested the power

of the states out of the hands of the feudal lords.

In the Northern Sung the question of how to deal with the barbarians (jang-yi 攘夷) was regarded by most of the Ch'un-ch'iu commentators as subordinate to that of obeying the ruler (tsun-wang 尊王). Their preoccupation with moral issues led them to the conclusion that if the goal of a moral and centralized government were realized in China proper, the barbarians would not have the military strength to threaten China and in any case would most likely become Sinified as they came to recognize the superior qualities (as they must) of Chinese civilization through a long period of peaceful contact. In the long run barbarians were more likely to be pacified by the benevolence and majesty (en-wei 恩威) of Chinese culture than by military conquest. The practical consequences of such a view are to be found in the policy of assigning a lower priority to strictly military solutions to the barbarian problems. The extent to which these policies were related to the views of the Ch'un-ch'iu commentators would be a fruitful subject for future study but not one which is directly related to the subject of this dissertation. Exactly how the commentators themselves were preoccupied with these issues will form the substance of the following chapter. It will be considered within the context of tsun-

wang, which, although it is not synonymous with centralization, was advocated by the Ch'un-ch'iu scholars in large part because it would strengthen the centripetal forces within the state.

But, as mentioned above, there is more than one level on which the Ch'un-ch'iu can be interpreted. Echoing the views of the early Han, the Northern Sung impulse to unify heaven and earth, to identify the moral principles governing human action with those governing the universal order, is manifestly apparent in Sun Fu's thought. His selection of individuals who were responsible for the orthodox transmission of Confucianism gives evidence of his interest in synthesizing cosmology and politics: Yao, Shun, Yü, T'ang, Wen, Wu, Chou Kung, Confucius, Mencius, Hsün-Tzu, Yang Hsiung, Wang T'ung, and Han Yü.[85] The metaphysical aspects of Mencius's thought have already been well-treated, and have prompted Vincent Y.C. Shih to describe Mencius as a bridge between Confucianism and Taoism,[86] claiming that Mencius possessed "a rare insight which discloses the close connection between the metaphysical reality of human nature and its expression in the concrete affairs of the human world."[87] The metaphysical and cosmological implications of Hsün Tzu's concept of li 禮 have not been widely commented upon, and will be discussed in a following chapter.

Sun's views on Yang Hsiung are outlined in an essay entitled "In Defense of Yang Tzu" (Pien Yang Tzu 辨揚子) in which he argues that Yang Hsiung did not write the metaphysical treatise T'ai-hsüan ching 太玄經 in order to correct the I-ching but in order to criticize the usurpation of Wang Mang.[88] This argument, apart from the question of whether or not it is valid (it is not), serves to demonstrate Sun's own attitudes toward using classical interpretation of metaphysical principles as a forum for expressing personal political ideas. Sun says that in this essay Yang "greatly clarifies the principle of the beginning and end, the obeying and resisting, of heaven and man, and the distinction between the superior and the inferior, the serving and retiring of rulers and subjects. Those who follow these principles and distinctions will be blessed with good fortune, and those who resist them will be cursed with bad fortune. The basic idea of Yang Hsiung was to warn those who defy heaven, oppose man, slay the ruler, and rob the state."[89] Such a characterization might just as well apply to Sun's own attitudes toward the relationship between heaven and man. In another essay entitled "A Discussion of the Institutes of Shun" (Shun-chih yi 舜制議), Sun explicitly uses the cosmology of the I-ching to describe the relationship between politics and the universe: "The utmost principle was (to take) the hexagram for

heaven, ch'ien 乾 as the tao of the ruler, and (the hexagram for earth) k'un 坤 as the tao of the subject. They fit together like the upper and lower parts of a garment."[90]

Sun Fu was not the only admirer of Yang Hsiung (though in a diluted manner) in the Northern Sung. Apparently Yang's writings underwent something of a revival among many Neo-Confucians. Shao Yung was an enthusiastic student of Yang's numerology, and interestingly enough, so was Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光 (1019-1086), who even composed a numerological work of his own modeled after Yang's T'ai-hsüan, entitled Ch'ien-hsü 潛虛 (and also edited an edition of the T'ai-hsüan ching.[91] Ssu-ma's explanatory passages in the Ch'ien-hsü make an explicit identity between the moral values immanent in the conduct of human affairs, and the transcendental principles of the cosmological order.[92]

Sun's ideas on metaphysical questions are further developed in two essays on non-action, "Wu-wei chih shang" 無為指上 and "Wu-wei chih hsia" 無為指下 .[93] Sun was greatly attracted to the cosmology developed by the Huang-lao branch of politically oriented Han Taoists. A very important part of that tradition was the concept of non-action, which to the Taoists was an ideal mode of behavior through which the spontaneous (and therefore pure) forces of nature could assert themselves. To Mencius, as to most

later Confucianists attracted to Taoism, spontaneity without being accompanied by strenuous efforts to cultivate the moral faculties of the personality was distrusted. Because of this wu-wei came to mean especially to the Han Taoists not non-action, but rather no action which would run counter to the will of heaven.[94] But just to understand that will of heaven required a vigorous effort of cultivation; and even after one could claim understanding, in order to obey one's true nature one was further obliged to bring society into conformity with the will of heaven as well, or at least work toward that goal. Sun follows this line of argument and adduces several examples to show that the sages did in fact take an active part in government. His purpose is to demonstrate the futility of imposing simplistic formulas on past events which fail to take into account the complexities of moral principles when they are applied to particular circumstances. He falls short of advocating that the ruler leave everything up to his officials because he knows that among other things, the inevitable outcome would be civil disorder.[95] In this regard his views contrast with those of Tung Chung-shu quoted earlier, and reflect Tung's greater concern with limiting the power of the ruler, and Sun's with reducing the likelihood of disunion. Both agree, however, that the ruler is himself subject to a higher law.

Let us turn now from Sun Fu to a brief consideration of some of the other principal commentators on the Ch'un-ch'iu in the Northern Sung, many of whom were students of either Hu Yüan or Sun Fu. The most famous, as a Ch'un-ch'iu scholar (but who was not a student of either Hu or Sun), was Liu Ch'ang[96] 劉敞 (1019-1068), whose extant writings on the Ch'un-ch'iu are numerous.[97] Liu Ch'ang was an active administrator who held a variety of high positions under the emperors Jen-tsung 仁宗 (r. 1023-1063) and Ying-tsung 英宗 (r. 1064-1067). He was interested in Buddhism and Taoism, and his commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu concentrated on the subject of li 禮 . Ou-yang Hsiu, among others, often turned to him regarding questions of li. His interpretations, based principally upon the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang, were greatly admired by Ch'ing scholars, who believed that he introduced his own ideas on the classics without dispensing with the whole of the previous exegetical tradition, as they thought Sun had done.[98] His commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu, while much more extensive and scholarly than Sun Fu's, exerted less immediate influence because they were more concerned with an accurate understanding of the text itself than with using the text as a vehicle to discuss contemporary political and moral issues.

Another Ch'un-ch'iu scholar whose commentary has been

preserved, and whose significance derives from his having followed the iconoclastic tradition of the T'ang scholars Tan Chu and Chao K'uang, was Wang Hsi 王晳 .[99] He did not accept Sun's position that the Ch'un-ch'iu contained all blame and no praise.[100] Although he freely introduced his own ideas (too freely, according to Ch'ing scholars), his commentary was not focused effectively on those contemporary issues which were regarded as of fundamental importance by Sung scholar-officials.

For those commentaries which did focus on the critical problems of their times we have to return to the mainstream begun by Hu Yüan and Sun Fu, exemplified best by the two most famous of Hu's students, Sun Chüeh[101] (1028-1090), and Ch'eng I. Sun Chüeh pursued an active political career, and incurred Wang An-shih's disfavor by attacking the ch'ing-miao 青苗 (Young Shoot Money), reforms as harmful to the people.[102] In his commentary on the Ch'un-ch'iu, the Ch'un-ch'iu ching-chieh 春秋經解, he concentrated on the issue of criticizing the hegemon and revering the ruler (yi-pa tsun-wang 抑霸尊王). In supporting his conclusions he drew from all three commentaries but particularly from the Ku-liang, and he emphasized the praise-and-blame method of interpretation. When he departed from those commentaries he was most likely to borrow from the Tan, Chao, and Lu commentaries of the T'ang, or directly

from Hu Yüan.[103]

From the point of view of subsequent influence on the development of Neo-Confucianism unquestionably the most important commentator on the Ch'un-ch'iu after Sun Fu was Ch'eng I[104] 程頤 (1033-1107). His commentary, entitled Ch'un-ch'iu chuan 春秋傳, is a composite of his own writing (up to the end of the ninth year of Duke Huan, 703 B.C.) and oral explanations recorded by his students.[105] In his introduction to that work he describes why Confucius wrote the Ch'un-ch'iu and thus reveals the principles which underlie his own interpretation:[106]

> Confucius wrote the Ch'un-ch'iu because at the end of the Chou no sages had reappeared and because there was no one to follow (the ways of) heaven in managing contemporary affairs. Therefore he wrote the Ch'un-ch'iu in order to provide a great and unchanging norm for a hundred kings.

Ch'eng I also emphasized the importance of revering the ruler, remarking in his commentary that "the way of preserving the people lay in putting the principle of tsun-wang first."[107] On the other hand the main emphasis in his commentary is on the importance of heaven in bringing the times into conformity with natural law, or the "heavenly principle" (t'ien-li 天理). Because of his profound concern for the reconciliation of practical politics and universal moral values, he warned against the abuse of authority: "Don't worry about not respecting the power of the ruler; rather worry that the officials respect it too

much, thus leading to a proud heart."[108] The precise manner in which he synthesized the Confucian hierarchical view of political authority traditionally embodied in the Ch'un-ch'iu with his own metaphysical philosophy of principle, li 理, will be considered in greater detail in a later chapter. Suffice it to say that Ch'eng I represents the height of Sung scholarship on the Ch'un-ch'iu in the Northern Sung, and the wellspring, together with Sun Fu, from which the great Southern Sung commentators drew their main themes.

Ch'eng I had two students who were also well-known for their writing on the Ch'un-ch'iu, Hsieh Shih[109] 謝湜 and Liu Hsüan[110] 劉絢 (1045-1087). Their writings on the Ch'un-ch'iu are no longer extant,[111] but Liu Hsüan was closely involved in the preparation of Ch'eng I's writings and sayings on the Ch'un-ch'iu.[112]

There are four more important Ch'un-ch'iu scholars who were educated in the Northern Sung but who because they spent their mature years in the Southern Sung therefore will not be directly considered in this dissertation. Since they are alluded to from time to time, however, they deserve a brief mention here. They are Ts'ui Tzu-fang[113] 崔子方, Hu An-kuo 胡安國 (1074-1138), Yeh Meng-te[114] 葉夢得 (1077-1148), and Lü Pen-chung[115] 呂本中 (1084-1145). Ts'ui Tzu-fang lived most of his life in retirement from active affairs, and his books were not

published until the Southern Sung. He generally relied on the Tso-chuan, and to a lesser extent on the Kung-yang and Ku-liang, but did not concentrate on the Ch'un-ch'iu text itself, and in this regard he represents a departure from the mainstream of Sung commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu.[116]

Hu An-kuo, the most important of the four for reasons which have already been indicated, drew upon both Sun Fu and Ch'eng I. P'i Hsi-jui says that his main principle of interpretation (ta-yi 大義) was based upon the Mencius, and his praise and blame on the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang.[117] The Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu editors claim that Hu's commentary, the Ch'un-ch'iu chuan 春秋傳, was selected as the orthodox commentary by later scholars because Chu Hsi had not written a commentary, and Ch'eng's commentary was incomplete. Hu's was thought to have been the best surviving commentary which accurately reflected Ch'eng I's views.[118] He did, however, change the emphasis from tsun-wang (which nevertheless was still supported) to "repel the barbarians" (jang-yi 攘夷), using, as the Northern Sung scholars did, the Ch'un-ch'iu to present his views on the most pressing contemporary political issues, in his case the recapture of the north from the Jürchen Chin dynasty.

Yeh Meng-te relied more on the Tso-chuan than Sun Fu, but in most respects followed Sun's rejection of the commentaries and reliance on the text of the Ch'un-ch'iu

itself.[119] Lü Pen-chung's commentary, according to the Southern Sung scholar Ch'en Chen-sun 陳振孫, was just a composite of the ideas of Lu Ch'un and the major Northern Sung commentators, without adding anything new.[120]

The Sung dynasty thus represented a major departure from the mainstream of classical exegesis on the Ch'un-ch'iu from the late Han to the end of the Five Dynasties period. In many ways it was a response to the particular configuration of internal and external threats which confronted the Sung dynasty. In its attempts to relate the importance of revering the emperor to the higher code of absolute moral law held to govern the entire universe, and to formulate this moral law in terms of a rational metaphysics which incorporated many Buddhist and Taoist ideas, Sung Ch'un-ch'iu scholars were also returning to principles first enunciated in Ch'un-ch'iu scholarship by Tung Chung-shu in the early Han. Belief in the interaction between heaven and man, disregarded or repudiated by scholars who were preoccupied with problems of etymological research, was again asserted, and again fulfilled the dual function of both legitimizing and limiting the authority of the emperor, as we shall see in the next two chapters.

REFERENCES

1. See the "Yi-wen chih" 藝文志 chapter of the Sung-shih 宋史, pp. 5056-5066. It notes (p. 5066) that there were 240 works listed, in 2,799 chüan. Ch'en Fang-ming has noted that the next numerous of the Sung commentaries were those regarding the I-ching ("Sung-tai cheng-t'ung lun," p. 421).

2. Legge, "Prolegomena," pp. 11-12. The Chinese terms, listed in the order they appear in the text, are: 改元, 即位, 生子, 立君, 朝聘, 盟會, 侵伐, 遷滅, 朝覲, 享唁, 喪葬, 祭祀, 蒐狩, 興作, 甲兵, 田賦, 豐凶, 災祥, 出國, 入國, 盜賊, 刑戮.

3. Juan Chih-sheng, pp. 31-36.

4. Maspero, China in Antiquity, pp. 361, 363-364.

5. Ibid., p. 482, note 21.

6. SKTY, vol. 1, p. 515.

7. Maspero, China in Antiquity, p. 355, and p. 477, note 83.

8. P'i Hsi-jui, Ching-hsüeh, pp. 103-107.

9. Dubs, Former Han, vol. 2, p. 271.

10. There are approximately 41,500 characters in the Ku-liang, and approximately 44,000 in the Kung-yang, as opposed to about 18,000 in the Tso-chuan. See Ch'i Ssu-ho, "Professor Hung," p. 52.

11. Maspero, China in Antiquity, p. 355. Watson is of the same mind, citing Japanese authorities who base their conclusions on astronomical information contained within the Ku-liang.

12. See the Ch'ing scholar Chi T'ang-yen's 季唐晏 remarks, quoted in Wang Hsi-yüan, "Liu-shih nien-lai," p. 431.

13. Dubs, Former Han, pp. 271-274.

14. Maspero, China in Antiquity, p. 355 and p. 478, note 83. Wang Hsi-yüan quotes from Chang T'ai-yen in support of this position, p. 437. Also see Wang's discussion of Liu Shih-p'ei's 劉師培 views, pp. 450-451.

15. Juan Chih-sheng, p. 37.

16. Ibid., pp. 37-45. See also Laurence Schneider, Ku Chieh-kang, esp. pp. 52-84 and 188-217. William Hung's ideas on the Ch'un-ch'iu are enunciated in his preface to the Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, supplement no. 11 (Combined Concordances to the Ch'un-ch'iu, Kung-yang, Ku-liang, and Tso-chuan), Peiping, 1937 (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Press, 1966, photocopy), pp. i-cvi. See also Ch'i Ssu-ho's article, "Professor Hung." This article inspired a short note by Helmut Wilhelm entitled "Confucius and the Ch'un-ch'iu" which appeared in volume 2 (1939), pp. 297-300, of the same journal. Wilhelm is not willing to turn his back on the Kung-yang tradition and follow Hung's line of argument.

17. Legge, Mencius, pp. 281-283.

18. Watson, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, pp. 88-89. Watson argues that in this context, "theoretical judgment" is a more accurate translation of 空言 than "empty words."

19. Juan Chih-sheng, p. 42.

20. CCFL 5, 3:22, quoted in Fung, vol. 2, p. 75.

21. Thomas Lee, "Education in Northern Sung China," p. 137.

22. CHY, p. 282.

23. Tain, "Tung Chung-shu," pp. 280-282.

24. The quotation is from the CCFL 81:17.1, as quoted in Fung, vol. 2, p. 57.

25. Tain, "Tung Chung-shu," pp. 6-7.

26. CCFL 35:17.12. Quoted in Fung, vol. 2, p. 46.

27. CCFL 44:11.9. Quoted in Fung, vol. 2, p. 47.

28. CCFL 18:6.5a-6a. Quoted in de Bary, Sources, pp. 174-175.

29. Huai-nan tzu 9:1a, 6b-7a. Quoted in de Bary, Sources, p. 174.

30. CCFL 30:8.13b-14b. Quoted in de Bary, Sources, p. 187.

31. See the long discussion of this in Tain, "Tung Cung-shu," pp. 268-280. See also Hsiao/Mote, pp. 485-486. One of the most interesting examples of a Confucian official acting in the name of moral authority was the case of Ho Kuang. Ho Kuang was a trusted official under Han Wu-ti, who was given the responsibility of acting as regent for the young emperor Chao after the death of Wu-ti. Chao ruled from 86-74 B.C. and then died, without a male heir. Officials then met and decided to name a grandson of the Emperor Wu by the name of Liu Ho, King of Ch'ang-i, to the throne. But after he came to the throne he acted in a manner so contrary to the norms of Confucian behavior that after a very short time Ho Kuang had him replaced with a great grandson who became the Emperor Hsüan. See Ho Kuang's biography in the Han Shu, translated by Burton Watson in Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 121-138.

32. Hsiao/Mote, Chinese Political Thought, pp. 497-498, 514-515; and Tain, pp. 255-259.

33. Hsiao/Mote, p. 504.

34. Dull, "Historical Introduction to the Apocryphal Texts," pp. 26-42.

35. Tain, "Tung Chung-shu," pp. 285-288.

36. Liu Te-han, "Ch'un-ch'iu Kung-yang chuan," pp. 39-40.

37. Hsiao/Mote, p. 524.

38. Ibid., p. 526.

39. The three ages are disorder, shuai-luan 據亂, ascending peace, sheng-p'ing 升平, and universal peace, t'ai-p'ing 太平. See Hsiao/Mote, p. 530, and Fung, vol. 2, pp. 83-84, for a translation of

Ho's comments on the three ages. I must confess I am confused by the pronunciation of 據 as shuai, which is not found in any of the dictionaries I have consulted. Morohashi does not even have the term 據亂 (see vol. 5, pp. 418-419).

40. SKTY, vol. 1, p. 515.

41. Compare for example the Chin-wen phrase "borrow from the past in order to reform institutions" t'o-ku kai-chih 託古改制 with Hu Yüan's admonition that a scholar of the classics has a threefold task, understanding substance, t'i 體, putting it into practice, yung 用, and clarifying it in writing, wen 文. The Northern Sung also followed the Chin-wen argument that Confucius's principles were carefully hidden, wei-yen ta-yi. For a discussion of the relationship between classical interpretation and practical politics in the Han see Liu Te-han's article.

42. Chou Yü-t'ung, Ching Chin-Ku-wen hsüeh, pp. 12-27; and P'i Hsi-jui, Ching-hsüeh, pp. 82-97.

43. Although these scholars were primarily interested in textual criticism, some, especially Cheng Hsüan, Fu Ch'ien, and Chia K'uei, were not averse to drawing on the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang traditions to fortify their arguments. P'i Hsi-jui, p. 161, and p. 20, note 6.

44. P'i Hsi-jui, pp. 10-13, and p. 172. Also discussed in Juan Chih-sheng, pp. 37-38.

45. P'i Hsi-jui, p. 172, and pp. 177-178, notes 19-20.

46. Hsiao/Mote, pp. 602-606.

47. P'i Hsi-jui, pp. 218, and 220, note 6.

48. There is a short and valuable description of this period in Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism in T'ang Intellectual Life," esp. pp. 88-91.

49. Quoted in CYK 176:4b. "助愛公穀二家以左氏解義多謬 ."

50. Tan Chu's Ch'un-ch'iu chi-chuan 春秋集傳 (1 chüan) and Ch'un-ch'iu li-t'ung 春秋例統 (also 1 chüan) are preserved in the Yü-han shan-fang chi-yi shu 玉函山房輯佚書 published in 1883 in Ch'angsha, and compiled by Ma Kuo-han 馬國翰 (1794-1857).

51. His Ch'un-ch'iu ch'an-wei tsuan-lei yi-t'ung 春秋闡微纂類義統 (1 chüan) can also be found in the Yü-han shan-fang chi-yi shu.

52. P'i Hsi-jui, p. 231, note 2, and CYK 176:7a-7b.

53. CYK 176:6a.

54. CYK 176:8a.

55. This was published in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu in 10 chüan. A Fu chiao-k'an chi in 1 chüan is preserved in the Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien.

56. This was also published in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu in 3 chüan.

57. Published in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu in 10 chüan.

58. Mou Jun-sun, "Liang Sung Ch'un-ch'iu," p. 103.

59. CYK 178:1a-11a; and also the Ch'ien-yüan tsung-chi 潛園總集 , by the Ch'ing bibliophile Lu Hsin-yüan 陸心源 (1834-1894).

60. CYK 178:4b.

61. CYK 178:2b.

62. One example is his statement that "clarifying the principle of revering the Son of Heaven with regard to things that are above, and the principle of condemning the feudal lords with regard to things that are below, is the way to rectify the kingly way." CYK 178:3a-3b.

63. Quoted in P'i Hsi-jui, p. 237.

64. SKTY, vol. 1, p. 575.

65. De Bary, Sources, p. 524.

66. C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image, p. 12.

67. P'i Hsi-jui, p. 272.

68. His tzu was K'ang-hou 康侯 , hao Wu-yi 武夷 , and he was posthumously known as Wen-ting 文定 . He was from Ch'ung-an 崇安 in Chien-ning chün 建寧軍 (modern-day Chien-yang in Fukien province).

69. Tzu Po-yüan 伯原, hao Yüeh-fu 樂圃, from Wu-hsien 吳縣 in Su-chou 蘇州 (modern-day Kiangsu province). Chu taught and wrote and did not accept public office until the middle of the Yüan-yu 元祐 period (1086-1093) when he was appointed Correcting Editor of the Imperial Library (Mi-shu sheng cheng-tzu 秘書省正字). He was the author of a work entitled Ch'un-ch'iu t'ung-chih 春秋通志 in 20 chüan, which is no longer extant.

70. Mou Jun-sun, p. 113.

71. This does not mean that Hu An-kuo had no criticism of Sun Fu. He thought Sun was much too harsh in his judgments, for example. Mou Jun-sun, p. 116; and CYK 179:4a.

72. P'i Hsi-jui, p. 272, and p. 276, note 6.

73. Tzu Yi-chih 翼之, hao An-ting 安定. The Sung-shih says that he is from Hai-ling 海陵 in T'ai-chou 泰州 (now T'ai-hsien in Kiangsu province), but the Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an says he is from Ju-kao 如皐, also in T'ai-chou.

74. De Bary, "Reappraisal," pp. 88-91.

75. Quoted from de Bary, Sources, p. 439. The Chinese can be found in the first chapter of the Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an.

76. Sung-shih 432:12837-12838.

77. The Hung-fan k'ou-yi was copied into the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu, and is also published in the Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng. The Chou-yi k'ou-yi was also included in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu.

78. It is listed in the Sung-shih ("Yi-wen chih" chapter) 202:5058.

79. Tzu Ming-fu 明復, from P'ing-yang 平陽 in Chin-chou 晉州 (present-day Shansi).

80. It is referred to in an essay of that date by Shih Chieh 石介 (1005-1045), Sun's student. See "T'ai-shan shu-yüan chi" 泰山書院記, in Shih Tsu-lai chi, pp. 63-64.

81. This is available in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-

pien pa-chi, vol. 148. Sun also wrote a work on the I-ching, which has not survived, entitled I-shuo 易說, in 64 pien. See Shih Chieh's essay, "T'ai-shan shu-yüan chi," p. 64.

82. Chu Hsi said that Sun's contribution was awe-inspiring, and although he claimed Sun was not learned in the classics of the sages he said he still captured their intentions in his commentary. See Chu-tzu yü-lei 朱子語類, chüan 83.

83. Quoted in Mou Jun-sun, p. 109.

84. Ibid., p. 104.

85. "Hsin-tao t'ang chi" 信道堂記, SMFHC, p. 35a.

86. Vincent Shih, "Metaphysical Tendencies," p. 320.

87. Ibid., p. 338.

88. SMFHC, pp. 11a-12a.

89. Ibid., pp. 11b-12a.

90. Ibid., p. 4a. In another context Sun Fu said that one should study the I-ching to ascertain Confucius's mind and the Ch'un-ch'iu to find out how to put it into practice. See Shih Chieh, "T'ai-shan shu-yüan chi," p. 64.

91. Knechtges, "Yang Shyong," vol. 1, p. 77, and p. 127, note 123.

92. See the Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien editions, vol. 697, pp. 1-6 and 36-37.

93. SMFHC, pp. 19a-22a.

94. Hsiao/Mote, pp. 549-550.

95. SMFHC, p. 21a.

96. Tzu Yüan-fu 原父, shih Kung-shih 公是. He was from Hsin-yü 新喻 in Lin-chiang 臨江 (present-day Kiangsi province). His highest positions were Academician of the Chi-hsien Yüan (Chi-hsien Yüan hsüeh-shih 集賢院學士) and Supervisor of the Nanking Censorate (Nan-ching yü-shih-t'ai p'an-kuan 南京御史臺判官).

97. His Ch'un-ch'iu chuan 春秋傳 (15 chüan), Ch'un-ch'iu ch'üan-heng 春秋權衡 (17 chüan), and Ch'un-ch'iu Yi-lin 春秋義林(2 chüan), are all in the T'ung-chih t'ang ching-chieh 通志堂經解 collection. His Ch'un-ch'iu chuan shuo-li 春秋傳說例 is in both the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu 四庫全書 (as are the above three as well) and the Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien.

98. SKTY, vol. 1, pp. 528-530.

99. The SKTY says that there is very little personal information about Wang Hsi, though it reports him as being referred to as a Han-lin Academician. According to the CYK he wrote a Ch'un-ch'iu t'ung-yi 春秋通義 in 12 chüan, a Ch'un-ch'iu yi-yi 春秋義義 in 12 chüan, a Ch'un-ch'iu ming-li yin-kua 春秋明例隱括 in 1 chüan, all lost (CYK 179:7a). His Ch'un-ch'iu huang-kang lun 春秋皇綱論 is in the T'ung-chih t'ang ching-chieh.

100. SKTY, vol. 1, p. 527.

101. Tzu Hsin-lao 莘老 . He was from Kao-yu 高郵 (in present-day Kiangsu province). His Ch'un-ch'iu ching-chieh is in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu in 13 chüan and the T'ung-chih t'ang ching-chieh in 15 chüan.

102. Sung-shih 344:10926-10927.

103. SKTY, vol. 1, pp. 530-531. Also see Sun's foreword in CYK 181:1a-3a.

104. Tzu Cheng-shu 正叔, known as I-ch'uan hsien-sheng 伊川先生 , from Lo-yang 洛陽 (in present-day Honan).

105. The passage is clearly demarcated. See Ch'eng-shih ching-shuo 程氏經說 5:30b (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu edition) and I-ch'uan ching-shuo 伊川經說 4:16a (Ssu-pu pei-yao edition).

106. CYK 182:4b-5a. This preface is not included in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu edition but is in the Ssu-pu pei-yao edition.

107. Ch'eng-shih ching-shuo 5:12b. The phrase reads "保民之道以尊王為先."

108. Quoted in Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, p. 498.

109. According to the CYK (183:3a), Hsieh wrote two works on the Ch'un-ch'iu, the Ch'un-ch'iu yi 春秋義 in 24 chüan and the Ch'un-ch'iu tsung-yi 春秋總義 in 3 chüan, both of which are no longer extant. Tzu was Ch'ih-cheng 持正, from Chin-t'ang 金堂 (in present-day Szechuan province).

110. Tzu Chih-fu 質夫, also called Ho-nan hsien-sheng 河南先生, from Ch'ang-shan 常山 (in present-day Chekiang province).

111. Liu Hsüan wrote a work called simply Ch'un-ch'iu, which has been lost. CYK 184:1a.

112. Ts'ai Yung-ch'un, "The Philosophy of Ch'eng I," pp. 49-50.

113. Tzu Yen-chih 彥直, or Po-chih 伯直, hao Hsi-ch'ou chü-shih 西疇居士, from Fu-ling 涪陵 (in present-day Szechuan province).

114. Tzu Shao-yün 少蘊, hao Hsiao-weng 肖翁 and Shih-lin 石林, from Wu-hsien 吳縣 (in present-day Kiangsu province).

115. Tzu Chü-jen 居仁, hao Tung-lai hsien-sheng 東萊先生, from Pien-liang 汴梁 (in present-day Kaifeng in Honan province).

116. SKTY, vol. 1, pp. 533-535.

117. P'i Hsi-jui, p. 272.

118. SKTY, vol. 1, p. 539.

119. Ibid., pp. 536-538.

120. Ibid., p. 538.

PART TWO THE IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION

CHAPTER THREE

SUN FU'S VIEWS ON OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY: THE LITERAL/MORAL LEVELS

Introduction

From very early times the belief that Confucius wrote the Ch'un-ch'iu in order to expound the kingly way (wang-tao 王道) to future generations was commonly accepted by all those who acknowledged Confucius's authorship. Since according to Confucius good government could be realized only when the ruler conformed to a prescribed set of moral principles, the Ch'un-ch'iu was understood to serve the dual purpose of defining those principles and demonstrating how they should be implemented in particular circumstances. In the Northern Sung, China had just passed through a period of disunion reminiscent of the period in which Confucius himself had lived, and Northern Sung scholars were not unaware of the parallel. But the parallel was not always applicable. The position of the ruler in imperial Confucian ideology had already been raised in Han times to a higher level of importance than had originally been envisioned by Confucius. By the time

of the Sung it had also become apparent to many scholars that rulers who could unify China performed a very valuable service to the common good and deserved credit for it, quite apart from the question of their own personal moral conduct.[1] The problem in the Northern Sung, as suggested earlier, had become one of incorporating the obvious need to obey the ruler into a system of moral values which would transcend the personal interests of the ruler and thus curb the impulse to abuse power inherent in a highly centralized form of government. This chapter and the next are intended to show how the Ch'un-ch'iu was used to arrive at a new and deeper understanding, and a partial resolution, of this problem.

The historical circumstances which led to the policy of centralization implemented by the emperors T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung, and which attracted the support of even the idealistic scholar-officials, have been sketched already in Chapter One. The emperor was concerned with consolidating his own power, and the scholar-officials with preventing a recurrence of the anarchy which had prevailed in the late T'ang and the Five Dynasties Period. T'ai-tsu's policy was pursued on two fronts, by transferring power from military officers to civilian officials (chung-wen ch'ing-wu 重文輕武), and by gathering decision-making power into his own hands ("strengthening the trunk and

weakening the branches" ch'iang-kan jo-chih 強幹弱枝 , which phrase is found, incidentally, in Tung Chung-shu's Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu,[2] exemplifying the way in which practical policies were often expressed in terms deriving from studies on the Ch'un-ch'iu). The first was of course universally welcomed by the scholar-elite, since it brought with it an increase in their own influence in politics. The second was generally welcomed by Ch'un-ch'iu commentators, but there were many other Neo-Confucianists who voiced reservations. Such people, e.g., Li Kou 李覯 (1009-1059) and Chang Tsai 張載 (1020-1078), criticized the government for sacrificing efficiency for the sake of greater control.[3] Their opponents, although they might acknowledge the truth of the charge, felt that such a policy was ultimately necessary in order to achieve a stable government.

Sun Fu's commentary, which is the focus of this chapter, saw the threat of anarchy appearing on three broad fronts. The first was from the usurping lords, the second was from usurping officials, and the third from the barbarians. As a result, he interpreted the history of the Ch'un-ch'iu as passing through three stages of decline:[4]

> The Son of Heaven began to lose control of the government from the time when he moved the capital east (771 B.C.). The feudal lords had begun to lose control of the government by the time of the meeting at Chü-liang 澳梁 (556 B.C.). Therefore from the ascension of Duke Yin (721 B.C.) all the way to the meeting at Chü-liang, the governance of the world and the affairs of the central states were all divided up

> by the feudal lords. From the meeting at Chü-liang to the meeting at Shen 申 (537 B.C.) the governance of the world and the affairs of the central states were all usurped by the officials. From the meeting at Shen until the appearance of the unicorn (480 B.C.) the control of the governance of the world and the affairs of the central states passed into the hands of the barbarians. Because of this the regulations, the institutions, the manner of dress, the inherited customs, and the old forms of governance were swept aside. That the central states had all sunk into such a state by this time brought to fruition all which had been said before. Both Chin and Lu were present at the meeting of Huang-ch'ih 黃池 (481 B.C.). After that there is nothing more to say on the subject--the feudal lords were in a state of confusion and the power to give orders was exercised by Wu and was never again restored. This is because the central states and the world were controlled by the barbarians. For this reason the Ch'un-ch'iu exalted the Son of Heaven and honored the central states. Because it honored the central states it deprecated the barbarians; because it exalted the Son of Heaven it downgraded the feudal lords. Exalting the Son of Heaven and downgrading the feudal lords (in the Ch'un-ch'iu) began with the Duke of Yin (721 B.C.), and honoring the central states and deprecating the barbarians ended with the capture of the unicorn. Alas! The essential message of the text is subtle indeed, subtle indeed!

This chapter will consider these three stages separately, in order to show precisely how Sun Fu used the past to understand and comment upon the present. Examples from the commentary are included as they relate to each of the three stages, so that the richness and variety of human experience covered by the Ch'un-ch'iu exegetical tradition can be fully understood and appreciated.

The discussion of Sun's ideas on practical threats to orderly government resulting from a failure to obey the authority of the ruler is followed by a discussion of the

normal implications of his views on authority. These are placed in the context of the absolute moral values expressed by the term li 禮, because it is in that context only that Sun's ideas on authority can be fully understood. So long as authority is defined in terms of its function as guiding action toward greater realization of moral values commonly held to be absolute, as well as avoiding certain practical consequences of anarchy, then to advocate authority is not merely to advocate greater personal power in the hands of the ruler, and certainly not to make rulers more arbitrary. Sun did criticize the actions of rulers, but he made his judgments about their behavior not on the basis of whether or not they were unwise, or stupid, or insincere, or unrighteous, or lacking in benevolence or virtue. Rulers were not criticized for being impractical, short-sighted, or narrow-minded. They were criticized for acting in a manner "contrary to li" (fei-li 非禮). At the same time obedience to the ruler was enjoined not just because of some compact, or out of fear of the ruler's power, or because of historical tradition, or merely because of the utility of such obedience to the order and stability of the state (although this last factor was hardly absent from the minds of the commentators), but rather because of the imperative of li. The obligation of rulers to abide by those standards of li was just as

forcefully asserted as the obligation of subjects to obey the ruler. Taken together with the interpretation of the main thrust of the Ch'un-ch'iu as a decline into anarchy resulting from the failure of all parties to obey li, it is abundantly clear that Sun was not in favor of an absolutist ruler subject to no higher authority above himself. In fact he was as interested in restraining the ruler through li as he was in revering the ruler.

Usurpation by Feudal Lords and Obligations of the Ruler

Sun Fu's ideas on this subject reveal themselves in the form of judgments on certain categories of events recorded in the Ch'un-ch'iu. According to Sun everything mentioned by Confucius in the Ch'un-ch'iu was recorded in order to condemn it.[5] For this he was often criticized by his contemporaries and by later scholars, who claimed that he took unwarranted liberties with the text.[6] For the most part, however, those critics were not objecting to the main thrust of Sun's argument, but merely felt it was unnecessary to go to such an extreme in order to make his point, and feared he might even alienate some who would otherwise be sympathetic to his position.

Among the many actions criticized by Sun was the usurpation by the feudal lords of the military authority of the Chou king. This usurpation manifested itself in a

variety of ways, the most important of which was the attack by one state on another without first having appealed to the king for permission or support. For example, in a passage from the year 720 B.C., in which the ruler of the state of Cheng 鄭 had attacked the state of Wei 衛 without first consulting the king, Sun quoted Confucius's famous dictum:[7]

> When good government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the Son of Heaven. When bad government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the princes. When these things proceed from the princes, as a rule, the cases will be few in which they do not lose their power in ten generations. When they proceed from the Great officers of the princes, as a rule, the cases will be few in which they do not lose their power in five generations. When the subsidiary ministers of the Great officers hold in their grasp the orders of the State, as a rule, the cases will be few in which they do not lose their power in three generations.

Sun then noted that the process of devolution of power from the feudal lords to the officials began after the reign of Duke Hsüan (607-590) and Duke Ch'eng (589-572), presumably to illustrate that Confucius's historical generalization was correct--the power of the princes did not last even ten generations. He went on to claim that all further mention by Confucius of one state attacking another was done in order to condemn the parties involved.

Sun's later entries continue to emphasize this interpretation of Confucius's intentions. He criticized the

feudal lords relentlessly. For example, the state of Chin 晉 in 631 B.C. attacked the state of Ts'ao 曹 and gave over its earl and perhaps some of its territory to the neighboring state of Sung 宋. The hope was that Sung's acceptance would in turn stimulate an attack by Ch'u 楚, which would then cause the states of Ch'in 秦 and Ch'i 齊 to ally with Chin in an attack on Ch'u, which is what Chin wanted in the first place.[8] Sun objected to the fact that such wars were pursued by the states entirely for their own temporary advantage in a bitter struggle for survival, without reference to the Chou ruler. As it happened, it was in this same year that the ruler of Chin was granted the title of Hegemon by the Chou king, to whom, paradoxically, the Chin ruler paid only nominal allegiance. Sun was very critical of Chin for its cynical maneuvering, and said so,[9] lamenting the decadence of the times and the lack of a unifying central authority. Again, none of the three commentaries were followed by Sun, because none of them focused on the irrelevance of the Chou king to the unfolding of events, which to Sun was the central meaning of this and all similar passages. Force was used to decide all questions, a situation in which the big states held all the cards and the small states were helpless.

Another illustration of the usurpation of the military authority of the Chou king condemned by Sun was the

formation in 561 B.C. of a third army in the state of Lu. Sun draws on the Chou-li to show that Lu was not qualified for three but only two armies.[10] In 536 B.C., when they disbanded the army, they were again blamed by Sun, this time for not first bringing the matter up with the king and abiding by his decision.[11] Here Sun is not concerned with whether or not they needed the army in order to survive, simply because that is not germane to his main thesis, which was the need to obey the ruler.

In like manner, covenants were symptomatic of the loss of the tao, since they implied the existence of sovereign states, which was not possible if all authority came from the central government, as it should. Sun took advantage of the recording of a covenant between the ruler of Lu and the ruler of Ch'u in 721 B.C. to argue that all covenants mentioned in the Ch'un-ch'iu were done so for the purpose of blaming the participants,[12] as has been noted above. This particular event, however, is praised in the Kung-yang.[13] Here again Sun is clearly departing from the traditional interpretation in order to hammer away at his principal theme of obedience to the ruler.

Covenants arrived at between states of China proper were already bad enough, but when they were undertaken between one of the Chinese states and a barbarian state they were to Sun the ultimate manifestation of degeneracy.

In 720 the state of Lu did conclude just such a covenant with the Jung 戎 barbarians,[14] and Sun scornfully noted that they had to rely on such uncivilized practices as smearing their mouths with the blood of sacrificial animals in order to compensate for the lack of mutual trust which would have prevailed if they had acted in accordance with li 禮 from the very beginning.

Rulers of the states were criticized for usurping the appointive prerogative of the Chou king. This question is especially important because it bore directly on the issue of appointment of local officials in the Northern Sung. One of the bases of the autonomous military governors' (chieh-tu-shih) power in the late T'ang had been their control of appointment of local officials, and Sung political thinkers anxious to prevent the recurrence of these governors were wary of any challenge to central appointment. Those who argued for greater autonomy on the local level were opposed by others, such as Sun Fu and later Ch'eng I,[15] who argued that all officials ought to be appointed by the emperor, and numerous examples from the Ch'un-ch'iu were cited in defense of their opinion. In one case, Sun even ignored the Li-chi 禮記 when he claimed that all officials in ancient times had been appointed by the Son of Heaven.[16] The Li-chi states quite clearly that the rulers of smaller states were

allowed to appoint a certain number of their ministers themselves.[17] But in all cases where feudal lords attempted to alter the prescribed pattern of succession within a state,[18] or where officials were not appointed by the king,[19] or where office was obtained by hereditary right,[20] without petitioning for the king's approval, Sun condemned the persons responsible for failing to adhere to the proper ethical standards of li and offered these examples as further evidence of the loss of the wang-tao.

Rulers of the states were condemned for exchanging lands, either as a reward for the spoils of war,[21] or as a reward for help in setting up a ruler in another state.[22] Over and over again, whenever appropriate, Sun repeated the statement that land which was originally bestowed by the Son of Heaven should not have been exchanged without his permission.[23] It was his, and his alone, to dispose of. The parallels between this form of usurpation and the power of the military governors in the late T'ang and Five Dynasties period are too obvious to require an explanation. Sun Fu saw his mission, however, not only to point out these parallels, but to tie them into the general condition of moral decay which prevailed in the Ch'un-ch'iu period and which he was trying to warn against in the Sung. Sun was trying to show how these phenomena were the consequences of a failure to follow the absolute standards of li.

Sun regarded occurrences of natural phenomena as tangible evidence of heaven's dissatisfaction with the loss of moral harmony in the world. All instances of eclipses are listed by Sun and interpreted as the consequence of the failure of the Chou house to rule properly.[24] Floods were visited upon the land because "the rule of the Sage Kings was not followed."[25] Lightning striking temples,[26] meteors falling, and fish-hawks flying backwards[27]--all were attributed to man's failure to adhere to li. Earthquakes happened because the "earthly tao had been lost,"[28] and fires were caused because there was "nobody to restore kingly rule."[29]

The murder of ruling feudal lords, or of the heirs to the position of ruler, were condemned, regardless of whether or not the perpetrators were of the Chou house, or were themselves feudal lords. Even though the feudal lords were in many ways usurping epicenters of power, they were still in charge of their state's affairs (having been appointed, after all, by the Chou king) and deserved the respect which should accompany that position. The Ch'un-ch'iu is replete with examples of regicide, and in every case they were assumed by Sun to be manifestations of the decline of respect for li. In an early example Sun points out that the decline took place incrementally and led to a gradual escalation in violence until finally even the

most basic relationships governed by li were infected:[30]

> The phenomenon of officials murdering their rulers, and sons murdering their fathers, does not happen overnight. The underlying factors develop gradually. Because it is difficult to distinguish these factors in their early stages, the sages warned the rulers, and officials, and sons, through their teaching, to take every precaution possible from the very beginning. This is because the evil intentions of officials and sons begin imperceptibly and accumulate only gradually; if they are not stopped over a long period of time then they will result in the misfortunes of murder and rebellion.... Because of this, in the Ch'un-ch'iu there were cases of hereditary officials murdering their rulers, of sons murdering their fathers, of younger brothers murdering their older brothers, and of wives murdering their husbands.

In another case, Sun claims that according to the principles of li only the Chou king had the authority to put a ruler of one of the feudal states to death.[31] This goes for officials as well, since they were also appointed by the king. Sun counted 47 cases in the Ch'un-ch'iu of officials being executed by their feudal lords, all of whom were thereby considered to be usurping the authority of the Chou king.[32] In some cases dukes even killed their own sons and heirs.[33] In some cases patricide was also regicide, doubling the enormity of the offense.[34] How much worse, then, when a ruler was not only killed, but used as a substitute for an animal in a sacrifice.[35] In addition, Sun blamed the feudal lords for siphoning off tax revenue from the Chou king and keeping it for their own use.[36] Here again the parallels between the unstable

and decentralized experience of the late T'ang and Five Dynasties period are obvious.

Now we arrive at a particularly interesting question. Does the obligation to exalt the ruler imply that rulers do not make mistakes or should not be criticized if they do? Sun's answer is negative. Kings are at fault when they depart from the standards imposed by li and deserve to be criticized. In the very first paragraph of the commentary, when Sun explained why Confucius set out to write the Ch'un-ch'iu, he said:[37]

> Confucius wrote the Ch'un-ch'iu because the world was without a proper ruler.... In ancient times the evil kings met with misfortune; King P'ing moved the capital to the east. Since (by so doing) P'ing did not act like a proper king, the tao of the Chou house was broken, and its power became weak in proportion as that of the feudal lords increased. The proper li of imperial audiences was not cultivated; the responsibilities of sending tribute to the king were not maintained; orders were not attended to; and proper rewards and punishments were not administered.... From the time of the accession of Duke Yin on, there was never again a proper king in the Ch'un-ch'iu period.

The obligation of the ruler to walk the straight and narrow "kingly way" was clear and unmistakable, and when he diverged, it was incumbent upon his ministers to set him straight. Sun blamed the king for sending an envoy to u under circumstances which did not conform to the proper standards of li.[38] The King was also blamed in strong terms for personally placing himself at the head of an army sent to suppress a rebellion in the state of Cheng.[39]

Sun's argument was that since in theory the king could have no enemies (he ruled over the whole world) he should not commit his office personally to any particular military campaign. By involving himself in the sordid details of fighting he was acknowledging his weakness for all to see, and further undermining respect for his position. None of the three commentaries have this interpretation of the passage. In similar fashion the king was blamed for leaving the capital in order to escape the consequences of some particular political squabble or another.[40]

The king was also blamed for not coming to the rescue of states which were unjustly set upon by other states or by barbarian armies.[41] Presumably Sun did not intend for the king to take command of the situation personally but to undertake to organize a punitive expedition under the leadership of his ministers still subject to his authority.

Kings were blamed for other infractions of li, such as when the Chou king Chuang 莊王 summoned Duke Chuang 莊公 of Lu to act as intermediary for him in arranging his marriage to a daughter of the Duke of Ch'i, while Duke Chuang was still in mourning for the death of his mother.[42] Kings were blamed for trying to do away with heirs to the throne, in favor of other sons (usually at the instigation of a favored concubine).[43] Not only did they try to get

rid of their sons, they also murdered their younger brothers, and Sun blames them for not acting as proper brothers. Thus does Sun deal with the usurpation of power by the feudal lords, endeavoring to show, by showering the reader with examples from the Ch'un-ch'iu, the many ways in which central authority could be eroded gradually over a long period of time, and the disastrous consequences to the governing of the state and the preservation of Chinese cultural values (embodied in li) such a process could inflict. In this process both the feudal lords and the king are held responsible for failing to submit to the absolute moral standards of li.

Later commentators continued and further amplified the concept of tsun-wang (elaborated by Sun Fu) at some length. Sun Chüeh, for example, went so far as to claim that the heavenly king (t'ien-wang 天王) presided over the welfare of all living things, down to the lowliest insect and fish, whose very life flowed from his beneficent influence.[45] He further maintained that the ruler was the basis of the world, the font of all instruction and political order; his authority came by natural right, granted from heaven. In fact his position as a kind of intermediary between heaven and earth endowed him with a very special and crucial role. He embodied the creative power of heaven and earth (體天地生成之德) which he then

used to bestow prosperity upon his kingdom.[46] Sun Chüeh even went so far as to say that there was no praise or blame for the king because he rose above it (on the principle that whatever could be praised could by implication also be criticized). He claimed that this did not mean that individual rulers could not make mistakes, but that Confucius did not intend to criticize them as rulers (presumably they could be criticized as individuals, not as institutions). Ch'en Ch'ing-hsin says that this point of view started with Sun Chüeh.[47]

Later, the philosopher Ch'eng I referred to tsun-wang as the great principle of heaven and earth (天地之大義) thus raising it to the level of universal principle, about which more will be said in the next chapter.[48] His student, Hsieh Shih, put it this way:[49]

> The ruler and heaven have the same virtue; in their actions they share the same tao.... If you wish to protect the state you have to respect heaven; if you wish to respect heaven you have to exalt the ruler. If the feudal lords had served the ruler as if he were heaven, then the protection of the state and the prosperity of the people would have been secured.

In another passage Hsieh said:[50]

> The mandate of the king is the basis of all under heaven. The people in a state have no right to set up a ruler, and the son of a ruler has no right to be set up by private interests. When the mandate of the king is not practiced the state will fall into confusion.

Thus was Sun Fu's interpretation elaborated by later

Ch'un-ch'iu scholars in the Northern Sung who placed it in a more metaphysical context. But Sun's message did not stop there. He was also concerned about the potential of usurpation by officials, and he may well have had in mind the danger of imperial sycophants and eunuchs as well as officials appropriating to themselves excessive power over both the bureaucracy and their sovereign.

Usurpation by Officials

Sun believed the first explicit mention of the rising power of the officials occurred in a passage in 569 B.C., in which it was recorded that a group of officials of the various feudal lords held a meeting of their own soon after one had just been held by the feudal lords themselves.[57] According to the modern historian Hsü Cho-yün this process had already started much earlier, at least in the state of Lu.[52] For example, during the reign of Duke Hsi 僖 (658-626) much of the duke's power was shared with his minister (and brother) Sui 遂, who dominated the next duke, Wen 文, after whose death Sui engineered the succession of Duke Hsüan 宣 by first murdering the two legitimate successors. After that no duke in the state of Lu ruled except by authorization of the major families, whose members were nominally the ministers of the duke. Fixing the beginning of the trend at any particular time is not as important for our purposes,

however, as identifying Sun's interpretation of the process.

Many of Sun Fu's comments about the usurpation of power by officials are similar to those describing the erosion of the king's power into the hands of their rulers, the feudal lords. Officials are criticized, for example, for leaving the state without the permission of the ruler.[53] They are criticized for killing the son of a ruler in order to set up someone else more malleable to their sinister purposes.[54] When officials begin to hold meetings with each other independently of their feudal lords, they are blamed in much the same terms as were the feudal lords when they first began to covenant with each other without regard to the wishes or instructions of the Chou king.[55] The process of usurpation is regarded by Sun as being complete at about the time that the Ch'un-ch'iu recorded a meeting of ministers in Sung in 545 B.C.[56] Later on, in 528 B.C., the text of the Ch'un-ch'iu itself makes a special point of mentioning that the feudal lords did not attend a meeting of the ministers.[57]

Officials were blamed for not carrying to completion, or for not obeying, the orders of their rulers.[58] They were blamed for offering refuge to officials of other states who were forced to flee because they had become involved in improper activities of one sort or another.[59]

Subversive elements were not to be encouraged by the hope of finding safety in nearby states. Nevertheless, no matter how unworthy an official might be, it was not proper for him to be put to death by a feudal lord--that authority rested only with the Chou king himself. When three officials were executed at the same time in 573 B.C., for example, Sun maintained that this was contrary to the tao.[60] In this case he followed the Tso-chuan, a small passage of which is worth quoting because it illustrates how Sun drew from many commentaries to find support for his own interpretations. One of the ministers who was killed, Hsi Chih 郤至, had been advised of the ruler's intentions, and when his family urged him to oppose the will of the ruler in order to save his own life, he made the following remarks:[61]

> The things which set a man up are fidelity, wisdom, and valour. A faithful man will not revolt against his ruler; a wise man will not injure the people; a valiant man will not raise disorder. If we lose those three qualities, who will be with us? If by our death we increase the number of our enemies, of what use will it be? When a ruler puts a minister to death, what can the latter say to him? If we are really guilty, our death comes late; if he puts us to death, being innocent, he will lose the people, and have no repose afterwards, however much he may wish it. Let us simply wait our fate. We have received emoluments from our ruler, and by means of them have collected a party; but what offence could be greater than if with that party we should strive against his order (for our death)?

What were the consequences of this devolution of power into the hands of the ministers, according to Sun Fu?

The answer is simple--that diffusion of power produced anarchy, and anarchy produced lawlessness and needless suffering among the common people. The first appearance in the Ch'un-ch-iu of robbers committing murder was attributed to the fact that punishment and governance had been lost (失刑政也).[62] A similar conclusion was reached by Sun (無刑政也) when the Ch'un-ch'iu recorded in 521 B.C. the murder by thieves of the elder brother of the Marquis of Wei 衛.[63] In case after case Sun sought to drive home the necessity to distinguish between short-term and long-term advantage. He argued that however compelling the practical reasons might have been to pursue a particular course of action which might result in a diminution of central authority, the long-term consequences were so destructive as to wipe out utterly whatever immediate gain might have been sought or even achieved.

Expulsion of the Barbarians

The very serious threat of invasion from northern barbarian tribes, the Tangut Hsi-hsia in the northwest and the Khitan Liao in the northeast, and in fact the final defeat of the Northern Sung by a third tribe, the Jurchen, in 1127, has already been mentioned in Chapter One. This threat plagued emperors and officials throughout the 150-year period of the Northern Sung. Nevertheless, the problem of the barbarians was subordinated to the issue of

centralization in the Ch'un-ch'iu commentaries of the Northern Sung. That it never reached the proportions of a fixation until the Southern Sung, when something had obviously gone wrong, is understandable. Officials in the Northern Sung could argue that the barbarians could be bought off, or even in the long run be gradually assimilated into the Chinese cultural orbit, both of which would tend to reduce the threat of barbarian invasion. Those in the Southern Sung knew better.

One of the first instances of Sun Fu's interpretation on this question in his commentary came as early as 683 B.C., in response to a passage recording an attack on one of the central states by the barbarian state of Ch'u (referred to in its early history as Ching 荆).[64] Sun claimed that the reason that the barbarians were able to make inroads into the Chinese states was because there were no sagely kings to act (聖王不作故也). The next treatment came in 655 B.C., on the occasion of the famous covenant of Shao-ling 召陵, which was convened after an expedition of the Chinese states led by Ch'i against the state of Ch'u. Both the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang praised Duke Huan of Ch'i for keeping the barbarians from invading the Chinese states. But Sun Fu, though acknowledging that this was indeed a service, reiterated that this task should have been done by the Son of Heaven, and

lamented the necessity of having to rely on a feudal lord to do the job of the Chou king.[65] Just five years later, in 650 B.C., commenting upon the covenant of K'uei-ch'iu 葵丘, Sun again praised Duke Huan for his role in expelling the barbarians, but at the same time condemned him for not acting properly in relation to the Chou king, for which transgression he was not to be forgiven.[66] Clearly this offense against the authority of the Chou king was so serious that it could not be justified by whatever temporary benefit the Chinese states might have gained as a result of military campaigns against the barbarians. In this case again, as was often true before, the other commentaries differed from Sun's, the Kung-yang praising Duke Huan, and the Ku-liang praising the covenant.

The primacy of moral considerations is even more forcefully put in response to the battle of Ch'eng-p'u 城濮 in 631 B.C., in which an army belonging to the state of Ch'u was defeated by armies under the leadership of the state of Chin 晉. Sun again underscored his main point, that this should have been done by the Son of Heaven, not by Duke Wen of Chin, however beneficial the outcome of the military campaign might have been.[67] Sun argued that the fault lay ultimately not with the barbarians but with the moral deterioration within the Chinese states themselves (中國失道).[68] No matter

how many times the barbarians are defeated militarily, nothing but a moral rejuvenation of the Chinese states themselves would ever cause the barbarians to exalt the Son of Heaven and adopt the kingly way. In 589 B.C., in the first year of the reign of Duke Ch'eng 成 of Lu, when the Ch'un-ch'iu recorded that the common people were assigned the task (over and above their normal taxes) of producing military equipment, Sun argued that Confucius intended to blame Ch'eng for not being able to defend the state, and ascribed his weakness not to military circumstances, but to the fact that he was "unable to cultivate virtue."[69]

Even the very definition of a barbarian was based upon moral considerations. A barbarian was someone who did not accept the moral standards of the Chinese. In 505 B.C., for example, the ruler of the state of Wu was identified in the Ch'un-ch'iu passage by the title of Viscount, normally reserved only for rulers of the central states. According to Sun this was done in order to praise him for coming to the aid of the central states in their struggle against the barbarian state of Ch'u. Later on in the same year, however, when the same ruler took the mother of the defeated ruler of Ch'u as his wife, both the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang, and Sun Fu, refer to him as reverting (反) to the status of a barbarian.[70]

Criticism was expressed in other ways as well. When the army of Ch'u occupied P'eng-ch'eng 彭城, a city in Sung, and placed a puppet in charge, the Ch'un-ch'iu text still referred to it as belonging to Sung. This was taken to instance (in Sun's view) Confucius's unwillingness to countenance the power of a barbarian state to occupy Chinese territory.[71] In like fashion, by a subtle choice of words Confucius was said to have made it appear that the states Ch'en 陳 and Ts'ai 蔡 had not been destroyed at all by the barbarian Ch'u (when in fact they had) in order to downgrade Ch'u's importance.[72] In one of the last passages in the commentary, discussing the famous meeting in 481 B.C. at Huang-ch'ih 黃池 under the auspices of the Viscount of Wu, Sun claimed that Chin (also present at the meeting) was now too weak to assert its authority over all the states. He also noted that ever since the battle of Pai-chü 柏舉 in 505 B.C. power over the central states had passed into the hands of the barbarians, as a direct consequence of the failure of the states to observe the tao and restore the rule of the sage-kings.[73] The placement of Wu behind Chin in the passage is supposed to mean that Wu had no right to its pretensions as the organizer of the meeting.

The practical consequences of failing to adhere to li on the part of the Chinese states are thus regarded by

Sun as graphically illustrated by the success of the barbarians, and represent the final denouement of the whole process of rejecting li begun in the early years of the Ch'un-ch'iu period.

Universal Implications of Li 禮 In the Early Commentaries

The previous sections have shown how Sun and other Neo-Confucianists attempted to relate the particular problems encountered in the Ch'un-ch'iu period with those problems which arose during the Northern Sung period. The obvious and not entirely erroneous conclusion to draw from a review of the similarities they claim to have found is that the commentaries of the Northern Sung were written primarily for the purpose of justifying certain political policies which had been implemented already by the early Sung emperors. A balanced perspective, however, shows that this is only partially true. The greatest significance of the commentaries does not lie solely in this realm but in the way in which they tried to demonstrate the universality of the principles manifested by the particular circumstances of the Ch'un-ch'iu period. In this context the use of praise and blame should be seen in a slightly altered sense from that in which it is often understood. It is not always intended to be the anachronistic imposition of subjective standards of later political

morality on historical events by selecting those which easily conveyed a didactic message and rejecting those facts which didn't. Rather it was the result of a new faith in certain transcendent moral principles, universal in scope but immanent and knowable in history.[74] In fact it was thought by some that one did not even have to exercise praise and blame explicitly because it was believed that an honest recording of the facts would speak for themselves and convey the message implicitly. Thus could Ssu-ma Kuang, regarded as one of the most conservative of the Sung scholar-officials, say in his introduction to the Tzu-chih t'ung-chien:[75]

> Now your servant in his narrative has sought only to trace the rise and fall of the various states and make clear the people's times of joy and sorrow so that the reader may select for himself what is good and what is bad, what profitable and what unprofitable, for his encouragement and warning. He has no intention of setting up standards of praise and blame in the manner of the Spring and Autumn Annals which could compel a disorderly age to return to just ways.

In reading this it is important to realize that whether he did convey subjective opinions of blame or praise is a separate question from whether or not he thought that is what he was doing. The point is that the Sung thinkers believed so strongly in the existence of universal moral principles, and the susceptibility of those principles to rational understanding, that it was not always deemed necessary to state them explicitly.

The term li is often translated as "ritual" or "norm." These rituals were thought to be the outward manifestation of certain absolute moral principles, and the term li was often used to refer to those universal moral principles rather than merely their ritualistic expression. Because of the complexity of the term (dealt with below) and the inadequacy of any English equivalent, the best solution is simply to use the Chinese term. In order to avoid confusion with the word for principle, also li 理 , the former will usually be used without the Chinese character, and the latter with it.

Li can be explained as having three different levels of meaning, distinguished from each other by the object each is designed to pursue. The first aims to cultivate the individual self through the use of ritual and ceremonies; the second to cultivate the order and stability of society through adherance to proper ritual (remembering of course that in all cases the rituals are synonymous with the moral principles which they represent); and the third to bring man into harmony with the laws of the universe. The second is emphasized by those who are most concerned with the practical affairs of government, and the third by those who are most concerned with resting their political ideas on a firm foundation of absolute moral principles. Sun Fu used both the second and the third level in his

commentaries, and it is the third level that was later expanded by Ch'eng I to fit into his metaphysical system.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate these three levels of meaning. In the Analects Confucius is recorded as having said:[76]

> Respectfulness, without the rules of propriety (li), becomes laborious bustle; carefulness, without the rules of propriety, becomes timidity; boldness, without the rules of propriety, becomes insubordination; straight-forwardness, without the rules of propriety, becomes rudeness.

Thus even virtuous behavior, without the judgment which comes from knowing what is proper under the circumstances, can be carried to extremes. One of Confucius's leading disciples, Yen Yüan 顏淵, in speaking of what he learned from Confucius, said that he "enlarged my mind with learning, and taught me the restraints of propriety,"[77] revealing that for him li represented a sense of moral discipline. In a passage from the Tso chuan, li takes on a much wider connotation, to include the orderly conduct of affairs of a whole community, in other words, of government. It reads: "It is propriety which governs States and clans, gives settlement to the tutelary altars, secures the order of the people, and provides for the good of one's heirs."[78]

Hsün Tzu has perhaps the most significant of all discussions of the subject, at least for our purposes, since in it he anticipates the universal significance of

li which was also given to it by the Sung thinkers:[79]

> Through rites (li) Heaven and earth join in harmony, the sun and moon shine, the four seasons proceed in order, the stars and constellations march, the rivers flow, and all things flourish; men's likes and dislikes are regulated and their joys and hates made appropriate. Those below are obedient, those above are enlightened; all things change but do not become disordered; only he who turns his back upon rites will be destroyed. Are they not wonderful indeed? When they are properly established and brought to the peak of perfection, no one in the world can add to or detract from them. Through them the root and the branch are put in proper order; beginning and end are justified; the most elegant forms embody all distinctions; the most penetrating insight explains all things. In the world those who obey the dictates of ritual will achieve order; those who turn against them will suffer disorder. Those who obey them will win safety; those who turn against them will court danger. Those who obey them will be preserved; those who turn against them will be lost. This is something that the petty man cannot comprehend.

The Li Chi, now known to have been put together in the Han but once thought to have been of much earlier provenance, also contains some passages which are of particular relevance to our discussion because they also extend the meaning of li far beyond mere rites or ceremonies, and for this reason are worth looking at. As regards the origin of li, it said:[80] "...rules of ceremony must be traced to their origin in the Grand Unity. This separated and became heaven and earth. It revolved and became the dual force (in nature). It changed and became the four seasons.... Its lessons transmitted (to men) are called its orders; the law and authority of them is in Heaven." As

to the nature of li and the consequences of not following its dictates:[81]

> Thus propriety and righteousness are the great elements for man's character; it is by means of them that his speech is the expression of truth and his intercourse (with others) the promotion of harmony;.... They constitute the great methods by which we nourish the living, bury the dead, and serve the spirits of the departed. They supply the channels by which we can apprehend the ways of Heaven and act as the feelings of men require. It was on this account that the sages knew that the rules of ceremony could not be dispensed with, while the ruin of states, the destruction of families, and the perishing of individuals are always preceded by their abandonment of the rules of propriety.

The importance of the interrelationship of these three levels of meaning of li becomes apparent as one turns to the commentaries themselves. Though the infractions of li pointed out in Sun Fu's and Liu Ch'ang's commentaries are infractions of ritual,[82] their full significance for Sung political thought emerges only when their absolute moral implications are brought out. Violations of ritual are violations not only of the human order, but of the universal moral order as well. The two levels are in fact inseparable, and it was believed that the failure to observe the proper li would result inevitably in punishment, in much the same way that the people of Judah were taken to task by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 31:1) for relying merely on the weapons of war to protect themselves instead of obeying the will of God.[83] The later attack on them by the Assyrians was thus

interpreted by Isaiah as just punishment to the Jews for their loss of faith in God.

In Western literature one of the most powerful expositions of this theme of the interrelationship between the cosmos and the world of human affairs, and the importance of ritual in bringing a tyrant to heel, was the Greek play Antigone by Sophocles (495-406 B.C.). In it two brothers, both sons of Oedipus, the former king of Thebes, led two opposing armies which met and fought a battle at the gates of Thebes. In the battle both brothers died, after which the tyrant of Thebes, Creon, refused to permit the burial of the brother who had attacked the city. Since it was believed at the time that the soul of anyone not granted the proper ritual of burial was condemned to wander the earth forever, a daughter of Oedipus, by the name of Antigone, buried her dead brother in secret and was discovered. For this she was condemned to be buried alive in a cave, where she committed suicide along with her lover Haemon, Creon's son. Meanwhile the prophet Tiresias had warned Creon that his defiance of the gods would bring about his own downfall and the end of his house, but by the time he sought to undo his actions it was too late and Antigone, Haemon, and Creon's wife had all died by their own hand.

The parallel is obvious--no ruler is the final

authority, and the mistaken belief of a tyrant in his omnipotence will inevitably result in his own destruction, or that of his house. It is an expression in dramatic form of the belief shared by Northern Sung thinkers such as Sun Fu and Liu Ch'ang, that ritual is the visible embodiment of absolute moral principles, to which even tyrants are subject. The moral of the play would have been perfectly clear to a Chinese audience in the Sung (more clear, one suspects, than it would be to a modern audience).

Conclusion

The foregoing has traced the main lines of Sun Fu's attitudes toward obedience to authority by concentrating on the three stages of decline which he claimed the Ch'un-ch'iu period passed through as a result of the failure of its rulers, feudal lords, and ministers to carry out the will of heaven (made manifest through li 禮) and exalt the ruler. We have also seen how the concept li was used to support a set of moral principles believed to be universally valid and binding equally on rulers and subjects. How influential Sun's ideas were is apparent in the content of later commentaries. For example, Hu An-kuo, echoing Sun, wrote in the Southern Sung that "the unifying theme of the Ch'un-ch'iu is to exalt the mandate of the king and deplore the division of authority among officials.... The

rectification of names (by which a person acts according to the absolute standards which govern those in his position) is the eternal principle of heaven and earth and is the comprehensive principle of righteousness that links the past with the present."[84] Only by obedience to the civil authority of the ruler and to the moral authority of li did Sun believe the long term interests of the people could be properly served.

However, the practical value of centralized rule can be more clearly seen with respect to the threat of internal usurpation than that of barbarian invasion. No matter how one tries to get around it the undeniable fact is that a strictly military solution to the problem of the barbarians in the Northern Sung--the Hsi-hsia and the Khitan --would have required the emperor to delegate much of his authority to commanders in the field. Commanders would have had to have the power to appropriate local revenue in order to pay for expenses which could not be anticipated, and the power to make on-the-spot tactical (as well as strategic) decisions in order to take advantage of immediate military opportunities. But to do so raised the specter of the autonomous military commanders of the recent past. To avoid that, Sun argued that in the final analysis the long-term benefits gained by sustaining the power of the emperor far outweighed the temporary

advantages which might accrue by allowing local military commanders a wide latitude in responding to the military threat of the barbarians. Simply put, he regarded the internal threat as much more serious than the external threat. Policies which implemented this very choice of priorities were in fact pursued by all the Northern Sung emperors, giving the appearance of military weakness which has elicited the condemnation of nationalistically inclined Chinese scholars from the Southern Sung to the present.[85]

I wonder, however, whether such condemnation is fully justified. The more acquainted I become with the Ch'un-ch'iu scholars of the Northern Sung the more inclined I am to the belief that they would quite possibly have regarded the course of later Chinese history, more particularly the Southern Sung, as a vindication of their ideas, rather than an indictment of their failure to protect China from the barbarian military threat. This is because the twin virtues of obedience to a unified state and also to the Chinese moral tradition continued to be sustained, albeit on a smaller scale, throughout the period of the Southern Sung and on through the Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing dynasties. Given their assumptions about the ultimate ends of government, they would have argued, I suspect, that these values would have been placed in far greater jeopardy if the

Northern Sung emperors had decentralized military authority and delegated it to commanders in the field. The probability that the habits of challenging central authority, so ingrained after centuries of indulgence during the late T'ang and Five Dynasties period, would have reasserted themselves was very great, and as a result China would quite likely have once again lost the benefits of a unified stable government. Fragmented and weakened from within, it would have been in no position to hold off barbarians indefinitely anyway, so the same results would probably have been obtained, but at a far greater cost than was in fact the case.

If this interpretation has any merit, and I believe it does, then the Ch'un-ch'iu scholars no more deserve the accusation of being impractical than do the early Sung emperors (who in any case were the real authors of the policy of centralizing authority and buying off the barbarians). The point at issue is not one of practicality or impracticality but rather priorities. As far as the Sung scholars were concerned, they were trying to establish a clear set of priorities and standards by which the formation and execution of practical policies could be measured and which would lend unity and direction to those policies.

That they had solid grounds for their fear of

decentralizing military power can be illustrated not only by reference to the late T'ang but also to a strikingly similar problem in medieval European history. The Carolingian rulers of medieval France and the Norman rulers of medieval England were also confronted with barbarian intrusions. They found it expedient to create certain administrative areas on the borders of their kingdoms, called marches, which had as their purpose the repulsion of attacks from their less civilized and more warlike neighbors from the north (and in the case of England, from Wales also). According to one writer:[86]

> Delegation of power proved from the outset the only way of governing wide areas; and in such a situation there was little or no method of supervising and limiting the local lords who held delegated power. Border-lands in particular created difficult situations where lords needed strong forces and free hands. The policy of Charlemagne with regard to the marches helped to develop the fief, just as both in Anglo-Saxon and Norman England the Welsh marches produced especially warlike and consolidated earldoms.... To hold up the fissiparous tendencies a Frankish king might send a count, comes, to each city; but in the conditions of the ninth century all local powers tended to grow autonomous. The magnates assumed the right to levy troops or taxes, to exercise police and law administration.

Later Lindsay adds:[87]

> Throughout the Middle Ages the marches of north and east produced many challenges to the crown, which, however, had no choice but to allow dangerous concentrations of power there.

The point is that the price paid for this protection was high, and included both usurpation and dissolution of

central rule. For example, Robert the Strong, one of the lords appointed by the Carolingian ruler Charles the Bald (843-877) to protect the Loire valley from the Vikings, spent so much energy consolidating his own power (instead of fighting the barbarians) that his descendants ultimately were able to replace the Carolingians with their own Capetian dynasty.[88]

Of course, the circumstances of the medieval European monarchies were very different from those of the Chinese empire. Among other things, the Chinese benefited from a common written language and long experience in the bureaucratic administration of a large territory. The Europeans lacked those advantages to the same degree (though Latin did serve as a common administrative language) and as a result were more vulnerable to fragmentation than their Chinese counterparts. Nevertheless the parallel is instructive because in both cases a similar problem led to a similar outcome.

It ought to be clear now precisely how the Ch'un-ch'iu was used by Sun Fu and others as a vehicle to express opinions on the fundamental problems of national defense and obedience to the ruler. In order to understand the meaning and significance of those opinions we must move on to a consideration of the metaphysical level of interpretation in which the duty of obedience is understood not

to be imposed on man from without, in consideration of only utilitarian motives and at the expense of individuality and freedom, but to come from within, from sources which are rooted in the very nature of man and the universe.

REFERENCES

1. For example, Ssu-ma Kuang's disagreement with Mencius's rejection of the hegemon. See Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, p. 482.

2. Tung Chung-shu, CCFL 5:12.

3. For Li kou and a more general discussion of centralization see Hsiao, Cheng-chih ssu-hsiang, p. 449. Julia Ching discusses Chang Tsai briefly in "Neo-Confucianism," p. 44.

4. CCTWFW, 10828, Ai-kung 14.

5. See Mou Jun-sun, pp. 105-106, in which he quotes from Sun's commentary, CCTWFW, 10727, Yin-kung 1; and 10728, Yin-kung 2. In fact Sun did have words of praise, which are noted occasionally as they appear later in the chapter. In 699 B.C., for example, when the same date is repeated twice, Sun says that this was intended to connote praise without, however, explaining why. The Kung-yang does not say anything, and the Ku-liang (Malmquist, p. 107) merely states: "the text repeats the day in order to make decisive the significance of the dating." The Tso-chuan also does not have any commentary on this point.

6. Liu Yen 劉敞 (1048-1102) criticized him for introducing purely personal ideas, inappropriate to a commentary (CHY, p. 287). Ch'ang Chih 常秩 (1019-1077) called him a latter-day Shang Yang for focusing on trivial questions. Hu An-kuo echoed this criticism. Yeh Meng-te 葉夢得 (1077-1148) said that he didn't get to the heart of the classic, that his understanding of li 禮 was superficial (Mou Jun-sun, p. 110).

7. Legge, Confucian Analects, p. 310. The translation is Legge's. See CCTWFW, 10729, Yin-kung 2. Actually Sun does not quote the last sentence.

8. See Legge, Ch'un Ts'ew, p. 208, for further details.

9. CCTWFW, 10772, Hsi-kung 28, as quoted in CHY, p. 308.

10. CCTWFW, 10800, Hsiang-kung 11. Legge discusses this on page 452 in greater detail.

11. CCTWFW, 10810, Chao-kung 5.

12. CCTWFW, 10727, Yin-kung 1.

13. The only reason given for the praise is that "he (Chu) gradually advanced." See Malmquist, p. 70. When the commentaries are as enigmatic as the text, the possibilities of interpretation are multiplied manyfold.

14. CCTWFW, 10728, Yin-kung 3.

15. As quoted in CHY, pp. 325-326, from his Ch'un-ch'iu chuan, Yin-kung 1.

16. CCTWFW, 10728, Yin-kung 1.

17. Legge, Li Chi, vol. 1, p. 214.

18. CCTWFW, 10779, Wen-kung 14.

19. For example, ibid., 10728, Yin-kung 2; and 10737, Huan-kung 2.

20. In the CCTWFW, 10730, Yin-kung 3, Sun claims that hereditary offices were partly responsible for the decline of the Hsia and Shang dynasties, and appear again in the Chou when it begins to decline. See also 10785, Hsüan-kung 10, in which Sun follows the Kung-yang in criticizing hereditary offices.

21. CCTWFW, 10757, Chuang-kung 31.

22. Ibid., 10783, Hsüan-kung 1.

23. See ibid., 10737, Huan-kung 1; 10791, Ch'eng-kung 8; 10802, Hsiang-kung 19; and 10827, Ai-kung 8.

24. Ibid., 10729, Yin-kung 3.

25. Ibid., 10737, Huan-kung 1.

26. Ibid., 10767, Hsi-kung 15.

27. Ibid., 10767, Hsi-kung 16. See Legge, pp. 170-171.

28. CCTWFW, 10778, Wen-kung 9.

29. Ibid., 10737, Hsüan-kung 16. Sun's comment was "無有能以王道興起之者故因其災也傷之."

30. Ibid., 10730-31, Yin-kung 4.

31. Ibid., 10753, Chuang-kung 22.

32. Ibid. Even the son of the Chou king did not escape blame for engineering the murder of one of the feudal lords (10787, Hsüan-kung 15). See also Legge, p. 329.

33. CCTWFW, 10804, Hsiang-kung 26; 10783, Hsi-kung 5.

34. Ibid., 10806, Hsiang-kung 30.

35. Ibid., 10812, Chao-kung 11.

36. Ibid., 10787, Hsüan-kung 15. With regard to this passage, see Legge, p. 329, which explains that this was an extra tax on the produce of a crop. There is not total agreement on the meaning of this passage, but in our case it is how Sun took it that is important. See also 10827, Ai-kung 12; and Legge, p. 828.

37. Ibid., 10727, Yin-kung 1.

38. Ibid., 10727, Yin-kung 1. The exact nature of the violation is not agreed upon, but that there was something wrong, is believed by all the commentators.

39. Ibid., 10739-40, Huan-kung 5.

40. Ibid., 10769, Hsi-kung 24; and 10792, Ch'eng-kung 12.

41. Ibid., 10764, Hsi-kung 5.

42. Ibid., 10747, Chuang-kung 1.

43. Ibid., 10763, Hsi-kung 5.

44. Ibid., 10806, Hsiang-kung 30.

45. CCCC, chüan 1, as quoted in CHY, p. 321.

46. CCCC, Yin-kung 1, as quoted in CHY, p. 275.

47. CCCC, chüan 5, as quoted in CHY, p. 323.

48. LSCY, chüan 19, as quoted in CHY, p. 321.

49. LSCY, chüan 1, as quoted in CHY, p. 321.

50. LSCY, chüan 3, as quoted in CHY, p. 324.

51. CCTWFW, 10798, Hsiang-kung 3. Sun mentions the meeting at Chi-tse 雞澤 (in present-day Hopei) several times later as marking the beginning of the officials' usurpation of power. See, for example, 10801, Hsiang-kung 16.

52. Hsu, Cho-yun, Ancient China, pp. 78-82.

53. CCTWFW, 10756, Chuang-kung 27; and 10784, Hsüan-kung 5.

54. Ibid., 10765, Hsi-kung 9.

55. CCTWFW, 10801, Hsiang-kung 16. Now, according to Sun, power is fully in the hands of the officials. This meeting took place in 556 B.C., at Chü-liang 溴梁 (in present-day Honan), which belonged to Chin.

56. CCTWFW, 10804-5, Hsiang-kung 27. Again in the same year, the ministers met by themselves in Sung. See also 10809, Chao-kung 4.

57. CCTWFW, 10812-13, Chao-kung 13.

58. Ibid., 10784, Hsüan-kung 8; and 10788, Hsüan-kung 18.

59. Ibid., 10803, Hsiang-kung 21; and 10803, Hsiang-kung 23.

60. Ibid., 10794, Ch'eng-kung 17.

61. Legge, p. 405. The translation is Legge's.

62. CCTWFW, 10800, Hsiang-kung 10.

63. Ibid., 10814, Chao-kung 20.

64. Ibid., 10750, Chuang-kung 10. See also Legge, p. 86. This is the first mention in the Ch'un-ch'iu itself of the state of Ch'u.

65. CCTWFW, 10762-63, Hsi-kung 4. See also Malmquist, pp. 162-163, and Mou Jun-sun, pp. 106-107.

66. CCTWFW, 10765, Hsi-kung 9. See also Mou Jun-sun, p. 107, and Malmquist, p. 163.

67. Ibid., 10771, Hsi-kung 28.

68. Sun's views on this subject were not shared by all his fellow Ch'un-ch'iu enthusiasts in the Northern Sung. Ou-yang Hsiu, for example, although he came close, did not take such a strong position: "With regard to relations between China and the barbarians from ancient times, when China was in possession of the tao, the barbarians did not necessarily submit, and when China was not in possession of the tao, they did not necessarily stay away." See the Hsin Wu-tai shih 72:885.

69. CCTWFW, 10789, Ch'eng-kung 1.

70. Ibid., 10820, Ting-kung 4. See also Malmquist, p. 212. Dr. Hsiao also draws upon the same example from the Kung-yang to make the same point. See Hsiao/Mote, vol. 1, pp. 24-25, note 55. The difficulties of this type of interpretation become apparent when one compares this passage with another in 530 B.C., in which the ruler of Ch'u was castigated for his lack of the tao in killing the ruler of the state of Ts'ai 蔡. The state of Ch'u, already permanently and irrevocably categorized as a barbarian state, and here caught in an action manifestly barbarian, was referred to in the text of the classic by the title of viscount (CCTWFW, 10811, Chao-kung 11. Wu is blamed from its first appearance in the text in 583 B.C. for usurping the title of viscount; see 10791, Ch'eng-kung 7), and no particular importance was attached to the title in this case. Logical consistency, to put it charitably, was not regarded very highly in this particular genre of criticism. All this does not alter, however, the persistent tendency to interpret barbarian behavior in terms of Confucian morality. In the Southern Sung, for example, even someone as opposed to Sun Fu's method of exegesis as Lü Tzu-ch'ien 呂祖謙, who regarded the Ch'un-ch'iu purely as factual history, defined the barbarians in terms of their adherence to li 禮 (Hu Ch'ang-chih 胡昌智, "Lü Tzu-ch'ien ti shih-hsüeh 呂祖謙的史學", Shu-mu chi-k'an 書目季刊 10 (1976), pp. 125-126).

71. CCTWFW, 10797, Hsiang-kung 1.

72. Ibid., 10813, Chao-kung 13.

73. Ibid., 10828, Ai-kung 13. One must guard against the tendency to see this interpretation as an attempt to hide one's head in the sand--the barbarian threat will go away if one just pretends that it doesn't exist. Sun's purpose was not to explain them away but to challenge the legitimacy of their power whenever it did not conform to standards of li.

74. De Bary puts it this way ("Reappraisal," p. 90): "According to this view (Hu Yüan's), the Classics were to be studied as deposits of eternal truth rather than as antiquarian repositories, and the true aim of classical studies was to bring these enduring principles, valid for any place or time, to bear upon both the conduct of life and the solution of contemporary problems."

75. Quoted in de Bary, Sources, p. 506.

76. Legge, Confucian Analects, p. 208. The Chinese reads as follows: "子曰,恭而無禮則勞,慎而無禮則葸,勇而無禮則亂,直而無禮則絞." Legge notes in his commentary that li does not refer only to "...mere conventionalities, but the ordinations of man's moral and intelligent nature in the line of what is proper."

77. Ibid., p. 220. "博我以文,約我以禮."

78. Legge, Ch'un Ts'ew, p. 33. "禮,經國家,定社稷,序民人,利後嗣者也"

79. Watson, Hsün Tzu, p. 94. See also the record of a statement by the great prime minister of the state of Cheng, Tzu-ch'an, in the Tso-chuan (Legge, p. 708): "Ceremonies (are founded in) the regular procedure of Heaven, the right phenomena of earth, and the actions of men."

80. This and the following three quotations are all from the Li Yün chapter of the Li Chi. See Legge, Li Ki, vol. 1, pp. 386-388. "是故夫禮,必本於大一.分而為天地,轉而為陰陽,變而為四時...其降曰命,其官於天也"

81. Ibid., pp. 388-389. "故禮義也者,人之大端也,所以講信脩睦...所以養生送死事鬼神之大端也,所以達天道人情之大實也,故唯聖人為知禮之不可以已也,故壞國喪家亡人,必先去其禮."

82. See Appendix.

83. See also Hosea 10:13-14: "You have ploughed iniquity, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your chariots and in the multitude of your warriors, therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your people, and all your fortresses shall be destroyed...."

84. LSCY, kang-ling shang 綱領上, p. 18b.

85. See Chapter One, and Ch'ien Mu, Kuo-shih ta-kang, pp. 394-401.

86. Jack Lindsay, The Normans and their World (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1973), p. 128.

87. Ibid., pp. 282-283.

88. Painter and Tierney, Western Europe in the Middle Ages, p. 168.

CHAPTER FOUR

CH'ENG I'S VIEWS ON OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY: THE MORAL/METAPHYSICAL LEVELS

Introduction

We have now arrived at the major junction of the dissertation, where the hitherto divergent paths of Neo-Confucian metaphysical speculation and Neo-Confucian political thought intersect and travel for a time along a common route. The immediate cause of their convergence was a mutual interest in the problem of authority. The result was to strengthen the obligation of the subject to obey his ruler while at the same time strengthening the obligation of the ruler to obey universal moral laws, of which the ruler himself was regarded as merely the instrument. It is the thesis of this chapter that the close correspondence held to exist by the Neo-Confucian metaphysical thinkers between the nature of man's being (and therefore of political society) and the nature of the universal order was intended to be a protection against arbitrary rule rather than a theoretical justification of it. Thus it was the particular contribution of these thinkers to locate traditional Confucian political beliefs within

the larger context of a unified body of thought which gave a rational explanation of man, nature, and the cosmos. Those redefined traditional Confucian political beliefs may have supported central authority, but they did not support absolutism.

This metaphysical approach was brought to fruition in the Northern Sung by Ch'eng I, who took Sun Fu's views on authority and incorporated them into a new metaphysical system through the use of the concept of principle, li 理. This new development strengthened the moral imperative to obedience discussed by Sun in terms of li 禮 and gave it a rational justification. Since there are remarkable and revealing affinities between Ch'eng I's ideas and those of certain medieval European theorists of natural law with regard to the problem of obedience and the related problem of divided moral loyalties, the section on Ch'eng I's ideas is followed by a discussion of the significance of those affinities, in a comparative context.

Metaphysical Implications of Principle, Li 理, In Ch'eng I's Commentary

Ch'eng I was born 40 years later than Sun Fu and died almost 50 years later than Sun Fu. Since he was working on his commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu in the last years of his life (Ch'eng I's preface is dated 1103), it represents his most mature thought on the relationship

between political life and metaphysical thought. It also represents the observations of a man who spent the bulk of his career in a China which was in many ways different from that in which Sun Fu had lived. Sun grew up and wrote in the formative period of the Sung, when the dynasty was just beginning, and when, as discussed in Chapter One, the scholar-elite was inspired to a new sense of mission and confidence in their ability to influence practical affairs. Ch'eng I, however, had lived through decades of bitter factional struggle in the central bureaucracy, and had suffered much personal anguish at the hands of his enemies among the rival groups of officials. In fact Ch'eng spent most of his life in Lo-yang, occupied in scholarship and in various degrees of opposition to the series of institutional reforms introduced by Wang An-shih and his followers (a conflict which began in the early 1070's and lasted to the end of Ch'eng's life). His rare service in the bureaucracy, owed partly to his failure to pass the chin-shih examination as well as to the efforts of opposing factions, allowed him more time for intellectual pursuits than his brother Ch'eng Hao, whose shorter life (he died in 1085) was often interrupted by the press of official duties.

Some have been tempted to argue that Ch'eng I's metaphysical ideas in general and his attitudes toward the

role of the emperor in particular were motivated by his factional opposition to Wang An-shih's reforms and by the need to counter Wang's reformist ideology (based on the Chou-li) with a more persuasive ideology of his own.[1] Certainly the divisiveness and destructiveness of the factional struggles which took place during the reigns of Shen-tsung (1068-1085) and Che-tsung (1086-1100) must have strengthened Ch'eng's awareness of the need for a strong moral authority. But it would be a mistake to explain the metaphysical ideas of Ch'eng I solely in terms of short-term expediency. However disappointed Ch'eng was in his own life, and regardless of how far short of their expectations in bringing about a moral revival Confucian scholar-officials were by the end of the 11th century, many of those conditions which inspired the Neo-Confucians at the beginning of the century (outlined in Chapter One) were still present at the end of the century. What appeared to be lacking was not the outward conditions but a lack of consensus and unity on fundamental questions among the scholar-elite themselves. Ch'eng I's purpose was to restore a degree of unanimity on first principles--then and only then would it be possible to expect unified action by high-minded scholar-officials. The fact that such an enterprise propelled him into factional struggles is a consequence of his intellectual efforts; it is not,

as some would assert, a cause of those efforts.

There is no question that Ch'eng I was one of the most original philosophers in Chinese history. A.C. Graham calls him "the greatest Confucian thinker of the last two thousand years."[2] Nevertheless in his political thought, as in his philosophical thought, he owes a debt of varying degrees of magnitude to certain predecessors. The fact that among early Sung thinkers he was most favorably disposed in his writings to Hu Yüan and Sun Fu[3] is indicative of their great influence on his early intellectual development, and the prevalence of the idea of exalting the ruler in Ch'eng's commentary is further testimony to Sun Fu's own specific contribution to Ch'eng I's political thought. Sun Fu and Ch'eng I are linked by their agreement on the need to invest the ruler with a powerful moral authority; Ch'eng in a sense brought Sun's thought to a greater degree of sophistication by incorporating it into a system of rational metaphysics based on the concept of principle, li 理.

In Ch'eng I's thought the concept which acted as a bridge between his metaphysical ideas and his political thought was "heavenly principle," t'ien-li 天理, which Ch'ien Mu has noted came to overshadow in the Sung the traditional concept of the mandate of heaven, t'ien-ming 天命.[4] The idea of t'ien-li as it came to be used in

Neo-Confucianism, originated with Ch'eng Hao, and was not used by him in a cosmological sense but in the sense of the natural endowment of principle in human nature (and in all particular objects), as opposed to the human emotions, jen-yü 人欲.[5] On the cosmological level, it has been defined as "...the unity of Heaven and Man, with Heaven understood as that which holds the cosmos together, the fullness of being and goodness...."[6] Chu Hsi later identified Chou Tun-yi's supreme ultimate, t'ai-chi 太極, with Ch'eng's t'ien-li.[7] But in the Ch'un-ch'iu commentaries it clearly refers to both levels of meaning, depending on the context. Because of certain parallels between this universal level of meaning and natural law (which will be dealt with in the following section) I translate it as "natural law."[8]

The relationship between cosmic forces and human affairs was made even more explicit in the writings of Ch'eng I and those who followed him than in the commentaries of Sun Fu or Liu Ch'ang. For example, in a passage noting an unseasonable snowfall, Ch'eng commented that "the movements of the yin and the yang observe regularity and are not (given to) excesses. Cases in which they lose their customary measure are all (a result of) men having become confused."[9] Again, commenting on a Ch'un-ch'iu passage (in the year 709 B.C.) noting that "it was a good

year," Ch'eng said:[10]

> When human affairs are smooth below, then the material force (ch'i) of heaven is in harmony above. For (Duke) Huan to ascend the throne by assassinating the prince is (an act) contrary to natural law (t'ien-li), which causes the human moral virtues (jen-lun 人倫) to become disordered. The material force of heaven and earth becomes abnormal and perverse (by such behavior). Floods, droughts, famine, and other disasters are thus the necessary (consequence). Now the reason (that the Ch'un-ch'iu records) a good year is because (Confucius wanted) to record how unusual it was.

Thus are the acts of men in general, and rulers in particular, linked to the flow of cosmic forces. Ch'eng frequently mentions the decline of belief in natural law which took place in the Ch'un-ch'iu period, and the absence of the tao of men:[11]

> (Belief in) natural law has been destroyed and the tao of men is no more. (When Confucius) wrote "Heavenly King" (t'ien-wang) (he meant) to say that one ought to revere heaven.... (Faith in) the li 理 of men has been extinguished, the motions of heaven have become perverse, and the yin-yang have lost their proper order.

The ruler's role is pivotal, and the basic purpose of the Ch'un-ch'iu, according to Ch'eng I, was "to make available for all time the means by which a balanced appraisal of the institutions of kingship might be acquired."[12] However, it was not the power of the ruler that was stressed in Ch'eng I's commentary, but the responsibility of the ruler to obey a higher authority, natural law (li 理). The relationship between the authority of heaven, the authority of the ruler, and the authority of

the husband, are related to each other in the following passage. The incident occurs in the fall of 721, in the first year of the Ch'un-ch'iu, when the king "sent the (sub-)administrator Hsüan with a present of two carriages and their horses for the funerals of Duke Hui and (his wife) Chung-tzu."[13] Ch'eng's comment goes as follows:[14]

> The king receives (his authority), as it were, from the tao of heaven (or natural law), (for which reason) he is called the heavenly king (t'ien-wang), his mandate is called the mandate of heaven, and his punishment is called the heavenly punishment. What fulfills this tao is the kingly way. When later generations used wisdom and power to manage the world, (it became) the way of the hegemons (pa-tao). The Ch'un-ch'iu relied on (the concept of) the kingly mandate in order to rectify the methods of the kings, and used the term "heavenly king" in order to esteem the mandate of heaven. (Thus it is that) the basis of moral relations between husband and wife ought first to be rectified. During the time of the Ch'un-ch'iu, wives and concubines misused their authority and caused disorder. The sages were particularly careful in making the proper distinction in names, (so that) in matching men and women there (should be) no changes throughout their lifetimes. For this reason there was no li 禮 (by which anyone) could be rematched. From senior officials on down, if within (the home) there was no master then the way of the family was not established, and for this reason there was no way that there could be (a rule of) li 禮 (allowing someone) to select another wife. Because the duties of the Son of Heaven and the feudal lords were so all-encompassing, and their empresses were able to act as regents themselves, there was no li 禮 (by which they could) select another empress.

Ch'eng I then goes on to say that the wording of the passage under consideration was designed to convey the message that Duke Hui's second wife did not deserve to be

elevated to the position of primary wife, since to do so was contrary to li and amounted to a form of usurpation which resulted in dissension between the duke's sons. There are two aspects which are of special importance in this passage. One is the clear and explicit statement of the subordination of the ruler to heaven, which bestows authority on him and punishes him for abusing it. Emphasis is thus not put on the ruler's power, but on his obligation to make his actions conform to the will of heaven, i.e., to walk "the kingly path." The other is the way in which the problem of authority on the three levels of family, state, and heaven, is treated as a unified whole, each linked together in a great chain of moral principle in which the governing order is natural law.

Ch'eng's interpretation of t'ien-li had an enormous influence on later commentaries. Ch'eng I's student Hsieh Shih 謝 湜, for example, wrote that "following natural law and giving substance to the affairs of the heavenly king, (the purpose of the) Ch'un-ch'iu was to put the king first and rectify the ways of the early kings; this is why men ought to revere the heavenly king."[15] Later, Hu An-kuo wrote:[16]

> The main point of the Ch'un-ch'iu is to clarify how (belief in) natural law weakened as each new generation appeared and how the tao declined. Sons killed their fathers and subjects their rulers; concubines and wives inherited positions occupied

> by their husbands. With the passage of time there were none who could set things right and (belief in) natural law was destroyed.... The unifying theme of the Ch'un-ch'iu is to revere the mandate of the king and deplore the division of authority among officials.

According to Chu Hsi, "the Ch'un-ch'iu (records) the affairs of a period in disorder and (shows how) the sages regulated everything by means of natural law."[17] Even Yeh Meng-te 葉夢得 (1077-1148), who tended to regard the Ch'un-ch'iu more as a historical document than a political tract, said that the Ch'un-ch'iu "sought (to explain) natural law through the comprehensive (treatment of) the relations between ruler and subject, father and son, brother and brother, friend and friend, and husband and wife."[18] All of these reflect the close ties between natural law and all the relationships governing human social and political life.

Ch'eng I's contribution was to integrate the concept of obedience with a philosophical system of thought which explained authority not only in terms of the cosmological order, but in terms of the basic essence of human nature itself. This was done by identifying li 理 as giving form to the substance of all things, including man.[19] The manifestation of this li 理 was benevolence, or love, jen 仁. The hierarchical order of the universe, and of human society, was thought to bring with it certain obligations and responsibilities to those who occupied a given

position in that hierarchy. The fulfilment of those responsibilities, through jen, was thus the means by which each individual perfected himself, as well as the means by which the larger community was brought into line with the principles governing the universal order. To violate li 理, to act without jen, was to go counter to both one's own nature and to heaven as well, and would invite certain retribution.

In his own life Ch'eng I certainly carried out his principles in practice. For example, he is said to have incurred the dislike of the emperor Che-tsung when, as his tutor, he reprimanded the young emperor for breaking off a willow branch in the spring time. Ch'eng I scolded him for failing to carry out his special responsibility to cultivate life in the season of the year in which new life is being born.[20] The number of enemies he made, of whom the most famous was Su Shih, suggests that the emperor was not the only one who was put off by Ch'eng I's moral righteousness.[21] The point is, of course, that in Ch'eng I, or indeed in any of the prominent Neo-Confucians of the Northern Sung, we do not have a man evidencing slavish obedience to authority. On the contrary, his life was consistent with his thought and reveals a man committed to making others, including the emperor, act in accordance with what he believed were universally valid

moral principles. Neither his life nor his thought was intended to contribute to the growth of an absolutist institution of kingship.

Natural Law in the West and China

Natural law, simply put, is the belief that there exist certain laws or rules of action which are inherent in human nature and which reflect the rationally apprehensible order of the universe. The influence of natural law on Western political thought has been very great, and to understand its significance, and the changes in content undergone in different periods of European history, it is necessary to sketch briefly its origin and development.[22]

Although Aristotle spoke of a distinction between natural law and human law in the Ethics,[23] he believed that it was only through the institution of the Greek polis that the potential of the individual human being could be fully developed in accordance with natural law. It fell to the Stoics, whose horizons had been widened by the aspirations of Alexander the Great to world empire, to elaborate on Aristotle's ideas. According to Yves Simon:[24]

> One of the striking features of the Stoic's teaching in ethics is their universalism, their sense of human unity, their belief that human affairs are governed by rules that hold universally. The Stoics are citizens of the world, citizens of the human republic, and they are strongly inclined to believe in propositions that are equally true and good in all parts of the world. After Plato and Aristotle, they are the main founders of moral universalism.

The Stoics believed, and this was to remain an essential element of natural law, that men could only develop themselves fully through life in a community, and govern themselves according to rational laws which mirror the universal order of things.[25]

The particular circumstances of the Roman empire, which contained within its boundaries large bodies of people with widely varying customs and laws, caused the Roman jurists, greatly influenced by Stoic philosophy, to develop three different interpretations of law. The categories of ius civile (laws applicable to Roman citizens) and ius gentium (laws applicable to members of those various societies under Roman domination), which had been in effect since the third century B.C.,[26] were supplemented by the ius naturale, held to be above the other two and synonymous with reason. According to Cicero:[27]

> True law is right reason in agreement with Nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrong-doing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or prohibitions upon good men in vain, though neither have any effect on the wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by Senate or People, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and for all times, and there will be one master and one ruler, that is, God, over us all, for He is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge.

Conflicts between any of them were not necessarily considered justifiable grounds for reform. The institution of slavery, for example, was considered to be in violation of natural law but was still retained as a part of the ius gentium.[28] These three levels of law remained standard long after the Roman empire had ceased to exist.

The Fathers of the Church added to this the belief that natural law originated in the will of God. One of the last of the Western Latin Fathers, St. Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), was responsible for transmitting the idea of natural law on to the medieval canon lawyers, and in his encyclopedia, the Etymologiae, he wrote; "All laws are either divine or human. Divine laws are based on nature, human laws on custom. The reason why these are at variance is that different nations adopt different laws."[29]

In the 12th century, medieval canon law underwent a great revival, centering around the appearance of the Decretum of Gratian in the 1140's, which began with the words, "Mankind is ruled by two laws: Natural Law and Custom. Natural Law is that which is contained in the Scriptures and the Gospel."[30] In this great compilation of canonical law Gratian dealt with such questions as the relation between natural and divine law (he held them to be roughly synonymous) and between ius gentium and ius

civile (the former he considered more general than the latter, so that ius gentium occupied a position midway between ius naturale and ius civile).[31] The importance of canon law in the development of natural law was very great. It constituted "the principal vehicle, in the Middle Ages, of the doctrine of the law of nature."[32]

But it was Thomas Aquinas who, in making the grand synthesis of Aristotelian thought (then undergoing a revival in the 13th century) and Christian theology, clarified the doctrine of natural law for later ages. With regard to the relation between positive law and natural law, Aquinas posited three levels--divine, natural, and human. Divine law was held to govern the origin and operation of the cosmos itself, revealed to man in the form of revelation. Natural law was that part of divine law which applied particularly to man alone and was made accessible to man through the use of reason. The realm of human law (or positive law) was confined to the application of natural law to the particular problems of everyday living, and it represented the changeable, accidental expression of the changeless, essential nature of natural law. One writer has argued that Aquinas united,[33]

> ...in one coherent whole Roman, patristic, Hebrew, and Aristotelian views. Insofar as he accents the need for a definite law-declaring authority he is Roman, as he is also when he stresses the reasonable will. In his consciousness of positive law as subordinate to the law of nature, he combines

> Aristotelian and patristic positions. Insofar as he looks upon positive law as an externally imposed discipline for the training of mankind, Augustinian and Hebraic elements are present, as they are to the degree that he thinks of legal and political development as an expression of the will of God in history.

The relevance of this discussion to the subject of this dissertation becomes apparent when we look at how natural law influenced Aquinas's views of obedience to political authority. Because of Aquinas's recognition of the positive force of custom and of political authority in general (as opposed to the view of Augustine, for example, who regarded temporal authority as an undesirable expedient necessitated by man's fallen nature), he was inclined to justify obedience even to an unjust ruler.[34] On the other hand, Aquinas was not unaware of the dilemma which was outlined in the first pages of this dissertation. His essential ambiguity on this point is testament to his awareness of the impossiblity of forming a theory which would be applicable to all particular situations. Thus it was that he also asserted the primacy of natural law over positive law, and the subordination of the temporal ruler to the natural law. Obedience was enjoined, but the possibility of a tyrant caused Aquinas to speak also of resistance, in the following way:[35]

> Man is bound to obey secular rulers to the extent that the order of justice requires. For this reason if such rulers have no just title to power, but have usurped it, or if they command things to be done which are unjust, their subjects are not obliged to

> obey them, except perhaps in certain special cases, when it is a matter of avoiding scandal or some particular danger.

Yet this resistance was considered proper only when in collective form, as opposed to individually initiated sedition, which was expressly condemned.[36]

If Aquinas gave to natural law its finest hour in philosophy, Shakespeare furnished its greatest literary expression, in which there are remarkable affinities with Neo-Confucian ideas on the cosmic order. While Aquinas might be said to have inaugurated the golden age of theistically grounded natural law in the West, Shakespeare lived at the end of that age. His plays contain some of the most powerful statements of belief in the harmony of the cosmic and human order in the English language (as Dante's Divine Comedy did in Italian). At the same time Shakespeare was fascinated with the problems of kingship--the responsibilities and obligations of the king, and the limitations which had to be imposed on his power in order to prevent the rise of tyranny. By far the most famous passage dealing with the consequences of upsetting the hierarchical order occurs in a speech by Ulysses in Troilus and Cressida, when he exhorts the Athenians to look for the cause of their impotence against the Trojans in their own moral degeneration and not in mere inferiority of arms. The ideas could almost have been taken out

of a Ch'un-ch'iu commentary in the Sung noting the disasters and prodigies that would follow upon the actions of an evil ruler, and arguing that the nation's strength or weakness against its enemies lay primarily not in force of arms but in moral cultivation. Ulysses' speech reads as follows:[37]

> The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre
> Observe degree, priority and place,
> Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
> Office and custom, in all line of order;
> In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
> Amidst the other; whose medicinable eye
> Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
> And posts, like the commandment of a king,
> Sans check to good and bad: but when the planets
> In evil mixture to disorder wander,
> What plagues and what portents! what mutiny!
> What raging of the sea! shaking of earth!
> Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors,
> Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
> The unity and married calm of states
> Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shaked,
> Which is the ladder to all high designs,
> The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
> Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,
> Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
> The primogeniture and due of birth,
> Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
> But by degree stand in authentic place?
> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets
> In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
> Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
> And make a sop of all this solid globe:
> Strength should be lord of imbecility,
> and the rude son should strike his father dead:
> Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,
> Between whose endless jar justice resides,
> Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey,

> And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,
> This chaos, when degree is suffocate,
> Follows the choking.
> And this neglection of degree it is
> That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose
> It hath to climb. The general's disdain'd
> By him one step below, he by the next,
> That next by him beneath; so every step,
> Exampled by the first pace that is sick
> Of his superior, grows to an envious fever
> Of pale and bloodless emulation:
> And 'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot,
> Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,
> Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

Shakespeare in many ways was merely reflecting the prevailing beliefs of his age.[38] The Elizabethan and early Stuart examples of cosmic harmony are often remarkably similar to those employed by the Chinese. Analogies between the king and the sun, for example, were so common in Shakespeare's time as to be almost a convention.[39] Compare that with Ch'eng I's statement commenting on an eclipse in 719 B.C.:[40] "When the kingly way is preserved then the li 理 of man is established; that is the main point of the Ch'un-ch'iu.... The sun is the prince, and when it is consumed during an eclipse it is because the princely way has been proscribed." These parallels are instructive and relevant to the problem at hand because both traditions share a belief in the fundamental unity of man and nature such that the affirmation of hierarchical authority is balanced by a sense of the responsibilities which those in each level in that hierarchy owe to those above and below. This naturally

imposes limitations as well as privileges. Everywhere the responsibilities of the king are emphasized. One scholar has noted, "A prince's sins blemish all his people, and always in Shakespeare we find a relationship between the character of the ruler and the moral condition, as well as the actual prosperity, of the governed."[41] Richard II, for example, lost his crown through the weaknesses of his personality, and plunged England into the chaos of civil war (in which the usurpers of the crown suffered dearly for their crime).

By the time of Shakespeare's death in 1616 the great edifice of God-centered natural law began to be dismantled. Starting with Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), who discussed natural law in terms "independent of theological presuppositions,"[42] theories of natural law became intensely rationalistic and anti-historical, thus making possible the later appeals to a primitive and pure state of nature in which man was as yet uncorrupted by property. This tendency was of course strengthened by the Scientific Revolution.[43] Another strand of natural law was greatly influenced by the Protestant Reformation, which in theory (if not often in practice) emphasized individual interpretation of scripture, thus undermining the notion of objective standards. The Protestants also tended to downplay the importance of reason, drawing on Augustine and

William of Ockham, among others, to show that the world is a product of God's will entirely and that man's puny reason can never be sufficient to understand the mysterious will of God. Thus deprived of confidence in reason and in the objective authority of the Church's teachings, this branch of natural law gradually became a tool of individualistic ideas. These two strands of modern natural law, rationalism and individualism, combined to produce the third characteristic--the emphasis on natural rights of the individual procured through the social contract. This contract was taken to be "a manifestation of individual will with the object of establishing a relationship of mutual obligation which would not otherwise exist by the law of nature."[44]

This discursion into the later evolution of the concept of natural law is necessary to show the wide variety of meanings which are now often invested in the term natural law. It is not the modern conception of the term which lends itself to productive comparison with Chinese thought, but the medieval understanding. Modern man no longer believes in an underlying unity between the divine and the human worlds, no longer appreciates a hierarchical world order based upon a harmonious balance of privileges and responsibilities, no longer recognizes the existence of absolute moral standards the transgression of which

would certainly bring punishment. But the Chinese thinkers in the Sung most definitely did share those ideas, and it is because of this that many scholars have been tempted to draw a parallel between the terms li 禮 and li 理 , and natural law.

Applying Natural Law to Neo-Confucian Political Thought

The leading modern Chinese intellectual and scholar, Hu Shih, in an essay entitled, "Natural Law in the Chinese Tradition," gives a definition of natural law which is largely medieval.[45] He believes that li 理 , t'ien-li, and tao-li can all be translated as natural law; and even quotes from the Han Fei Tzu to show how natural law was used to limit the power of the ruler:[46]

> For those who work in accordance with the universal laws of nature (tao-li), there is nothing that they cannot accomplish.... For those who act foolishly and in disregard of the universal laws of nature, even though they may possess the power and authority of Kings and princes and the fabulous wealth of an I-tun or Tao-chu, they will alienate the support of the people and lose all their possessions.

Hu also mentions the story of the early Sung minister, Chao P'u 趙普, (922-992) being asked by Sung T'ai-tsu, the first emperor of the Sung, what was the greatest thing in the world, and replying "Tao-li is the greatest."[47] Hu then goes on to quote a passage from an essay by the Ming scholar and official Lü K'un 呂坤 (1536-1618):[48]

> There are only two things supreme in this world: one is li 理 , the other is political authority. Of the two, li is the more supreme. When li is discussed in the Imperial Court or Palace, even the Emperor cannot suppress it by his authority. And even when li is temporarily suppressed, it will always triumph in the end and will prevail in the world throughout the ages.

Kenneth Scott Latourette has also noted the similarities between natural law and li 理 , saying that li was "...akin to although not identical with the concept of natural law which was present in the Graeco-Roman world...."[49] In addition Arthur Hummel has written that "Government was never regarded as anything more than an instrument for carrying out the will of Heaven, that is to say, the moral law."[50] Herrlee Creel wrote "The concept of natural law, so important in Europe, is very like the Confucian conception of the Way, as both Leibniz and Wolff recognized...."[51] In another passage he notes a similarity between natural law and "righteousness, yi 義 .[52] Joseph Needham even "equates" li 禮 with natural law.[53]

What are we then to make of this comparison between medieval European natural law and Neo-Confucian concepts of the natural order? What were the similarities and differences? What is the significance of them? It is clear that there were differences. The Chinese did not make quite the same distinction, for example, between natural law and positive law as did those in the West. Although in both traditions positive law was taken to be

subordinate to natural law, in the West its tie with natural law (as well as its tie with tradition, which was important for both Roman and English common law) endowed it with much greater authority than was the case in China. The Chinese understanding of natural law differed also from that of its medieval European counterpart in that the Neo-Confucians did not develop their system around belief in a personal God, whose conscious will created the physical universe and all the principles by which it is governed, and who also intervened personally in human affairs. Cosmic principles were not associated with a creator God, and the unity of the cosmic and human order was an ontological, not a teleological, unity.

Nevertheless, for the purposes of our discussion, which concentrates on that part of natural law in both cultures which dealt with the conflict of obedience to temporal power and obligation to a higher moral law, the parallels are striking and instructive. Both shared the belief that the ultimate ends of government were moral; both were guided by a sense of the underlying unity pervading all the apparent variety of the natural order, and by a belief in the harmony of the human and the universal order, proceeding along hierarchical lines; both believed that the principles responsible for change in the world were accessible to understanding by reason; and both

believed that temporal authority carried with it heavy moral obligations, which acted, given the prevailing assumption that transgressions of absolute moral standards would be punished, as a restraint on the arbitrary exercise of that temporal power.

These ideas of universal moral order (and the relationship of the ruler to them) were promoted in a number of institutions created or revived both by the Sung state and by early Neo-Confucian scholar-officials. The state, for example, greatly expanded the civil service examination system and the bureaucratic recruitment system, as has already been noted in Chapter One. Education was also assigned great importance by the Neo-Confucians. Then, as a result of the efforts of reforming Confucians such as Fan Chung-yen, after the middle of the 11th century the state became more and more involved in setting up public schools.[54] On a higher level, in order to guide (and restrain) the emperor, the institution of the imperial seminar, ching-yen 經筵, was founded in 1033, in which scholars lectured the emperor periodically on selected topics from the histories and the classics.[55] The lectures took place throughout the lifetime of the reigning emperor and were supplementary to the classical education he received (also at the hands of the scholar-officials) when he was growing up.

Another mode of instruction by which the emperor was guided to right action also began in the early Sung and was known as the "learning of the emperor," ti-hsüeh 帝學.[56] The earliest example of this institution is the Learning of the Emperor (Ti-hsüeh) by Fan Tsu-yü 范祖禹 (1041-1098), a student of Ch'eng I who became one of the important collaborators with Ssu-ma Kuang in the compilation of the Tzu-chih t'ung-chien. Contained in this work is the distillation of almost eight years of instruction offered to the Che-tsung emperor during the years 1085-1093.

Another institution which had classical antecedents but which had not been used in the T'ang was the worship of heaven by the emperor in the Hall of Enlightenment, or ming t'ang 明堂.[57] The Sung, in fact, was the only period in which the ming-t'ang ritual flourished. The actual worshipping ceremonies took place annually, in a temple constructed especially for that purpose, and were devoted not only to heaven but the founding emperor as well.[58] James T.C. Liu considers the support given these ceremonies by Neo-Confucians an example of "how Confucian rationalism was applied to the ideology of absolutism."[59] It may be that some emperors used the ritual with a view to enhancing their own authority. But after taking into account the arguments presented above, it seems clear that

the ritual could just as easily be regarded, insofar as it underlined the importance of bringing heaven and earth into harmony, as limiting the authority of the ruler. It could hardly be regarded as supporting absolutism, since absolutism by definition acknowledges no limits on the power of the ruler.[60]

It was through such institutional devices that the Neo-Confucian scholar-officials sought to inculcate in the educated public and in the ruler an understanding of the principles of natural law which were believed to unite heaven, earth, and man. The notion that moral suasion could act as a restraint upon the arbitrary exercise of kingly power stands out as one of the most striking and significant similarities between the medieval European and the Northern Sung concepts of the natural order. In both traditions morality and politics were unified and expressed in terms of a rational philosophy.

Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on the importance of metaphysics in arriving at a more complete understanding of the question of obedience to political authority in Neo-Confucianism, as interpreted through the medium of Ch'eng I's commentary on the Ch'un-ch'iu. Ch'eng I's contribution was to integrate Sun Fu's views on political authority with a unified and rational philosophy (based

upon li 理) which came to be accepted as orthodox for the next millennium. This philosophy was then compared with the medieval European conception of natural law in order to support the argument that the Neo-Confucians, through their commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu, were aware of the potential tension between the need for obedience to political authority and the obligation of all moral men to obey a higher moral code.

It is true that those who believe strongly in the existence of a transcendent God or a universal moral code are not likely to rebel against established authority, regardless of its iniquity (not in spite of their fundamental assumptions, but rather because of them). This is because those who are committed firmly to a belief in transcendent principles of justice are not normally willing to acquiesce in acts of rebellious violence against the state if by doing so they would be forced to adopt means which would violate their allegiance to those absolute principles. However much the two traditions on which I have drawn may differ, in this they are as one, that the right of civil authority to rule, once established, ought not to be questioned (even under the threat of unjust execution). Again, this grows out of a recognition of the necessity of such authority in establishing conditions of peace, security, and unified action, without

which civilized living would be unthinkable, and a faith that tyranny, should such arise, in the long run will be punished either by God or by nature without the necessity of individual human intervention.

But such an understanding of obedience did not mean that the power of the ruler was unlimited. Indeed, in China the responsibility for ensuring that the ruler did not become a tyrant rested squarely on the shoulders of the scholar-elite. This responsibility also brought with it certain rights and benefits, namely a rationally supported argument in favor of their own legitimate claims to political authority, albeit delegated.

My reasoning runs along the following lines: if the legitimacy and the long-term success of a ruler depended upon his adherence to li (禮 or 理), and if li could be fully understood and interpreted only after a long period of classical study, reflection, and self-cultivation, then it must follow that the scholar-officials, in whom exclusively all those opportunities and qualities resided, were the only group qualified to govern (in the name of the ruler of course). These pretensions of the Confucian elite were not new. What was new, however, was on the one hand the way in which the legitimacy of their power as a class was made to appear as a natural expression of the universal order of things, and on the other hand the fact

that they really did enjoy a degree of practical authority in government which they had long been denied (for reasons which have been outlined in Chapter One). They now combined the practice of power with a body of theoretical orthodoxy which went far beyond in scope what had preceded it. They were now equipped with ideological claims to political authority which the military or the old aristocracy could not possibly hope to match.

In this way, then, was the concept of authority brought to bear on the problems of limiting the power of the ruler, and of others who tried to usurp that power, and of buttressing the power of the scholar-officials themselves. Some of the broader implications of these ideas are left to more detailed consideration in the next, and concluding, chapter.

REFERENCES

1. See Michael Freeman, "Lo-yang and the Opposition to Wang An-shih."

2. A.C. Graham, Two Chinese Philosophers, p. xix.

3. Ibid., p. 158.

4. Ch'ien Mu, "Wang Pi," p. 135.

5. Ch'ien Mu, Sung Ming li-hsüeh kai-shu, p. 71.

6. Julia Ching, "Confucian Way," p. 385.

7. Ibid., p. 376.

8. The term tao is often used by the Neo-Confucians synonymously with li 理 , so that t'ien-tao can also be translated as natural law. See Fung, vol.2, p. 501.

9. Ch'eng-shih ching-shuo, p. 18b. "陰陽運動有常而無忒凡失其度皆人為感之也."

10. Ibid., p. 25a. "人事順於下則天氣和於上桓弒君而立逆天理亂人倫天地之氣為之繆戾水旱凶災乃其宜也今乃有年故書其異 ."

11. Ibid., p. 25b. "天理滅矣人道無矣書天王言當奉天也…人理既滅天運乖矣陰陽失序." See also Hsieh Shih's comment (Ch'un-ch'iu chi-yi, kang-ling 1, p. 7b): "The Ch'un-ch'iu clarifies the disasters of heaven and earth and gives form to the changes of the yin and the yang; the tao of harmony can be found in just this aspect."

12. Ch'un-ch'iu chi-yi, kang-ling 1, pp. 1b-2a. "為萬世王制之所折衷此作春秋之本意也 ."

13. Adapted from Legge, p. 3. Duke Hui was the father of the present ruler Duke Yin, who was ruling in place of his younger brother, the future Duke Huan. The younger brother had the stronger claim to the throne because the status of his mother, Chung-tzu, was held to be higher than that of Duke Yin's mother. He later made good his claim by murdering his

brother Duke Yin and becoming Duke Huan.

14. Ch'eng-shih ching-shuo, pp. 3b-4a.

15. Ch'un-ch'iu chi-yi, kang-ling 1, p. 7a. "順天理物天王之專春秋首王正先王人所以尊天王也."

16. Ibid., pp. 18a-18b. "夫春秋大要明天理世衰道微臣子弒君父妾婦乘其夫舉世莫之討而天理滅矣....春秋大一統尊王命惡臣下之分權."

17. Ibid., kang-ling 2, p. 1a. "春秋皆亂事而聖人一切裁之以天理."

18. CYK 183:6b. "經求之天理則君臣也父子也兄弟也朋友也夫婦也."

19. See Fung, vol. 2, pp. 500-508.

20. Ch'ien Mu, Sung Ming li-hsüeh kai-yao, p. 86.

21. See Fung, vol. 2, p. 499.

22. I have relied principally on A.P. d'Entreves' Natural Law and Yves Simon's The Tradition of Natural Law. George Sabine's History of Political Theory and Mulford Sibley's Political Ideas and Ideologies have also been very helpful.

23. Ethics 5:vii. "There are two sorts of political justice, one natural and the other legal. The natural is that which has the same validity everywhere and does not depend upon acceptance; the legal is that which in the first place can take one form or another indifferently, but which, once laid down, is decisive...."

24. Simon, Tradition, p. 30.

25. A beautiful expression of this same belief can be found in the writings of Richard Hooker (1554-1600). See for example the following passage from Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (vol. 1, pp. 187-188): "The laws (of nature) which have been hitherto mentioned do bind men absolutely even as they are men, although they have never any settled fellowship, never any solemn agreement amongst themselves what to do or not to do. But forasmuch as we are not by ourselves sufficient to furnish ourselves with competent store of things needful

for such a life as our nature doth desire, a life fit for the dignity of man; therefore to supply those defects and imperfections which are in us living singly and solely by ourselves, we are naturally induced to seek communion and fellowship with others. This was the cause of men's uniting themselves at the first in politic Societies, which societies could not be without Government, nor Government without a distinct kind of Law from that which hath already been declared."

26. Sibley, Political Ideas, p. 133.

27. From De Republica, III, xxii, 33, quoted in d'Entreves, Natural Law, p. 25.

28. Sabine, Political Theory, p. 169.

29. Quoted in d'Entreves, Natural Law, p. 39.

30. Quoted in ibid., p. 37.

31. Sibley, Political Ideas, pp. 216-217.

32. D'Entreves, Natural Law, p. 38.

33. Sibley, Political Ideas, p. 243.

34. Ibid., pp. 243-245.

35. Quoted in d'Entreves, p. 46. From the Summa Theologica, 1a 2ae, 95, 2.

36. Sibley, Political Ideas, pp. 244-245. See also d'Entreves, p. 46.

37. I:iii, 85-137. Note also the conversation in Macbeth between the old man and Ross that opens Act II, scene iv:

Old man: Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.
Ross: Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage: by the clock, 'tis day,

And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

Old man: 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Ross: And Duncan's horses--a thing most strange and certain--
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

Old man: 'Tis said they eat each other.

Ross: They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes
That looked upon't.

38. See James Daly's article, "Cosmic Harmony."

39. Ibid., p. 11.

40. Ch'eng-shih ching-shuo, p. 8a. "王道存則人理立春秋之大義也……太陽君也而被侵食君道所忌……."

41. Reese, The Cease of Majesty, p. 110.

42. D'Entreves, p. 55.

43. In the words of Leo Spitzer (Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony, ed. A.G. Hatcher, Baltimore, 1963): "The world-embracing metaphysical cupola that once enfolded mankind disappeared, and man is left to rattle around in an infinite universe." Quoted in Daly, p. 34.

44. D'Entreves, p. 59.

45. See especially pp. 199-120. He draws, however, strictly modern liberal conclusions from it: "In short, the most significant historical role of the concepts of Natural Law and Natural Rights has been that of a fighting weapon in Man's struggle against the tyranny of unlimited power and authority." (p. 122)

46. Ibid., p. 147.

47. Ibid., p. 147. Chao P'u was not an intellectual, which makes his answer all the more surprising.

48. D'Entreves, p. 152.

49. Latourette, The Chinese, 3rd edition, p. 535. In the 2nd edition (1934) of this text (vol.2, p. 44), the li referred to was ritual or norm (禮), not principle (理). It is from this edition that Hu Shih quoted the above passage approvingly in his article on natural law (pp. 142-143). In the 3rd edition 禮 is replaced by 理 , with no change in the surrounding text. The confusion is understandable if one believes, as I do, that the two words have overlapping meanings when they refer to natural law.

50. Hummel, "Case Against Force," p. 338.

51. Creel, Confucius, p. 268. Also see David Mungello, Leibniz and Confucianism, p. 16.

52. Creel, Confucius, p. 164.

53. Science and Civilisation, vol. 2, p. 544. Needham's understanding of natural law is distinctly modern--one might even say anthropological. He regards it as "the sum of the folkways whose ethical sanctions had risen into consciousness." (ibid.) In fact Needham's failure to understand fully the history of natural law in the West causes him to invest the ideas of natural law with a continuity which they did not possess. When he says that "... we may find it equally reasonable to relate the rise of the concept of laws of Nature at the Renaissance to the appearance of royal absolutism at the end of feudalism and the beginning of capitalism," (p. 543) he apparently does not realize that the content of the natural law used to justify absolutism was very different from what had preceded it, nor did it "rise" at the Renaissance. See also Derk Bodde, "Chinese'Laws of Nature'."

54. Kracke, Civil Service, pp. 18-19.

55. Hartwell, "Historical Analogism," pp. 696-697.

56. De Bary, "The Neo-Confucian Learning of the Mind-

and-Heart," Columbia University Seminar on Neo-Confucianism, February, 1980, pp. 30-34. See also Julia Ching, "Neo-Confucian Utopian Theories," esp. pp. 45-47.

57. See James T.C. Liu, "The Sung Emperors and the Ming-t'ang."

58. The construction of a special temple for the Ming-t'ang ceremony was begun under Hui-tsung (1101-1125). It was delayed due to the appearance of a comet, considered to be a bad omen. Ibid., p. 54.

59. James T.C. Liu, ibid., pp. 52-53.

60. It is true that the theory of the divine right of kings in 17th century Europe still held that the ruler was responsible to God, implying the conclusion that absolutism is not incompatible with acknowledgment of a higher authority. In fact, however, the theory of divine right referred to the will of God alone, and not to a body of natural law understandable to all men through reason. Thus the Chinese understanding of authority is more compatible with medieval natural law than with the later theories of absolutism. According to Fritz Kern, the theory of absolute divine right "changed the moral duty of passive obedience into a legal claim on the part of the king to unconditional obedience. It transmuted the sacramental consecration of the king into a mystical tabu that made the monarch inviolable and a quasi-spiritual person. It exempted him from the authority and disciplinary powers of the Church.... It rested finally upon legitimism, the inborn right to rule, which freed its possesser from all human dependence." (Kingship and Law, p. 138)

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Throughout the history of Chinese political thought the need for obedience to authority has been a constant refrain. A representative example from the Analects illustrates the early appearance of the Confucian hierarchical view of obedience, linking family authority to its counterpart in the state:[1] "They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. There have been none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up confusion." This respect for hierarchical authority was given further support by the philosophical system of Neo-Confucianism developed in the Sung dynasty, which emphasized, within a cosmological framework, the importance of exalting the ruler.

However, to say that Neo-Confucianism lent philosophical credence to an authoritarian view of politics is not to say that it deserves to be blamed for the growth of autocratic or absolutist power in later Chinese history.[2] On the contrary, a review of the political ideas (expressed in the form of commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu) of many of the leading Neo-Confucians of the Northern Sung,

such as Sun Fu and Ch'eng I, suggests that by phrasing their appeal to authority in terms of absolute moral principles, to which even the ruler was clearly meant to be subject, they were attempting to limit, not justify, the arbitrary exercise of power by the ruler.

In order to understand fully the context in which these political ideas were expressed, and the particularly strong sense of mission which Sung political thinkers (indeed all Neo-Confucians) brought to their work, one has to understand first the sweeping nature of the social, political, and economic changes which were taking place in the early Sung. Some of these were in consequence of developments which had been underway for some time, and some were of comparatively recent origin. Socially, the role of the old landed aristocracy had been diminishing since the T'ang dynasty, and by the early Sung it was no longer a significant force in national politics, leaving something of a vacuum which the scholar-elite moved in to fill; the power of the military in Sung government had been restrained as a result of deliberate policies of the first two Sung emperors; printing had now reached a level of development making possible the publication of classical literature in relatively inexpensive editions, and these were disseminated to a reading audience which was growing in size due to the presence of new educational

opportunities and the appearance of new urban centers; emperors in the eleventh century staffed the vast majority of important positions in the government with members of the scholar-elite selected by means of rigorous competitive examinations which, in conjunction with the growth of printing, gave rise to the expectation that the deserving talent of society would now have unprecedented opportunities of being sought out and recognized for their true worth; commercial growth was bringing new levels of prosperity to the country after more than 200 years of economic instability. In addition, the Sung emperors were on the whole a humane lot, and following the example set by the Sung founder, T'ai-tsu, refrained from abusing or executing their officials in the manner of many of their predecessors and successors. Officials who didn't have to contemplate every day the prospect of returning home in a coffin were much more likely to display initiative than those who knew that their lives were always on the line.

These conditions and opportunities for participation in government by the scholar-elite coincided with a clearly defined military crisis in the Northern Sung. Externally the country was menaced by two northern barbarian peoples, the Tangut Hsi-hsia in the northwest and the Khitan Liao in the northeast, who seriously challenged Sung military security. This obvious threat was complicated by

the fear on the part of most Neo-Confucian thinkers (and, of course, the emperors) in the Northern Sung that a strictly military response to the barbarians would facilitate the rise of the same sort of regional military commanders which had destroyed the T'ang not long before. This latter fear made them keenly aware of the need to have a strong centralized state headed by a vigorous emperor. At the same time, however, they wanted to take every precaution possible to insure that the centralized ruler would be a willing instrument of those moral principles which the Neo-Confucians regarded as the main purpose of the political order.

It was in part the convergence of these new opportunities and serious challenges which induced the scholar-elite who were part of what came to be called the Neo-Confucian movement to rise to such heights of intellectual achievement. In Sung China the scholars were drawn into the service of the state in such greater numbers than ever before, and with the prospect of such vastly increased authority, that it must have seemed to them as if the state would finally become the instrument of their own moral purposes. The opportunities which were now spread out before them partly explain the rise of a new sense of mission characteristic of the period. It was one of those rare moments in history when a particularly

fortuitous constellation of circumstances and human talent acted on each other in such a way as to touch off a tremendous outburst of creative intellectual and aesthetic energy. The challenges were so great that only an intellectual effort of an equivalent magnitude would suffice to meet them on their own terms. But the challenges alone were not enough, though they were important--challenges, after all, had been present for some time, but without a particularly distinguished response. The critical difference was the prospect that the tools to resolve these problems now seemed to be at hand. The period of general optimism, however, did not last beyond the end of the eleventh century, and the disillusionment which replaced it was not, for various reasons, fully shaken off until the twentieth.

In political thought this new burst of energy found expression most vividly in the form of commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu. In an effort to bring life and thought together, to integrate the practical and the theoretical, the first generation of Ch'un-ch'iu commentators, best represented by the pivotal figure of Sun Fu, took as their guiding principles the concepts of "revering the emperor" (tsun-wang) and natural law (li 禮). The association of these two ideas allowed them to support the necessity of obedience to centralized authority, on which the stability

and unity of the state was thought to depend, while at the same time placing moral limits on the arbitrary power of the ruler. The argument, as one would expect, was analogical, based on examples drawn from the Ch'un-ch'iu, which illustrated the catastrophic punishment that was visited by heaven on those who contravened the principles of tsun-wang and li. The moral responsibility of all the various levels of the political community (rulers, feudal lords, and ministers) to bring earthly society into harmony with nature was paramount and overshadowed all other considerations.

The next generation of commentators on the Ch'un-ch'iu, of whom by far the most influential was Ch'eng I, substituted principle, li 理, for li 禮, gathering their political arguments in favor of obedience to the ruler into the broader framework of a rational metaphysics. This philosophical system synthesized cosmological and ontological speculation so persuasively that it was not dislodged from its position of eminence (though it was certainly attacked) until the twentieth century, when it gave way to Marxism. In this system the hierarchical order of the universe was duplicated in the human order by virtue of a common participation in li 理, which enjoined obedience to those above and moral obligations to those below. The outward manifestation of this li, on

both the macrocosmic and the microcosmic levels, was benevolence, jen 仁. All this added to the injunction of obedience a new dimension, making it a necessary condition not only of bringing order to society but of perfecting human nature as well. It was thought that the only means of bringing the li of the human person to its highest expression (of fulfilling one's potential) was through devotion to the common good. But the common good had as an indispensable ingredient obedience to authority, without which unified action was impossible; therefore it followed that one fulfilled one's li through obedience.

But again, as mentioned above, it would be a mistake to conclude that the obedience owed to the ruler, as understood by the Neo-Confucians, was unqualified. In order to show the significance of their reservations on the question of obedience I have had recourse to the medieval European concept of natural law, which was more explicit with regard to the problem of divided loyalties but which came to many of the same conclusions. Medieval natural law was based upon orthodox Christian doctrine, and also prescribed obedience to established political authority. One of the earliest sources of Christian thought on the subject of obedience can be found in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (13:1-7) which set the tone for later Christian attitudes toward the state:[3]

> Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

This statement appears to leave little room for ambiguity. Similarly, some of Aquinas's remarks seem on the surface very straighforward appeals to almost blanket obedience, such as when he wrote,[4] "In matters pertaining to salvation of the soul we should obey spiritual rather than temporal authority, but in those which pertain to the political good we should obey the temporal rather than the spiritual...." But there is another side to Aquinas, and to natural law as discussed in the previous chapter. There was in the medieval understanding of natural law a deliberate ambiguity over the issue of obedience. As one observer has put it: "...Within the doctrine of the Church, the right of active resistance and the duty of passive obedience contended one against the other with almost equal strength. And yet, in the last analysis, it must be

recognized that this antagonism is necessary, permanent, and inevitable, because it is rooted in human nature."[5] This ambiguity is also present in the Neo-Confucian tradition, which is one of the reasons why a comparison of the two traditions has the potential to yield so much insight.

The Confucian body of classical thought, no matter how much it may have emphasized obedience to authority, has from very early times also advocated the right of the people to revolt against tyranny.[6] As we have noted above, this right to revolt was advanced not only by Mencius but by such "authoritarian" Confucians as Hsün-tzu. Revolt was thought to be one of the instruments of punishment of a tyrant, along with natural disasters and prodigies. In fact one might argue that natural disasters and prodigies represented the efficient cause of a ruler's downfall, while revolt represented the instrumental cause, the revolt itself being in large part a response to desperate circumstances brought about by famine, flood, drought, or disease (which were in turn products of misrule). The reasoning, such as it was, was that only when the situation had reached an extreme state of disorder would a revolt be likely to act as a constructive vehicle of the common good. In the absence of large-scale suffering, a revolt organized by factions jostling for power at the top

would most likely result in a civil war, which would be attended by far greater damage to the welfare of the average citizen than existed before. For this reason official Confucian historiography has approved of scholar-officials, such as the exemplary early adviser to the first Ming emperor Chu Yüan-chang 朱元璋 (lived from 1328-1399) Liu Chi 劉基 (1311-1375), who transferred their loyalties once it became apparent, by the proliferation of popular revolts, that the mandate of heaven had been withdrawn from the present ruler.[7]

To what, then, can one attribute the persistent tendency, noted in the introductory chapter, to associate Neo-Confucian views on authority with the later and indisputable growth of the institution of autocracy in China? One might first be tempted to explain it away as a simple case of succumbing to the post hoc propter hoc fallacy. But the scholars who hold such views are far too sophisticated to fall easily into such a transparent error. In addition to this, there is no doubt that many of the ideas of Neo-Confucianism were manipulated by later emperors for their own narrow purposes. The book of Mencius, for example, raised by Chu Hsi to become one of the primary models of Neo-Confucian studies, was censored by the first Ming emperor, who rose from humble origins and was himself only semi-literate in the great tradition, in order to

remove passages which advocated rebellion against an unworthy ruler.[8] The Ch'ing emperor K'ang Hsi (ruled from 1662-1722) also manipulated the Neo-Confucian "orthodoxy" in his Sacred Edict.[9] When all is said and done, however, one ought not punish the father for the crimes of the son. Just as one cannot attack Christianity for having spawned Marxism (though it is impossible to conceive of Marxism apart from the context of Christian thought out of which it grew), one cannot blame the Neo-Confucians for the hash made out of their thought by lesser men who used certain parts of it as a political bludgeon against their enemies. The Neo-Confucians may have unwittingly surrendered into the hands of the state the instrument of their own future oppression, but such oppression was defended only by emptying Neo-Confucian political thought of much of its moral content, leaving little more than an empty shell.

It seems far more likely that the most important ingredients in the rise of autocracy in China ought to be sought elsewhere, in many of the reasons so ably assembled by Professor Mote.[10] The alien conquest dynasties which followed the Northern Sung (the Chin, 1112-1234, the Yüan, 1279-1368, and the Ch'ing, 1644-1911) fostered the growth of despotism by further centralizing the institutional structure of the government and by meting out occasionally harsh treatment to recalcitrant officials.[11] The Ming

emperors, particularly the founder Ming T'ai-tsu (1368-1398), were notably brutal in their treatment of officials. In addition, and most important, China lacked the pluralistic institutions of the West which might have exercised a check on the power of a centralized ruler in China. Among other things, there was no Church, through which in the West the moral values of natural law were embodied in a form which could command, if not always obedience, at least frequently a certain measure of respect and influence, and which, by its claim over the consciences of all men (including that of the ruler) was a visible and tangible reminder that the power of the ruler lay only within the province of the temporal order.

The real root of our misapprehension about the contribution of Neo-Confucianism to the growth of autocracy lies in the nature of the assumptions which we bring to the evidence. It is an understatement to say that we live in an age in the secular West in which natural law, at least in the sense in which it was understood in the age from Aquinas to Shakespeare, does not enjoy widespread acclamation. Obedience to authority, and disobedience, are now justified on grounds which do not admit of metaphysical questions. There are no absolute moral values independent of our individual perceptions of them, and there is no "essence" of human nature which can be agreed

upon by thinking men through reason. Even when natural law is appealed to, it is, as suggested above, a very different animal from its medieval ancestor. Authority, deprived of its function as a vehicle of the common good (that is, to bring man and society closer to God, or to greater fulfillment of li 理, as the case may be) becomes instead a threat to individual freedom. Authority and freedom thus become antithetical rather than complementary.

Such a view, which has penetrated to the very core of Western thought in the last few centuries, cannot have failed to influence the study of Chinese history both by Westerners and by Chinese historians. As Chow Tse-tsung has remarked of Chinese intellectuals in the May Fourth Movement, "In the main, the concept of freedom current among...Chinese intellectuals was derived from Rousseau's theory of the general will and from British utilitarianism."[12] Hu Shih, for example, had such a starting position when he claimed that Neo-Confucianism was responsible for China's "lack of political and intellectual freedom."[13] In the West, positivist ideas, which regard metaphysical speculation as largely irrelevant in human action, still continue to dominate the academic world and influence the writing of history. The result is that modern man (including of course the modern historian)

often underestimates the degree to which moral beliefs may exercise a restraining influence on the ruler's power, and is not likely to be receptive to the further notion that those whose advocacy of obedience to authority is rooted in a belief in universally valid moral principles may have a better sense of the limits of authority than those who think only in terms of advancing the cause of freedom. The American revolution, for example, was undertaken in the name of freedom and natural law, but it was a modern understanding of natural law, and would clearly have been condemned by the medieval understanding. It is difficult to imagine a modern intellectual following the example of Thomas More and enjoining his listeners to obey the very same king who had ordered his imminent execution.[14]

There is one last service which the concept of natural law can be called upon to perform. We have noted how in both China and the West the understanding of obedience to authority according to natural law contained a fundamental ambiguity. Any particualr action involving a moral choice had to be made on the basis of a prudent consideration of both absolute principles and the actual circumstances of the moment. No formula could possibly be devised which was capable of governing all situations. The great (some might say tragic) paradox is that by abandoning the belief in moral absolutes within the context

of which that moral dilemma of divided loyalties derived its meaning, both China and the West have swept aside the most effective barrier they once had to the rise of the totalitarian state. As one historian has put it:[15]

> Natural Law and Natural Rights are not now fashionable concepts.... Strictly speaking, we cannot prove that Nature teaches any morals or gives men any rights; but the belief that she had done so was for many centuries a highly civilizing force; and no one has yet thought of a more satisfactory way of maintaining that a government ought not, for example, to make it a capital crime to be born with red hair. It may be significant that the modern government which most blatantly rejected all vestiges of the old idea was the government which made it a crime to have been born a Jew.

Those intellectuals who sacrificed traditional standards of authority for freedom (or who thought that is what they were doing) were frequently seduced into believing a doctrine of Marxism-Leninism (in both China and the West) which in application has been more destructive of human freedom than any doctrine in the entire history of the world. This was not necessarily inevitable--many did not fall into the trap--but those who did, did so because they were searching for the easy way out of a moral dilemma which their ancestors understood much more profoundly than they did. The Sung Neo-Confucian commentators on the Ch'un-ch'iu, for all their appreciation of the positive value of obedience to authority, owed their ultimate loyalty to what they believed were universally valid moral

principles, and in the practical application of those principles to political events (in the Ch'un-ch'iu) they demonstrated a profound understanding of the irreconcilable tension between what one can do in an imperfect world of conflicting interests, and what one ought to do.

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1. Legge, pp. 138-139.

2. See my remarks on this in the Introduction.

3. Remember that the Roman rule of which Paul spoke, however conducive its transportation and legal system were to the spread of Christianity, was also responsible for sporadic and sometimes savage persecution of Christians until the fourth century. See also 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor."

4. Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, II.D.44, Q.2, Art. 3., quoted in Sibley, p. 248.

5. Fritz Kern, Kingship and Law, p. 143.

6. Some examples have already been given above. See also the discussion of the hexagram for revolution, ko 革, in the I Ching (Wilhelm, pp. 189-192 and 635-640).

7. Chan Hok-lam, "Liu Chi," p. 159.

8. See James T.C. Liu, "How Did a Neo-Confucian School Become the State Orthodoxy?" According to Julia Ching (JHI, p. 371): "The evolution of Confucian teachings in China revealed a pattern which may be described as the interplay of truth and ideology. By 'truth' is understood here that interpretation of reality suggested by the great philosophical minds with the help of the Classical texts. By 'ideology' is meant here the institutionalization of 'truth' by the state authority selecting and manipulating the commentaries on the Classics, through the educational and examination system, in

such a manner as to present a certain interpretation of man, society, and the world which contributes to the consolidation of that same authority. The historical process by which truth becomes institutionalized can first be discerned in the case of Confucianism around the first century B.C. during the Han dynasty (202 B.C.--A.D. 20). It was later repeated in the T'ang (618-906) and Sung (960-1279) dynasties, which witnessed another attempt by the state to reconstruct a Confucian ideology. In this case, however, the new ideology failed to take hold of men's minds, largely because of the challenges posed by Taoist and Buddhist philosophies. But the movement of reinterpretation of Confucianism became important with the emergence of several independent thinkers who sought to go beyond ideology and recover the lost truth, until, in its turn, the new synthesis which they created became established as state doctrine in the Yüan dynasty (1260-1368)."

9. Pei Huang, Autocracy at Work, p. 188.

10. In his review article on Wittfogel's Oriental Despotism quoted in the Introduction.

11. See Tao Jing-shen, "The Influence of Jurchen Rule on Chinese Political Institutions," esp. p. 130.

12. The May Fourth Movement, p. 295.

13. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, s.v. "Confucianism."

14. More's last words on the scaffold were to the effect that he died "the King's good servant but God's first." See R.W. Chambers, Thomas More (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 349. Speaking of John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse, a Carthusian monastery which refused to recognize the right of Henry VIII to act as head of the Church in England, and who along with several other monks was executed a few days before Thomas More, Chambers wrote: "He was hanged, cut down, and disembowelled while still alive; as his entrails were torn out, he was heard to say gently 'Oh most merciful Jesus, have pity upon me in this hour!' The other monks had to watch his tortures, and, as each awaited his turn, also those of their fellows. Whilst waiting, they urged the crowd to obey the

King in all that was not against the honour of God and the Church." (ibid., p. 326)

15. Christopher Morris, Political Thought in England, pp. 141-142.

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APPENDIX

VIOLATIONS OF LI 禮 RECORDED IN SUN FU'S COMMENTARY

The examples recorded below all involve a lapse of some kind from the standards of li 禮 formulated in classical times. Those dealing with tsun-wang and jang-yi have already been mentioned and form the bulk of the commentary. This appendix considers those categories which have not been mentioned above.

In some cases sacrifices were held at the wrong time (CCTWFW, p. 10740. In this case Sun follows the Tso-chuan. The Kung-yang and the Ku-liang make no mention of the time.), or animals were used instead of silk (CCTWFW, p. 10755, and p. 10794), or captured rulers were used instead of animals (CCTWFW, p. 10768, and p. 10812). Ceremonies on the occasion of someone's burial were often a cause for blame. It was contrary to li, for example, for Lu to accept the coffin of an unworthy man when it was returned to Lu from Ch'i (CCTWFW, p. 10780). People were often being buried too soon or too late (CCTWFW, p. 10783). It was improper for ceremonies to be cancelled or postponed merely because of the weather (CCTWFW, p. 10784). It was improper to send a high official to attend the burial of someone of low position (CCTWFW, p. 10806). Nor should

a head of state go abroad himself in order to attend a funeral (CCTWFW, p. 10807). Similarly, for mourning there were prescribed actions which, when not attended to, were blamed by Sun Fu as contrary to li. One should not attend meetings in an official capacity during the mourning period for one's mother (CCTWFW, p. 10761), for example, and one should not have meetings too soon after the death of any of the Chou kings (CCTWFW, p. 10790, and p. 10797). It was improper to hold a military review when the duke involved was still in mourning for his mother (CCTWFW, p. 10812. In this case Sun follows the Tso-chuan, which comments that it is "contrary to li."). One should be careful not to die in an inappropriate place (CCTWFW, p. 10774. Sun merely copies the Ku-liang passage here, saying that it was abnormal [fei-cheng 非正] without saying why. See also p. 10781. Here again Sun merely copies from the Ku-liang without explaining why, hardly manifesting a critical toward the classical commentary. See also p. 10823).

Ceremonies relating to wedding and marriage were a particularly frequent source of infractions of li. A lady, for example, should not be escorted from the country of her birth to the country of her new husband without the consent of the Chou king (CCTWFW, p. 10741). And when she is already married she should not go on official

trips with her husband, since in one case the wife of Duke Huan of Lu committed incest with her brother and conspired with him to murder her husband (CCTWFW, p. 10745). It was contrary to li to mediate a marriage involving the son of one's father's enemy (CCTWFW, p. 10751), as it was to make arrangements for marriage soon after one's own mother's death and with the daughter of the duke responsible for murdering one's own father (CCTWFW, p. 10754). The same restrictions also apply, obviously, after the death of one's own father (CCTWFW, p. 10783). Marriages ought to be arranged through the proper intermediaries and not by the bride and groom themselves (CCTWFW, p. 10756). The marriage of a ruler ought to take place in his own state and not that of his bride (CCTWFW, p. 10776). It is quite improper for maidens attending the wedding ceremony to come from more than two states (CCTWFW, p. 10791). More logically, it was deemed improper for a low-ranking minister to be assigned the responsibility of conveying the future wife of the Chou king from one state to another (CCTWFW, p. 10801).

It has always been important in Confucian thought that the name given to something correspond precisely to its actual meaning and function, i.e., "rectification of names," cheng-ming 正名. It was wrong, thus, for a son to refer to his mother as the principal wife of his

father when in fact she was only a concubine (CCTWFW, p. 10765. Sun follows the Kung-yang and the Ku-liang here). No ruler should permit himself to be called the ruler in the same year of his father's death (CCTWFW, p. 10780). According to li the whole year in which a given ruler dies is considered part of his reign. Nor should a ruler name a palace after one in a barbarian state (in this case Ch'u). How much worse, then, when the ruler was careless enough to die in such a misnamed place (CCTWFW, p. 10807).

In addition, all manner of ritual observances had to conform to the standards of li. It was quite improper, for example, for the principal wife of a ruler to entertain the ruler of another state while he was visiting (CCTWFW, p. 10748. This case, it must be admitted, was a little unusual, since Lady Chiang was thought to have had an incestuous relationship with her brother, as has already been mentioned). It was quite impermissible to shift ancestor tablets around in order to enhance the prestige of one's own father at the expense of other members of the family (CCTWFW, pp. 10775-10776. Legge has a thorough explanation of the complexities of the matter on p. 234), and one had to be careful not to inaugurate the intercalary months improperly (CCTWFW, p. 10776). Rulers were also expected to maintain the standards of li with regard to their ministers, among which was the re-

quirement to meet with them on the first day of the month. When this was not done, they were blamed (CCTWFW, pp. 10780-10781).

Liu Ch'ang's commentaries were even more well known for their elaboration on the concept of li. He and Sun would not always agree in their interpretation of particular passages, but their reasons for disagreeing were often related. In 654, for example, when the Chou king Hui wished to replace his heir with another son of a more favored concubine, Duke Huan of Ch'i organized a covenant at Shou-chih 首止 in support of the just heir. Liu Ch'ang praised this action on the grounds that the Chou king was saved from making a bad mistake, thus preserving the proper relationships (CCC:5, quoted in CHY, p. 347). Sun, on the other hand, condemned the duke for usurping the authority of the Chou king and calling a meeting of the feudal lords without the king's permission (CCTWFW, pp. 10763-10764). Sun Fu was not going to give an inch of his position of exalting the ruler, while Liu Ch'ang, although committed to the same goals, was more flexible in his choice of means. To back up his arguments in favor of tsun-wang, Liu Ch'ang also asserted that feudal relationships were based on designations made by the Son of Heaven and not by birth, in accordance with li. Thus feudal lords had the right to be so called only after

having been recognized as such by the Chou king (CCC:2, quoted in CHY, pp. 347-348), and a child became heir to the throne of a state only after being recognized by the Chou king (CCC:2, quoted in CHY, p. 348).

In the same vein, an official of one state was not supposed to meet with the ruler of a state of an equivalent status, though he could with the ruler of state of lesser status, according to Liu Ch'ang's interpretation of li (CCC:1, quoted in CHY, p. 349). When in another passage the Ch'un-ch'iu records the attack by Duke Huan of Ch'i against the barbarian Shan-jung 山戎, Liu blames him for launching the attack without the permission of the Chou king (CCC:4, quoted in CHY, p. 349). It was considered by Liu to be contrary to li for a duke to attend personally the funeral of another duke, rather than send a minister as his representative (CCC:9, quoted in CHY, pp. 350-351. The Tso-chuan, however, says that the duke was retained against his will in order to attend the funeral. No other dukes were present. So it would appear that Liu Ch'ang is being unfair to the duke in order to make a point about li. The Kung-yang and Ku-liang say nothing about this passage). The feudal lords were also blamed for making a covenant at a place which was located very near the Chou king, on the belief that such close proximity amounted to a slap in the face for the king

(CCC:6, quoted in CHY, p. 351. The Tso-chuan says merely that it is contrary to li for officials, ch'ing 卿 , to meet with anyone above the rank of earl, i.e., duke or marquis). In another violation of li, some of the feudal lords acquired more than the prescribed number of armies (CCC:9, quoted in CHY, p. 351). In fact, Liu's commitment to li can be seen also by examining his attitudes toward the barbarians. Following Sun Fu, and the Kung-yang, but stating his position more forcefully, Liu referred to the states of Wu, Ch'u, Hsü, and Yüeh as "barbarian" not because of their ethnic background but because they acted contrary to li in appropriating the title of king to themselves (Ch'un-ch'iu yi-lin:1, Chuang-kung 10).

VITA

Alan Thomas Wood

Date of Birth: July 13, 1945

Place of Birth: Colfax, Washington

Education: Pullman High School, Pullman, Washington, 1963.
B.A., University of Oregon, Eugene, Ore., 1968.
M.A., University of Washington, 1976.
Ph.D., University of Washington, 1981.

Parents: Herbert John Wood
Katherine Jacobson Wood