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EXPLORATIONS OF CHINESE METAPHYSICAL CONCEPTS: THE HISTORY  
OF SOME KEY TERMS FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO CHU HSI (1130-1200)

*University of Pennsylvania*

PH.D. 1983

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EXPLORATIONS OF CHINESE METAPHYSICAL CONCEPTS:

THE HISTORY OF SOME KEY TERMS FROM

THE BEGINNINGS TO CHU HSI (1130-1200)

Patrick Edwin Moran


A DISSERTATION

in

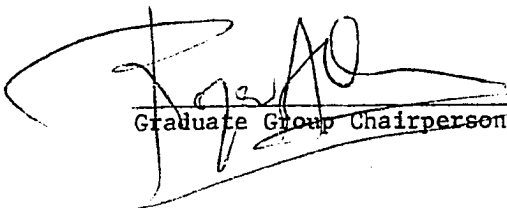
Oriental Studies

Presented to the Graduate Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

1983



Supervisor of Dissertation



Graduate Group Chairperson

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1983



[The] constructive -- one might say productive -- impulse . . . . does not generally receive sufficient attention in descriptions of the origins of concepts. Far greater emphasis is more commonly placed on abstraction at the expense of the tendency to complete, which is essential to any process of idealization and is the impulse that drives thought onward. In this lies the productive power of concepts and ideas.

-- Rolf Nevanlinna

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Often the most significant contributions to an undertaking occur early in that process while later developments may loom larger in the eyes of all observers. In order to avoid unintentionally slighting anyone I have decided to follow chronological order in expressing my debts of gratitude.

I will begin by thanking those who shouldered the greatest burden, both educationally and financially, for the training that lies behind this study: my grandparents, John and Mamie Gaskill, and my parents, Edwin and Louise Moran.

Throughout the course of my growth and intellectual development, the influence of no one has been more important than my early teachers and friends, particularly Miss Carol Gunlatch, Mr. Robert Shanahan, Miss Lillian Hanks, Miss Sara Jane Whitten, and Mr. Donald and Mrs. Doris McGaffey.

At Stanford my introduction to Chinese philosophy came from Professor David Nivison, who also suffered far beyond the call of duty as my adviser. His encouragement and continuing guidance have aided me greatly. Professor John Mothershead's unfailing enthusiasm for teaching the history of philosophy from a point of view sympathetic to his subjects, his freely given encouragement, and his ability to demolish error calmly and objectively have continued to inspire me (and, I am sure, generations of other students) down to the present. Professor James T. C. Liu encourages his students of Chinese intellectual history to think on their feet while at the same time giving them the benefit of his own inter-disciplinary expertise and breadth of knowledge. He also encouraged me to go to Taiwan to study.

## Acknowledgments

While at the Stanford Center in Taiwan, I received the special guidance and encouragement of Mrs. Yeh Liu Hsiao-hsien and Mrs. Chang Chou Hui-ch'iang in the study of spoken Chinese. At the National Taiwan University Professor Fang Tung-mei, and later, Professor Fan Shou-k'ang directed my Master's thesis on the thought of the inner chapters of the Chuang-tzu. Subsequently, Professor Yin Hai-kuang increased its intelligibility considerably with his editorial skills.

Returning to the United States, I resumed study with Professor Nivison. He directed my Master's thesis at Stanford, a partial translation of an eclectic text, the Liu-tzu. In the Liu-tzu we noticed problems of definition and interpretation, without my realizing how profound they are, that have a bearing on issues raised in this dissertation.

As an undergraduate I was assigned to read a small book of perhaps fifty pages by Professor Derk Bodde. Although I have a painfully inadequate visual memory, I nevertheless retain a vivid image of that reddish-orange pamphlet as well as remembering how remarkable a man it seemed to me that Dr. Bodde should be that he could concisely and intelligibly present in so limited a scope what others failed to convey in five hundred pages. That little book, along with Dr. Bodde's translation of Fung Yu-lan's History of Chinese Philosophy, prompted me to abandon an NDEA scholarship in order to come to the University of Pennsylvania as a teaching student to study with him. I confess I did not anticipate the richness of the learning environment into which I would enter. Professors Allyn and Adele Rickett supervised my early teaching as well as teaching me themselves. To Dr. Allyn Rickett fell the thankless task of

## Acknowledgments

keeping me on the track while I struggled to support burdens of teaching and learning that were perhaps beyond what I ought to have attempted. Professor Barbara Ruch was generous, kind, and perceptive both in her class in the Japanese language and out. She provided me with a good role-model as a teacher. Professor Hiroshi Miyaji not only continued my training in the Japanese language but helped, along with Drs. Rickett and Bodde, in the supervision of my first attempted dissertation, an annotated translation of Yen Yüan's Ts'un-hsing pien.

Thanks to the encouragement of colleagues at the University of Colorado, I applied for and received a Fulbright-Hays scholarship for research in Japan and Taiwan to finish annotating the Ts'un-hsing pien. In Japan I received valuable aid from Professor Shimada Kenji, whose familiarity with Neo-Confucianism as well as fluent spoken Chinese greatly aided my studies while in Kyoto. Soon after I arrived in Taiwan I encountered Professor Yen Ling-feng. I showed him a definition of the term "ch'i-chih" that I thought expressed properly what Yen Yüan had meant by it. Dr. Bodde and I had struggled with that term at considerable length, and had tentatively agreed to translate it as "tangible ch'i." The definition I made in Chinese and showed to Professor Yen reflected that understanding. It provoked an immediate reaction: "That definition is not correct. Ch'i-chih has to do with spirit, not matter." Very well, I thought, if ch'i-chih can receive such different interpretations then let me see if I can clarify half of it, the idea of ch'i. Gradually I became aware that it was not just one or two concepts that needed to be researched and reinterpreted, but a whole constellation of them. One challenge from Professor

## Acknowledgments

Yen initiated three years of research. That research cannot truly be said to be completed today, nor do I believe it will be completed during my lifetime.

I was extremely fortunate soon after my unexpected comeuppance at the hands of Professor Yen to secure an introduction to Professor Ch'ien Mu, whose work on Chinese philosophy I had long admired. I am beholden to him for striking to the core of my confusion over the dual significations of the traditional Chinese concept of nature (hsing), and also for permitting me the pleasure of unravelling the knot involved once he had shown me the place to begin. My fortune continued to be extraordinarily good. I renewed my acquaintance with Professor Fang Tung-mei, whose enthusiasm was high even in the last months of his life, and met Professor T'ang Chün-yi who was visiting at the National Taiwan University that year. I not only benefitted from his lectures; he also enthusiastically agreed to check over my studies on ch'i, which I presented to him in Chinese as they progressed. Unfortunately, Professor T'ang returned to Hong Kong and later died of cancer, so I did not have the further benefit of his guidance. His place at the National Taiwan University was later taken by another professor from the Hsin-ya hsüeh-yüan in Hong Kong, Dr. Mou Tsung-san. Although no one else would venture an interpretation of one crucial Buddhist text, he very generously spent two afternoons teaching me about its contents. While on the subject of my researches in Taiwan, I must not fail to mention my friend and research assistant, Mr. Ch'iu Chün-chih, whose aid in searching the Chu-tzu yü-lei for material relating to ch'i has been invaluable.

I returned to the United States with major trepidation. My research had produced an understanding of Chinese metaphysical concepts far removed from

## Acknowledgments

the one with which I had left America three years before. Moreover, some of my ideas were antithetical to those presented in the authoritative History of Chinese Philosophy by Fung Yu-lan. I anticipated, perhaps unwarrantedly, great difficulty in convincing others that my ideas were at least not completely outrageous. I was therefore immensely relieved to begin work upon my return with Professor Nathan Sivin, whose understanding was usually in advance of mine and frequently served as a needed corrective to my own wilder ideas. Not only has Dr. Sivin striven mightily to make me communicate my ideas intelligibly, but he has also had to cope with my failure to follow the good example of Dr. Bodde to write cogently and concisely, not to mention dealing with an advisee whose teaching duties and other constraints have frequently contributed to less than laudable performances.

Professors Derk Bodde and Dale Saunders have shared in the task of supervising this dissertation. I am extremely grateful to them for suggestions and criticisms that have made this dissertation better than it could otherwise have been. In the general regard of cogency, I should also mention another debt of gratitude: Many years ago, after months of fruitless study of the Critique of Pure Reason by Immanuel Kant, I happened upon Gottfried Martin's Kant's Metaphysics and Theory of Science. By tracing the origins of Kant's ideas in medieval scholasticism, Dr. Martin provided the keys -- which were available to all students of philosophy in Kant's own time -- with which present day readers might unlock Kant's arcanum. Dr. Martin's work has been a great inspiration to me, although I must confess that I have failed to equal either the brevity or the clarity of my model.

## Acknowledgments

In addition to those already mentioned, I am grateful to Professors Schuyler Cammann, James Liang, and William Deub for their warm encouragement and enlightening discussions at various stages in the development of my work. Mr. David Bean provided trenchant criticisms of the Introduction from the point of view of someone with no previous exposure to Chinese philosophy. There are others whom I should thank for more peripheral help. I apologize for not mentioning everyone individually.

It is a truism that, despite all the aid one may have received, responsibility for the errors and shortcomings in such a work as this must fall squarely on the author. Beyond acknowledging that point, I should like to make a request: Since the large scale of this work forces its conclusions to be in some sense first approximations needing to be refined, it would be particularly helpful if readers knowing of evidence against any of my conclusions, or serious omissions, would report these points to me.

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## NOTES

### CONVENTIONS USED IN THIS DISSERTATION

During the course of this study I have been made painfully aware that not only the pagination of various editions of the same Chinese book may vary, but even the limits of chapters or chüan may be different. For this reason I have attempted to give more than the usual chüan and page numbers whenever it has seemed advisable: in some instances, where subdivisions of chüan amount to only a few lines, I have also given those chang or p'ien numbers. I have also included the total number of pages in a given chüan so that the reader can quickly calculate the position of the quoted text in his edition. I use the following format: Chu-tzu yü-lei, 32:3a/42. This reference indicates that the text in question is to be found in chüan 32 of the Chu-tzu yü-lei, page 3, recto, and that that chüan has a total of 42 pages. If the reader's edition happens to have 82 pages in that chüan, he should then look for the text on or about page six. In the case of the Harvard-Yenching texts, I have used the same format except that in place of page numbers I give line numbers. Since the fractional position of the text in the entire chüan is in any case the same, this should not occasion any difficulty for the reader whose text is not numbered by line. For the Li-chi (except for the Ta-hsüeh and Chung-yung, which have section numbers), I use the Shih-san ching erh erh text published by the Taiwan K'ai-ming shu-tien, and number the lines myself.

I use square brackets for words added to complete the sense of translated materials, and ordinary parentheses for explanations of terms found within my translations.

## Notes

I have, whenever possible, inserted short references to texts in curly brackets immediately following translations or other references to works of other authors in order to spare the reader from having to glance frequently to the bottom of the page.

I have used the Harvard-Yenching series of indices whenever they have an accompanying text. Failing this, I have used the Ssu-pu pei-yao 四部備要 whenever possible. (I abbreviate the name of that collection of Chinese texts as SPPY.)

I follow the generally accepted convention among students of philosophy in placing quotation marks around a term when I am speaking of the word itself and not its referent, for example: "Green" is not green.

The abbreviation "c.p." means "continuous pagination," and is used to indicate page numbers in modern editions whose pages are numbered consecutively throughout.

### PROBLEM VOCABULARY

"Evil" -- I use this term without intending any religious overtones. By "evil" I mean anything that causes harm, trouble, or pain.

"Thing" -- I use this word to translate "wu 物." I mean it in a rather wide sense to include not only "physical things," but its first two meanings as given by Webster's New World Dictionary of the English Language: "1. any matter, circumstance, affair, or concern. 2. that which is done, has been done, or is to be done; a happening, act, deed, incident, event, etc." The term "wu" can properly refer to all phenomena experienced in the universe. Frequently,

## Notes

however, it has the sense of "being" or "creature," when it occurs in the expression "wan-wu 萬物 (myriad creatures).

## TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

Accurate translations for many Chinese technical terms in this work are not available. Since the cultures of Europe, North America, and China have not developed the same philosophical concepts (I include those of natural philosophy), English does not always lend itself to a ready rendering of them. Even where it is possible to find appropriate equivalents, inapplicable connotations may confuse even the reader who is alert to them. Moreover, some words have great ranges of meaning due to their long history of technical use. For instance, the term "li 理" can mean anything from "to lay out the fields" and "pattern," to "a transcendent potential or principle that accounts for the existence and characteristics of all beings." Nor do those renderings exhaust the possible meanings of "li." It is imperative to bring out the interconnections of the various meanings of "li," yet any single translation is inadequate, and a different translation for each different sense of the term conceals the fact that they are connected. Therefore I have chosen to use romanized Chinese for technical terms such as "li" and to follow them by a note in parentheses giving the meaning I judge to fit the passage under consideration.

## TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ana. = Lun-yü

Chuang = Chuang-tzu

Notes

Compendium = Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu

Conv. = Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan

c.p. = continuous pagination

Han = Han Fei-tzu

Hsi = Hsi-tz'u

Lao = Lao-tzu

Mean = Chung-yung

Menc. = Meng-tzu

Mo = Mo-tzu

Post. = Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu

Yüeh = Yüeh-chi

## I. INTRODUCTION

### I. Scope

This study concentrates on the Confucian tradition from Mencius (Meng K'o 孟軻 372?-289?) to Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), a period of approximately 1,500 years. Under consideration are nine interwoven concepts that had general use in the intellectual history of China. I have traced the histories of these concepts from their earliest appearances in literary contexts such as the Shih-ching 詩經 [Book of odes] and the Shu-ching 書經 [Book of documents]. (My intention has been to find clear usages of the words in question in concrete contexts in order to fix unambiguously their early meanings. My intention has not been to be absolutely exhaustive in my treatment of these concepts.) I have regularly gone beyond the Confucian tradition because most of these concepts have been the common tools of all Chinese thinkers. Thus I have included coverage of thinkers such as Chuang-tzu, Wang Ch'ung, and Chih Tun even though their respective interests lie in the mystical apprehension of the tao, the naturalistic repudiation of pernicious ideas, and attainment of nirvana. The concepts that draw all of the others together in one complicated knot, however, are Confucian ideas that trace their histories back to some ideas in the Mencius.

Mencius' philosophy, and the reactions of others to it, raised certain questions that engaged the attention of philosophers in China from his time on. Although the nucleus of the problems raised was the question of the goodness or evil of human nature, the discussion of the constitution of human beings was naturally connected to the question of how any being is formed.

While the Mencius concentrated on a few central issues, succeeding philosophers broadened the scope of inquiry to include discussions of metaphysical as well as psychological matters.

Chu Hsi attempted to reconcile and synthesize the teachings of philosophers who had preceded him. He was constrained on the one hand by his desire to declare the position of Mencius orthodox, and on the other hand by the force of objections that had long been raised against Mencius' dictum that the nature of human beings is good.

Chu Hsi's success as teacher and philosopher was so great that thinkers of later generations were forced to define their philosophies, to a greater or lesser degree, in terms of their agreement with, or opposition to, him. Thus Chu Hsi's philosophy is important both as the culmination of one line of development in Chinese philosophy, and also because it must be comprehended in order to understand the philosophies of later thinkers who tried to reform or perfect his ideas.



## II. Preliminary Contrasts between Western and Chinese World-Conceptions

In some Greek and European medieval scholastic thought, the fundamental image used to explain the constitution of things was that of a carpenter making an artifact out of timber (hyle) by taking some exemplary form (eidos) as a design.<sup>1</sup> Thus the constitution of things in the world was believed to be governed by teleology. Things are constituted, according to Aristotle, by successive processes of fabrication, in the same way that a tree may be cut to produce logs, the logs hewn and planed to make boards, and the boards trimmed and shaped to form various wooden artifacts. This picture immediately suggests questions about the primal matter from which all else comes, the models or plans and intentions according to which things are made, and about the maker himself.

Aristotle argues in De Anima, Book II (pp. 412a13ff) that substances are compounded of matter and form or essence. Matter is "not a 'this,'" but the potentiality for something. Form or essence makes a thing a "this" and is therefore an actuality. He says of natural bodies that some are inanimate and others have life. The ones that have life are like the ones that are inanimate, except that a living being is formed out of inanimate matter by the imposition of the form (or essence) of life. Aristotle calls this particular kind of essence or form a soul.

Aristotelian theory continued to be influential during the Middle Ages, particularly through Thomas Aquinas' efforts to synthesize Aristotelian

---

1 See A Greek-English Lexicon compiled by Liddell and Scott for the term "hyle." See also Philip Ellis Wheelwright's The PreSocratics, pp. 144, 171, and 322; Abraham Edel's Aristotle, p. 56; Alfred Edward Taylor's Aristotle, pp. 44ff.; Plato's Cratylus, p. 389; Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 984a22, and Physics, pp. 193a9-32.

and Christian ideas. Even today many people accept the proposition that body and soul are distinct entities, and that the soul departs from the body at death.

There is no compelling reason known why the Greeks chose the image of an artisan making something as the analog by which to explain the production of things in the universe. This idea fitted well with the Hebrew concept of a creator, which helps to explain its continued acceptance by cultures strongly influenced by Christianity. When faced with the mystery of creation, it now seems natural to ask concerning creatures: What are they made from? How are they made? But Chinese explanatory concepts developed in different ways, and so the Chinese did not ask the same questions as did their European counterparts.

Far from beginning with the work of carpenters or foundry workers, the Chinese began with a kind of divination technique associated with the Yi-ching 易經 [Book of changes]. They used analogies drawn from the Appendices to this text to elaborate their theories of cosmogony, understanding the coming into being of things in the world by analogy to the formation of a hexagram, or divining pattern, produced by the manipulation of yarrow stalks. I discuss this problem at more length below in the part of the section called the Plan of This Study that deals with li 理 (patterns).

Another idea fundamental to the Chinese world-conception is the breath of life that gives vitality to a living organism. The idea of spiritus, from which we derive our English word "spirit," is similar, but it did not receive such extensive philosophical development even though it appears in Hebrew and Arabic thought (possibly under Greek influence -- the Stoic idea of pneuma) as well as in European philosophy.

Beginning, as the Chinese did, with such different analogies by which to understand their world, it is not surprising that the system of concepts elaborated from their fundamental stock of ideas was quite different from the world-conceptions developed in the West.

Understanding one's own world-conception is important for comprehending the broadest practical implications of human thought processes. The elements of our world-conception form our picture of the world. To the extent that our picture is inaccurate, our actions will be dysfunctional.

The study of an alien world-conception serves to challenge one's own and to highlight points upon which it is imperfect.

Benjamin Lee Whorf argues that differences of language lead members of different cultures to conceive the world differently not only with regard to the conjectural realms of theology and metaphysics but even with regard to the objects of everyday experience. Whorf maintains that the conceptual systems of the users of most European languages are dominated by the binomial formula "formless item plus form." This scheme, he maintains, leads us to such commonplace formulations as "a moment of time, a second of time, a year of time." Yet we produce these formulations on the analogy of concrete things experienced in daily life: "The pattern is simply that of 'a bottle of milk' or 'a piece of cheese.'" {1956: 142f}

Most interesting, if Whorf is correct, is that the same linguistic pattern that he sees behind much of our metaphysical and scientific thinking is ubiquitous in contemporary spoken and written Chinese and by no means absent in earlier written Chinese. In fact, aside from the absence of verbal tenses (but not the means of specifying the time when an event described occurred), absence

of gender and number (but not the means to make them clear when needed), and a preference for using aspect to accomplish many of the same linguistic tasks for which English speakers use tense, there are few surprises for the Western student of Chinese on the level of the surface features of the language. There is no fundamental divergence in linguistic structures, such as exists between Shawnee and English (according to the analysis given by Whorf), to account for the profound differences in the Chinese and Western systems of thought over how a horse, dog, or human being is to be conceptualized. {1956: 208}

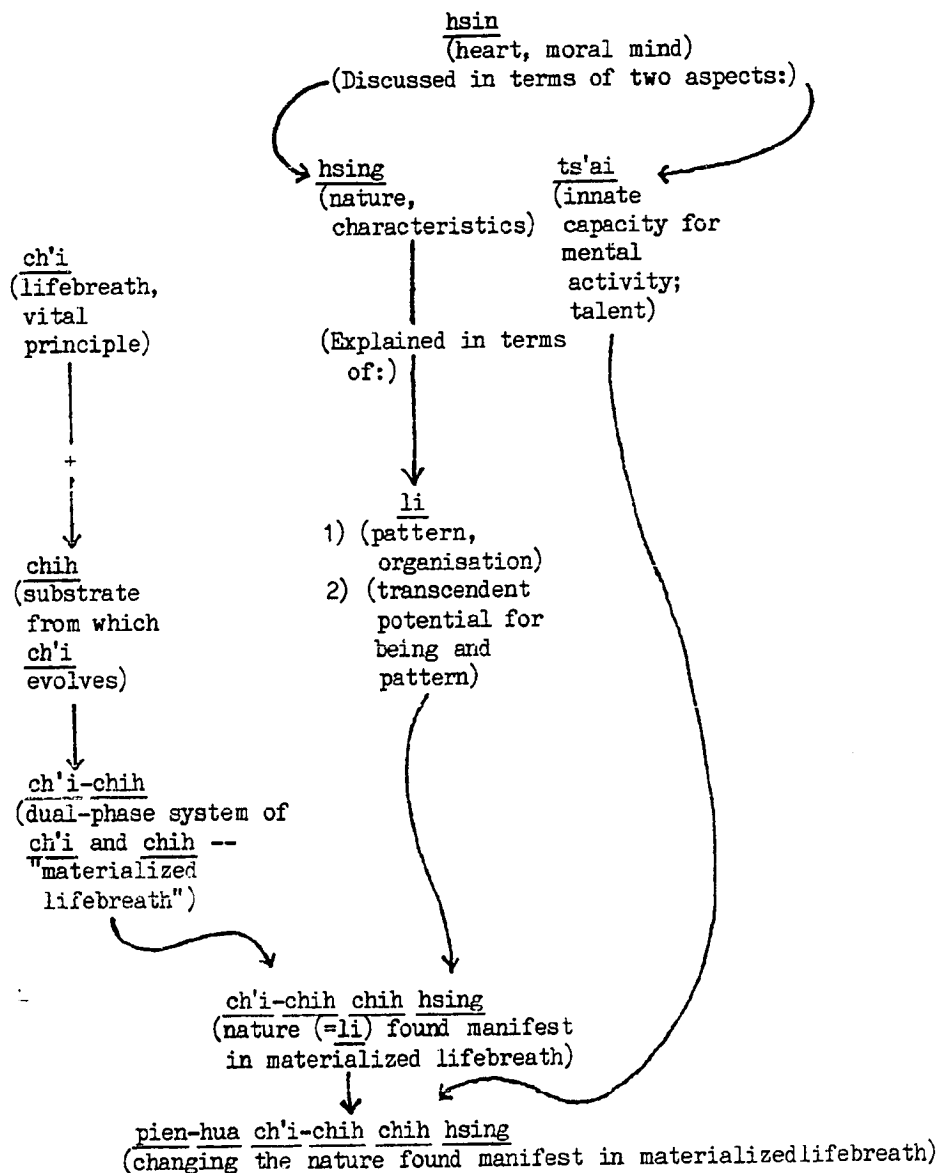
I conclude, then, that the reasons for differences in conceptual systems must be sought in other than the most fundamental levels of the world-conceptions of the traditional Chinese and the present-day cultures of Europe and America. Therefore, my approach to understanding the Chinese world-conception is to study the different use that the traditional Chinese culture made of our shared concepts about concrete particulars in forming the unique Chinese world-conception.

The pre-modern Chinese thinkers described our world using concepts much different from those used by others. Study of their conceptual system is important not only from the point of view of correcting some past mistakes, but also because -- whatever the terms in which they were expressed -- the Chinese who operated in the traditional system had much of value to say. We may also observe within a rather homogeneous cultural and linguistic community spanning nearly two thousand years how intellectual tools for dealing with the natural and social environment were elaborated from the stuff of everyday experiences. This may provide us with some sense of the necessarily contingent nature of any system of thought, a better feeling for the tentative nature of what inevitably

seems most certain to us, and a clearer sense that alternatives to our own system of concepts exist. Perhaps my judgment is swayed by personal involvement, but I also believe there is a considerable esthetic satisfaction to be derived from the appreciation of another coherent world conception. No matter that it may seem quaint in some respects to the reader well versed in the scientific picture of our universe; it may yet throw interesting lights on our world from odd angles and highlight things to which we may have been oblivious.

III. The Plan of this Study

For the sake of providing a general "road map" to the body of this dissertation, I present here an impressionistic account of the general outlines of the Chinese world-conception. I have deliberately oversimplified the problem of chih to spare the reader initial difficulty.



The chart above indicates the interrelations of ideas appearing in this study. Below there follows a non-technical discussion of each one.

Hsin 心 (heart, moral mind)

The heart functions, according to traditional Chinese thinking, much as we believe the brain to function. It is responsible for various psychological phenomena. The hsin is filled with ch'i, or "lifebreath" (of which more later), which is a tenuous substance that accounts for the vitality of the organism as well as for the activity of the hsin. Neither hsin nor ch'i can perform mental functions in the absence of the other.

According to Mencius, the follower of Confucius (K'ung Ch'iu 孔丘 551-479), the specific function of the hsin is to produce moral or ethical impulses that serve to control or subordinate such ordinary drives as sex and hunger that human beings share with the animals. This moral hsin is the unique possession of human beings.

Ch'ing 情 (the unsullied, genuine, pristine state)

According to Mencius, in its ch'ing state the human hsin is able to do good. That is, it can properly subordinate the desires that human beings share with the animals. If the original pristine state of the hsin is degraded, however, the behavior of human beings may fall to the level of the animals.

The next major Confucian scholar following Mencius, Hsün-tzu (Hsün K'uang 荀况 c. 298-c. 238), misinterpreted Mencius' words -- whether he did this deliberately or not is a moot point -- taking "ch'ing" to mean not "unsullied state" but "emotions." He thus obscured the teaching of Mencius concerning the ethical function of the human hsin and simultaneously initiated a

debate over whether human beings are innately good or bad that has never been resolved.

Mencius' true teaching concerning the human hsin is of vital importance to a proper understanding of free will. This teaching lay hidden for over two thousand years until recently rediscovered by Tang Chün-yi 唐君毅<sup>2</sup>. The loss of Mencius' true teachings concerning the ethical nature of human beings -- the ethical drives of human beings toward ethical goals -- his insight into the problems of free will, and the replacement of those teachings by the views of Hsün-tzu set the stage for authoritarian tendencies that occur in some of Hsün-tzu's followers -- tendencies that continue to exert their influence even today among those who believe that there are no innate controls (in the hsin) on base human impulses, and that rewards and punishments must be used to govern the behavior of human beings in society.

### Hsing 性 (nature, characteristics)

This term means neither nature in the sense of the "great outdoors," nor in the sense of the totality of characteristics of an organism. Rather, for Mencius at least, it means the specifically human ethical drives or impulses. The hsing is comprised of four ethical tendencies: jen 仁 (benevolence), yi 義 (sense of right and wrong, duty), li 禮 sense of ritual, and chih 智 (sense of what is correct and incorrect, wisdom).

I argue that for Mencius "hsing" always implies motivation or tendency, rather than form or essence, and is distinguished clearly from external influences that may force one in a direction contrary to the

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2. See his Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun, yüan-hsing p'ien, pp. 21-28.



inclinations of one's hsing. Thus when Mencius argues that the hsing of human beings is good, he is talking about their ethical impulses or motivations. These four ethical drives are the potentials of the human hsin that enable it to subordinate non-ethical impulses. Mencius attributed the evil things that human beings do to forces that countervail against their ethical drives. These countervailing forces could be the non-ethical impulses, if those were allowed to get out of hand, or could be external forces that act on the person. Mencius offered advice concerning how to secure the proper fulfillment of the characteristic human ethical motivations when something has interfered with their proper expression: that one should accumulate the doing of just acts, that one should minimize desires, and that one should seek integrity.<sup>3</sup>

Ts'ai 才 (innate capacity)

As I have already indicated, Mencius did not intend this word to be taken as a technical term. It is clear from its contexts that it means something like "capability," "capacity," "native endowment," or "talent." Mencius said that the ts'ai of all human beings are equally good, so if some people are not good it cannot be because they are deficient in ts'ai.

After Hsün-tzu advanced arguments to prove that human beings are inherently evil, various attempts at compromise between his position and that of Mencius were made down through the intellectual history of China. The Ch'eng-Chu school of the Sung dynasty (960-1279) revered Mencius and minimized mention of Hsün-tzu. Therefore it comes as a surprise that they maintained the ts'ai of human beings to be imperfect and hence not good, thus tacitly reverting to Hsün-

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3. See the Mencius, 2A:2, 4A:13, and 7B:35.

tzu's position. The reason that they could do this can best be understood by following the development of their understanding of the word "li理" (pattern, or in some contexts the potential for being and pattern). I will show how "hsing" changed from meaning innate ethical characteristics of human beings to meaning a kind of transcendent (i.e., outside space and time) potential or source for the production or creation of human beings.

The Ch'eng-Chu school argued that the capacities of actual human beings (ts'ai) are most often bad, and simultaneously maintained that the transcendent potential for the creation or production of human beings is always good.

Now we must consider li in more detail to see how it could be used to explain hsing.

### Li 理 (pattern, organization)

Originally this word meant "to lay out the fields." Since fields laid out with regard for the topography of the land form a pattern, "li" soon came to mean "pattern," "order," "organization," and by extension "to order," "to organize." Before long the patterns found in events were indicated by this term, including patterns such as recurring seasonal changes that extended beyond single entities in both space and time. The term "great li" was used to speak of the pattern formed by the interrelationships of all things in the universe.

Speculation connected with the Book of Changes came to be used to explain the formation of pattern in the world.<sup>4</sup> Li were believed formed in a

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4. See the Appendix on Yi Theory for further information.

way analogous to the formation of the patterns of broken and unbroken lines in the Book of Changes. Those patterns, called hexagrams, are used in divination, and were formed long before development of speculation based on them about li or patterns. A more sophisticated view was that the hexagrams themselves were formed as mappings of patterns in the universe.

#### A Hexagram

level no.	
6	— <u>yang</u> state
5	-- <u>yin</u> state
4	-- <u>yin</u> state
3	— <u>yang</u> state
2	-- <u>yin</u> state
1	— <u>yang</u> state
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0	( <u>t'ai-chi</u> -- transcendent source of all being -- not diagrammed in a hexagram)

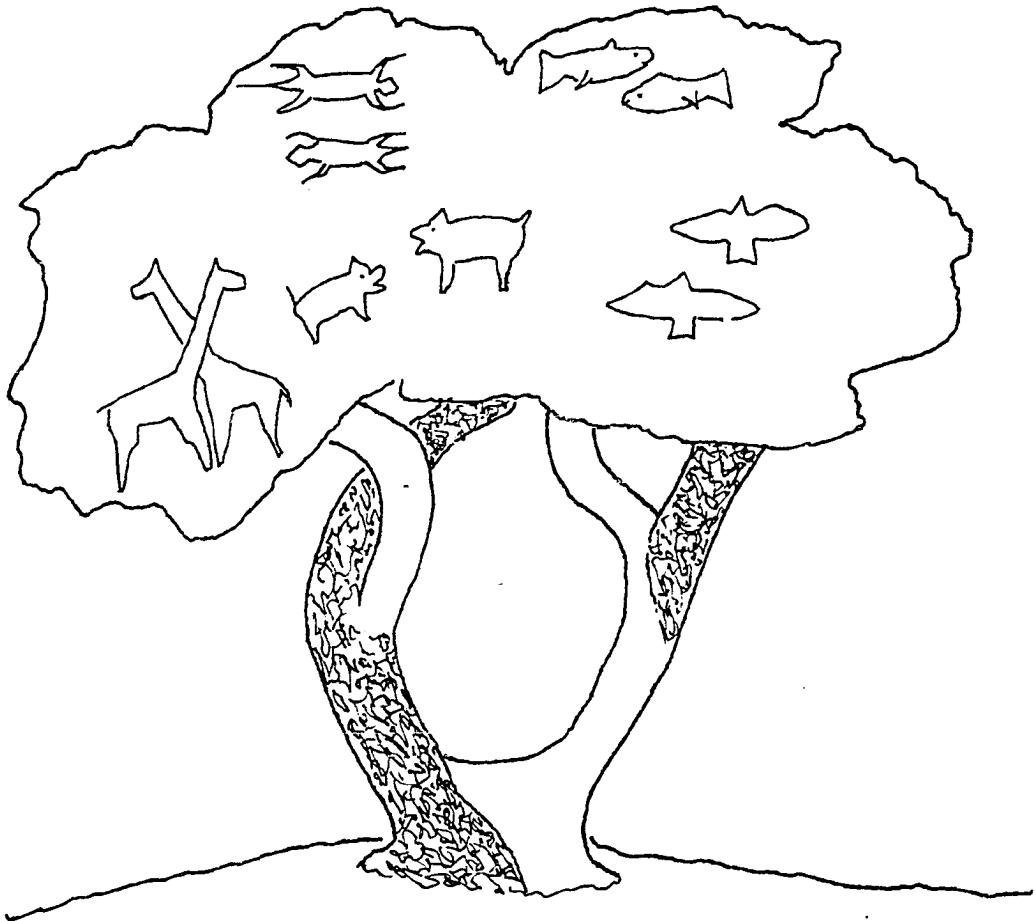
On each level of the hexagram there may be an  
yin or a yang state.

Perhaps an analogy of my own construction will serve to help the reader grasp how the formation of li was related to the idea of cyclical change from yin to yang proceeding on the several levels represented in the lines of a hexagram. Suppose that out of the living leaves and twigs of a large tree many figures are sculpted. (Implicit mention of a sculptor spoils the analogy -- really I should say that the figures are formed by mysterious processes.) These figures represent, in the terms of this analogy, the things of the empirical world. The root of the tree represents the transcendent source of all beings. In between these extremes lie twigs, branches, limbs, and trunks. To the creatures formed on the surface of the tree, they are known by intellectual processes, by insight, by intuition, or by mystical absorption into the

"innerness" of the tree. The inner awareness of the twigs, branches, etc. that form them is different in degree for different creatures.

The tree has twin trunks, joined at the root, representing cosmic yin and yang. Each trunk has four main limbs, each main limb eight branches. This process of ramification continues until the sixth level where there are sixty-four twigs on each minor branch. The leaves on each twig represent a creature. Each trunk, branch, or twig imparts its own "sap" or quality to what nourishes the leaves.

Seen from the outside, there are only myriads of individual creatures swarming over the surface of the tree. But as regards the inner structure of twigs, branches, limbs, trunks, and root, everything is joined in an intricate pattern.



The pattern or series of relationships of the various branches, limbs, and so forth, that form the underpinning and supply the vitality of a single creature is the li of that creature.

The root is called a li in another sense -- it is the potential for all the li that form from it. It somehow has contained within it the "genetic" determination for the particular arrangement of limbs, branches, twigs, and leaves that grow from it.

Note that this li is different from both Platonic Ideas and Aristotelian form or essence. The root contains both the potential for the wood of the tree (what Plato would call the chaos that is to be informed by an Idea and what Aristotle would call the prime matter of creatures) and the potential for the pattern, order, organization, or structure of the parts of the tree (what Plato would call the Idea of creatures -- without referring to the intervening structures postulated by the Chinese, and what Aristotle would call the forms imposed on matter).

While native Chinese thought did not call the transcendent root of all being a li, Chinese Buddhists identified li with what was transcendent according to their teachings, the ineffable content of mystic experience. When this idea of the transcendence of li was absorbed into native Chinese theories, "li" came to have two meanings: 1) the transcendent source of all pattern (and being), also called t'ai-chi, and 2) pattern itself. Much confusion has been caused by failing to see that two different but related things have been given the same name. Both meanings are involved in Sung-dynasty explanations of hsing. As hsing could originally be interpreted to mean a li, or pattern, within things, when "li" came to have a transcendent meaning, "hsing" was also considered to be a transcendent entity --- actually the transcendent li as applied to or manifest in human beings.

Ch'i 氣 (lifebreath)

I have coined the term "lifebreath" after analogy to the English word "lifeblood." "Lifeblood" is defined by the Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language as:

1. the blood necessary to life.
2. the vital part or animating influence of anything.

Ch'i accounts not only for the vitality of animals, but for the activity of many things that we would not ordinarily regard as living. In fact, ch'i is regarded as constituting all tangible things and motivating all processes in the universe. Heaven and earth each have their respective ch'i, and the melding of their ch'i in the womb-space between them produces the myriad creatures (wan wu 萬物), each creature bearing the activating principles of heaven and earth within it.

In simplified terms, the picture of living creatures imagined by those speculating on ch'i seems to have been of a core of heavenly ch'i surrounded by a mantle of earthly ch'i. Although ensconced, the core ch'i is still capable of communicating with the greater ch'i outside the body. This core-mantle structure is the inverse of the arrangement of the cosmic ch'i of heaven and of earth where heavenly ch'i envelopes the earth. But beyond this apparent multiplicity of ch'i there is a fundamental unity of all ch'i, and hence of all things, in the universe because everything differentiates from a common source without, however, separating from it.

According to Chinese belief, heaven and earth diverged from a primal unity when the grosser fraction of the primal ch'i gravitated to the center and

the finer fraction hovered around it. Earth is ch'i, although of a less ethereal sort than the ch'i that forms heaven.<sup>5</sup>

Within the universe ch'i is found in different densities, from the ch'i that is a stone or metal to the most intangible ch'i that is cosmic yin or yang.

Ch'i can exist in two phases, a tenuous, non-perceptible phase, and a concrete, tangible phase. The tangible phase is given the name chih in Neo-Confucian thought. Chih can evolve ch'i as ice sublimates to form vapor. Ch'i can condense to form chih. In organisms both phases are found in dynamic equilibrium. The qualities of the two determine the actual (as opposed to potential) characteristics of the creature.

#### Chih 質 (substrate)

I translate "chih" by the word "substrate" (rather than "substratum," which has metaphysical connotations that make it more suitable as a translation of "pen-t'i" 本體) to suggest the idea of a medium for growth or the surface on which something grows. In its earliest use, "chih" was compared to the bodies or pelts of various animals from which different kinds of fur or hair are produced. A chih is a relatively palpable ch'i that underlies and supports the production of a more tenuous ch'i. A chih is not only relatively tangible, but has a definite character of its own that influences the ch'i that evolves from it. Ch'i of various qualities determine the psychological attributes of human beings. These mental or emotional characteristics may not always be desirable

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5. For another introduction to the concept of ch'i, see T'ang Chün-yi, "Chang Tsai's Theory of Mind and Its Metaphysical Basis," Section III, in Philosophy East and West, VI, 2 (1956), pp. 119-121.



ones, so their deficiencies give grounds for concern and hence for attempts at self-improvement.

Since the ch'i involved in the psychological activity of an organism evolves from some chih, one way to control the ch'i or behavioral attributes of a person is to change the chih or substrate from which that ch'i arises. The great program for moral effort in the Sung dynasty and afterwards was to change one's ch'i-forming chih in a desirable direction. To understand how this was to be done, we must first elucidate the concept of ch'i-chih.

**Ch'i-chih 氣質**

(dual-phase ch'i and chih, ch'i-forming chih,  
materialized lifebreath)

The term "ch'i-chih" would probably be better left in romanization as it is difficult to convey its meaning with a few English words without permitting the English rendering and the force of linguistic and cultural habits to lead the reader astray. I have tried to suggest by the word "materialized" the way ghosts in fantasy literature are supposed to materialize out of thin air and to imply that the being so formed might thus "dematerialize" at some later time. Ch'i-chih is dual-phase ch'i and chih existing in a state of dynamic equilibrium, but, when the term is used, the chih as substrate is usually intended to stand in the forefront. Thus, to the American or European reader, the term usually seems to mean "material entities," but that interpretation fails to comprehend the ch'i, and hence the energetic, aspect of ch'i-chih.

Chih forms from invisible ch'i and later evolves ch'i. The changing of one's ch'i-forming chih, i.e., one's ch'i-chih, amounts to what psychologists now identify as a change in one's character structure.

Pien-hua ch'i-chih 變化氣質  
(changing materialized ch'i)

Changing ch'i-chih could be accomplished, according to Sung scholars, in two ways. One was straightforward, but understanding the other will require the reader to incorporate much of the Chinese world-conception into his own stock of ideas. The straightforward method of changing ch'i-chih derives from the theoretical consideration that chih, which is relatively stable, is condensed ch'i. The ch'i seen in Chinese theory corresponds to, and is used to explain, inwardly experienced psychological phenomena that are subject to some measure of volition. To the extent that one can control one's attitudes, temper, and other psychological activities, one can purify the enveloping cloud of ch'i from which one's chih is constantly being re-formed. It follows that the ch'i or psychological activity evolving from the re-forming chih will subsequently be purified to some degree, thus becoming more amenable to control. Thus through a process somewhat analogous to repeated fractional distillations and condensations, the ch'i-chih can be purified of trouble-causing components that produce one's undesirable mental or emotional characteristics.

Pien-hua ch'i-chih chih hsing 變化氣質之性  
(changing the nature found manifest in ch'i-chih)

The idea for the second way of changing ch'i-chih depends on the identification of the hsing, or nature, with li, or pattern, and the further identification of the li that is pattern with the li that is the transcendent potential for being as well as pattern. It is easy enough to see that if there is a certain pattern to all the constituents of a creature, then that thing will have corresponding characteristics. The pattern or organization of some

creature is thus virtually equivalent to its nature. But when it is argued that the immanent pattern springs from a potential found in the transcendent source of pattern, it follows that in a sense the hsing of the individual is contained in the transcendent source. This theoretical account suggests a way to ameliorate evil.

One difference between the transcendent potential and actual immanent patterns is that the former is perfect whereas the latter are generally imperfect. Since both transcendent potential and immanent actuality can be identified with hsing, it follows that in a sense a human being (or any other creature) has two hsing: a perfect transcendent nature and an imperfect immanent one. Put another way, in terms of original potentiality one is perfectly good, but in terms of subsequent actuality one may well be imperfect and therefore to some greater or lesser extent evil. Is it not preferable for the latent perfection found in a human being's potential to be realized in his actual constitution?

Somehow the original good potential to produce a creature has in fact not been fully actualized, producing an imperfect human being. If that potential could be fully actualized, one would become perfected. Observation convinced the Chinese philosophers that various educational experiences can change what modern psychologists might call one's character structure. In Chinese terms, changing one's character structure means changing one's ch'i-chih. Since one's li or hsing is the pattern formed through various layers of yin and yang along the "fifth dimension" from the transcendent source of all being to an actual creature, it follows that the educational experience must have changed the very constitution of the creature in the part that lies along this "fifth dimension." Now this change is "physical" in the sense that all

those levels of yin and yang are real things in the world.<sup>6</sup> They are all ch'i, but the change produced in them is not the same kind of physical change that would be produced by surgery.

Meditation was also believed capable of changing one's constitution. The argument was that there are shallower and deeper levels of inner experience, from the merely sensual to ineffable union with the springs of creation. Animals are obstructed in their inner awareness and cannot fully perceive the intermediate level of the ethical drives. Ordinary human beings can fully perceive that level. The sages can perceive beyond it to comprehend yin and yang, and even to the level of the transcendent potential or primal li (this depth of inner experience is said to be what enabled the early sages to create the Book of Changes).

By using meditative techniques, one strives to clear one's inner sensorium. External perception may supplement inner awareness when the latter is inadequate. In terms of the tree analogy given above, all creatures in the world stem from the same root, the t'ai-chi. The beings that ramify from this absolute potential may share not only the root, but also many other levels, from trunk to branches. Thus the levels of one's own inner constitution are also manifested in those of other creatures. What is obscured in inner vision may become apparent upon investigation of outer phenomena. If one is incapable of perceiving yin or yang in his internal vision, he may yet hope to secure awareness of it externally. Since yin and yang are in any case the same individual yin and yang (and not merely indistinguishable but discrete entities

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6. For a discussion of the physicality of yin and yang, see Wei Cheng-t'ung's Chung-kuo che-hsüeh tz'u-tien, pp. 586ff.

like electrons and protons) it does not matter where one perceives them. Once one has penetrated to a certain level, no matter how, the channels of one's interior vision are permanently opened to that level. "The bright mirror gathers no dust."

## IV. Previous Studies

In the sixth century B. C., the disciple Tzu-kung lamented that the teachings of Confucius concerning hsing 性 and the tao 道 of heaven were not readily accessible. {Ana., 5:13} From at least that early time, people have sought clearer explanations about the key terms of Chinese philosophy.

Occasionally, philosophers have carefully defined their basic vocabulary, as when Han Fei 韓非 delineated the meaning of the term "li 理" used in his analysis of the Lao-tzu.<sup>1</sup> {Han Fei-tzu 韓非子, chap. 20} More often, however, philosophical concepts were clarified in commentaries on the classical texts such as those by the famous Han-dynasty scholar Kao Yu 高誘 (fl. 205-212).

Generally speaking, commentaries are written for the benefit of students living in a particular culture and familiar with a set of concepts so thoroughly assimilated as to require no explication. That fund of elementary terminology can confidently be used by members of that culture to explain more complicated ideas. However, people approaching such a tradition of scholarship from the outside may expect difficulty in understanding the undefined fundamental words and hence all the others whose definition depends on them.

Moreover, the authors of Chinese philosophical texts tend not to give careful explanations of their most basic notions since such ideas are assumed to be common knowledge in the school for which they are written down. Nor do they generally concern themselves to trace the evolution of the meanings of philosophical terms. While basic concepts may be carefully defined or analyzed when they first come into use, it is unusual for such discussions to have been

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1. See my discussion, p. 110.

preserved, probably because the ideas in question have already attained widespread currency (at least within the school in question) before being employed in major philosophical texts. Explanations are more common after such notions cease to be immediately understandable or when they come under attack. Of course, such explanations may be made hundreds or even thousands of years after the fact, and may not accurately reflect the intention of the original author. They may reflect a revision of meanings to make accommodations to new circumstances or to provide a defense against an attack the originator could not have foreseen. Neither the original author, the commentator, nor the reader from a different intellectual milieu may share a common body of basic concepts.

At least as early as Ch'en Shun 陳淳 (1153-1217), a favorite disciple of Chu Hsi, entire works were devoted to the analysis of philosophical terminology. Ch'en's Pei-hsi tzu-yi 北溪字義 treats over thirty concepts, including hsing, hsin, ch'ing, ts'ai, li, and t'ai-chi. New ideas central to Neo-Confucianism, however, were not discussed. Rather, older ideas were explained by the new technical terms. Even Ch'en's discussion of li relates primarily to its appearances in classical contexts. Concepts such as ch'i, ch'i-chih, ch'i-chih chih hsing, and pien-hua ch'i-chih chih hsing were not discussed, but it is precisely those ideas that the modern reader most needs to have explained. The book is therefore not as useful as one might hope.

With the fall of the Ming dynasty to the invading Manchus in the mid-seventeenth century, critical attention was directed by Chinese scholars to the strengths and weaknesses of the native culture and philosophies. Thinkers such as Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 (1619-1693) and Yen Yüan 顏元 (1635-1704) attempted to separate what the ancient philosophers such as Mencius really said from what later scholars claimed they meant. As a result, clearer explanations

of some terms emerged. The relation between li and ch'i was analyzed by both Wang and Yen. Wang produced the only clear explanation of ch'i-chih that I have ever seen.<sup>2</sup> Yen's treatment in his Ts'un-hsing pien 存性編 [Preservation of the human nature] is both more concrete and more explicit concerning ch'i-chih chih hsing than were Chu Hsi's discussions.

Other Ch'ing dynasty scholars contributed to the tradition of Ch'en Shun and compiled studies of the meanings of particular words. Among them are the Meng-tzu tzu-yi shu-cheng 孟子字義疏證 of Tai Chen 戴震 (1723-1777), and the Hsing-ming ku-hsün 性命古訓 by Juan Yüan 阮元 (1764-1849). Juan also compiled a large selective dictionary of terms that appear in the classical texts, the Ching-chi tsuan-ku 經籍纂詁 [A compilation of glosses to the classical texts]. This book quotes definitions by classical authors as well as commentators and early dictionaries. Juan Yüan's work is particularly useful because its form avoids subjective judgments by the author (except the basic decision of which sources to quote). On the other hand, the succinctness of the definitions and the shortness of examples of usage quoted make it difficult for one not intimately familiar with a broad range of classical texts to follow it easily. A similar source is the commentary to Hsü Shen's 許慎 (fl. 100 A. D.) Han-dynasty etymological dictionary that was prepared by Tuan Yü-ts'ai 段玉裁 (1735-1815), usually known as the Shuo-wen chieh-tzu Tuan chu 說文解字段注 [Tuan's commentary to the Shuo-wen chieh-tzu]. This dictionary quotes the Shuo-wen, explains it, adds definitions from other early dictionaries and from early texts and their commentaries. Many

2. See my translation of his definition on page 256.



readers might benefit from tracing the examples back to their sources for more context or commentary.

At about the same time in Europe, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) was remarkably well informed by the reports of Italian missionaries concerning the basic ideas of Chinese metaphysical speculation. He expressed more clearly than many later scholars in Europe and America some of the most fundamental and far-reaching ideas of Sung Confucianism. He reported that li produces ch'i. {1977: 57} He further called li "order". {Loc. cit.} He claimed that li "is also the aggregate of the most perfect multiplicity because the Being of this [first] principle contains the essence of things as they are in their germinal state." {63} He moreover maintained that "individual Li's are more or less perfect emanations (according to their bodies) of the great Li." {78}

The impulse provided by Leibniz's studies in Chinese philosophy seems to have shifted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Translations of the classics by Legge, Couvreur, Soothill, Giles, and others advanced studies of Chinese thought. I have not attempted to evaluate their translations. Couvreur, Soothill, Giles, Mathews and others greatly improved our knowledge of the Chinese language.

Among contemporary studies of the concepts discussed in this dissertation, several are outstanding. With regard to hsin (心), I. A. Richards's Mencius on the Mind remains fascinating both for its insights into the philosophical problems of mind raised by Mencius and for its observations concerning the difficulties of interpreting classical Chinese texts. A. C. Graham treats the topic of ch'ing (清) with special insight in the appendix to his article "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature." T'ang Chün-

yi 唐君毅 provides particularly deep insight into Mencius' theory of human nature (hsing 性) in his Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun, yüan hsing p'ien 中國哲學原論·原性篇 [The origins of Chinese philosophy, volume on the origins of the idea of hsing (pp. 20-28)]. Paul Demiéville wrote a seminal article on "La Pénétration du bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise" (pp. 28-32) that discusses li and other concepts important to Chinese philosophy. This work is complemented by three important studies: T'ang Chün-yi's "Lun Chung-kuo che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang shih chung 'li' chih liu yi 中國哲學思想史中「理」之六義" [Discussion of six meanings of "li" in the history of Chinese philosophical thought]; Ch'ien Mu's 錢穆 "Wang Pi, Kuo Hsiang chu Yi, Lao, Chuang-tzu yung li tzu t'iao-lu" 王弼郭象注易·莊、老子用理字條錄 " [An itemized record of the use of the word "li" in the commentaries of Wang Pi and Kuo Hsiang to the Yi-ching, Lao-tzu, and Chuang-tzu]; and Wing-tsit Chan's "The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept Li as Principle."

For some unknown reason, the concept of ch'i has received little serious attention outside of Japan. Beginning at least as early as thirty years ago, however, Kuroda Genji 黑田源次 began publishing a series of detailed studies. Kuroda's researches have a strong medical component, but he has followed the history of the concept of ch'i from its earliest occurrences in oracle bone inscriptions through the philosophers of the Sung dynasty as well as relevant medical sources. Hiraoka Teikichi's 平岡禎吉 "Ki no shisō seiritsu ni tsuite 氣の思想成立について" [Concerning the formation of the concept of ch'i] was another pioneering effort that spanned oracle inscriptions and anthropological studies. He also made a complete study

entitled Enanji ni arawareta ki no kenkyū 淮南子に現われた氣の研究 [Ch'i in the Huai-nan-tzu]. More recently, an entire book has been devoted to the concept of ch'i, Ki no shisō -- Chūgoku ni okeru shizenkan to ningenkan no tenkai 氣の思想 — 中國における自然觀と人間觀の展開 [The idea of ch'i -- the development of the Chinese view of nature and man]. Not only does this text cover virtually every aspect of the question, but it also has an extensive and helpful index.

Among Japanese studies more specifically concerned with Sung philosophy, specially attention should be drawn to Ōshima Hikaru's 大島晃 "Chō Ōkyo no 'taikyo soku ki' ron ni tsuite 張橫渠の「太虚即氣」論について" [Chang Tsai's "the great void is ch'i" theory]. It compresses a great deal of useful background information into a brief compass; moreover, it forms a good supplement to my own work since it covers much that I had to omit. Yamada Keiji 山田慶兒 provides much pre-Sung and Sung detail on the history of philosophy relating to Chu Hsi in his series of two articles, "Shushi no uchūron josetsu 朱子の宇宙論序説" [An introduction to Chu Hsi's cosmology] and "Shushi no uchūron 朱子の宇宙論" [Chu Hsi's cosmology]. The articles also have much theoretical interest and are not as narrow in scope as the titles might lead one to expect. Tomoeda Ryūtarō's 友枝龍太郎 "Tenbun rekisu to riki no setsu 天文曆數と理氣の説" [Theory of astronomical and calendrical cycles and their connection with li and ch'i] includes a very good general section dealing with the Sung thinkers. Yasuda Jirō's 安田二郎 "Shushi no sonzairon ni okeru 'ri' no seishitsu ni tsuite 朱子の存在論に於ける「理」の性質について" [The characteristics of li in Chu Hsi's ontology] is outstanding as a clear exercise in comparative philosophy. Finally, the Shushi

gaku taikai 朱子學大系 [Great systematic study of the philosophy of Chu Hsi] can only be compared with Ch'ien Mu's multivolume Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an 朱子新學案 [A new study of Master Chu].

In his "Chu-tzu 'li ch'i kuan' t'ao-lun 朱子理氣觀討論" [Discussion of Master Chu's "view of li and ch'i"] Li Jih-chang 李日章 has vividly and succinctly expressed the difficulties posed for students by the unsystematic presentation that Chu Hsin and his students gave his philosophy. I believe that the difficulties he raises have not previously received adequate answers.

As a general introduction to Chu's philosophy, Percy Bruce's Chu Hsi and his Masters, although somewhat dated, is still worth reading. Ch'ien Mu's five volume Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an contains a wealth of information on almost all aspects of Chu Hsi's thought. Huang Siu-chi has written informatively on "The Concept of T'ai-Chi (Supreme Ultimate) in Sung Neo-Confucian Philosophy," and Stanislaus Sun has created an excellent study on "The Doctrine of Li of Chu Hsi." With regard to the entire topic of the Chinese conceptual system, readers will find much of value in Alfred Forke's The World Conception of the Chinese. Unfortunately, the topics of ch'i-chih, ch'i-chih chih hsing, and pien-hua ch'i-chih chih hsing have not, to my knowledge, received serious attention since the time of Wang Fu-chih and Yen Yüan.

Among general histories of philosophy, two stand out for their completeness. Fung Yu-lan's Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih has been translated into English by Derk Bodde as A History of Chinese Philosophy. Fung's work contains many useful long passages from philosophers of all periods. Alfred Forke has diligently collected innumerable passages from the Chinese philosophers and

woven them together with his narrative in three volumes: Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie, Geschichte der mittelalterlichen chinesischen Philosophie, and Geschichte der neuen chinesischen Philosophie. Although Forke's treatment given relatively little attention to philosophical analysis, since he prefers to let the philosophers speak for themselves, he has provided Chinese texts for all passages quoted. This is extremely convenient for the reader who wishes to compare the original with his translations. Moreover, his selection of texts is excellent.

## II. MENCIUS' THEORY OF THE HUMAN MIND

### 1. Hierarchy of Motivations

People have common, specifically human desires as well as those common to all creatures. The Mencius 孟子, 6A:7, says:

[Human] mouths have the same delights in regard to flavors. [Human] ears have the same pleasures (lit. "hearings," t'ing 聽) in regard to sounds. [Human] eyes have the same beauties with regard to sights. Is it solely with regard to the hsin/心(heart, mind) [of humans] that there is no [such] unanimity?

This passage mentions four organs<sup>1</sup> of the human body. Perhaps their functions are equally intended. Each is said to have its appropriate object. Although the word "t'ing" is axiologically neutral in ordinary contexts, it appears clear that Mencius intends it as a parallel to "delights" and "beauties." Surely Mencius means to say that human hsin (hearts, minds) all have common joys. At the end of the passage quoted above, Mencius continues his argument concerning the natural objects of the senses:

Li 理 (order) and yi 義 (duty or justice) delight my mind  
as the meats of ruminants and other animals delight my palate.

The implication seems to be that human beings are motivated to seek satisfactions, those things in which their mouths, ears, eyes, and hsin take delight.

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1. See Manfred Porkert's The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine, p. 107, for a discussion of the difference between traditional Chinese and Western ideas on what the European cultures conceive as "organs."

The Mencius, 6A:15, says:

Kung-tu-tzu asked: "They are all equally men, [yet] some are great and some are petty. Why?"

Mencius replied: "Following their greater aspect (lit. body, t'i 體), they become great men; following their lesser aspect they become petty men."

"[If] they are all equally men, [then why do] some follow their greater aspect and some their lesser?"

"When the organs which are the ears and eyes do not ssu (function intellectually and ethically)<sup>2</sup> they become hoodwinked by things -- one thing merely comes into interaction with another and is led [astray] by it. In the case of the organ which is the hsin, it can ssu. If [the hsin] ssu's then it gets it; if not then it does not get it.<sup>3</sup>

"[Hsin] is what heaven has given me. If I establish myself in my greater [aspect], then my lesser [aspect] cannot take [over] by force. This is just what is meant by [being] a great man."

At 6A:7 Mencius maintains that the ears, eyes, and hsin are similar in that all have objects that especially gratify them. In this passage Mencius maintains that the hsin is distinguished from other organs or systems of function in that it can ssu (function intellectually and ethically). So to ssu must be different from having appetancies for the natural objects of each of

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2. See David S. Nivison, "Philosophical Voluntarism in Fourth Century China," a paper read before the twenty-fifth meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 30, 1973.

See also, Ts'ai Jen-hou, "Meng-tzu hsin-hsing-lun chih yen-chiu," K'ung-Meng hsüeh-pao, XXII (Sept., 1971), p. 107.

3. Just what is intended by the word "it" (chih 之) is not clear in the original.

these sense organs. That which ssu's cannot be hoodwinked or led astray by external forces. In other words, when it functions (ssu) properly, the hsin is not passive to external influences. On the contrary, it is autonomous.

## 2. Nature and Mandate

Mencius reveals his ideas about the nature of this "mental functioning" in another passage. The Mencius, 7B:24, says:

The way the mouth is disposed toward tastes, the eyes toward colors, the ears toward sound, the nose toward smells, and the four limbs toward ease is hsing (nature). [But] there is ming 命 (lit. mandate, heaven's will) therein. The [morally] noble man does not speak of these dispositions as hsing. The manner in which jen 仁 (benevolence) pertains to the relation between father and son, yi 義 (sense of right and wrong, justice, duty) to the relation between prince and subject, li 禮 (sense of ritual) to the relation between guest and host, chih 智 (wisdom)<sup>4</sup> to good and wise men, and the sage to the way of heaven (t'ien-tao 天道) [ -- all this] is ming. [But] there is hsing therein. The [morally] noble man does not speak of these virtues as ming [i.e., he views "hsing" the more appropriate term].

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4. Chih, or wisdom, is the innate ability to recognize things as right or wrong -- the ancient Chinese appear not to have imposed a clear distinction between things morally right or wrong and things factually right or wrong. "Shih-fei 是非" refers to both. At 4A:27, Mencius observes: "The actualization of jen (benevolence) lies in serving one's parents; that of yi (sense of right and wrong, justice, duty) in following (i.e., in obeying) one's elder brother; that of chih (wisdom) in knowing those two and not letting them go. The actualization of li (sense of ritual, propriety) lies in limiting (i.e., constraining) and ornamenting those two." Mencius' emphasis is on objective knowing, but it is the knowing of an ethical truth or imperative rather than a point of general information.



At 7B:24 there occurs the same opposition discussed at 6A:15 between the appetancies of the ordinary sense organs, and a particular kind of mental functioning (the seeking of certain ethical goals, ssu). This opposition suggests that the highest function of the hsin, in Mencius' view, was the kind of ethical seeking or moral appetancy called jen, yi, li, and chih. What then is the significance of the distinction made at 7B:24 between "nature" and "mandate"? <sup>5</sup>

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5. See D.C. Lau, Mencius, "Introduction," p. 28f. For a different interpretation from mine, see Huang Chang-chien, "Meng-tzu hsing-lun chih yen-chiu," in Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an, XXVI (1955), 248ff.

Chu Hsi gave his assent to an interpretation of this passage given by his correspondent, Tung Shu-chung and recorded in the Hui-an wen-chi, 51:14bf/56. According to Tung's interpretation, the first "hsing" refers to hsing as found in ch'i. The first "ming" refers to ming as found in both li and ch'i. The second "ming", however, refers to ming only as manifest in ch'i, and the second "hsing" refers to hsing as li. That is to say, hsing in the first case is purely "mundane," whereas the second hsing is purely transcendent. Ming in the first case is both immanent and transcendent, whereas in the second case it is only immanent or "mundane."

While I believe that Mencius' distinction was between different levels of functioning within the human organism, Chu Hsi and his friend felt that it was between the pure moral impulse of t'ien (heaven) and that impulse as contaminated by mundane traces. Nevertheless, Chu Hsi agrees with me in one respect: In the case of the moral virtues they have a "material" basis (what he calls the ming that is solely involved in ch'i), i.e., they are constituted by ch'i processes that occur in the world, yet they transcend these limiting factors as hsing. The hsing that Chu Hsi believes transcendent in an ontological sense is the hsing that I say grants human beings practical autonomy of moral choice in this world.

"Ming," as used by Mencius, referred to manifestations of the will of heaven, both within the hsing of human beings and externally in the world. The Mencius, 5A:6, says:

What is done without [anyone] doing it is t'ien (heaven, or better here, nature, as opposed to artifices of human beings). What happens (lit., arrives) without [anyone] making it happen (chih 致) is ming.

"Ming" means "mandate," the command of a ruler. Originally, it must have meant the commands of T'ien, conceived as an anthropomorphic god. But the anthropomorphic concept of god, or heaven, had been greatly weakened by the time of Mencius. Heaven is seen as a presiding power in the universe.<sup>6</sup> Angus C. Graham defines heaven in one of its contexts as "the power which is responsible for everything outside human control." He defines "ming" as "all that is

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6. The Lun-yü 論語 [Analects of Confucius] frequently speaks of t'ien 天, or heaven, as an anthropomorphic if distant and majestic deity. See for instance 3:13, 3:24, 9:5, 7:23, 6:28, 9:12, 11:9. The Mencius contains only one passage, 2B:13, that continues to depict t'ien as a person.

"[When] Mencius left Ch'i, Ch'ung Yü asked him along the way: 'My master looks displeased. In days past I learned from you that "The [morally] noble man does not resent heaven nor does he reproach people."

"[Mencius] remarked: 'That was one occasion and this is another! [Every] five hundred years a [true] king must arise. In this time there must be one who names the age (i.e., gives his name to the age). More than seven hundred years have passed since [the time of the virtuous rulers who began] the Chou [dynasty]. Accordingly, the time is already overdue. Judging by the times, it would be permissible [to have a true king arise]. Now heaven must not yet desire to pacify and order the world (t'ien-hsia 天下). Should [heaven] desire to do so, then in the present generation who could there be besides me [to carry out heaven's tasks]? Why should I be displeased?'"

outside man's control, which he must accept as the unalterable conditions of his existence, including his own nature."<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Mandate Seen in Humans and in the World

Heaven's will is manifested to men in two ways. One is the direct manifestation of heaven's will in human beings as their proper hsing.<sup>8</sup> Heaven creates the things of the world and among them men.<sup>9</sup> As the latter are the special creatures of heaven, the will of heaven is mirrored exactly in their hsing. If a human being heeds his hsing, then he will know the ming of heaven. But to produce the things of the universe, heaven must also mandate all creatures and the natural processes that they undergo.<sup>10</sup> If heaven mandates the beneficial change of the seasons, the ripening of the grain, etc., it also mandates disasters. The Lao-tzu 老子 recognized this seemingly cruel aspect of heaven more clearly than most Confucians would have cared to. The Chuang-tzu 莊子 referred to ming in explaining the disasters that befall human beings and

7. Angus C. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in The Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies, New Series, VI 1-2, (December, 1967) pp. 215 and 255.

8. See the Mencius, 7A:1, 3A:5, and 6A:6.

9. D. C. Lau's Introduction to his translation of the Mencius is enlightening with regard to this point. See especially, pp. 12f, 28, 32, 37, and 45.

10. The Mencius, 7A:2, says: "There is nothing that is not mandated." See also, Huang Chang-chien, "Meng-tzu hsing-lun chih yen-chiu," in Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an, XXVI (1955), 243.

advised them to accept what they could not avoid.<sup>11</sup> It is not that "ming" means fate in the sense that a particular man is singled out and predestined to disaster by heaven.<sup>12</sup> It is rather that the preponderant force of events mandated by heaven bears down upon him. A greater man may withstand it. A wiser man may arrange to be elsewhere at that time. So ming is manifested both internally and personally, as well as externally and impersonally. The internal, personal manifestation provides a characteristically human (ethical) motivation. The external, impersonal one provides what we call the ordinary external factors in our existence.

The Mencius, 7A:3, says:

[Those cases where] by seeking one can obtain something and by giving it up one can lose it are those in which seeking is advantageous to acquisition. These are cases of seeking what is within oneself. The cases where there is a tao 道 (way) for seeking something and a ming (mandate) for acquiring it are those in which seeking is of no [sure] benefit to acquisition. These are cases of seeking what is external to oneself.

Mencius continues the teaching of Confucius with regard to seeking what is within oneself:

"Is benevolence far? If I desire benevolence, then it arrives!" {Ana., 7:30}

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11. Chuang Chou 莊周 (369?-286?) wrote some chapters of the book bearing his name as its title, but others were probably written by his students or followers. The date and author of the Lao-tzu are unknown, but modern scholars generally regard it as later than the oldest parts of the Chuang-tzu.

12. See the discussion on this point in I. A. Richards's Mencius on the Mind, pp. 37ff.

But he recognizes also that when a goal is external to oneself, whether one attains it or not is dependent on factors that are beyond personal volition. "Ming" almost seems to mean "fate" in the passage above from the Mencius, although Mencius elsewhere makes it clear that what a person does is by no means negligible in determining what will happen to him. If one wishes to be ruler of the world, or to attain any other external goal, then there is much to contend with outside oneself.

In the passage at 7B:24 (see above, p.33) when Mencius speaks of ming, he implies the sense of external causation, the force of events remotely derived from the acts of heaven. The natural inclinations of the sense organs are characteristics of the organism, so in one sense they can be called hsing (nature). But there is in it the sense of ming as mandate or external causation. Therefore, the desires of the sense organs are characteristic of an organism only in a conditional sense, since they may change from moment to moment under the influence of outside forces that impinge upon them, and they do not constitute the abiding hsing or nature of that organism.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4. Human Autonomy

The hsin is a part of the human organism. If there had not been a mandate from heaven to constitute that organism, then there would have been no

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13. Ts'ai Jen-hou, "Meng-tzu hsin-hsing-lun chih yen-chiu," K'ung-Meng hsüeh-pao, XXII (Sept., 1971), 105, says that this passage means that the satisfaction of ordinary desires is dependent on external, contingent factors, which are called ming here.

human being and no hsin.<sup>14</sup> In that sense, the hsin is determined by ming (mandate). But once constituted, the hsin is no longer subject to commands emanating from without. The hsin that ssu's (functions intellectually or ethically) cannot be hoodwinked and led astray. So, even though there was an element of external determination in its constitution, the hsin is not passive to external forces. It is not appropriate to speak of it in terms of ming. Instead, we must reserve for that purpose the word "hsing," since the hsing is the true, invariable, nature of the creature that remains until that creature perishes.

Humans are capable of doing a variety of things, good or bad, that do not in themselves distinguish men from animals. However, the hsin's activity, when functioning intellectually or ethically (ssu), is characteristic of the human organism in an absolute sense. There is no conflict possible between hsing and ming when ming refers to the will of heaven that constituted the hsing in the first place, because the human hsing is an exact mapping of the will of heaven. The only possible opposition would be between the hsing and elements of mandate or causation constituted by the ming of heaven in its general activities in creating the world.

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14. It is not clear to me whether Mencius believed that an individual mandate was issued for each human being or whether he believed in some kind of general mandate.

A simple chart may serve to make this relationship clearer:

PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION	MENTAL CONSTITUTION
Sense organs have appetancies.	Minds have appetancies.
Appetancies of the sense organs are for food, drink, sex, etc.	Appetancies of the mind are for <u>li</u> (order) and <u>yi</u> (justice).
(The physical constitution is called the lesser aspect.)	(The mental constitution is called the greater aspect.)
The physical constitution does not <u>ssu</u> .	The mental constitution can <u>ssu</u> .
Sense organs come into interaction with other things and are led astray.	<u>Ssu</u> -ing is immune to forces from the outside.
The physical constitution is <u>hsing</u> but also <u>ming</u> .	The mental constitution is <u>ming</u> but also <u>hsing</u> .
The physical constitution must be called <u>ming</u> .	The mental constitution must be called <u>hsing</u> .

To return to the passage at 7B:24, Mencius contrasts two classes of motivations: the desires of the senses, and the four moral virtues (ssu te 四德), jen (benevolence), yi (sense of right and wrong, duty, justice), li (sense of ritual, propriety), and chih (wisdom). At 6A:7, Mencius compares the appeal of order and duty to the hsin with the appeal of tasty meats to the palate. The motivational aspect of these situations concerns Mencius. Activity is stimulated to occur by one's delight in tasty meats or virtuous behavior. The innate wellsprings of human motivation account for the appeals of a beautiful person of the opposite sex, of the savory aroma of good food, as well as for delight taken in justice, duty, order, and other moral virtues.

Mencius does not use any special word to refer to all of these motivations taken as a class. At 2A:6 he speaks of the Four Beginnings (ssu tuan 四端, sympathy and compassion, shame and dislike, modesty and yielding, and approval and disapproval) that produce the four moral virtues (jen, yi, li, and chih) when they find their proper fulfillment; but the term applies only to moral impulses. In English, we call any basic impulse or urge of an organism that we consider innate a "drive". What happens when there is conflict between the ordinary drives of a human being and his moral ones? What happens when there is conflict between what pleases the senses and what delights the mind?

Mencius maintains, at 7A:3, that the moral virtues internal to oneself (jen, yi, li, chih) can be summoned at will. They do not depend on outside factors. If we wish, we can be benevolent at any time. But we cannot will to be hungry, for hunger, as well as the satisfaction of hunger, is dependent on outside factors.

Mencius maintains at 6A:15 that the hsin is the greater aspect (or perhaps "organ" is intended here) because it can ssu (function intellectually, and especially ethically), and so not be overwhelmed by the rest of the organism. He says: "If one establishes one's self in one's greater [aspect] (the heart or mind), then one's lesser [aspect] (the sense organs and their impulses) cannot take over by force." Mencius means that the passions cannot gain control and suppress the ethical function of the hsin.<sup>15</sup>

The specifically human hsin is not bound by external causal factors even though it initially was constituted by them. The moral virtues are formed

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15. See Mencius 2A:2, p. 186, and 6A:15, p. 32.



through the ordinary kind of causation that governs most processes in the phenomenal world; but, once fully constituted, these virtues motivate a man regardless of the fluctuations of his physiological condition. The ordinary desires or drives that human beings share with other animals, such as hunger and sex, increase and decrease in intensity depending on the degree of satiation or on other physiological conditions. The moral virtues are invulnerable to such variations, though of course -- along with all urges and impulses -- they are permanently stilled by the death of the organism. Forces such as selfish desires within the organism may also obstruct the moral virtues so that, while they still function in a sense, they are frustrated.<sup>16</sup> This interaction is something like the way a ruler may continue to issue commands even though a person or situation thwarts their transmission or execution. There is a remedy for this predicament: the unification of the will (chih 志) insures that the hsin can resist disruptive forces and maintain its moral control over the entire organism.<sup>17</sup>

16. The Hsing-li ta-ch'üan shu 性理大全書 [Great compendium on [human] nature and principle -- which was completed by Hu Kuang 胡廣 [1370-1418] in 1415], 31:3bf/32, records the way Huang Kan 黃幹 (Huang Mien-chai 黃勉齋 [1152-1221]) expressed this idea in terms of ch'i 氣 (lifebreath): "The ch'i's being either pure or turbid is like [the hsing's being covered over by something so that to a greater or lesser extent] it cannot issue forth. For instance, weak men see what is just (yi) and yet do nothing. The idea of doing what is just is indeed within, but it cannot issue forth. This is like the light of a lamp being covered with a paper shade. The light is still inside, but it cannot issue forth. However, when the paper is removed, [the light then shines brightly forth] without any further ado."

17. See the Analects, 2:4, the Mencius, 2A:2, 4A:13, 7A:4, the Ta-hsüeh, sections 1 and 7, and the Chung-yung, sections 20-26 and 32.

While these moral drives may be stilled by death, it is also true that they may lead a person to choose death to prevent their violation.

Several passages indicate that the hsin or will can sacrifice the organism (including itself) when necessary to preserve the moral integrity of the whole. One characteristic passage is quoted below from the Mencius, 6A:10:

Mencius said: "I desire fish, and I also desire bear's paw. If I cannot have both I will give up the fish and choose the bear's paw. Life too is something I desire; yi (duty, justice) is also something I desire. If I cannot have both I will give up life and choose yi.<sup>18</sup>

### 5. Potential Goodness of Human Beings

Because the four te (moral powers, virtues, or drives -- jen, yi, li, and chih) have the ability to subordinate the drives shared with animals, Mencius maintains that humans are good by nature. But this goodness is a potential that has to be developed. Mencius nowhere claims that humans are good from birth. Their hsing, or nature, is good, but it must be developed and integrated before it can assume full control over the organism.

Some supporting evidence for this interpretation has already been mentioned in passing. In the passage from the Mencius quoted above on page 32 the "greater aspect" that allows one to be a great man is clearly the hsin. Of the hsin it is said: "If [the hsin] ssu's (functions intellectually and ethically) then it gets it; if not then it does not get it. [Hsin] is what heaven has given me. If I establish myself in my greater [aspect], then my

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18. This course of action is what is known as "sacrificing life in the course of fulfilling moral obligation." See the Mencius, 6A:10.

lesser [aspect] cannot take over by force." The "lesser aspect" is the ordinary level of function of the person, which comes into interaction with external things and is led astray by them. But the greater aspect, the mind, once established firmly cannot be so led astray. This passage reiterates the teaching from Mencius, 7A:3, quoted above on page 37. Ssu (intellectual and ethical functioning) is a case where "by seeking one can obtain something, and by giving it up one can lose it."

The Mencius, 7A:21, gives another indication of what he regards the proper hsing of a human being to be:

The [morally] noble man does desire vast lands and multitudes of people, but what he enjoys is not therein. The [morally] noble man does take joy in standing at the center of the world [as ruler] and pacifying [all] the people within the four seas, but what he recognizes as his hsing (i.e., his innermost motivations) is not therein. What the [morally] noble man takes as his hsing is neither augmented by great office nor diminished by circumstances of poverty, for his lot (scope of proper action, moira) is determined. What the [morally] noble man gives recognition to as his hsing are the jen (benevolence), yi (sense of right and wrong), li (sense of ritual, propriety), and chih (wisdom) that are rooted in his mind. When these [virtues] take visible form, they are seen as a mild harmony in the countenance and a rich fullness in the back. When expressed through the four limbs, they convey their meaning wordlessly.



Mencius indicates that full actualization of a human hsing transforms one's mental or spiritual state so that in facial expression as well as "body language" he expresses no distress or internal conflict. We today may affirm that such a change is merely a temporary state of the body reflecting a transient condition of mind, but Mencius (and later philosophers) may well have

regarded it as a more substantial transformation. Indeed, in later times, moral transformation was believed to involve "physical" changes. But that is the subject of the last two chapters of this dissertation.

### III. CH'ING

The concept of ch'ing first comes to philosophical prominence in a crucial passage in the Mencius. Because of problems of interpretation centering around that passage, later thinkers replaced Mencius' idea of a subordination of some functions of the human mind by other of its functions with the idea of a tension between moral inclinations and physical desires. This realignment of the image of human mental functioning had a profound influence on the further development of Chinese thought.

#### 1. Derivation and Cognates

The word "ch'ing 情" derives from "ch'ing 青" (bronze form , seal form , the name of a color concept that includes the deep tones of the spectrum from blue to green shading into black.<sup>1</sup> The structure of the character indicates that the most primitive meaning was probably "the color of growing vegetation," but at a very early time the term was applied to the color of the cloudless sky. The Chuang-tzu, 1:15/47, says of the mighty p'eng 鹏 bird that it "cuts through the clouds and puts its back to the ch'ing sky." Clearly the p'eng had reached an altitude where the sky was no longer sullied by clouds. The clear blue of the sky became a symbol of purity. This connotation of the word is still seen in the modern terms "ch'ing t'ien 青天," (lit., "blue sky," but used figuratively to describe a person's purity and moral clarity), "ch'ing t'ien pai jih 青天白日" (lit., "blue sky and white sun," said of a person whose conscience is clear and who has nothing concealed in his heart), "ch'ing

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1. See Kao Shu-fan, Hsing, yin, yi tsung-ho ta tzu-tien, p. 2012.

yün 青雲" (this does not mean "blue clouds," but "a blue sky free of clouds," and is descriptive of people of commendable virtue), and several other terms built on "ch'ing yün" such as "ch'ing yün chih 青雲志" (pure and lofty aspirations).<sup>2</sup>

Several cognate terms were derived from the sense "purity" of the word "ch'ing 青":<sup>3</sup> "ch'ing 清" (水 water + 青 blue-green), clarity or purity (of water); "ch'ing 晴" (日 sun + 青 blue-green), clearness (of the sky); "ch'ing 菁" (艸 grass + 青 green), usually the name of a light green flower, it also means the pure fraction or essence of something; "ching 精" (米 rice + 青 blue-green), the pure or refined part of something;<sup>4</sup> "ching 靜" (青 blue-green + 爭 struggle), tranquility or absence of struggle; "ching 睛" (目 eye + 青 blue-green), the transparent part of the eye. Finally there is the word "ch'ing 情" (心 heart + 青 blue-green) that is the subject of this discussion.

2. See Wu Sen, "'Ch'ing' yü Chung-kuo wen-hua," Ming pao, IX, 9 (1974), 17-22.

3. Not all characters having "ch'ing" as a component involve the sense of purity. For instance, a ching 鶩 is a bird something like a heron, "ching 清" means "to cool," and a ch'ing 蜻 is a dragonfly. For more information on the color ch'ing, see Peter A. Boodberg, ed., Cedules from a Berkeley Workshop in Asiatic Philology, no. 008-540910, "On Chinese ts'ing, 'blue-green.'"

4. Ch'ien Mu, Shih tao-chia ching-shen yi, [Explanation of the ching-shen as used by the Taoists], Hsin-ya hsüeh-pao, II, 1 (1969), 27, says: "When clouds or fog are swept away so that the blue sky can be seen, this is also called ching 精." Ch'ien Mu provides several examples of this usage.

2. Whether "Ch'ing" Meant "Emotions" in Early Times

Angus C. Graham has already explicated the meaning of this word in an appendix to his article entitled "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature,"<sup>5</sup> where he says:

In the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung dynasty ch'ing 'passions' is contrasted with hsing 'nature.' Although the word ch'ing is very common in pre-Han literature I should like to risk the generalization that it never means 'passions' even in Hsün-tzu, where we find the usage from which the later meaning developed. As a noun it means 'the facts' (often contrasted with ming 名 wen 聞) or sheng 聲 'reputation'), as an adjective 'genuine' (contrasted with wei 偽 'false'), as an adverb common in Mo-tzu 'genuinely.'"

Graham means "passion" as a synonym for "emotion," and indeed he translates "liu-ch'ing 六情" as the "six emotions." {219 and 248} At the very least, he does not say that "ch'ing" has any denotation or connotation of "emotions" in pre-Han times (i.e., before 206 B.C.), but limits the term to meaning "the facts," "genuine," and "genuinely." To take this as an exhaustive treatment, or to maintain as Graham does, that his definition holds for all philosophical usage through the Hsün-tzu, oversimplifies the concept denoted by "ch'ing," and overlooks a serious problem. The Shih-ching 詩經 [Book of odes], Ode 136, says:

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5. Graham, Angus C. "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies, n.s., 6, 1-2 (1967), 259f.

Your dancing and reveling on Yüan Hill is truly with ch'ing, and this is blameless.<sup>6</sup>

Even if we use Graham's definition (p. 260), "the ch'ing of X is what X cannot lack if it genuinely is X," the genuineness of true dancing and reveling would seem necessarily to include feelings or emotions. "Ch'ing" is at minimum being used to refer to the emotions, to say that they are genuine. But the term actually seems to mean "strong feelings" or "sincere emotions" in this poem. It seems somewhat incongruous to me to assert that the poet means that genuine dancing (what is false dancing?) and genuine reveling are blameless. It must rather be that the dancing and reveling are blameless because they express genuine feeling.<sup>7</sup>

The Shu-ching 書經 [Book of documents], "K'ang kao"

(Announcement to K'ang), 7/23, says:

Oh! Young Master Feng, [conduct yourself as a feudal prince as though the threat of] pain and disease were upon your

6. The expression "wu-wang 無望," which I have translated "blameless," is variously interpreted by scholars of the Shih-ching. Ch'ü Wan-li explains that it is the same as "wu-wang 无妄" in the Yi-ching, hexagram 25, "The Unexpected." See his Shih-ching shih-yi, p. 98. Bernard Karlgren, The Book of Odes, p. 87, translates: "I certainly have love (for you), but no admiration." My own translation is colored by my understanding of the rest of the passage, especially the word "ch'ing." My interpretation of "wu-wang" has the advantage that it uses a standard dictionary definition of "wang" attested by the Shuo-wen t'ung-hsün ting-sheng. That definition also agrees with Legge's translation of the name of the twenty-fifth hexagram.

7. Confucius comments on the Shih-ching that none of its poems are lascivious. {Ana., 2:2} This may be because he viewed all of the emotions expressed therein as genuine.



body. Be serious! The majesty of heaven aids those who are sincere. The ch'ing of the people is abundantly visible.

Although this ch'ing may well be the facts about the people or their true facts and circumstances, surely among these circumstances their emotional reactions to the events of their lives must predominate. Yet Graham says that "In [the Hsün-tzu and the Li-chi 禮記 (Book of Rites)], but nowhere else in pre-Han literature, the word refers only to the genuine in man that it is polite to disguise, and therefore to his feelings." {1967: 263}

The other meanings of the word "ch'ing 情" that can be found in early sources may have come by extension from the meaning of genuineness or sincerity of emotions. Those meanings all preserve the sense "unsullied" or "unadulterated" of "ch'ing 青." They are: honesty or presenting the true circumstances (Ana., 13:4), evidence (Ana., 19:19), the volatile emotional state involved in human sexuality (Mo, 6:35/40), truly (Mo, 13:58/60; 17:10/14; 18:1/41; 19:62/65), reality (Mo, 16:36/86), truth (Mo, 36:2/31), true testimony (Mo, 36:5/51), or natural state (Menc., 3A:4).

### 3. Mencius' Use of the Word "Ch'ing"

Contrary to most accounts, Mencius did not use "ch'ing 情" as a technical term. The four occurrences of this word in the Mencius refer to the real or natural state of things (3A:4), the actual circumstances or facts (4B:18), the real conditions of people or the real facts about them (6A:8), and (in Graham's words) "what constitutes a genuine man" (6A:6). Graham's interpretation of this passage is in my judgment correct. Nevertheless much more can be discovered concerning Mencius' original meaning.

The word "ch'ing 情" became a technical term in Chinese philosophy because after Mencius used it incidentally in a crucial passage, Hsün-tzu 荀子 (ca. 298 - ca. 238) distorted its meaning. This passage records a conversation in which one of Mencius' disciples lists many counterexamples given by others to show that the hsing (nature) is not good. The Mencius, 6A:6, says:

[Kung-tu-tzu said:] "Now you say that the hsing (nature) is good. Then are all of these [counterexamples] false?"

Mencius replied: "As for its ch'ing (nai jo ch'i ch'ing 乃若其情), it can do good. That was what I meant by good. If one does what is not good, it is not the fault of one's ts'ai (innate potential). All men have hsin (heart, mind) of compassion and sympathy. All men have hsin of shame and dislike. All men have hsin of modesty and yielding. All men have hsin of affirmation and denial. The hsin of compassion and sympathy is benevolence (jen). That of shame and dislike is the sense of right and wrong (yi). That of modesty and yielding is the sense of ritual (li). The hsin of affirmation and denial is wisdom (chih).

When Mencius says: "As for its ch'ing 情, it can do good," the word "its" (ch'i 其) must refer to the word "hsing (nature)" immediately above.<sup>8</sup> If "ch'ing" does indeed refer to the unsullied state of something, then Mencius is saying that as for the hsing (nature) in its unsullied state, it can do good. This is reminiscent of his famous story of Ox Mountain {6A:3}, where the good hsing (nature) of man is said to be degraded by socio-cultural environmental forces just as the verdant growth of Ox Mountain was destroyed by the depredations of men and their domestic animals. Mencius identified as components of the hsing (nature) the famous Four Beginnings: jen, yi, li, and

8. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 59:9b/47.

chih (which are the hsin of compassion and sympathy, shame and dislike, modesty and yielding, and affirmation and denial), and said that -- if unsullied -- they were enough to permit men to do good.

#### 4. Hsün-tzu's Misinterpretation

Hsün-tzu misinterpreted Mencius' words by equating "ch'ing 情" with emotions and selfish desires. The twenty-third chapter of the Hsün-tzu, entitled "The hsing (nature) is evil," is directly aimed at Mencius and his doctrine of the goodness of human hsing.<sup>9</sup> It is hard to believe that he would not correctly understand that by the ch'ing 情 of man or of his hsing, Mencius meant the Four Beginnings. But at 22:2/88 Hsün-tzu says: "The liking, disliking, happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy of the hsing are called ch'ing." By unannouncedly giving ch'ing a new meaning in a clearly Mencian context, Hsün-tzu suggested in the following text that Mencius had said that "by following one's emotions (such as joy, anger, etc.) one can do good."

Hsün-tzu seems to have misunderstood Mencius' use of the expression "nai-jo . . . tse . . . 乃若 . . . 則 . . ." which in the Mo-tzu and the Mencius means "as for," but which does not occur in either the Chuang-tzu or

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9. Wang Ch'ung 王充, Lun-heng 論衡, 3:14a/22, says: "Sun Ch'ing 孫卿 (Hsün-tzu) has written a chapter on the evil of hsing in opposition to Mencius."

the Hsün-tzu<sup>10</sup> According to the Chao Ch'i 趙岐 (died 201 A.D.) commentary to the Mencius, and as is attested by other early texts, "jo 苟" by itself means "following along with," and is glossed by the word "shun 順."<sup>11</sup> By using this meaning, the phrase "As for its ch'ing" becomes "then by following one's ch'ing." It is at least a great coincidence that Hsün-tzu uses the word "shun

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10. Mo Ti 墨翟 (ca. 479 - ca. 381 B.C.) was from the state of Sung, and Mencius was from nearby Tsou. But Chuang-tzu was also from Sung. So the fact that "nai-jo" does not occur in the Chuang-tzu cannot be because of dialectal differences. Hsün-tzu was from Chao, which was rather remote from Sung and Tsou, but he lived and worked in Ch'i and Ch'u, which were on the north and south of the Sung and Tsou area. Since the expression "nai-jo . . . tse . . ." is an uncommon one, it is understandable that Hsün-tzu might have been unfamiliar with it if its use was limited to the Sung and Tsou area.

Hsün-tzu was not unaware of meanings of "ch'ing" other than "emotions": For instance, at 8:28/128 and 23:86/94 he uses it to mean "reality," at 16:79/82 "true characteristics," and at 21:42/96 "true conditions." Hsün-tzu's "The Hsing is Evil" chapter was directed at Mencius' doctrine that the hsing is good. It is not easy for me to believe that Hsün-tzu could be unable to understand Mencius use of "ch'ing." Even if Hsün-tzu failed to understand the "nai jo . . . tse . . ." sentence structure, he should have been able to see from the general context of Mencius' remarks that human beings were affirmed to be innately provided with the Four Beginnings. Rather than setting up the implicit straw-man argument that Mencius maintained that by following the emotions such as fear and anger human beings could do good, Hsün-tzu ought to have stated clearly that Mencius believed all humans possess the Four Beginnings and then show evidence to prove that judgment incorrect.

11. Chu Hsi agrees that "jo cannot mean "shun" in the Mencius passage. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 59:9b/47.

順 " (following) four times in the passage at 23:1/94, and uses its synonym, ts'ung從," one more time:

Man's hsing is evil. His goodness is artificial. Now no sooner is a man born than by hsing (nature) he has a desire for profit. The result of following this [desire for profit] is that strife will be produced, and modesty and yielding will perish. [Man is] born and has his hatreds and dislikes. By following them, cruelty and injuriousness will be produced, and loyalty and faithfulness will perish. [Man is] born and has the desires of the ears and eyes, the appetites for sounds and colors. Following these [desires and appetites], debauchery is produced, and ritual (li禮), duty (yi義), culture, and order (li理) will perish. Therefore, following the human hsing and complying with the human ch'ing must incur struggle and strife, combine [with similar tendencies of other people to produce] opposition to maintaining one's social station and [to produce social] disorder, and finally result in violence.

Note that Hsün-tzu explicitly mentions modesty and yielding (this pair is one of the Four Beginnings), loyalty and faithfulness (great Confucian virtues), ritual and duty (li and yi, two of Mencius' four human virtues), culture, and order (li, thought by Mencius to be innately appealing to human beings).

If he was indeed covertly referring to Mencius' doctrines, Hsün-tzu misinterpreted his words by defining "ch'ing情" as "emotions," and playing on the isolated meaning of the word "jo" as "to follow" in the expression "nai-jo乃若 (as for)." He seemed to imply that Mencius had said: "Then by following one's emotions (such as fear, anger, etc.), one can do good." Hsün-tzu ridiculed this view and declared that those feelings derived from man's hsing, man was surely evil. How could anyone do good by following his "likings, dislikings, happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy?" This attack, regardless of whether it was

truly a covert attempt to discredit Mencius, opened the question of the good or evil of human nature within the Confucian school and also suggested the idea common in later Confucianism, that desires or passions flow from the hsing -- an idea that is made to seem reasonable to us by the usual translation of the word "hsing" as "nature," when in fact Mencius restricted the meaning of human hsing to the Four Beginnings or the four moral virtues. Hsün-tzu's argument and the commentary on the Mencius by Chao Ch'i that explained "jo" as meaning "following" directed later readers' attentions from what Mencius had to say about the powers exercised by the hsing in its unsullied state to a non-Mencian view that the mind had a tripartate division into hsing, ch'ing, and ts'ai and that ch'ing can produce yü (desire) should it get out of hand.

Hsün-tzu elaborated on the relationship between hsing (nature) and ch'ing (feelings), saying at 22:63/85: "Hsing is the natural tendency [of an organism]. Ch'ing are the unadorned states (chih 質) of the hsing (i.e., the states of hsing as uninfluenced by education). Desires (yü 欲) are the responses of the ch'ing." Hsing is the totality of the innate tendencies of an organism, and ch'ing are the individual emotional components (as listed above)

of those tendencies.<sup>12</sup> At 22:2/85, "hsing" is also defined as the response of the organism to external things:

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12. Hsün-tzu defines three words: hsing, ch'ing, and yü. He says, in effect: "Hsing' means the natural tendency [of an organism]. 'Ch'ing', the unadorned states of the hsing. 'Yü', the responses of the ch'ing." Now if "ch'ing" means "what is genuine within us," then Hsün-tzu must mean that 'what is genuine within us' is the unadorned states (Graham identifies these with the chih 質, "material" {1967: 264}) of the hsing. That interpretation certainly makes sense; in fact it is virtually a tautology. Graham translates: "'Nature' is spontaneous tendency. 'What is genuine in us' is the material of our nature. 'Desire' is the response of what is genuine in us." Although the structure of the three Chinese sentences is identical, in the English the first and third have the nature of definitions, while the middle sentence is a comment. What is genuine in us may very well be the material of our natures, but "what is genuine in us" does not mean "the material of our natures" in the same way that "nature" means "our spontaneous tendencies," and "desire" means "the responses of our ch'ing." "What is genuine in us is the material of our nature" is a comment or explanation about the constitution of human beings, not a definition. It seems more natural and true to the Chinese to say Hsün-tzu's interpretation is that "'Emotion' means the unadorned states of our hsing." As Hsün-tzu says at 22:3/88: "Our hsing's (nature's) likings, dislikings, happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy are called ch'ing." "Ch'ing" here clearly means "emotions," or "natural feelings," but Graham translates: "Our nature's liking and disliking, pleasure and anger, sadness and joy, are called 'what is genuine in us.'" This is a strange sentence even in English. Liking and disliking may indeed be "what is genuine in us," but why say that we call them that?" Perhaps Graham thinks Hsün-tzu meant something like "Liking and disliking, etc., are what is genuine in our nature." But I believe that in Chinese that would have to be: "Hao, wu, hsi, nu, ai, le, hsing chih ch'ing yeh 好, 惡, 喜, 怒, 哀, 樂, 性之情也," a much different sentence.

What is produced by the harmony of the hsing in its perfect response [to external things] naturally and without the use of external compulsion is [also] called the hsing.

When the innate tendencies of an organism are set in motion by outside stimuli, the response, including the tendency toward goal-oriented behavior, is called desire.

### 5. Later Interpretations

Analysis of the relationship between ch'ing and hsing lay dormant after Hsün-tzu, with the exception of some T'ang dynasty thought, until Sung scholarship turned its energies to a renewed study of Mencius' philosophy. These investigations formed the basis for the definitions of those concepts formulated more completely by Li Ao 李翱 (died ca. 844), Wang An-shih 王安石 (1021-1086), the Ch'eng brothers (Ch'eng Hao 程頤, [1032-1085] and Ch'eng Yi 程頤, [1033-1108]) and Chu Hsi 朱喜 (1130-1200), who reintroduced mention of yü (desire).

In his Fu hsing shu 復性書 [Restoration of the nature], A:5/35, Li Ao says: "The hsing [of a human being] is the mandate of heaven. . . . Ch'ing is the activity (tung 動) of the hsing." Wang An-shih says: "The hsing is the basis (pen 本) of the ch'ing. The ch'ing are the functions (yung 用) of the hsing." {Hsing-ch'ing p'ien} Ch'eng Yi's view is recorded in the Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu 河南程氏遺書 [Posthumous works of the Ch'eng brothers of Honan], 18:17b/42:

[Someone] asked: "Are happiness and anger produced from the hsing (nature)?"

[Ch'eng Yi] replied: "Indeed they are. As soon as there are life and awareness there is hsing. As soon as there is



hsing there is ch'ing (feeling). Without hsing how could there be ch'ing?"

[Someone] also asked: "How about [saying that] happiness and anger are produced externally?"

[Ch'eng Yi] responded: "It is not that they are produced externally. They are stimulated (kan 感) externally but issue forth (fa 發) from inside."

[Someone] asked: "Is the hsing's (nature's) having happiness and anger like the water's having waves?"

[Ch'eng Yi] said: "Yes. . . . Without hsing how could there be ch'ing?"

The Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu, 22A:14b/14, adds an explanation of yü (desire):

Po-wen asked further: "Are the hsin, hsing, and heaven of which the two of you speak only one li?"

[Master Ch'eng] answered: "That is correct. In terms of li, it is called heaven. In terms of what is endowed, it is called hsing. In terms of what is present within human beings, it is called hsin."

[He] asked further: "Is what is applied [in thought] always [then] the hsin?"

[Master Ch'eng] said: "It is yi 意 (thought, intention)."

T'i asked: "Is yi emitted (fa發) by the hsin?"<sup>13</sup>

[Master Ch'eng] answered: "After there is hsin then there is yi."

[He] asked further: "How about when Mencius says that the hsin comes and goes at no special time?"

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13. The image of the mind emitting a thought is strongly discordant with the Western world-conceptions. In the Western context, the mind is conceived as immaterial, and seems to be virtually indistinguishable from its thoughts. This Chinese depiction of ideas raises the question: Where is thought emitted to?

If we think of the hsin as a tsang (storehouse), and furthermore as a chih (substrate) -- the choice of words here relates to the level of abstraction one prefers and not to any fundamental difference in conception -- then we find no difficulty conceiving of the hsin emitting a ch'i. But this ch'i is just thought or intention, which may either remain in the immediate vicinity of the hsin, travel through the body to initiate actions at its periphery, or (as in the case of the Han-dynasty woman who wanted to summon her son [Lun-heng, 5:15af/16]) even travel beyond the body.

Wang Pi 王弼 (226-249) discusses the rectifying effects of the hsing on the desires or passions of a person in terms of an analogy to the warming effects of a fire. His words suggest a similarity between ch'i and a field, such as surrounds a magnet or a mass, in that he indicates ch'i may be emitted by some chih and hover around it during an ongoing process, like a swarm of bees hovers around the migrating queen.

In his Lun-yü shih-yi 論語釋疑 [Explanations of doubtful points in the Analects of Confucius], 9a/11, Wang Pi says: "Near a fire it is hot, but the fire itself is not hot. Even though the fire itself is not hot, it can make (shih使) [things] hot. What can make [things] hot is ch'i or hotness." Wang Pi has probably observed that the heat from a fire extends far from the flames, and has attributed this "field" of warmth to a very fine ch'i that takes fire as its chih.

[Master Ch'eng] replied: "The hsin does not come and go to begin with. Mencius was only speaking [of the hsin] in terms of taking things up and dismissing them."

Po-wen continued questioning: "When a person pursues something, is it his hsin pursuing it?"

[Master Ch'eng] replied: "The hsin has no coming or going. What pursues things is yü (desire)."

In his commentary to the Mencius, 6A:6, in the Ssu-shu chi-chu 四書集注, Chu Hsi repeats the definition of Li Ao. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan [Great compendium of classified conversations of Master Chu], 5:16a/17, records the following explanation, which includes "ts'ai (capacity)," also a term from the Mencius:

The hsing (nature) is the li (pattern) of the hsin. The ch'ing (feelings) are the activity (tung 動) of the hsin (heart, mind). The ts'ai (capacity) is ch'ing's being able to [act] that way.

The Hui-an wen-chi 晦庵文集 [Collected writings of Chu Hsi], 64:19a/39, reiterates the idea that "desires are the responses of the hsing":

In your last letter I received your teaching concerning the word yü as it appears in the classics. According to my humble opinion, all the people who have ever been seen have been unable to remain unstirred by [outside] things and to be unmoved [emotionally]. [The Yüeh-chi, Treatise on music, 14/123] says: "To be stirred by things and be moved is the yü of the hsing." This says that [desire] also belongs to the hsing. The important question is whether the hsin rules or not. If the hsin rules then the ch'ing (feelings) attain rectitude. Governed by the norm of the hsing it cannot be called yü. If the hsin does not rule, then the ch'ing flow and sink [into iniquity] and the hsing is totally engaged in passion.

#### IV. HSING

Controversy over hsing -- the question whether human nature is good or evil -- has been a central part of Chinese philosophical inquiry since the time of Mencius. Although the term "hsing" originally connoted the motivational aspects of life, it quickly became involved in speculations derived from yin-yang theory, ideas about li (pattern, "principle") and other more sophisticated concepts. Mencius' insights into the autonomy of the human mind are closely tied to his understanding of hsing. Although his observations have been greatly obscured, the more systematic teachings of later thinkers are of interest in their own right.

##### 1. Hsing in the Shih-ching and Shu-ching

The word "hsing 性" appears to have had psychological or motivational connotations related to the vitality of the human organism from at least as early as the time of the Shih-ching and the Shu-ching. The Shih-ching, Ode number 252, says:<sup>1</sup>

May you live out (mi 彌, fulfill) your hsing  
Coming to a good end like your ancestors.

In the Shu-ching, "Hsi-Po k'an Li 西伯 戡黎," 3/4, Tsu-yi 祖伊, a minister of the Shang royal court, reports to Chou 紂, the last ruler of the Shang, on the defeat of the vassal kingdom of Li. This conversation is almost certainly a fabrication used to substantiate the legitimacy of the Chou

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1. Bernard Karlgren, The Book of Odes, p. 209, translates: "May you (end=) fulfill your natural years and like the former princes (your ancestors) end them."

ruling class. Tsu-yi is explaining that heaven has withdrawn its mandate from the Shang royal house because of its failings and transgressions. He says:

Thus heaven has abandoned [the Shang], [so that] our people do not get sufficient food, do not take pleasure in their heavenly hsing, and do not follow our laws.<sup>2</sup>

After the regency of the Duke of Chou ended and the young king (Ch'eng 成, reigned 1115-1079) ascended to power, he commanded the Duke of Shao to inspect the site of the new capital at Lo. The former rulers of the Shang-Yin dynasty having been transferred there, the Duke of Chou gave the following advice which was recorded in the Shu-ching, "Shao kao 召誥" [The announcement of Duke Shao], 11/18:

Let the king first cause the officials of the [Shang-]Yin to submit, and keep them near to the officials of our Chou [court or administration]. Limit their hsing so that there may be daily

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2. See Karlgren, The Book of Documents, pp. 26f. He translates: "Therefore Heaven rejects us, and we have (no means of) eating our food in tranquility, (the king) does not consider his heavenly nature, he does not follow the statutes." Karlgren gives the earliest commentary, that of Cheng Hsüan (127-200), as his authority. But his interpretation involves a change of subjects. I follow the commentary of Sun Yi-jang 孫詒讓 (1848-1908).

progress 節性惟曰其邁.<sup>3</sup> Let the king be careful in giving them their proper positions; he must be careful to attend to virtue.

Judging by context, "hsing" originally meant "natural lifespan" and "things people like to do," and later, "innate inclinations." In his Hsing ming ku-hsün pien-cheng 性命古訓辨證, Fu Ssu-nien 傅斯年 has advanced the view that what is now written as "hsing 性" was in the most ancient texts written as "sheng 生" (life). Let us examine his explanation of "hsing's" early meaning. Let us try to determine the meaning of "hsing" or "sheng" (however it was originally written) from context alone. According to the early view, shown in the quotations above, hsing both imposes limits upon organisms and also can itself be limited. The first occurrence of "hsing" does not have any obvious connection with mind. It appears to simply mean "lifespan." In the second occurrence, hsing could well be connected with the mind, since it is the mind that feels pleasure. In the third passage, hsing apparently refers to human

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3. Bernard Karlgren, The Book of Documents, p. 49, translates: "May the king first submit Yin's managers of affairs, and associate them with our Chou's managers of affairs, discipline their (nature=) minds, and they will progress daily. May the king with reverent attention (making a place=) give them their proper positions; he should not fail reverently to attend to virtue."

"Hsing" in the first three quotations in this chapter is very close to (and may have been written as) "sheng 生" (to live, life). However, the word (regardless of how it may originally have been written in these texts) connotes the motivational aspects of life rather than the mere fact of life. For further discussion, see Fu Ssu-nien, Hsing ming ku-hsün pien-cheng (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1940), and A. C. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," pp. 216f.

desires. The desires or inclinations of the former rulers are subject to limitation by external restraint. If "hsing" does mean desire, then there is a clear connection between hsing and mind. It does not seem that the third quotation could be saying to limit the lives or lifespans of the Shang administrators since the speaker first advocates keeping them near the Chou rulers. If it means "limit the living" of the Shang administrators, then the idea of imposing limits implies that there is a vibrant motivational force of life to be limited. The idea of this motivational drive is appropriately symbolized by the heart radical on the left side of the common form of the character.

## 2. Motivational Connotations of Hsing

In all three cases given above, the hsing is something to be fulfilled, and in each case hsing has something to do with life processes. An organism, having been born, has an innate tendency to grow to maturity, reproduce, and carry out other biological functions. An organism has certain innate sources of direction that provide its motivation and that may receive

satisfaction from the environment.<sup>4</sup> The urges that these sources of motivation produce can be fulfilled in supplying needs of the organism, but they may also be either allowed to grow out of hand or be unduly limited. They are, in any event, motivations, drives, or forces that originate in the organism itself.

Confucius contrasted learned behaviors to hsing; the hsing of a person was taken to be the substrate from which various behaviors can be developed by practice (hsi 習). {Ana., 17:2}

### 3. Mencius' Understanding of Hsing.<sup>5</sup>

The beliefs concerning the hsing that Mencius proposed, or at least did not oppose when expressed by others, can be presented in the following propositions: The hsing is good. {Menc., 3A:1} It has normative or organizing powers to determine what a specific organism should be like. {6A:1} It is or

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4. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 59:4b/47, characterizes such innate sources of motivation from a Chinese perspective as follows: "Kao-tzu only knew the human mind; he did not know of the tao-mind. He perceived the place [in the mind] that tends toward benefit and avoids injury, and that [avoids] hunger and cold [in favor of] a full belly and warmth. Yet he did not know the place [in the mind] that distinguishes those beneficial and injurious things, etc. [That place] is precisely the original nature (pen-jan chih hsing 本然之性). Therefore he said that when another person is an elder I treat him as an elder, by which he meant to deny this respect is due to a hsin (heart, feeling, mind) that treats him as an elder -- because he is older I have no choice but to treat him as an elder. Therefore he pointed to yi (sense of right and wrong, justice, duty) as being external."

5. For an excellent discussion of hsing in Mencius and Hsün-tzu, see D. C. Lau's article, "Theories of Human Nature in Mencius and Shyuntzyy," 541-565. See also his article entitled "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," Asia Major, n.s. X (1963), p. 173.



has a tendency to do good. {6A:2} Each kind of organism has its specific hsing. {6A:3} The drives of hunger and sex are components of the human hsing. Hsing involves both the ability to perceive a thing as a suitable object for that hsing and a tendency or impulse to react to it in a specific way. {6A:5} In humans, this ability can be analyzed into four components of an axiological character that are specific to us: the Four Beginnings. {6A:6} Innate characteristics are broadly the same for all members of the same species. {6A:7} The moral virtues that are the products of the hsing can be attacked and diminished by socio-cultural environmental forces. {6A:8} The hsing can be augmented or strengthened by a process of interaction with the socio-cultural environment. {6B:15} The moral will or design of heaven is in some sense contained, reproduced, or otherwise present in the hsing. {7A:1} The hsing is latent in the hsin (heart, mind).<sup>6</sup> {7A:1} In his own theory, Mencius defined hsing as good innate tendencies to perceive and react to things in the environment in a certain way. He analyzed these innate tendencies into four kinds: his famous Four Beginnings. He maintained that these tendencies come from heaven but can be augmented or diminished by environmental factors.

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6. See also Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Ju-chia che-hsüeh, p. 93.

The Mencius, 4B:26, says:<sup>7</sup>

Those in the world who speak of hsing base themselves on ku 故 (external, causal factors) and nothing more. Ku take li (configurations [that channel forces or activities]) as their basis.<sup>8</sup> What is detestable about people who know a great deal is that they carve out [shortcut channels to force things to go where they think those things ought to go to achieve results]. In the case of knowledge like [that used in] Yü's managing the flood waters, there is nothing detestable about it. Yü's managing the [flood] waters was done by means of effortlessness (wu shih 無事). If people who know a great deal can also do things effortlessly, then their knowledge will be great. Consider the height of heaven and the distance of the stars. If their ku are sought, it is possible to call up (chih 致) the solstices for a thousand years while sitting at home.

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7. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 57:14a-17a/19 for Chu Hsi's explanation of this passage. Chu regards "ku" as referring to already-manifested phenomena. He believes "li 利" means "shun 順" ("to follow the flow"). Everyone, including Mencius himself must speak of hsing in terms of its manifestations. Following along with (li 利) the hsing is good, and opposing it constitutes evil. So Chu explains the second sentence of the text as: "one should take conformance with the manifestations of hsing as one's basis." Chu appears to regard this passage to be a positive explication of Mencius' own philosophy rather than a criticism of others. He does not anticipate the objection that one could interpret his words as condoning the actions of anyone who might follow the dictates of the lesser components of hsing that human beings share with animals -- to the detriment of compliance with the higher demands of the human hsing.

8. The word "li 利" usually means "benefit, profit." See the Appendix on Ku and Li for the basis of this new translation.

Mencius stresses that both benevolence (jen) and the sense of right and wrong (yi) are internal {6A:4,5}, that is, they are forces operating from within human beings. The myth of Yü's pacifying the waters is central to Mencius' approach to cultivating human virtue. It is important to remember that Mencius sees the human hsing as a dynamic entity, as a force operating from within human beings.<sup>9</sup> He distinguishes it from the external factors, present and past, that determine or influence the constitution of a human being.

#### 4. Autonomy of the Human Mind.

I believe that for Mencius the term "ku 故" refers to what we would call external causative forces and "hsing 性" refers to internal causative forces. Thus hsing is a kind of entelechy (in Leibniz's sense of the word),<sup>10</sup> an ongoing process of growth and direction, that determines itself, and seeks to determine its environment so that it will accord with the innate needs of the

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9. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 59:5a/47, records this observation: "In the final analysis, when something is white and I treat it as white, then that comes from the distinguishing [activity] of my hsin (heart, mind)." The point bears equally on treating an elder as an elder.

10. See Leibniz, The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings, translated with an Introduction by Robert Latta, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898). In Section 18, beginning on p. 229, Leibniz states:

"All simple substances or created Monads might be called Entelechies, for they have in them a certain perfection; they have a certain self sufficiency which makes them the source of their internal activities and, so to speak, incorporeal automata. (Theod. 87.)"

In his note to this passage, Latta says: "The entelechy of Leibniz . . . is to be understood as an individual substance or force, containing within itself the principle of its own changes."

organism.<sup>11</sup> Humans, then, have two ontological aspects: their ku aspect by which they are constituted by processes external to them and through which they are subject to ordinary causation, and their proper hsing by which they are entelechies and impose, or tend to impose, order from the center of their being outward.

The ku aspect of human beings is what Mencius says "is hsing, [but] there is ming (the force of events) therein." The internal motivational aspect of humans is what Mencius says "is ming (i.e., it is originally formed by the force of events external to it), [but] there is hsing therein." {7B:24} The first kind of hsing is what other people talk about as hsing but is merely the play of physical forces, whereas the second kind of hsing, even though constituted by the same play of physical forces, has its own sovereignty or inviolability.

Mencius argues that others confuse the external factors, or ku, with the hsing. They want to account for everything on the basis of outside forces imposed on human beings. They liken man's moral nature to a carved willow cup, {Menc., 6A:1} or say that the sense of right and wrong (yi) is external to man. {6A:4,5} Yet there is more to man than external forces, otherwise these external forces would have nothing with which to interact. Granted that some of these internal characteristics of human beings are subject to change under the force of external influences, yet some of what a man is cannot be so changed without destroying his entire being. No sooner is any man constituted than he

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11. Mencius' emphasis is primarily ethical but not restricted solely to that domain.

has his own hsing (he is an entelechy), and functions as a causative and normative force (Mencius saw the hsing, or man's entelechy, as predominantly functioning in the ethical realm), bringing about change in the universe in his own right and according to his own innate moral drives. This makes him a co-creator with heaven and earth.<sup>12</sup> The innate moral drives that constitute the essence of a human being are the Four Beginnings which act to produce benevolence, sense of right and wrong, sense of ritual, and wisdom.

In my estimation, Mencius' analysis, which cannot be explored further here, is a great contribution to the philosophy of life and to the discussion of free will. It is indeed unfortunate that so little of Mencius' teachings on this subject was preserved in writing.

#### 5. Hsün-tzu on Hsing<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the greatest influence, albeit a negative one, of Hsün-tzu on the development of the concept of hsing was to carry the notion of hsing far away from Mencius' idea, and in the process almost totally to obliterate and

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12. The clear statement of this idea is a later development. See the end of the Wen-yen 文言 commentary to the first hexagram of the Yi-ching (Richard Wilhelm, I Ching, pp. 382f.) and the twenty-second section of the Chung-yung 中庸 [Doctrine of the mean].

13. For more information on Hsün-tzu's ideas on hsing, see D. C. Lau's "Theories of Human Nature in Mencius and Shyuntzy," 541-565, A. C. Graham's "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," Ts'ing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies, n.s., VI, 1-2 (1967), 215-274, and Huang Chang-chien "Meng-tzu hsing-lun chih yen-chiu," Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an, XXVI (1955), 227-308, and Ch'en Ta-ch'i, "Meng-tzu hsing shan shuo yü Hsün-tzu hsing e shuo te pu hsiang ti-ch'u," Kung-Meng hsüeh-pao, XIII (Sept., 1967), 1-12.

confuse the meager clues presented by Mencius to his own concept. Hsün-tzu's rhetoric was extremely effective and opened the way for the view that supposedly superior people, i.e., the ruling elite, could properly tell a person what to do, and neither heaven nor a man's own moral sense could do that job.

Graham says:

One way out of this dilemma [created by the supposition that one ought to follow one's hsing even if it is not good because it is given to one by heaven] is to conceive the Way of Heaven not as benevolent but as morally neutral, and man as the inventor of a moral Way of Man which he requires to continue his social existence.<sup>14</sup> Hsün-tzu in the 3rd century BC took this position and could therefore recognise the conflict between nature and morality as irreconcilable and pronounce that human nature is bad. {1967, 225}

The Chung-yung 中庸 [Doctrine of the mean] (probably written sometime around 200 B.C.<sup>15</sup>) says:

The mandate of heaven [immanent in human beings] is called the hsing; following this hsing is called [one's] tao (way), and tending this tao is called education. {Mean, 1}

The author of this passage pictures the hsing as an internal version of t'ien-ming 天命, the mandate of heaven, which remains latent until fulfilled, or at least partially fulfilled, in the process of integrating (ch'eng 誠) an individual human being. He calls for the integration (ch'eng) of the individual to put hsing into full operation. The author agrees with Mencius that the hsing

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14. See also, D. C. Lau, "Theories of Human Nature," p. 556.

15. See Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, I, 269ff., for a discussion of the authorship and time of composition of this book.

is the source of the tendency toward good in human behavior. But no trace remains of Mencius' axiological drive of four aspects (the Four Beginnings), even though some parts of the Chung-yung appear to be elaborations and refinements of passages from the Mencius. Hsing has lost its earlier biological explanation and has become a cosmic force given expression through individual beings. The cosmic hsing is conceived as common to everything in the world, thereby unifying all of the natural order as it finds expression through individual beings. {Mean, 22}

The Yüeh-chi 樂記 [Treatise on music] (compiled during the Han dynasty, perhaps between 200 and 90 B.C.) teaches that there is a characteristic

response of the human hsin (heart, mind) to each kind of external stimulus.<sup>16</sup> This response is not the hsing, but the response of the hsing to the outside things that impinge upon it. Although these responses are natural, they can lead to the destruction of, or damage to, the t'ien-li 天理 (innate order) of the organism. The argument that it is very important to avoid stimuli that could cause the disruption or destruction of the organism's innate order gives a new justification for the goal of tranquility in Confucianism.<sup>17</sup>

By Han times Mencius' original theory of the hsing had become thoroughly obscured, and it did not reemerge as long as the Confucian tradition remained vital. The Sung Confucians based their own theories on the remainder of the teachings discussed above. From the Han dynasty to the Sung, various thinkers tried to find a satisfactory answer to the question raised by Mencius and Hsün-tzu whether human hsing is good or evil by explaining human nature as a mixture of good and bad, or by maintaining that there are different classes of

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16. The Yüeh-chi is part of the Li-chi 禮記 [Book of rites]. In his translation of Fung Yu-lan's A History of Chinese Philosophy, I: 408, Derk Bodde dates the Li-chi at about 200 B.C. The relevant passage from the Yüeh-chi is at 14/125. That passage is also found in the Huai-nan-tzu 淮南子 {1:4/10} and the Shih chi 史記 {24:8b/42} in slightly different form. The former was written before 122 B.C., and the latter was written before 90 B.C.

17. Confucius said: "The wise take joy in water. The benevolent take joy in mountains. The wise are active. The benevolent are quiescent." {Ana., 6:23} This appears to be an application of dialectical reasoning similar to what we find in yin-yang theory. Water is always found flowing as a complement to the unmovable mountains, and similarly, yin and yang are complements of each other. The towering virtue of the sage is not limited to either wisdom or benevolence, but has both in ample abundance and proper complementarity.



people whose hsing is in some cases good, in some cases bad, and in some cases indifferent. None of the compromise positions achieved universal acceptance.

Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒 (179? - 104? B.C.) used yin-yang theory to discuss human nature. He maintained that hsing is yang and therefore good, while ch'ing is yin and therefore evil.<sup>18</sup>

The Po-hu t'ung 白虎通 (compiled in 79 A.D.) applied the theory of the five phases to yin-yang theory to explain the hsing.<sup>19</sup>

Yang Hsiung 楊雄 (53 B.C. - 18 A.D.) taught that human hsing contains a mixture of good and evil.<sup>20</sup>

Wang Ch'ung 王充 (27 A.D. - ca. 100) taught that human natures range from good to evil, and that a bad hsing could be improved by cultivation.<sup>21</sup> In the Lun-heng, 18:13b/18, he says that the bodies of human beings are formed from ch'i which in turn determines their natures, appearances, and life spans.

Han Yü 韓愈 (768 - 824) held that there are three classes of human hsing -- good, evil, and mixed.<sup>22</sup>

Li Ao 李翱 (died ca. 844) made a sharp distinction between the good hsing and the bad ch'ing or "passions."<sup>23</sup>

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18. Tung's philosophy is discussed at greater length in the chapter on Chih, and in Fung Yu-lan's A History of Chinese Philosophy, II: 32-37.

19. See Fung, II: 44.

20. See Fung, II: 150.

21. See Fung, II: 161f.

22. See Fung, II: 414.

23. See Fung, II: 445ff.

The Sung Confucians drew upon some of the ideas that had grown up since the time of Mencius, the concepts of li (pattern, order) and ch'i-chih (materialized lifebreath) in particular.

Chou Tun-yi 周敦頤 (1017-1073) taught that the hsing is derived from yi 易 (change). He believed that the goodness of the human constitution compared to that of the animals lies in its better balance or good proportion of the various qualities that stem from change (yi).<sup>24</sup>

Chang Tsai 張載 (1020-1077) initiated the theory that contrasted the so-called "physical nature" (ch'i-chih chih hsing 氣質之性, nature found in materialized lifebreath) with the "nature of heaven." He indicted the "physical nature" as the source of the evils of human beings.<sup>25</sup>

The Ch'eng brothers (Ch'eng Hao 程頤, 1032-1088 and Ch'eng Yi 程頤, 1033-1108) were the first to equate hsing with li ("principle"). Ch'eng Yi specifically blamed ts'ai (capacity) for the evil of human beings.<sup>26</sup>

The concepts of li (potential, pattern, order) and ch'i-chih must be explained before Chu Hsi's theory of the hsing can be explicated. I will confine myself to saying for the present that Chu Hsi's theory of hsing was yet another attempt, albeit a more sophisticated one, to find a compromise between the teachings of Mencius and those of Hsün-tzu.<sup>27</sup>

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24. See Fung, II: 434-451, and particularly 437.

25. See Fung, II:488. See also, Ōshima Akira, "Chō Ōkyo no 'taikyo soku ki' ron ni tsuite, Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō, XXVII (Oct., 1975), 113-128.

26. See Fung, II:514-518. See also Ōshima Hikaru, "Chō Ōkyo no 'taikyo soku ki' ron ni tsuite," Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō, XXVII (Oct., 1975), 113-128.

27. See Fung, II:551-558.

## V. TS'AI

The concept of ts'ai figures in the controversy over how to explain the antisocial things that people do. It was first used in a philosophical context by Mencius. Thereafter, it lay dormant until the Sung Confucian philosophers used it to account for the bad things people do. In so doing they opposed the position of Mencius that the ts'ai of human beings is good, but they justified the change in terms of their association of the evils of mundane activities with the contingent constitution of human beings. They argued that the transcendent potential for human beings is perfectly good, but that the actual beings formed in this universe are imperfect. Since "ts'ai" connotes the actual capacities of some creature (even though those capacities may include potentials for further growth or development), it cannot have the perfection of goodness belonging to the transcendent potential for producing creatures. Therefore ts'ai is, in a privitive sense, evil.

### 1. Early Meanings

The word "ts'ai 才" conveys the idea of a potential for growth that displays a characteristic energy when actualized and that brings a particular kind of being into the world.

When this character is applied to human beings, its meaning can usually be conveyed by the English words "potential" and "talent," as when the Chuang-tzu, 5:42/60, says:

He must have a ts'ai (potential) that is complete and a te (virtue) that has not taken form.

(See also 6:37/97.) But just as the English word "talent" is frequently used to mean the accomplishments or level of ability of a person, so "ts'ai" too can

frequently be explained by the words "capability" or "capacity." For instance, the Mb-tzu, 1:16/21, says:

Those of great ts'ai are difficult to command.

In a series of passages beginning at 6A:6, Mencius makes several references to ts'ai (potential or talent), which later scholars misinterpreted because they took "ch'ing" (unsullied state) to be a technical term meaning the activity of the hsing. These later scholars attempted to define "ts'ai," "ch'ing," and "hsing" as three complementary aspects of the hsin (heart, mind). Since they used the word "li" (pattern) to mean "potential," they had to skew the meaning of "ts'ai" slightly to avoid weakening the preeminent value or importance of "li" by suggesting that it might be equivalent to "ts'ai." The confusion of "li" and "ts'ai" would have created further problems since the later scholars virtually equated "li" and "hsing." If both "ts'ai" and "hsing" should have been equated with "li" then the aspective differences between "ts'ai" and "hsing" would have tended to be obscured.

The Mencius, 6A:6, says:

If one does what is not good, it is not the fault of one's ts'ai (innate potential).

He goes on to enumerate the Four Beginnings of man's moral nature, which are the potentials of human beings for good actions, suggesting that ts'ai is the potential for virtue.

Regarding ts'ai, the Mencius, 6A:7, says:

In bountiful years children and younger brothers are generally dependent.<sup>1</sup> In bad years they are mostly violent. This is not [because] heaven has granted ts'ai differentially.

The belief expressed here is that heaven gives the same innate potentials to people of all times and places, but that socio-cultural factors make a difference in the way those potentials are actualized.

In one instance, Mencius explained ts'ai by an analogy that could be interpreted to show that human ts'ai might be evil. In the story of Ox Mountain {Menc., 6A:8}, which has been denuded by the depredations of humans and domestic animals, Mencius says that people conclude from its barren state that it never had any timber (ts'ai). For the sake of his analogy it might have been better if Mencius had said "sprouts" instead of "timber," because this would have allowed him to indicate more clearly that he was talking about potentialities rather than actualities. Since the word "ts'ai木" (timber) is both a homonym for "ts'ai才" (innate potential) and contains "ts'ai才" as a component, Mencius probably found these tempting reasons for using it in this passage. But the word "ts'ai" that means "timber" does suggest matured talents. Since, as Mencius himself points out, innate potentials may mature in different ways depending on environmental forces, this passage opens the way to saying that the ts'ai of a person could be either good or evil just as a tree might have grown well or have become malformed.

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1. Some interpreters, such as D. C. Lau, translate "lai賴" as "lazy." This explanation gives an extended sense of the word "lai" or "dependent" not found in the dictionary when the more fundamental sense is more forceful and suggestive of multiple interpretations.

## 2. Sung Dynasty Interpretations

Although authors such as Li Ao and Wang An-shih defined hsing and ch'ing in terms of each other, they did not involve the term "ts'ai" in their analyses of human nature. The concept of ts'ai remained fallow until attention was redirected to it by the Ch'eng brothers.

The Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu, 22A:11a/14, says:

[Ts'ai 才] is like plants grown as a source of material (ts'ai-chih 材植). For instance, the crookedness or straightness of a tree is its hsing. Its suitability for making wheels or wagon tongues, or its suitability for making ridgepoles or beams is its ts'ai 才. In the case at hand, when people speak of someone having ts'ai, they are referring to beautiful (i.e., good) ts'ai. [But] ts'ai is [properly] one's tzu-chih 資質 (natural endowment, disposition). If one follows the hsing in regulating [ts'ai], then even though it be the most evil, it can be overcome and made good.

It is no accident that ts'ai is said to be possibly evil. The Ho-nan Ch'eng shih wai-shu 河南程氏外書 [Additional works of the Ch'eng brothers of Ho-nan], 7:2a/4, says:

All hsing (natures) are good. That because of which one is not good is the ts'ai.<sup>2</sup> What is received from heaven is called hsing. What is endowed by ch'i 氣 (lifebreath, the source of actualization) is called ts'ai. The goodness (or lack thereof) of the ts'ai depends on the degree of balance of the ch'i.

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2. This idea is a forerunner of the later argument that ch'i-chih is responsible for human imperfections.

In an earlier period of his life, Chu Hsi seems to have accepted the view that human ts'ai (innate potential) is good. When he was approximately forty-three years old (i.e., around 1173) he said:

Ch'ing 情 (the activity of the hsing or nature) originally is naturally good. When, upon issuing forth, has it ever been other than good providing it has not been contaminated? Ts'ai 才 is just one's tzu-chih 資質 (natural endowment, disposition) and it too is always good [under the conditions enumerated above]. It is like the whiteness of things before they have been dyed -- they are just white. {Conv., 59:7a/47}

But, about twenty years later (around 1190), when asked about the difference between the teachings of Mencius and Ch'eng Yi on ts'ai, he said:

At the very beginning, ts'ai too are always good. Because of people's endowment of ch'i (lifebreath, the source of actualization) they have good and evil. Therefore their ts'ai too have good and evil. Mencius spoke of ts'ai with reference to their common [character at their point of origin], and therefore took it that [ts'ai] derives from hsing. Master Ch'eng spoke of ts'ai with reference to their different [characters as developed in different people], and therefore took it that [ts'ai] is endowed in the form of ch'i. {Conv., 59:9a/47}

This passage shows the great influence that the ideas of Ch'eng Yi exerted on Chu Hsi between his fortieth and sixtieth years (i.e., between 1170 and 1190).

Chu Hsi also said:<sup>3</sup>

Ch'eng Yi said that ts'ai is bestowed in ch'i, and that when the ch'i is pure the ts'ai is clear, [but] that when the ch'i is turbid the ts'ai is turbid. This doctrine is slightly different

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3. The person who recorded this conversation is unknown, so it is difficult to assign a date.

from Mencius' teaching on the ts'ai, and it is more closely argued.

This [difference] cannot be left unconsidered. {Conv., 59:9b/47}

Turbidity is virtually synonymous with evil.



## VI. LI

The following study on li is different from the other chapters of this dissertation because serious misconceptions concerning that concept have previously arisen and must be remedied. That imperfect understandings of li should have gained currency is indeed strange, since the missionaries with whom Leibniz communicated gave him an accurate idea of its meaning. Why was an inferior understanding accepted by later students of Chinese philosophy? Part of the explanation may lie in the turbulent period when China was subjected to humiliations at the hands of the more materially advanced nations of Europe and America. A desire to claim Chinese discovery of a near equivalent to Platonic ideas or Aristotelian forms may have clouded the vision of students of philosophy such as Fung Yu-lan. They both confounded li with Western metaphysical concepts and pushed the date at which it became regarded as transcendent entity back to nearly the beginning of Chinese philosophy. Li is a very rich concept with a long history. For that reason alone, a study of li would have to be of substantial length. Since I regard much of what others have said about it as doubtful, I have devoted special care to investigating the concept's development.

### I. Basic Considerations

Although "li" developed many abstruse significations in its long history, they were all extensions of one concrete meaning. It is necessary to understand the course of this development in order to correctly comprehend the notion designated by "li" in the thought of Chu Hsi and many who came after him.

Two major turning points in the development of the concept of li from the simple idea of pattern may be noted: First, beginning with the Lü-shih

ch'un-ch'iu, i.e., around 200 B.C., theoretical considerations derived from the Yi-ching and its Appendices were used to account for the production of patterned being in the universe. Combinations of yin and yang on the several levels of concreteness represented by the levels of the hexagrams were believed to constitute regularities that are the li of the things of this universe.

The second major turning point was the elevation of li to transcendent status. Before the advent of Buddhism in China, the source of yin and yang (t'ai-chi, "supreme ultimate") was conceived to be transcendent, but it was not believed to be a kind of li, nor was there any clear explanation for how being or value was created in the universe. Buddhist thinkers gave the word "li" a patently transcendent signification.

After this critical change to a transcendent li, a clear connection could be made between the t'ai-chi, all being, and all value. T'ai-chi was seen as the transcendent li that produces all immanent li, that is, the transcendent potential for all immanent patterned being in the universe. The first-level expressions of t'ai-chi in this universe are yin and yang. Just as yang can have a positive axiological connotation and yin a negative one, so too, the four manifestations of the t'ai-chi on the next greater level of concreteness also constitute value in the world -- in the case of human beings these values appear as the four great Confucian virtues. Each successive level of concreteness has its axiological aspect. So patterned being is also a direct expression of ethical value.

The four Confucian virtues can be seen both as manifestations of the t'ai-chi and as the specifically human hsing. The transcendent li, or t'ai-chi, came thus to be seen as the perfect potential for ethical values as well as other regularities. Value could then be explained not as an accidental feature

of the universe or of human beings, but as an intrinsic aspect of all beings that flows from the nature of the ultimate source of everything. Human hsing could be viewed as a particular instance of the manifestation in our universe of the nature of the t'ai-chi.

Chinese characters take on new meanings by two processes. One is through extensions, by which the word gradually evolves from a basic sense to several extended meanings. The other is by the loan of a character to write another word, as when the numeral "4" is used to write "for" in "For Sale" signs in English. One important consideration in this study is whether any of the philosophical senses of "li" were produced by a sudden break in continuity such as may occur when a character is loaned to write a totally different meaning. I believe that there is no discontinuity in the development of the concept of li.

Unless a change in the meaning of "li" to a totally unrelated one did occur, it should be possible to trace the most remote and technical senses of "li" back to its primary sense when the history of the word is thoroughly understood. This procedure will provide a check against introducing an interpretation from our own culture that seems to us to fit the context of some traditional Chinese text when in fact there is no way to substantiate the argument that the author ever intended that meaning.

## 2. Early History of Use

The Shuo-wen chieh-tzu {1A:9a/13}, a Han-dynasty etymological dictionary written about 100 A.D., treats "li" as a verb and says that it means "to work jade." However, the structure of the character for the word "li理" seems to indicate such ideas as topography and pattern. The left-hand element of "li" is "yü 玉" or jade. Since jade may have veins, or a variation of

colors within the stone, this fact suggests the idea of pattern. The right-hand element of "li理" is "li里" which gives the pronunciation of the word. The earliest known usages of "li理" have nothing obvious to do with jade. There are no extant oracle or bronze forms, so it is impossible to say whether the jade element was present in the earliest written forms of the word. "Li里" (field 田 plus earth 土) also has a meaning that is relevant to the meaning of "li理"<sup>1</sup> and, in fact, is more closely related to the meaning found in the earliest extant instances of "li理." "Li里" means a village and its environs, including the fields cultivated by the dwellers of the village.<sup>2</sup>

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1. David E. Mungello, Leibniz and Confucianism: The Search for Accord, Honolulu, 1977), pp. 76f, says that "Han dynasty scholars stressed the etymological interpretation of li as containing the semantic particle for jade, yi, and the phonetic-semantic particle li里, which refers to an inner sense as, for example, in the lining of clothing, li裏."

2. See the Erh-ya dictionary, entry number 137 (Harvard-Yenching Index series, no. 18). See also T'ang Chün-yi, "Lun Chung-kuo che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang shih chung 'li' chih liu yi," p. 60.

The Shih-ching, Ode number 210, says:<sup>3</sup>

Long are the Nan Mountains  
Tamed by Yü.  
The cleared plains and valleys  
Are cultivated by his great grandchildren.  
We set out the boundaries and lay out the fields

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3. The Tso-chuan, Duke Ch'eng, second year, quotes Ode 210. Although commentators have said of this passage in the Tso-chuan that "li" means "chin 治" (to order), the context makes it clear that the author was following the original meaning of the Ode.

The state of Chin sent the troops of Ch'i into retreat. Ch'i offered terms to Chin, but Chin demanded, among other things, that Ch'i run all of its fields from east to west. Fields are bounded by raised partitions of earth that are difficult to drive over with war chariots. If the divisions running north and south were to have been eliminated, then Ch'i troops could easily have swept through Chin from east to west following their chariots. The representative of the state of Ch'i objected as follows:

"The former kings set boundaries and laid out fields (chiang-li 疆理) in all under heaven; [according to the mutual] suitabilities of crops (lit., things, wu 物) and soil [all under heaven] spreads its bounties (li 利). Thus the Shih[-ching] says: 'We set out the boundaries and lay out the fields, making terraces to south or east.' Today my lord (referring here to the spokesman for Chin) would set boundaries and lay out fields [in the territories of the] feudal lords (chu-hou 諸侯), yet you say to only 'make terraces to the east.' This [course] benefits the war chariots of my lord alone, and disregards the suitabilities of the soil. Does this [demand] not contravene the mandate of the former kings?"

(Wo Chiang wo li 我疆我理),  
 Making terraces to south or east.<sup>4</sup>

Ode 237:

[The augury having been positive, they decided to  
 settle here.]

Thereupon they set out the boundaries  
 And laid out the fields,  
 Began cultivating new land  
 And making terraces.<sup>5</sup>

Ode 250:<sup>6</sup>

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4. The Book of Odes, p. 164, gives Karlgren's translation of Ode number 210: "Extended is that Southern mountain, it was Yü who put it in order (for cultivation); cleared into even plots are the highlands and lowlands, his descendant cultivates them; we draw boundaries, we divide them into sections; running towards the south or running towards the east are the acres."

5. Ode number 237 is given on page 190: "And so he remained quiet, he stopped; he went to the left, he went to the right, he made boundaries, he made divisions, he ("cubited"=) measured to the cubit, he laid out acres; from west he went east, everywhere he took the task in hand."

6. Karlgren's interpretation of Ode 250 differs from mine. In my opinion, he arbitrarily ignores the intended associations of pairs of lines. He makes a major division after mention of the river Wei, so that the stones mentioned must somehow be associated with settling or settlements. That linkage, in turn, convinces him that "li" in the next line must refer to the buildings. But the practice of agriculture, not the building of dwellings, assures plentiful provisions and increased population. I believe that if Karlgren had not failed to see that the stones were for the previously mentioned ford and had nothing to do with the following line, he would not have disrupted the natural flow of imagery and association of the poem. I will reproduce his translation in sequence below.

Staunch Prince Liu dwelled in Pin,  
 He made a ford across the Wei,  
 Taking stones coarse and fine.  
 Having settled, [the people] laid out the fields (li),  
 So the population became large and their possessions  
 great.<sup>7</sup>

Ode 262:

You shall set out the boundaries,  
 and lay out the fields,  
 All the way to the South Sea.<sup>8</sup>

The earliest meaning attested for "li理" is "to lay out the fields." Judging by the fact that "li理" is used this way in four different poems in the Shih-ching, laying out fields was an activity of some importance in ancient China, as would be natural to an agricultural people.

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7. Ode number 250 appears on page 208: "Staunch was prince Liu; in Pin he soujourned; for fording the Wei he made a crossing(-place); he took whetstones and hammering stones; the settlements were well distributed; they were numerous and (having=) rich, on both sides of the Huang-stream valley, pushing upwards to the Kuo-stream valley; the lodgings were dense, they reached to both sides of the river bend."

8. Karlgren, p. 234, translates: "Go and draw boundaries, go and make divisions, as far as the southern sea."

The result of laying out the fields in accordance with the topography of the land -- a kind of pattern<sup>9</sup> -- is another kind of pattern, that of fields and other areas devoted to different purposes: expanses of grain of various kinds, melon patches, pastures, roads, streams, and dwellings. The location of hills and valleys, streams and rocky protrusions determines the different suitabilities of plots of land. Fields should be laid out in accord with the lay of the land. So "li 理" suggests the idea of topography. It seems possible that one of its components, "li 里," may originally have been used both as a noun, "village," and as a verb, "to village, to shire," meaning to lay out the various fields, roads, and places for habitations. The element "yü 玉" (jade) may have been added later to distinguish the verbal use of the word "li 理" from the meaning of fields and village, or it may have been added to clarify the meaning of pattern, or to pattern. Addition of yü as a clarifying element would also have served to isolate the more abstract meanings of "li" from the meaning of "fields and village." In his Shuo-wen chieh-tzu, 1A:9a/13, Hsü Shen says that li means "to work (chih 治, lit., to order, an antonym of 'luan 亂,' disorder) jade." This definition, which was made several hundred years after the writing of the Shih-ching, takes "li" in a verbal sense, but assumes that

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9. Tang Chün-yi, "Lun Chung-kuo che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang chung 'li' chih liu yi," p. 51, quotes a commentary (uncited) to the Yi-ching that says of the Hsi-tz'u passage "He looked down to inspect the li of the earth," {A:3}, "Earth has mountains, streams, plains, and bogs each having orderly arrangement (t'iao li 條理), so [the passage in question] speaks of li."



the element "yü" (jade) indicates the substance that was patterned (i.e., worked), rather than directly indicating the idea of pattern. Hsü Shen's definition, "to work jade," would appear to have missed the fundamental meaning of this word, since the first instance of its usage in his sense seems to be in the relatively late Han Fei-tzu 韓非子 (Han Fei died 233 B.C.). Examination of early texts shows that ideas of patterning and patterns are fundamental to its meaning, and not those of cutting or otherwise fabricating something.<sup>10</sup> Thus the idea of pattern, seen so often in early as well as later texts, is not remotely related to the fundamental meaning of the word "li" but is its first extended meaning.

The Mo-tzu 墨子, 3:12/17, says:

How do all rulers obtain security? It is because they carry out (perform) li. [Their] carrying out li depends on appropriate staining (i.e., influences imbued from others that affect their characters or habits -- from the story of dyers of cloth who become stained by the pigments employed in their work).

In what sense do the rulers carry out patterning? Probably in the sense of ordering. The antonym of "chih (order)" is "luan 亂." "Luan" frequently refers to social or civil disorder. So the Mo-tzu passage probably refers to what we would call good order. But it is also possible to interpret this instance of "li" to mean a good order of mind, orderly thinking about affairs, or what those who come from the European cultural tradition would call reasonableness.

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10. Tuan Yü-ts'ai 段玉裁 (1735-1815) says in his commentary to the Shuo-wen chieh-tzu: "'Li' means to cleave asunder. Although jade is extremely hard, if one employs its cleavage planes in working it, then it is not difficult to produce artifacts."

The Mo-tzu, 25:14/88, says:

By rich burial and prolonged mourning is it in reality impossible to enrich the poor, multiply the dwindled [population], secure [the country against] dangers, and li [social] disorder (luan)?

"Li" clearly means "to order, to set to rights."

The Mo-tzu, 39:22/63, says:

Benevolent people admonish each other with the li of what to accept and what to cast off, of what is right and what is wrong.

Li provide guides for action in a variety of circumstances, and cannot be a concrete pattern or order. Simply translating "li" as "pattern" in the sense of norm seems adequate, since Mo-tzu preached "the identification with the superior." One's superior establishes the pattern for what is to be considered good behavior, and one simply follows it.

### 3. Alternative Interpretations — Li and Principle

Wing-tsit Chan thinks "li" means moral principles in the passage above. {1969:48} The word "principle" is defined as follows by the Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language:

1. the ultimate source, origin, or cause of something.
2. a natural or original tendency, faculty, or endowment.
3. a fundamental truth, law, doctrine, or motivating force, upon which others are based.
4. a rule of conduct, especially of right conduct: as, the principle of racial equality. . . .
7. the law of nature by which a thing operates: as, capillary attraction is the principle of a blotter.
8. the method of a thing's operation: as, the principle of a gasoline engine is internal combustion.

The word "principle" suggests the idea of an "ultimate source" even when it is used to mean "rule of conduct." None of the meanings of "principle" involve the idea of statements. There are principles and subsequently there are statements about them. People may take the idea of "principle," given in definition two, to justify ideas about it, as the term is defined in number four. Then the question would be why to accept a natural tendency as a standard for human behavior unless it is sanctioned by heaven. The fourth meaning of "principle" seems most nearly to fit the passage from the Mo-tzu, but the connotations carried by "principle" -- that these li have a transcendent ontological status, that they may have divine sanction, or that they dictate absolute values independent of the situation to which they may be applied -- seem to me to be entirely inappropriate.

If it be argued that "li" means a transcendent and ultimate source of value at this early time, then he who so argues must show how this considerable extension of meaning came about. I believe that "li" does eventually have this meaning, but only very much later in Chinese history, around the time of Kuo Hsiang 郭象 (died 312 A.D.). I intend to show the course of development that eventually produced this meaning. Wing-tsit Chan argues that this meaning was present almost from the beginning, and devotes the second chapter of his Neo-Confucianism, Etc. to his interpretation of the development of the family of concepts denoted by "li." I will leave aside detailed consideration of his arguments, and content myself for the present with a reconsideration of the evidence.

The question of when "li" comes to mean "principle" is an important one. The only way to answer it is to trace the main instances of "li" that demand interpretation as something extrinsic to (and probably transcendent with

respect to) a thing and as in some way determining what it is or ought to be. By not assuming a transcendent connotation for "li" at the first opportunity, but by patiently following the unfolding of the concept, it becomes possible to see how, even in the case of Sung thought, the English word "principle" obscures the actual concept of "li." The new insight gained into what the Sung Confucians, and especially Chu Hsi, meant by "li," is vital to understanding their theory of hsing.

#### 4. "Normative" and Other Senses Before Han Fei

A normative sense of "li" appears in the Mo-tzu, 43:92/97,<sup>11</sup> where Mo-tzu talks about what can and cannot be "condemned by (i.e., condemned in accord with) li." The context of the remark suggests that the standard proposed is not merely the pattern of behavior set by the ruler. "Li" appears to mean "what is in accord with reasonableness," an extension of the meaning found in the first passage quoted from the Mo-tzu. As to what is "reasonable," the author might appeal to generalized patterns abstracted from experience that describe the behavior of things, maintaining that what is reasonable or orderly in one's thinking is what is in accord with those patterns. This interpretation is supported by the following passage.

The Mo-tzu, 45:1/30, says:

Now the activity of discrimination is done so that the distinction between what is right and what is wrong will be clearly seen, so that the difference between order (chih) and disorder may

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11. T'ang Chün-yi, "Li' chih liu yi," p. 54, thinks that this passage refers to the question of whether some proposition is factually correct or whether a chain of logical deduction is correct.

be discerned, so that places that are different or the same may be clearly seen, so that the li of name and actuality may be investigated, and so that one may engage oneself in [questions of] benefit and harm, and resolve mistrust and doubt.

Name and real object are contrasted, as have been the other pairs such as order and disorder. There is a li between them that is open to investigation. The context suggests that this is not a normative li established somehow to determine how names shall be assigned to things. "Li" is paralleled by "distinction" and "difference," so it must be an analogous concept. If things are arranged in a pattern, then there is some kind of relation between or among those things. So, in this passage, "li" must be a pattern of a rather more abstract kind than those seen in concrete things or single events.

The Mencius, 7B:24<sup>12</sup> speaks of human appetites for four things: the meats of ruminants, that of other animals, yi (acts that are in accord with justice or duty as defined by one's sense of right and wrong), and li. An appetite for yi would seem to be a drive to produce or to further a just or dutiful state of affairs. So an appetite or drive for li would then seem to be a drive to produce or to further a li state of affairs. "Pattern" seems too weak an interpretation, but "order," and especially "social order" would seem both appropriate and to form a good complement to "yi."

At 3:6/19, there appears the only occurrence of the word "li" in the so-called inner chapters of the Chuang-tzu, which tradition holds to be the most dependable of the works attributed to Chuang Chou. In it, Cook Ting gives an explanation of how he is able to butcher an ox in such a remarkable way:

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12. See above p. 34,

I follow along the natural (t'ien 天) li to cut through the great crevices and guide [my knife] through the great interstices, depending on what is already there. I never touch the junctions or the connective tissue, much less the large joints.

The word "li" refers to the organic structure of the ox, to each internal feature that determines where the knife must go. In this case, "li" refers to a three-dimensional pattern.

The Chuang-tzu, 25:62/82, says:

The four seasons each have a special ch'i (lifebreath). Heaven grants no boon [to any particular season] and so the crops come to maturity. The five officials each have a special function. The ruler is not partial (ssu 私) [to any of them] and so the country is ordered. The civil and military [officers each have special areas of competence].<sup>13</sup> The great man grants no boon [to either] and therefore the [moral] power (te 德) [to conduct affairs that they exercise for the sake of the country] is perfect. Each of the myriad creatures has a special li. The tao (way) is not partial (ssu) [to any of them]. Therefore they are nameless. Being nameless they carry out no activity that goes against the tao (wu-wei). Without activity that goes against the tao there is nothing they do not do.

Judging by the other three examples, the li mentioned here must be some kind of characteristics. Perhaps it is simply the patterns of the parts of the myriad creatures, their, legs, tails, heads, internal organs, or the patterns of their growth and development. The interesting thing about this passage is that it foreshadows an important later idea -- that "li yi erh fen shu 理一分殊," "li is one but its divisions are manifold." Just as the yearly changes in heaven

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13. There are evidently several words missing from the text at this point.

(i.e., the sky) produces the four seasons, which are aspects of itself, so the tao (way) evolves the myriad li, which are aspects thereof. If the myriad li are all parts or aspects of the tao, then the tao may be said in some sense to be a (super) li that contains all lesser li. This is a later development, of course, but if this formula be read back into "the tao (way) creates the myriad li," it becomes "Li produces the myriad [lesser] li," that is, "li yi erh fen shu."

The Chuang-tzu, 14:16/82, says:

As for perfect music, first let it respond to human affairs; then let it comply with the t'ien li<sup>14</sup> (heavenly, i.e., natural, as opposed to artificial [human-made] patterns); next let it carry out the [operations of the] five virtues (wu te 五德); and finally, let it respond to spontaneity (tzu-jan 自然). Thereupon the four seasons will be regulated (t'iao-li 條理) and the myriad creatures will be in grand harmony.

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14. The expression "t'ien-li" refers to the natural order of things. This passage indicates a clear series of stages from human affairs to the spontaneity characteristic of the tao (way). Music must be appropriate to each of these stages to be perfect. The first stage is human affairs, which operate by the kinds of psychological motivation with which we are most familiar. The second stage is the natural order, which includes the obvious laws of mechanics. The third stage is on the level of the more metaphysical "five virtues" theory, which is related to the theory of the five phases (wu-hsing 五行). The fourth stage is on the level of spontaneity (tzu-jan). This process is described in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Lao-tzu: "Man models himself after earth. Earth models itself after heaven. Heaven models itself after the tao (way). And the tao models itself after what is spontaneously so (tzu-jan 自然, lit., 'self-so')." It is significant that li is said to be closer to the human than to the transcendent tao.

The Chuang-tzu, 17:38/91, says:

This [way] is to have understood neither the li of heaven and earth, nor the ch'ing 情 (true circumstances) of the myriad creatures.

"Li" may be singular and refer to the pattern or order that encompasses the whole world, or it may be plural and refer to patterns found in the true natures of the myriad creatures. If "li" is singular in the passage above, it must refer to a pattern perceived at some level of abstraction in order to be comprehensible to the human intellect. That is to say, patterns themselves may fall into patterns, and so it may not be necessary to have specific knowledge of all the intricacies of the total world pattern, but only of the patterns into which patterns fall. Here "li" seems to refer to something like descriptive generalizations.

At the beginning of the seventeenth chapter of the Chuang-tzu, the god of the Yellow River has traveled down to the ocean, has encountered the god of the sea, and has realized the former limitations of his own concept of the world. Jo, the god of the sea, says:

Now I can discuss the great li with you.

Judging by the context, these would seem to be the larger, more all-encompassing patterns, or perhaps one pattern that encompasses all the lesser patterns in the world.

The Chuang-tzu, 17:48/91, says:

Those who know the tao (way) are certain to comprehend the li [of things]. Those who comprehend the li [of things] are certain to be clear about the momentary state or balance of events. Those who are clear about the momentary state or balance of events do not injure themselves with things.



This passage shows a progression toward the concrete. The tao is the source of all being, but cannot itself be described. The li are the patterns among the things of the world, their relationships, etc., that in turn determine or describe the momentary states or balances of events among them. These momentary states or balances of events in turn determine by what things one might likely be hurt.

The Chuang-tzu, 25:69/82, says:

Ta-kung-t'iao (lit., "great impartial accord") said: "Yin and yang beam at each other, cover each other, and regulate each other. The four seasons replace each other, produce each other, and kill each other. Thereupon, [distinctions among] desire, dislike, avoidance and approach arise; and furthermore, [differences between] male and female, being fragmentary and being whole, become commonplace. Security and danger change into one another, disaster and good fortune produce each other, the leisurely and the hasty grate on each other, while things are produced by accumulating what has been dispersed. These are the names and realities that can be chronicled, the refined and minute [things] that can be recorded. The reciprocal li-ing of following and connecting, and the reciprocal employment of bridging and conveyance are such that when fully extended [these modes of interaction] return to the beginning, and when finished they begin again. These characteristics are true of all things; they bring us to the limits of words and the reaches of knowledge. [These characteristics] are the extreme limits of things and nothing more. Those people who perceive the tao neither follow things to the point where they are discarded nor trace them back to their origins. [For] this is the point at which discussion must stop."

Shao-chih (lit., "little understanding") said: "Of the two theories, that of Chi Chen that nothing does it, and that of Chieh-tzu that something makes it, which is correct with respect to the true circumstances (ch'ing 情) and which deviates from li?"

Ta-kung-t'iao said: "Cocks crow and dogs bark. This [all] men know. Even though there be one of great knowledge, it would be impossible for him to use words to explain how [cocks, dogs, and other creatures] transform themselves (i.e., exhibit various changes of behavior), nor could he use thought [to predict] what they will do in the future. If you analyze these [sorts of] things, on the side of the minute you arrive at a point where there are no longer any distinctions, and on the side of the gross you arrive at what cannot be encompassed. 'Nothing does it,' and 'something makes it' do not get beyond things, so in the end they are both mistaken. If you say 'something makes it' then [this errs on the side of imputing] substantiality (i.e., this hypostatizes the causes of change), and if you say 'nothing does it,' then [this errs in imputing] vacuity (i.e., in suggesting that there is no cause of change). Having name and substance is the dwelling place of things (i.e., their substantial aspect). Having neither name nor substance is the vacuity of things (i.e., their functional aspect). You can talk and you can think, but the more you say the further off you are. Before [one is] born, [birth] cannot be prohibited, and after [one is] dead, [death] cannot be prevented. Life and death are not far apart, [but their] li cannot be seen. "Something makes it" and "Nothing does it" are the [propositions] that cause doubt. If I look toward the roots [of things], then they go back without end. If I look for their branch tips, then they go forward without cessation. When it is said that they are without end and without cessation, it means that this being without has the same li as things. When it is said that 'something makes it' and 'nothing does it,' it means that the source [of things] has the same beginning and end as things.

This long passage is extremely difficult, and I am not satisfied with any of the interpretations that I have seen, including my own. The central argument seems to concern two apparently contradictory propositions: 1) that events have a

source or agent, and 2) that events have no source or agent. The author implies that there are limits to the utility of a discursive treatment of these questions. His words suggest the argument that saying events have a cause leads one to think of a specific, concrete entity that caused the events, and that saying they have no cause ignores the fact that there are indeed causative factors in the universe even though they cannot be isolated from the things they cause.

The first "li" in the passage above seems fairly clearly to mean "to order." The second "li" is coordinated with the word "ch'ing," which means "true circumstances," and probably refers to the natural order of things, whether they are seen concretely or abstractly. The third "li" is more of a puzzle. In what sense can life and death be said to have a pattern that cannot be seen? Living creatures can be seen, dead creatures can be seen, and the passage of a living creature from life to death can be seen. But the inner logic of life and death, the total pattern that accounts for the coming to being of a living creature from non-living constituents, and the passage into death of a living creature is beyond our ken. The third "li" seems to mean a kind of natural order or relationship that we can only know abstractly and imperfectly.

The fourth "li" occurs in a sentence that is even more murky than the rest of the passage. The text has just stated that death changes over inevitably to life and that life changes over inexorably into death. If the 'something that makes it [happen]' is sought, there is no answer because tracing back the transition from inanimate to animate being involves infinite regress, since "If I look toward the roots [of things], then they go back without end." If it is assumed that "nothing does it" (i.e., that nothing makes living creatures die), then this fails to account for the fact that the process of

change from life to death and back again continues to happen. The Chuang-tzu states that being without end and without cessation is characteristic of a linear process that is unbounded in either direction. This being without bounds has the same li as creatures. The boundless process and the individual things are parts of each other, and the pattern of the whole is their common li. The last sentence quoted is particularly intriguing. It appears to indicate that the author of this chapter of the Chuang-tzu affirmed both propositions about whether something makes things happen. This stratagem of affirming both horns of a dilemma is called "liang-hsing 兩行" (going both ways at once). {Chuang, 2:40/96} According to the Chuang-tzu, affirming both propositions implies that the source of things has the same beginning and end as things. That is, to say that "the source [of things] has the same beginning and end as things," when the process of becoming is infinite, is to affirm the infinitude through time of the source of things, since this source extends throughout.

At any time the source is functioning as the origin of the things that are in perpetual transformation. So in some sense the source, which surely has to be the tao (way), must also be responsible for the fact that the things transform from animate to inanimate phases. And this whole process, including both the transformations through time and the eternal production of their being, forms a pattern called li. In the "Ch'i-wu lun" (chapter two, The discussion on leveling all things), Chuang-tzu discusses this problem in terms of the pipes of heaven. The author says that there are three kinds of pipes: those of men, of earth, and of heaven. The pipes of men are known by all. They are the flutes and horns by which men make music. Those of earth are known by some.

They are the natural nooks and crannies that whistle and howl in the wind. Men blow their flutes and horns, and the winds blow the natural pipes of the earth. Men are themselves pipes of a kind. There is something that makes them blow and make sounds. And what makes the wind itself blow? We say that men breathe, sing, or whistle, and make other such noises, and that the winds blow as though those were actions that caused themselves. But t'ien ("heaven", but in a more abstract sense "nature", the total pattern of function of the universe) makes them blow. And what in turn makes t'ien blow? (See Lao-tzu, 25: "The tao models itself on what is spontaneously so.")

In the fourth case, Chuang-tzu treats li as having metaphysical import. The li extends throughout time, throughout all creatures, and at least as far as the transcendent tao. It is not clear that the transcendent tao is included, since it is characteristic of the tao that it is the formless and indeterminate source of what has form and determination and therefore can have no pattern within itself.

The Chuang-tzu, 33:43/87, says:

Heaven can cover [things] and yet cannot hold them up. Earth can hold [things] up and yet cannot cover them. The great tao can contain [things] and yet cannot distinguish them. By this we know that each of the myriad creatures has what it can and cannot do. Therefore it is said: If a selection is made, it is impossible to be universal. If something is taught, then there will be imperfection. [Only] the tao leaves nothing out. Therefore Shen Tao abandoned knowledge and expunged his self. Taking his motivation from the inevitable, he purified himself of things -- this he took to be the li of the tao.

The meaning of "li" determined for this passage will be strongly influenced by the interpretation given "tao." In some contexts, "tao" seems to refer to the

totality of process in the universe. In others it seems to refer to the transcendent source of being, as when the Lao-tzu refers to it as the wu 無 (non-being, void, the "thing" that is totally devoid of all differentiations by means of which we experience things) from which all yu 有 (being, substantial existence, the perceptible things of our universe) is produced. If "tao" refers to the totality of process in the universe, then "tao-li" (the li of the tao) is the pattern found throughout this process. If "tao" refers to a transcendent source of being, then "tao-li" is more difficult to interpret. If the tao is truly devoid of all differentiation, then it is difficult to say in what sense it can contain patterns. On the other hand, as I have already noted, the Lao-tzu refers to the hsiang (images, foreshadowings) that are contained in the tao. Are these affirmed to be in the transcendent aspect of the tao (wu)? or in the immanent aspect of the tao (yu)? This seems a moot point.

The Chuang-tzu passage quoted above says that "the great tao can contain [things] and yet cannot distinguish them." But this only means that all things are equally part of the universal process, and none have preferential status. "The tao leaves nothing out." Nevertheless, the tao may have been considered by the author of this passage to have a transcendent aspect. In that case, the li of the tao would have to be the pattern or order of the transcendent source of being. Some eminent authorities regard the tao to have been conceived as a transcendent object even during the Chou dynasty. Whether this is true or not remains a question worthy of further investigation.

In the book that bears his name, Hsün-tzu says that the relationships between ruler and minister, father and son, and husband and wife, "have the same li as heaven and earth." {9:67/127} This suggests that human social

relationships are identical in some sense to the relationship that exists between heaven and earth. In other words, human beings fall into the same pattern as do heaven and earth. This li is not subject to immediate inspection in its entirety, but must be known through a process of abstraction.

The Hsün-tzu, 11:13/146, speaks of rulers who, though imperfect, had "in some measure brought together the li of the world (t'ien-hsia chih li lüeh ts'ou yi 天下之理略奏矣)."16 This passage indicates that li were believed subject to observation and possible to learn. The context indicates that the li mentioned were ones that guided the rulers in their interactions with other people; that is, having learned these li, they knew how to conduct their affairs in a satisfactory way. While the li in some sense supply the rulers with guidance for proper rule, it would not be correct to regard them as mere maxims. For a maxim may be a useful or non-useful formula for action. Merely collecting maxims provides no guarantee of correct handling of affairs. But if one has perceived the patterns that link things and events, if one has seen how things work (in human interactions or elsewhere), then no matter in what form this insight is given appropriate expression, it provides a good guide for action.

The Hsün-tzu, 20:33/50, says:

Music is the immutable part of harmony, and the rites (li 禮) are the unchangeable parts of li 理.

Both harmony and li are to be found in this world. The rites are not concrete things to be examined, but a body of knowledge and activity that can be apprehended in practice. The patterns that we call ritual (li 禮) can be

16. I read tsou 奏 as ts'ou 奏. See Chang Heng's Hsün-tzu chia-chieh tzu-p'u, (Taipei, 1965), p. 182.

apprehended. They are immanent, but they are not comprehensible in one all-encompassing view.

The Hsün-tzu, 21:1/96, says:

In general, the affliction of men is that they are blinded by the partial and obscured [in their vision] of the great li. If they are regulated, then they will return to the warp [of the tao], but if there is duality and comparison [giving equal weight to alternatives],<sup>17</sup> then they will be confused. The world does not have two tao, and the sage does not have two minds [on any subject].

The authoritarian timbre of this pronouncement is hard to miss. Perhaps the last sentence should be: "The sages do not have two minds [on any subject]." In any event, li are subject to inspection. By calling them "great li," Hsün-tzu presumably means to refer to patterns of great generality in which the things and events of the world are organized, so this would have to mean an immanent order in the world known through a process of abstract reasoning.

The Hsün-tzu, 21:78/96, says:

In general, that by which [things] can be known<sup>18</sup> is the hsing (nature) of man, and what can be known are the li of things. If one seeks the li of things that can be known by means of the

17. I read yi 疑 as ni 擬 following the commentary of Yü Yüeh. See his Chu tzu p'ing-yi, p. 225.

18. This passage appears to be somewhat corrupt. I accept the emmendations suggested here and below by Liang Ch'i-hsiung (quoted in Wang Chung-lin's Hsün-tzu tu-pen [Taipei, 1972], p. 323). Liang reads yi 以 as k'o 可.



human hsing that can know,<sup>19</sup> then unless there is that by which to delimit [the quest for knowledge], in all of time one will be unable to exhaust them.

This passage clearly states that it is the li of things that are the objects of knowledge. Thus li cannot be things that transcend our apprehension. They must be immanent in the world, although some of them may be of such immensity in space and time that we cannot comprehend them all in one glance.

The idea of extension in time is apparent in the riddle told in the Hsün-tzu, 26:17/35:

Here we have a thing, its form is naked, and it changes repeatedly like a god. Its meritorious accomplishments cover the world, and it ornaments a myriad generations. It brings completion to the rites and to music, and distinguishes between nobles and commoners. The care of the aged and the nurture of the young all depend upon it, and only when it comes can they be preserved. As for its name, it is not euphonious and is a "neighbor" to violence.<sup>20</sup> When its achievements become established its body is discarded. When the task is completed its house is destroyed. When aged it is abandoned; its progeny are preserved. Men are among those it benefits, and birds are among those it injures.<sup>21</sup> Your servant is ignorant of it, and begs an augury from [the shaman] Wu-t'ai. Wu-t'ai gives us this augury: Its body is like a woman, its head like a horse. It changes repeatedly but does not live long. It is skillful in its prime and clumsy in old age. It has a mother and father, but no sex. It hibernates in the

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19. Liang reads k'o yi chih 可 以 知 as k'o chih 可 知.

20. The Chinese word for silkworm, "ts'an" is a homonym of another word that means "to injure, to destroy."

21. It provides cords for fowling arrows.

winter and wanders about in the summer, eats mulberry [leaves] and spits silk. In the beginning it is disordered, and in the end orderly. It is born in the summer but hates the heat, loves moisture and hates the rain. A chrysalis is its mother, and a moth is its father. It is prostrate thrice and thrice arises; [then] its concerns come to a major completion. Now this is the li of a silkworm.

This curious riddle describes the life cycle, the patterns of activity and function, and characteristics -- the li, of a silkworm. Clearly this li is a pattern that has extension in time.

The Hsün-tzu, 23:61/94, says that "benevolence, yi (duty, justice, sense of right and wrong), the law, and upright behavior all have li by which they can be known, and by which they are possible." The word "li" mentioned in this passage implies the idea of potential. Being known and being possible depend on li. This meaning, "potential," became very important in Sung-dynasty times.

##### 5. Summary Exposition

So far I have found no direct statements, in any of the texts I have considered, to the effect that li are transcendent, that they exist in heaven, or that they exist in the tao. In fact, the word "li" is simply used as though everyone understood its meaning perfectly well, making definition unnecessary. In examining the word "li" in context, most instances seem to indicate that li were regarded as parts of the real world, not as mere statements about regularities that apply to the real world (although it might be given this meaning by extension). However, I do not believe that li were believed to exist extrinsic to the things they govern as "moral principles" or "laws of nature." If li are simply the intrinsic patterns or regularities found in things, then

the existence of li is no more mysterious or needful of explanation than the existence of the myriad creatures themselves.

"Li" is clearly stated to be "the transcendent and ultimate source" only in the Sung dynasty. That this "ultimate source" (the t'ai-chi or Supreme Ultimate) was a li was regarded as a great discovery.<sup>22</sup> It is usual for those who are well versed in Neo-Confucianism to read this meaning back into instances of the word "li" in the classical period, just as it is tempting for those in the West to read their ideas of metaphysical principles and divine laws into it. But there is no clear statement that li can be transcendent before the Sung. On the other hand, it is possible to document an evolution from the idea of pattern to the idea of ultimate source or potential for being.

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22. The Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih wai-shu, 12:4a/19, says: "Although there is that in my learning which has been received from others, the two words "heavenly li" are ones which I myself have originated. " The Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu, 2:15/17 (c.p. 33) records the following words of Chu Hsi: "The T'ai-chi diagram was never hidden from people, but people only experienced it through the methods of Ch'an [Buddhist meditation] as a resplendent, responsive something which could function. So they called this t'ai-chi without knowing that the so-called t'ai-chi is the li of heaven, earth, and the myriad creatures. It unites antiquity and the present and is indestructible. The two words 'wu-chi' are the insight of Master Chou into the very being of the tao, and [that insight] goes far beyond ordinary reality. He courageously went straight ahead to proclaim the truths that others would not dare to, so that later scholars would clearly perceive that the incomprehensible efficacy of the t'ai-chi is not subsumed under [the categories of] being or non-being, nor does it have spatial location. They thus have access to a secret the last thousand sages did not transmit."

## 6. Han Fei's Definition

The foregoing summary and exposition is by way of introduction to the first definition of the word "li" by a Chinese author. In the "Chieh-lao 解老" chapter [Explicating the Lao-tzu] of the Han-fei-tzu, 20:13/20, Han Fei gives the discussion translated below. Due to the subject matter, we should expect to find a highly metaphysical explanation of li if Han Fei had one. Instead he says:

The tao is that by which the myriad creatures are as they are and the myriad li are combined. Li are the patterns (wen 文) of completed things. The tao is that by which they are completed. Therefore it is said: "The tao is what li {verb} things." Things having li, they cannot interfere with each other. Because things have li and cannot interfere with each other, li serve as the differentiations of things [in such a way that] the myriad creatures all have different li. The myriad creatures each having a different li, the tao (way) is fulfilled.

Since [the tao] combines the li of the myriad creatures, it therefore cannot but transform. It cannot but transform, hence there is no constancy to its activities. Therefore, the ch'i (breaths) of death and life<sup>23</sup> flow therefrom, the myriad [forms of] wisdom are gleaned therefrom, and the myriad affairs experience failure or success therein. Heaven partakes of it to be superior. Earth partakes of it to store [away what comes into being]. The Big Dipper acquires it in order to bring its magnificence to completion. The sun and moon acquire it in order to make constant

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23. I.e., the cosmic effluences that bring life and death to creatures, as the breath of spring brings life and the breath of frost brings death to vegetation.

their light. The five constants (i.e., five phases) acquire it in order to make constant their hierarchic positions. The arrayed stars acquire it in order to keep their courses correct. The four seasons acquire it in order to control their changing ch'i (i.e., the activities corresponding to each period). Hsüan-yüan 軒轅 (i.e., the Yellow Emperor) acquired it in order to rule over the four quarters [of the earth]. The immortal (hsien 仙) Ch'ih-sung 赤松 acquired it to unite with heaven and earth, and the sages acquired it to bring the ornaments of culture to completion.

The tao is wise with Yao and Shun,  
 Crazy with Chieh Yü,  
 Destructive with Chieh and Chou (evil last emperors  
 of the Hsia and Shang dynasties).  
 Creative with T'ang and Wu (the virtuous founders of  
 the Hsia and Shang dynasties).

Do you think it is near? It roams through the four reaches. Do you think it is far away? It is constantly at my side [although unseen]. Do you think it is dark? Its rays are luminous. Do you think it is bright? As a 'Thing' (wu 物) it is dark and obscure, yet its accomplishment is to bring completion to heaven and earth and harmonize and transform the [forces of nature such as] thunderbolts. The things of the universe depend upon it for their completion.

All realizations (ch'ing 情) of the tao  
 Take form only if there is differentiation [of the  
 fundamental unity of the tao].  
 Softly and flexibly, the [realizations] conform to  
 the times  
 And respond to li.  
 The myriad creatures partake of it to die,  
 And partake of it to live.  
 The myriad affairs partake of it to fail,  
 And partake of it to succeed (ch'eng 成).

The tao may be compared to water. If those who are drowning drink too much of it they die; if those who are thirsty drink it in suitable amounts they live. It may be compared to weapons. The ignorant man will use them to carry out his angry impulses and thereby disaster arises. The sage will use them to punish violence and thereby good fortune ensues.

Therefore [the people] partake of it to die  
 And partake of it to live,  
 Partake of it to fail  
 And partake of it to succeed.

People seldom see a live elephant, yet they may come by the bones of a dead elephant and imagine it in life on the basis of a drawing [made from the skeleton]. Therefore, all things that people imagine are called "elephants." So those things by means of which people think (yi-hsiang 意想) are called hsiang 象 (images).<sup>24</sup> Therefore [chapter fourteen of the Lao-tzu] says: "[Tao is called] the formless form and the insubstantial image."

All li are distinctions [such as those between square and round, short and long, course and fine, strong and brittle]. So only after li are determined can things be described (tao). Therefore, among determined li are those of preservation and perishing, life and death, prosperity and decline. [Since] things are now preserved and now perish, suddenly die and suddenly are born, prosper in the beginning and later decline, they cannot be called constant. Only what was produced simultaneously with the division of heaven from [its primordial unity with] earth, and which will not die or decline until the disintegration of the world, can be called constant, and the constant is without change, without determinate li. Because it is without determinate li, and because it is not at any constant location, it cannot be described. The sage contemplates its mysterious vacuity, employs its pervasive

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24. The character for the word "elephant" also means "image."

activity, and by default calls it by the name "tao" (the way). Only then can it be discussed. Therefore, [chapter one of the Lao-tzu] says: "The tao that can be spoken is not the constant tao."

I have quoted the entirety of this long passage from the Han-fei-tzu because of its extreme importance in the history of the concept of "li" and its relationship to the concept of "tao (way)."

This chapter of the Han-fei-tzu takes the form of expositions, each followed by a quotation from the Lao-tzu to which it refers. The first paragraph presented here does not end with a quotation from the extant texts of the Lao-tzu. The words "Therefore [the people] partake of it to die and partake of it to live . . ." may be from a lost text even though it does not begin with the usual "Thus it is said (ku yüeh 故曰)." The words "The tao is what li's things" from the beginning of this selection may also be a quotation from a lost text of the Lao-tzu. Moreover, this passage is not unrelated to early Taoist texts. The passage beginning with the words, "Heaven partakes of it to be high," and ending with the words, "the sages partook of it in order to bring the ornaments of culture to completion," is a rough paraphrase of the Chuang-tzu, 6:31/97. The words: "The myriad creatures acquire it to die and acquire it to live," are closely related to chapter 39 of the Lao-tzu which says:

In antiquity, of those who attained unity:  
 Heaven attained unity to be clear,  
 Earth attained unity to be tranquil,  
 Spirits attained unity to be responsive,  
 Valleys attained unity to be full,  
 The myriad creatures attained unity to live,  
 And the lords and kings attained unity to be the pure  
                   ones of the world.

Chapter twenty-five of the Lao-tzu says:

There was a thing that came to formless completion before the production of heaven and earth. How still! How vibrant! It was independent and immutable, operating in complete self-sufficiency without danger of cessation, and so could serve as the mother of the world. I do not know its [true] name. I give it the appellation "Tao," and by default call it "Great." To be great means to set out, to set out means to go far, and to go far means to turn back. Thus the tao is great, heaven is great, earth is great, and man<sup>25</sup> is also great. In this domain there are four greats, and man is one of them. Man models himself after earth. Earth models itself after heaven. Heaven models itself after the tao. And the tao models itself after what is spontaneously so.

This passage explains how the world evolves from a primordial unity, achieving a greater and greater complexity without independence from that primordial unity. On the contrary, it eventually turns back upon itself in an ever-continuing process of evolution and dissolution.

The first paragraph of the selection from the Han-fei-tzu (see above p. 110) discusses the role of li in the process of evolution and dissolution. The tao in its evolution from primordial unity bestows li upon what take shape as individual things, and this evolution is completed only when "the myriad creatures each have a different li." Since the forms of the universe are in endless permutation, this implies that endless transformations pass across the

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25. Some texts read "king" instead of "man." I follow Yen Ling-feng's interpretation as given in his Lao-tzu ta-chieh, p. 103.



face of the tao.<sup>26</sup> If we look at phenomena subject to our immediate inspection, then we find "no constancy in [the tao's] activities." The tao is to be identified with all of its ceaseless activities or permutations, and yet with none of them, for the tao is in all of these phenomena and yet loses nothing when they transform into other phenomena, appearing to us to come into, or go out of, existence.

Things cannot come into existence or go out of existence arbitrarily, however, for the tao is an articulation of a fundamental unity. The phenomena present at any time limit the possibility of fresh phenomena in that the latter cannot conflict with present phenomena but must "softly and flexibly" take shape within the interstices of the present reality. Thus from the standpoint of what we would regard as an individual being, that being's existence or destruction depends on whether it "acquires" the tao (i.e., on whether it is articulated within the overall pattern of the tao), and on whether the tao itself begins or continues to assume that particular identity.

The second paragraph of the passage from the Han-fei-tzu asks what the epistemological status of this tao is. The word "tao" means "road." By extension it came to mean "the course that something follows," or "the correct course for something to follow." The authors of the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, however, rejected the idea of ethical absolutes, so for them "tao" meant simply

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26. In his article entitled "Lun Chung-kuo che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang-shih chung 'li' chih liu yi," p. 52, T'ang Chün-yi says: "The word 'tao' is predicated of the commonalities of the myriad creatures and myriad li, while 'li' is predicated also of the distinctions of the myriad objective creatures."

"the course or process which something follows." In the broadest sense, it meant "the course or process of the entire universe." This clearly is both spatially and temporally beyond our experience. Therefore it can enter our awareness only as an "elephant," or what we today might call a "theoretical construct" or "convenient fiction."

In the third paragraph, Han Fei explains why the Lao-tzu concludes that the constant tao cannot be expressed in words. The reasoning is paradoxical: What we, in our limited human experience, regard as permanent or fixed is in fact mutable, whereas what we see as endless transformation and process is in fact the only thing which is immutable. There is no true stability, but we require the semblance of stability and permanence in order to think and talk about things. Each apparently stable configuration is in fact in constant transformation, and what is lost by one quasi-entity is gained by some other quasi-entity or quasi-entities. But the tao, because it is the total system in process, neither gains nor loses; it only shifts within itself. Therefore, "the constant is without change, [and yet] without set li," and so escapes our powers of formulation.

Han Fei considered li intrinsic to things. Things and their li are like inconstant waves that come and go over the surface of the water. The tao is like the water, which has no set form by which it may be known but which remains the same regardless of what disturbances pass over its surface.

#### 7. Yi-ching, Lu-shih ch'un-ch'iu, and Li-chi

##### — Li and Transformations of Yin and yang

I next consider the Yi-ching 易經 [Book of changes] and its Appendices, the Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu 呂氏春秋 [Spring and autumn annals of

Mr. Lü], and the Li-chi. Tradition regards the Yi-ching and its appendices as the work of Fu-hsi 伏羲, King Wen 文王, the Duke of Chou 周公, and Confucius. Modern scholarship has left no basis for this belief. Most authorities date the Appendices much later, anywhere from the closing years of the Warring States era (403-222) to the early Han dynasty (221 B.C. - 227 A.D.). Which of the eight appendices to the Yi-ching came first is not clear. Lü Pu-wei 呂不韋, sponsor of those who wrote and compiled the Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, died in 235 B.C., but the book that bears his name was completed in 240 B.C. Since the Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu seems to go beyond the Appendices of the Yi-ching in some ways, I have elected to treat it after the Yi appendices. The Li-chi is also said to be early Han.<sup>27</sup> For reasons that are discussed in detail below, I believe that one of its parts, the Yüeh-chi 樂記, may be as late as about mid-second century B.C., and so I have put it third in order.

The "Wen-yen" commentary to the Yi-ching, second hexagram, says:

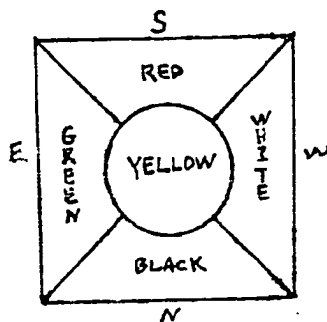
The [morally] noble man corresponds to yellow and the center, and [therefore] has a comprehensive awareness (t'ung 通) of li.

In the five-phase system yellow is emblematic of the point of neutrality or balance between opposites in tension. To be central means to be located centrally between heaven and earth (not primarily in terms of the earth and sky, but in terms of the structure of a hexagram). This neutrality or balance and centrality or correctness of position somehow accounts for the morally noble person's ability to t'ung li 通理. "T'ung" means either "to reach to," "to

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27. Derk Bodde lists it before the Yi appendices in his historical charts added to Fung Yu-lan's A History of Chinese Philosophy, I:408.

comprehend," or "to penetrate throughout."<sup>28</sup> So the sage can reach to, or penetrate throughout, li. This li would seem to be something found in the world between heaven and earth, and to be something that ordinary people either cannot comprehend or cannot experience fully. Perhaps this passage is referring to a pattern that links heaven and earth and joins everything between the two, thus accounting for the order aspect of cosmic process.



The Hsi-tz'u 繫辭 [Great appendix] A:1, says:

By means of the ease and simplicity (yi chien 易簡) [of the yi 易], the li of all under heaven are attained. The li of all under heaven being attained, positions (wei 位, levels of hierarchical relation) are then established in their midst.

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28. The expression "t'ung-li," which I have rendered as "reaching or penetrating li" is quite significant. The word "t'ung" is very difficult to translate adequately, not because it is a particularly abstruse concept, but simply because English lacks a single word to express its meaning. The basic image called forth by this word is of something passing through a passageway from its source to its destination, although it often implies spreading throughout something in all directions. It can be translated in some contexts as "to get through to," "to communicate with," "to understand thoroughly," or, "to make sense" (said of a sentence that succeeds in communicating the intended meaning).

What is intended here: the cosmic yi 易, which is the totality of change in the universe, or the Book of Changes (Yi 易)?

If the passage quoted above refers to the cosmic yi, then the li mentioned are the actual li (patterns) of things of the world, and the positions or levels mentioned are the hierarchical positions that things of the world hold because they are embedded in this li. This would then mean that yi or change produces the patterns or order of the things of the world.

If the passage refers to the Book of Changes (Yi) here, then the li mentioned are mappings of the li of the world onto hexagrams, and the positions or levels mentioned are the positions of the six lines of a hexagram.

"Li" can validly be interpreted to refer simultaneously to actual changes in the world and to the changes seen in the hexagrams, since the latter explicitly encompasses the former.<sup>29</sup> The point of the Hsi-tz'u appendix is to explain how the Book of Changes and its hexagrams function. It explains the hexagrams as mappings of a world in temporal flux which are so designed that they provide a new reading whenever the yarrow stalks are employed for divination. It seems extremely difficult to maintain that the li mentioned in this passage could simply be verbal statements of abstract principles (i.e., maxims).

The Hsi-tz'u, A:3, says:

[Fu Hsi] looked up to see the patterns (wen 文) in the heavens, and looked down to inspect the li of the earth. He thereby knew the ku 故 (external causal factors) of both invisible and visible [things].

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29. The first idea became important later on.

The words "wen" and "li" are parallel. The terms "t'ien-wen 天文 (celestial phenomena)" and "ti-li 地理 (earthly phenomena)" now refer to astronomy and geography, and before the mid-nineteenth century referred to astrology and geomancy. But the second sentence of this passage is a reminder that these sciences have as their objects not only static phenomena such as constellations, but to a much greater extent dynamic phenomena such as the orbits of planets and the shifting courses of rivers. The text probably refers to these kinds of phenomena. So these wen and li must include patterns experienced through time or, in other words, relations whose relata may not all be subject to simultaneous inspection. For instance, eclipses of the sun and moon are related to each other through time although only a single eclipse can be experienced at a given time.

The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, 1:7b/11, says:

Therefore the earlier kings . . . did not wear hot, heavy clothing. If hot and heavy [clothing is worn] then the li will become plugged. If the li become plugged, then ch'i (lifebreath) will not reach throughout (ta 達) [the various parts of the body]. Li here seem to be passages in the body for the entry and circulation of ch'i. The commentary by Kao Yu 高誘 of the Later Han (fl. 205-212) explains "li" by the word "mo 脈" which means the tracts (corresponding crudely to the veins and arteries) forming the circulation system. It may also refer in part to the pores and interstices between skin and flesh through which non-respiratory ch'i enter the body (ts'ou-li 腠理 in medical terminology).

The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu says at 9:9b/10:

[In the story of P'ao Ting carving the ox in the Chuang-tzu (see above, p. 93), P'ao Ting] followed its li and was true to (ch'eng 誠) the ox.

"Li" would here seem clearly to refer to the structure of the ox. Lü Pu-wei cannot mean that the li were metaphysically prior to the ox, for then he would have to say that P'ao Ting followed the structure of the ox and was true to li.

The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, 17:6b/18, says:

In all cases, the ear's [ability to] hear depends on silence, the eye's vision depends on brightness, and the mind's sentience depends on li.<sup>30</sup>

Silence, brightness, and li all appear to be external conditions necessary for perception. If the environment is too noisy, too dark, or too lacking in li (pattern or order), then perception fails. But is li like silence or brightness? Is li an orderliness of stimuli necessary for perception? Or is li a pattern there to be perceived? If the latter orderliness that characterizes the world, then this is the idea of li as the proper objects of the mind. This idea has an important bearing on the use of "li" in Buddhist texts, as will be explained later.

The statement in the Great Appendix (Hsi-tz'u) to the Book of Changes that "by means of ease and simplicity [of the yi], the li of all under heaven are attained," has already been examined. The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, 20:6a/19 seems to expand on this idea:

All men and creatures are transformations of yin and yang. Yin and yang are fabricated by heaven and then completed. Since heaven does indeed have its declines, deficiencies,

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30. Note that by analogy to "silence" and "brightness" li must refer not to a pattern but a state -- the object is in the state of being patterned. The opposite of li may be the undifferentiated state before the production of the phenomenal universe. See the appendix on wu.

disabilities, and submissions, as well as its flourishing periods, abundances, accumulations, and resurgences; so too men have their difficulties, extremities, humiliations, and shortcomings, as well as their successes, fulfillments, achievements, and accomplishments. These are all the inevitable regularities (shu 效) [that occur because] heaven encompasses (jung 容) the li of things.

This extremely important passage explains in some detail how the li of things are related to heaven through the transformations of yin and yang. It seems to mean that li are regularities that are in some sense contained in heaven (not the sky, but the metaphysical principle of which the sky is emblematic). It may also mean that the li themselves are in this heaven and direct the activities of yin and yang by which men and creatures are produced. This would be a completely new sense of "li," and moreover a sense which was not used by later philosophers. Even Chu Hsi would equate the t'ai-chi (supreme ultimate) with li only in the sense that li is the potential for ordinary li of the sort already discussed above. It may be that this passage from the Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu is close in meaning to the twenty-first chapter of the Lao-tzu.

#### 8. Tranquility versus Desire — the Threat to Li

The Yüeh-chi [Record of music] chapter of the Li-chi, 14/125 says:

The tranquility of a human being at birth is his heaven [-endowed] hsing (nature). When he is affected by things and acts, this is the hsing [-produced] desire (yü 欲). Only after things impinge upon him and knowledge of them is acquired do likings and dislikings take form. When there are no internal strictures on likings and dislikings, and the [faculty of] knowing is distracted by external [things], so that he is unable to introspect, then the heavenly (i.e., innate) li are extinguished.



Just previous to this passage the author has been discussing innate reactions to music, and the innate ability of humans to produce music. This innate musical sensitivity is most probably the referent intended for the words "heavenly li," and not some transcendent principles of human ethical behavior as has been suggested by others. Nevertheless, there are problems with regard to whether the word "li" is intended as singular or plural, and with regard to the exact sense of the word "extinguish." These difficulties stand out even more clearly in the words immediately following:

The Yüeh-chi, 15/123, says:

The influence of things (wu 物) upon humans is without end. When the likes and dislikes of human beings are without discipline, then upon contact with things people will be transformed to correspond to [these phenomena]. For a human being to be transformed to correspond to things is to extinguish the heavenly li in order to bring fulfillment to human desire.

This passage clearly contrasts human desire to heavenly li. Desire as the antithesis of li was perhaps the single most powerful concern of the Sung Confucians. As the Sung Confucians tended to view things, the li could almost be called another order of being, with which the mind could commune provided that it were not bound to mundane things by desire.<sup>31</sup> Once having been exposed to this view, it is difficult to avoid interpreting the above passage to mean that human desires form an impenetrable curtain over the window to the world of li. However, it should be clearly noted that this passage bears a strong

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31. D. C. Lau seems to reflect this view in the Introduction to his translation of the Mencius, p. 28: "There is a secret passage leading from the innermost part of a man's person to Heaven, and what pertains to Heaven, instead of being external to man, turns out to pertain to his truest nature."

resemblance to certain ideas in the Chuang-tzu that do not support this interpretation at all. The beginning words of the third chapter of the Chuang-tzu suggest that the limitlessness of the distractions of the world is the problem, not the fact that there is desire. It says: "My life has its limits, but knowledge is limitless. To use the limited to pursue the limitless is dangerous." And the Chuang-tzu contrasts the spontaneous and natural, which is called the "heavenly," with the obstinately perverse products of discursive thought processes and with downright manipulation, scheming, and guile, which are called the "human."

Depending on which interpretation is chosen, "li" may be taken to refer to the individual abilities (such as the ability to relate sounds and produce music, or, perhaps, the innate drives called hsing) of particular human beings, i.e., the individual embodiment of the same class of abilities in different people. Or it may refer to the shared object of awareness of all men through some transcendent form of perception that functions well when it is not inhibited or does not suffer interference from desires. If the first interpretation be chosen, then the word "extinguish" could mean either the actual destruction of these li or the serious impairment of their function. If the second interpretation be chosen, then it would appear that the word "extinguish" must mean the interruption of the perception of these li and not their actual impairment, an unlikely interpretation.

The Yüeh-chi, 51/123, says:

[The kings of old] caused the li of close and distant [human relationships], noble and base, elder and youth, and male and female all to be given perceptible form in music.

In this passage, "li" clearly refers to various kinds of relationships.

The Yüeh-chi, 54/123, says:

Melody and harmony respond to each other. Of the twisted, skewed, crooked, and straight, each [responds] to its own type, and the li of the myriad creatures all move according to their kinds.

Li are again compared to musical relationships. This passage clearly indicates that li are multiple, and it strongly implies that the li mentioned here are resonant organizations. Creatures of similar li resonate or respond to each other because of the similarities of their organizations.

The Yüeh-chi, 56/123, says:

Then express it with notes and tones, embellish it with lyres and zithers, give it movement with shields and battle-axes, ornament it with feathered pennants, and accompany it with flutes and pipes. Arouse the light of highest virtue, and motivate the harmony of the four breaths (ch'i 氣) in order to manifest the li of the myriad creatures.

The several kinds of harmonious activities of music and dance listed can be used to express the li of the creatures of the world. So if li do not themselves constitute some kind of relationships, at least there is some means of translating li into terms of musical harmonies.

The Yüeh-chi, 66/123, says:

Music is the immutable [element] of feeling ch'ing chih pu k'o pien che 情之不可變者, and li 禮 (ritual, propriety) is the unchangeable [element] among li 理.

The general idea of this passage would seem to be that music expresses feelings, or at least those feelings that are common through time to all human beings; and that li 禮 (ritual, propriety) expresses li 理, which in this passage may mean order or a desire for order in social relationships.

9. Organic Unity in the Huai-nan-tzu

The Huai-nan-tzu, compiled by Liu An 劉安 (died 122 B.C.), 19:3bf/15,

says:

The activities of the sages differ in embodiment yet unite on li. They travel upon different roads yet converge upon the same place.

This is one passage in which it seems justifiable to translate "li" as "principle" (see discussion above, p. 92), that is, "li" appears to refer to the ultimate sources of the activities of the sages. Note that the activities of the sages are compared to the many different roads, and the li upon which the sages unite is compared to the center from which the roads diverge. The Yi-ching, Hsi-tz'u, B:3, says:

The [people of the] world all converge upon the same place although they [travel upon] different routes.

The passage given here from the Huai-nan-tzu is a paraphrase, yet it can be interpreted to suggest that the sages proceed from a common li rather than arriving at a common li. Either way, the implication is that there is a li common to everything in the world, and that this li may be embodied, articulated, developed, or applied in such a way that it takes many different forms and motivates varied processes. The idea that all the beings in the world are linked in a gigantic organic system suffuses the Huai-nan-tzu, so the li mentioned here may be related to this idea.

The Huai-nan-tzu, 1:11b/17, says:

As for musical sounds, when kung 宮 (the note "do") is established the five notes (of the pentatonic scale) take form.<sup>32</sup> As for flavors, when sweet is established the five flavors become present. As for colors, when white is established the five colors are brought to completion. As for the tao (ways), when unity is established the myriad creatures are produced. For this reason the li of unity permeates the entire world, and the expansion of unity reaches the bounds of heaven and earth.

The general argument seems to be that diversity derives from a fundamental unity. Unity as a metaphysical entity produces the myriad creatures. "Li" refers to a pattern, and could almost be translated as "net" or "network" in this passage. Unity expands to reach heaven at one extreme and earth at the other, and in so doing constitutes a network of relationships or patterns embracing all being within the world between heaven and earth. (The earth and the sky are emblematic of the feminine and masculine creative powers of the universe.)

It seems that the sages mentioned at 19:3bf/15 unite as they do because they proceed back along different branches of the world-li to the same unitary principle. This is the reverse order of expression of the idea that "li is one but its divisions are many," which became important in Sung times.

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32. See Joseph Needham, Science and Civilisation in China, IV.1, 140, for a discussion of Chinese musicology. Needham, II:261, says: "The five elements gradually came to be associated with every conceivable category of things in the universe which it was possible to classify in fives. Table 12 [on the next page] sets them forth."

10. Wang Ch'ung — Resonating Li, Li of Ch'i, Li of the Tao

Wang Ch'ung 王充 (27 - ca. 100 A.D.) discusses physiognomy in his Lun-heng 論衡 [The balance for discourse], 3:8a/21. He first says that the physiognomists can tell a person's fate (ming, individually mandated by heaven) by examining his build (ku-t'i 骨體), and then adds:

It is not only wealth, nobility, poverty, and baseness that can be learned from one's build. The purity or turbidity embodied in conduct also have their fa-li 法理 (model-pattern). Wealth, nobility, poverty, and baseness are [all] the mandate (ming) [of heaven]. The purity or turbidity embodied in conduct are [both determined by] one's hsing. It is not only the mandate which has a skeletal determination (ku-fa 骨法). The hsing also has a skeletal determination.

Wang Ch'ung has already {3:6b/21} used "li" in such a way as to suggest that it means pattern or physiological structure. So the term "fa-li" means something like "pattern-providing structure," that is, structure or pattern of the body that provides a pattern for one's hsing or ming (mandate, i.e., what is mandated for one by heaven).

The Lun-heng, 13:14a/16, says:

The production of discourses is like the shooting of arrows: A discourse's responding (lit., resonating, ying 應) to a li is like an arrow's hitting a target.

This passage suggests that li can be objects of thought, or even the contents of thought. This idea is very important to understanding the Buddhist use of the term "li."

The Lun-heng, 15:1b/15, says:

Thus the position of men between heaven and earth is like that of lice within a garment, or like mole crickets and ants in their crevices. Can the lice, mole crickets, and ants create changes in the ch'i of things (air) within the garment or crevices by their contrary, complaisant, improper, or proper actions? To say that lice, mole crickets, and ants cannot do so, but that man alone can do so is not to have understood the li of the ch'i (breath, and by extension, the concrete aspect [see the section on ch'i which follows]).

On the surface, all that this implies is that some people have not properly understood the nature of the "breath" that fills the space between heaven and earth. This breath is entirely analogous to the air that fills the interior of a garment. People do not expect the misbehaviors of body parasites to create tempests and other anomalous atmospheric conditions within their clothing, yet they wrongly expect that human misbehavior will make flood-producing storms and field-withering droughts within the world. Where we would speak of natural laws<sup>33</sup> governing atmospheric phenomena, the Lun-heng speaks of the li of these larger- and smaller-scale breaths. The word "li" seems to refer to objectively verifiable regularities, but it would be highly questionable to draw from this description the conclusion that the word "li" means some kind of "law of nature," if by that term is meant some entity having existence independent of particular things in the universe.

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33. In modern science, this term means descriptive generalizations, even though some people retain the older notion that a natural law is a rule imposed upon natural phenomena by divine fiat. See the discussions in Needham, Science and Civilization in China, II: 472 and 518-583.

The Lun-heng, 3:8a/21 (see above), has already related the model-li that determines the rectitude of one's conduct, to the skeleton as it relates to wealth and social station. So the li mentioned here are not transcendent entities nor are they extrinsic to things. They are, it would appear, the structures or patterns of beings. These structures or patterns of beings determine their various qualities and capabilities.

N.B. This is the first passage (to my knowledge) in which anyone clearly stated that ch'i or "breath" has li. The Yüeh-chi, line 56/123 (see p. 125 above), has intimated some kind of relationship between the two, but the nature of this relationship is not clear from that passage. The interrelationship between these two aspects of being and the manner in which that interrelationship is constituted form a major focus of interest among Sung Confucians. The beginnings of this system of philosophy are already present in the Han dynasty.

The Lun-heng, 16:9b/18, says:

To say that only the insects' eating of grains (and not other things) is a response to political matters is to misunderstand the reality of the li of the tao, and not to understand the hsing of the ch'i of things.

The meaning of this passage is not clear. Probably "tao" means "the way things work," in which case its li would not be transcendent but abstract. Ch'i is said to have a hsing, but Wang Ch'ung has already said that ch'i has a li, so this suggests the equation of hsing and li, an important Sung dynasty Neo-Confucian idea. Notice, however, that "li" is associated with "tao" and "hsing" is associated with "ch'i." This is remarkably like the later Sung depiction which polarizes the cosmos between its transcendent aspect, the tao of heaven



or the supreme li (t'ai-chi), and its immanent aspect, ch'i (or ch'i 器, implement, a thing composed of ch'i 氣 (breath) and the embodiments of li that are called hsing.<sup>34</sup>

#### 11. A List of Meanings Encountered Thusfar

Thus far approximately forty meanings of the word "li" have been examined. All of them can be traced back to the original meaning of "pattern." Two passages were discovered that may indicate that the authors thought of li as transcendent, but there has been no passage studied yet that force us to give "li" a transcendent interpretation.

This study has now reached a turning point. Before examining new meanings of "li", it may be useful to review very briefly the chief significations discovered so far. I have supplied the page numbers where a discussion of each meaning may be found in this study.

"Li" means:

"to lay out the fields," 84ff.

pattern, 82f, 87

civil order or reasonableness, 88

to order or set to rights, 88f, 96, 98

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34. The Hui-an wen-chi, 58:4b/41 (Answer to Huang Tao-fu 黃道夫), says: "Between heaven and earth there are [both] li and ch'i. Li is the tao above form, the fundament of living creatures (sheng-wu 生物). Ch'i is the ch'i 器 (implement) beneath (i.e., within) form, the concrete possession of living creatures. Therefore in the production of human beings and creatures, all must be endowed with this li in order to have hsing, and all must be endowed with this ch'i in order to have form. Although [neither] their hsing nor their forms are external to their individual bodies, nevertheless between tao and ch'i (implement) there is an exceedingly clear demarcation.

relation, 91f.  
social order, 92  
organic structure, 92f  
specific characteristics of the myriad creatures that derive from the one tao,  
93  
the natural order of things, 94f, 96, 98  
a pattern or order encompassing all things -- known through a process of  
abstraction and synthesis, 95  
all-encompassing pattern, 95  
some sort of pattern at an intermediate level of generality between the tao and  
concrete, specific things, 95f  
a pattern formed by the production and the transformation through time of  
creatures and also their eternal production by the tao -- since the tao is  
transcendent the li may also be transcendent if the li is conceived to reach  
into the tao and not just be produced by it (and the tao itself is conceived  
to be transcendent), 100f  
pattern in the tao -- may be transcendent if the tao is conceived as being  
transcendent, 100f  
an abstract pattern, 101f  
observable regularities permitting the formulation of descriptive and  
predictive generalities, 102  
an abstract order in the human sphere, part of which may be immutable, 102f  
organizational patterns of greatest generality, 103  
the life cycle of an organism, 104f  
potential, 105  
the patterns of completed things, 108  
patterns produced by the tao, 108  
distinctions such as round and square, 110  
something that can be known by the sage to a degree unequalled by ordinary  
people, 115  
something given by the ease and simplicity of the yi (change or the Book of  
Changes), 116f  
something the inspection of which enables knowledge of objective causes, 117f  
passages in the body, 118

structure of an ox, 118f  
 a prerequisite for intellection, 119  
 something produced by transformations of yin and yang, 119f  
 something innate in humans that can be extinguished by desire, 120f  
 various kinds of relationships, comparable to musical relationships, that can  
     resonate with other li, 123  
 something that can be mapped onto musical relationships, 123  
 something that can be expressed through ritual, 123  
 something common to everything in the world and that can be articulated,  
     ramified, or elaborated to take many different forms, 124  
 a network of relationships derived from unity and filling the space between  
     heaven and earth, 125  
 a pattern-providing structure in an organism, 126  
 an object of thought or the content of thought, 126  
 an aspect of ch'i (lifebreath -- the concrete aspect of things), 127  
 an aspect of the tao, 128

In the instances above where li appears to be transcendent, it is  
 because the organic unity of the universe has been traced back to a transcendent  
 source. Li is never treated in the awed tones used by the Lao-tzu for the tao,  
 nor is it used like heaven in the Shih-ching, Ode no. 235: "The activities of  
 heaven above are without sound or odor." When in Sung times li becomes  
 indisputably transcendent, the source of this change proceeds from another  
 quarter.

12. Transcendent Li

A totally transcendent li, having nothing to do with mundane life, appears for the first time, during the Han dynasty (sometime during the late first or early second century). The Ssu-shih-erh chang ching 四十二章經 [Sutra in forty-two sections], section two, records:<sup>35</sup>

The Buddha said: The s'rmaṇa who having left their families sever desire, expunge love, perceive the source of their own mentation, and attain to the deep li of Buddhahood (ta Fo shen li 達佛深理), becoming enlightened with regard to the dharma of the cessation of action (i.e., nirvāṇa). . . . do not pass through the several stages<sup>36</sup> but spontaneously [achieve] the highest dignity. This is called mārga (the way to nirvāṇa, or, by extension, nirvāṇa itself).

In his analysis of the concept li, Wing-tsit Chan states that in this passage "there is no reason to believe that li here is [used] in any sense other than truth." {1969: 61} But the context shows that "truth" does not mean a true statement. Attaining this truth is not to be equated, as Chan suggests, with

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35. Tang Yung-t'ung, Han Wei liang Chin nan-pei-ch'ao Fo-chiao shih, chapter 3, discusses the authenticity of this sutra. On page 42 the author indicates one sentence from the material quoted to be spurious. I have deleted it as indicated. The Taishō Tripitaka, volume XVII, p. 722, preserves the passage quoted in a footnote indicating a version different from the one it takes as the main text.

36. The several stages are the sotāpanna or "stream-entrant," the sakadāgāmi or "once-returner," the anāgāmi or "non-returner," and the arahant or "holy one." These four stages are achieved by breaking groups of the dasā-saṃyojana or "ten fetters." See the Fo-hsüeh ta tz'u-tien, p. 767, and Sangharakshita's A Survey of Buddhism (Boulder, 1980), pp. 164f.

the mere verbal mastery of a point of dogma.<sup>37</sup> One cuts off all desires and all appeals of the senses, directs one's awareness inward to the source of one's own mental being. Only then can one attain to what is both a state of knowing and a state of being wherein one is awakened to, and aware of, nirvāṇa. The word "li" then refers to the content of this experience (refer to the discussions of li above, pp. 107, 128, and 162. This li is certainly not an objective truth, because in it there is no subject-object dichotomy. It would

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37. It might be argued that "li" in the passage from the Ssu-shih-erh chang ching is a translation of the word "dharma." In this regard it should be noted that "dharma" has three principle meanings: 1) A body of doctrine, the teachings of the Buddha, 2) things or phenomena in general (what we would call the data of experience), and 3) reality itself, the absolute, that is, whatever is once the delusive processes of māyā have been surmounted. The last is practically equivalent to nirvāṇa. The third kind of dharma is given expression, to the extent possible in this world of māyā, in the first kind of dharma. The passage under discussion cannot mean mere doctrine -- no matter how sublime -- by "li," for nothing more than a retentive memory is needed to attain this knowledge. Yet the text indicates that attaining this li is subsequent to leaving the family, severing desire, expunging love, and perceiving the source of one's own mentation. The second definition of "dharma" is clearly inapplicable to the passage under consideration if we restrict "dharma" to the elements of experience of the ordinary world, and is practically equivalent to the third definition if we decide (as I do) that "li" must refer to the transcendent. This leaves the third definition by elimination. In that case, the passage says that after proper preparation one attains to the transcendent experience of Buddhahood (i.e., enlightenment). The conclusion indicated by the text, that one attains thereby the way to nirvāṇa, confirms this argument. See Sangharakshita, A Survey of Buddhism, pp. xxvi, 52f, 85, 89, and 295.

be even less appropriate to speak of it as a discursive truth, since no language is involved.

This passage from the Ssu-shih-erh chang ching, believed to be the earliest extant Buddhist text in Chinese, is extremely important because for the first time the word "li" was adopted to express Buddhist concepts. It is not clear whether the Ssu-shih-erh chang ching was a translation of an Indian text or an explanation of Buddhist ideas written specifically for a Chinese readership. So it is impossible to say that "li" was a translation for some Sanskrit or Pali term. It is clear, however, that it has taken on a new depth of meaning.

When "li" was adopted to express Buddhist ideas, it came for the first time to denote a transcendent verity extrinsic to the ordinary categories of our experience. The regularities of the phenomenal world derive from dependent causation. Statements about these regularities can only be called provisionally true because nothing has an enduring character or self-nature (svabhāva, tzu-hsing 自性). What is veridically perceived is not to be perceived in our ordinary state of consciousness, but in an enlightened state. This experience is ineffable. The content, as it were, of this experience is called "li" by analogy with the use of "li" to name the content of what are ordinarily viewed as correct perceptions of states of affairs, i.e., ordinary truths.

### 13. Wang Pi Continued to Develop Indigenous Ideas

While "li" clearly took on a transcendent meaning for the Buddhists,<sup>38</sup> Wang Pi continued the development of the concept already seen in non-Buddhist sources.<sup>39</sup>

Wang Pi suggested, but did not clearly state, the idea of an "utmost li" (chih-li 至理) that descends from heaven, and a complementary "reaching li" (t'ung-li 通理) that, rising to meet it from earth, engenders and brings to completion all the beings of the world. To say so would be to express in terms of li the idea that there is a male ch'i (lifebreath) that descends to call forth from earth a female ch'i that rises to envelop the ch'i of heaven and produce thereby the myriad creatures.<sup>40</sup>

The Lao-tzu Wang Pi chu 老子王弼注 (Wang Pi's commentary on the Lao-tzu), chapter 42, says:<sup>41</sup>

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38. For further developments in the concept of li within Buddhism, see Robert Gimello's insightful article entitled "Apophatic and Kataphatic Discourse in Mahayana: A Chinese View," Philosophy East and West, XXVI, 2 (April, 1976), 117-136. See also, T'ang Chün-yi's "'Li' chih liu yi," pp. 75-81, and Morino Shigeo's "'Meiri' no imi," Shinagaku kenkyū, XXXI (1965), 23-29.

39. See Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism," T'oung Pao, series 2, LXVI, 1-3 (1980), 120, for the assertion that the commentary on the Lao-tzu by Wang Pi and the commentary on the Chuang-tzu by Kuo Hsiang as well as the text and appendices of the Yi-ching contributed to a hybrid Buddho-taoist "Dark Learning" (hsüan-hsüeh 玄學) during Wei-Chin times. Zürcher does not affirm Buddhist influence on Wang Pi or Kuo Hsiang in this article.

40. For a similar idea expressed in numerological terms, see Schuyler Cammann, "The Magic Square of Three in Old Chinese Philosophy and Religion," History of Religions, I, 1 (1961), 55. The entire article is well worth reading for the background information it provides.

41. See Paul J. Lin, A Translation of Lao Tzu's "Tao Te Ching" and Wang Pi's "Commentary." Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1977.

"What other people teach, I also teach." What I teach is not done by forcing other people to follow. Rather, I make use of tzu-jan 自然 (nature or spontaneity), taking up its utmost li. Following this [utmost li], good fortune must result, and going against it bad fortune inevitably follows. Therefore people instruct each other concerning it, just as I teach people not to violate it.

The word "chih," translated above as "utmost" has a strong verbal sense derived from its basic meaning, which is "to reach, to arrive at." So it connotes not only something that is perfect, or as near to being perfect as is possible, but also gives a sense of the intermediate stages on the approach to that perfection. For instance, the phrase "stop [only] at the utmost good" (chih yü chih shan 止於至善) from the Ta-hsüeh [Great learning, section 1] makes implicit reference not only to the utmost (chih) good, but also to all the intermediate stages of good along the way to the attainment of the most perfect good. Wang Pi's "utmost li" would seem likewise to be that li reached by following all the more commonplace li back to their source; that is, the root from which all li ramify. This utmost li would seem not to be subject to immediate inspection. Wang Pi may regard it as being known by a process of abstraction and synthesis, or through some kind of intuition. But it is a moot point whether it transcends the world we know through ordinary perception.

The Lao-tzu Wang Pi chu, chapter 47, says:

"The world may be known without going out the door. The tao of heaven may be seen without looking out the window." Events have ancestors, and things have masters.<sup>42</sup> 'Although they [travel

42. Chu Hsi quotes this sentence, without attribution, in a letter in answer to Ch'en Ch'i-chih. See Hui-an wen-chi, 58:22b/40



upon] different paths, all converge upon the same place. Although there are one hundred ways of thought, they all arrive at the same conclusion.' (See Hsi, B:3.) The tao has its great constants, and li have their final outcomes. 'Holding to the tao of old, one may manage [the things of] today.' {Lao, 14} Although we are located in the present, we can 'know the ancient beginnings.' Therefore 'without going out the door [and without] looking out the window' things may be known.

.....  
 "So the sage does not go [anywhere] and yet knows, does not see [anything] and yet is [able correctly to] name [things]." [The sage] gets the final outcomes of things. Therefore, although he does not go [anywhere] he can know by cognition. He perceives the ancestors (i.e., the earliest causes) of things. Therefore, although he does not see [anything], he can get the li of (i.e., the li that allow determination of) truth and falsity, and [so be able correctly to] name [things].



The passage from the Lao-tzu upon which Wang Pi comments here is reminiscent of Mencius, 4B:26, where it says: "Consider the height of heaven and the distance of the stars. If their ku (external causes) are sought, it is possible to call up the solstices for a thousand years while sitting at home." It is tempting to say that both Mencius and Lao-tzu were concerned to discover the principles of things. But we would be deceived if we thought that this constitutes an explanation, for the question would then be how the early Chinese conceived of these so-called "principles." It would not be prudent to assume that our modern concept of principle is the same as were their concepts of ku or li. In fact, the comments of Wang Pi show that, at least until his time, the matter was quite otherwise.

"Events," Wang says, "have ancestors." He pictures all of the multiplicity of events present in everyday experience as the descendants of some primal event or events. Moreover, he maintains that while different people will begin to trace back toward the beginning from their knowledge of different sets of events, different lineages of events, as it were, their searches will tend to converge upon a common source. The Western concept of "principle" derives from the idea of "prince," i.e., a sovereign will imposed on subjects. Wang Pi's concept of "li" is, on the contrary, explained in terms of family lineage. That "things have masters" is not due to there being a Lord God who issues fiat from on high, but is due to their hierarchical position within a lineage, a family tree.

"The tao has its great constants, and li have their final outcomes." This statement is reminiscent of Han Fei's claim that "The tao is what li's (i.e., orders) things." {Han, 6:8b/11, p'ien 20} That is, the tao is what causes things to have the li that they possess.

"[The sage] gets the final outcome of things. . . . He perceives the ancestors of things." This observation again calls attention to the beginning and the end of a process of ramification.

In general, Wang Pi argues that by perceiving the ancestors of things (the root of li-ramification) one can tell the different possibilities for ramification that stem from that root, and that by perceiving the final outcomes of a process of ramification one can discover from what origins and by what process of ramification it came to pass -- providing, of course, that one is a sage with a knowledge of the general process of ramification.


In the Chou-yi Wang Pi chu 周易王弼注 (Wang Pi's  commentary to the Book of Changes), hexagram 1, Wen-yen, (SPPY,  1:4a/17) Wang Pi says:

"Ch'ien, the originator [of all being], consists of all nines (i.e., unbroken lines symbolizing yang reaching its peak and ready to begin changing to yin.) The world is ordered (chih 治)." . . . Nine is a yang number. Yang is [emblematic of] things that are hard and straight. Now it is only the utmost (chih 至) li in the world (t'ien-hsia 天下) that can use (i.e., function as) the hard and straight (refers to the six yang lines of the ch'ien hexagram) throughout, extending itself (i.e., its perspicacity) to the greatest extent and [yet] being good at the gentle [as well as the abrupt]. Therefore [it is said], "Ch'ien, the originator, consists of all nines," and so "the world is ordered." Now by perceiving the motions of things, the li by virtue of which they are as they are can all be known. The virtue (i.e., characteristics) of dragons (the emblems of yang and of the hard lines of the hexagrams) is that they do not perpetuate disorder.

The selection states that the utmost li are "in the world." As yang on the verge of going over to become yin, the natural force emblemized by the ch'ien hexagram functions as creative energy on all levels of being and deploys itself to its ultimate extent. Li on this highest level is seen before it ramifies into the complex entities of the world. It also appears as potential. As the Yi-ching's Hsi-tz'u (Great Appendix) says (A:1, A:5, B:1), there is nothing more simple than ch'ien and k'un; yet within these two lies the potential for all the complexities of being. The ultimate potential, according to the Hsi-tz'u is the t'ai-chi or Supreme Ultimate. Yin and yang are aspects of this t'ai-chi, but they are phenomenal whereas the t'ai-chi is transcendent. So it is pointless to argue which of yin and yang is "really" first. It is significant,

however, that Wang Pi regards the utmost li as being "in the world." This judgment would seem to indicate that he did not regard the t'ai-chi as a species of li. T'ai-chi was apparently not regarded as a species of li until the Sung dynasty.

#### 14. "Reaching" Li

The Chou-yi Wang Pi chu, Hexagram 2, line 5, (SPPY, 1:6b/17) 

says:

"A six in the fifth position<sup>43</sup> [corresponds to] a yellow lower garment [and hence] great good fortune." Yellow is the color of the center.<sup>44</sup> This garment is a decoration for the lower [part of the body]. K'un (the second hexagram) is the tao (way) of a subordinate, whose beauty (i.e., goodness) is fulfilled by [maintaining] the lower position. Now the body (i.e., the structure of this hexagram) has no hard, vigorous [lines], yet it can comprehend the realities (ch'ing 情) of [all] beings. [This is because k'un 坤 is a] t'ung (reaching, penetrating, comprehensive, universal) li. That it holds a position of majesty by means of the virtues of yieldingness and complaisance [is because it] bears and accepts the pattern-li (wen-li 文理). That it drapes a yellow lower garment [over its body] in order to obtain great good fortune [is because it] does not use aggressiveness.

Wang Pi's commentary on this judgment of the fifth line derives in part from the Lesser Symbolism (hsiang 象) for this line, which states:

43. In casting a hexagram, the manipulation of the yarrow stalks yields the number six, seven, eight, or nine. Six and eight indicate yin lines and are noted as a broken line in the hexagram. Seven and nine are yang and are noted as an unbroken lines in the hexagram.


44. Yellow is the color of the earth. The earth is given a central position when the other four phases correspond to the four directions.

A yellow lower garment means great good fortune because there is a pattern [emblazoned] on its center.

Wang explains this by the theory of male superiority given in the Yi-ching appendices according to which the male is creative, while the female takes an entirely receptive role in nurturing what the male has engendered. Yellow is the color of earth, and earth is feminine. The yellow garment submits to the procreative force symbolized by the design emblazoned upon it. So good fortune is symbolized by the yellow garment's playing its proper role as a passive background for this design.


Wang virtually gives a definition of the expression "reaching li" when he says that the structure of the k'un (second) hexagram has no hard or vigorous lines yet can comprehend the realities of all beings. The function of k'un, the receptive, is to complement ch'ien, the inceptive. Ch'ien is the agent that initiates all change and development, but no matter how ch'ien evolves and changes, it is always "reached out to" and perfectly complemented by k'un. In the commentary to hexagram 50, line 5, the so-called "reaching li" are again associated with the feminine, receptive ability to accept the imprint of the male procreative ability.

#### 15. Li and the Mandate of Heaven — Related Ideas

The Chou-yi Wang Pi chu, Hexagram 6, line 4, (SPPY, )  
1:12b/17) says:

"Nine in the fourth position [indicates] being unable to withstand conflict.<sup>45</sup> Turn again to the mandate [of heaven]. Turn aside. Be at peace in correct firmness. Good fortune [will come of this]." Someone in a higher position contending with someone in a lower position is one who is able to change; therefore this person's penalty is not great. If one is able to return to following the basic li, change [back to] the previous (i.e., original) mandate, be at peace in correct firmness without committing any infringement, and not lose his tao (i.e., correct way), [then] "being benevolent comes from oneself," {Ana., 7:30} and therefore good fortune will follow from this.

As Ch'ien Mu rightly says, "In this passage, the word 'li' is given a position even superior to that of the word 'mandate [of heaven].'" {1955: 137} The term "basic li" would appear to refer to a li that determines other, derivative, li.

The Chou-yi Wang Pi chu, Hexagram 16, line 2, (SPPY,   
2:7a/12) says:


A six in the second position [indicates] one who is steadfast as a rock, [but] does not [delay] for as much as an entire day. Correct firmness [brings] good fortune." . . . He distinguishes the pi-jan chih li / 必 然 之 理 and therefore does not change. His steadfastness in this respect is rocklike.

It is not obvious whether this "pi-jan chih li" means a li that is itself necessary, or a li that determines that some things must be as they are or will be. Other uses of the term point to the second sense, but here the phrase may well mean both.

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
45. The late Ch'ü Wan-li, Professor of Chinese and noted authority on the Yi-ching, says that "conflict" (sung 訟) refers to litigation in this passage.

{Class notes}

The Chou-yi Wang Pi Chu, Hexagram 21, line 4, (SPPY, ) 3:1bf/12) says:

"A nine in the fourth position [indicates] someone eating dried meat and finding a metal arrow. It will be advantageous to persevere through difficulties." Although in the body of this hexagram this yang line is the master of the yin lines, it is not in a central position, nor is it in a position proper to yang. Under these conditions, when something is eaten it will not submit [to being easily chewed].<sup>46</sup> So [the Yi-ching] says "eating dried meat." Metal is hard and an arrow is straight. If in eating dried meat you find something hard and straight, it can be of benefit in persevering through difficulties, but it will not be sufficient to fulfill the tao (way or course) of the reaching li.

The term "reaching li" was introduced in Wang's commentary to the second hexagram. That hexagram consists of all soft lines, whereas this hexagram has three hard lines and three soft lines. Wang seems to regard this awkwardly placed hard line in the middle of the hexagram as the main reason that this hexagram, or the forces it represents, cannot perform the "reaching," "penetrating," or "complementing" function played by k'un.

The Chou-yi Wang Pi chu, Hexagram 38, Hsiang (Greater ) symbolism), (SPPY, 4:9a/15) says:

"Above there is fire. Below there is a lake. [This is a picture of] opposition. The [morally] noble man uses sameness yet [produces therefrom] differences." "Sameness" refers to the t'ung (reaching) li. "Difference" refers to affairs for which [the morally noble man] is responsible.


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46. The uppermost and lowermost hard lines of the hexagram suggest the jaws, and this line suggests something in the mouth being eaten.

Ch'ien Mu says:

This passage is most worthy of attention. After this, the Hua-yen [Buddhist] sect of the T'ang dynasty elaborated most on the idea of the opposition of li and affairs, and the expression did in point of fact originate with this [commentary]. Why does he say 'Sameness refers to the reaching li?' This is just what is meant by [Wang Pi's] Chou-yi lüeh-li (Summary exemplifications of the principles of the Book of Changes) where it says: 'There is an ancestor to connect them, and an origin to bring them together.' {SPPY, 10:2a/14} Since all events in the world are connected and brought together in one li, then the multitudes of li naturally are connected [with one another] and have to be the same (i.e., cannot be alienated). {1955: 136}

The significance of this passage to the present study lies in its suggesting the idea that many particular things of different natures are produced from one common "ancestor" or li. That view became a cardinal tenet in Sung Confucianism.

The Chou-yi Wang Pi chu, Hexagram 55, Hsiang (Greater  symbolism), (SPPY, 6:1a/12) says:

"Thunder and lightning both arrive, [this is the image of] abundance. The [morally] noble man uses [this power] to judge trials and impose punishments." He moves by flashes of brightness [symbolized by the thunder and lightning] and so does not lose the li of the true circumstances (ch'ing 眞).

In his article quoted above, Ch'ien Mu says:

Note: In his discussions concerning li, Wang Pi either poses li in contrast to affairs, or links li together with ch'ing (true circumstances). In his Chou-yi lüeh-li, he speaks only of li in the first section, "Understanding the 'Commentary on the decision (T'uan)," and speaks only of ch'ing (true circumstances)



in the second section, "Understanding the interrelationships among individual lines." All human affairs can be completely treated by means of the two words "ch'ing" and "li," and this is the main point of [Wang] Pi's commentary on the Yi-ching. {1955: 137}

Following this analysis, it would seem that Wang Pi preferred to use the word "ch'ing" to refer to the actualities of the world, or to concrete things, and the word "li" to refer to potentialities, or to underlying realities understood through abstraction. Yet the passage from Wang Pi's commentary to the fifty-fifth hexagram quoted above shows that these terms were not mutually exclusive. Rather, they denoted two aspects of one reality, as Ch'ien implies.

The Chou-yi Wang Pi chu, Chou-yi lüeh-li, (SPPY, 10:1af/14), says:

What are the "Decisions?" They discuss in a comprehensive way what each individual hexagram embodies, explaining the master from which [their significance] derives. Now multitudes cannot control the multitudes. [Only] the fewest can control the multitudes. Activity cannot control activity. [Only] what is given correct firmness in unity<sup>47</sup> can control the activity of the world. Therefore in order for the multitudes all to survive, their master must bring about unity. In order for movements all to be [correctly] cyclical, its originator must be without duality. Things do not happen to creatures or events capriciously; thus they must follow [some] li proper to them. There is an ancestor to connect them, and an origin to bring them together. Therefore they are fecund and yet are not disorderly, they are many and yet are not deluding. Therefore when six lines of a hexagram are in interrelation, it is possible to select one [line] to explain [them all], and when the hard and soft ride on each other (i.e.,

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47. "I interpret fu 夫" to be equivalent to "hu 乎" in this passage.

interact), it is possible to establish (i.e., determine which is) the master in order to define them.

The word "li" in this passage seems to me to refer to the structure or relationship of lines of the hexagram as it is formed out of hard and soft (broken and unbroken) lines. As the hexagrams mirror reality in some way, the li or patterns found in the hexagrams mirror some li or pattern in the real world.

#### 16. Growing Acceptance of the Idea of Transcendent Li By Non-Buddhist Thinkers

Up to this point -- except for the one Buddhist text already examined -- it has always been possible to explain li as actual or potential features of the real world, which -- although they may stem from a transcendent source -- are themselves immanent. A few instances turned up in which li might have one foot in a transcendent realm, but these cases were not clear-cut. The Wei-Chin period (220-420) was one of ferment, and Buddhist ideas had a strong impact on the entire culture. Thus it is not surprising to find the first clear affirmation of the transcendent status of some li in a non-Buddhist source, that is, in the commentaries to the Chuang-tzu of Kuo Hsiang 郭象 (died 312).

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu 莊子郭象注 (Commentary of Kuo Hsiang to the Chuang-tzu), 1:1/47 (SPPY, 1:1af/25), says:

"There is a fish named K'un in the Unfathomable Sea of the North. I know not how many thousand miles long it is. It changes into a bird, and its name is P'eng. . . . When the sea current flows, then it migrates to the Unfathomable Sea of the South. The Unfathomable Sea of the South is the pond of heaven." . . . Great creatures must naturally be produced in great places, and great places must likewise produce great creatures. Since this li

is indeed so of itself (tzu-jan), there need be no fear of its failure, so why be concerned over the matter?

The word "li" refers to the natural regularity that Kuo Hsiang has formulated in the statement that "great creatures must naturally be produced in great places, and great places must likewise produce great creatures." "Li" does not refer to something transcendent here. Kuo Hsiang maintains historical continuity in his use of this term, using it as had many before him to refer to natural regularities.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, 1:5/47 (SPPY, 1:2a/25), says:

"If the accumulation (i.e., depth) of water is not deep, then it will not have the buoyancy to support a large boat. If you pour a tumbler of water into a depression in the courtyard, then a mustard seed can become a boat. But if you place the tumbler in the water it will adhere to the bottom because the water is shallow and the vessel is large." This is to explain that the reason the P'eng flies high is that its wings are large. The endowments of things whose chih (substrate) is small do not depend on great [resources], and likewise the [resources] used by things whose chih (substrate) is large cannot be small. Thus li have their ultimate lots (fen 分) and things have their determinate extremes (chi 極). Each of these is sufficient to describe matters; their utility [in this regard] is the same.

The context makes it fairly certain that the words "fen" (lots) and "chi" (extremes) refer to natural domains and the creatures that fill them. The word "fen" is here translated by "lot," which is intended as a rough equivalent of the Greek concept of moira.<sup>48</sup> If this interpretation is correct, then "li have

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48. See Francis M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy, pp. 15ff.

their ultimate lots," and "things have their determined extremes" are parallel or complementary expressions. "Li have their ultimate lots" apparently means that li determine for things what shall be their domain or allotted portion in the world. "Things have their determined extremes" probably means that whether a thing fits in a large or a small ecological niche is determined -- probably by its li. But whether this li is envisioned as an aspect of the thing so determined, as something wholly intrinsic to that thing, or is envisioned as some "ancestral"<sup>49</sup> li by which the being of a thing is determined, is not clear from the context of this passage.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, 1:22/47 (SPPY, 1:5b/25), says:

"The godlike man earns no merit." Creatures never abandon their lives to [the care of] nature but always happily submit themselves to [artificial treatments such as] acupuncture. When the li reach [their limit] then [all] traces [i.e., things or activities that go against the tao, such as the artificial means of acupuncture] are obliterated. Now [the godlike man] follows [the natural inclinations of] things and does not aid them; he acts in unison with the ultimate li [in so doing], and therefore earns no merit.

Kuo Hsiang explains why the godlike man is said to earn no merit. He makes an analogy between the activities of the godlike man and those of the ordinary practitioner of medicine. The godlike man does not follow a course analogous to that of ordinary men who seek to minister to the needs of people.

In the case of disease, the ordinary practitioner resorts to acupuncture and medicines, which may produce a pronounced effect on the patient

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49. Discussion of "ancestral" li begins on p. 138.

(whether for good or for ill). The way used by those with the least degree of skill is to give topical treatment to symptoms. A better way is to treat the less obvious cause of the problem. The skilled practitioner of acupuncture, for instance, may cure a disease of the eye by treating the liver.

In the case of other troubles, the godlike man goes even farther toward the source of problems, so far in fact that he arrives at the primal reaches of the li of things and events. When one traces back such ramifications to their root, one reaches a point logically prior to the differentiations by which our sense organs perceive the world. Thus "all manifestations are obliterated," and the godlike man appears to be doing nothing. Since he "does nothing," he acquires no merit in the eyes of those who perceive the world in ordinary ways.

In other words, li proceed from an ultimate level, which is not subject to ordinary inspection, to a level of great complexity (such as the veins in tree leaves) in which li can be directly perceived. While the latter li are easily accessible, perception of these li does not permit elegant and efficacious solutions to problems. While the former li are not easily accessible, awareness of them on this higher level permits solutions to problems that create little turbulence, few undesired side effects, and that appear to be completely effortless.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, 1:28/47 (SPFY, 1:6b/25), says:

"There are godlike men living on distant Mount Ku-yi. . . . They ride on clouds, drive flying dragons, and roam beyond the four seas (i.e, the boundaries of the world). Their spirits are coherent. They cause creatures to escape disease and the grain to reach maturity. . . ." Those who embody the spiritual, reside in responsibility, and [so] fully comprehend li and completely

fathom the ineffable efficacies (miao 妙), occultly unite with what lies beyond the four seas [that bound the world], while [their physical bodies] remain still and silent within their chambers.

This is the first time (at least in the materials I have discovered) that a non-Buddhist author suggests there are li to be comprehended in a non-normal psychic state.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, 2:49/97 (SPPY, 1:18a/25), commenting on the "Ch'i-wu lun 齊物論" chapter (On leveling [all] things), says:

There are no words for the ultimate li.

This statement reinforces the impression given in the previous passage that the ultimate li are to be experienced in no ordinary state of mind, but in the state of "sitting in forgetfulness." Li would then appear to be transcendent.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary to Chuang-tzu, 2:56/96 (SPPY 1:19a/25), says:

Each thing has a li, and every process has its best course.

Evidently there are particular as well as general li in Kuo Hsiang's system of thought.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary to Chuang-tzu, 2:76/96 (SPPY, 1:22a/25) says:

Things have their tzu-jan (spontaneity or natural condition), and li have their extremes. If one follows them with a sense of direction, then he will unfathomably (ming-jan 冥然) come into congruence with them; this is not something about which it is possible to speak.

These words seem to refer to an ineffable mystical experience of transcendent li.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary to Chuang-tzu, 2:92/96 (SPPY, 1:24b/25), says:

By one's forgetting the years (i.e., time), life and death are occultly identified. By forgetting yi (duty, justice, righteousness), right and wrong are thoroughly interpenetrated. When right, wrong, life, and death are united by removing [conventional] constraints [on thought], this is the ultimate li. The ultimate li is permeated by the wu-chi 無極 (limitless),<sup>50</sup> therefore those who commit themselves to it will never find it exhausted.

"Li" seems to refer to a state of consciousness or to what one is aware of in such a state of consciousness. Li seems to be transcendent here.

#### 17. Immanent Li That Can Grow and Change

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary to Chuang-tzu, 3:11/19 (SPPY, 2:2b/23), says:

The li [of the ox butchered by cook Ting] are sundered, yet there are no knife marks.

This observation means that the natural divisions in the ox's body are followed so closely that there is no trace left to show that the ox did not simply come apart and separate into its component. "Li" has no transcendent meaning in this passage. Kuo Hsiang confirms my judgment on this passage from the Chuang-tzu stated above, p. 96.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary to Chuang-tzu, 6:45/97 (SPPY, 3:8a/19), says:

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. 50. Cf. W. T. Chan, Neo-Confucianism, Etc., p. 60.

There are some spontaneous (tzu-jan) li that are brought to completion by accumulated practice.

Kuo Hsiang says this in the context of instruction that is acquired through a long line of transmission and that concerns spiritual development. The passage quoted shows that Wang Pi regarded li as capable of development after the birth of the organism. This is very important in connection with Chu Hsi's idea of hsing (human nature) and his theory of how individuals are related to the t'ai-chi (supreme ultimate, the pure potential for everything in the universe).

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary on Chuang-tzu, 8:18/33 (SPPY, 4:4a/23), says:

What makes the myriad li all take their correct places is not yi (duty, justice, sense of right and wrong), yet the meritorious activity of yi is seen therein.

It appears from this passage that the myriad creatures must each have an individual li. Presumably these myriad li are all joined in a greater li just as the veins of an individual leaf are merged in the overall organic structure of a tree.

#### 18. Relation Between Transcendent and Immanent Li

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary on Chuang-tzu, 12:5/102 (SPPY, 5:1b/27), says:

By unity and wu-wei 無為 (activity that does not go against the tao) the assemblage (ch'ün 羣) of li is taken up.

The Chuang-tzu passage to which this is a commentary says: "When one makes contact with unity (in a mystical state), all events cease. When the mind takes nothing in, then ghosts and spirits will submit." The commentary expresses the idea that by attaining to unity and wu-wei one can



control all things from their source. The li mentioned here would appear to be the individual patterns of the myriad creatures. They are taken up at their common root, the primal unity from which the entire universe is differentiated. So if one can apprehend primal unity, which is transcendent, one can comprehend all of the li that flow from it and that are immanent.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary on Chuang-tzu, 12:37/102 (SPPY, 5:5a/27), says:

"In the highest beginning there was nothing, which was without being and without name, the source from which the One arose; then there was unity but as yet no form." The One was the beginning of being, and was of the greatest ineffable efficacy. Because it was thus, there were as yet none of the forms of the li of things. Now the origin of unity is in the perfect One and not in non-being.

Then why does Chuang-tzu repeatedly mention non-being at the [time of] beginning? The beginning [is the time when] nothing has been produced and yet production becomes possible. This [potentiality for] production is difficult to attain, and yet it does not depend on non-being above nor does it depend on being known below. Abruptly it arrives at spontaneous production. Or again, why should we delegate production [of things] to something that has already been produced [itself, hence involving us in infinite regress] and thereby overlook spontaneous production?

The word "being" implies the word "non-being," so either of these concepts involves duality. "Unity" refers to a stage before substance and void, being and non-being. Yet, despite the fact that this unity can not be experienced due to its lacking the various contrasts on which our perception depends, it is not a true nothing. The Chuang-tzu, however, affirms that there was a true nothing before unity.

"The forms of the physical li" refers to the distinctions by which humans perceive things. Kuo Hsiang believed in the production of multiplicity from unity, and he believed that there are large numbers of li that belong to the individual beings of the physical world. He did not accept the idea of a true or absolute nothing as opposed to a relative nothing.

The question of whether non-being really occurs before being reappears in the philosophy of Chu Hsi. There it takes the form of the question whether wu-chi 無極 (supreme nothingness, or the infinite, depending on how the term is

interpreted) really precedes t'ai-chi 太極 (the supreme ultimate).<sup>51</sup> This

51. Wu-chi" appears first in Chuang-tzu (1:27/47, 6:6 1/97, 11:42/74, 15:7/22) where it means "the limitless, the infinite." Lao-tzu, 28, says: "Return again to the wu-chi." Chan translates it as: "the state of Ultimate Non-being" {A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, p. 154}, but in the Hui-an wen-chi, 36:10b/32, Chu Hsi comments that "wu-chi means 'inexhaustible' (wu-ch'iung 無窮) here." Chu Hsi's interpretation is correct. Nevertheless, the Lao-tzu does introduce the idea of a transcendent wu. (See my appendix on Wu and Arthur Link's article "The Taoist Antecedents of Tao-an's Prajñā Ontology," History of Religions, IX (1969-70), 187f, 192, 195ff., 199f, 205.) In Chu Hsi's own philosophy, the term "wu-chi" does not mean "not having (wu) a terminus (chi)" but "the terminus characterized by the non-presence of any phenomenal being." That is, Chu Hsi uses the binome as an adjective plus a noun instead of the earlier verb plus object combination. Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 94:23b/49, says: "The wu-chi and yet the t'ai-chi' does not mean that there is an entity glistening and gleaming there. It just means that in the very beginning there was not a single thing; there was only this li and nothing more." As Chen Tehsiu 真德秀 (chin-shih sometime between 1195 and 1201) expresses it, {Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu, 26:8b/42}, "The t'ai-chi is not an entity with form (hsing 形) or a concrete utensil (ch'i 器). It is only the utmost li (li chih chih che 理之至者)." In a letter to Wang Tzu-ho 王子合 {Hui-an wen-chi, 49:10af/30} Chu Hsi says: "When Master Chou says 'The wu-chi and yet the t'ai-chi,' he does not mean that above the t'ai-chi there is a wu-chi. He is only saying that the t'ai-chi is not a thing. This is like saying 'The things of heaven are soundless and odorless.'" {Shih-ching, ode 235} It seems to me, however, that if Chou Tun-yi had wanted to convey this meaning he might better have reversed the sentence order to say "The t'ai-chi -- and yet it is a chi characterized by nothingness (t'ai-chi erh wu-chi 太極而無極)." Probably Chou intended by "wu-chi" to indicate the characteristic meaning of wu as the transcendent and ineffable source of all being first seen in the Lao-tzu. "T'ai-chi" may indicate some kind of incipient ch'i such as Chang Tsai's t'ai-hsü: "The great void in which no forms (hsing 形) exist -- such is the basic embodiment (pen-t'i 本體) of ch'i." {Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu, 2:2a/27}

problem has its source in some ambiguities in the philosophy of Lao-tzu.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, in this passage Kuo Hsiang does not state whether there is a li associated with the aboriginal unity.

The Chuang-tzu Kuo Hsiang chu, commentary on Chuang-tzu, 33:61/86 (SPPY, 10:19b/23), says:

The li-root, as the extreme that is the great beginning, cannot be called shallow.

Ch'ien Mu says: "This means that the universe and the myriad creatures all come from li." He further identifies this passage by Kuo Hsiang as a forerunner of the Sung "T'ai-chi Diagram." {1955: 155} Ch'ien correctly implies that one transcendent li is portrayed as the ultimate source of all immanent li. It would seem that despite his relatively great stress on the li of individual things, Kuo Hsiang still believed that these li are the ramifications of a primordial li.

#### 19. Han Po and Ramiform Li

In his commentary that covers the parts of the Yi-ching not explained by Wang Pi, published with Wang Pi's commentary as the Chou-yi Wang Han chu 周易王韓注, Han Po 韓伯 (died ca. 385) comments on the Hsi-tz'u or Great Appendix, section A:1 (SPPY, 7:1b/10):

"By means of the ease and simplicity (yi chien 易簡) [of the yi], the li of all under heaven are attained." There are no li in the world that are not [derived or produced] from ease and simplicity, and thus each [li] is enabled to conform to its lot and status.

52. See the Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu, 1:13/17 and 2:15/18 (c.p. 13 and 33).

"The li of all under heaven being attained, then positions (wei 位, levels of hierarchical relationship) are established in their midst." "Establishing positions" is descriptive of the establishment of images (i.e., the images of the trigrams). When ease and simplicity are comprehended, then the li of the world can be understood. Because the li of the world have been comprehended, the images can be completed in a way that makes them duplicate the cosmos. "In their midst" is said in order to clarify the way that the images duplicate the cosmos.

In these two passages, Han Po seems to interpret the Hsi-tz'u to mean that the li of things in the world are actually produced (and not merely understood) by the qualities, ease and simplicity, of the yi (i.e., of the process of change in the universe). He adds the idea that these li then impose conditions of "lot and status" on these beings.

In the Chou-yi Wang Han chu, commentary on the Hsi-tz'u, section A:5 (SPPY, 7:4a/11), Han Po says:

"Obvious with regard to its benevolence (jen), yet concealed with regard to its functioning, it urges forth the myriad creatures, and yet it does not have the same concerns as does the sage. So the magnificent virtue and the great undertaking are achieved." That by which creatures are interconnected, and that by which events are li-ed (ordered), all come from the tao. The sage is the mother (i.e., nurturer) of function (i.e., the activities of heaven and earth), and embodies and unites with the tao. So it is that the "magnificent virtue and great undertaking" can occur.

This passage is reminiscent of Han Fei's "The tao is what orders (li) things." It shows the continuing development of the Chinese cosmological model. Here the ordering process in the universe is traced back to the tao, but this time it is within the context of the Hsi-tz'u. This argument strongly suggests that the tao can and does order things precisely because, as the Hsi-tz'u says a few

lines earlier: "The [rhythmic] alternation of yin and yang is called the tao (the way or course of heaven)." Thus all order in the universe derives from the rhythmic alternation of yin and yang, and ultimately from yi (change) itself.

In the Chou-yi Wang Han chu, commentary on the Hsi-tz'u, B:5 (SPPY, 8:5a/10), Han Po says:

"The Master said: 'How godlike is the one who knows the springs of action. . . . The springs of action are the smallest of movements, and the first visible [signs] of good fortune.'" The springs of action come from non-being and enter into existence. [They have] li but as yet no form. They cannot be found through names, nor can they be seen in forms.

Han Po again points to a kind of li in incipient acts as they emerge from a state prior to embodiment.

In the Chou-yi Wang Han chu, commentary on the Hsi-tz'u, B:7 (SPPY, 8:8a/10), Han Po says:

"Oh! The general prediction of survival and perishing, of good and ill fortune can be known without leaving one's home. Knowledgeable people need only look at the Judgments (t'uan-tz'u) to understand the greater part of what they want to know." The Judgments present the rules by which the images are produced. They discuss the significance of the central lines. They are summary in order that what they encompass should be broad, and simple in order that they should apply to a large number of circumstances. "The intermixed things (i.e., lines of the hexagrams) give purport of virtues (i.e., the potentialities of affairs)," yet there is a unity which runs through all of them: The ancestor of [all] forms is the tao. The resort of the multitude is the One. The more complicated things become, the more they are impeded by form. The more summary are li, the nearer they orbit the tao. The Judgments take their meaning from the One. The function of the One is identical with the tao.

Once again, the picture is painted of unity repeatedly ramifying until it produces perceptible form. The tao is either itself li or is the proximate cause of the most general li.

## 20. Chih Tao-lin and Prajñā-Wisdom

Chih Tao-lin 支道林, also known as Chih Tun 支遁, lived from 314 to 366. He continued the development of the concept li found in the Ssu-shih-erh chang ching (Sutra in forty-two sections) in his Ta-hsiao p'in yao-ch'ao hsü 大小品對比要鈔序 [Preface to important points from a comparison of the greater and lesser texts of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra].<sup>52</sup> {Taishō tripitaka, LV, 55, no. 2145}

I am convinced after studying this text of more than two thousand characters that, despite appearances to the contrary, Chih Tao-lin uses the word "li" in a peculiarly Buddhist sense that is a major divergence from the mainstream development of the concept under study here. Perhaps he intended to confound the reader's intellectual propensities. Chih Tao-lin liberally sprinkled his Introduction with words and phrases from the Chuang-tzu and the Lao-tzu to which he gave meanings entirely opposite to their original significance. It may be that Chih Tao-lin was deliberately tempting his readers to fall into their old, non-Buddhist, habits of thought by making such statements.

Chih Tao-lin's use of the word "li" follows from the earlier Buddhist use of the term to apply to that knowing state of mystic fusion with nirvāṇa in

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53. This is an extremely recondite text, and it was only with the help of Mou Tsung-san 牟宗三, Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the National Taiwan University, that I was able to gain some understanding of its meaning.

which knower and known are one. No matter how li have been conceptualized, at least up to this point in the history of non-Buddhist Chinese thought, they have been considered to be necessarily definite. Used as a verb, the word "li" has meant to put things in some definite order. As a noun, it has meant the order or pattern of things, or at least some form of verbal description of these regularities.

Chih Tao-lin's subject of discussion, however, is prajñā-wisdom, and the most salient characteristic of this form of knowledge is that it has no determinate content. If there is some li that pertains to this state, it cannot be the kind of li ordinarily perceived or formulated. In fact, if one persists in trying to apply one's conventional terminology to this situation, one only binds oneself the more fully to the original delusive system. Thus Chih Tao-lin says:

If li cannot be li, then li [should] not be [taken as] li.  
If vacuity (wu 無) cannot be vacuity of itself, then it [ought] not  
be [taken as] vacuity." {Chih, 9/148}

Let us state the matter in our own terms of reference: we expect knowledge to be of something, and we expect to be able to formulate statements that, if true, will exhaust and define this knowledge. Here we are faced with a situation in which there is no longer a knower and a known, in which there are no definable objects, and of which no statements could conceivably be made. In this state there is the truth concerning which we formerly sought to make statements in an ordinary state of mind. But statements cannot be made in or of this mystical state of mind. The word "knowledge" used in this new context no longer fits the definition that it originally had. So "knowledge" is not "knowledge" any more.



If the foregoing explication is correct, this extension of the meaning of "li" follows from the earlier-seen meaning of "content of thought," or "the object of knowledge." Yet this li is not the ancestral source of anything, it is not an order or pattern, it is not a scientific law or principle, it determines nothing, and is itself indeterminate. However, it is transcendent.

Two important mainstream developments to the concept of li occurred between the advent of Buddhism in China sometime in the first century B.C. China and the Sung dynasty which began in 960 A.D. The first is that li was affirmed to exist on a transcendent level. The second is that li came clearly to be seen as a pattern of ramification that spread out from a single root to the individual intricacies of each of the myriad creatures so that the individuals were rooted in and limited by their source. The Buddhist concept presented by Chih Tao-lin, however, was entirely different. For him, li was not a pattern or principle, but an experience in which the distinction between subject and object vanish.

A more general study of Chih Tun's thought and its bearing on the development of the concept of li is beyond the scope of the present study.<sup>54</sup>

## 21. Summary

The concept of li developed from the idea of ordering or patterning things (laying out the fields), to the idea of an order or pattern existing in particular things (going on from the idea of patterns of fields, to include the general idea of pattern), then to the idea of an overall pattern of everything in the universe, and finally to the idea of a patterning that begins at a transcendent level and extends down to the finest distinctions and regularities among things. Sung philosophers brought these ideas to their culmination.

## 22. Chou Tun-yi — The Differentiation of Ch'i and the Formation of Li

Chou Tun-yi 周敦頤(1017-1073) was the earliest of the four main Sung Confucian scholars. He had a seminal influence on the rest of them. Despite the

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54. Chih Tun's importance in the history of the development of the concept of li was first noted by Paul Demiéville in his article "La Pénétration du bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise," Cahiers d'Historie Mondiale 3, no. 1 (1956), pp. 19-38, especially pp. 28-32. Erik Zürcher has a considerable amount of information about Chih Tun in his The Buddhist Conquest of China. See Zürcher's Index, p. 449, for a complete citation of his references to Chih Tun. Leon Hurvitz has translated the Ta hsiao p'in tui-pi yao-ch'ao hsü in an article entitled "Chih Tun's Notions of Prajñā," Journal of the American Oriental Society, LXXXVII, 2 (Apr., June, 1968), 243-260. There is also a good study in Chinese, T'ang Yung-t'ung's Han Wei liang-Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao Fo-chiao shih, I:177-181.

For more information on Buddhist ideas about li 理, see section 4 of T'ang Chün-yi's article, "Li' chih liu yi," pp. 75-81.

fact that Chinese from Sung times on have called the school which he founded "li-hsüeh 理學," or "study of li,"<sup>55</sup> he himself almost never used the word. It does not appear even once in his T'ai-chi t'u shuo 太極圖說 (Explanation of the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate). The thirteenth section of his Chou-yi t'ung-shu 周易通書 [Comprehensive writings on the Book of Changes] says:

Li 禮 (ritual, propriety) is li. Music is harmony.

For him, "li" would appear to mean "orderliness" or "proper order." Orderliness is prior to harmony.

Section 22 is entitled "Li, hsing, ming 理性命," (Li, human nature, and the mandate of heaven), but the text does not mention li. What it does say is:

The two ch'i (yin and yang) and the five phases (wu-hsing) transform and produce the myriad creatures. The five [phases] are differentiated, and the two [ch'i] are not void. The two are fundamentally one, and thus the myriad are one. The one [primal ch'i] is not void, and is differentiated into the myriad distinctions. [When] the myriad and the one each have their proper [relation], then the small and the great are fixed.

Thus Chou Tun-yi explains the formation of li, or patterns, through differentiation of ch'i -- if the title of this section was indeed written by Chou Tun-yi himself and not by someone else. This interpretation is supported by a statement found in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 59:13b/47:

55. During the Sung dynasty, Huang Chen 黃震 (Tung-fa 東發, f. 1250) used this term. There are several chüan entitled "Tu pen-ch'ao chu ju li-hsüeh shu" 讀本朝諸儒理學書 [On reading the books concerning the study of li by several Confucian scholars of this dynasty] in his Huang-shih jih-ch'ao 黃氏日鈔 [Daily reading notes by Mr. Huang], beginning with chüan 33.

[Ch'eng Yi] said: "The hsing is just li," After Confucius and Mencius, no one was able to have this insight. This is also to say that from ancient times no one has dared to speak in this way.

The li mentioned by Ch'eng is transcendent li. Chu Hsi must have believed that Chou did not equate hsing with transcendent li. If that is the case, then in the passage written by Chou Tun-yi quoted immediately above, the only connection between li and hsing possible is that hsing is interpreted to be the li, or pattern, of the ch'i found in human beings. The passage then affirms that these li are constituted by differentiation of the primal ch'i.

### 23. The Ch'eng Brothers — Normative Li

In the philosophies of the two Ch'eng brothers, the normative sense of "li" came to the fore. "Li" was virtually equated with "ming 命" (mandate of heaven), and with "hsing" (nature). The Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu 河南程氏遺書, 21B: 1b/3, says:

Li, hsing (nature), ming (mandate of heaven) -- the three never are different.

. . . . .  
Heaven has this li. The sage conforms to it and puts it into practice, and this is what is called the tao (way).

Wang Pi regarded li, and the mandate of heaven, as impersonal determiners of the people and things of the world, whereas the passage quoted immediately above seems to speak of a mandate of heaven that one who is not a sage can fail, or refuse, to follow.<sup>56</sup> Thus the meaning of li" has shifted from "an order or pattern of things" to "an order from heaven" -- to which people who are not

56. See the Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu, 2A:22b/26.

sages may or may not conform.<sup>57</sup> The compound "yi-li義理" (moral principle) was frequently used.

The Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu, 11:5a/13, says:

The myriad creatures all have li. Follow [the li] and there is ease. Oppose [the li] and there is difficulty.

Normative li also appear in the work of Chang Tsai 張載 (1020-1077),<sup>58</sup> as well as the idea of "exhaustively understanding li (ch'iuang li窮理)" taken from the Yi-ching<sup>59</sup>, but the idea of li was not central to his philosophy.

#### 24. Chang Tsai — The Course of Least Resistance

The Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu, 3:12a/24, (Cheng-meng 正蒙), says:

The six yao 爻 (lines of a hexagram) follow the li of yin and yang, rigid and pliant, benevolence and justice, and hsing and mandate by each fulfilling their benefit (i.e., bestowing maximum benefit) and then moving (i.e., changing polarity). Thus it is said: "The movements of the six yao are the tao of the three ultimates (i.e., heaven, earth, and human beings)."

"Li" in this passage seems to refer to the regularities on the levels of heaven, earth, and human beings. When Chang Tsai speaks of following the li of benevolence and justice, it sounds as though some kind of moral law is involved, but when he speaks of following the li of yin and yang or of rigid and flexible

57. Ibid., 11:5a/13.

58. See the Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu 張子全書, 3:12a/24, 9:26b/36; 10:5a/33; 11:7b/33; 11:20a/33; 11:29b/33.

59. See the Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu, 6:5b/8; 11:17b/33; 11:25b/33; 11:29ab/33; 12:7af/10.

it sounds more like conformity to some kind of natural "law." The yao of the hexagrams conform to these external configurations or real features of the universe and so effectively map them. It follows, to paraphrase the sentence Chou quotes, that the yao map the courses of the three realms -- heaven, earth, and human beings -- by subtly responding to them. Thus the li are not normative in the sense that they lay out laws and sanctions for breaking them, but only in the sense that difficulties may flow from ignoring the regularities of nature.

Chang Tsai says that "te 德" (virtue) means "to acquire (te 得), and that "tao" (way, course) means "to follow or conform to those li." {11:7b/33} Acquiring li is a matter of voluntary study and learning. Conforming to li would also seem to be an activity that can be engaged in on a voluntary basis. Such behavior then manifests itself as the tao (a particular kind of activity). That Chang admits the existence of behavior that goes against the grain of the universe is made clear by the following passage from the Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu, 11:20a/33 (Yi-shuo 易說):

That yang has direct and universal experience of the yin multitudes, and that the latter all serve one yang is li. For this reason, when two rulers [control] one subject, or when one subject serves two rulers, then with respect to both superiors and inferiors this is the tao of petty people. When one ruler responds to two subjects or two subjects respect one ruler, then with regard to both superiors and inferiors this is the tao of [morally] noble people.

There can be tao that conform to the li (configurations) of the world, or that go against them.

## 10. Shao Yung's Theory of Knowledge

Although Shao Yung 邵雍 (1011-1077) scarcely mentioned li in his works, he had some interesting ideas on epistemology -- he appears to regard some li as the content or objects of knowledge.<sup>60</sup> In the twelfth "inner" chapter of the "Kuan-wu p'ien 觀物篇," he says:<sup>61</sup>

Now what is meant by "observing things" is not observing them with the eyes. Rather than observing them with the eyes, they are to be observed by the hsin (heart, mind). Rather than observing them with the hsin, they are to be observed with li (pattern). Nothing in the world is without its own li, its own hsing (nature), and its own ming (mandate, destiny). The reason they are called li is that they can only be known by exhaustive [investigation or understanding]. The reason they are called hsing is that they can only be known by the perfecting [of innate potential]. These three kinds of knowledge are the [only] real knowledge in the world. Not even a sage can transcend them. It is not on account of transcending them that [people are] called sages. {SPFY, 6:26a/27}

This passage enumerates three means of observation: 1) by the eyes, 2) by the mind, and 3) by the li. Since both the eyes and the mind are included in the human being, the implication is clear that the li is included in the human being also. The Chuang-tzu, 4:26/91, says:

Do not listen with your ears, listen with your hsin; do not listen with your hsin, listen with your ch'i."

60. For a general treatment of Shao Yung from a Marxist perspective, see Yang Yung-kuo's "Shao Yung ssu-hsiang p'i-p'an," Li-shih yen-chiu, V (1960), 59-74.

61. Shao Yung wrote the so-called "inner" chapters, while his students compiled the so-called "outer" chapters.

Both the ideas and the sentence structures are virtually identical. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Shao Yung is paraphrasing the Chuang-tzu here. Probably what Shao Yung intends to convey is the idea that the hsing is a special kind of li that mirrors ming and is found in human beings. One is to know things in the world, which have been constituted by ming, by means of one's own li which is just one's hsing.

In the third inner chapter of the "Kuan-wu p'ien," (SPPY, 5:7a/23) Shao Yung comments on the "Shuo-kua" appendix to the Yi-ching, section 1, and shows the relation he believes to exist among li, hsing, and ming. This passage makes it clear that Shao Yung did not regard li as transcendent or extrinsic to things:

"Exhaust li<sup>62</sup> and fulfill hsing until ming is perfected."

"Li" refers to the li of creatures. "Hsing" refers to the heavenly (i.e., innate) hsing. "Ming" refers to abiding in li and hsing. What else but the tao enables [human beings] to abide in li and hsing?

While the place Shao Yung assigned li in his philosophy is by no means obvious, it is clear that he did not regard it as something extrinsic to the things of the world, nor did he use it to explain the coming into being of the things of the world.

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62. The Ch'eng brothers also taught the value of "exhausting li." See Tomoeda Ryūtarō's "Tei Isen ni okeru kyūrisetsu no tenkai," Tōkyō Shina gakuho, X (June, 1964), 1-13.



26. Chu Hsi and Li

Chu Hsi attempted to encompass the ideas of the earlier Sung Confucians, along with a great many Chou- and Han-dynasty philosophical ideas. How can li be at once the pattern in things and among things, and yet at the same time be normative? How can each thing have its unique, individual li, if there is only one li for everything in the world? What is the nature of the relationship between li and ch'i, and which (if either) comes first? -- historically? cosmogonically? or logically?<sup>62</sup>

Chu Hsi put the t'ai-chi (supreme ultimate) in place of the tao as the undifferentiated source of all being. He maintained that being ramifies from the t'ai-chi, and that this process of ramification constitutes the li of

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62. I highly recommend that the reader study Stanislaus Sun's "The Doctrine of 'Li' in the Philosophy of Chu Hsi," International Philosophical Quarterly, VI (1966), 155-188. This article includes much background material that considerations of length have eliminated from this dissertation.

particular things.<sup>63</sup> Yet the t'ai-chi as ultimate source of all li is itself

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63. Two sources indicating Chu Hsi's interest are the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i k'ao-yi (A study of the 'Kinship of the three') and the Yi-hsüeh ch'i-meng [Lifting the veils of youthful ignorance from the study of the Book of Changes]. The former was finished in 1184, when Chu Hsi was 54, and the latter was written in 1197 when he was 67 years old. As he matured, Chu Hsi became more and more willing to demur at certain of the teachings expressed by Confucian scholars of earlier generations. Even so, he was primarily concerned with resolving misconceptions of his students and apparently was reluctant to express any ideas he thought might seem too revolutionary. Chu Hsi's final understanding of how the things of the world come into being must be pieced together from what hints he has provided us. I attempt this in the chapter on "Ch'i-chih chih hsing in the Philosophy of Chu Hsi," Chapter 11. For the moment I point to one discussion in which Chu Hsi suggests that the formation of the li of things of the world is like the formation of a hexagram by the manipulations of yarrow sticks. On the level of the Yi-ching certain operations result in the formation of a pattern of six hard or soft (yin or yang) lines, a hexagram, and on the level of the universe certain analogous operations result in the formation of patterns of yin and yang on each level of being (analogous to the levels of the hexagrams) devolved from the t'ai-chi.

The Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu, 10:8/23), says: "'How can the Yi[-ching] be merely the source of the five classics? Must it not [express] the mystery of heaven, earth, ghosts, and spirits?'

"Chu commentary:

"Yin and yang encompass natural changes. The lines of the hexagrams have natural embodiments. This is the reason that the Yi[-ching] book became the ancestor of the written characters and the progenitive source of moral li. And not only that: It would appear that all things governed by yin and yang -- even those as large as heaven and earth or as mysterious as ghosts and spirits -- have their li concretely present in the lines of the hexagrams. This is the fine mystery of the sages, and so had to be set forth (lit., entrusted) in this passage."

called li, a confusion that provides many difficulties of interpretation. When the t'ai-chi (li) ramifies it produces actual beings, and actual beings have both a li and a ch'i aspect, no matter what their level of ramification.

Chu Hsi's<sup>64</sup> Yi-hsueh ch'i-meng 易學啓蒙 (Lifting the veils of youthful ignorance from the study of the Book of Changes), 2:1af/20, says:

What fills the space between heaven and earth is nothing else but the inexplicable efficacy (miao 妙) of the t'ai-chi (supreme ultimate) and yin and yang. [Realizing this] the sage "lifted his head to observe [the heavens] and bent down to inspect [the earth], seeking far and near for things to take in, and did indeed acquire that by which to transcend [ordinary limited viewpoints], finding silent assent in his heart [to what he had discovered]."

64. Doubt has been cast on the authorship of the Yi-hsueh ch'i-meng by Chu Hsi. The Hsu (introduction) to this book is signed "The realized transcender [of the world] of Yun-t'ai Monastery (Yün-t'ai chen-yi 雲臺真逸). Chu Hsi was the guardian of this monastery during the Shun-hsi 淳熙 reign period (1174-1190). (See the Chu-tzu nien-p'u 朱子年譜 [Chronological biography of Master Chu] for the twelfth year of the Shun-hsi reign period.) The Introduction itself suggests that Chu Hsi was not the sole author: "My comrades [and I] collected many things heard of old and composed this book in four chapters to show the beginning student and prevent him from having doubts concerning these theories." In the Hui-an yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 67:12a/38, Chu Hsi speaks of "my Ch'i-meng." In the Chu-tzu wen-chi, 56:16a/38, the fifth letter to Fang Pin-wang 方賓王, Chu Hsi says that he wrote it. The book is also mentioned several times in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan without any suggestion that anyone other than Chu Hsi wrote it: 66:20a/27, 67:7b/38, 67:11b/38, and 67:13a/38.

See the Tu Yi hui-t'ung, ho-t'u lo-shu, p. 84, for comments on the "actual" authorship of this text by Ts'ai Yüan-ting 蔡元定. This allegation is based on the Sung-shih ju-lin-chuan 宋史儒林傳.

Therefore, in the undifferentiated t'ai-chi before its division into the two instrumentalities (liang yi 兩儀, i.e., yin and yang), the li of the two instrumentalities, four images, and sixty-four hexagrams are already radiantly present (i.e., the Supreme Ultimate contains the potential for the division into yin and yang, their production of the four images), the further production of the eight three-line diagrams, and finally the production of the sixty-four hexagrams).

[Although] the t'ai-chi divides to become the two instrumentalities, [nevertheless] the t'ai-chi is still the t'ai-chi, and the two instrumentalities are still the two instrumentalities. The four hsiang (images, foreshadowings) are divided from the two instrumentalities, so the two instrumentalities are still the t'ai-chi and the four hsiang are still the two instrumentalities.

[We may] argue by analogy from this [to show the following sequence]: The eight [trigrams are produced] from the four [images, foreshadowings]. The sixteen [four-line diagrams are produced] from the eight [trigrams]. The thirty-two [five-line diagrams are produced] from the sixteen [four-line diagrams]. The sixty-four [hexagrams are produced] from the thirty-two [five-line diagrams].

[This process continues,] reaching to the infinite millions and billions [of possible compound graphs]. Although when seen in graphic reproduction they seem to come in a sequence as though the product of human artifice, yet their predetermined forms and preshaped configurations (shih 勢) are indeed present in the midst of the undifferentiated. [Even at that point] there was no further scope for [human] thought or action therein.

From the epistemological point of view, li are those patterns by which we differentiate things. Chu Hsi affirms that everything stems from yin and yang and before that from the fundamental unity which is the t'ai-chi. If the world

be examined in its concrete complexity, it is difficult to see that everything in it shares a common root. But the sages, transcending the superficial understanding of ordinary humans, penetrated to the common origins out of which all diversities ramified. This amounted to tracing back to the root of the tree of li, the innumerable extremities of which constitute the concrete particulars of this world.

### 27. T'ai-chi Is A Li

The point upon which all diversities converge is the t'ai-chi. Therein resides the potential for yin and yang and all their derivative complexities. Chu Hsi also calls the t'ai-chi a li, because it is the source of all li even though it transcends our awareness, being neither (properly speaking) substance nor void. At an early time the Lao-tzu had drawn the conclusion that beyond what appears as the most stark antithesis in our experience -- plenum and void, being and nothingness, or presence and absence -- there must be a state that unites the two. But our experience, reduced to its most basic terms, is either of the form "there is something here" or "there is nothing here," so we are incapable of perceiving something that is neither substance nor void. We perceive a void in relation to our perception of a presence; so even though there is no object to perceive, we can perceive that there is such an absence. Of the highest unity we have no experience whatsoever. In a sense, that unity could be called "nothing" as well; but as the Chuang-tzu, 1:31/47, points out, we cannot conclude from our blindness to

something that it does not exist and does not have a determinate nature of its own.<sup>65</sup>

The li of the things of the world may be traced back to the point where we see that everything, every quality, shares in yin and yang, increase and decrease, positive and negative. Beyond this high level of yin and yang, we cannot experience a higher level of abstraction. Within yin and yang are the potentials for more subtle and shaded gradations of relationships -- the four images (ssu hsiang 四象), eight trigrams, and so forth, yet we cannot see the complexities as they lie latent within these simple things. If we reverse the order in the text, however, we can find the t'ai-chi inductively. From the sixty-four hexagrams, to the thirty-two five-line diagrams, to the sixteen four-line diagrams, to the eight trigrams, to the four images, to the two instrumentalities, we proceed to each step by halving. The logic of the situation suggests that the two, yin and yang, must further collapse into one. The complexities of all beings must lie latent within this one, which is called t'ai-chi. Similarly, the potential for their being lies hidden there also.<sup>66</sup>

### 28. Ch'i, the Mandate of Heaven, and Normative Li

When he is not speaking casually, Chu Hsi maintains that the mandate of heaven is no more and no less than the flow of ch'i (lifebreath) in the

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65. Compare the idea of hsin 心 in the Lao-tzu, 21. See Yen Ling-feng's Lao-tzu ta-chieh, p. 83.

66. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 75:19a/28 says: "The t'ai-chi is within yin and yang. Viewed from within events and things, yin and yang contain t'ai-chi. If we proceed inductively to the basis [of yin and yang and of things and events, we see that] t'ai-chi produces yin and yang."

world. {Conv., 4:26b/28 and 53:4b/25} Chu Hsi never, to my knowledge, attempted to explain why ch'i flows in one way or another. His discussion is at least superficially at variance with earlier theories that equated ming with li. According to Chu Hsi, there is no anthropomorphic will of heaven.

Similarly, under Chu Hsi's analysis the normative functions of li are naturalistic, following a teaching of Ch'eng Hao (see above, p. 167): Each creature has a particular kind of li or pattern to its existence. A man has the li of a man, and a giraffe has that of a giraffe. A giraffe trying to live in a gopher hole would find that this attempt does violence to its nature. Likewise a man trying to ignore his innate drives for jen (benevolence), yi (justice, duty, from the sense of right and wrong), li (propriety, from the sense of ritual), and chih (wisdom) will also find that ignoring his moral inclinations does not suit his innate being.

Chu Hsi's confidence in the necessary innate morality of human beings (which he gets from Mencius) is in marked contrast to the prevalent moral attitudes of the West. Chu Hsi and the others in the tradition of Mencius see no need for sanctions, divine or otherwise, to force a human being to be good. In fact it would almost be a contradiction in terms to force a person to do and be what he spontaneously can do and be. (His argument leaves aside the question of how civil authorities are to proceed when this natural goodness has been destroyed and antisocial behavior has resulted.)

The point of Confucian moral teaching is that a human being has a spontaneous and innate axiological drive that is a reflection of the mandate of heaven. If a person proceeded to perform an act, however "good," because he was forced to do so, it would not be his act. We in the West are not blind to this issue when considering the merits of feigned versus genuine gratitude, but

I believe we tend to assign more value to the act than the intention in serious matters. In practice we may find it difficult to experience strong revulsion for a nominally good act done for abhorrent reasons.

In Chu Hsi's philosophy, awareness of the innateness or the naturalness of human ethical motivation is so predominant that it seems to me to have produced the idea that to act in a good way -- in the absence of selfish desires that impede moral awareness and moral action -- is simply the course of least resistance. This is, of course, just another way of stating Mencius' water analogy: water always tends to run downward, and to flow down is the course of least effort. It is only when external effort reverses this process that water can flow upward. So, whether from internal but secondary drives shared with the animals or from external forces, human beings must be forced to do what is not good before they will proceed against the dictates of their uniquely human nature. The idea of a path of least resistance comes through fairly clearly in this passage from the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 6:2a/26:

Li [means] to have orderly sequence (t'iao-li 條理), to have a patterned pathway (wen-lu-tzu 文路子). Where the patterned pathway should go, one ought also to go. Where the patterned pathway does not go, one ought also not to go. One must seek the place where the patterned pathway is and only proceed by following along (ai-che 挨著) this li.



The other normative idea discussed in terms of li is that of the goodness or badness of a human being.<sup>67</sup> The t'ai-chi is pure potential, and as such is perfectly good. Each being, rooted in the t'ai-chi, shares that potential, and in that sense is perfectly good. But human beings have been actualized by a process of ramification through several levels beginning with the Two Instrumentalities, four hsiang, eight trigrams, and so forth, each of which is either yin or yang. This is analogous to the formation of a hexagram. Chi-chi 既濟, the hexagram whose structure (reading from the bottom up), +--+--, is considered perfect with respect to yin and yang line correspondences. Any hexagram that departs from this arrangement involves certain liabilities. Similarly, a human being or other creature, whose yin-yang pattern is not

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67. Since, as explained below, li and ch'i form an aspective pair (i.e., they are two aspects of any one thing), defects in li are equally manifested as defects in ch'i. The argument may be formulated two ways:

- 1) When the pattern of yin and yang on different levels (corresponding to the different levels of the elements of a hexagram) is balanced, then a good ch'i will be found as the embodiment of this li. Chu Hsi follows tradition to speak of a clear or pure ch'i in this case. When the yin-yang pattern is unbalanced, then a bad ch'i will be found as the embodiment of this li. Such a bad (i.e., imperfect) ch'i may be called turbid (cho 濁).
- 2) When a good or pure ch'i is found, it will manifest within itself a good (well-formed) li or pattern. On the level of moral experience, this li permits one's mind an unhindered awareness of the center of one's own being, the t'ai-chi or Supreme Ultimate, which is the fountainhead of all moral value. When a bad or turbid ch'i is found, it will manifest within itself a bad li or pattern. That is, the organization, structure, or pattern of such a human being (or lesser creature) is not well constituted. On the level of moral experience, such a li means that one's mind is hindered or obstructed from clear awareness of one's moral center. It is as though a cataract has formed on the moral eye.

analogous to chi-chi, has certain imperfections that will cause trouble under certain circumstances, and in this sense that person or creature is not good. Chu Hsi hints at the idea that the yin-yang pattern constituting a human being or other creature might involve more than six levels, or at least that there could be more than six levels involved in the ramification of a particular being from the t'ai-chi, but he does not develop this idea.<sup>68</sup> A human being's li is a

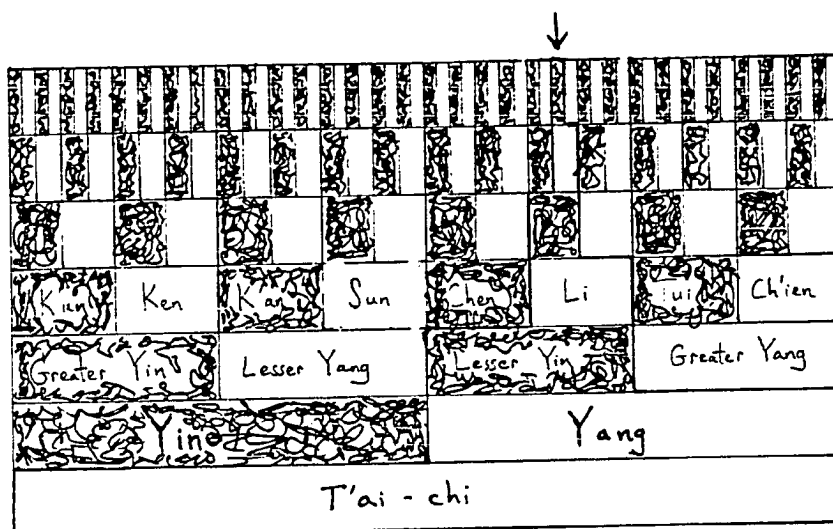


Diagram of the Sixty-four Hexagrams

Each of the sixty-four hexagrams is represented by a rectangle on the upper level and the five rectangles that fall beneath it. The vertical arrow points to the uppermost rectangle representing the top yao of the hexagram chi-chi. It is clear from this diagram that the lower rectangles, representing more and more universal yin-yang states, are shared with other hexagrams.

68. See above, page 173ff.

pattern of yin and yang in the same way that the li of a hexagram is a pattern of hard and soft (unbroken and broken) lines.<sup>69</sup>

### 29. Ramiform Li, the Nature of the Relation Between Li and Ch'i, and the Transcendent Unity of All Things

The li of an individual thing is rooted in the t'ai-chi. Every li is a differentiation of the t'ai-chi; but, at the same time every li may share

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69. The Yi-hsüeh ch'i-meng, 2:1af/20, says: "At the point that the t'ai-chi divides to become the two forms, the t'ai-chi is still the t'ai-chi and the two forms are still the two forms. [Similarly] the two forms are again the t'ai-chi, and the four images are again the two forms. Extending [the argument] on from this, one proceeds from the four [hsiang] to the eight [trigrams] to the sixteen [four-line graphs], from the sixteen [four-line graphs] to the thirty-two [five-line graphs], from the thirty-two [five-line graphs] to the sixty-four [hexagrams], [and so on] reaching to the inexhaustible millions and billions [of possible n-line graphs]. Although when seen in graphic representation they seem to come in series as though the product of human artifice yet their already determined forms and already complete power-configurations (shih 勢) are indeed already present in the midst of the undifferentiated [t'ai-chi] and do not admit of the slightest element of [human] thought or action." The above passage is discussed in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 67:7b/28. A student asked: "The [Yi-hsüeh] ch'i-meng says: '[Although] the t'ai-chi divides to become the two forms, nevertheless . . .' All the way to where the four hsiang produce the eight trigrams [and so forth, these levels] are without exception pushed forth from one stage to the next. Obviously each thing contains the t'ai-chi within itself. -- Is this the right understanding?" To which Chu Hsi replied: "This is just one dividing into two, stage by stage, all the way to infinity (wu-ch'üang 無窮). It is 'One produces two' [from the Lao-tzu]." The student asked: "Is this what is meant in the Introduction when it says 'From root to trunk, from trunk to branches?'" Chu Hsi answered: "Yes."

components on several levels with other li, thus forming "families" of li.<sup>70</sup> Since the t'ai-chi is shared by every li, every individual thing can be said to have the same li, that is, the t'ai-chi. As the t'ai-chi, exclusive of its ramifications, contains the potential for all possible beings, any individual being can be said to contain the li for all beings.

The Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu, 30:6bf/24, conflates two statements by Chu Hsi:

Master Chu said: "At times ch'i may not exist, but li exist (or exists) unceasingly."<sup>71</sup> He also said: "When there is a certain ch'i, there is a certain [corresponding] li; when there is no such ch'i, there is no such li."<sup>72</sup>

The Ch'ing dynasty Confucian scholar, Yen Yüan 顏元 (1635-1704), sharply criticized Chu Hsi for this passage.<sup>71</sup> Yen would accept the second half of the passage quoted above, because he believed that li and ch'i are aspective. According to him, neither li nor ch'i is extrinsic to a creature. Rather, they are two aspects abstracted from it in thought. Since Yen Yuan rejected the idea of the t'ai-chi or of li as a transcendent being or a being having independent existence, he would reject the first statement of Chu Hsi. Yen Yuan argued that the passage from the Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu is blatantly self-contradictory. He did not know that passages from two sources were conflated by the editors of the

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70. For more on the li-interconnections among all things, see T'ang Chün-yi's article on "Li chih liu yi," p. 82.

71. Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 4:13a/28, and Hui-an wen-chi, 46:24bf/37.

72. I have been unable to find this quotation in the original sources available to me.

73. See his Ts'un-hsing pien, 1:5a/16.

Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu. Chu Hsi's statements are merely vague and out of context. The t'ai-chi may exist independently, while the li of individual things do not. The li of individual things exist only as aspects of those individual things. The editors of the Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu did Chu Hsi no good service by placing side by side two statements in which "li" is used in different senses, one of them possibly a serious misquotation.

The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta ch'üan, 1:2aff/10, gives several passages that help to straighten out these problems of interpretation. I will quote this passage momentarily, but to heighten the apparent contradiction in Master Chu's thought, let us first consider a sentence in the same book, 1:2a/10: "There being this li, there is then this ch'i." The passage from the Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu criticized by Yen Yüan indicated that there had to be a certain ch'i in order to have a certain li. It is easy to misinterpret Chu Hsi to be proposing a theory involving circular causation -- li produces ch'i which produces li -- and argue against this straw man that lacking the ch'i in the first place there could be no li ever to produce it. However, Chu Hsi says:

In the world (t'ien-hsia 天下) there has never been any ch'i without its li, nor has there ever been any li without its ch'i. {Conv., 1:2a/10}

This passage states clearly that, in this world, li and ch'i are always inseparable aspects of real things. So in the above quotation {Compendium, 30:6bf/24, second part}, Chu Hsi is speaking of the li or patterns of particular individuals.

Someone asked: "How about the idea that there must [first] be this li and afterwards there will be this ch'i?"

[Master] Chu said: "Basically there is no before and after to be discussed. However, if one were to insist upon

drawing inferences concerning where they [all] come from, then we would have to say that first there is this li. However, li is not, on the other hand, a thing distinct [from the ch'i]. Since [li] subsists within that ch'i. If there were not that ch'i, then this li would have nothing to hang on. {Conv, 1:2bf/10}

. . . . .

[Someone asked]: "At what point in ch'i is li manifested (fa-hsien 發現)?"

[Master Chu] said: "Such things as the interpenetration of yin and yang and the five phases (wu-hsing 五行) without the loss of their proper order are li. If ch'i were not to consolidate, then li would have no place to be attached (fu-chuo 附著)." {Conv., 1:3a/10}

. . . . .

[Master Chu said]: "Whether there is first li and then ch'i, or first ch'i and then li, cannot be answered by investigation. However, if we may proceed by reasoning, I suspect that this ch'i is dependent on this li to operate. Thus when this ch'i has collected (i.e., consolidated), the li is also found within it. {Conv., 1:3af/10}

In his commentary on Chou Tun-yi's T'ai-chi t'u shuo, Chu Hsi says:

T'ai-chi producing yin and yang is li producing ch'i.  
{Chou, 1:7/16}

The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 4:17a/28, records a similar teaching on the same subject:

Although ch'i is what li produces, after it has been brought forth li cannot control it. If this li is ensconced in ch'i, whether in daily or intermittent use, all [activity] comes from the ch'i. It is simply that ch'i is powerful and li is weak.

The root-li, which is called the t'ai-chi, produces ch'i. From that point on, everything has both a li and a ch'i aspect. This is the situation "in the world (t'ien-hsia). For li to ramify and manifest itself in the world, ch'i

has to gather and consolidate -- or to put it better, li ramifying in the world manifests itself as the gathering and consolidating of ch'i in patterned ways. 'The li is found within [the consolidated ch'i]' because t'ai-chi is the potential not just for being but also for forming pattern or order.

A difficult thing for the Western reader to understand is the fact that "li" has expanded from meaning "pattern" to meaning -- as equivalent to "t'ai-chi" -- "the principle or source of both being and pattern." Hence, like the growing tip of a tree, li not only clothes itself in ch'i at each step but also continues to serve as the potential for further growth and ramification.

## VII. CH'I<sup>1</sup>

I believe that it is difficult for a reader from the European tradition to form a sufficient appreciation of the importance of ch'i as an explanatory concept in Chinese culture if that reader restricts himself to generally available translations and explanations of Chinese philosophy. This difficulty is by no means the fault of those who have done the translations or other studies. Rather, it is because the concept of ch'i must in one context be translated so as to exhibit its "materialistic" aspect, and in another context to demonstrate its "energetic" aspect. Since the term has received various translations, such as "ether," "pneuma," "breath of life," "vital energy," "matter-energy," "material force," and so forth, it is difficult for one beginning researches that might interest him in a study of this concept to become aware that the word that appears in all of these guises is the same. By its very pervasiveness, "ch'i" tends to fall into the background of every discussion. For the pre-modern Chinese it was a fundamental concept; for the modern student it seems to be a continually-appearing member of the supporting cast on the stage of Chinese philosophy. Either way, it tends not to be noticed.

Ch'i, however, is a very important concept, not only in Chinese philosophy, but in fields as far removed as poetics and martial arts. In the beginning, ch'i was a too-facile explanatory concept. To account for any phenomenon, one only had to postulate a ch'i of a corresponding type and the

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1. For a different perspective on ch'i, incorporating many quotations from ancient bronzes and ritual texts, see Hiraoka Teikichi's "Ki no shisō seiretsu ni tsuite," Shinagaku kenkyū, III (1955), 34-42.



matter was done. The concept of ch'i came to maturity when Chinese philosophers went further to explain why each type of ch'i has its particular characteristics. At an intermediate stage, the idea of the mandate of heaven was used to explain why each ch'i takes its particular form. Later, the idea of li superceded mandate, and the basis of Sung philosophy was laid.

### 1. Basic Meaning is "Breath," but Other Meanings Quickly Developed

The Lun-yü 論語 (Analects of Confucius), 10:3, says that when Confucius "ascended to the reception hall . . . he held his ch'i (breath) so that he did not seem to breathe." But even at this early time the word "ch'i" was not used merely in the material sense of "breath," as it is in this passage.<sup>2</sup>

The Lun-yü, 16:7, says:

The [morally] noble man has three things against which he guards himself. When he is young and his hsüeh-ch'i has not yet stabilized, he guards himself against sexual passion. When he reaches his prime and his hsüeh-ch'i is imperturbable, he guards himself against combativeness. When he reaches old age and his hsüeh-ch'i is already depleted, he guards himself against acquisitiveness.

The terms "hsüeh" (lifeblood) and "ch'i" (lifebreath) taken together refer here to what we would call the vital energies of the body, without either of which it would die. In this passage the term "hsüeh-ch'i" is used to explain attitudes or behavior. People may have observed that mental events, emotions, and the

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2. The clear equivalence of "ch'i" and "breath" at this early time is demonstrated by Hiraoka, p. 38.

like could affect both breathing and the pulse, and then identified the emotions with the agitations of the blood and breath. They seem to have thought that a certain temperament corresponds to a certain kind of blood and breath.

The Mo-tzu, 25:84/88, says:

The depth to which [a person's grave] is to be dug [is such that] from below there will be no incursion of water, and the ch'i will not be vented above.

"Ch'i" would seem to refer to the foul-smelling vapors from the decomposing corpse.

Mo-tzu reports that a sage king of old taught people to live in houses to protect their ch'i from injury by the moisture they were subjected to by living in caves. {21:17/19} "Ch'i" would appear to refer to their lifebreath, which gives them their vitality, as distinct from the air they breathe.

Mo-tzu indicated that food should be eaten in sufficient quantity "to fill the emptiness and give continuation to ch'i." {21:5/19} Ch'i (lifebreath) is maintained not merely by respiration but also by proper nutrition. The Mo-tzu, 6:22/40, says:

The practice of agriculture should provide food in sufficient [quantity] to increase ch'i and fill the emptiness, strengthen the body and suit the belly.

The parallel structure of this passage suggests that increasing ch'i strengthens the body.

In addition to the above meanings, which all have to do with the ch'i found in man and other animals, the Mo-tzu, 68:7/23 and 70:98/139, also refers

to the practice of ch'i-gazing (wang ch'i望氣), or prognostication by observing the clouds in the sky.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Ch'i in Mencius

The Mencius, 2A:2, gives a fascinating glimpse of the way the early Chinese thought about ch'i and its relation to the hsin and to chih 志 (will). Unfortunately, it is not clear whether "hsin's" meaning of "mind" or "storehouse" (organic system of function) is stronger here, nor is the relation between hsin and chih clear. Perhaps Mencius thinks of chih as a function of hsin.

[Kung-sun Ch'ou] said: "May I venture to inquire about the difference between your and Kao-tzu's immovable hsin?"

[Mencius said]: "Kao-tzu says: 'Do not seek in the hsin for what is not received through maxims<sup>4</sup>. Do not seek in the ch'i for what is not obtainable through the hsin.' The part about not seeking in the ch'i for what is not obtainable through the hsin is correct, but not the part about not seeking in the hsin for what is

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3. See the article by Derk Bodde entitled "The Chinese Cosmic Magic Known as Watching for the Ethers," in Studia serica Bernard Karlgren dedicata (Copenhagen, 1959), pp. 14-35. See also A. F. P. Hulsewé, "Watching the Vapours: an Ancient Chinese Technique of Prognostication," Zeitschrift für Kultur und Geschichte Ost- und Sudostasiens, CXXV (1979), 40-49.

4. This sense of "yen" was explained in David S. Nivison's paper, "Philosophical Voluntarism in Fourth-Century China," read before the Association for Asian Studies meeting in 1973.

not received through maxims.<sup>5</sup> For the will is the commander of the ch'i [of the body], and the ch'i is what fills the body. Thus will is supreme and ch'i is secondary. Therefore it is said: 'Those who keep their wills in rein will not suffer tumultuous outbursts of ch'i.'"

"Since you said: 'Will is supreme and ch'i is secondary,' what does it mean to say also: 'Those who keep their wills in rein will not suffer tumultuous outbursts of ch'i?'"

"When the will is unified it moves the ch'i. When the ch'i is unified it moves the will. What now trips and rushes headlong forward is the ch'i, and it contrarily moves the hsin."<sup>6</sup>

In this passage the will is virtually synonymous with the hsin. Mencius begins by talking about the hsin, continues by talking about the will, and returns to talking about the hsin. He tells us that the will can move the ch'i or vice-versa. Ch'i appears to be a semi-substantial intermediary between the hsin and the body. Mencius says that the will is the commander of the ch'i and that the ch'i fills the body. The significance of the fact that the ch'i fills the body is not immediately clear, but Mencius further says: "What now trips and rushes headlong forward is the ch'i, and it contrarily moves the hsin." This statement suggests the picture of a man who having tripped over something lurches forward out of balance and experiences some mental disorientation as a result.

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5. Kao-tzu argues that maxims are the best source of knowledge. If something is known from maxims, then it is permissible to seek confirmation in the heart-mind and even in ch'i. But if something not found in the hsin, then one should not seek it in the ch'i. Mencius refutes this position, saying that the hsin is greater in authority than the ch'i, and implying that any maxims owe their authority to what is already in the hsin.

6. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 30:6a/19.

Actually, it is the body that "trips and rushes headlong forth," but this impulse is transmitted to the ch'i that "fills the body."<sup>7</sup> Then the ch'i "contrarily" (i.e., in opposition to the normal course of events) moves the hsin. The picture is then of a substantial body on one level, a semi-substantial ch'i on a second level,<sup>8</sup> and a chih (will) on a third level. Although it is conceivable that Mencius may have thought of the hsin as a substantial organ, if the chih was conceived to be an activity of the hsin then it was not likely to have been conceived to be a substantial thing. Considering the progression outlined above, the chih would seem most likely to have been conceived as something even more tenuous than ch'i. Apparently, the chih can move the ch'i, which in turn can move the body, and vice-versa.

In the passage already quoted above, on page 34 and discussed again on page 39, Mencius says:

In the case of the organ that is the hsin, it can ssu (function intellectually and ethically). . . . This is what heaven has given me.<sup>9</sup>

This thought may be in agreement with an idea on the creation of human beings and their resultant composition expressed in the Kuan-tzu, 16:5b/14:<sup>10</sup>

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7. See also the discussion on "things taking over by force," on p. 33.

8. See Hiraoka Teikichi's "Ki no shisō," p. 36, for further indications of the "substantiality" of ch'i.

9. D. C. Lau, in his Introduction to his translation of the Mencius, p. 15, says: "It is a gift from Heaven of a thinking heart that marks human beings off from animals."

10. The Kuan-tzu 管子, attributed to Kuan Chung 管仲 (died 645 B.C.), contains much interesting material, but it is very difficult to date its various components. See the Introduction of W. Allyn Rickett's translation, Kuan-tzu, for a study of the times of composition of the various parts.

In the production of each human being, heaven provides his finer portion (ching 精), and earth provides his form (hsing 形). These two are brought together to become a human being. When they harmonize there is then life, and not otherwise.<sup>11</sup>

By saying that the hsin or its function is what heaven has given him, Mencius means to give it an elevated status and argue that it deserves to rule the body. If it be argued that in the Mencius, 2A:2, "t'ien" (heaven) merely means the natural order, would this argument not imply that something other than the natural order has provided the rest of the human being? I believe that "t'ien" means "heaven" in a more fundamental sense and that the passage given here from the Mencius indicates a lingering trace in Confucianism of an older belief that gave equal dignity to heaven and earth, the masculine and the feminine.<sup>12</sup> If my belief is correct, then Mencius may well have conceived of a human being as a heaven-given core of the finest ch'i called the hsin or ensconced in the physical hsin, an intermediate layer of ch'i produced as the result of the combination of the ch'i of heaven and earth, and an outer mantle of substantial ch'i provided by earth.

The chih (will), possibly an activity of the hsin, controls ch'i, which in turn controls the body. If the activities of hsin really do derive from heaven, and the body indeed derives from earth, with the ch'i of combination then to be found between them, the situation is homologous to the

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11. See also the Huai-nan-tzu, 7:1a/13 and the Lun-heng, 3:8b/22.

12. See the Lun-heng, 18:1b/18, and 18:4b/18. Other interpreters extend the reference of the word "this" in the passage quoted from the Mencius, 6A:15, to include the sense organs. If they are correct, then my interpretation is not valid.

relation between heaven (the masculine metaphysical principle) on high, ch'i (atmosphere, clouds) in the middle, and earth (the feminine metaphysical principle) below. Ch'i in either case forms a medium of communication between its extremes. Mencius indicates that ch'i is itself vitality, and that its quantity and quality determine a human being's energy and temperament.

The Mencius, 2A:2, says:

"May I ask in what way the Master excels?"

"I know maxims. I am good at nourishing my flood-like<sup>13</sup> ch'i."

"May I ask what this 'flood-like ch'i' is?"

"It is difficult to explain. As ch'i, it is extremely extensive and supremely adamantine.<sup>14</sup> If you nourish it with directness and do not injure it, then it fills up all the space between heaven and earth."

Because it is analogous to the ch'i between heaven and earth, a man's ch'i properly nourished by physical or moral means can flow out into the greater ch'i and merge with it. Thus the "breath" of human beings can become united with the "breath" of heaven and earth.<sup>15</sup>

The Mencius, 2A:2, continues:

"As ch'i it matches yi (justice) and the tao (way). Without it one is inert. It is that produced by the accumulation of yi. It is not something that [acts of] yi [can] sieze in one assault. If one's actions leave some dissatisfaction in one's

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13. "Flood-like" (hao-jan) 浩 然) has connotations of unceasing productivity and indomitable energy.

14. The ch'i is called adamantine to indicate its possessor's unwavering determination in the face of duress.

15. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 52:7b/48.

mind, then it becomes inert. I therefore say: Kao-tzu never knew yi, because he put it on the outside (i.e., believed it to be external to himself). There must be constant effort applied to it without fail, yet it should not be forced to grow.

Mencius argues both that yi is an internal drive, and that "accumulations" of it can produce the flood-like moral ch'i. When he urges constant exercise of yi, Mencius indicates to me that he believes the constant exercise of (and satisfaction of) one's yi drive can produce an ever stronger ch'i. The significance of the mention of ch'i here is that it is not merely a feeling or a drive, as is yi, but also involves the capacity to produce changes in the real world -- hence the reference earlier to the ch'i filling up all the space between heaven and earth. Mencius goes from feeling to activity on the one hand, and from intangible aspirations to tangible results on the other. The energetic aspect of ch'i is clearly in the forefront here.

In the story of Ox Mountain, (6A:8), Mencius says that "It is not that what was hsi 息 (breathed, nourished) by the day and night, or irrigated (jun 潤) by the rain and dew, did not sprout and put forth fresh shoots." The character "hsi 息," is a picture of the heart and the nose. Its basic meaning is "to breathe."<sup>16</sup> Speaking of human beings, Mencius says in the same passage:

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16. Hiraoka shows that the expressions "hsi" and "ch'i" were so close in meaning as to be interchangeable in some contexts. See his article on "Ki no shiso," p. 39.



[If in spite of] what they hsi (breathe, are nourished by)<sup>17</sup> by day and by night, and the [restorative influence of the] dawn ch'i, hardly any of their likings and dislikings resemble those of other men, then [this is because] what they do by day has attacked [what has regrown] and caused it to perish.

The air at dawn is still believed by the Chinese to be the most healthful to breathe. The passage shows that human beings can be nourished by external ch'i.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. Ch'i Can Be Changed by Environmental Forces

Perhaps the most far-reaching teaching of Mencius concerning the ch'i is that it (and therefore a person's temperament) can be shaped or degraded by environmental forces. The Mencius, 7A:36, tells what happened when Mencius was traveling and saw the sons of a king. He sighed and said:

One's residence (surroundings) changes one's ch'i, and one's nourishment changes one's body. How great is [the influence of] one's residence. Now are we not all the sons of men?

Both princes and commoners are human beings, but the special environment of a high noble stamps his character indelibly. One's social environment can have an influence on one's ch'i, but it is not clear from this passage whether the influence need be either good or bad. It is a common observation that one's

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17. See Hsü Shen 許慎 (fl. 100 A.D.), Shuo-wen chieh-tzu 說文解字, 10B:10a/19: "To breathe. From hsin (heart, mind) and from tzu 自 (nose, self). 'Tzu' also gives the pronunciation."

18. For the view that a person's internal ch'i can be insulated from the external ch'i see the Ch'ang-sheng t'ai-yüan shen-yung ching 長生胎元神用經, found in the Tao-tsang, ts'e 1050, cheng-yi-pu 正乙部, tien 典 10, 13a/15.

social environment can change one's character, and that seems to be what is meant by changing ch'i here.

According to Mencius, the condition of one's ch'i can either permit one to link with the greater ch'i of the world or it may be part of a low moral state -- one in which a person has lost something that is essential to life as a human being.

Mencius' conception of ch'i in conjunction with his theory of mind and hsing implies a division in human psychology between certain mutable functions performed by ch'i and certain immutable functions performed by hsin and enumerated as the hsing, or as pertaining to the hsing. Ch'i accounts for what we might call vitality. Its quantity and quality determine a man's vigor and temperament. It is mutable and subject both to influences from the environment and to influences within the person. Ch'i is a primary term in Chinese thought. As such, the concept of ch'i cannot be further analyzed to explain why it is mutable. On the contrary, the fact that ch'i is mutable is used to explain what we in the West would speak of as physical, mental, or moral changes. We can determine various characteristics of ch'i, but these do not have real separate existence and are seen only by abstraction. When the discussion of something has been brought to the level of ch'i, there is nothing further that can be

said.<sup>19</sup> Hsing, or more properly that part of the hsing that is specifically human, is immutable short of destruction. Providing that the hsin is properly integrated, it can always exert control over the rest of the organism.

#### 5. Ch'i in the Kuan-tzu

Although the Kuan-tzu 管子 is composed of materials from many different sources and is difficult to date, material in the "Nei-ye" chapter (chapter 49), seems to be close to the Mencius both in spirit and in time.

The Kuan-tzu, chapter 49 (SPPY, 16:2b/14), defines a key term in the passages concerning ch'i to be examined below:

Ching means the refined [portion or fraction] of ch'i.

The Kuan-tzu, (SPPY, 16:1a/14), stresses the importance of ching:

The ching of all creatures is the source of their lives. Below, it produces the five grains. Above, it is the stars arrayed. Flowing between heaven and earth it is called ghosts and spirits. Stored away in the thorax it is called the sage. Thus this<sup>20</sup> ch'i is bright as though one had ascended to the sky. It is unfathomable as though one had descended into an abyss. It is

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19. This reliance on the explanatory power of the concept ch'i can produce explanations that are decidedly unsatisfactory from our standpoint. The arguments assume the following circular form: Whenever one wants to explain the characteristic Y of some thing X, one merely affirms that X has ch'i of kind Y. That assertion is supposed to explain everything when in fact it explains nothing. For example, a student asked Chu Hsi about a man with the bristles and skin of a swine. In answer, Chu Hsi told of another man with such bristles who grunted like a hog in his sleep. "This was only because he was endowed with the ch'i of a hog." (See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 3:14b/25.)

20. Emmended following the discussion in W. Allyn Rickett's translation of the Kuan-tzu, p. 158.

vast<sup>21</sup> as though immersed in the sea. It is compact<sup>21</sup> as though within one-self.

This statement is reminiscent of Mencius' claim that one's ch'i, when properly nurtured, can fill the space between heaven and earth.

The Kuan-tzu, 1bf/14, adds:

Thus this ch'i cannot be stopped by force but can be made tranquil by virtue. It cannot be summoned by a yell but can be greeted by the [faculty of] intention. To respectfully preserve it without fail is called completing virtue.

This passage shows a common feature of both the followers of Confucius and of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu -- the importance attached to tranquility. It is also reminiscent of Mencius' belief that anyone less than a true sage must in some sense rediscover or "reclaim" his true nature.

Another indication of affinity with Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu is given in the passage at 49:2a/14:

That whose form cannot be seen and whose sound cannot be heard, yet whose accomplishments are preserved is called "tao." The tao never takes anything as good other than that the hsin should be at peace and should love. If the hsin is tranquil, then ch'i will be orderly and the tao can be retained (i.e., prevented from abandoning one).<sup>22</sup>

In another passage the Kuan-tzu, 16:4a/14, seems to incorporate ideas from thinkers who sought to extend the normal life-span with Mencius' idea of the ch'i that extends to all of heaven and earth:

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21. Emmended following the discussion in W. Allyn Rickett's translation of the Kuan-tzu, p. 158.

22. C.f. W. Allyn Rickett, Kuan-tzu, p. 159, part 2a, lines 5ff.

When ching is preserved (i.e., not wasted), one will naturally [continue to] live. Externally, one will be placid and resplended. Internally, the stored [ching] will be a source [for ch'i]. Flood-like and peaceful, the [ching] functions as an abyss (i.e., wellspring or source) of ch'i. So long as the abyss cannot be dried up, the body will be enduring. So long as the spring is inexhaustible, the nine orifices of the body will remain unclogged and so [one's ch'i will be] able to extend to all of heaven and earth and to encloak the [land within the] four seas.

The connection between ch'i and mind, on the one hand, and the importance of ch'i in mediating interactions between things or people, on the other hand, is stressed in the following passage from the Kuan-tzu, 16:4bf/14:

When good ch'i greets a person, it is more affectionate than [the feelings between] brothers. When an evil ch'i greets one, it is more damaging than weapons of war. An unspoken word is more urgent than [the sounds of] thunder and drums. The form of the ch'i of the hsin is brighter than the sun and moon, more discerning than one's parents. Rewards are inadequate to encourage goodness. Punishments are not enough to deter error. [But] when one gets the "ch'i-intention" then the world will submit. When the "hsin-intention" is stabilized, then the world will obey. Concentrate ch'i like a god; then the myriad creatures will be completely preserved.

This fascinating passage combines echoes of Mencius, of Lao-tzu or Chuang-tzu, and of the syncretic writers of such texts as the Chung-yung and Ta-hsueh.

##### 5. Ch'i in the Chuang-tzu — Human and Cosmic

The beginning of the fourth chapter of the Chuang-tzu mentions an occasion when Confucius (who appears in the guise of a Taoist sage) is visited by a student who intends to offer advice to a cruel and wanton ruler without

having "penetrated (ta 達) to his ch'i" and without having "penetrated to his hsin." This passage indicates that for the author ch'i has something to do with attitudes or temperament, and (judging by the parallel structure of the sentences) that it is closely related but not necessarily identical to the mind. Similarly, the Chuang-tzu, 7:10/33, speaks of "letting the hsin roam in simplicity, and joining ch'i with silence." The Chuang-tzu, 23:78/79, says that if one desires tranquility one should "make one's ch'i even (i.e., regulate it)," and that if one desires to be spirit-like one should "make one's hsin compliant." These passages do not clearly designate the relation between the ch'i and the hsin. The Lao-tzu, chapter 55, says: "For the hsin to force the ch'i is called straining." Possibly -- as with the Mencius -- the hsin is capable of subordinating the ch'i. Because the emphasis of Lao-tzu was on maintaining spontaneity, he rejects what Mencius could regard as the ethical control of ch'i by the will.

The Chuang-tzu, 11:20/74, speaks of "making the five visceral systems of function (lit., five storehouses, wu tsang 五藏) miserable in order to create benevolence and duty, and burdening the hsüeh-ch'i in order that it might conform to rules and regulations." This passage suggests a relationship between the blood and breath and the five "storehouses," like that posited in the paragraph above between ch'i and hsin. It may be that these tsang were seen as storehouses for the hsüeh-ch'i.

As with the Mencius, ch'i in the Chuang-tzu seems to perform certain functions that we would call psychological. The Chuang-tzu, 4:26/90, says:

Do not listen with your ears, listen with your hsin; do not listen with your hsin, listen with your ch'i. The ears stop at

perceiving.<sup>23</sup> The hsin stops with correspondences. Ch'i is void and receives [i.e., unbiasedly perceives] things.

I interpret this text to mean that ch'i was either regarded as the means by which we are able to perceive things, or as somehow being perceptive itself.

The Chuang-tzu, 26:39/49, says:

A thing's having perceptivity (sentience) is dependent upon breathing (hsi 息).

Although ch'i is not mentioned, the connection seems fairly obvious. Thus one more characteristic of ch'i is noted.

The Chuang-tzu, 2:4/96, says that "the great clod (i.e., the earth) belches ch'i, and the name [of this ch'i] is 'wind.'" The Chuang-tzu, 6:49/97, speaks of the ch'i of yin and yang, or yin and yang ch'i. And at 25:67/82 it says:

Heaven and earth are the greatest of forms. Yin and yang are the greatest of ch'i.

I have found no passage that says that heaven belches ch'i, and Confucian sources attribute both yin and yang to heaven; but it appears that the authors of chapters two, six, and twenty-five of the Chuang-tzu may have believed that heaven produces yang ch'i while earth produces yin ch'i (or perhaps the reverse). It may also be that the conjunction of heaven and earth produces both yin and yang ch'i.

23. The text has "t'ing chih yü erh 聽止於耳." I follow the Yü Yüeh 俞樾 commentary in reversing the sentence order, which does not make sense as it stands. The revised sentence is parallel in structure to the next statement.

24. See also, Alfred Forke's translation of the Lun-heng, I:239f and 548.

The Chuang-tzu, 25:62/82, says:

The four seasons differ in their ch'i.

At 25:5/79 it says:

When the ch'i of spring issues forth the diverse plants grow.

At 11:46/74 it says:

The ch'i of heaven is not in harmony. The ch'i of earth is contorted. The six ch'i are not concordant. And the four seasons do not keep their proper bounds.

From the first two quotations it appears that each season has a ch'i that casts its influence on the seasonal growth, maturation, and return to dormancy of the creatures of earth. The third quotation does not appear to be entirely consistent with the others. The six ch'i are variously defined, and none of the dictionary definitions seem to fit particularly well here. The list of several ch'i in the definition most commonly given begins with yin and yang. If, as it appears, yin and yang are the ch'i of heaven and earth, then the remaining four ch'i may be those of the four seasons. It may be that the author of this chapter of the Chuang-tzu intends yin and yang as two aspects of one ch'i that corresponds to the ultimate unity of heaven and earth, believing that yin and yang (cold and hot) can further differentiate into the ch'i proper to each season. But the evidence is not sufficient for a clear determination.

The view in the Chuang-tzu concerning the formation of men and other creatures is somewhat inconsistent. The Chuang-tzu, 22:11/84, says:

Human beings are born [because of] the accumulation of ch'i. When it accumulates there is life. When it dissipates there is death. . . . There is one ch'i that connects and pervades everything in the world.



But an ambiguous passage at 17:9/91 suggests a different idea. It says: "Tzu yi pi hsing yü t'ien ti, erh shou ch'i yü yin yang 自以比形於天地而受氣於陰陽. I am not sure what the words "tzu yi 自以" mean. Since the next sentence is one in which the speaker compares his size to heaven and earth, the sentence quoted above may mean: "I, because (tzu yi) my body is modeled on (pi 比) heaven and earth and [my] ch'i is received from yin and yang [make the following comparison between my size and that of the world]." "Pi 比" can mean "to stand in ratio to."<sup>25</sup> So I interpret "pi" here to mean "modeled on" in accordance with the later view that the heads of human beings are round to resemble heaven, and their feet are square to resemble earth. The alternative, chosen by all the commentators I have seen, is to say the sentence means: "I compare my body with heaven and earth," but this leaves "yi 以" unexplained and destroys the parallel with receiving ch'i from yin and yang. In any event, judging by the first passage quoted there is only one ch'i, but judging by the second passage two ch'i must be involved. This is the same discrepancy noted in the paragraph above. It may be that the Chuang-tzu pictures a primordial unity of which heaven and earth are aspects, and further affirms that heaven and earth each have their respective ch'i that combine to form a human being with both heavenly and earthly aspects. The ch'i of the human being may still have yin and yang aspects, perhaps, as in later writing, cohesive and dynamic tendencies on the one hand, and dispersive and passive tendencies on the other hand. That, at a minimum, the two kinds of ch'i interpenetrate fully is made clear by the Chuang-tzu, 21:27/70, where it says:

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25. See the Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, 20:7b/19.

The highest yin is the most restrained. The highest yang is the most exuberant. The restrained comes forth from heaven. The exuberant issues forth from earth. The two intertwine and penetrate forming a harmony, and [as a result] things are born.

(Yin comes out of heaven because heaven is the full development of yang, and the full development of one phase always gives birth to the opposite phase.)

Despite the fact that ch'i changes so that there is first form and then life, ch'i is also an aspect of a living being that can be wasted by riotous living or conserved by spiritual or hygienic practices. The Chuang-tzu, 19:56/76, in telling the story of a remarkable maker of bell-stands, gives the artisan's explanation for his powers:

When I am about to make a bellstand, I never dare to waste my ch'i. I must practice ritual purification<sup>26</sup> (chai 齋) in order to calm my hsin.

Both Chuang-tzu and Mencius gave a positive evaluation of ch'i. Both strove to augment it. In the story of Lieh-tzu bringing a shaman to his teacher {Chuang, 7:26/35}, the shaman is shown various aspects of the teacher's inner communion with the universe, and among them is his "springs of activity [latent in the] balanced ch'i," which is the stage of creation just this side of "not having left my ancestor." This ch'i has much the same mysterious quality as Mencius' "flood-like ch'i," which if properly nourished can "fill up the space between heaven and earth." The Chuang-tzu also advocates that ch'i be nourished.

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26. Before ordinary sacrifices, one must purify one's body by abstaining from the consumption of certain foods and from sexual intercourse. Before seeking union with the tao, one must purify the mind of preconceptions and self-centered desires.

At 19:11/76 the author advocates that the student "unify his hsing, nourish his ch'i, and unify his virtue in order to come in contact with what fashions [all] things." At 6:68/97, the Chuang-tzu mentions that one can "roam in the one ch'i of the world." While there are clearly differences in the way ch'i is treated in the Mencius and in the Chuang-tzu, both convey the general feeling that ch'i is a desirable aspect of reality. This approbation contrasts strongly with the Hsün-tzu.

#### 6. Hsün-tzu Distrusted Ch'i

Hsün-tzu's ideas about ch'i were not much in agreement with those of others. He believed that the only social good to be found in human beings came from their seeking enlightened self-interest. He therefore favored the intellect and denigrated the spontaneous feelings that motivate humans. For this reason he looked upon ch'i primarily as a potential source of trouble to be regulated and kept under control. He may at times have made hsüeh-ch'i into a merely figurative way of talking about temperament without reference to a physical substrate. He used "hsüeh-ch'i" to refer to mannerisms that he regarded as learned. He did not speculate about a ch'i of heaven and earth.

The Hsün-tzu, 5:15/63, says:

The vulgar disorderly "gentlemen" of today and the smart alecks of the back country are all beautiful and fetching. They don startling clothing and women's jewelry. In their hsüeh-ch'i (lit, lifeblood and lifebreath) and attitudes they imitate women.

"Hsüeh-ch'i 血氣" seems to be used here to mean "behavior." Hsün-tzu regards it as having been produced by mimicry. At 1:40/51 he refers to those having a "combative ch'i" -- what we would call a combative "spirit" -- not at all indicating a psyche or soul, but rather a condition of mind. At 32:11/37 he

says that the gentlemen whose strength is as great as an ox or who can run as fast as a horse will not compete with those animals. To do so would indicate "the ch'i of one who contests and would equal [others]." These "ch'i" all seem to refer to transient conditions of the individual that we would call behavioral states.

Hsün-tzu indicated that a stimulus originating in the environment could evoke a ch'i of the same or corresponding kind. This instance again suggests that ch'i was used to refer to a condition of mind. The Hsün-tzu, 20:26/50, says:

The ears of a [morally] noble man do not listen to lascivious sounds. His eyes do not see female beauty. His mouth does not utter foul words. The [morally] noble man is careful in these three regards. A contrary ch'i (i.e., one that goes against moral norms) will arise in response to any wicked sound that stimulates a person.

Therefore, Hsün-tzu says, the former kings made music that was sufficient to give expression to happiness, but not productive of social disorder. The Hsün-tzu, 20:4/50, says that they made the music "sufficient to arouse (kan-tung 威動) the good hsin of men, preventing that depraved and impure ch'i from obtaining a way to attach itself." This passage means that music could be used to prevent one from being contaminated by bad ch'i from the external world. It sounds almost as though overly exuberant music might allow an incursion of some foreign ch'i, or might contribute to a person's relaxing his psychic defenses. Hsün-tzu's words might also refer to protection by means of music from influence by the bad mental states of others.

In some cases Hsün-tzu used "ch'i" to refer to something other than a mental state. The Hsün-tzu, 21:74/96, tells the story of a man so stupid and

easily frightened that one evening he became scared of his own shadow and of his own hair; thinking both of them ghosts or goblins, he fled. "When he got to his home, he lost his ch'i and died." This sounds as though the ch'i physically departed from his body, causing death.

The Hsün-tzu, 9:69/127, says:

Fire and water have ch'i but do not have life. Grasses and trees have life but do not have perceptivity. Fowl and beasts have perceptivity but do not have yi (sense of right and wrong, duty, justice). Men have ch'i, life, perceptivity, and yi.

This passage suggests that ch'i is a necessary substrate for life, that life is a necessary substrate for perceptivity, and that perceptivity is necessary substrate for yi (sense of right and wrong, duty, justice). If so, then ch'i is prior to mind, and is not fundamentally a product or state of mind.<sup>27</sup> Hsün-tzu mentions fire and water as exemplary possessors of ch'i because fire heats things at a distance, water may throw off a visible cloud of vapor, and both move in a way that suggests the energetic characteristics of life.

Hsüeh-ch'i sometimes involves much more than attitudes and mannerisms.

The Hsün-tzu, 19:97/127, says:

Those [creatures] possessing hsüeh-ch'i necessarily have perceptivity.

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27. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 52:13a/48 records Chu Hsi's explanation of the relation between various kinds of ch'i: "There is [really] only one ch'i, but the one that is produced from morality (yi-li 義理) is flood-like (hao-jan 浩然) ch'i, and the one produced from blood, flesh, and body is the ch'i of hsüeh-ch'i (i.e., the ch'i meant in the phrase "blood and breath").

It would appear that the author either conceives hsüeh-ch'i as the sufficient condition for perceptivity, or else believes that there is something more fundamental that is a sufficient condition for hsüeh-ch'i and also for perceptivity. In passages at 2:8/44, 12:28/117, and 26:9/36, Hsün-tzu linked hsüeh-ch'i with will (chih-yi 志意) and cogitation (chih-lü 志慮), but in those passages the nature of the connection is even less clear than the connection suggested above between hsüeh-ch'i and perceptivity.

Whereas Mencius affirmed his own ability to nourish his ch'i, Hsün-tzu advocates something else. At 2:14/49, he says:

The method (shu 術) for ordering the ch'i and nurturing the hsin is that when the ch'i is unyielding and strong it should be gentled by harmonization. When thought becomes deep it should be unified through uncomplicated goodness.

Hsün-tzu believed that man is inherently evil in the sense that following the raw impulse of his hsing will cause harm to himself or others. He said that the goodness of man is due to artifice, i.e., that in order for man to be good, something good must be made out of him. If, for Hsün-tzu, as A. C. Graham says {1967: 225}, heaven is morally neutral and man is the inventor of morality, then man must have made something good out of himself. Later on there can be talk of people being taught to be good, but in the beginning someone must have learned for himself to be good.<sup>28</sup> According to Hsün-tzu, man has no innate impulses that are not selfish. His intelligence may be coldly rational, when it is functioning unimpaired, but this rationality by itself will lead him nowhere.

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28. See D. C. Lau, "Theories of Human Nature in Mencius and Shyuntzy," p. 557. Lau points out that Hsün-tzu was against the idea that ordinary people could invent morality.

It is only when his intelligence applies itself to the satisfaction of his desires, and observes that the immediate satisfaction of some desires will lead to the non-fulfillment of other -- more important -- desires, that goodness is produced. This knowledge is then systematized by human beings and passed down as morality.<sup>29</sup>

The ch'i, as a source of motivation, was a potential source of social disorder unless it could be ordered, i.e., coordinated with all of the other motivations in society, and ultimately subordinated to it for the general good of its members. Hsün-tzu conceived of the hsin as the faculty that was capable of seeing the ultimate necessity of this subordination, and hence he felt that the hsin had a much more positive social value than ch'i. For it was ch'i, as the source of all the discordant motivations in the world, that had originated the problem of social disorder; and it was hsin, which had originally seen the way out of the conflicts, that must be reenlisted in this process in each generation.

According to Hsün-tzu's general approach to the problems of human interactions, ordering the emotions, or the ch'i, amounts to suppressing those desires that can cause those problems. Mencius favored integrating human desires, not so much with the desires of others, which he thought would be taken care of automatically, but with each other and with the specifically human hsing whose axiological activities would secure their balance under the proper conditions of integration.

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29. In this general analysis I agree with Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, I, 294ff.

Mencius' approach to the regulation of the passions follows the legend of the management of the flood waters by the great sage king Yü (see above, p. 68f and the appendix on Wu). If the hsing is good, then in "fulfilling one's form" {Menc., 7A:38} all one need do is see that the impulses of the hsing are properly channeled or canalized, just as Yü managed the flood waters by dredging channels to connect to the sea (their natural outlet), rather than attempting to prevent their flow.

Hsün-tzu apparently believed that the hsin is superior to ch'i in another way. The Hsün-tzu, 18:62/122, says:

Hsüeh-ch'i and muscular power decline with age, but such things as wisdom, cogitation, and the ability to make decisions do not decline.

This is one instance in which "hsüeh-ch'i" does not mean anything like temperament. It has more to do with what we in the West would call vitality. This "vitality," or the quality of this "vitality," may be used to explain temperament, although the terms are not synonymous.

#### 7. A Tentative Synthesis

At the risk of going beyond the evidence in the texts, it may be helpful at this point to attempt a synthesis of the Chou-dynasty teachings with regard to ch'i as it concerns human beings. It is important to see how, from the beginning, ch'i played an important part in the Chinese explanations of what we in the West would call mental or spiritual events, while at the same time it was not an immaterial thing. In later Chinese thought, ch'i is said to constitute what we regard as patently material things as well as the energies that are characteristic of them. There is no contradiction here, even though our preconceptions suggest one.



In the materials covered so far, the concept of ch'i seems to have been relatively simple. In all but two of the instances, ch'i meant either the breath of a person or that of heaven and earth. One exception was the passage in the Mo-tzu concerning burials, where it apparently meant foul vapors. Material from the Hsün-tzu indicated that water and fire each have ch'i; both water and fire nourish life and are in some ways lifelike. Moreover, it is fairly clear from the general argument of that passage that ch'i is common to all forms of life, not only to fire and water. So ch'i seems closely linked to what we would call vitality in one form or another.

#### 8. Blood in Relation to Ch'i

As far back as the Analects of Confucius, the ideas of blood and breath (hsüeh-ch'i) were already closely linked. It is not hard to see why this should be so, since the loss of either results in the death of the organism. Since pulse, skin color, and respiration are all much affected by emotion, it is easy to see why blood and breath should also become closely linked to qualities of temperament and motivation. It is not clear whether there was any theory explaining the association of blood and breath, and indeed we in the West have not felt a need for one to link blood and breath together intrinsically to explain their particular efficacy as vital signs.

The Chinese, having observed that blood and breath are closely linked to emotions and temperament, took the further step of postulating that blood and breath are the loci of emotions and constitute temperament. Emotions are

closely related to disturbances of blood and breath,<sup>30</sup> and their quality in a person determines the quality of the emotions he experiences. A certain temperament was thought to correspond to a certain kind of blood and breath (hsüeh-ch'i). Observing that emotions and physical energies all respond to deficiencies in nutrition, the Chinese thought the body, in assimilating food, somehow transformed it into ch'i. They further observed that while blood was

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30. The Huai-nan-tzu, 7:2bf/13, says: "Now the orifices are the portals of the spirit (ching-shen 精神), while the breath-volitions (ch'i-chih 氣志) are the official receptionists [deputed by] the five storehouses [to receive the spirit(?)]. Should the eyes and ears become deluded by [immersion in] the pleasures of sounds and sights, then the five storehouses will oscillate and become unstable. When the five storehouses are oscillating and unstable, then the blood and breath vacillate and have no rest. When the blood and breath are vacillating and have no rest, then the spirit will gallop abroad and will not be conserved (lit., kept up). When the spirit gallops abroad and is not conserved, then upon the arrival of [imminent] disaster, even though it [be as obvious] as hills and mountains, nevertheless the person will have lost the ability to recognize it."

The Huai-nan-tzu, 8:8a/12, says: "When something offends against the nature of a person, then he becomes angry. When he is angry his blood congests. When the blood congests, then the ch'i becomes agitated. When the ch'i becomes agitated, then the person releases (fa 發) his anger. When his anger is released, then his resentment is discharged."

The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, "Yin ch'u," SPPY 6:6b/10, makes clear the intermediary position of ch'i between the world (including the flesh and bones) and the hsin, as well as testifying to the emotional functions of ch'i: "This [music] is what is liked by [people in] countries in disorder and enjoyed by [those whose] virtue is degenerate. When agitated, soaring, unbridled and immoderate music is produced (ch'u 出), then convulsive ch'i and a dissolute hsin respond."

fluid and ch'i was only semi-substantial, the mind could never be seen or felt except as an entirely subjective phenomenon. The mind could influence and control the emotions and other energies of the body and thereby direct the movement of the body. The body could likewise stir up the emotions to such an extent that they influenced the functioning of the mind. The Chinese observed that the heart was intimately associated with the pounding of the pulse under emotional stress, so they conceived it to be the system of organic function (tsang 藏, lit., storehouse), or what we would call the organ, that dealt most directly with the blood and breath, and therefore came to regard it as the seat of the mind. They also observed that there were other systems of organic function; they postulated that these also had their own blood and ch'i. As they considered ch'i the mediator between the substantial body and the things of the world, and the insubstantial mind, they took it to be the cause of perceptivity and the substrate upon which sentience depended. Since they observed that attitudes and motivations could be changed by environmental influences, they believed that the latter produced actual qualitative changes in the blood and ch'i.

Certain cosmological ideas that were not fully worked out until after the Chou dynasty suggested the idea that human beings are formed by the interaction of the breath of heaven and the breath of earth, so that each person has a yang and an yin aspect. Yang ch'i corresponds to heaven, and yin ch'i corresponds to earth. The two meet in the empty space between heaven and earth and form a harmonious union from which all beings (including humans) are produced, and within which they function. Human beings receive their ch'i from the effluences of heaven and earth (later sources add the idea that human beings

receive them in most perfect balance), so that their forms are comparable to their sources. Some authors say that human beings are formed by the consolidation of the one ch'i, but the bipolar idea summarized above had greater influence on ideas concerning human psychology. The belief that the earth is solid and gross, while heaven is insubstantial and refined suggested the idea that the yin component of a human being is his physical, corporeal or substantial body, whereas the yang component is his non-corporeal, non-substantial, or at most semi-substantial, part, which Europeans and Americans name variously as mind, psyche, spirit, temperament, feelings, or desires.

#### 9. Han Fei and the Endowment of Ch'i

The Han Fei-tzu 韓非子 bears the name of Han Fei (ca. 280-233). Some chapters, including the one quoted below, are thought to be by scholars of Ch'in- or early Han-dynasty times. The Han Fei-tzu, 20:8/20, says:

Those who know how to serve heaven have their orifices open (hsü 竅). . . . When the orifices are [kept] open, the harmonious ch'i enter daily.

This passage probably refers to the ch'i formed by the harmonious interpenetration of the effluences of heaven and earth mentioned above. This passage recalls Mencius' idea of the restorative benefits of the early morning ch'i.

The Han Fei-tzu, 20:14/20, is the first to mention the idea of the endowment (ping 稟) of ch'i, saying that it determines life and death. The "endowment of ch'i" (ch'i-ping 氣稟) became a very important idea in the later history of the concept of ch'i.

10. Late Chou or Early Han Ideas Relating Yin and Yang to Ch'i

The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, 13:3b/12, says:

Heaven, earth, and the myriad creatures are the body of one person.

At 13:1a/12 it says:

Heaven and earth have (i.e., provide [?]) beginnings. Heaven is subtle in its activity so that it may complete [things], and earth is filling (i.e., gestating and nurturing) so that it may give [them] form. The joining and harmonizing of heaven and earth are the great warp (connecting element) in life.

This passage explains the apparent duality of heaven and earth as the polarization of a fundamental unity. It agrees with the Mencius in saying, at 7:3a/9, that "the hsing (nature) is what is received from heaven." At 12:6a/10, it repeats that, adding: "It is not that one chooses to do something." From the idea that heaven is subtle in its activity so that it can complete things, and give them their hsing or natures, whereas earth is gestating and nurturing in order to give things their forms, we may perhaps descry an early statement of

the view that the hsing of human beings first appears as an effusion of ch'i from heaven:<sup>31</sup> Ch'i is the characteristic manifestation of heaven, and is imperceptible. After the y'ang ch'i of heaven is produced, the yin ch'i of earth then fills in around the endowment of ch'i so produced and gives it physical form.

The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, 9:10a/10, presents the idea that ch'i is continuous from generation to generation.

A child and its parents constitute one body divided into two [apparent parts] -- there is the same ch'i but different respiratory [systems].

If we assume a common ancestor for all human beings, then it would follow that all human life is ultimately the articulation of one ch'i.

I shall treat the appendices to the Yi-ching next, since most authorities think they were written in the early years of the Han dynasty, and since the texts with which I am concerned are somewhat more specific with regard to the roles of heaven and earth in the constitution of creatures than is the Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu.

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31. The Lun-heng, 3:14b/22, says: "Tung Chung-shu, having read the books of [Hsün-tzu] and Mencius, then wrote a discourse on ch'ing and hsing, saying: 'The great warp (connecting element) of heaven is yin and yang. The great warp of humans is ch'ing and hsing. The hsing is produced from yang, and the ch'ing from yin. Yin ch'i is mean (pi 𠄎); yang ch'i is benevolent (jen 仁). Those who say that the nature is good regard the yang [nature]. Those who say that it is evil regard the yin (emotions).'" This passage does not occur in the Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu as D. C. Lau points out in his article on "Theories of Human Nature in Mencius and Shyuntzzy," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XV (1950), 541-565. The Shuo-wen chieh-tzu, 10B:10a/19, defines hsing as "the yang ch'i of human beings. The hsing is good."

The Yi-ching was itself originally a book used for prognostication. This fact has occasioned some confusion and disagreement concerning which ideas in its appendices are properly cosmological, and which refer only to the structures of the hexagrams or the operations involved in prognostication. However, it appears that the authors of some of the appendices consider the whole yi (change) process detailed in the Yi-ching to be a model for the universe -- which explains why the Yi is supposed to work -- and almost everything that is said about the hexagrams, is also being said about the universe.<sup>32</sup>

The principal features of the natural order upon which the theories of the Yi appendices are modeled are sexual (producing a bipolar model of cosmogony), and seasonal or astronomical (producing a cyclical model of creation). The sexual metaphor is predominant.

Several of the appendices indicate that a cycle of the yin-yang sort can be put in motion by an essentially linear process of cosmic sexual intercourse: The T'uan or Judgment to the eleventh hexagram says:

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32. I have benefited greatly in my study of the Yi-ching from Nathan Sivin's unpublished article entitled "Preliminary Reflections on the Words Pien 變, Hua 化, and T'ung 通 in the Great Commentary to the Book of Changes."

Heaven and earth intertwine (chiao 交) and the myriad creatures come into contact (t'ung 通) [to complete their cycles]."<sup>33</sup>

In the view of the authors of these appendices, the creation of the universe is essentially the creation of interlocking cyclical processes -- the four seasons and all the lesser life cycles that go on amidst them.

To return to the main course of the development of the concept of ch'i, let us now consider the third section of the Shuo kua appendix:

Heaven and earth set their positions. The mountain(s) and marsh(s) join their ch'i. Thunder and wind strike against each other. Water and fire do not attack (lit., fire arrows at) each other.

The rest of the passage goes on to relate the above to the trigrams that diagram these natural phenomena, and their use in prognostication. But see the imagery of this passage: Heaven poises itself over earth. The mountain (penis) and marsh (vagina) join their productive essences. The creative forces

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33. The Hsi-tz'u, A:10, says: "An opening and closing [of the doors of creation] is called pien 變. Going (cycling) back and forth inexhaustibly is called t'ung 通."

The Hsi-tz'u, A:11, says: "There are no greater norm-setting hsiang (images, foreshadowings) than heaven and earth, and no greater inflections (pien 變) [in processes that turn back upon themselves to] maintain continuity throughout (t'ung) than the four seasons."

The Hsi-tz'u, A:12 says:

Moving along by means of the pushing [of the rigid and the pliant] is called t'ung.

See also, Hsi-tz'u, B:2.



emblemized by thunder and wind stir within the womb, but the female and male forces (water and fire) involved are not antagonistic.

The Hsi-tz'u, A:4, says:

Ching [and] ch'i become creatures.<sup>34</sup>

If I am correct, ching is the unspecific ch'i provided by the yin aspect of any process (what Porkert calls "structive potential"<sup>35</sup>), here it is the unspecific or following, compliant ch'i provided by earth; and ch'i is the specific, determinative ch'i provided by heaven. This would essentially conform with the ideas in the Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu discussed above, page 215.

The Hsi-tz'u, B:4, says:

Heaven and earth join their vital breaths (yin-yün 絪縕),<sup>36</sup> and the myriad creatures are perfected through their transformations (hua-ch'un 化醇); male and female join their [ch'i and] ching 精, and the myriad creatures arise by transformation (hua-sheng 化生).

Here there is clearly sexual congress on two levels, both involving the melding of yin and yang types of ch'i to produce the myriad creatures.

34. Chu Hsi says of this passage that the ching, which he characterizes as being yin, is the hun 魂 (animus); and the ch'i, which he characterizes as yang, is the p'o 魄 (anima). I believe that the inversion of gender is intentional, although it may seem strange. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 74:17b/27, and Nathan Sivin's discussion of the Chou-Yi ts'an-t'ung-ch'i in Joseph Needham's Science and Civilization in China, IV.1:230.

35. Cf. Manfred Porkert, The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine, p. 176f.

36. The term yin-yün is variously defined as the primal (yüan 元) ch'i of heaven and earth, or as the act of combination of yin and yang ch'i.

## 11. "Falling" Into Immanence

A much clearer picture of the ch'i-constitution of a human being emerges from the Huai-nan-tzu, 3:1a/19:

Heaven (seen here as the ultimate source of all being) falls (to 墜, i.e., descends into proto-immanence) as the formless. Fleeting, fluttering, penetrating, amorphous it is, and so it is called the Supreme Luminary. The tao begins in the Void Brightening. The Void Brightening produces the universe (yü-chou 宇宙). The universe produces ch'i. Ch'i has bounds. The clear, yang [ch'i] was ethereal and so formed heaven. The heavy, turbid [ch'i] was congealed and impeded and so formed earth. The conjunction of the clear, yang [ch'i] was fluid and easy. The congelation of the heavy, turbid [ch'i] was strained and difficult. So heaven was formed first and earth was made fast later.

The pervading essence (hsi-ching 絪縕) of heaven and earth becomes yin and yang. The concentrated (chuan 專) essences of yin and yang become the four seasons. The dispersed (san 散) essences of the four seasons become the myriad creatures. The hot ch'i of yang in accumulating produces fire. The essence (ching 精) of the fire-ch'i becomes the sun. The cold ch'i of yin in accumulating produces water. The essence of the water-ch'i becomes the moon. The essences produced by coitus (yin 淫) of the sun and moon become the stars and celestial markpoints (ch'en 辰, planets).

The first sentence of this passage introduces "to 墜," a term whose correct explanation is important to understanding the metaphysics of Chu Hsi. "T'ien to wei hsing 天墜未形" (literally, heaven fell unformed) does not mean that there was already a "formless something" waiting for heaven to "fall into," but rather that when heaven's creative impulse is first expressed the nascent being that results is without form. The development of the universe as we know it is next traced through several stages arriving before long at ch'i, which is

finite, and (implicitly) proceeding then to the separation of ch'i into its ethereal and gross fractions that compromise the empirical heaven (sky) and earth. Heaven and earth each evolve ch'i proper to them, which are yang and yin in character. Further differentiation of these ch'i produces the seasons and the myriad creatures as well as fire, water, sun, moon, stars, and planets.

At 3:1b/19, the Huai-nan-tzu says that heaven spews out its ch'i and earth envelops with its ch'i, so that heaven donates (shih 施) ch'i to conceive and earth transforms (hua 化) [itself(?)] to give life to creatures:

The tao (way) of heaven is called round. The tao of earth is called square. What is square is the salient characteristic of darkness. What is round is the salient characteristic of brightness. What is bright spews out ch'i. For this reason fire is called the external aspect (wai ching 外景). What is dark [gathers and] contains (han 含) ch'i. For this reason water is called the internal aspect (nei ching 內景).<sup>37</sup> What spews forth ch'i donates (i.e., is the ch'i donor<sup>38</sup>); what [gathers and] contains ch'i [bears and] transforms. Thus yang is the donor and yin is the transformer.

The Huai-nan-tzu, 7:1a/13, recounts the myth of two gods who had been born fused together but who split to form yin and yang, and then:

separated to become the eight extremes (chi 極, directions of the compass). Rigid (hard) and flexible (soft) brought each to

37. Fire manifests its activity by radiating light and heat. Water manifests its activity by absorbing them.

38. "Donates" (shih 施) is used to refer to the emission of vital essence during intercourse. See the Lun-heng, 11:11a/22, where it says that in shih ch'i 施氣 during intercourse, a man's motive is not to produce offspring.

completion, whereupon the myriad creatures took form. The unrefined (fan 煩) ch'i became animals, and the refined (ching 精) ch'i became human beings. For this reason the spirit (ching-shen 精神) belongs to heaven, and the bones and body belong to earth.

The two gods mentioned "built heaven and earth" before they split into yin and yang. Rigid and flexible (kang 剛 and jou 柔) were derived from yin and yang, and the myriad creatures were further derived from the rigid and flexible. Within them there is spirit, which comes from heaven, and bones and body, which come from earth. Taking the foregoing with the passage at 3:1b/19 mentioned above, the idea seems to be that part of heaven is somehow ejected to form man's spirit, and then earth envelops this part to form man's body. So the kang (or yang) aspect of a man is his spirit, and the jou (or yin) aspect is his body. As already explained above, primal unity is sundered to create heaven and earth, which then recombine to create a higher, synthetic unity from which evolve the myriad creatures. Each of the myriad creatures is a unity, but each retains a heaven aspect and an earth aspect. It is not entirely clear from this passage how the Huai-nan-tzu's account is to be reconciled with the ordinary facts of human reproduction. Perhaps the belief was that, at least after the original creation of human beings, they acted as the agents of heaven and earth and transmitted the creative powers of those primal parents so that new life could be produced from old. The text does not explicitly state that kang and jou combine, or how they might combine, but it says clearly that the spirit belongs to heaven (the yang or kang aspect), and the body belongs to earth (the yin or jou aspect). The spirit is presumably contained within the body like "millet and the rice in a bag." {Lun, 20: 10a/16}

The Huai-nan-tzu, 7:1b/13, explains further:

Now the spirit is what is received from heaven, and the form and body are what are endowed by earth. Thus it is said [in the Lao-tzu, 42]: "The one produces the two. The two produce the three. The three produce the myriad creatures.<sup>39</sup> The myriad creatures bear<sup>40</sup> yin and enfold yang, agitating [their] ch'i [during sexual intercourse] to make a harmony [of yin and yang phases]. Thus it is said: "In the first month a jelly, in the second month a swelling, in the third month a fetus (t'ai 胎), in the fourth month flesh, in the fifth month muscle, in the sixth month bones, in the seventh month completion, in the eighth month motion, in the ninth month agitation, in the tenth month birth. The form and the body being already complete, the "five storehouses" (internal organs and their functions) take form."

Note that it is yin, the earthly, that is borne outwardly, and yang, the heavenly, that is enfolded. The body is composed of both yin and yang ch'i, and when the five "storehouses" of ch'i (internal organs) take form they then are concerned with specific functions of specific ch'i.

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39. There are several interpretations of "one," "two," and "three." "One" is generally taken to refer to the tao. "Two" may refer either to heaven and earth or to yin and yang. "Three" may refer to heaven, earth, and human beings, to the combination of heaven and earth, or to the ch'i produced by their combination. For "ch'ung 中" meaning "to agitate," see Chiang Hsi-ch'ang, Lao-tzu chiao ku, pp. 280f.

40. They "bear" yin in the sense that they "carry it on their backs." In this passage, "to bear" seems to connote being encloaked by, whereas "enfolding" connotes concealment within.

## 12. Return to Transcendence

The Huai-nan-tzu advocates spiritual development by controlling one's point of attention -- preventing the attention's being directed outward. This is to be done by returning the ch'i of heaven and earth found within the body to their proper resting places, that is, to the "storehouses" or "tsang." Returning them to the tsang is tantamount to returning them to their sources, and this permits them to communicate with the great unity, and ultimately with the tao of heaven, which is presumably their ultimate source. The Huai-nan-tzu, 9:1b/24, says:

Now if the eye looks in a undisciplined manner, then one will become depraved. If the ear listens in a loose manner then one will become deluded (huo 惑). If the mouth speaks in a loose manner then one's speech will be incoherent. [So] these three border passes (kuan 關 -- the eyes, ears, and mouth, which are the interface between a human being and the outer world) must be carefully guarded.

[Yet] if one should try to regulate them, one would in so doing distance oneself from them,

If one should try to embellish them, one would in so doing do injury to them.

The ch'i of heaven is the animus (hun 魂), and the ch'i of earth is the anima (p'o 魄).

They are to be returned to the occult chambers (probably tsang or "storehouses" are meant here), so that each resides in its [proper] dwelling place

And is protected without loss. [So] they will communicate with the t'ai-yi 太一 (great unity) above.<sup>41</sup>

41. The Huai-nan-tzu, 14:1a/13, defines the t'ai-yi as follows: "The all-pervading unity of heaven and earth, while chaos (hun-t'un 混沌) was still an uncarved block and before creatures had been formed, is called t'ai-yi."

The essence (ching 精) of the great unity communicates and unites with the tao (way) of heaven.

The tao of heaven is occult and silent, having neither [describable] countenance nor [discernible] design (tse 貝).

It is so great that it cannot be exceeded, and so deep that it cannot be fathomed.

It always transforms (hua 化) along with human beings, <sup>42</sup> [yet] knowledge of it cannot be obtained.

The hun (animus) is related to the spirit, and the p'o (anima) is related to the body. So by affirming that "the ch'i of heaven is the animus, and the ch'i of earth is the anima," this passage comes very close to affirming that the ch'i of heaven forms man's spirit and the ch'i of earth forms his body. In the Po-hu-t'ung 白虎通, compiled in 79 A.D., the special name for ch'i of the denser sort that forms the body is chih.<sup>43</sup> Should someone take this equation to interpret this passage in the Huai-nan-tzu, he would have in embryo the idea of the ch'i-chih constitution of human beings that was so important to Sung Confucianism. The Sung Confucians too sought to control the senses to avoid the tendencies toward immoral behavior that they believed indulgence in the senses would produce. Although the specific means advocated to control the senses and rejoin the source of being (and value) are different, the goal of cosmic and personal integrity is not fundamentally different.

The Huai-nan-tzu gives further indications of the general Chinese view of the structure of what we should call the mind. Man is a microcosm. The

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42. The tao in its immanent aspect is the totality of all being. So if something in the universe changes, the immanent tao must be said to transform "in response" to the alteration of its "parts."

43. See below, p. 251.

Huai-nan-tzu, 7:2a/13, says:

Thus the ears and eyes are [comparable to] the sun and the moon. The hsüeh (blood) and ch'i (breath) are [comparable to] the rain and the wind.

When the Huai-nan-tzu speaks of the hsüeh and the ch'i, it means the ordinary blood and breath of the body, but in Chinese thought these are never inert fluids. A characteristic activity of blood and breath was to make an individual behave in a certain way. One aspect of the nature of hsüeh and ch'i was fluidity (one of them being a liquid and the other a gas), and another aspect was what we in modern times would call energy in the everyday, nonscientific sense -- bearing in mind that although energy is an abstract concept, the corresponding Chinese notion was not separated from hsüeh and ch'i.

The Huai-nan-tzu, 8:11a/12, says:

The hsing (nature) of man [is such that] when he is offended he becomes enraged. When he is enraged then his blood (hsüeh) fills [his body]. When his blood fills [his body] then his breath (ch'i) is aroused. When his breath is aroused, then he vents his rage. When his rage is vented he is released from his hatred.

It is fairly clear that what is being depicted here is the pounding of the blood in the arteries and veins, and the increased respiration of a furious



person.<sup>44</sup> The author of the Huai-nan-tzu believes that blood is linked to breath in such a way that a change in the blood (the blood rushing to fill the blood vessels making them stand out and pound) produces a change in the breath (increased respiration). This suggests that an yin-yang relationship was posited to exist between blood and breath such that blood was considered the yin phase of the yang breath. That is, blood undergoes a phase-change to become ch'i. Thus when blood is mobilized more ch'i is produced by such a phase change. In modern Chinese, to become angry is to "produce ch'i" (sheng ch'i 生氣).

The Huai-nan-tzu, 1:16af/17, says:

The form (hsing 形) is the domicile of life. Ch'i is what fills life. The spirit is what governs life. . . . [Why can the person perform various functions?] Because ch'i fills [the entire person] and the spirit directs [the entire person].

This passage seems to present life as having three aspects: the physical form that contains life, the ch'i that resides within the body and vivifies it, and the spirit that gives direction to the entire being through the ch'i.

The Huai-nan-tzu, 7:2b/13, says:

The blood and breath are the efflorescences (hua 華) of man, and the five storehouses (internal organs) are his ching (the purest part, or, as discussed on p. 219, the unspecified ch'i provided by the yin or negative-tending side of a process). Now if the blood and breath can be concentrated in the five storehouses

44. David H. Funkenstein, "The Physiology of Fear and Anger," in Psychobiology, the Biological Bases of Behavior, p. 193, quotes from Walter B. Cannon's The Wisdom of the Body concerning reactions to pain, rage, or fear: "Respiration deepens; the heart beats more rapidly; the arterial pressure rises . . ."

(internal organs) and [be prevented from] spilling over to the outside, then the chest and belly will be filled and desires will be diminished. When chest and belly are filled and desires are diminished, then the ears and eyes will be clear and hearing and vision will be acute. For the ears and eyes to be clear and hearing and vision to be acute is called "clarity" (ming 明, enlightenment). If the five internal systems of function (storehouses) can be subordinated to the hsin (heart, mind, one of the five storehouses or systems of function) without contrariness, then upsurges of ambition will be overcome and behavior will not be deviant. When upsurges of ambition are overcome and behavior is not deviant, then spirit (ching-shen 精神) will be abundant and ch'i will not disperse. When spirit is abundant and ch'i does not disperse, then there will be order (li 理). When there is order, then there will be equability. When there is equability then there will be contact (t'ung) [with higher sources of power, the primal sources of ch'i, i.e., the way of heaven (t'ien-tao 天道)]. When there is contact, then one will be god[like] (shen 神). When one is god[like], then nothing remains unseen when one looks, nothing remains unheard when one listens, and nothing remains unaccomplished when one acts. For this reason, melancholy and suffering will not be able to enter, and malevolent ch'i will not be able to invade.

The term "ching 精" used in this passage is puzzling. The words "ching" and "hua" appear at the same point in grammatically parallel sentences, a clear implication that they are related. But what is the nature of the relation? The word "ching" has as its basic meaning the winnowed grain free of the chaff, and hence it is usually translated as "pure," "refined," or "essence." In this instance it may connote the nutritive substance found in such grain, and hence indicate a substrate from which blood and breath evolve. In that case when the text advocates concentrating the blood and breath in the five storehouses or

internal organs it really means for the efflorescences to be transmuted back to the substrata from which they originally sprang. This would certainly seem adequate to explain their not being wasted by spilling over to the outside. Whether the efflorescences, blood and breath, are phases of one another, or whether they work somehow in tandem is also not clear.

"Ching-shen 精神" is also an unclear term. The word "ching" is the same as that above, but the referent is apparently not the same. I suspect, but have as yet no way of proving, that the "ching" of "ching-shen" refers to seminal fluid, whereas the "shen" of that term refers to what we would call spirit. Both are generative and creative in nature, and it may have been that the early Chinese imagined a connection between the two, believing that the dissipation of one's physical energies foretold a decline in one's mental energies. About two hundred years later, ch'i was said to be bestowed (shih 施) by a male upon the female in intercourse (See the Lun-heng, 11:11a/22). Here, abundant ching-shen is linked to the non-dispersion of ch'i. This association of ideas strengthens the possibility that ching may be seminal fluid. There may be a three-way relationship between ching, shen, and ch'i, but I am not confident that I have understood the author's intention properly. If this passage is indeed talking about sexual continence, then it is in the general tradition of sexual hygiene, the argument being that conservation of seminal fluid preserves a high level of the endowed ch'i. This ch'i, which is not dispersed, must be unified, or perhaps integrated, and therefore should be very close to unity with the universe, and thereby to the tao from which all power and actualized being flows.

In summary, the Huai-nan-tzu appears to be saying this: The tao is supersensible and unbounded, the source of all being as we know it. It produces ch'i, which by its very nature is spatially limited and imparts limitations to all beings that flow from it or are composed of it. This primordial ch'i separates into lighter and heavier fractions. The lighter form heaven, and the heavier earth. Heaven and earth have, in turn, their most characteristic parts or essences, which are yang and yin. Yin and yang are dispersed and present in all things, but they are also concentrated and apparent in the four seasons. This concentration is a temporal one. If yang is spatially concentrated we call it fire, and the purest portion of this spatial concentration of yang we call the sun. Similarly, the yin gives us water and the moon.

Once having separated, heaven and earth can interact to produce the first creatures. (Thereafter, except for cases of what we would call spontaneous generation, the creatures reproduce themselves.) To create the first beings, in each instance of creation heaven emitted its yang ch'i so that it interacted with earth. Earth responded by emitting its yin ch'i, which enveloped the yang ch'i of heaven and formed a mantle around it.<sup>45</sup> The enveloped yang ch'i formed the ching-shen or spirit of the creature, and the enveloping yin ch'i became its body. At birth a creature is not fully integrated, i.e., it does not mirror the primordial unity from which sprang heaven and earth. But if the various endowed ch'i of the body can be kept from disruptive influences and thereby concentrated (unified or integrated), then this microcosmic unity can communicate with and join the cosmic unity, and ultimately attain to the

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45. The Lun-heng, 22:15b/15, says: "Yin ch'i produces [the body] as bones and flesh. Yang ch'i directs (chu 主) [it] as ching-shen 精神 (spirit)."

primordial tao and share its infinitude and power. Thus the microcosm becomes fully constituted, resulting in a greater synthesis of macrocosm and microcosm. This is essentially what Chu Hsi was to teach more than a thousand years later.

### 13. Wang Ch'ung Questioned What Causes Ch'i to Take the Forms it Does

Wang Ch'ung is the last thinker to be studied in regard to ch'i in order to prepare the way for understanding the Sung thinkers. Much of what Wang Ch'ung has to say about the constitution of human beings centers around controversies about the reality of ghosts. According to the Lun-heng, it was believed that the ch'i of heaven makes ghosts and spirits. It is said that heaven conceives a human being's body, and so it can make an semblance (hsiang 象) of man's appearance that is non-corporeal, an apparition or phantom. It is further specifically affirmed that yin ch'i forms a human being's body, and yang ch'i forms its spirit. Then yang ch'i by itself is what makes spirits. {22:25b/25} So heaven apparently can make a real being with its yang ch'i in cooperation with earth, or it can make an apparition of a human being independently. Lacking earth's contribution, such a being is not substantial. This shows clearly the nature of the contribution of heaven to a human being's production.

The Lun-heng states that the responsive (ling 應) ch'i is in the hsin. {16:6b/14} This observation reinforces the idea already seen that the heart (a "storehouse") contains a ch'i that is specifically concerned with the functions of mind.

Wang Ch'ung introduced the idea of primal ch'i (yüan-ch'i 元氣) and indicated that the quantity of this primal ch'i received by an individual

determines how good he is, i.e., it determines his hsing.<sup>46</sup> So all degrees and kinds of hsing are possible. The Lun-heng, 2:14b/19, says:

The good and evil of human beings [are due to] their having concretely present the one primal ch'i. Ch'i may be more or less, therefore the hsing may be worthy (hsien 賢) or unworthy (yü 愚).

He also introduced the idea (which he attributed to Tung Chung-shu) that the human hsing comes from yang ch'i and his ch'ing (feelings, motivations) come from yin ch'i. {3:14b/22} This doctrine practically amounts to the idea that the spirit of man is received from heaven and the body of man is received from earth. It prepares the way for the doctrine that the ch'ing of man is yin and the cause of evil, being derived from earth which is feminine and therefore morally inferior. The hsing of a human is yang and the cause of good, being derived from heaven, which is masculine and therefore morally superior.

In explanation of the production of things by heaven and earth, the Lun-heng says that heaven gives off its ch'i which consolidates (wo 握) and falls as rain. {6:15b/20} Rain is likened to semen. {25:9a/15} Cosmic production is likened to human reproduction. {11:6bf/22} Heaven dispenses ch'i to earth, and humans in turn reproduce themselves. {3:21a/22}

Wang Ch'ung further relates the cosmic to the human by maintaining that humans are endowed (ping 稟) with the ch'i of the five constants (wu-ch'ang 五常, benevolence, sense of right and wrong, sense of ritual, wisdom, and trustworthiness). {3:15b/22, 13:10a/17} This correspondence established between the cosmic and human relates the moral nature (hsing) of man to the five phases (wu-hsing 五行). He elucidates the relation between ch'i and the human body as

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46. See Alfred Forke, Lun-Heng, I:34f, 97, and 381.

analogous to the relation between a fire and its fuel, i.e., the body is the fuel and the ch'i is the flame. {20:10a/16, 20:11b/16}

By the end of the Han the use of the concept ch'i to explain the nature and fate of man and the constitution of things of the world was already widely accepted and fully developed. But so far the question of why a particular creature developed as itself and not as some other creature had not been given much consideration.

Wang Ch'ung said:

The endowment of ch'i rests with heaven, and the establishment of form rests with earth. [One can] examine the forms that are found on earth in order to know the mandate that is in heaven. {3:8b/22}

The development of this idea, using the concept li (t'ai-chi) to answer the question of what manner of thing this mandate is, occupied the considerable energies of the philosophers of the Sung dynasty, and of Chu Hsi in particular.

### 13. Influence of the Lieh-tzu on Later Cosmological Ideas

The Lieh-tzu is another important source concerning ch'i. Unfortunately, the time of composition of this text is in doubt. I treat it here since a date earlier than Wei-Chin times cannot be proven.<sup>47</sup> The Lieh-tzu, 1:3af/18, says:

Since what has form is produced from what has no form, from what could heaven and earth be produced? So it is said: "There was the great change (yi 易), there was the great inception

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47. For a comprehensive study on dating this book, see A. C. Graham's "The Date and Composition of Liehtzyy," Asia Major, n.s. VIII, 2 (1961), 139-198.

(ch'u 初), there was the great beginning (shih 始), and there was the primal stuff (su 素)." [At the stage of] the great yi, [ch'i] had not yet appeared. The great inception was the the beginning of form (hsing 形). The great primal stuff was the beginning of corporeal being (chih 質). Because ch'i, form, and corporeal being were all present but had as yet not separated [into distinct beings], this [stage] was called hun-lun 渾淪 (the undifferentiated). "Hun-lun" means the myriad creatures were all undifferentiated and had not yet separated from one another.

Gaze at it and it cannot be seen, listen for it and it cannot be heard, pursue it and it cannot be obtained; therefore it is called yi (change, here obviously substituted for the word "tao" in this paraphrase from the Lao-tzu, 14, under the influence of the Hsi-tz'u appendix). The yi is without form. It changes (pien 變) and becomes one. One changes and becomes nine. The change of nine (chiu 九) goes as far as possible (chiu 究), so it again changes and becomes one. One is the beginning of changes in form.<sup>48</sup>

The pure and light ascended and became heaven. The turbid and heavy descended and became earth. The harmonious blend (ch'ung 中)<sup>49</sup> of [these two] became men. So when heaven and earth enfold seminal essence (ching 精), the myriad creatures are spontaneously produced through transformation (hua-sheng 化生).

The middle paragraph seems to break up the discussion in the first and third paragraphs. The Lieh-tzu, 1:9b/17, also says:

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48. An instance of "folk etymology" is used here to explain why the number nine should be indicative of imminent change. The word for nine is a homonym for the word meaning "to go as far as possible." For the author, the similarity of sounds implies a commonality of meanings. Also, 9 is the last number in the denary number system.

49. "Ch'ung" means "to agitate, to shake" and by extension "to blend, a blend."



The spirit (ching-shen 精神) is the part [obtained from] heaven, and the bones and body (ku-hai 骨骸) are the parts [obtained from] earth. What belongs to heaven is pure and dispersive. What belongs to earth is turbid and accumulative (chü 聚). When the spirits depart from the form (i.e., body), they each return (kuei 歸) to their true domiciles. Therefore they are called ghosts (kuei 鬼).<sup>50</sup> "Ghost" means "return," that is, what returns to its true domicile. The Yellow Emperor says: "When the spirit enters its door, and the bones and body return to their roots, what will remain of me?"

These passages contain several ideas that became accepted parts of the cosmology of later Chinese thinkers. The first paragraph relates ch'i (vital breath) to chih (corporeal being). These two terms formed the binome "ch'i-chih" in Sung times. It is important to see that ch'i and chih can coexist, thus suggesting that the term "ch'i-chih" does not simply mean chih formed out of ch'i.<sup>51</sup> The third paragraph contains the idea that primal ch'i divided into lighter and heavier fractions that separated to become heaven and earth, and rejoin in harmonious proportions to become men. The last paragraph clearly states that heaven provides man's spirit and earth man's corporeal body. These ideas are all fundamental to Sung Confucian teachings regarding the nature of human beings. The Lieh-tzu does not, however, link the discussion of ch'i and chih directly to the internal constitution of human beings.

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50. This definition is another instance of folk-etymology. The implication is that the name for ghost derives from the word "to return" because the two words are homonyms.

51. In the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 94:14b/49, Chu Hsi says: "Ch'i is ch'i, and chih is chih. It is not proper to speak imprecisely [about them]."

In Sung times, the concept of ch'i was firmly linked both to the concept of li and to the concept of chih. The discussion of ch'i cannot be continued into the Sung until the groundwork is provided for understanding the concept of chih.<sup>52</sup>

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52. For more information on the topic of ch'i in the philosophy of Chang Tsai, see Ōshima Akira's "Chō Ōkyo no 'taikyo soku ki' ron ni tsuite," Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō, XXVII, 113-128.

## VIII. LI AND CH'I

The concepts of li and ch'i being far removed from the European and American reader's usual patterns of thought, it may be helpful to try to show how the two concepts came into relation with each other even though this attempt necessarily involves repeating much that has already been stated above. Originally the two had no connection. The li or pattern aspect of a thing or process was simply acknowledged to exist. The ch'i aspect or actuality of a thing was likewise simply acknowledged to exist. The theories, or at least sets of ideas, that employed these two concepts were separate. It did not occur to anyone before the Sung dynasty to use these two concepts to explain each other.

### 1. How to Explain Forms Taken by Ch'i?

Although the Lun-heng suggests that there is a ming 命 (mandate) in heaven that calls forth the various forms assumed by ch'i in its consolidated form, it was not until Wang Pi that ming was virtually linked with li.<sup>1</sup> Then it became possible to think of li, rather than ming, as the entity that calls forth the various forms assumed by ch'i. The theoretical relation between li and ch'i did not assume its full form immediately, however. It was not until the time of the Sung Confucians that the nature of the relation posited to exist between li and ch'i was fully articulated.

In my study of li I have tried to demonstrate how the concept of li developed from the idea of patterns in specific things or events, to larger patterns existing among things or affairs but still subject to empirical

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1. See the Hsiang commentary to the Yi-ching, sixth hexagram, line four. See also, Ch'ien Mu's article on li in the Hsin-ya hsüeh-pao, I, 1 (1955), p. 137, and Wing-tsit Chan's Neo-Confucianism, Etc., p. 57.

investigation (such as the recurring pattern of the seasons, the regularities in the movements of celestial phenomena), to a total pattern embracing all things in their organic connections through both space and time and so vast that it could only be perceived through the imagination, and finally to the connections among all things on a transcendent as well as ordinary level, a pattern that included the history of creation from the primal unity to yin and yang and then down to the intricacies of structure of individual beings. The latter kind of li may be used to answer Chuang-tzu's question about what blows the pipes of heaven. The connections among all things proceeding from a transcendent level are most commonly explained in terms of the ramifications of yin and yang into the four images, the four images into the eight trigrams, and so forth down to the intricacies of structure of individual things. As one passes from the concrete and particular to the more abstract and general, then to what all things have in common on the metaphysical level, and finally to the transcendent, the li are found to be less and less easily available to empirical investigation, more and more to be seen through a process of abstraction and synthesis, and finally to transcend our senses altogether so that they can only be regarded as non-phenomenal, approachable only through intuitive or

meditative processes.<sup>2</sup> In other words, viewed cosmogonically, the ultimate li is transcendent and is pure potential. As pure potential, it "already" has regularities (hsin 信) within it. The Lao-tzu, chapter 21, says of that tao that "it is impalpable and intangible. While impalpable and intangible, there are yet hsiang 象 (images, foreshadowings) within; while intangible and impalpable there are yet things within." Thus it can become actualized only in accord with its own nature. "The tao models itself on what is spontaneously so." [Lao, 25] The first phenomenal order of actualization, based on the theories derived from the Yi-ching, is yin and yang, both of which aspects are shared in some measure by all phenomenal being. The second order is the four hsiang

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2. At least as early as the Chuang-tzu, there appears to have been the belief that certain aspects of reality could be approached through meditative practices leading to paranormal states of consciousness. There is, for example, the story of the maker of bell-stands who prepared himself rigorously for each expedition into the forest to seek an already perfectly-formed bell-stand (see the Chuang-tzu, 19:54/76, and page 201 above). But he did not see the li of trees in the forest. Rather, he saw their t'ien-hsing 天性, their heavenly natures. As far as I have been able to determine, until the advent of Buddhism the word "li" always applied to patterns that could be perceived in normal states of consciousness. Before the advent of Buddhism, "li" was used to apply to some patterns that could be seen at a glance, and to others that were so spread out through space or time that like Han Fei's elephant they could be comprehended only in the imagination or in the abstract. The Buddhists used "li" to refer to the content of a paranormal state of consciousness as early as the first Buddhist text translated into Chinese, the Ssu-shih-erh chang ching [Sutra in forty-two sections]. Kuo Hsiang was the first to use the word in non-Buddhist writing to apply to something that might be experienced only in a paranormal state of consciousness.

which are perceptible but impalpable and intangible, and so on until the most concrete actualizations are produced. These too must have their li aspects.

## 2. Development of Theories of Ch'i

The theories concerning ch'i developed independently of those concerning li, until the Sung dynasty. Before then the theories of ch'i were by far the more elaborate. The same concept, ch'i, was used to explain the macrocosm and the microcosm and their connection. According to Chinese belief, ch'i is the vital breath that animates both the universe and human beings and other creatures. The universe was formed by the separation of the one primal ch'i into a lighter fraction that became heaven and a heavier fraction that became earth, both of which form a higher synthesis. The heaven-aspect and the earth-aspect of this synthesis each emanate a ch'i characteristic of itself.

So too, human beings were believed to be formed by the combination of a lighter fraction, obtained from heaven, which formed his mental aspect (primarily conceived in moral terms) and which performed his mental functions, and a heavier fraction, obtained from earth, which formed his physical aspect.<sup>3</sup> The endowment of a particular kind of ch'i determined a particular temperament and character, but this ch'i was considered to be mutable under various environmental influences.

For some theorists, this ch'i, or at least the lighter, finer fraction of it, was identified with the spirit which itself was not exclusively identical with hsin or ch'ing. For other theorists, there were higher emanations of the two human ch'i (or perhaps finer fractions of each of the two kinds of human

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3. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 3:4bf/24.

ch'i) that corresponded to semen (ching 精, which is watery and therefore yin and physical or corporeal) and to the spirit (shen 神, which is invisible, yang, and mental).<sup>4</sup> Scholars theorized that the archetypal production of a human being (or other creature) was by the gathering and consolidation of ch'i. An effluence of ch'i from heaven called forth a complementary effluence of ch'i from earth. The specific nature of the ch'i of heaven determined entirely the specific nature of the ch'i of earth that flowed forth in answer it and gave that ch'i a physical form. The same process, at one remove, was carried out in human reproduction. The creature that resulted from the combination of the heavenly or masculine (yang) ch'i and the earthly or feminine (yin) ch'i was a unitary being with an yin pole and a yang pole.

Just as the universe was believed to have heaven as one pole and earth as another, with ch'i as a medium between them, so too, a human being had his hsin (heart, mind) as one pole and his flesh and bones as another pole, with ch'i as a medium between them. Thus a human being was not an immaterial soul living in a physical body, but a unity of polar opposites mediated by a semi-substantial ch'i that performed the energetic functions of the organism.

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4. N.B. What I have called "physical" and "mental" are polar opposites within a whole. Mind and body are united through the mediation of ch'i, not dichotomized as in some Western speculation. So "mind" and "body" are extremes bounding a continuum. For instance, sexual desire is "mental" in the view of most modern people, but it belonged to the grosser ch'i and not to the hsin for the pre-modern Chinese. In other words, it was somewhere along the continuum between "mind" and "body" and not at either extreme.

3. Li Supplants Ming.

In the Lun-heng, an anthropomorphic concept, the mandate of heaven, was used to explain how the same heavenly ch'i could produce different creatures. But later philosophers were not content with an anthropomorphic theory, and the question then arose: If there is not a will in heaven, like that of a human being, that determines the characteristics or natures of the various creatures, how does their differentiation occur, and what maintains regularity in this universe? The answer given was that li (patterns) are not merely present in this world as one aspect of its being, but that li transcends this world and as the t'ai-chi forms the ultimate and infinite, but non-capricious, potential for all being.

As pure potential, li might almost be identified with primal ch'i or the earlier "great void (t'ai-hsu 太虛, see the Chuang-tzu, 22:65/83). But ch'i was used to account for finitude as well as materiality. By being entirely without form or substance, transcendent li could be infinite. Because li is the potential for being, it spontaneously (tzu-jan) has the potentiality for movement and stillness, yang and yin, and so these are produced. But by the very fact that yin and yang are different, they are limited in one respect. There is a point of inflection between yin and yang, even though there is no discontinuity between them. At the same time that they are limited, they also come within human ken. They can be sensed and known, although direct and total knowledge of them is beyond ordinary human capacity.

Anything of which the words "yin" and "yang" can be predicated has both a li or formal aspect, and a ch'i or material aspect. Yin and yang are the most general non-transcendent li of things because they are the most general



categories of the distinctions that form patterns.<sup>5</sup> In the order of the production of the universe, yin ch'i and yang ch'i are the first and most basic ch'i. Anything that is yin or yang has finitude and actuality. In Sung times it was further argued that there was one li that transcends the world of ch'i and is pure potential. This li is called t'ai-chi.

As we shall see, the theories concerning li and those concerning ch'i were melded during Sung times. Li came to be seen not only as the transcendent source of order or pattern, but the transcendent source of ch'i and substantial things as well. As pure and transcendent potential, li was the latent source of order or pattern and ch'i.

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5. See Han Fei's definition of li given above, p. 110.

## IX. CHIH

Chih was a relatively unobtrusive concept in Chinese philosophy. Nevertheless, its history began with Confucius and came to theoretical climax with Chu Hsi. Since there is no near equivalent in Western languages, chih can be a deceptive concept for many. It became a crucially important concept when it was linked with the concept of ch'i to form the binome "ch'i-chih" during the Sung dynasty. Since it is a goal of this investigation to determine the meaning of "ch'i-chih chih hsing," it is vital to ascertain the correct understanding of the term "chih."

### 1. Basic Meanings

In the Analects of Confucius, the basic meanings of the word "chih" were already fairly well developed. The Analects, 6:18, says:

The Master said: "When chih exceeds ornamentation, then one will be uncouth; when ornamentation exceeds chih then one will be priggish. Only when ornamentation and chih are perfectly complementary can one be a [morally] noble man."

Chih is not quite the antithesis of ornamentation; rather it is something like unadorned material to which ornamentation is applied to form a useful and beautiful artifact. The morally noble man has a good constitution or nature that has been given an appropriate outer expression by the polite forms of culture.

The Analects, 15:18, says:

The [morally] noble man takes yi 義 (the sense of right and wrong) as his chih, and puts it into practice through li 禮 (propriety, sense of ritual).

Note that the morally noble man is someone who selects a certain aspect of human experience, the sense of right and wrong, and then deliberately makes use of it.

The passage in question states that this sense of right and wrong is taken as his chih, and that the morally noble man uses propriety to put the sense of right and wrong into practice. The decorum promoted by the sense of ritual or propriety would seem to be the "ornamentation" needed to complement the otherwise austere sense of right and wrong.

That chih is a substrate upon which work is done, and to which ornamentation is applied, comes out even more clearly in the Analects, 12:8:

Chi Tzu-ch'eng said: "A [morally] noble man [consists of] chih and nothing more. What role is there for ornamentation?"

Tzu-kung said: "How sad, Sir! You have said this about the [morally] noble man, but four horses could not catch up with your tongue! Ornamentation [should be] like chih, and chih [should be] like ornamentation (i.e., they should suit each other). The prepared hides of tigers and leopards [without their fur] are [indistinguishable from] the prepared hides of dogs and sheep."

Embellishment does not necessarily involve any change in the substrate. The two should be appropriate to each other. But it does not follow that chih is immutable. In this passage there is implicit the further idea of something (the fur) that grows from, and takes its support from, something else (the skin). This relationship suggests the idea of "substrate," which I believe is the most appropriate translation for "chih."

The idea of chih as a substrate out of which something higher is produced, which then rests on that substrate, is expressed even more clearly in the Chuang-tzu, 15:8/22:

Now placidity, blandness, tranquility, and silence, void indeterminacy, and action that does not go against the tao -- these constitute the undisturbed state of the world and the chih of moral power (tao-te 道德.).

Moral power, power acquired by being attuned to the tao, rests on one's placidity, blandness, tranquility, and silence, for this state of mind permits one to be unified with the tao. I believe American and European readers will be inclined by their habitual patterns of thought to cast this argument into the form of the preconditions necessary for the development of moral power, or the source from which moral power may derive. We tend to assume a kind of linear, "billiard ball" causality: first there is "Event A" and following it there is "Event B." One man pulls the trigger of a gun and another man dies. This view of causality is based primarily on situations in which human volition is involved. The Chinese account of the production of certain states, such as the possession of moral power, does not follow the Western model to affirm that at some time the individual was subjected to certain stimuli that turned him into that kind of person. Rather it follows the model of a given animal's body producing a coat appropriate to it. Those in the European tradition might follow their typical idea of causality to explain the formation of clouds by saying that the rays of the sun fall upon water, impart energy to it so that it vaporizes, and so forth. They concentrate their attention on the triggering stimulus and virtually ignore the various preconditions such as the existence of the body of water. The pre-modern Chinese approach exemplified here concentrates on the phase-change relation between the body of water and the

vapor formed from it and virtually ignores the contribution of the sun.<sup>1</sup> Now the word "chih" refers, in any situation that fits this model, to the gross, more corporeal, phase, and the word "ch'i" can be used to refer to the more ethereal phase. Some English word that would convey this meaning of the word "chih" is clearly desirable. Failing to one, I have chosen "substrate," which I define as "a part, substance, element, etc. which lies beneath and supports another,"<sup>2</sup> as the best compromise.

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1. The Chinese had no concept of energy before adopting the Western scientific conceptual model: Energy was never abstracted from the things of the world. Fire burns simply because that is its hsing, not because of a change of potential energy to kinetic energy in gasses during an intense chemical reaction. The current Chinese term for "energy" is "neng 能," which is short for "neng-li 力 ." As late as the time of writing of the K'ang-hsi Dictionary (compiled in 1716), "neng" did not have this meaning. Prior to the adoption of Western scientific ideas, "ch'i" was the explanatory concept par excellence for things in the realm of daily experience. Fire burns because it is a fiery ch'i. No distinction is made between the "substance" ch'i and the energy it bears. Therefore "ch'i" has frequently been confused with our idea of energy, or worse -- considering the current technical meaning of the term -- "matter-energy." By some quirk of fate, "matter-energy" as we mean the term is a true chih and ch'i pair -- matter can transform into energy and energy can transform into matter. But as W. T. Chan uses "matter-energy" it merely means that Chinese thinkers using their original conceptual scheme did not distinguish what we call "matter" from energies found associated with it. (By "matter" I mean matter as conceived by those with an understanding of classical physics. "Energy" refers to kinetic, potential, and other forms of energy described in classical physics.) The Chinese confused two kinds of phenomena rather than distinguishing them clearly and then discovering a hidden equivalence between them.

2. I base my definition on Websters New World Dictionary of the American Language, first definition of "substratum," which is a synonym for "substrate."

The Chuang-tzu, 23:63/78, says:

Permit me to attempt to explain "shifting affirmation:" Affirmation is rooted in [one's own] life, and takes [so-called] knowledge as its exemplar. Because affirmation and denial are employed; therefore there are names and their [so-called] referents. [Both the acts of affirmation and denial] take oneself as chih.

Chuang-tzu is saying that, if rid of the self and its subjective powers of affirmation and denial, we would be spared the confusion of the true and false predication of names. There being a self, affirmation and denial spontaneously flow from it.

## 2. Chih Not Necessarily a "Material"

That chih is not necessarily a material out of which something else is made is clearly shown by the following passage from the Chuang-tzu, 24:50/110:

Carpenter Shih said: "I once could chop [a smudge from the nose of a person with my ax], but my chih has been dead for a long time [now]."

What Carpenter Shih needed for the performance of his feat was not a smudged nose, which surely could have been easily found, but an imperturbable person who could stand perfectly immobile while Carpenter Shih swung his ax. That imperturbable person was not to be worked upon by the ax; quite the contrary.<sup>3</sup> So the word "chih" cannot be interpreted here as "raw material" in the ordinary sense, since raw materials are designated as things taken to be reshaped into something else. "Chih" means rather the substrate or foundation for some other

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3. Burton Watson (The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu, 269), as well as other eminently qualified sinologists, would probably disagree.

activity, and in this case the chih required is the friend. The crucial aspect of the required chih is imperturbability like that of the friend in the face of a swinging axhead. A different chih would produce various ch'i manifestations, such as violent trembling, that would interfere with the performance of the feat. A person of a particular kind is needed.

In the Hsün-tzu, chih appears as innate intellectual capacities or the substrates for such capacities as the awareness of benevolence, the sense of right and wrong, and so forth. The Hsün-tzu, 23:62/94, says:

The common people all have the chih by which they can recognize benevolence, right and wrong, lawfulness, and uprightness.

The Hsün-tzu also indicates that this chih can be transformed through persistent practice and custom, thereby anticipating the Sung Confucian interest in the transformation of ch'i-chih. The Hsün-tzu, 8:109/128, says:

The hsing (nature) is not something that one can make by intention, but it can be transformed. The accumulation<sup>4</sup> [of practice] is not something that I have [initially], but it can be produced through intention. The employment (chu-ts'o 注錯) of practice and custom is how the hsing is transformed. Singleness [of purpose] without fail is how accumulation [of practice] is achieved. Practice and custom can change one's aspirations, and

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4. I read 情 as 積 with the T'ang dynasty commentary by Yang Liang 楊倞. The text as it stands would mean that emotions are produced only through intention, i.e., that one always chooses what one will feel. But human beings have problems, according to Hsün-tzu, because they have spontaneous feelings that they must learn to govern by exercising their rationality. I believe the Chinese character in question was distorted at some point in the transmission of the Hsün-tzu from one copyist to another.

persisting in them for a long time can change one's chih. Singleness without fail [permits one to] make contact with the spirits and form a trine with heaven and earth.

If one merely judges by the immediate context of these remarks, one would be inclined to translate "chih" as "character," or perhaps "character structure." But it would be premature to assume that this chih that can be transformed is only a habit or set of habits, or to assume that what is to be changed consists only of insubstantial memories.<sup>5</sup> The later history of Chinese psychology makes it seem that most Chinese did not make a mind-body dichotomy. If what we in the European tradition call the mind, or any part of it, changes, then what we call the body must also change. To most Chinese thinkers, the difference between mind and body would seem to have been only aspective.

#### 4. Chih Sometimes Equated with Corporeal Being

In a passage quoted above in the section on ch'i, the Lieh-tzu, 1:3/17, suggests that imperceptible ch'i is followed by perceptible form

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5. We of the European tradition automatically assume a division between what is physical and what is not. We may call this "non-physical" part "mental," "spiritual," etc. If there is no such division, if there is a gradation from the gross forms of being such as flesh and bones, to the finest forms of being, such as "spirit" (ching-shen 精神) or "mind" (hsin), then any change in a human being involves a change somewhere in this continuum. If what we in Europe and America call the mind changes, then simply because there is no dichotomy between mind and not-mind in the traditional Chinese view, the body must change also. If chih is indeed the grosser, more corporeal phase, then changing chih means changing the more substantial, the underlying substrate of some process. Here the idea seems to be that this change may be effected indirectly by first affecting the ch'i half (the aspirations, which are frequent spoken of as "chih-ch'i 志氣") so that the chih that "condenses" from it will gradually change.



(hsing 形), and that perceptible form is followed by chih or corporeal being. The nature of this progressive activity is not made clear, and it was not until Chu Hsi that it was clearly stated that "ch'i accumulates and forms chih." {Conv., 1:2a/10}

We have seen "chih" compared to the bodies of various animals from which different hair or fur may grow. The Po-hu-t'ung 白虎通 (compiled in 79 A.D.) relates chih to other categories of being in such a way as to suggest that it is relatively substantial. The Lieh-tzu, discussed below and in the chapter on ch'i (p. 233) elaborates on the following passage from the Po-hu-t'ung, 7:35:

The great inception was the beginning of ch'i. The great beginning was the beginning of form (hsing-chao 形兆). The great primal stuff was the beginning of corporeal being (chih).

This text has a bearing on the problem of what relationship was posited by the ancient Chinese to exist between the mind and the body.

##### 5. Continuum of "Fractions" of Ch'i

As early as the Analects, 12:8, quoted above, we have seen the implication that chih is the more basic of a pair. The other half of the pair is a kind of product that evolves in some manner from the more basic one, as the fur of an animal grows from its skin. There is no reason to inject our own ideas of mind-body dichotomy into the pre-modern Chinese conceptual world. Nothing forces us to conclude, or even strongly suggests that the pre-modern Chinese conceived of an immaterial mind coupled by some miracle with a material body. The alternatives to that view would seem to include the idea of a continuum passing from the most solid flesh and bones to fluids such as the blood, to gasses such as the breath, and perhaps on to even more ethereal

"spiritual" entities. While the conceptual scheme of many Europeans and Americans promotes the idea that mind and body are two entirely separate orders of being, the traditional Chinese conceptual system did not.

Fan Chen 范缜 (ca. 450 - ca. 515), says at the beginning of his Shen mieh lun 神滅論 [On the extinction of the spirit]:

The form (hsing 形) is the chih of the spirit. The spirit is the function (yung 用) of the form.

Fan argues, against exponents of the Buddhist faith, that the spirit dies with the body. The spirit is merely a function deriving from the human "form" or body. This passage shows that at least for Fan, the relation between a chih and its ch'i is that of t'i 體 (lit., body, basis for a function) to yung. This observation, in turn, implies that at least for Fan (and I think for most others) all function is the activity or "behavior" of some ch'i.

When I say that if what Europeans and Americans call the mind changes then the body must change as well, I do not mean that such a change necessarily produces such an easily perceptible change as a transformation of the bone structure. But if there is a continuum from bones to mind, and if the chih for the mind changes, then it follows that a part of that continuum on a more solid or substantial level than the mind must change. Being more substantial and more basic, as well as being necessary for the production of something, is just what is meant by the word "chih."

#### 6. Chih Used to Account for Evil

In his Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu 春秋繁露, 10:11a/34, Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒 uses chih as a more inclusive term than hsing. He says:

The [human] body has within it the hsing and the ch'ing (feelings), just as heaven has yin and yang. To speak of

man's chih and to exclude from this his feelings, is like speaking of heaven's yang while excluding its yin.<sup>6</sup>

Thus chih encompasses both hsing and ch'ing, nature and feeling, which are yin and yang complements. "Chih" is here a name for the total natural constitution of a creature. Chih minus its yin aspect is hsing proper. Chih minus its yang aspect is its ch'ing. As the total constitution of a creature, chih is closer to what we in the European tradition would call "nature." In fact there is even some confusion of the terms "chih" and "hsing" in the Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu. Fung Yu-lan says at II, 34:

Inasmuch as man's 'basic stuff' (chih) includes not only the nature (conceived in the narrower sense) but also feelings, and not only the virtue of love but also the undesirable quality of covetousness, it is impossible to say it is [wholly] good. Tung Chung-shu comments: "If one says that the nature is good, then what about the feelings?" {10:10b/23} Here he is speaking of the nature in the broader sense as equivalent to the "basic stuff."<sup>7</sup>

This observation is the beginning of the Sung argument that when Mencius said that the nature of human beings is good he was talking only about one aspect of the nature of human beings and not affirming that the natures of human beings are good in their innate totality. Tung Chung-shu divides a human's innate constitution into a good hsing (yang) and bad ch'ing (yin); Sung thinkers divide a human's innate constitution into a good potential or "original" hsing

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6. See Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, II:32f. Derk Bodde's translation has been slightly altered here.

7. Derk Bodde's translation has been slightly altered here.

(pen-jan chih hsing 本然之性 , t'ien-hsing 天性, etc.) and a partially bad (i.e., imperfect) actual hsing (ch'i-chih chih hsing 氣質之性 ).<sup>8</sup>

### 7. Ch'i Accumulates to Form Chih

In a passage quoted above in the chapter on ch'i, the Lieh-tzu, 1:3/17 (following the Po-hu-t'ung, 7:35), suggests that imperceptible ch'i is followed by perceptible form (hsing 形 ), and that perceptible form is followed by chih or corporeal being. The nature of this progressive activity is not made clear, and it was not until Chu Hsi that it was clearly stated that:

Ch'i accumulates and forms chih. {Conv., 1:2a/10}

However, I think that implication is fairly clear that each progressively more concrete level is constituted by the preceding one.

Chih is the inner, unmanifested, aspect of something, the yet-to-be-developed human resource for something, or in more sophisticated discussion, the substrate for something else. As such, it determines the nature of what evolves from it, or at least imposes a limitation on what can be fashioned from it or derives from it. Thus "chih" is very close in meaning to "hsing" (nature), with the important reservation that "chih" includes the limiting factors of a thing.<sup>9</sup>

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8. Beginning with Tung Chung-shu's discussion, chih is virtually a synonym for the entire human being. This entire being includes both hsing and ch'ing. If we abstract from this human being his hsing, then what remains is the ch'ing. If the hsing is good, then the ch'ing must account for any deficiencies in goodness, i.e., ch'ing constitutes the limiting factors of the being.

9. Wang Ch'ung attributes an yin-yang interpretation to Tung Chung-shu. See above, p. 213. Ch'eng Hao subscribed to Tung Chung-shu's view. See Fung, II, 518.

Tung Chung-shu calls hsing "yang" and ch'ing "yin." Yang is associated with heaven and yin with earth. This relation of ideas suggests the following conclusion: Whereas "hsing" connotes the entelechy and potential for moral development of a person as set forth by heaven, the yang aspect, "chih" connotes the corporeal, the sub-stantial, and hence the earthly ch'i upon which heaven works its will or ming, the yin aspect. Under this analysis of Tung's thought, it would never be safe to assume that a creature may be deemed to be completed. The formation of any creature by earth at the command (ming) of heaven both requires time and may also be subject to reversals and impediments due to unfavorable environmental factors.

"Chih" is almost invariably linked with ch'i as "ch'i-chih 氣質" (materialized lifebreath) in the works of the Neo-Confucians, so further treatment of this concept must be deferred to the next chapter.

## X. CH'I-CHIH AND ITS TRANSFORMATION BEFORE CHU HSI<sup>1</sup>

The term "ch'i-chih" appears suddenly in the records of conversations of the Ch'eng brothers with their students and in the writings of Chang Tsai. From the way it is used, this word would seem to have already been commonly understood among the students of the Ch'eng brothers. It is not clear whether Ch'eng Yi or his brother Ch'eng Hao invented this designation or merely continued to use vocabulary invented by some earlier scholar. Since the Ch'engs and Chang Tsai were contemporaries, it is also possible that Chang Tsai invented this name. Chu Hsi gives the Ch'eng brothers and Chang Tsai credit for first using the concept to explain the source of evil in human hsing:

[According to the] T'ai-chi t'u shuo  
[Explanation of the t'ai-chi diagram], the transformations of yin  
and yang and the five phases are irregular.<sup>2</sup> Basing themselves  
upon this [observation], the two Ch'eng brothers were first to  
reason out [the idea of the] ch'i-chih chih hsing (the nature found  
manifest in ch'i-chih). {Chou, 2:14/18}

### 1. Different Possible Meanings

The meaning of the term ch'i-chih is not immediately obvious. Depending on the nature of the relationship posited to exist between the words

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1. For a very useful introduction to some of the key concepts of Neo-Confucian philosophy, see Huang Siu-chi, "The Concept of T'ai-chi (Supreme Ultimate) in Sung Neo-Confucian Philosophy," Journal of Chinese Philosophy, I (1974), 275-294. Further useful background is to be found in Schuyler Cammann's "The Magic Square of Three in Old Chinese Philosophy and Religion," History of Religion, I, 1 (1961), 37-80.

2. I.e., they do not often produce consistently; they produce a great variety of disparate creatures.

"ch'i" and "chih," the word "ch'i-chih" could mean 1) chih that is made from or composed of ch'i, 2) the chih (=hsing) or characteristics of a particular ch'i, or 3) ch'i and chih, a given ch'i and the corresponding substrate to and from which it makes phase changes. We are faced with the problem of which of these three senses is correct -- or whether all three may be correct.

Each of these interpretations has something in its favor. There are grounds for accepting the first -- chih composed of ch'i -- because the word "chih" usually means "the substrate for something else," and gets its meaning of "characteristic" only because the nature of the substrate of something was believed to have an important influence on the characteristics of that thing. This fact makes the second interpretation, that ch'i-chih is the chih or characteristics of a particular ch'i, difficult to uphold. However, the second interpretation -- chih or characteristics of a particular ch'i -- is supported by the argument that the term "ch'i-chih" is generally used to discuss qualities of human behavior, or phenomena that we would regard as mental, behavioral, psychological, or spiritual, and that the "materialistic" connotations of the word "chih" do not fit well with these applications. The third interpretation, while seeming to be a little strange, may in fact be the best explanation.

## 2. Equivocal Usage

The foregoing arguments address only the surface meanings of the components of the term "ch'i-chih" and their possible modes of combination. When we investigate actual passages from the Sung philosophers, we find that while these quotations may initially suggest either interpretation one or interpretation two, they do not unequivocally support either, and it is always possible to reinterpret them in terms of interpretation three.

On the grounds of evidence already presented in the sections on "ch'i" and "chih," it is possible to show in favor of the first possible interpretation that chih was believed upon be in some sense consequent upon ch'i. Chu Hsi said that chih was formed by the consolidation of ch'i. A chih formed from ch'i might reasonably be called a "ch'i-chih." However, if it be further argued that such a chih could be the substrate for another ch'i that rises from it analogous to the way in Aristotelian philosophy that a substance formed of matter and form can be the matter for a higher substance, then this argument could be used to account for the mental, psychological, and spiritual phenomena mentioned above. This is in fact the explanation given by Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 in his commentary to Chang Tsai's 張載 Cheng-meng 正蒙, the chapter on "Ch'eng-ming 誠明", 3:8b/14 (c. p. 108):

"Ch'i-chih" [refers to the condition when] ch'i forms chih and this chih in turn produces ch'i.<sup>3</sup> When ch'i forms chih it consolidates and resides in form, taking its requirements (tzu 資) from things (wu 物) in order to nurture its chih.

The second interpretation, that "ch'i-chih" means characteristics of ch'i, is favored by the following statement by Ch'eng Yi from the Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu, 18:7a/48 :

[Someone asked:] "Is it not true that a person's speech being [characteristically] tense and hurried [is a sign of his] ch'i being unstable?"

[Master Ch'eng] replied: "This case too must be a matter of practice. When one practices until his speech becomes naturally

3. Note that the words "in turn" (huan 還) imply the idea of a cycle.



relaxed, this [indicates] a change in his ch'i-chih. Only when one studies to the point that his ch'i-chih changes does he succeed [in his aim]. [Being] what kind of a man one is, is only a question of practice. Note that today the civil officials naturally have one kind of demeanor (ch'i-hsiang 氣象), and the military officials naturally have [another]. The noble families naturally have [their own] deportment. They are not this way from birth. It is only a matter of practice. In times gone by I once gave advice to the sovereign and the queen mother, pleading that he should spend more of his time every day in the company of worthy gentlemen and great officials, and less time with eunuchs and palace bureaucrats, in order to nurture his ch'i-chih and condition (lit., "smoke") his moral nature."

The student asks about the stability of one's ch'i, and it appears that Ch'eng Yi answers in terms of a change in the chih, or characteristics, of one's ch'i. But it could be argued, against using the second interpretation, that while his student asked about ch'i, Ch'eng Yi answered in terms of changing the substrate from which an undesirable ch'i was produced to a substrate that would produce a more desirable ch'i.

A second quotation from Ch'eng Yi argues for the first interpretation that "ch'i-chih" means chih that is made from or composed of ch'i. The Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu, 22A:2a/14, says:

If one is able to study profoundly and thoroughly mull over the Analects and the Mencius, then the success of this nurtur[ing education process] will result in a great production of ch'i-chih.

It seems unlikely that by these words Ch'eng Yi could mean the production of a mere quality or characteristic without the production of something for that quality or characteristic to subsist in. The third interpretation of the term

"ch'i-chih," that it means a given ch'i and its corresponding substrate, also fits the context of Ch'eng Yi's remark.

The third interpretation is supported by the writings of Chang Tsai. The Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu (Complete works of Master Chang), 3:11b/23, says:

The yi 易 (change) is one thing (wu 物) with three ts'ai (capabilities). Yin and yang [conceived as one whole with two aspects] is ch'i and is predicated of heaven. The rigid (kang 剛) and flexible (jou 柔) [conceived as one whole with two aspects] is chih and is predicated of earth. Benevolence and the sense of right and wrong [conceived as a whole with two aspects] is te 德 (virtue) and is predicated of human beings.

Change (yi) produces a unitary world of three aspects: heaven, earth, and mankind. Heaven is characterized by yin and yang. Earth is characterized by the rigid and flexible. Human beings are characterized by benevolence and the sense of right and wrong. The yin-yang dyad is ch'i. The rigid-flexible dyad is chih. The benevolence and sense of right and wrong dyad is te (virtue). Ch'i pertains to heaven. Chih pertains to earth. Te pertains to humans (as does hsing). But these three are aspects of a whole. Thus ch'i and chih cannot be fundamentally different.

### 3. Ch'i-chih and the Hsing of Human Beings

The empirical hsing seems to result from a combination of ch'i and chih, heaven and earth. The Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu, 2:18bf/26, shows how ch'i and chih are related within the constitution of a human being:

Only after [a person] takes form is there the hsing of (i.e., found manifest in) ch'i-chih. [If one is] good at returning [external exemplifications of true human hsing to one's own mind for inspection and authentication], then the hsing of heaven and earth [will be discovered to] exist therein. Thus, as for the

hsing of ch'i-chih, the [morally] noble man does not regard it as the [true] hsing.

This passage derives from several sections in the Mencius. Mencius said: "Yao and Shun [embodied the true nature of a human being] innately, and T'ang and Wu recaptured (lit., returned to) it." {7B:33} "Everything is complete within me. There is no greater joy than when I return things to myself and integrate them." {7A:4}<sup>4</sup> Chang Tsai contrasts this hsing of heaven and earth with the ch'i-chih or dependent hsing that Mencius called ming (mandate) in the passage on the ming that the morally noble man regards as hsing (i.e., the mandate that constitutes a hsing), and the hsing that the morally noble man regards as ming (i.e., the contingent characteristics of a person that depend on, and interact with, external causative factors devolving from the general action of the will of heaven in the world). The nature found manifest in ch'i-chih is present only after the person takes physical form, which is at a later stage of development than simple ch'i, so it is clear that Chang Tsai is not talking about characteristics of ch'i but rather of a chih or substrate formed from ch'i. He identifies the hsing or characteristics of this substrate with the contingent factors that Mencius said were not to be properly regarded as the specific hsing of man -- the hsing that sets man off from the animals.

It is clear that Chang Tsai distinguishes ch'i-chih from ch'i, and it appears to me that he regards ch'i-chih as relatively resistant to exogenous change whereas the ch'i that appears in psychological or physiological processes is regarded as a specific response to environmental factors. At 5:4b/8 he says:

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4. Ch'ien Mu points out the connection between these two passages in his Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang shih, p. 24.

The li by which men's ch'i-chih are beautiful or ugly (good or bad), noble or base, short- or long-lived, are all the determinate portions (fen 分) that they receive [from heaven]. Ch'i-chih that are ugly can be altered by study. The reason that people today are so often controlled by their ch'i and unable to become worthies must be that they do not know how to study. In ancient times one's teacher, older schoolmates, and friends in the village school would teach and admonish one daily, and so naturally there were many worthies (i.e., many arose without a planned course of self-discipline). If one can study until one's hsing is complete, then ch'i has no way to become predominant (over it). Mencius said that if one's ch'i is unified it can move one's will.<sup>5</sup> "Moving" is the same as saying that [ch'i] can alter [one's will]. If one's will is unified, it can also move the ch'i. One must study and learn until one becomes a perfect semblance of heaven and thereby one's hsing will come to completion.

The compound nature of ch'i-chih is elucidated by Chang Tsai at 6:8a/8:

Ch'i-chih is like what people call innate ch'i (hsing-ch'i 性氣) [This] ch'i has [the varieties of] rigid, yielding, slow, fast, pure, and turbid. Chih is [innate] ts'ai 才 (capability). Ch'i-chih is a single thing. The life (sheng 生) of plants and trees and the like can also be called ch'i-chih. Only one's ability to overcome oneself [can be called] the ability to change [ch'i-chih]. Driving out the habitual ch'i-hsing (nature formed in the ch'i of a person by learning) or restraining it is how [Mencius'] flood-like (hao-jan 浩然) ch'i is to be produced by the accumulation of yi (just acts). "Accumulating yi" is like saying "accumulating good acts." [Acts of] yi must be constantly

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5. When Mencius said that one's ch'i can move one's will, he was talking about the ch'i involved in a particular interchange with the environment.

accumulated without any lapses. By this means the vast moral (tao-te) ch'i can be produced.

In the past, I frequently compelled my ch'i [against its natural inclinations], but afterwards I reduced this [tendency] greatly so that in the course of a whole year this [unnatural forcing of my ch'i] almost never happened. Then I became like the supreme harmony (t'ai-ho 太和)<sup>6</sup> which contains the myriad creatures and gives play to their spontaneity.

Chang Tsai seems to be talking here about the chih or substrate and the ch'i or effluent that evolves from it. He appears to maintain that these are aspective -- or perhaps one could say they are phases of each other. His argument would seem to be that accumulated acts of goodness change the chih of a person, which in turn changes the ch'i of that person into the Mencian "flood-like ch'i."

For the Sung Confucians, changing one's ch'i-chih, or contingent constitution, to make it a proper utensil for the expression of one's moral nature became an important goal. For both the Ch'eng brothers and Chang Tsai, hsüeh 學 or "study" was the means by which ch'i-chih was to be changed. The Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih ts'ui-yen 河南程氏粹言<sup>1</sup>, 1:12b/35, says:

Someone asked: "There are some people who can memorize a myriad words per day or who have a [remarkable command of] techniques. Can [these abilities] be learned?"

Master [Ch'eng] replied: "They cannot. [One's] ts'ai (capabilities) can be driven to some small improvements, [but] the dull cannot be made sharp. Only by accumulating study and

6. "T'ai-ho" is a technical term Chang Tsai derived from the T'uan Appendix to the Yi-ching, the first hexagram. In Chang Tsai's philosophy, "t'ai-ho" refers to the transcendent tao. See Wei Cheng-t'ung, Chung-kuo che-hsüeh tz'u-tien, p. 126.

understanding li over a long period of time can the ch'i-chih be changed. Thereupon the beclouded (lit., dark) [intelligence] will surely become bright, and the weak will surely become [firmly] established.

From a psychological point of view, this activity sounds very much like what Europeans and Americans would call a process of conditioning used to produce a change of character. This impression is strengthened by the words of Chang Tsai at 5:4a/8:

With regard to changing ch'i-chih, Mencius said: "[One's] residence alters ch'i as nurture alters the body." {7A:36} How much more does residing in the greatest residence in the world! When one resides in benevolence and moves in accord with the sense of right and wrong (i.e., makes jen and yi one's constant environment), then naturally one's mind will be harmonious and one's body upright. Further, set a time, then just brush away the actions of the past, and make all your movements in accord with the sense of ritual (li 禮). [Then] your ch'i-chih will spontaneously become completely good.

At 6:3a/8 he also said:

The greatest benefit of devotion to study lies in its ability on its own to change one's ch'i-chih. Otherwise one would never discover [basic moral truths]. One would be unable to perceive the mysteries of the sages. Therefore those who study must first change their ch'i-chih. Changing the ch'i-chih and having an unbiased mind (hsü-hsin 虛心) are mutually aspective.

Why does Chang Tsai think that devoted studying and learning are sufficient to change the contingent factors of one's being? To some extent this must reflect a preference for the Confucian tao over the Buddhist mārga. Bear in mind that while educational means are believed sufficient to change ch'i-chih, it does not

follow that the intended transformation is "merely mental" in the way that Europeans and Americans commonly regard a change of character.

## XI. CH'I-CHIH CHIH HSING IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHU HSI<sup>1</sup>

"The nature found manifest in ch'i-chih" is a concept that is completely strange to those brought up under the influence of the European tradition. It would be impossible to resolve the apparent contradictions in Chu Hsi's thought that center around it without getting a much clearer idea of this concept of nature. Similarly, it would be impossible to learn how Chu Hsi could contemplate actually changing the natures of human beings without knowing in some detail how he believed those natures to be constituted in the first place.

### 1. Vital Points Neglected in Previous Studies

The ultimate aim of education and moral culture is, for Chu Hsi, changing the nature found manifest in one's ch'i-chih (pien-hua ch'i-chih chih hsing 變化氣質之性) so that man's moral nature (yi-li chih hsing 義理之性, also called heavenly nature or t'ien-hsing 天性) can fully shine forth. It is strange, then, that secondary sources neglect to explain two vital points:<sup>2</sup>

1) Beyond simply affirming that ch'i-chih chih hsing is the manifestation of li (t'ai-chi or t'ien-hsing) in ch'i-chih form, what can be said about the manner in which this manifestation occurs? In their general expositions of Chu Hsi's philosophy, some students of Chu Hsi -- such as Fung

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1. For a short introduction to Chu Hsi's life and contributions, see Stanislaus Sun's excellent article entitled "The Doctrine of the "Li" in the Philosophy of Chu Hsi," International Philosophical Quarterly, VI (1966), 155-188.

2. Li Jih-chang has written a superb delineation of the difficulties presented by the absence of adequate explanations for these points. "Chu-tzu 'li ch'i kuan' t'ao-lun," Ta-lu tsa-chih, XLV, 5 (Nov., 1972), 56-60.



Yu-lan 馮友蘭,<sup>3</sup> Huang Kung-wei 黃公偉,<sup>4</sup> Wu K'ang 吳康<sup>5</sup> -- compare li to Platonic ideas, and ch'i to the indeterminate initial state of the universe, or chaos; or they compare li to Aristotelian form and ch'i to matter. Ch'ien Mu<sup>6</sup> 錢穆 and W. T. Chan<sup>7</sup> 陳榮捷, firm supporters of a monistic interpretation of Chu Hsi's philosophy, offer strong arguments against such comparisons, but they fail to make any explanation of their own for what Chu Hsi calls the "falling into (to-ju 墮入) ch'i-chih" of li. Chu Hsi appears to offer two accounts of the relation between li and ch'i. One, that li produces ch'i,<sup>8</sup> and two, that li "falls into" an already-existing ch'i to give it pattern or order. The first account, if correct, would lend credence to the monistic interpretation of Chu Hsi's philosophy. Chu Hsi affirms in his commentary to Chou Tun-yi's T'ai-chi-t'u shuo (see the Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu, [Complete works of Master Chou], 1:7/17) that li produces ch'i. But under this interpretation, how does li "produce" ch'i and then "fall into" it?

The second account of the relation between li and ch'i, if correct, would lend credence to the dualistic interpretation. The opponents of the

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3. Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, II:537, 542.

4. Huang Kung-wei, Sung Ming Ch'ing li-hsüeh t'i-hsi lun shih, p. 213.

5. Wu K'ang, Sung Ming li-hsüeh, p. 205.

6. Ch'ien Mu, Sung Ming li-hsüeh kai-shu, pp. 163, 166.

7. Wing-tsit Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, p. 590.

8. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 4:17a/17, says: "Although ch'i is produced by li, afterwards li cannot control it." See ahead, page . Li is said to produce ch'i, not in the sense that one thing acts upon another to make it into something else, but in the sense that a potential is actualized as a particular thing or things in the real world.

dualistic interpretation, while adducing ample grounds for believing that Chu Hsi was a monist, do nothing to solve the difficulty presented when Chu Hsi nevertheless affirms that li falls into ch'i in the process of the creation of the myriad creatures.

It would seem that Chu Hsi must believe that li first produces ch'i and then "falls into" it. If that is the case then he alternates between a monistic theory and a dualistic theory similar to that of Plato.

2) The second neglected vital point is the question of why li is so often imperfectly present when manifested in ch'i-chih. Superficially, Chu Hsi seems to say that some people receive bad or turbid (cho 濁) ch'i and other people receive good or pure (ch'ing 清) ch'i. But if li and ch'i are only aspects of each other, then, it would seem -- as Yen Yüan argues repeatedly -- that li and ch'i must be equally good or bad. Yet Chu Hsi appears to put the blame entirely on ch'i. Furthermore, if li is good and li produces ch'i, then why does it produce bad ch'i?

These inconsistencies plead for a dualistic interpretation of Chu Hsi's philosophy; yet the supporters of the monistic interpretation have not answered these difficulties.

Chu Hsi observes that what he conceptualizes as ch'i-chih can be changed by an educational process. If we interpret ch'i-chih as "temperament," or "character," this claim would seem to pose no difficulties. We are not disconcerted by the idea that what we call temperament can be changed by experience of a broadly educational nature. But the word "temperament" represents a relatively naive idea to the modern reader, certainly not a

fundamental metaphysical concept.<sup>9</sup> The word "ch'i-chih," on the contrary, represented to the people of Chu Hsi's time a concept involving several major metaphysical ideas. It was a conceptually sophisticated description of the states of being of things, and was applicable to everything that we would call a substantial entity. Furthermore, people apparently believed that ch'i-chih is given at birth by whatever forces bring a person into being. It is certainly not immediately obvious how the fundamental constitution of a person can be changed by experiences which we in our own time conceive as merely educational. The records of the conversations of Master Chu are mute on this score. Nor do his apologists offer any explanations. I will return to the question of changing the ch'i-chih nature in the next chapter after explaining the concept of ch'i-chih nature itself.

## 2. Some Basic Concepts Drawn On by Chu Hsi

Explaining ch'i-chih chih hsing, while far from easy, is not hopeless. It does require reviewing ideas that were commonplace in Chu Hsi's circle.

First, let us lay to rest the misconception that the ch'i-chih of a person is merely a mental state. Take, for example, the following statement, from the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 3:9a/25:

Someone asked about the animus and anima (hun and p'o 魄). [Master Chu] said: "Ch'i-chih is substantial (shih-ti

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9. In medieval European physiology the idea of temperament was not so vague. It referred to the proportions of the mixture of the four humours: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. In excess, the four humours would produce, in turn, the sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic temperaments. This idea of temperament is not dissimilar to Chu Hsi's idea of ch'i-chih, although there are important differences.

實底), the animus and anima are semi-substantial, and the ghost (kuei 鬼) and spirit (shen 神) are more insubstantial than substantial."

It would seem from what Chu Hsi said at 3:2a/25 and 3:10b/25 of the same book, and also from remarks recorded at 28:12b/18 of the Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu, that the terms "ghost" and "spirit" refer to contracting and expanding phases in cyclic change,<sup>10</sup> and that the animus and anima are the sources of those contracting and expanding activities. Reading this interpretation back into the above quotation, it would seem reasonable to assume that ch'i-chih is regarded as the palpable substrate for the animus and anima, which are rather ethereal,<sup>11</sup> and that the animus and anima are themselves substrates for contracting and expanding activities.<sup>12</sup>

On the cosmological level, ch'i-chih appears as an amalgam of pure and light ch'i and turbid and heavy chih. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 3:5a/24, says:

The pure portion of ch'i forms ch'i [sic], and the turbid portion forms chih.

The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 1:2a/10, says that in the production of creatures:

First there is a heavenly li and then there is ch'i. The ch'i accumulates and forms chih, and hsing (nature) is concretely present therein.

10. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 3:2b/25.

11. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 3:8a/25.

12. For the development of Chu Hsi's ideas on ghosts and spirits in historical sequence see Tomoeda Ryūtarō, "Shushi no kishin ron," Shinagaku kenkyū, XXIII (1959), 41-49.

These quotations recall the belief that the primeval undifferentiated ch'i split into lighter and heavier fractions that formed heaven and earth, as well as reminding us of the belief that the seminal ch'i of heaven calls forth the corresponding ch'i of earth to form an organism according to heaven's mandate (ming). Yet, according to the present account, it is not heaven but li that initiates the production of creatures. And it appears that li produces ch'i, which accumulates as chih according to some pattern of its own, in such a way that an individual hsing is determined in each creature.

That this hsing is not merely a function or functions of creatures is amply attested by Chu Hsi's own words. In the Hui-an wen-chi, 74:15b/30 ("Meng-tzu kang-ling"), he says:

Hsing is called t'i (basis for a function) precisely because it is benevolence, the sense of right and wrong, the sense of ritual, and wisdom in their state before they issue forth; it is not merely the basis for the functions of vision and hearing [but of all of these].

### 3. Development of Chu Hsi's Own Theory

That the word "hsing" applies properly only to a state or configuration of ch'i-chih is a view that developed over some period of time.<sup>12</sup>

At the age of 45, Chu Hsi apparently believed only in a perfectly good original hsing; he did not believe in a different ch'i-chih chih hsing. The following conversation of that era is recorded in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 95:19a/47:

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12. The following discussion is based on Ch'ien Mu's Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an, I: 446ff.

Someone asked: "In the discussions in the Chin-ssu lu [Reflections on things at hand] on hsing, it appears that there are two kinds [of hsing]. How is this?"

[Chu Hsi] answered: "Everyone always misinterprets this discussion. [Master Ch'eng said:] 'No sooner [can one] speak of the hsing than it already is other than [the original] hsing.'<sup>14</sup> [This means that] man's hsing is fundamentally good, and that is all there is to it. No sooner does it fall into ch'i-chih [form?] than it is smoked and stained (i.e., contaminated, influenced) to its detriment. Although it is thus [adversely affected], nevertheless the original hsing is still there. All that is required [for its restoration] is that the scholar apply his energies to the task. Yet people nowadays say that there is a fundamental hsing and also a ch'i-chih chih hsing. This [misunderstanding] does great injury to li."

Chu Hsi maintains that as soon as li falls (to li) or becomes actualized as a particular human hsing or nature, it is subject to environmental influences, therefore the true human hsing is never seen in its pure state. Yet this hsing does not undergo a fundamental change; neither does it undergo an irreversible change. It is merely overlaid by accretions of learning that can be removed. But, he asserts, in his time "ch'i-chih chih hsing" meant, to many people, a distinctly embodied secondary hsing that was subject to change.

Sometime between the ages of 59 and 64, Chu Hsi gave a different explanation that restricted hsing to the realm of ch'i-chih. The Hui-an wen-chi, 49:10b/30, the thirteenth "Letter in answer to Master Wang Ho 王令," says:

"Man is tranquil at birth." {Yüeh, 14/125} Tranquility is indeed man's hsing; but once the word "birth" is mentioned, it implies ch'i-chih. It is impossible to speak [correctly] of [ch'i-chih] before birth. It would seem that [the Yüeh-chi] is speaking of the li at a point

14. Ho-nan Ch'eng-shih yi-shu, 1:7b/8.

before any form becomes perceptible. Therefore, in the case at hand, speaking of hsing immediately implies ch'i-chih. We cannot speak of hsing in a void (i.e., purely abstractly). "Hsing" means "what continues (i.e., flows) from [the tao] is the good," {Hsi, A:4} [and the statement] originally described the function of the shaping and transforming forces (i.e., yin and yang). But when [Ch'eng Hao] speaks of this, he is referring to the development and activity of the human hsing. This idea is comparable to Mencius saying: "As for [man's] ch'ing<sup>15</sup> he can do good." {Menc., 6A:6} However, when [Ch'eng] Yi speaks of the "hsing found by going to the most fundamental, and searching out the ultimate origins {Post., 3:3b/7}," he is opposing it to the hsing of the ch'i-chih. He is saying that although there are differences of good and bad among various ch'i-chih, nevertheless if one discusses [the hsing] found by going to the most fundamental and searching out the ultimate origins, that hsing is never other than good.

Around 1190, Chu Hsi explained why he believed it inaccurate to equate the hsing with the t'ai-chi. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 94:8a/49, says:

[Someone] asked: "[You once said that because] the t'ai-chi has this hsing it therefore has yin, yang, and the five phases. What does this imply about the hsing?"

[Master Chu] said: "I think that must be my old explanation. Thinking about it more recently, I see that it is incorrect. This word "hsing" refers to what is endowed by heaven. In the case of the t'ai-chi it is only correct to speak of li. The two terms are certainly not interchangeable. The Yi-ching [Hsi-tz'u, A:4] says: 'The [rhythmic] alternation of yin and yang is called tao (the way or course of heaven). What follows from this [alternation]' is called good. Only [when the Hsi-tz'u] gets to 'what completes this [process]' does it apply the word 'hsing.' This passage refers to what heaven gives to men and creatures, and what men and creatures receive from heaven.

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15. Chu Hsi interprets ch'ing as such activities of the human hsing as feelings, ethical judgments, etc.

When he was 63, in 1193, Chu Hsi described the sources of human li and ch'i, as recorded in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 92:28a/49:

[Someone] asked: "[In the sentence] 'What follows from this [alternation of yin and yang] is called good, and what completes [this process] is called hsing,' why are 'following,' 'good,' 'completing,' and 'hsing' divided into four parts?"

[Master Chu] said: "'Following' and 'completing' belong to ch'i; 'good' and 'hsing' belong to li. [But] hsing already involves both li and ch'i, [while] 'good' refers to li alone." He also said: "[Human] li is received from t'ai-chi; ch'i is received from the two ch'i (yin and yang) and the five phases."

This passage asserts that human hsing is received in part directly from the t'ai-chi, which provides its li (moral and potential) aspect, and in part from the yin, yang, and five phases, which provide its ch'i aspect.

Chu Hsi amplified this position two years later in a letter in reply to Lin Te-chiu 林德久 recorded in the Hui-an wen-chi, 61:10a/36:

If it were not for ch'i there [could] be no [perceptible] form. Without form the goodness of the hsing would have no place in which to be endowed (fu 賦). For this reason all who speak of the hsing must depend on ch'i-chih [as the actual basis] for their discussions. But within this ch'i-chih there is naturally the li that has been endowed.

In the following years Chu Hsi clarified the way in which li is found in ch'i-chih as its hsing. In a letter in reply to Yen Shih-fu 嚴時父 (t. Shih-heng 時亨) recorded in the Hui-an wen -chi, 61:22b/36, he says:

Ch'i-chih is what is done or made by (so wei 所為) yin and yang and the five phases. Hsing is the entire basis for function (t'i 體) of the t'ai-chi. However, [when] discussing the hsing found in ch'i-chih, it is the entire basis for function [of



the t'ai-chi] as fallen (to li) into the midst of ch'i-chih, and not a separate hsing.

The t'ai-chi is the transcendent potential for, and continuing sustainer of, human hsing.<sup>16</sup> Chu Hsi continues:

"Man is tranquil at birth" [describes] the time before [his nature] issues forth [in action], that is, it is the time before men and creatures are born; one cannot speak of hsing in this connection. Whenever one speaks of the hsing, one is talking about the time after the birth of a man [or other creature], when li has fallen into the midst of form and ch'i, and is [thus] not entirely the original substratum (pen-t'i 本體) of hsing. Nevertheless the original substratum [of the hsing] is never entirely apart from this [actual hsing].

At the age of 68, in 1198, Chu Hsi affirmed that when the t'ai-chi "falls into" ch'i-chih it is not thereby changed into ch'i-chih. It retains its original status of transcendent substratum, and is not transformed into some other kind of being. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 95:16bf/47, says:

Before "man is tranquil at birth," is the state prior to when men or creatures are born. Before men or creatures are born [the determiner of innate characteristics] can only be called li; it is not yet possible to speak of hsing. This [fact] is what is referred to in the phrase "In heaven it is called ming." "No sooner do we say hsing than it already is no [longer] the [original] hsing" is to say that no sooner do we call it hsing than it is already after the time of birth of the man, and this li has already fallen into ch'i-chih, so that [in this form] it is no longer entirely the original substratum (pen-t'i 本體) of the

16. For more information on Chu's view of t'ai-chi see Tomoeda Ryūtarō, "Shushi taikyoku ron no seiritsu katei," Hiroshima daigaku bunkakubu kiyō, XVI (1959), 55-74.

hsing. So [Master Ch'eng] said, "It is no [longer] [the original] hsing." This is what is meant by "[the mandate of heaven as found] in men is called hsing." The general idea is that [when] humans acquire this form and ch'i, then this li begins to be concretely present (chü 具) in the midst of form and ch'i, and is called hsing. No sooner can it be so called than it is involved in life, and is bound up in ch'i-chih, so li [as actualized in man] can no longer be [the same as] the original substratum of the hsing. Nevertheless, the original substratum of the hsing is never mixed (tse 雜) [with the actual hsing found in ch'i-chih]. People should observe in this that its original substratum has never departed [from actual creatures] and has never mixed with them either.

Somehow li, otherwise called t'ai-chi, "falls into" ch'i-chih without mixing with it. "Falling into ch'i-chih" is a rather confusing way of stating the transformation of a transcendent substratum (pen-t'i 本體) into immanent and particular creatures.<sup>17</sup> It almost seems that the li are formative forces that cause ch'i-chih to take particular forms; but note that Chu Hsi calls the li a pen-t'i and says that the li is never confused with actual beings nor is it ever out of contact with them. In his Science and Civilization in China, II:462, Joseph Needham says that he thinks the term "pen-t'i" is possibly borrowed from

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17. We have already observed this usage above, in the Huai-nan-tzu, see page 220.

Buddhism, where it is used to translate dharmatā.<sup>18</sup> Regardless of whether "pen-t'i" actually came into the Chinese language by way of Buddhism, the transcendent sense of the word is clear in the words of Chu Hsi quoted above. Li is continuous with, but distinguishable from, actual beings. Like the water that forms the waves, it is always there yet always distinct from them.

#### 4. How Li "Falls into Ch'i"

The answer to the riddle of how li "falls into" ch'i in various configurations is to be found at the fountainhead of Sung Confucian metaphysics, the T'ai-chi t'u-shuo of Chou Tun-yi. Chu Hsi maintains that the t'ai-chi is

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18. In The Buddhist Conquest of China, Erik Zürcher translates "dharmatā" as "transcendent truth" (225). On p. 100f he gives a more extended explanation in the course of elucidating another matter:

"The same formulas of negation are applied to all elements of the pseudo-personality, the four great elements, the six sensory faculties together with their objects, etc., but also to the very notions expounded by this literature: Buddhahood, Enlightenment, Nirvāṇa and Wisdom itself. No concept, no 'clinging' to something, no 'name' is left standing; when the last barrier, that of attachment to the idea of Emptiness itself, is broken, the yogi merges into the amorphous 'True Nature of all Elements' (法性 dharmatā, 諸法實相 (?) sarvadharma-bhūta-lakṣaṇa) which is 'empty' (空, śūnya), 'inactive' (無作, aprāṇihita), 'subtle' (妙, sūkṣma), 'uncharacterized' (無作, ānimitta), et cetera. But all these terms are mere 'conventional appellations' (字, prañāpti, saṃketa), which must never give rise to any mental representation, any 'grasping' or attachment."

transcendent subsistence.<sup>19</sup> He says that Chou Tun-yi was able to make his diagram because he achieved "silent union with the tao-body." {Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu, 1:1/17} and depended on this insight to write his Chou-yi t'ung-shu, which explains the Yi-ching. Furthermore, he adds, "when the elder and younger Ch'eng brothers spoke of the realm of hsing and ming (mandate of heaven), they never failed to base themselves on his discussion." {Chou, 1:1/17} It would probably not be far wrong to say that Chu Hsi followed their example when he elaborated his own metaphysics.<sup>20</sup>

Chou Tun-yi's T'ai-chi t'u shuo (Explanation of the t'ai-chi diagram), 4f/17, says:

19. For further ideas on t'ai-chi, see Huang Siu-chi's article on the concept of t'ai-chi, especially pp. 279 and 289, and Stanislaus Sun's article on "The Doctrine of Li," pp. 177-181. See also Tomoeda Ryutaro's "Shushi taikyoku ron no seiritu katei," Hiroshima daigaku bunkakubu kiyō, XVI (1959), 55-74.

20. For a general treatment of Chu Hsi's cosmology that provides much valuable background information, see Yamada Keiji's "Shushi no uchūron josetsu," Tōhō gakuho, XXXVI (1965), 481-511, and "Shushi no uchūron," Tōhō gakuho, XXXVII (1966), 41-151.

The wu-chi<sup>21</sup> [is] yet the supreme ultimate (t'ai-chi) [of the things of this world]. The supreme ultimate moves and produces

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21. This term is sometimes translated as the "ultimateless," an interpretation I find difficult to understand. Anything except something characterizable by the world "ultimate" should be characterizable by the word "ultimateless." Chu Hsi claims that "wu-chi" is just another term for "t'ai-chi." (See the Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu, 1:5f/17 (c.p. 5f) and 1:13/17 (c.p. 13), and the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 49:10af/30, letter to Wang Tzu-ho 王子合.) I think that for Chou "wu-chi" means "the nothingness ultimate," and refers to the void which, in Wang Pi's interpretation of the Lao-tzu, is the source of all substantial being. Chu Hsi would probably prefer to deemphasize the connection between Chou Tun-yi's thought and the Lao-tzu.

"T'ai-chi," which I have followed convention to translate as "supreme ultimate," means something like "terminal being," "terminus of being," or "the being terminus." When one begins with beings and traces them to their fundamentals, one finds that all the "fibers" of being are gathered in a single nexus which is their common origin. So this point of origin, as the source of all being, is supreme being. At the same time, it is supreme nothingness. The Hui-an wen-chi, 45: 10b/44, preserves the following passage from Chu Hsi:

"The origins of the word 'chi' probably are taken from the term 'shu-chi 樞極' (the first star in the Great Dipper, Polaris, and hence the North Pole). The sages called it 't'ai-chi' to indicate [that it is] the root of heaven, earth, and the myriad creatures. Master Chou went beyond them to also call it 'wu-chi' in order to express its soundless, odorless (i.e., imperceptible) ineffable efficacy. So when he said: 'Wu-chi and yet t'ai-chi; t'ai-chi originally is wu-chi,' he did not mean that after wu-chi [came into existence] there was a separate production of t'ai-chi so that above t'ai-chi there is a prior wu-chi." (See also the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 74:1a/49).

Things in the world are concrete and particular, yet their common fundamentals reveal themselves as ever and ever more tenuous and unconcrete. At the final limit, where all being has a common ground, there is no longer any perceptible sign of being. Thus it is a kind of "nothingness."

Movement reaches its ultimate [limit] and becomes tranquility. Tranquility produces yin. Tranquility reaches its ultimate [limit] and again [becomes] movement. The [rhythmic] alternations of movement and tranquility mutually form the root [of all being which ramifies therefrom], and by the division into yin and yang the two instrumentalities are established.

In his commentary to that passage, Chu Hsi writes:

For the t'ai-chi to produce yin and yang is for li to produce ch'i. Yin and yang having been [so] produced, t'ai-chi is within them, and again, li is within ch'i.<sup>22</sup>

This passage explains what is meant by li "falling into" ch'i. It does not fall into something already there waiting for it, but "falls out as" or deploys itself as ch'i or actual being while subsisting as potential and the source of all such dependent being. Thus to "to-ju ch'i-chih chung 隨入氣質中" means "to descend and thereby be embodied in a dependent realm of actualized being."<sup>23</sup>

The T'ai-chi t'u shuo continues:

Yang changes and yin cleaves to it, producing [thereby] the five phases: Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth. The five phases complaisantly deploy themselves, and the four seasons derive their continuity therefrom. The five phases are just one yin-yang, and the yin and yang are [just] one t'ai-chi. The t'ai-chi is basically the transcendent [even though the t'ai-chi has an immanent expression]. The production of the five phases is such that each individuates its own hsing.

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22. See Stanislaus Sun's article on "The Doctrine of li," p. 183.

23. Recall that "falling" had already been used to refer to a descent from transcendence to immanence in the Huai-nan-tzu. See above, pages 217 and 272.

In his commentary to this passage, Chu Hsi says: "The productions of the five phases follow their ch'i-chih, the endowment of which is different [for each of the five], so 'each individuates its own hsing.'" {Chou, 1:13/17} In a letter in answer to Hsü Tzu-jung 徐子融 recorded in the Hui-an wen-chi, 58:14a/41, he says:

The ch'i-chih chih hsing is just this hsing as fallen into the midst of ch'i-chih. Therefore [each thing] follows its ch'i-chih and as a matter of course has one [particular] hsing. This is just what Master Chou meant when he said that "each individuates its own hsing." If there were in the beginning no original (transcendent) hsing, then from where would this ch'i-chih chih hsing come?

In this passage, Chu Hsi is explaining the individuality of actual natures by reference to the history of their ramifications from the root of all being, which is the t'ai-chi.

The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 65:4af/19, reports the following conversation:

Chih-chih said: "The Cheng-yi maintains that yi is the general term for change, and an alternative word for exchange, which is just the li (i.e., potential) for the ceaseless production and reproduction of the two ch'i, yin and yang. In my opinion this teaching is well stated."

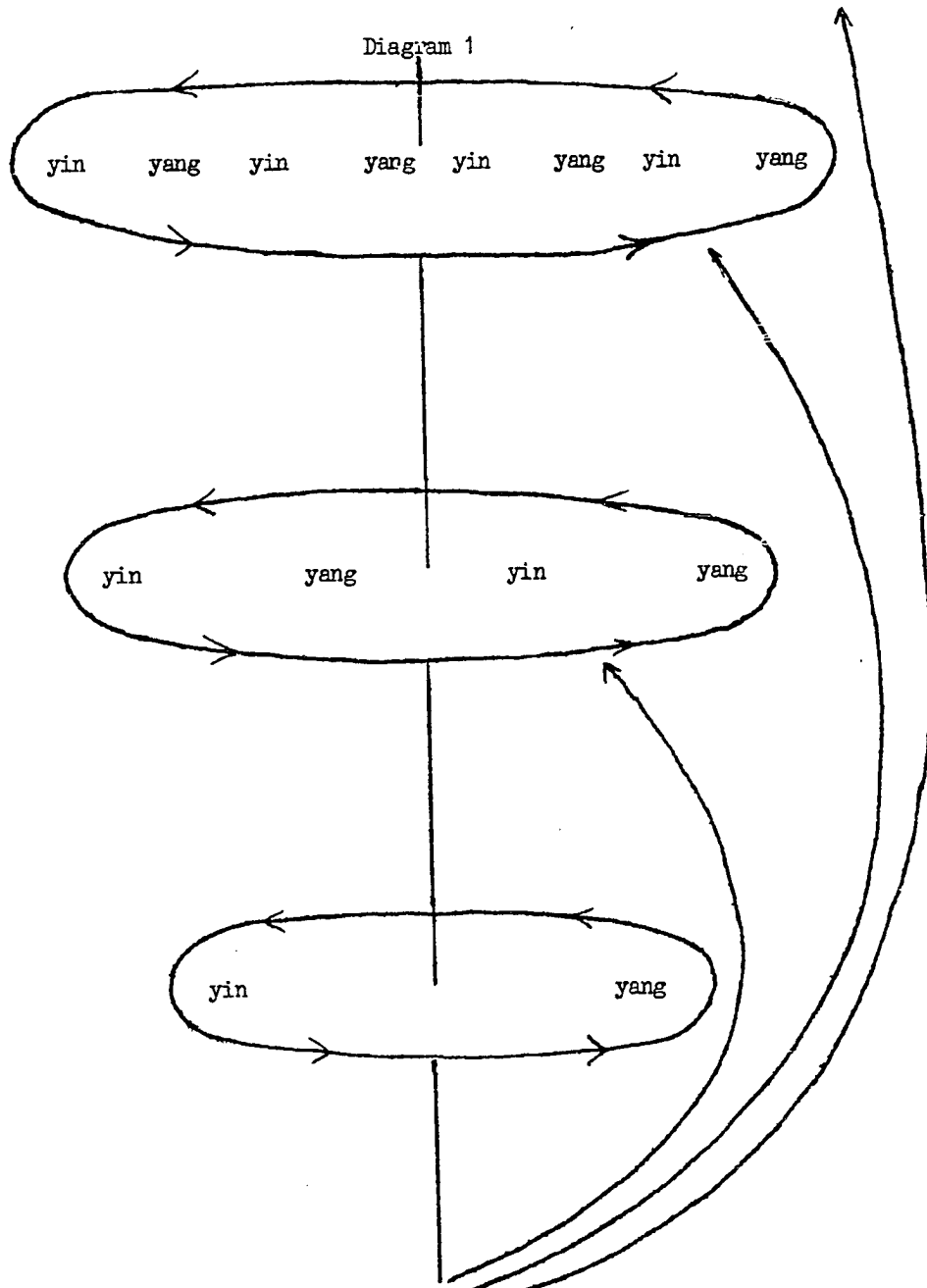
[Chu Hsi] replied: "I take it that the word 'yi' has two meanings: change and interchange. In the pre-creation (hsien-t'ien 先天) diagram one side was originally all yang and the other side was originally all yin. [Now,] in the midst of yang there is yin and in the midst of yin there is yang. [The reason] is just that yang went over to interchange with yin and yin came over to interchange with yang. The two sides faced off one by one. Actually, [yin and yang] did not really come and go. It is just

that their hsiang did so. However, the sage originally did not think about it in this way either. He simply drew a yang or an yin and then each one produced two [more]. Above a yang was produced a yang and an yin. Above an yin was produced an yin and a yang. Things just kept going on in this way, one became two, two became four, four became eight, eight became sixteen, sixteen became thirty-two, thirty-two became sixty-four. Having formed a thing (wu-shih 物事) it was naturally orderly like this. All of this is [based on the fact that] the primal (pen-jan 本然) ineffable efficacy of heaven and earth was like this from the very beginning, and all that was needed was for the sage to trouble himself to diagram it.

##### 5. The Hexagrams as Analogs for Contingently Constituted Natures

The manner in which a creature "falls out" or is produced by the ramification of the root of all being is mirrored in the (ontological) process of forming a hexagram, as diagrammed by Shao Yung and recapitulated by Chu Hsi in the Yi-hsüeh ch'i-meng [Lifting the veils of youthful ignorance from the study of the Book of Changes]. The t'ai-chi transforms itself and forms the lowest level (looking at it on the model of the formation of a hexagram -- the most fundamental level is at the top of the T'ai-chi t'u, however). This lowest level is a cycle and thus a configuration composed of one yin and one yang phase. When this cycle runs its course, a second level, composed of two yin phases alternating with two yang phases, is formed above it. When the second series is completed a third level consisting of eight phases is formed, and so on. According to my tentative understanding, any creature is the combination of one phase from each level. Just as hexagrams have more or less ideal patterns, depending on the placement of hard and soft lines, so, too, creatures may have more or less ideal ch'i patterns.





**T'ai-chi Transforms Itself**

A new level appears upon the completion  
 (t'ung 通) of the yin-yang cycle below it.  
 (The above diagram is non-traditional, and is for explanatory purposes only.)

Diagram 2

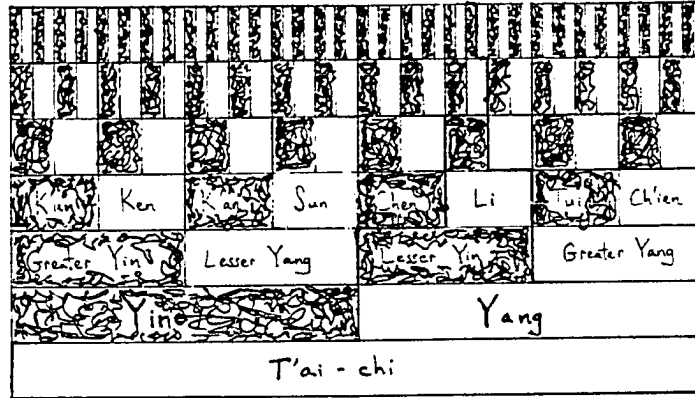
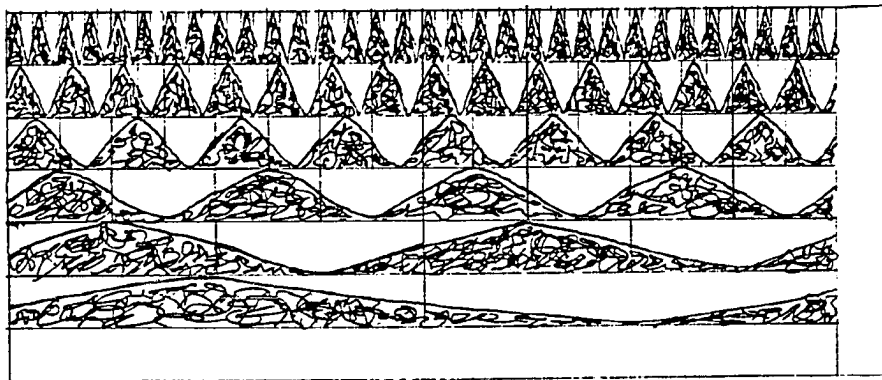


Diagram of the Sixty-four Hexagrams

(The above diagram is traditional and has already been presented in the chapter on Li, above, page 179.)

Since yin gradually transforms to yang and yang back to yin, the traditional diagram could be made somewhat clearer as follows. (The illustration below is another non-traditional diagram of my own making.)



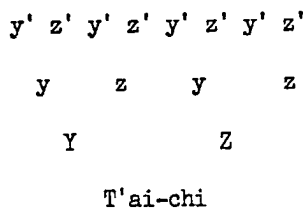
A further change could be made by cutting the diagram out and rolling it into a cylinder. By rotating it, some idea of seasonal and other yin-yang changes can be demonstrated.

In the section on li an ideal li has already been described above, page 179. Just as yin and yang on the first level are ch'i, so too the yin and yang on each succeeding level must also be ch'i. Of course, since li and ch'i are aspective, we were able at that point to give a description in terms of li. The basic intuition of the Yi-ching is that whether something is yin or yang is not so important as the context of other yin and yang on other levels with which the given yin and yang must interact or to which it will respond. (One easy way to see this is to think of yin and yang states in a hexagram as representing dominant and submissive individuals in a social hierarchy. An ideal hexagram is symbolic of proper social order. A hexagram is "good" to the extent that it models the maintenance of proper social order by emblemizing situations in which those who should be dominant and those who should be submissive actually are so.) Concrete instances of interactions between yin and yang states are given by the Yi-ching. But we miss the point if we insist that it is only the concrete instances mentioned that are meant. It is the relationships that are most important. These relationships are li. But for now, let us look at the constitution of a human being or other creature.

Diagram 7 is a polar projection of Diagram 2. In Diagram 7, a creature is mapped not from its physical center, but from its metaphysical center. That is, what is most fundamental to the constitution of the creature is placed in the center, with subsidiary constituents surrounding it on several levels. The diagram shows the t'ai-chi at the center, then yin and yang (the two instrumentalities), the four hsiang (images, foreshadowings), and so on. I have shown all the yin and yang possibilities on each level even though ch'i on each level would actually be either waxing or waning at any one time so that

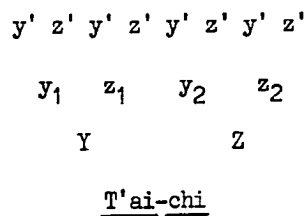
there would really only be one set of yin-yang states as indicated by the zones crossed by some radius drawn through an arbitrarily selected point on the circumference of the outer circle. One further point -- the relationships involved are constituted not only by the "vertical" combinations, but also by the "horizontal" combinations involved. For instance, let us use "y" to represent yang and "z" to represent yin. The following chart shows the first three levels beyond the t'ai-chi:

Diagram 4



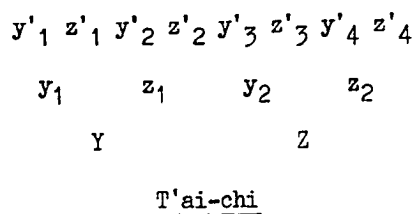
Now consider, for instance, the third-position y on the second level. It is not only a y, but a y over a Z, a y flanked on the left by a z over a Y and on the right by a z over a Z. The first-position y on the second level is a y over a Y flanked on the left by a z over a Z (since the diagram should really be cut out and rolled into a cylinder) and on the right by a z over a Y. It follows that we can meaningfully differentiate between the two y's and the two z's on the second level, so that our diagram becomes:

Diagram 5



Since  $y_1$  is significantly different from  $y_2$  and so on, the same line of argument allows us to determine that the  $y$ 's and  $z$ 's on the third level become

Diagram 6



Now we can see that  $y_2$  is characterized by being flanked by a  $z_1$  and a  $z_2$ , and moreover, by being topped by a  $y'_3$  and a  $z'_3$ . These interrelations may be compared to the subtle variations of pitch involved in transposing from one key to another when using non-tempered musical scales. A series such as --+ may appear several times at higher levels of the diagram, however these seemingly identical patterns are in fact subtly different.

Diagram 7

a particular li

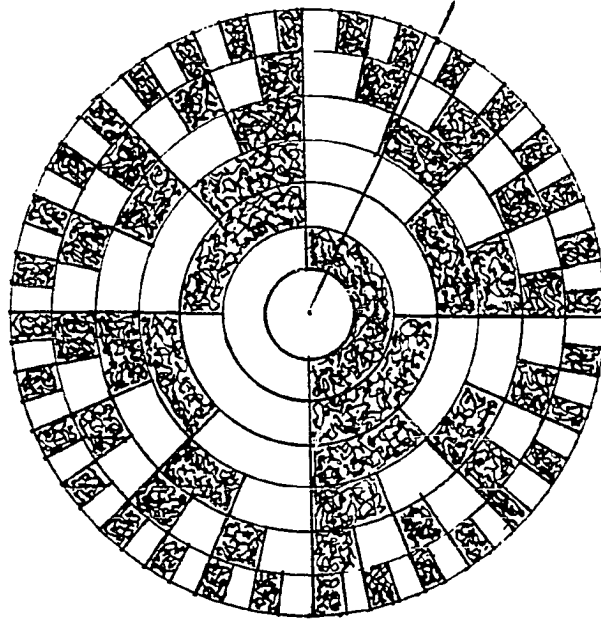
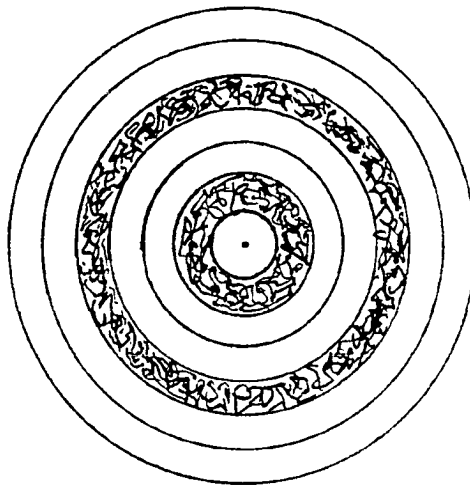


Diagram 8

the same li seen as an individual creature



Note that diagram 8 is a "section" along the radius labeled "a particular li" of Diagram 7.

Diagram 7 above expressed the same relationships just described, in the form of concentric circles, with the t'ai-chi at the center. This diagram shows all of the yin-yang possibilities up to the sixth level, which is that of the hexagram. An individual type can be found by looking at a particular segment on the periphery and the levels of yin and yang adjacent to it on a line drawn from the center. Of course, instead of an abrupt transition from black to white, there should be "sine" curves going around each concentric circle to form extensions of the familiar comma-form yin-yang diagram (See Diagram 9 on page 287):

Diagram 8 shows the ch'i corresponding to a particular selection taken from the first diagram. Note that once again the diagram does not indicate the subtle differences in "coloration" due to the influence of adjacent yin-yang states, nor does it indicate that all levels are possibly either waxing or waning and not necessarily exactly at a minimum or maximum.

Diagram 8 is a diagram of a particular creature. The center shows not his physical center, although there may be some degree of correspondence involved, but the metaphysical center of the creature. Ethical awareness is consciousness of the core levels. All human beings have access to the second torus, which is the level of the four hsiang (images, foreshadowings) -- or in ethical terms the Four Beginnings. The sage has access to the first torus,

which is the level of the Two Instrumentalities -- yin and yang.<sup>24</sup> It was this level of awareness that enabled the original composition of the hexagrams. Finally, the sage has access in mystic contemplation to the center circle, which is the fountainhead of all being and all pattern, the t'ai-chi.

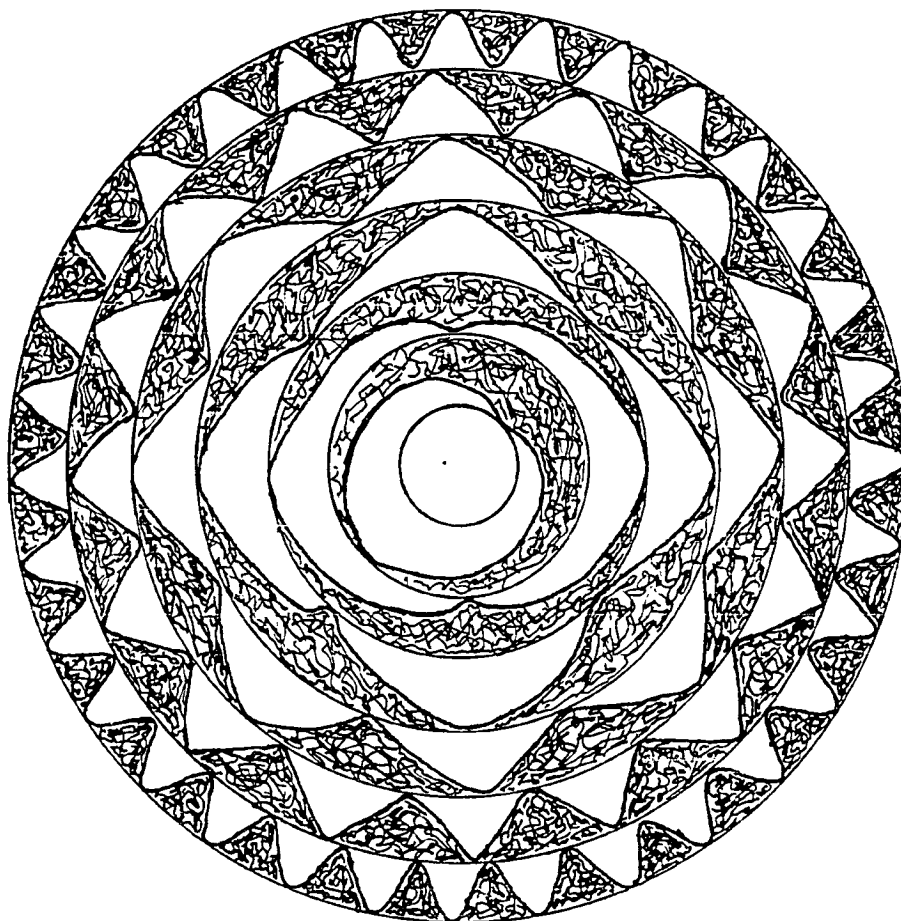
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24. The Huai-nan-tzu, 11:8a/17, says: "'Perspicacity' (ming 明, "enlightenment") does not refer to one seeing the other, but only to seeing oneself. 'Acuity' (ts'ung 聰, usually "intelligence" but here the ability to hear clearly) does not involve hearing the other, but only to hearing oneself. 'Understanding' (ta 達, lit., "to attain," "to reach all the way to") does not mean knowing the other, but only to knowing oneself. Thus the body is that wherein the tao is placed for safekeeping. If one attains (lit., "gets") one's body (i.e., fully implements and manifests one's innate potentials), then one attains to the tao." For Chu Hsi as well, one's person has the tao latent within it.



Diagram 9

The yin-yang pattern of all li. Tai-chi is at the center, and is neither yin nor yang.



Note that diagrams 7, 8, and 9 are all non-traditional, and are for explanatory purposes only.)

The reason that animals do not have access, or at least full access, to the ethical levels, and the reason that most human beings do not have access to the level of the Two Instrumentalities and beyond, is that their own pattern of yin and yang on the several levels impedes their awareness. When there is an appropriate pattern of yin or a yang on the several levels, this condition facilitates communication between the core and the periphery.

#### 6. Individuality Accounted for by the History of Ramification from the T'ai-chi

Chu Hsi's explanation of the individuality of actual hsing by reference to the history of their ramification from the root of all being, which is the t'ai-chi, means that the individuality of a given creature lies in the uniqueness of its ontological pattern -- a structure that is, nevertheless, shared on its more fundamental levels with other creatures. The implication would seem to be that changing the ch'i-chih chih hsing of a creature must involve changing this ramiform pattern, and hence must involve changing what I call its pattern of being. From what Chu Hsi has said in other places, it would seem to follow that the ch'i-chih nature of each creature is different, even though it is an expression of the same transcendent li, the t'ai-chi.

There is the [transcendent] hsing of heaven and earth, and there is the hsing found in ch'i-chih; thus the fundamental inexplicable efficacy of the t'ai-chi is the one root of the myriad different [hsing].<sup>25</sup>

As Chu Hsi said in a letter in answer to Liao Tzu-hui 廖子晦 in the Hui-an wen-chi, 45:19b/48, the ch'i-chih hsing of a person is produced as a result of the process of change detailed in the Yi-ching:

25. Quoted without citation in Huang Kung-wei, Sung, Ming, Ch'ing li-hsueh t'i-hsi-lun shih, 216.

The heavenly hsing is li, and nothing more. Ch'ien and k'un (the forces represented by the pure yang and pure yin hexagrams) change and the myriad creatures receive their mandates [thereby].

This process of change (yi) involves contingency. As a result, some ch'i-chih is more completely expressive of the potential found in the t'ai-chi than is other ch'i-chih. This inequality, in turn, produces differences in moral worth. For Chu Hsi, a person's not being good is really a matter of privation, and not the presence of some positive evil. In his third letter to Hsü Tzu-jung 徐子融 in the Hui-an wen-chi, 58:13a/41, he says:

People and other creatures differ in the form and ch'i they have received, therefore their minds have gradations [from] brightness [to] darkness, and their natures have disparities of [relative] completeness (i.e., degrees of perfection).

### 7. Summary

The natures of individual human beings, with all their imperfections, are not accounted for by the Platonic explanation that each being in this world is a more-or-less perfect reproduction of a transcendent exemplar. Nor is the nature of any thing explained in terms of the relatedness of form and function. Instead, the nature of each individual is seen as an actualization of the potential for all being and all pattern, the t'ai-chi. The t'ai-chi is the potential for yin and yang. Yin and yang are in the starkest of terms merely waning and waxing. But both waxing and waning are actual, and by virtue of being actual they involve a certain "thingness," i.e., they are ch'i. To restate in analogical terms what was said in the body of this chapter: The waxing and waning actualized from the t'ai-chi constitute a vibration. In somewhat the same way that a violin string can vibrate with a rich display of

harmonics, so the t'ai-chi actualizes itself as vibrations in many harmonically related frequencies. Any being is a set of states of waxing and waning at various frequencies, and its nature is defined by the pattern of yin and yang so constituted.

## XII. CHU HSI ON CHANGING CH'I-CHIH CHIH HSING

There is a strong historical connection between yin-yang theory and attempts to transform human constitutions by means of alchemy. Since Chu Hsi's idea of the constitution of human nature was based on yin-yang theory, it is not surprising to find that he incorporated many traditional ideas not usually associated with orthodox Confucianism into his program for the moral perfection of human beings.

### 1. Sources of Chu Hsi's Ideas — Early Diagrams

The history of the progression of ideas leading to Chu Hsi's discussions on how to change the hsing found manifest in ch'i-chih leads back to Wei Po-yang's 魏伯陽 周易參同契 Chou-yi ts'an-t'ung-ch'i [Akinness of the trio in the Yi-ching] (said to have been written ca. 142 A.D.),<sup>1</sup> a book for which Chu Hsi prepared a commentary,<sup>2</sup> and beyond that to Han

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1. Many quotations in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan attest to this point. See 65:4a/19, 65:16a/19, 65:17b/19, 67:4b/38, and 100:11af/14.

2. Question has been raised concerning the attribution of this work, the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i k'ao-yi 參同契考異 [Study of textual differences in the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i], to Chu Hsi. Ch'ien Mu has discovered many references to the work at various stages of compilation and revision in the letters of Chu Hsi. See Ch'ien's Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an [A new study of Master Chu], V, 213ff. See also, Fan Shou-k'ang Chu-tzu chi ch'i che-hsüeh [Master Chu and his philosophy], p. 66, and the Ch'in-ting ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu t'i-yao 欽定四庫全書提要 [Notices to the imperial edition of the complete collection of books in four bibliotheca] comments published in the Ssu-pu pei-yao edition of the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i k'ao-yi.

dynasty ideas on prolonging life beyond normal limits by means of medicinal preparations intended to influence one's ch'i.<sup>3</sup>

Two component diagrams of the T'ai-chi t'u (T'ai-chi diagram) are said to have originally been included in the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i.<sup>4</sup> The first of these, the k'an-li 坎離 diagram, is also called the "Aiding rim of water and fire diagram." The beginning of the Ts'an-t'ung ch'i says:

Ch'ien (+++)<sup>5</sup> and k'un (---) are the doors of change (yi), and the father and mother of the multitude of trigrams (or perhaps hexagrams are intended here). K'an (-+-) and li (+-+) rim the perimeter; the rotating hub centers on the axle.

Chu Hsi comments:

Ch'ien and k'un take their positions above and below, and k'an and li rise and fall between them. This [fact] is what is called yi. These are the pre-creation (hsien-t'ien 先天) positions: Ch'ien at the top, k'un below, li at the left, and k'an at the right. Therefore they resemble the shape of the rim of a wheel. [K'an and li's] rising and falling between them is like the axle of a cartwheel fitting into the hub to turn up and down (i.e.,

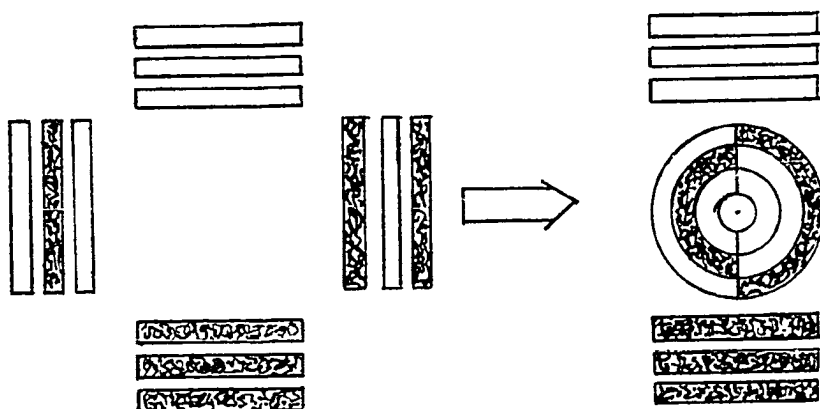
3. Wang Ch'ung's Lun-heng, 2:7b/19, says that although ceramic vessels cannot be decomposed and remolded to make new dishes, metal implements can be melted and recast as other tools or containers. "Human beings are endowed ch'i by heaven. Although each receives [a unique] ming (mandate or fate that determines lifespan) of short or long life that establishes his body, if one acquires an excellent tao (i.e. method, technique) and godlike (i.e., mysteriously efficacious) medicine, the form (hsing) can be transformed and one's ming can be increased." See also 7:11b/19.

4. See Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, II:440f.

5. I use "+" to denote yang or hard lines in a trigram or hexagram, and "-" to denote yin or soft lines. Since trigrams as well as hexagrams are constructed from the bottom up, the left-hand symbol denotes the bottom line, and so forth.

as one side of the wheel, represented by k'an, goes down, the other side, represented by li, go up, or vice versa).

If one uses this description to make a drawing, the following diagram results:

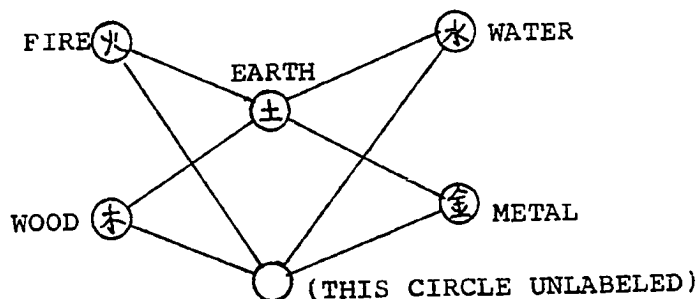


The central part is just the k'an-li diagram found in the T'ai-chi-t'u.<sup>6</sup> This fact does not prove that Chu Hsi had a k'an-li diagram from the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i before him when he wrote his commentary, but it does show how the text could suggest the diagram once somebody decided to curve the lines of the original trigrams involved.

There is less evidence to show that Chu Hsi saw the second diagram, called by some the San-wu chih-ching t'u 三五至精圖. The Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i, chapter 24, (SPPY 19a/25), has the phrase "san wu yü (or wei) yi, t'ien-ti chih ching 三五與 (or 為) 一, 天地至精" (which may mean) three [of] five, and one -- the utmost essence of heaven and earth," but Chu Hsi admits

6. See Uchino Kumaichirō, "Rikuchō Tō Sō kyōhai hakka hōi zukei o kiwamete Shūshi Taikyokuzu no raigen ni oyobu," Tōhō gaku, XXV (1963), 22-23, for a study showing that the K'an-li diagram is not found in extant bronze castings dating before the Sung dynasty.

puzzlement over its meaning (19b/25), and there is no obvious connection between these words and the present-day diagram by that name:

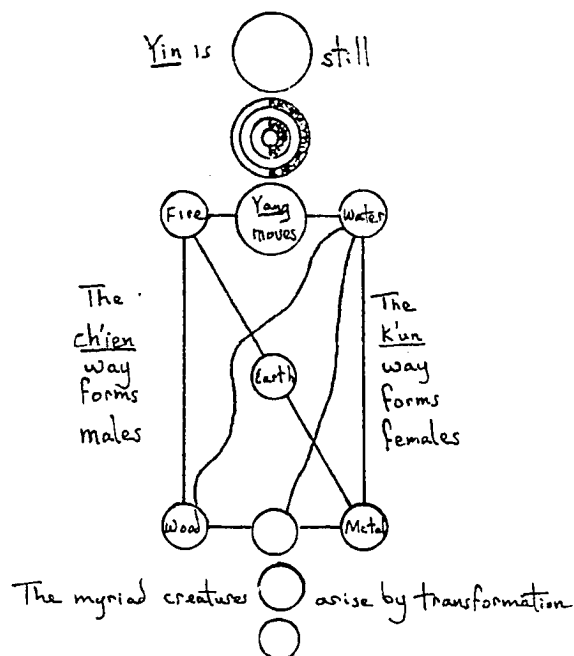


It may be significant that any two of the four phases on the perimeter are brought into conjunction through the mediation of the earth phase in the center to form a group of three, and that they are both directly joined to the one circle at the bottom. I think this unlabeled circle may represent heaven and earth united as one. But this is working backwards from diagram to text. Nathan Sivin suggests that it "makes more sense to read the text as 'ts'an wu yü yi ~~五~~ 五與一' -- 'the five and the one made kin' -- which is what the lines seem to do." This interpretation is consistent with the function of the "[T]s'an-wu chih-ching t'u" found as part of the T'ai-chi t'u (Diagram of the supreme ultimate), but there is insufficient evidence to prove a historical link between the passage in the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i and that diagram.

The earliest extant version of the T'ai-chi Diagram may be the T'ai-chi hsien-t'ien chih t'u 太極先天之圖 [Diagram of the pre-creation t'ai-chi] that appears in the Shang-fang ta-tung chen-yüan miao ching 上方大洞真元妙經 (Tao-tsang 道藏, ts'e 196, chüan 436, tung-hsüan pu 洞玄部, the seventh Kuo 國 section). That work has an introduction under the name of emperor Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang dynasty, who reigned from 713 to



755. Not all authorities accept the introduction as genuine, however.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the diagram has several peculiarities that suggest that it may have been adapted from some other source. The second element is not a proper K'an-li diagram, since the middle arc on the left-hand side is not black. This discrepancy may simply be due to an error in the original engraving or in copying (e.g., from the Sung to the Ming Tao-tsang). That element, however, is not labeled, nor is the bottom circle. Furthermore, the diagram has nothing obvious to do with the t'ai-chi as it stands.



7. In his Sung, Ming li-hsüeh, p. 36, Wu K'ang says that it "seems to be" by Hsüan-tsung. In his Chu-tzu chi ch'i che-hsüeh, p. 20, Fan Shou-k'ang expresses the belief that the introduction is inadequate evidence for dating the text "since the contents of Taoist religious texts occasionally contain [unfounded] emmendations, additions, and deletions."

The first lines of the text preceding the Shang-fang ta-tung chen-yüan miao ching diagram read:

The great tao circulates (yün 運) the ch'i which is genuine, unitary, primal, and yang. Its ch'i is boundless and penetrates everywhere. Therefore it is the ancestor of the myriad creatures. If people can hold to this [ancestor], then they can learn to be spirits and immortals.

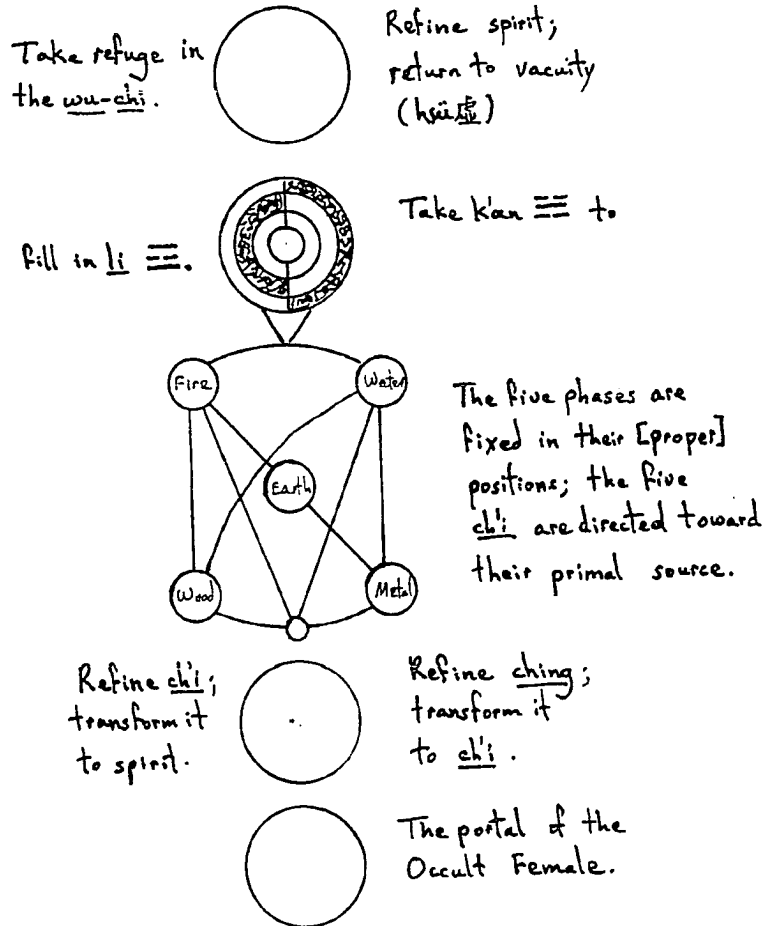
While the t'ai-chi diagram of this work is little different from that of Chou Tun-yi, it seems likely that the Tao-tsang diagram is given not so much to explain the creation of things as to provide a map by which the adept can return to the ancestor of the myriad creatures and become immortal.<sup>8</sup>

Approximately two hundred years after the putative date of the tao-tsang diagram, there appeared another diagram, that of Ch'en T'uan 陳搏 (ca. 906-989), that was meant to be interpreted from bottom to top. The following is a reconstruction based on descriptions by Huang Tsung-yen 黃宗炎 (1616-

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8. See Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, II:442. He quotes Huang Tsung-yen as saying that "when Master Chou acquired this diagram, he reversed its sequence, changed its name, linked it with the great Changes, and maintained that it had been secretly transmitted by the Confucianists. The fact is that the arts of the Taoist practitioners (fang shih 方士) consist of creating the elixir (of immortality) through opposition (to Nature); hence (their diagram) was oriented from below upward. But Master Chou's idea was (to show) how man is produced through conformity (to the course of natural evolution). Hence his (diagram) was oriented from above downward." Fung comments that unfortunately the source of the evidence for these remarks is unknown.

1686) and Chu Yi-tsun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709),<sup>9</sup> of the diagram which Ch'en T'uan was reported to have graven on stone near his domicile on Mount Hua.<sup>10</sup> This



9. See the Sung Yüan hsüeh-an 宋元學案 [Critical study of Schools of the Sung and Yüan dynasties], 12:13a/24.

10. This is the same mountain upon which Chu Hsi wrote his Yi-hsüeh ch'i-meng some two hundred years later. If the diagram was indeed graven in stone, Chu Hsi may well have seen it or have been given an accurate description of it by local residents.

diagram, although a reconstruction, has the advantage that all its parts are labeled. Moreover, they are labeled in a way that is not derivative from the labeling of the T'ai-chi-t'u, but that does permit a consistent and satisfying explanation.

Huang Tsung-yen says:<sup>11</sup>

[This] diagram [is read] from bottom to top to demonstrate the method of reversing the flow [of creation?] in order to complete the elixir [of longevity]. . . . The lowest circle is called "the portal of the occult female." The occult female is the same as the valley spirit [mentioned in the Lao-tzu]. The significance of "female" is a cavity, and the significance of "valley" is vacuity. [The words "the portal of the occult female"] refer to the empty space in the human body [between] the "portals of life (ming-men 命門)," the kidneys. It is the place upon which ch'i depends for its production; that [place (?)] is the "ancestral ch'i." All the functions and awareness of the sense organs and other parts of the human body are rooted (ken 根) in this.<sup>12</sup>

The generative essences are both the root of the interior heaven and earth -- the microcosmic world of the human body and its functions -- and the source of new life at the time of conception. The sixth chapter of the Lao-tzu says:

The valley spirit does not die. It is called the occult female. The gate of the occult female is the root of heaven and earth.

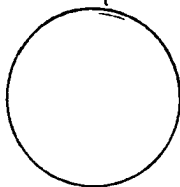
The generative essences can either pass out of the body through the gate of conception, or they can remain within and be directed up to the region depicted by the second circle from the bottom of the diagram. There, according to the

11. Sung Yüan hsüeh-an, loc. cit.

12. This passage describes a concentration technique of "internal alchemy" that may involve sexual practices.

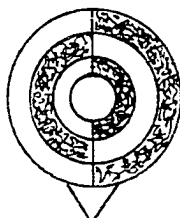
Chou Tun-yi's T'ai-chi Diagram

The wu-chi is yet the t'ai-chi.



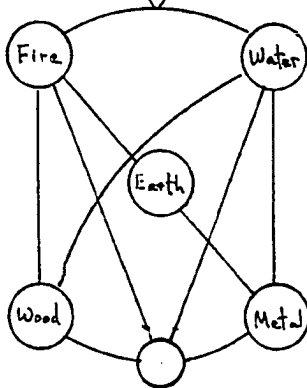
Yang

moves;

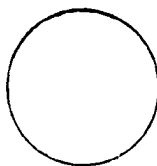


Yin

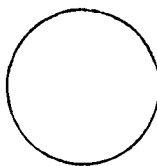
is still;



The ch'ien way  
forms males



The k'un way  
forms females.



The myriad creatures  
arise by transformation.

labels on the diagram, ching (probably what we in the European tradition would call semen, although "ching" represents the concentrated essence of all the visceral systems of function, which the "portal of life" in the kidney region merely stores) is refined into ch'i, and ch'i is further refined into shen (spirit).<sup>13</sup> Before the shen can be further refined, two intermediate steps must be performed. First, the five phases must be put in proper order and then directed toward their primal source. This process is shown at the level of the five interconnected circles. Second, the real analog to the yang lines in each

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13. Nathan Sivin points out that in most medical contexts ching and shen form an yin-yang pair on the same level.

In his article entitled "Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang-shih chung chih kuei-shen-kuan," Hsin-ya hsüeh-pao, I,1 (1955), 31f., Ch'ien Mu brings together several quotations from Chu Hsi (unfortunately without providing citations) that make it fairly clear that Chu regarded ching as a liquid and classed it along with hsüeh (blood). The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 63:31a/39, says that: 1) the moist quality of wood is p'o 質 (anima) whereas the smoke it gives off is shen (spirits). 2) Ching and hsüeh are both p'o, which is classed with kuei (ghosts), whereas speech and other activities are ch'i, which is classed with shen. 3) The juice of sugarcane is kuei and its fragrant ch'i is shen. 4) Ching is to be classed with kuei. So the water phases of things are p'o or kuei, and the gas phases or activity phases are shen. Ching is clearly regarded as a liquid. Blood, saliva, and seminal fluid are the three most easily observed fluids of the human body. Followers of the hygiene schools whose works are recorded in the Tao-tsang pay much attention to the proper conservation of both saliva and seminal fluid. Whether any other body fluid are meant in the diagram under consideration is unknown to me, but I would be astonished to learn that semen was not included among them. See also the Hsing-li ta ch'üan-shu, 28: 27b, and the Ch'ang-sheng t'ai-yüan shen-yung ching, Tao-tsang, ts'e 1050, cheng-yi 卍 乙 pu, tien 卍 10, 13af/15.

of the two elements of the k'an-li diagram must be taken to cancel the real analogs of yin lines, returning everything to an undifferentiated state. After this is accomplished, or perhaps in accomplishing this, one then further refines shen or spirit so that it returns to vacuity and one takes ones refuge in the wu-chi 無極. The context strongly suggests that "wu-chi" means the pole or originating "point" of complete nothingness or void from which, according to Wang Pi's interpretation, Lao-tzu taught that all being derives. Thus the normal direction of creation and procreation is reversed. The adept reverses those energies, which would otherwise have been squandered in the indulgence of sexual desire, to permit his reunion with the infinite and eternal source of all being.

## 2. Meditation to Achieve Awareness of the T'ai-chi

In very much the same sort of language used by the Taoists, Chu Hsi advocates using quiescence (ching 靜) and seriousness (ching 敬)<sup>14</sup> to return the mind to its primal state. He is not saying that one should transcend the body and vault in one move to a transcendent realm. The t'ai-chi is fundamental to each being's very existence. Therefore there is no need to transcend that mundane existence. But there is a need to perceive the t'ai-chi adequately since there is some partiality remaining even in being in communication with yin or yang. It is not a question of perceiving the t'ai-chi solely in introspection, for the t'ai-chi is everywhere; it forms the fundament of every being. Therefore, once it is adequately perceived it is perceived everywhere and at all times.

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14. See Fan Shou-k'ang's discussion in his Chu-tzu chi ch'i che-hsüeh, 48ff.

This commonality is what Chu stresses in his contrast of the Confucian t'ai-chi or hsing with the Buddhist idea of hsing. The Buddhists teach that nothing has a tzu-hsing 自性 or enduring "self-nature." On the contrary, they say, everything is śūnya — void in the sense that there is no enduring being. Chu Hsi teaches that everything has a tzu-hsing. Since each individual nature is an expression of the t'ai-chi, and the t'ai-chi is our hsing (or more exactly, the perfect potential for our hsing), there is nothing that is outside the compass of our hsing. There is immense variety in the self-natures of the various actualizations of the t'ai-chi, but the actualizations are fundamentally one. This means that every being is transcendently related<sup>15</sup> to every other being. Their common ground, moreover, is not, as we might expect, the fundamental laws of physics, but the ethical drive that we experience at the core of our being since the first and second levels of actualization of the t'ai-chi are strongly axiological in character because they correspond to yin and yang and the four hsiang (foreshadowings). The latter account for Mencius' Four Beginnings or four moral virtues.

### 3. The Need for the Fundamental Transformation of Human Beings

As we have seen above, in later life Chu Hsi did not believe that the imperfections in man's behavior were due to an accretion of bad environmental influences. Therefore, returning the mind to its original state<sup>16</sup> cannot be

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15. A transcendental relation is one in which the related elements are connected by way of transcendent being -- in this case the t'ai-chi -- but are not necessarily connected in any other way.

16. See Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 94:15b/49.



interpreted to mean wiping out the superficial traces of external influences. For Chu Hsi, the hsing is fundamentally the t'ai-chi. Just as the t'ai-chi is the center of creation, so the hsing is the ontological center of the whole person. The ontological pattern of some people is such that it permits them effortlessly to be aware directly of the t'ai-chi of which they are a part. These people are sages. The ontological pattern of others is such that their communication with the t'ai-chi is obstructed (sai 塞). In order to regain communication with the t'ai-chi, their ch'i-chih must be changed. The process of getting in touch with the t'ai-chi is thus the activity of changing one's ch'i-chih.

#### 4. To Limitations or "Imbalances" of Ch'i there Correspond Imperfections of Immanent Li

In the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 98:16a/27, Chu Hsi says:

In terms of the world, heaven and earth are the father and mother of the world. All is one unitary ch'i, and initially there was no distinction or separation [between things]. 'Other people and I are blood brothers; the [myriad] creatures and I are comrades.'<sup>17</sup> The myriad creatures are all born of heaven and earth, yet man alone receives the balanced (cheng 正) ch'i<sup>18</sup> of heaven and earth.

Man is the most spiritually responsive of the things of this world because he receives the most balanced ch'i. Yet among men there are differences in degree of perfection, because there are still some differences in the balance of ch'i.

17. Chou-tzu ch'üan-shu, 1:3a/16.

18. See Huai-nan-tzu, 4:3/13, and Erh-Ch'eng yi-shu, 11:4a/12.

Therefore it is desirable to correct imbalances of ch'i. But what is meant by ch'i having a balance?

The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 95:13a/47, says:

[Someone] also asked: "Everyone who speaks of the nature is only talking about "the continuation [of the t'ai-chi] is good." How can 'the continuation of it is good'<sup>19</sup> {Hsi, A:4} refer to the hsing?"

[Master Chu] replied: "My friend, you are absolutely correct in your doubts. This [passage] is addressing concrete human beings to say that the continuation [of the t'ai-chi as seen in them] is good. If we speak of what comes before (lit., above) this, then when the li of heaven has just flowed out, this too cannot be called the hsing."<sup>20</sup>

"In "Life is what is named by 'hsing,'" {Menc., 6A:3} hsing refers to ch'i and ch'i refers to hsing.<sup>21</sup> This speaks of the mixing of hsing and ch'i in human life.

[Master Chu] said: "Only when some ch'i becomes a human being, and li then is concretely present in a body, can we talk about it as hsing."

It has already been shown that "li" means both the potential for being with a non-capricious pattern, order, or structure within; and also the pattern, order, or structure actualized from the original potential. Chu Hsi maintains that the word "hsing" refers to the manifested li, the concrete pattern of being of a human being found within ch'i. As manifested li intertwined with ch'i, there

19. The Chin-ssu-lu, 1:14/28, quotes Ch'eng Hao.

20. This stage is that of yin and yang, four hsiang (images, foreshadowings), etc.

21. Chin-ssu-lu, 1:13/28.

are individual differences among all hsing. The criteria for the goodness or proper balance of ch'i would appear to be necessarily the same as for the goodness of li, which in turn are defined on the model of the ideally formed hexagram which has yin and yang states at their appropriate levels (wei 位). (See above, p. 176, ftn. 67.)

The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 94:17a/49, says:

[Someone] asked: "Upon production of the five phases, each individuates its own hsing<sub>T</sub>.<sup>22</sup> {Chou, p. 13} When [these] five hsing<sub>T</sub> are stimulated and move (i.e., react), then good and bad become distinguished.' {Chou, p. 19} Does the word 'hsing' in this passage imply [the idea of] the endowment of ch'i?"

[Master Chu] said: "The hsing<sub>T</sub> cannot be separate from the endowment of ch'i. Only when there is an endowment of ch'i does hsing<sub>T</sub> exist within. If there is no endowment of ch'i, then the hsing<sub>T</sub> has no place in which to be deposited. The hsing<sub>T</sub> of those who have been endowed clear ch'i is within clear ch'i. This clear ch'i does not block or obscure that goodness. The hsing<sub>T</sub> of those who have been endowed with turbid ch'i is within turbid ch'i, and that goodness is obscured by their turbid ch'i. 'On the production of the five phases, each individuates its own hsing<sub>T</sub>' [means] that each [creature] follows that creature's [own individuality] to possess [its unique hsing<sub>T</sub>]."

In this passage, "hsing" is used in two senses: (T) transcendent and (I) immanent. I have marked them accordingly with subscripts. The transcendent

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22. The Hui-an wen-chi, 58:13bf/40, records Chu Hsi's answering letter to Hsü Tzu-jung wherein he says: "This hsing falls into the midst of ch'i-chih and therefore itself becomes a[n actual] hsing [whose characteristics are] consequent to that ch'i-chih's quality]. This is exactly what Master Chou meant when he said that 'each individuates its own hsing.'"

hsing (i.e., li or t'ai-chi) can appear more or less perfectly in immanent hsing.

Each immanent nature is somehow unique, and has its own unique degree of clearness. Clearness is in turn a function of balance in the ch'i

components.<sup>23</sup> The hsing is the endowed ch'i in a particular configuration or

23. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 17:5bf/20, says:

"[Somebody] asked: '[Someone else] asked [about the idea that] balanced (cheng 正) and linking ch'i (t'ung-ch'i 通氣, i.e., ch'i that reaches to and connects with the source of being) becomes human beings while imbalanced and obstructed ch'i becomes creatures. How about it?'

"[Chu Hsi] said: 'Creatures have form (hsing 形) because of the consolidation of ch'i. The ones that get the pure [fraction] become human beings. The ones that get the turbid [fraction] become [ordinary] creatures. Imagine that in a large furnace one melts iron. The good part of it will be in one place, and its dregs will be in yet another place.'

"[The questioner continued]: 'Ch'i has [inequalities of] clearness and turbidity, yet li is one and the same. What about this idea?'

"True indeed. li is like a precious pearl. In a sage or worthy, it is as though resting in clear water. Its dazzling radiance spontaneously shines forth. [But] in the ignorant and unworthy, it is as though submerged in turbid water. It is necessary to remove the mud and sand before [li's radiance] can be seen. . . . And so it is necessary to overcome and regulate [oneself]. The myriad creatures also have this li. When has heaven ever failed to bestow it upon them? It is only because ch'i is murky and obstructed . . . that the li [disappears]. Yet among creatures there are those who know of [the proper relations among] ruler and subordinate and between mother and son, who know of sacrifice [to gods, spirits, or ghosts], and who know the seasons. They have a ray of light within them. Nevertheless, they cannot be like human beings simply because they cannot overcome and regulate [themselves]."

The Hui-an wen-chi, 58:13af/40, records a letter in answer to Hsü Tzu-jung in which Chu Hsi says:

"In the case of jen (benevolence), this is the primary one among the four virtues within the hsing (nature). It is not that outside the hsing there is another thing that acts in concert with the hsing. However, it is only the hsin (heart, mind) of human beings that is most responsive and so can give fulfillment to these four virtues and express them outwardly as the Four Beginnings. In the case of [other] creatures, their ch'i is unbalanced (p'ien 偏) and mottled (po 駁) so that their minds are confused and obstructed and do indeed have that to which they cannot give fulfillment."

li. The precise explanation of how li is manifested in ch'i lies in the T'ai-chi Diagram. Understanding this point will enable us to see more clearly how the goodness of any given ch'i is related to the perfection of its yin-yang pattern or li.

In the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 137:24a/27, Chu Hsi says that "Only Master Chou's T'ai-chi Diagram has the idea of ch'i-chih. The theories of Master Ch'eng, moreover, were taken from his perceptions of the T'ai-chi Diagram. Just how this diagram relates to ch'i-chih is made somewhat clearer by the exchange recorded in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 94:17a/49:

[Someone] asked [about the dictum]: "The five phases are stimulated (kan 坎), move, and then good and evil differentiate." {Chou, 2:1/18 (c.p. 19)} [Master Chu] said: "The hsing of heaven and earth is li. As soon as one reaches the [point of] having yin and yang and the five phases there is the hsing of (i.e., found manifest in) ch'i-chih. Thereupon there are the differences between obscured and bright [awareness of the ethical content of the t'ai-chi], and rich and poor [lit., "thick and thin" moral endowments]. What [is meant by] getting [heaven's] hsing and being the most responsive, is something posterior to [the existence or formation of] ch'i-chih.

The T'ai-chi Diagram depicts the actualization or coming into being in this world of the t'ai-chi as yin and yang, their further transformation by a second level of actualization performed by the t'ai-chi, into the five phases, and eventually the production of the myriad creatures. According to Chu Hsi, anything beyond the t'ai-chi has a ch'i aspect. But it also has a li (order or potential) aspect, and this is its hsing. To the limitations of ch'i there correspond limitations of the li that has been manifested therein. (See above, p. 179, ftn. 69.)

Whether the limitation of li seen in imperfect beings is a deficiency in the yin-yang pattern of the creature itself, or is rather a limitation on the ability of the creature to perceive the t'ai-chi, is a moot point. Perhaps it is best to say that a deficiency in the yin-yang pattern of a creature limits the creature's ability to be aware of the t'ai-chi and be aware of the moral values contained therein.

When someone asked for an explanation of the T'ai-chi Diagram, Chu Hsi explicated the yin-yang pattern of human beings. This discussion is preserved in the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 94:14b/49:

[Chu Hsi said:] "Speaking of it in terms of the human body, the ch'i that is inhaled and exhaled is yin and yang. The corporeal body with its blood and flesh is the five phases (identified elsewhere by Chu Hsi as chih). Its hsing is li." He also said: "Its ch'i (breath) is spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Its physical being (wu 物) is Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. Its li is humanity, sense of right and wrong, sense of ritual, wisdom, and trustworthiness." He also said: "Ch'i is just ch'i, and chih is just chih, and they cannot be muddled together in discussion."

The first quotation identifies the corporeal body with the five phases. The second identifies physical being with Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, which are the five phases. The five phases are elsewhere identified with chih. So the corporeal body or physical being of a person is his chih, and this is distinguished from his ch'i, which is the relatively insubstantial breath that fills the body and vitalizes it but is not identical with it. If the li mentioned here is to be identified with the t'ai-chi in the T'ai-chi Diagram, even though li is ensconced in a particular physical organism, then this passage would seem to indicate that the hsing of a creature is in some sense

ontologically prior to its physical actuality. Moreover, the creature's breath is ontologically prior to its flesh and bones.

In Chu Hsi's view, the hsin is a composite of li and ch'i; in other words it is an actual thing of this world with a pattern of yin and yang on the several levels similar to other things. It is fairly clear that a failure to be fully aware of the t'ai-chi is an inadequacy of the hsin. If one fails to be aware of the t'ai-chi -- which amounts to being unaware of one's own hsing -- this is a failing that derives from the "physical" aspect (i.e., ch'i) of one's constitution, and equally (since they are aspective) from the li immanent in one's constitution. The failure of awareness is due to an inadequacy of what one actually is, and does not in any sense indicate a lack in what one could potentially be. That would be small comfort were transformation, transmutation, or re-actualization not possible.

**5. Desire is Symptomatic of Imperfect Li-Ch'i Constitution that Acts as a Barrier to Awareness of the T'ai-chi, the Source of All Value**

Desire is the primary obstacle to correct thought. In the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 78:44af/47, Chu Hsi says:

There are those who from birth have few physical (wu 物) desires. It seems that selfish desires are something within ch'i-chih.

At 61:4a/21 he says:

Mencius too spoke of the ch'i-chih nature in such [references as that to] the mouth's [response] to tastes.

A passage at 60:23b/35 records Chu Hsi's response when someone asked about the dictum that benevolence, the sense of right and wrong, the sense of ritual, and wisdom are rooted in the hsin:



The above mention of the [morally] noble man['s endowment of ch'i] was meant to include the sage. Now the [morally] noble man's endowment of ch'i is clear and bright, and is without the encumbrance of physical (wu 物) desire. Therefore, when [such a person] is born, this root reaches into the soil, and for that reason the appearance and form of life (sheng se hsing 生 色 形) is manifested externally [through that person]. When one of the masses is born he is cut off from this root of his by his endowment of ch'i with its physical desire. This root then fails to reach into the soil. Those who have a cruel heart have lost the root of benevolence. Those who have a dull heart have lost the root of the sense of right and wrong. Those who have an angry, hateful heart have lost the root of the sense of propriety [or ritual]. Those who have a benighted heart have lost the root of wisdom. Each individual has its barrier, yet now human beings need only remove their barriers of physical desire and cause the roots of the four [beginnings] to reach into the soil. In the case of "Yao and Shun being innately possessed of it," the root had already reached into the soil [at their births]. [But in the case of] "T'ang and Wu recapturing it (lit., returning to it)," [the root] had originally not reached the soil, and only later was shifted so as to reach it.

Desire is the barrier that keeps a human being from being rooted in the ground of the t'ai-chi. The t'ai-chi is the source of all value since yin and yang, its first-order actualizations, are axiological as are jen, yi, li, and chih (the four ethical drives), which are its second-order actualizations as seen in the ethical experience of living beings and which correspond to the four hsiang (foreshadowings). (See p. 84.)

6. Achieving Awareness of the T'ai-chi Produces a Fundamental Transformation of the Human Constitution

Following the lines of the teaching that the bright mirror gathers no dust (i.e., that one who is morally pure will not be contaminated by exposure to worldly temptations) found first in the Chuang-tzu, 5:17/60, and later a Ch'an byword, Chu Hsi argues that if only the li (t'ai-chi) be once perceived, then the impediments in the ch'i-chih will disappear.<sup>24</sup> According to the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 118:19a/33, when someone remarked that individual ch'i-chih each have different defects, Chu Hsi replied:

Only after one comes to an awareness of li will the ch'i-chih then naturally change, and those defects will disappear of themselves.

In a general way it is clear that this means that having once seen the truth by getting around or seeing through the distorting physical desires in some way, these physical desires will cease to trouble one's perception. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 95:15b/49, says:

[Someone] asked again: "In that case, the statement that people must apply effort to purifying and ordering until [their impurities] are [all] set in one corner means that when people have sought what will or can be used to change their ch'i-chih and, having changed their ch'i-chih, then return to the original (pen-jan 本然) nature, no external additions are involved."

[Chu Hsi] said: "That is correct." Changing ch'i-chih does not mean bringing something to it from outside, but beyond this what can be said about this process?

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24. See T'ang Chün-yi's article, "Li chih liu yi," p. 85.

7. Transformation Involves a Change in the Yin-yang Pattern of a Person

Chu Hsi is not explicit about the course that this change in ch'i-chih takes, nor about what is meant by a change in ch'i-chih, beyond the observation that one whose ch'i-chih has been so changed will never be led astray by physical desires. In view of the world-conception shared by members of Chu Hsi's school, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that a change in ch'i-chih must mean a change in the yin-yang pattern of the creature.

One indication of a change in the very being of a person, akin to those changes discussed in the Tao-tsang, is given by these words of Chu Hsi taken from the Chu-tzu ch'üan-shu, chüan 46, quoted in Fan's Chu-tzu chi ch'i che-hsüeh, 130f.

What is maintained within is called virtue (te 德);  
 what is manifested in affairs is called behavior (hsing 行). . . .  
 Virtue's being brought to completion within me is like there being  
 a man within who must be filial, brotherly, loyal, and true, and  
 who absolutely is unwilling to perform unfilial, unbrotherly,  
 disloyal, or untrue acts. This process is like the nurturing of an  
 infant within spoken of by the Taoists.

This "nurturing of an infant within" is the goal of the practices explicated by the numerous t'ai-chi and internal elixir diagrams in the Tao-tsang.

That Chu Hsi conceived of the possibility of a definite "physical" change, when he spoke of these pursuits of immortality, is shown by the following passage taken from the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 125:16bf/20:

People say that the hsien (usually translated "immortals") do not die; it is not that they do not die; rather they just gradually melt away until they are imperceptible. It must be that they are able to refine their corporeal ch'i (hsing-ch'i 形氣), causing their dross (cha-tzu 渣滓) to totally melt away so that only the pure and insubstantial (hsü 虛) ch'i [remains], and they are able to ascend and change.

It is most significant that Chu Hsi uses the term "dross" in this passage.<sup>26</sup> It is the same term he uses to describe the gross portion of the primal ch'i (otherwise called chih) that separates from the fine part and settles to become the earth. Here he indicates that the Taoist hsien purified themselves of their chih, leaving only the more subtle ch'i which would then naturally float off to join the rest of the ch'i that forms heaven.<sup>27</sup>

It seems almost certain that Chu Hsi did not intend to achieve such a dramatic result through his spiritual practices. And it seems likely that he would not have wanted to face the accusation that he quotes at one point from the words of Han Yü -- that "today all those who speak [about the hsing] mix Buddhism and Taoism into their discussion."<sup>28</sup> It might be noted in passing that

26. See also, Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 63:26a/39

27. See Joseph Needham's Science and Civilisation in China, V:4, p. 238, for a translation by Nathan Sivin of a T'ang dynasty text that speaks of the adept destroying the outer body, dissolving yin ch'i (the equivalent to riddance of cha-tzu), and subsequently floating off to immortality.

28. See Han Yü's short essay, Yüan hsing 原性 (Searching out the origins of [human] nature), in chüan 11 of the Han Ch'ang-li ch'üan-shu 韓昌黎全書 [Complete works of Han Yü].

he disguised his authorship of the commentary on the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i by the use of a cryptic pen name, and signed the Yi-hsüeh ch'i-meng by a sobriquet by which he was not commonly known.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless he was much influenced by the alchemical traditions widely represented in the Tao-tsang. Although he did not seem to expect such obvious results through the spiritual practices he advocated as did the authors of the Tao-tsang texts, he still intended to produce what we should call a physical or ontological change in the adept by his means of spiritual cultivation. In fact, if we do not accept the Western mind-body dichotomy, it is rather difficult to explain a "spiritual" change that does not involve a "physical" change.

Chu Hsi's own words can be adduced to show the debt of his school to the traditions often called religious Taoism partly preserved in the Tao-tsang. In the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 100:14a/14, he says:

The numerology of K'ang-chieh (Shao Yung) had its source in Ch'en Hsi-yi.

Ch'en Hsi-yi (Ch'en T'uan) was the author of the internal-elixir diagram mentioned above. Chu Hsi also indicated that the T'ai-chi Diagram of Chou Tun-yi had its source in the diagram of Ch'en T'uan, and that the learning of the Ch'eng brothers built on this source.<sup>30</sup>

#### 8. Summary

Chu Hsi sought to change the entire person neither by a mere process of changing his ideas and beliefs nor by alterations in his gross physical

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28. See the discussion of the authorship of this text above, p. 173n.

29. See the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 93:8a/15 and 137:23bf/27.

makeup. Rather, he sought to change the pattern of yin and yang on the successive levels issuing from the t'ai-chi so that the state of each level would be such as to interact optimally with all other levels. Although he did not advocate or intend to produce the outwardly obvious changes sought by the adepts described in the Tao-tsang tradition, he did indicate that a fundamental ontological transformation in a human being could be achieved by study and meditation.

### XIII. CONCLUSION

Although perceptions of concrete entities do not differ appreciably among members of the European and Chinese cultural traditions, the systems of concepts that the two groups used before modern times to explain the entities and activities of the universe differed considerably. The terms "hsin," "ch'ing," "hsing," "li," "ch'i," "chih," and "ch'i-chih" are central to the world-conception of the pre-modern Chinese. Because their ideas and ours differ so much, it is a dubious practice to translate those terms into English, and virtually impossible to find approximate translations that can hold over more than a limited range of useage. European culture simply does not have these concepts; consequently, it has no suitable words for them. Any words one might use as simple translations carry unwanted connotations. The best approach to conveying the Chinese world-conception to readers of Western languages is to explain the Chinese terms by beginning with their earliest instances that apply to concrete particulars and then to trace their development as they become more technical and more abstract.

One of the greatest stumbling blocks to discussing Chinese thought in terms of Western ideas is that cultures in the European tradition make sharp divisions between what are called "physical things," "minds," and "acts" (some regarded as physical acts and some regarded as mental acts), whereas traditional Chinese thought uses the concept of ch'i to talk about many of the things that would be called physical events as well as mental functions and phenomena in Europe and America.

The philosophy of Mencius opened two momentous lines of inquiry. Mencius' conclusion, that the hsing of human beings is good, was preserved, although for many it must have required a strong act of faith to believe people

who commit evil deeds to be fundamentally good. The true rationale for belief in the goodness of human hsing, and hence the true meaning of Mencius' teaching, was lost until the present century. In its place grew up the world-conception that has been the subject of this study. This second line of inquiry, unintentionally initiated by Mencius, developed because of the misinterpretation of doubtless obscure and fragmentary expressions of his ideas. Hsun-tzu argued that human beings have innate tendencies that influence them to commit selfish acts, and that those impulses may be acted upon directly to produce socially disruptive consequences unless they are mediated by the informed activities of the intellect that can guide them to seek their enlightened self-interest.

There were two long-term positive results of Hsun-tzu's misinterpretation: 1) centuries of fairly productive discussions with the object of either deciding in favor of Mencius or Hsun-tzu or finding a viable compromise between the two; and 2) the development of psychological and metaphysical ideas that culminated in Sung Neo-Confucian philosophical theories. Those philosophies took the terms "hsing," "ch'ing," and "ts'ai" from the original passage by Mencius and turned them into technical terms to be explained by further theorizing.

The negative results of Hsun-tzu's argumentation and the theorizing that followed from it was that a crucial part of Mencius' teaching was obscured for two thousand years. Social institutions were shaped under the influence of the ideas of Hsun-tzu counter-balanced only by the remaining portion of Mencius' thoughts and by other philosophies.

While Mencius was quoted as saying that the hsing of human beings is good, it is clear that he was as aware as anyone of the bad things that human



beings do. If "hsing" be interpreted to mean a static characteristic or quality, then Mencius' position is opened to ridicule. It is important to recognize that hsing involves a tendency toward some state or activity, and then to seek the tendencies that Mencius believed to be present as components of the human hsing.

When the early Chinese specified the hsing of water as being cold,<sup>1</sup> they did not mean that any water found would necessarily never be warm or hot. What they had observed, rather, was that water not subjected to a source of heat would tend to cool. They attributed this to a natural tendency in water itself. Modern thinkers explain such cooling in terms of the effects of evaporation, radiation of energy, convection, and conduction. The Chinese simply noted the self-cooling effect that reduced the temperature of water and also cooled other things with which it came in contact. Fire was believed to have a different hsing, for its tendency was to heat.

While Mencius doubtless observed the "likings, dislikings, happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy" that motivate human beings, he also perceived other, superior, motivating forces within them: benevolence, sense of right and wrong, sense of ritual, and the ability to affirm or deny on rational grounds that we call wisdom. Moreover, he noted that these two groups of motivating factors did not share equally powerful or strategically advantageous positions within a person even though they were all tendencies of that person. The superior group of innate drives he called hsing. Clearly, "hsing" does not mean the Platonic idea, the Aristotelian form, or the constitution of a thing.

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1. To cite one source at random: the T'ai-p'ing ching 太平經, the beginning line of the "An-lo wang-che fa 安樂王者法" chapter, c. p. 20. See also the Hui-an wen-chi, 72:46a/54.

According to Mencius, the hsin -- the higher group of motivating forces mentioned above plus the will -- holds a strategic advantage over the other sources of motivation or activity of a person. The hsin may fail to use its advantage and thus lose control like a general who carelessly permits insubordination in his army. But it can always reassert control if it functions intellectually and ethically (ssu) and if it unifies its will (chih).

The hsin is the natural sovereign of the entire person. Chuang-tzu expressed doubts about the existence of a true ruler within (chen-tsai 眞宰), but Mencius was sure that if one took care to minimize the boisterous demands of the passions and to seek integrity of thoughts as well as deeds, then nothing could be done to coerce the hsin short of killing the organism.

While the human organism was constituted by external factors, once that organism became established in its own right as a source from which causal influences flowed at the behest of its own will, the hsin ruled from an invulnerable bastion. Although brought into existence by external forces, it could not be ruled by them thereafter.

Mencius believed that the hsing of every human being is a true mapping of the will of heaven, so he could stipulate that the hsing be considered absolutely determined without prejudicing his belief in the organism's freedom to find a way of fulfilling its innate needs.

Mencius' concept of human beings argues for a government that is primarily concerned with educating and otherwise nurturing the good innate potentials of human beings. People naturally want to be in control of themselves, as even Hsün-tzu would surely admit. If being truly in control of

oneself insures ethical action, then government had best promote this genuine autonomy.

If, as Hsün-tzu argued, people are born troublemakers governable only if they can be made to comprehend that civilized behavior is in their own enlightened self-interest, then government must function to make them see what is truly to their advantage. The ancient sage kings had the wisdom to perceive long-term consequences and make rules for human beings accordingly. The people of later ages, Hsün-tzu thought, should be content to learn from them.

Suppose that people fail to accept the teachings of the sage kings and do not comprehend that misbehavior naturally brings undesired long-term consequences while good behavior brings advantages. Then government may institute rewards and punishments to impress the consequences of their actions upon these short-sighted subjects. This approach to government led to the philosophy and practice of Legalism.

The Legalist approach was incorporated with ideas of Confucius, Mencius, and others in Confucian practice. The teaching of Mencius that human beings are innately good carried considerable weight despite having been cloven from his teachings about the sovereign hsin. This remainder of Mencius' thought exerted a moderating influence on the practice of government.

Had Mencius' teachings concerning the human hsin been fully comprehended, they might have significantly changed the character of Chinese government and social organization.

Mencius thought of human hsing in terms of tendencies or moral drives. In later times Buddhists identified the hsing with functions performed by mind. The Neo-Confucians, led by Chu Hsi, rejected this view, arguing that the hsing

is a stable entity that explains the presence of an invariant human moral nature.

Mencius merely used the word "ch'ing" to refer to the unsullied state of human beings, but because of the misinterpretation of his position by Hsün-tzu (whose essay on the evil of human hsing suggested that by "ch'ing" Mencius had meant "emotions" or "feelings") the word became a technical term prominent in psychological theories of the Sung dynasty and afterwards.

The term "ts'ai" (innate potential, capacity) suffered a similar fate. But while Mencius indicated that the ts'ai of human beings is good, the Sung Confucians argued the contrary position. It was their belief that the ts'ai reflects the actuality of the human organism, and since actual human beings are imperfect this amounts to saying that their ts'ai are not good. This contradiction of Mencius' position was not stressed by the Neo-Confucians since they placed Mencius second only to Confucius in authority. They resolved this conflict with a two-tier theory of hsing: a transcendent potential hsing (li or t'ai-chi) and an immanent, actual hsing (ch'i-chih chih-hsing). Absolute goodness could be attributed to the transcendent hsing while the actual hsing could tacitly be admitted to be less than perfectly good. This enabled them to account for evil without the need to come into open conflict with Mencius' teaching, which would have mitigated against the general high respect that they felt for him.

The word "li" equated with "t'ai-chi" and used to name the transcendent potential for all being and all pattern or order originally meant "to lay out the fields." Its first extended meaning was "pattern." The scope of patterns named by "li" rapidly extended from the orderly arrangement of the veins in leaves and other such concrete patterns to the gigantic organic system

of relations that was believed to suffuse the entire universe. After the things and events of all space and time were said to be subsumed under one great li, the scope of li was further extended to include the relations of yin and yang states on the several levels of being between the transcendent source of being and the appearance of corporeal being.

The idea of a ramiform pattern in the process of creation, which stems from the Hsi-tzu appendix to the Yi-ching, has been a very important component of the theory of li. The failure of modern scholars to recognize the direct contribution of yi theory to the development of the concept of li since the Chou dynasty may be one reason why the understanding of the concept li did not progress much since the seventeenth century. The ideas that immanent li derive in some way from the transcendent t'ai-chi and that the t'ai-chi may in some sense be called a li were not simply grafted onto the existing stock of li theory by the Sung Confucians, but grew from it.

Outside the Confucian school, the concept of li was complicated by the presence of the belief in earth as the feminine metaphysical principle that corresponds to heaven as the masculine metaphysical principle. Whereas the Confucian heaven was conceived as embodying both yin and yang and therefore was independently capable of creating all being, the non-Confucian account (which was probably the earlier of the two) assigned yin to earth and yang to heaven. Both Wang Pi's commentaries and certain diagrams in the Tao-tsang indicate that their authors conceived of a ramiform pattern ascending from earth to meet a ramiform pattern descending from heaven. Here, of course, "ascending" and "descending" are taken in a figurative sense since we are dealing with heaven and earth as metaphysical principles and not as the perceptible entities that

emblemize them. It appears from the equal importance given to heaven and earth by thinkers outside the Confucian tradition that traces of a belief in a hierogamy between heaven and earth may have lingered among them.

While li were frequently conceived to be imperceptible and beyond the ken of ordinary people, they were not conceived to transcend the universe until Buddhists used the word "li" in a new sense. "li" had already been used in some contexts to refer to the content of experience. When the Buddhists spoke of the mystical experience of nirvāṇa it was natural that they too would refer to the content of their experience by the native Chinese term they judged most appropriate: "li." This practice began with the Han dynasty author of the Ssu-shih-erh chang-ching and was carried forth by Chih Tun (314-366); it had earlier crossed over to non-Buddhist thinkers with Kuo Hsiang (d. 312).

When "li" was applied to the experience of mystic fusion with the tao, with tathatā (thusness, ultimate reality), it not only suggested that li could be transcendent, but that the transcendent li could be known in a paranormal psychic state.

It is not clear to me what Mencius meant when he said that there is nothing in the world that is outside the hsing. But Sung philosophers identified hsing with t'ai-chi and took Mencius' words to mean that there is nothing in the world outside the t'ai-chi in the sense that the t'ai-chi is the potential for all being and pattern. This affirmation is broader than the assertion that the t'ai-chi contains all the contents of the human hsing as part of its potential, to which they would also agree. In both cases it is important that there is no indication of any concept like that of a Platonic idea or Aristotelian form. The potential of the t'ai-chi to produce non-chaotic being lies in its ability to produce a characteristic ramiform pattern of yin and

yang. T'ai-chi as an amorphous and transcendent potential realizes itself in manifest forms. This actualization is different from the ancient Greek idea that there were perfect exemplars for things (such as the Idea of a human being) in a transcendent world.<sup>2</sup>

With the possible exception of some Buddhists, no philosopher I have studied believed li to be extrinsic to the things of the universe. In fact, each creature was conceived by the Sung Neo-Confucians to have t'ai-chi at the ontological center of its being, so even in the case of the transcendent source of all being and pattern, one cannot say that this li is extrinsic to creatures. Rather, one must say that each creature shares in a common transcendent center. Since the English word "principle" has strong connotations of a power that rules from the outside (seen in the word's Latin root, "princeps," or "chief") I think it advisable to avoid "principle" as a translation for "li."

During the Sung dynasty the Ch'eng brothers did assign normative meanings to "li." This assertion had the effect of making li seem extrinsic to things. If the Ch'eng brothers indeed conceived of li as extrinsic to the things they govern, they would be outside the mainstream of Chinese philosophy and much closer to some Buddhist thought on this particular point. More study is needed to determine, if possible, just how the Ch'eng brothers conceived of li.

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2. Huang Siu-chi, in her article on the concept of t'ai-chi, p. 284, speaks of it as a "universal pattern." I believe she errs in making t'ai-chi seem to be either an actual patterned array on the one hand, or a "mental" plan for things on the other.

There are some grounds for suspecting that knowledge of things was believed to occur by a kind of resonance between external li (li in the world) and internal li (li in one's own being). The Yüeh-chi (see above, p. 125) indicates that the li of similar creatures resonate. Based on the words of Mencius, Confucians believed that the hsing of human beings encompass the hsing of all creatures. So it should be possible for human hsing to "move according to their kinds." If li are capable of resonating with each other, then the resonance of one's internal li with an external li should constitute knowledge or awareness of the external presence of that li. This is a subject for further inquiry.

My study has shown that previous English-language interpretations of "ch'i" are inadequate. "Ch'i" has been translated as "material force" by Wing-tsit Chan and as "matter-energy" by Needham. Both of these translations carry unfortunate connotations. Chan says: "Every student of Chinese thought knows that ch'i . . . means both energy and matter, a distinction not made in Chinese philosophy." {1963: 784} It is more to the point to say that neither the concept of energy nor that of matter is used in traditional Chinese philosophy, and to define clearly the concept ch'i that is used to cover some of the same ground. Joseph Needham makes explicit what is only suggested by Chan: "[Bruce] did well, in my opinion, to include energy with matter in the interpretation of Chhi. Today we know (too surely for our peace of mind) that matter and energy are intercontrovertible." {1956: 472, note} Needham rejects out of hand an earlier translation of "ch'i" by Chan: "The translation of chhi as 'vital force' by Chhen Jung-Chieh will not do." {1963: 472, note}. But it seems to me that the connotations of "ch'i" are much closer to Leibniz's "vital force" ("vis



viva") or Kant's "vis activa" than to the terms from modern physics that Needham prefers.<sup>3</sup>

Ch'i is not something that is transformed into energy and itself disappears as mass vanishes to produce immense quantities of heat and radiation in atomic fission. Ch'i is not something that is consumed like fuel in a fire. Ch'i is not something in motion that collides with something else to produce a physical change as a hammer strikes a bar of metal to dent and heat it. Ch'i is only comparable to a living entity that, by virtue of its own essential being, has the power to act, to perceive, to think. The reason is not hard to find. The Chinese mentally abstracted the vitality, the "livingness," of organisms and named it ch'i. Why, then, is an organism alive? Because it has ch'i. (Chu Hsi performed the same kind of circular reasoning centuries later: Why is the man a swine? Because he has the ch'i of a swine.)

As soon as life is hypostatized as ch'i it is perforce given an independent existence (at least as far as the traditional conceptual system of the Chinese is concerned). What began as merely a perceived quality of living beings -- their vitality -- now is identified with a substance whose existence can be used to explain other phenomena -- their breath. This ch'i, or "lifebreath," as first conceived is ethereal. But it was further argued that the ethereal ch'i could consolidate to form creatures, and that all entities are formed of ch'i. So even heaven and earth are fundamentally ch'i. Finally, it was believed that entities consolidated from ch'i could themselves evolve ch'i (perhaps on the analogy of the condensation and evaporation of water). So the

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3. See Kant's discussion in his Thoughts on the True Estimations of Living Forces, pp. 3ff.

creatures on earth could be explained as the consolidations of the commingled ch'i of heaven and earth. I believe that "ch'i" still retains its vitalistic sense even when it is used to talk about cosmic processes, and that in turn this connotation of the word explains how cosmic processes were thought to engender life.

The question of the relationships between hsin, the rest of the five ch'i storehouses (tsang, or what we would call "internal organs"), ching, shen, hun, p'o, hsüeh, and ch'i still bears further investigation.

Chinese philosophers who used the concept of ch'i to explain the production of creatures of the universe could not long avoid the question of why ch'i takes various forms. The earliest explanation, that the mandate of heaven determines the forms of the creatures, was not given in terms of ch'i, but the implication was clear. After Wang Pi gave li a position of authority tantamount to that of the mandate of heaven, the way was open to link the concepts of ch'i and li by saying that li, rather than ming, determines the forms taken by creatures. In the Appendices to the Yi-ching are found associated ideas of yin-yang, t'ai-chi, and (in one pregnant passage) ch'i. Since yin-yang ideas were later associated with li, the authority of the Yi-ching Appendices could be lent to the argument that the t'ai-chi is a transcendent potential for li and all being. The first immanent expression of this potential is on the level of yin and yang. This first level and all successive levels have ch'i aspects (corresponding to what we might call their actuality) as well as li aspects (corresponding to what we might call their form and potentiality).

The concept of chih is unusual in that it was present from very early times and yet did not assume much importance until Sung times, and because it has two complementary meanings that give it a special explanatory power and that

may well have influenced the formation of the concept of ch'i-chih. From the earliest written philosophies "chih" meant substrate, the underlying medium from which some characteristic substance is grown or evolves. From the first century of this era it had another, perhaps originally unrelated meaning: something somehow related to ch'i and to form (hsing 亨), but more concrete than either. Combining the two ideas produces the picture of something relatively substantial from which other, less-substantial and more active, things grow or evolve.

Chih was believed to be mutable at least as early as the time of Hsün-tzu. This assumption immediately suggests that whatever is produced from chih can be changed by changing that chih.

When Tung Chung-shu used the term "chih" to encompass both hsing and ch'ing (feelings, emotions), he virtually defined it as imperfect. This definition had an important bearing on the Sung dynasty argument concerning what Mencius meant when he said the nature of human beings is good. Sung thinkers could speak of ch'i-chih and associate the good hsing with transcendent li and the bad ch'ing with the immanent, actual constitution of human beings.

Ch'i-chih is a two-phase system of ch'i and chih. The li or pattern found in ch'i-chih is the hsing of that ch'i-chih. Ch'i-chih can be changed either through moderating it in the ch'i phase or through re-forming the ch'i-chih by affecting its yin-yang pattern.

When Chu Hsi talks about changing ch'i-chih, he means more than changing habits or memories. There is nothing in his philosophy that could be called an immaterial substance to correspond to most European and American thinkers' conceptions of mind and thoughts. But on the other hand, for Chu Hsi

changing ch'i-chih does not mean changing the physical body in any grossly perceptible way.

The difficulties with talking in English about changing ch'i-chih are how to avoid the appearance of maintaining that there is a "spiritual" change involved that affects only an immaterial mind or soul, and how to avoid the other extreme of appearing to maintain that there is a gross physical change involved. It will not suffice to talk about spiritual changes with physical concomitants. We need, rather, to picture for ourselves a continuum of being from the most incorporeal and universal to the most concrete and particular. A human being participates in all these levels. The change in ch'i-chih produced by moral cultivation will be somewhere in the intermediary area, not at either extreme.

I should like to leave the reader with an image or an analogy that may, however inadequately, serve to summarize Neo-Confucian metaphysics in vivid and concrete terms:

There is an ocean called T'ai-chi from which all is produced. In the course of this ocean's rising and falling, ice forms from place to place on its surface. As the waves beat more and more wildly, layer upon layer of ice is formed from its spray. Some ice is clear and other ice is milky. All ice is to some extent responsive to its surroundings. But only a few icebergs, whose strata are beautifully formed, can form clear images, can reflect what is beyond them. And of all these responsive creatures, only a minority are sufficiently clear throughout to enable self-awareness of their deepest levels or beyond to the sea from which they have all sprung. For the others, the milky writhings of passion, lust, and desire screen their own deepest being from themselves.

Yet there is hope, for it is a strange law of this world that once the depths of the sea are mirrored in an iceberg, its ice will be forever clarified. Some icebergs succeed by sufficiently subduing the writhings of passion to see downward through themselves. Some borrow a glimpse from others of what is obstructed and hidden within themselves. Some do not try, or try and fail, and are forever blinded by their own contingent shortcomings.

Since the time of the founders of the Chou dynasty it has been taught that the religious duty of human beings is to obey the mandate of heaven. To obey the mandate, one must know it. Even though that mandate is mirrored in one's own hsing, it is not easily seen.

The second religious duty, then, is to know the mandate of heaven. Memorizing the words of the sages will not suffice. Knowledge and recitation are two separate things. For the mandate of heaven is not a code graven on stone or metal, but a living force that motivates all whom it touches.

Learning permits knowing; knowing permits learning. Learning implies becoming a new person. Becoming this new person implies a fuller exercise of one's innate powers. Man becomes one with heaven.

Is there any need to ask: Why should one choose to follow the mandate of heaven?

### Toward the Future

This study began with a core of Chinese philosophical texts and asked anew the question of what certain technical terms meant. Are the answers valid in a wider context? Will examination of sources outside the realm of philosophy provide evidence that the definitions provided by my investigations are wrong? Will a broader scope show extended meanings not detailed here? I can already point to the concept of ming-li and the Hua-yen Buddhist idea of the interpenetration of the worlds of li and phenomena as two examples of developments in a key concept that my study did not treat since they were felt extraneous to the idea of li as it contributed to the concept of pien-hua ch'i-chih chih hsing. Another subject of possible future investigation would be the concept of ch'i in literature.

One more kind of extended study would investigate the concepts such as ching-shen, kuei, shen, hun, p'o, and the like that are used to describe the "interior" constitution of human beings. Manfred Porkert and others have studied these terms and given explanations for them, but I myself have been unable to apply their definitions consistently to the texts I have studied. Perhaps the problem is only with my comprehension, or perhaps the several authors of these texts did not have a common understanding. In any event, I should like to have a clearer understanding of these matters.

I am not the first to have remarked with some exasperation that the classical texts almost never define current philosophical terminology despite the thriving tradition of writing commentaries on earlier texts. Sophistical argumentation was typified by Hui Shih in his verbal duels with Chuang-tzu during the Chou dynasty. The Wei-Chin school of dark learning (hsüan-hsueh 玄學) excelled in displays of discursive cleverness. It is my impression,

however, that there was never the kind of argumentative scrubbing to brass tacks that characterized the school of Socrates and Plato.

Plato's dialogues are literary creations done for the sake of presenting philosophical argument. To what extent they represent a real tradition of close argument I do not know. But there is one instructive contrast between those dialogues and the ch'ing-tan 清談 (pure conversations) of the Wei-Chin philosophers. The Wei-Chin thinkers did not always spare others "faces." In fact, Chih Tun was noted for his cutting tongue. The earlier Hui Shih was more gentle, and there is no indication that thinkers like Mencius and Kao-tzu were either excessively courtly or belligerent. So there seems to have been a broad range of difference in the level of abrasiveness characterizing their exchanges. However, there was very little of the pinning people down that provided the zest of Greek argumentation. A key part of that style of philosophic exchange was the hammering out of clear-cut definitions. It may be that enough evidence could be assembled to permit an informed judgment concerning the style of argumentation in the Greek and Chinese cultures. Such an evaluation would be valuable for understanding the development of ideas in the two cultures.

Aristotelian philosophy has strongly colored religious doctrines in the Christian tradition. Religious beliefs have a profound influence on the education and social conditioning of young people and on the entire fabric of social relations. The original religious insights are colored in some way by the philosophical systems used to give them expression. What would have happened if early Christianity had encountered a traditional Chinese philosophical environment rather incorporating Greek metaphysical ideas? Can

the original religious insights not yet be combined in novel, revealing, and creative way with the observations in natural religion made by the Confucians, Neo-Confucians, and other pre-modern thinkers?

Coercion is common to both post-Mencian Chinese political thought and practice as well as to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious discipline and the political systems that grow from them. Many critics have noted anomalies that proceed from these coercive influences. Mencius argued for the absolute autonomy of the human mind; he also maintained that each human being has innate moral drives that characterize his very being. We have had ample experience with the philosophies that counsel the need for coercion. Can we form a more humane and enlightened system of belief and practice now that we see clearly where the opposing postulates have led?

In defining human beings and other creatures, the modern scientific world-view tends to think in terms of sets of isolated traits that are said to characterize the subject under investigation. The Chinese system described in this dissertation operates in terms of overlays of yin-yang phase continua. What appear to be isolated individuals may share changes at deep levels of their beings despite being separated by great distances. This is a different idea from that of action at a distance, and may have something to do with Jung's idea of synchronicity. The properties of such a system of thought are not well understood. If we can learn to understand our world in terms of this kind of a system of thought, we may gain important insights into the nature of the universe and the things in it. In terms of Chuang-tzu's rabbit-trap analogy, we have been trapping entities of certain classes in "rabbit-traps" that are appropriate for their capture. We suffer the illusion that those entities are all there is to apprehend. If we employ a new set of "traps" we may obtain novel phenomena



to investigate. The idea from Chinese medicine of "systems of organic function" is one example of the kind of descriptive generalization we might hope to find.

The mind-body dichotomy has long bedeviled philosophers in the European tradition. The question of how the mind interacts with its environment is of importance to scientists studying the function of the brain and to those attempting to create artificial intelligence. Part of our trouble with understanding the interaction of the mind with the world may lie in fundamental assumptions of which we may be barely aware. The Chinese system investigated here, or at least the most fundamental parts of it, may aid contemporary philosophers to better conceptualize mental function. Can we discover enough fundamental concepts by investigating the Chinese system to create an axiomatic system for describing mental function? The idea of resonant li that has come up from time to time in my study may be an important part of any such axiomatic system. If we can create an alternative system to our own, it may aid us in attempts to create an adequate one for ourselves.

Appendix I -- Ku

The following discussion is pertinent to my interpretation of the philosophy of Mencius. It explains why I interpret "ku 故" as "causal factor" and "li 利" as "configuration." These words appear as special technical terms in the discussion above on page 66.

In his article entitled "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," Ts'ing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies, New Series, VI 1-2, December 1967, p. 253, Graham translates "ku" in Mencius, 4B:26, as "sticking to things as they used to be," and gives considerable evidence in favor of his interpretation.<sup>1</sup> But he also says that one has a "general impression when

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1. For Chu Hsi's explanation, see the Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 57:16b/18:

[Someone] asked: "[Ch'eng Yi] says that [when Mencius said 'Those in the world who speak of hsing base themselves on ku and nothing more,' the word] 'tse 則' is a flavoring particle (yü chu 語助, a word that indicates emotional attitude rather than cognitive meaning). What do you think about this?"

[Chu Hsi] replied: "The word 'tse' cannot be viewed as a flavoring particle. The use of 'tse' indicates inadequacy. 'Those in the world who speak of hsing speak only of ku and nothing more.' 'Ku' has the meaning of 'that by which it is so' (so-yi-jan 所以然). Following that by which they are so, they do not lose (i.e., contravene) their original natures (pen-hsing 本性). With regard to the tendency of water to flow downward, if one follows it to channel (lit., lead) the water, one [preserves] its nature. If one strikes water to give it an [upward] impulse, one can indeed make (shih 使) it be at a higher elevation (lit., on a hill). However, this is not the original hsing (tendency, nature) of water."

For a modern Chinese perspective, see Chao Hsi-chin, "Meng-tzu 't'ien-hsia chih yen hsing yeh tse ku erh yi yi' chang chieh [Explanation of the section of Mencius where he argues that those who speak of hsing (actually) refer only to ku]. Ta-lu tsa-chih, XXX, 4 (Feb., 1961), 16-34.

groping towards an understanding of early Chinese concepts that often they tend to be more dynamic than their nearest Western equivalents, and that English translation freezes them into immobility." {1967:216} While he attempts to give "hsing性" a dynamic translation, he gives "ku" a static interpretation. Graham uses the last occurrence of "ku" in the passage from the Mencius, 4B:26, to determine the meaning of the first usages:

Ku reappears in the last sentence, this time as a noun. If we look at this occurrence without preconceptions derived from the first two, we can hardly fail to understand it as the preceding state of the heavenly bodies from which we infer the date of a future solstice (the use of ku 'former' from which ku 'reason' derives). {1967:252}

As Graham himself points out, merely knowing the dates of past solstices will not suffice to predict the dates of future ones. {1967: 254} Even if one knows the length of a solar year, this information in itself does not lead to the conclusion that another solstice will follow the last one a solar year later. Logically, one needs the further premise that what has happened in the past, namely a solstice every 365.25 days, will continue to happen in the future. And that may amount to the belief that something constant in the universe makes certain things happen as they do.

The Shuo-wen chieh-tzu 說文解字 [Explaining simple graphs and complex characters], written by Hsü Shen around 100 A.D. defines "ku 故" by the words "shih wei chih yeh 使為之也" (make to do it, cause it to happen). It regards "ku 古" (ancient) as the phonetic element of the character, and emphasizes, in its definition, the element indicating activity brought to bear to produce some result, "p'u 攴" ("to strike," and by extension, "to drive"). Contrary to this interpretation, Graham virtually equates "ku 故" with the

element within it that the Shuo-wen regards as its phonetic, making it practically synonymous with "ku 古" (ancient). I believe both interpretations are partially correct but incomplete. While the two words ku 故 and ku 古 have similar meanings and pronunciations and seem to be cognates, as early as the time of Confucius the character "ku 故" had both the meaning of "cause" or "reason for," and the meaning "things as they used to be" which is suggested for it by Graham. {1967:253}

"Ku 故" appears twice in the Analects as a noun meaning "old practices" or "old ways" {2:11, 8:2}, and appears to be distinct from "ku 古," which means "ancient times." It appears twice in the phrase "shih ku 是故" ([for] this reason). {11:25, 11:24} It appears once in the phrase ". . . ku yeh 故也" (. . . is the reason). It occurs seven times as a conjunction, "therefore." Both elements of "ku 故" would therefore appear to suggest part of the meaning of the word. I think the most fitting definition, which preserves both senses, is: "things of the past (ku 古) driving (p'u 攴) new things to happen."<sup>2</sup> Thus in the case of solstices, knowing their ku amounts to knowing not only past occurrences, but also to knowing that there is a reason for their regularity.

In the passage at 4B:26, when Mencius says: "Those in the world who speak of hsing base themselves on ku and nothing more," he is saying that they take into consideration only the "things as they used to be" that "cause things to happen." Mencius cannot be saying that other people discuss hsing in terms of old practices or ancient ways. It is, moreover, incomprehensible to me why

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2. The Mo-tzu, 40:1/20, gives this definition: "Ku, so te erh hou ch'eng 故 所得而後成 (ku is what being obtained brings completion to something)."

Mencius would say that "Old practices take profit as their basis," or even, as Graham has it, "Those for whom man stays as he used to be take profit as their basic consideration." {1967: 253} Not only is this interpretation implausible, but Mencius would even seem amenable to people "staying as they used to be" if this means retention of their innate goodness, their "hsin (heart, mind) of a new-born baby." {Menc., 5A:5} Finally, Graham's interpretation would make it a non sequitur for Mencius to speak next of the principles of good waterway management or flood control. Defining "ku 故" as I have proposed prepares the way for a correct understanding of the Mencius passage. This reinterpretation produces a surprising discovery regarding the meaning of the word "li 利" (ordinarily interpreted as "benefit" or "profit"), which in turn makes the entire passage coherent.

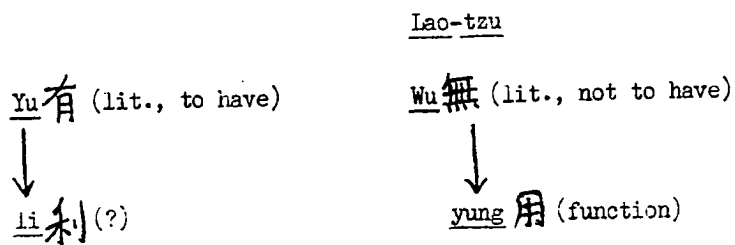
The Lao-tzu uses "li" in a way that has always vexed translators and others who have tried to interpret it: Chapter 11 says:

Thirty spokes surround one hub, but it is on the void [at their center] that the function of the vehicle depends. . . . Thus [we] take the substantial (yu 有) for its li and the void (wu 無) for its function.

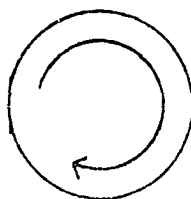
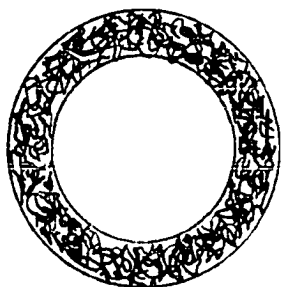
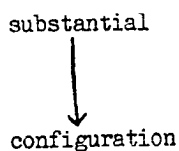
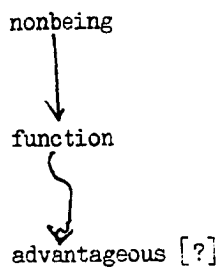
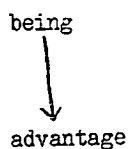
One would think that the advantage (li) of something would lie in its function. But whatever the li is for the author of the Lao-tzu, he has linked it with the substantial, and has linked function with the antithetical void. In his Neo-Confucianism, Etc., p. 119, Wing-tsit Chan has translated this passage, interpreting "li" as "advantage." Then he apparently links the advantage with the antithetical function in his own mind and very nearly contradicts himself by commenting: "Nonbeing (wu) . . . is here conceived not as nothingness but as something useful and advantageous." But it is the being, to use Chan's own

term, that the Lao-tzu has coupled with the "useful and advantageous" (li), not nonbeing. It seems that the interpretation that Chan and other translators have chosen creates problems for them.

Chart Showing the Original Chinese, Chan's Interpretation, and Mine.



W. T. Chan



If "li" is interpreted as "configuration," the passage from the Lao-tzu poses no difficulty. It would then say that the substantial aspect of something provides its configuration (li, the part of the wheel that holds the axle) and the void aspect permits its function (by letting the axle turn).

There is other evidence for this interpretation in texts of the same period and later. The Mencius, 2B:1, says:

The times of heaven are not as important as the li  
(configurations) of earth.

In his commentary to the Mencius, 4:1a/4 (c.p. 35), Chao Ch'i 趙岐 (? - 201 A.D.) says:

'The times of heaven' refers to auspicious and inauspicious periods of time. 'The li of earth' refers to dangerous and impassable walls and moats.

Mencius is making parallel statements about heaven and earth. Just as different times or seasons of heaven have different qualities or characteristics, so too do different regions of earth have different topographies and characteristics that influence farming, warfare, and other activities.

The Kuan-tzu 管子, "Ti-t'u" 27, (SPPY 10:7b/18), says:

Keep all the ins and outs and crossings about of the terrain firmly in mind, and then you can deploy troops and attack cities. Moreover, you may plan ahead for the sequence [of maneuvers] and not lose the li 利 of the land.

"Li 利" probably means "benefit" here, but it is clearly the benefits of terrain and not the agricultural benefits of the farm lands that are intended.

The Lieh-tzu, 1:16b/17, says:

I have heard that heaven has times (seasons) and earth has li.



The seasons differentiate a year into different periods having different characteristics; similarly the li of the earth divide it into areas having differing suitabilities for various crops.

The Mencius, 4B:26, says, in effect, that other people discuss hsing in terms of external causal factors -- the forces that drive events to their culmination. These external causes (ku 故) take configurations (shih 勢) along which forces (shih 勢) are disposed or flow as their basis or most important consideration.

When people "carve out channels," they try to force things into unnatural paths. Having seen that external causal factors (ku) operate on people, they attempt to use them without understanding the internal springs that motivate everyone's actions. This idea is expressed in mythological terms in the story of Yü and his father Kun. I summarize:<sup>3</sup>

The great sage emperor Yü saved China from total inundation after his father, Kun, had failed at the task. Kun had attempted to dam the flood waters at their sources, but the waters broke all bounds. Yü followed the lay of the land to dredge and widen channels to let the flood waters flow naturally to the sea.

According to this legend, both Yü and Kun used force. But Kun, the father of Yü, used force without regard to the question of how the natural tendency of water to flow downward would interact with the topography of the land. Disaster resulted for Kun, for he was punished by heaven. But Yü took

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3. The story is retold by Derk Bodde in his article entitled "Myths of Ancient China" found in Samuel Noah Kramer's Mythologies of the Ancient World, pp. 398ff.

account of water's natural tendency to flow downward, a tendency that experience had shown could not be withstood. He channeled the water, allowing it to flow harmlessly to the sea.

The natural tendency of water to flow downward is its hsing. Hsing is a force that operates from within water. Mencius stresses that both benevolence (jen) and the sense of right and wrong (yi) are internal, that is, they are forces operating from within human beings.<sup>4</sup> The myth of Yü's pacifying the waters is central to Mencius' approach to cultivating human virtue.

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4. The Chu-tzu yü-lei ta-ch'üan, 59:5a/47, records this observation: "In the final analysis, when something is white and I treat it as white, then that [activity, as well as when I treat an elder as an elder] comes from the [activity of] distinguishing done by my hsin."

## Appendix II

### Wu

The first section of the Lao-tzu has long been regarded as a masterpiece of Taoist philosophical writing, and a marvel of ambiguity. For reasons that will soon become evident, I reproduce the entire section in double columns below:

<u>道</u> <u>tao</u>	way	<u>名</u> <u>ming</u>	name
<u>可</u> <u>k'o</u>	can	<u>可</u> <u>k'o</u>	can
<u>道</u> <u>tao</u>	lead	<u>名</u> <u>ming</u>	name
<u>非</u> <u>fei</u>	not	<u>非</u> <u>fei</u>	not
<u>常</u> <u>ch'ang</u>	constant	<u>常</u> <u>ch'ang</u>	constant
<u>道</u> <u>tao</u>	way	<u>名</u> <u>ming</u>	name

Note that the third word in each column is a verb. The second "tao," in my opinion, is equivalent to the word presently written 導. Others say it means "to speak." The second "ming" has no special verbal written form. It is equivalent in meaning to the English word "name" in a sentence like: "He named the hour of their doom." It does not really mean to give a new name to something; rather, it means to speak out the name of something. I therefore translate: "As for ways, what one can be led along is not the constant way. As for names, what can be spoken out is not the constant name."

<u>無</u> <u>wu</u>	not have	<u>有</u> <u>yu</u>	have
<u>名</u> <u>ming</u>	name	<u>名</u> <u>ming</u>	name
<u>天</u> <u>t'ien</u>	heaven	<u>萬</u> <u>wan</u>	myriad
<u>地</u> <u>ti</u>	earth	<u>物</u> <u>wu</u>	beings
<u>之</u> <u>chih</u>	of	<u>之</u> <u>chih</u>	of
<u>始</u> <u>shih</u>	beginning	<u>母</u> <u>mu</u>	mother

It has long been noted that the word "ming" can either be taken as a verb or as a noun in these sentences. This possibility produces two alternative

translations: 1) "Non-being is named as the beginning of heaven and earth. Being is named as the mother of heaven and earth." (Or, in smoother English: "The beginning of heaven and earth is named non-being. The mother of the myriad beings is named being.") 2) "The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth. The named (nameable) is the mother of the myriad beings." In the first interpretation, one is forced to interpret "ming" as a passive verb or to invert the sentence order. In the second interpretation one is forced to supply the copula. Either way, the sense is that there is something that by virtue of its non-substantiality or ineffability is called "beginning," and something else that by reason of its substantiality or availability to sense perception and hence potential to be named is identified as "mother."

There is a deeper level of meaning to this passage, however. As above, there are different levels of abstractness in the first and second sentences. Tao pertains to process in the universe, which may be difficult to grasp. Ming pertains to things that are obvious enough to us that we can name them. Heaven and Earth are metaphysical entities, the sources of all coming to being in the universe beyond themselves. The myriad beings are what are produced by heaven and earth.

Beyond those obvious differences, which others have remarked upon in the past, an indication of inwardness and outwardness in the Chinese words "shih" and "mu" that has not been noticed. I shall show how this level of meaning enables us to link sentences one, three, and five, and two, four, and six "vertically" to provide a clear understanding of the remainder of the section.

The Chinese character for the word "mother," "mu母" was originally written 𠃉 in oracle bone script. This is very clearly a picture of a kneeling woman with exaggerated breasts. In the modern character only the breasts, rotated ninety degrees, remain. Breasts are the first means of nurture for human beings. They are external and obvious.

The Chinese word "shih始" (beginning) is a cognate of "t'ai胎" (fetus) as is attested by the very early Erh-ya爾雅 dictionary, the first page, and by Karlgren in his Grammata Serica Recensa, series no. 976.

Whether the author of the Lao-tzu was dealing with a knowledge of "t'ai" and "shih" as actual cognates, or whether he was indulging in a kind of literary pun based on the similarity of written forms, I do not know. The structure of the first section of the Lao-tzu makes it seem certain to me, however, that he did intend his readers to be aware that shih connoted the fetus. I believe he consciously opposed the image of the fetus hidden deep within the mother's body with that of the clearly visible breasts.

Nameable entities, lactating mammary glands, and fringes (chiao徼 seen in the text below) are all external, perceptible, and not hidden. The tao or total process of the universe, a fetus, and ineffable efficacies (miao妙) are all internal, imperceptible, and hidden. The Lao-tzu continues:

常 <u>ch'ang</u>	constantly	常 <u>ch'ang</u>	constantly
無 <u>wu</u>	not have	有 <u>yu</u>	have
欲 <u>yü</u>	desire	欲 <u>yü</u>	desire
以 <u>yi</u>	in order to	以 <u>yi</u>	in order to
觀 <u>kuan</u>	observe	觀 <u>kuan</u>	observe
其 <u>ch'i</u>	its	其 <u>ch'i</u>	its
妙 <u>miao</u>	ineffable efficacy	徼 <u>chiao</u>	fringes, outer manifestations

"Thus it is always so that by not having desire one can observe its ineffable efficacy, and by having desire one can observe its outer manifestations." This passage is a clear statement of the view that desires or passions obscure human comprehension of the deeper, hidden nature of the universe. It is a balanced teaching because it points out the desirability of having a normal human consciousness involved with desires so that one can perceive and deal with the empirical world and also indicates the advantage of having an awareness of the supersensible. Both kinds of awareness are equally valuable.

"Wu" and "yu," in the previous section, page 349, have long been correctly interpreted as "non-being" and "being," but as already observed above, we can agree with other interpreters in looking at "wu-ming" and "yu-ming" as compounds, and speaking of the nameless and nameable. The elements "non-being" or "nameless," "beginning," and "ineffable efficacy" form one set. The elements "being" or "nameable," "mother," and "outer manifestations" form another. Both sets belong to the universe. Neither is transcendent, but one is hidden and the other is obvious.

The Lao-tzu now proceeds to the realm of the transcendent:

此 <u>tz'u</u>	these
兩 <u>liang</u>	two
者 <u>che</u>	(ones)
同 <u>t'ung</u>	together
出 <u>ch'u</u>	come out
而 <u>erh</u>	and
異 <u>yi</u>	different
名 <u>ming</u>	name
同 <u>t'ung</u>	together
謂 <u>wei</u>	speak of as
之 <u>chih</u>	it, them
玄 <u>hsüan</u>	mystery

"These two (the hidden and the obvious, void and substantial, nothingness and being) come out together and receive different [sets of] names. [At the stage of their being] together they are spoken of as the Mystery."

玄	<u>hsūan</u>	mystery
之	<u>chih</u>	of
又	<u>yu</u>	even more
玄	<u>hsūan</u>	mysterious
衆	<u>chung</u>	multitude
妙	<u>miao</u>	ineffable efficacies
之	<u>chih</u>	of
門	<u>men</u>	portal

"Mystery of mysteries, it is the portal of the multitude of ineffable efficacies." All of the things of this universe are in some sense ineffable efficacies. We are hard put to understand the workings of even the most obvious phenomena. —But even more incomprehensible to us is the Mystery.

Human beings perceive in terms of presence and absence of sensation. Here there is light; there no stimulus meets our eyes. Dark is "nothing," but it is a perceived phenomenon. It would be another matter entirely for some creature born without eyes for whom there was a world only of the other senses. The Lao-tzu argues that there is a transcendent realm wherein all differences by which human beings might perceive things collapse into a totally undifferentiated state.

Such total undifferentiation would be forever beyond our ken. In that sense the Mystery is also a kind of wu or "non-being." It exists, but not in the sense that ordinary things exist. It does not exist, but not in the sense that unicorns do not exist.

Later in the history of Chinese philosophy, when Chou Tun-yi began his "T'ai-chi diagram" with the words "wu-chi erh t'ai-chi," he may well have meant to describe the transcendent potential for the universe much as Lao-tzu described the Mystery -- as a transcendent source for everything in existence. This source was wu not in the sense of a void, but in the sense of something totally beyond human ability to comprehend. It was also the greatest, the supreme (t'ai) because it gave birth to all being (and all phenomenal void).



### Appendix III

#### Yi Theory

The Book of Changes (Chou-yi 周易 or Yi-ching 易經) is composed of a divination text and seven Appendices that consist of commentaries. (The Appendices are called the Ten Wings (Shih yi 十翼) because three of them are divided into two parts each, making a total of ten chüan.) It is impossible here to give a complete understanding of the theory governing the Yi-ching, its Appendices, and the yarrow stalks. However, some general remarks may aid the reader who is unfamiliar with their use.

Seeking to resolve some troubling uncertainty, the diviner manipulates fifty stalks of yarrow. After several operations are performed, the diviner is enabled to construct a hexagram, which is a figure composed of six horizontal lines written one over the other. The first series of manipulations with the yarrow stalks produces the bottom line so that, contrary to what someone from the European tradition might expect, the top line is produced last. Some lines are broken (— —) and other lines are unbroken (——). The broken lines are called yin or jou (soft, yielding). "Yin" means "dark, soft, recessive, flexible, waning," and is associated with the feminine. The unbroken lines are called yang or kang (hard, rigid). "Yang" means "bright, hard, dominant, rigid, waxing," and is associated with the masculine. Sixty-four different six-line figures can be produced by various combinations of hard and soft lines. A hexagram selected at random follows:



Having formed such a pattern, the diviner may consult in the Book of Changes a text associated with the diagram that may help to resolve his difficulty.

Each series of manipulations of the yarrow stalks produces a number, which may be six, seven, eight, or nine. The odd numbers are yang and are recorded as unbroken lines. The even numbers are yin and are written as broken lines. However, the numbers six and nine are regarded as unstable because they are extremes. Six represents the maximal yin position in the yin-yang cycle. Six is yin on the verge of changing direction and becoming yang. Nine is the inflection point of yang beginning to turn back into yin.

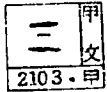

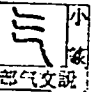
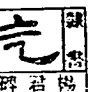


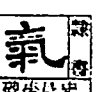

In some mysterious way, a hexagram formed to answer an uncertainty in the mind of the diviner mirrors the pertinent yin and yang states in the universe that bear on the problematical issue.

For more detail, see Wei Tat's An Exposition of the I-ching or Book of Changes, Helmut Wilhelm's Change, Eight Lectures On the I Ching, and the Introductions to the translations of the Yi-ching by Richard Wilhelm and James Legge. Wei's book is an exceptionally detailed treatment of a few hexagrams from the traditional Chinese viewpoint.

Appendix IV

GLOSSARY

CH' I

Oracle	Bronze	Seal	Scribe	Modern
 甲文 2103·甲	 金文 登侯彝	 小篆 部气文說	 隸書 碑君楊	 (形) 气
		 小篆 部米文說	 隸書 碑侯隸史	 (形) 氣

Shuo-wen, SPPY, 1A:12Af/13: Cloudy vapor.

Karlgren, no. 517a-b: \*k'iə̀d / k'jɛi- / k'i Shuowen says: cloudy vapours (no text); this is obviously the primary graph of [the second-line characters] in this reading and sense. c. \*χiə̀d / χjɛi- / hi to present food (Tso ap. Shuowen); loan for \*k'iə̀d / k'jɛi- / k'i (same as [first line] above) air (Lie); breath (Lunyü); vapour (Tso); temperament, disposition (Lunyü); vital principle (Li).

Moran: Some students of oracle bone inscriptions believe that the original sense of "ch'i" was close to the meaning Karlgren quotes from the Tso chuan above, "to present food." They indicate that the primary sense of "ch'i" probably had to do with nutrition. If they are correct, then the development of the meaning of this word may have progressed from "to present food" to "sustenance derived from food" to "lifebreath." In that case the meaning of "cloud vapor" must have been secondary, derived by analogy from the idea of the

breath visible before one's mouth on cold days. It seems possible to me that the term may have been used to refer specifically to the clouds seen taking form in mountain valleys. "Mountains produce (ch'u 出) mouths" says one of the paradoxes recorded in the Chuang-tzu, 33:75/86.

### CHIH

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern



Shuo-wen, 6B:8b/17: To give something as surety.

Karlgren, no. 493a: \*t̪iət / t̪siət / chī substance, solid part (Yi); essential (Lunyu); natural qualities (Li); natural, simple, honest (Shī); good faith (Tso); affirm (Li); give pledge (Shī); just, exactly (Li); directly (Li); verify (Li); written contract (Chouli); (solid lump:) wooden block (Kuliang); chopping-utensil (Kuots'ê); center of target (Sün); \*t̪iəd / t̪i- / chī gage, hostage (Tso); gift (Tso).

Moran: The substrate from which some less substantial but more active substance (frequently a ch'i) grows or evolves. "Chih" connotes substantiality, solidity, the basis for activity (activity is associated with ch'i).

The above meaning may derive from the sense of something given as surety, a hostage, in the following way: The thing or person given over as security to bind a relationship is the substantial basis from which an enduring, stable

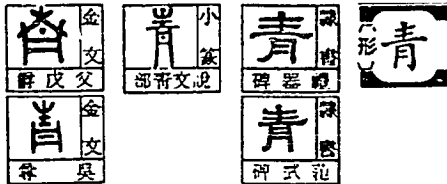
relationship can grow. So in this original sense, a chih is a substantial basis for something else, and by a simple extension the idea is used to describe the relationship between the living animal and the fur that grows from it, or any relatively substantial entity and the things or activities that grow or evolve from it.

#### CH'I-CHIH

Moran: Dual-phase ch'i and chih, ch'i-producing chih. A chih is the substrate related to some ch'i, which evolves from it. Ch'i can transform into chih, and vice-versa. While for some thinkers, such as Yen Yüan, the physical, material, or substantial connotations of "ch'i-chih" are very strong, and while substantial things such as the organs of the body are clearly called ch'i-chih, the term itself does not mean "matter." For one thing, our idea of matter does not include the idea of ch'i that is associated with ch'i-chih. For another, there is nothing in the Chinese concept about atoms, molecules, or other simpler components. The nearest we could come in Western philosophy would be Leibnizian substance and its associated vis viva (life force).

CH'ING

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern



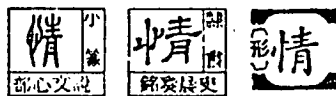
Shuo-wen, 5B:1b/17: The color of the east. The wood [phase] produces the fire [phase].

Karlgren, no. 811 c'-d': \*ts'ien / ts'ien / ts'ing green, blue (Shi); loan for \*ts'ien / ts'ien / ts'ing luxuriant (sc. vegetation) (Shi).

Moran: The portion of the spectrum including blue and green, shading into black. (Gray is also included.) Because of its association with the color of the sky unsullied by clouds, it frequently connotes purity.

CH'ING

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern



Shuo-wen, 10B:10a/19: The yin ch'i of human beings. It involves desire.

Karlgren, no. 811 1': \*dz'ǐěng / dz/ǐāng / ts'ing feelings (Tso); quality, proper nature (Meng); circumstances (Tso); true, real (Yi); love (Shi).

Moran: Genuine feelings unalloyed by guile. From this basic meaning the concept evolved into two ideas: 1) genuine, true circumstances, truly, and 2) feelings, emotions.

### HSIN

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern



Shuo-wen, 10B:10a/19: The human heart the earth [phase ch'i] storehouse in the body. The eminent scholars (po shih 博士, lit., those of wide learning) think it is a storehouse for the fire [phase ch'i].

Karlgren, no. 663a-b: \*siəm / siəm / sin heart (Shi). . . . The graph is a drawing.

Moran: We think of the brain as the site of electro-chemical activity that produces thought. The pre-modern Chinese thought of the hsin as a ch'i storehouse (tsang 藏) that was the locus of intellectual, emotional, and motivational activities.

HSING

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern

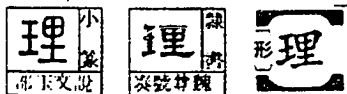
Shuo-wen, 10B:10a/19: The yang ch'i of human beings.

Karlgren, no. 812s: \*siəng / siäng- / sing nature, disposition (cf man) (Shu); life (Shi).

Moran: The quality or characteristic of the activity of something. In earliest times it meant "life," but even then it appears to have connoted strongly the motivational aspects of living beings.

LI

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern

Shuo-wen, 1A:9a/13: To work (chih治) jade.

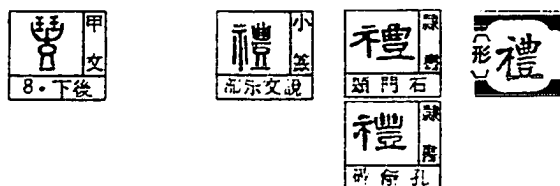
Karlgren, no. 978d: \*liəg / lji: / li to cut jade according to its veins (Kuots'e); fibres (in muscles) (Li); to mark out divisions of fields (Shi); regulate (Shi); reason (Yi); principle (Meng); resources (Meng); (arranger:) marriage go-between (Ch'uts'i); jail official (Kuan); envoy (Tso).



Moran: To lay out the fields, to make patterns, patterns, order, to order, pattern of yin and yang typified by the hexagrams of the Book of Changes, patterns recognized (i.e., the content of thought), the total pattern encompassing all patterns, the transcendent source of all pattern and all being.

Li

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern



Shuo-wen, 1A:2b/13: To carry out in practice (li 履); that by which one serves the gods and brings good fortune.

Karlgren, no. 597d: \*liər / liei: / li propriety (Shī); ceremony, rite (Shī), ritual (Shī).

Moran: Ritual, rite, ceremony, what is in accord with ritual, propriety. Mencius and philosophers who followed him believe there is an innate sense of ritual, i.e., an innate awareness of what is needed to facilitate social interactions and an innate tendency to subordinate and pattern one's own activities to promote good interpersonal relations.

TS'AI

Oracle    Bronze    Seal    Scribe    Modern



Shuo-wen, 6A:17b/18: The beginnings of grass and trees.

Karlgren, no. 943a-f: \*dz'əg / dz'əi / ts'ai endowment, ability, talent (Tso); well-endowed, able, strong (Shi).

Moran: Innate potential, capacity, talent.

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## NOTE

In the following Bibliographies the abbreviation SPPY indicates the Ssu-pu pei-yao 四部備要 [Complete collection of important texts in four bibliotheca], reprinted in Taipei by the Chung-hua shu-chü. The abbreviation SKCS stands for Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu chen-pen 四庫全書真本 [Fine editions in the 'Complete library in four treasuries'] under the general editorship of Wang Yün-wu 王雲五. Taipei, Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan.

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