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Author(s): Kai-wing Chow

Source: *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Apr., 1993), pp. 201-228

Published by: [University of Hawai'i Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1399613>

Accessed: 05/01/2011 14:30

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RITUAL, COSMOLOGY, AND ONTOLOGY: CHANG TSAI'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND NEO-CONFUCIAN ETHICS

Kai-wing Chow

Introduction

Current studies on the ethical thought of Sung neo-Confucians generally focus on issues concerning the cultivation of the mind and the investigation of principles. Both are essential to the realization of sagehood. The strong interest that neo-Confucianism has received in American scholarship notwithstanding, ritual, a major concern in neo-Confucian ethics, remains understudied.¹ One of the consequences has been the inflation of the importance of metaphysics in neo-Confucian discourse on morality.

From the perspective of Chu Hsi (1130–1200), however, modern students make the same mistake as the Buddhists, that is, they one-sidedly stress the rectification of the internal self with reverence (*ching i chih nei*) without also employing propriety or duty to regulate the external self (the body) (*i i fang wai*).² For Chu Hsi, both *jen* (humanity) and *li* (principle) could be defined in terms of *li* (ritual rules).³ In Confucian discourse, *li* in the sense of ritual rules are the major means that defines the proper level of the public display of emotions, feelings, and actions in the fulfillment of duty.⁴ *Li* are indispensable to the cultivation of proper conduct—the particular realization of universal virtues. Like Confucians before them, leading neo-Confucian thinkers such as Ch'eng I (1033–1107), Chang Tsai (1020–1077), and Chu Hsi were no less concerned about ritual. They had written on a wide range of rituals pertaining to funerals, burial, mourning, and ancestor worship.⁵

This essay seeks to redress this balance by demonstrating the importance of ritual in the moral theories of Sung neo-Confucians by focusing on Chang Tsai's thought. Chang Tsai was of one of the most consistent and renowned neo-Confucians in the Northern Sung. He formulated a theory of moral cultivation that put a premium on ritual, which informed his much-studied cosmology and ontology. In order to assess the centrality of ritual within the fabric of Chang Tsai's thought, I shall first show how it is inextricably related to his cosmology, theory of human nature, view of history, and system of ethics. I shall then try to place Chang's thought within the broader context of his agenda for reforming Northern Sung society.

Studies on Chang's thought in general stress the importance of his contribution to the formulation of a monistic ontology and a materialist notion of the cosmos based on the concept of *ch'i* (matter).⁶ The attention that Chang's metaphysical ideas have received in current scholarship has overshadowed his theory of moral cultivation. As I will

Assistant Professor in the Departments of History and East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

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敬以直內

仁 義以方外 理
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氣

Philosophy East & West
Volume 43, Number 2
April 1993
201–228

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demonstrate, this situation results from a one-sided approach to Chang's notion of *ch'i* that stresses its significance in his cosmology and ontology without also considering the inherently disruptive quality of *ch'i* for humanity.

Discussions of Chang Tsai's thought generally make little or no mention of his view of ritual.⁷ By contrast, the importance of ritual in Chang Tsai's thought had long been pointed out by his contemporaries and his students. In a biographical essay he wrote to commemorate his mentor, Lü Ta-lin related that Chang often encouraged scholars to start practicing ritual as the proper method of moral cultivation.⁸ The emphasis on ritual in Chang's teachings was also known among officials, including the famed statesman Ssu-ma Kuang (1033–1107).⁹ Even the author of Chang's biography in the *Sung shih* (A Dynastic History of the Sung) did not fail to note his interest in ritual.¹⁰

Apart from his *ch'i* cosmology, what distinguished Chang Tsai from other Sung neo-Confucians—such as Chou Tun-i (1017–1077), Ch'eng Hao (1032–1077), and Ch'eng I—was his strong emphasis on moral education through ritual practice. His view is epitomized in his pedagogical method—*i-li wei-chiao* (teaching by ritual). Similiar phrases conveying the same idea abound in Chang's writings.

To understand why the learning and practice of ritual constituted the central part of Chang's theory of moral education, we need first to take note of the by now well-recognized fact that there was a strong anti-Buddhist impulse in the *Tao-hsüeh* strain of neo-Confucianism. This anti-Buddhist sentiment appeared faintly in neo-Confucian cosmology but was expressed most pronouncedly in neo-Confucian ethics. In order to understand Chang Tsai's ethical thought, we need to examine the connection Chang himself made between the cosmos and human nature, for they form an inseparable and coherent system.

The Cosmos of Matter (*Ch'i*)

In traditional societies, ethics have often been rationalized as founded in the cosmic order, be it the creator of the universe or the very structure of the universe itself. Views of the natural order provide the paradigm and justification for the sociopolitical order of the human world. A cosmological pattern provides a "permanent and unchanging order of things," against which the flux of human conduct can be explained, measured, and valorized.¹¹ The need to ground a particular ethical system in the cosmos becomes acute when there is more than one ethical system. Their differences may result in an awareness of the arbitrariness and relativity of the order of social relations and hence the rules of conduct as they are prescribed by the competing systems. The battle of ethical doctrines thus often involves a cosmological debate. The Sung

呂大臨

司馬光
宋史

周敦頤 程灝

以禮為教

道學

neo-Confucians' profound interest in cosmological and metaphysical questions can be regarded as evidence for their determination to counteract Buddhist ethics at the cosmological level.

Setting aside the question of the accuracy of Chang Tsai's understanding of Buddhism, his notion of a cosmos of matter was meant as an explicit rebuttal of what he took to be the Buddhist negation of the phenomenal world.¹² Chang Tsai believed in a self-generating, self-renewing, and self-sustaining cosmos. The cosmos is a "great void" (*t'ai-hsü*) of formless matter (*ch'i*), which is its essence (*t'i*).¹³ There is no great void independent of matter. Ontologically speaking, they are inseparable, but, viewed from the vantage point of the human senses, they represent the two general modes of existence—form and formlessness. It is due to the principle (*li*) of the cosmos that essential matter condensed to form physical existence of all sorts, which will eventually disintegrate back into formless matter again. The cyclical process of the condensation and dispersion of matter are but two different states of the transformation of the Way. This dynamism of the cosmos is what Chang called *ch'i-hua* (transformation of matter), and the great void (*hsü*) refers to the formless state of the cosmos. These two aspects taken together constitute the "nature" (*hsing*) of all beings. Therefore, there is always matter regardless of its modality.

太虛
體

理

氣化 虛

性

The Cosmic Hierarchy

According to Chang Tsai, all things are the same in terms of the constituent *ch'i* and are without exception subject to the universal process of condensation and dispersion. But things in the universe do not flow freely in a chaotic manner; they all have their proper positions. Far from being an undifferentiated mass, nature is hierarchical. Things in the universe are ordered by several cardinal principles. Chang said:

There is a chronological order in birth; this is what constitutes the temporal order of Heaven (*t'ien-hsü*). Small and big, high and low, all appear in juxtaposition; this is what is called the hierarchical order of Heaven (*t'ien-chih*). Heaven creates things in an orderly manner, and, after taking shape, things come to have a hierarchical order.¹⁴

天序
天秩

Thus, in the world of forms or existence, there are principles regulating the relationship between individual things. Human society also reflects these natural principles of order. Any attempt to understand Chang Tsai's view of human nature must take into consideration Chang's idea of a cosmic hierarchy.

Cosmic Nature and Human Nature

According to the neo-Confucians themselves, one of Chang's major contributions consisted in his conception of "physical nature" (*ch'i-chih*)

氣質之性
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chih hsing). Ch'eng I argued that no discussion of human nature would be complete without an explanation of man's physical nature.¹⁵ Indeed, the concept of "physical nature" is essential to bridging Chang's seemingly egalitarian view of the cosmos and his defense of social hierarchy, a tension which Chang himself did not seem to recognize. Chang's main concern was how to explain the myriad differences of the human species in terms of their varying physical constitution, and hence the social hierarchy in terms of the variations in human intelligence and innate abilities. It is no coincidence that Chang's concept of "physical nature" was highly valued by Chu Hsi as an important contribution to Confucianism. This notion is, in fact, crucial to the neo-Confucians' response to Buddhism. They were compelled to accommodate the universalism of Buddhist cosmology while rejecting its altruistic implication for social ethics. It is this notion of physical nature that made it possible for the neo-Confucians to reconcile ontological universalism and the Confucian doctrine of social hierarchy based on the family.

In Chang's view, human existence derived its bodily form from cosmic matter. Man's physical form embodies the cosmic principle of the endless cycle of condensation and dispersion. Individual human beings are no more than particular instantiations of the coalescence of the essential matter of the cosmos. In this sense, human beings are identical with other things in the cosmos, and human nature is identical with the nature of the cosmos. "Nature," therefore, is universal and is not peculiar to humankind.¹⁶ While human beings are identical with everything else in terms of their cosmic origin and the material that constitutes their bodily form, upon taking shape as individual persons, they still differ as a result of their inevitable "imbalance" of physical constitution. Chang gives us no clue to why this is so. We can perhaps infer from his other ideas that such an imbalanced human constitution is inevitably a result of the natural process of condensation and dispersion.

Chang distinguished this corporeal nature of human existence, *ch'i-chih chih hsing* (physical nature), from its origin in the cosmic being *t'ien-ti chih hsing* (nature of heaven and earth). Distinctions appear as the cosmic *ch'i* condenses to form different kinds of existence (*wu*), of which humans are the most intelligent.¹⁷ When things acquire their specific forms, they break away from the undifferentiated—and, in this sense, pure—cosmic being. Humans assume their uniqueness only when they come into existence both as individuals and as a particular order of being. This rupture marks the very constitution of human existence that is different from other forms of beings and from the cosmic substance. To stress the rupture of beings is to call for a differentiated treatment of the cosmos, humanity, and nonhuman beings. As we shall see, this rupture provides Chang Tsai and the neo-Confucians with the logical and

天地之性

ontological ground for reaffirming the centrality of the human world and its hierarchical social structure.

It should be noted, however, that Chang did not regard “physical nature” and “nature of heaven and earth” as two differentiable aspects of the nature of an individual. The *ch'i* of a person is at the same time both universal and particular, since the body continues to be subject to the cosmic principle of condensation and dispersion. The rupture, therefore, is never complete. It is this linkage, however slim it may be, that provides the possibility of achieving full reunion with the cosmos through the comprehension of principles and moral cultivation.

This partial rupture between humanity and the cosmos is central to Chang's moral and social philosophy. There can be no humanity, no individual life, without separation from the undifferentiated cosmic substance. In Chang's thought, appetites, such as the desire for food and sex, are indispensable to human existence.¹⁸ The affirmation of physical needs was necessary for repudiating the Buddhist suppression of desires, especially sex, which served the important function of reproducing humanity and thereby constituted an indispensable element in the social institution of the family.¹⁹

The point of departure for moral cultivation is therefore not the universal nature of human beings as cosmic beings but the human reality of living persons in society. The validation of life was thus only the first metaphysical task that neo-Confucians had to tackle before they could advance their ethics. While insisting on the distinctiveness of the particular form of cosmic *ch'i* as instantiated in humans, Chang Tsai regarded physical nature as the determining force in a given human, seeking to fulfill that human's personal needs and appetites. To this extent the instantiation of universal *ch'i* is potentially disruptive at the social level as individual humans seek to gratify their appetites and to preserve and extend their own lives.

The stress on the human break from the cosmos was important for Chang's criticism of the Buddhist universal treatment of individuals as members of the human species, on the one hand, and of humankind as but one species of living creatures and things among many, on the other. The “pernicious” effect of Buddhist teaching, Chang explained, was that they “regard the nature of all things (*t'ien-hsia wan-wu*) as being without distinction.”²⁰ By attacking the Buddhists' mistake of treating human individuals as just another kind of living thing, Chang was implicitly attacking the Buddhists for extending their cosmic view to the human world. In accusing Buddhists of taking a “materialist” and universalistic approach to humanity, he was defending the Confucian position that places humanity at the center of things and affirming the hierarchical character of social relations—a point to which we shall return. In brief, Chang took

天下萬物

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exception to the Buddhists' elimination of social distinctions by virtue of their ontological universalism. Thus, according to Chang, the Buddhists failed to realize that humans should be treated differently because their physical nature varied considerably. Differences in physical nature justified social distinctions, which were embedded in ritual rules.

天地之性 Chang believed that the universal of human nature, what he also called *t'ien-ti chih hsing* (nature of heaven and earth), was good in terms of its completeness and balance. But when a human is born, the cosmic *ch'i* is instantiated in a particular form.²¹ Hence physical endowment varies according to the individual, as is evident in the myriad variations of human temperament and talent.

偏 欲 The myriad differences among real human beings, however, was for Chang precisely the source of the ethical problem faced by humanity. Variations in temperament, disposition, and intelligence were, in his words, the result of "the inharmonious" constitution of human beings.²² Even though Chang did not consider physical nature to be evil in itself, the physical constitution of each individual person was bound to be either deficient or excessive in one way or another (*p'ien*) compared to that person's cosmic nature prior to birth.²³ Chang saw in humanity's "imperfect" endowment a common proclivity to seek gratification of bodily appetites (*yü*), which was evil in the sense of being selfish or self-centered. A person's earthly existence, and hence the propensity toward seeking satisfaction of desires, inevitably rendered that person prone to all sorts of indulgences. Human nature in the empirical world, as Chang often found, was a far cry from its cosmic perfection.

返 心 In order to "return" (*fan*) to the harmonious and balanced state of the cosmic nature, one thus had to cultivate oneself.²⁴ It should be noted that Chang used "return" as a metaphor, meaning that, having transformed one's character by developing good habits, one would always behave as properly and naturally as heaven. Put differently, morality has to be "acquired" through cultivation. But if morality always involves a choice, the question of morality does not arise at the cosmic or ontological level. Morality only exists at the intellectual, psychological, and social level, and morality is possible because a human being has a mind (*hsin*).²⁵ Morality is peculiarly relevant to human existence. Therefore, morality needs to be created rather than discovered.

The premium that Chang Tsai placed on personal effort in acquiring morality is to some degree a response to Ch'an Buddhism, which had become a prominent form of Buddhist discourse in the Northern Sung. According to Ch'an Buddhism, since human essence and cosmic essence are identical, personal effort in cultivation is not necessary insofar as one comprehends this truth. This Buddhist position that had been embraced by some Confucians was the target of Chang's attack.²⁶ It is no surprise that although Chang argued that humankind had its origin in the cos-

mos, he did not entertain the Taoist notion of the harmony between human being and nature. For him, human nature is not to be left “un-carved,” as Lao Tzu insisted, but controlled, transformed, and disciplined.

老子

The Malleability of Human Nature

Confucians since the classical period had believed in the malleability of human nature.²⁷ Chang averred that one’s nature, which is the condensation of matter, was malleable and hence capable of transformation. Except for one’s life span, birth, and death, there was nothing in one’s nature that one could not change.²⁸ When Chang spoke of “transformation of nature,” he was without exception referring to “physical nature.” But why is transformation necessary? If morality is something to be acquired, why not concentrate on learning good conduct? To understand why Chang stressed “transformation of nature,” we have to examine closely his view of physical nature.

When Chang spoke of “physical nature,” he seldom referred to human presocial or biological nature; in most cases he was referring to internalized patterns of social behavior, which in the aggregate amounts to an individual’s character and psychological makeup.²⁹ While every human has natural abilities and emotions, the way these abilities are developed and put to use, and the manner in which humans are taught to express their emotions, are shaped by social practices. Therefore “physical nature” in Chang’s usage has two meanings: the natural endowments of the individual, and the socially conditioned patterns of these natural endowments, which in the aggregate constitute the character of a person. “Transformation of nature” in Chang’s mind in most cases means the changing of the social character of individuals. In brief, Chang’s use of the term “physical nature” has strong sociological and psychological connotations.

While the development of character is closely related to one’s temperament and dispositions, there is no reason to assume that everyone’s character is bad and in need of transformation. Chang Tsai’s idea of the imbalance in physical endowment only makes improper conduct possible but not inevitable or permanent. An “unbalanced” constitution has yet to produce thoughts or actions whose effect will then constitute a moral problem. But, for Chang Tsai, human character as a rule is in need of transformation. Why did he insist on transformation of physical nature as the main task of moral cultivation? This explanation has to be sought in Chang’s view of history, which, as will be explained later, is inseparable from his perception of Northern Sung society in the eleventh century.

The Historical and Social Origins of Immoral Conduct

Chang’s teaching about the transformation of nature presupposes a belief in the presence of patterns of improper conduct, or evil (*o*), in a given individual. Where does evil arise? According to Chang, one’s unbal-

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anced constitution is a necessary but not the sufficient condition for the generation of evil because different social environments can prevent or facilitate its development. When the individual with an unbalanced constitution is taught *li* (ritual rules), which involves bringing one's emotions and actions into line with standard rules (as occurred during the Three Dynasties in high antiquity), that individual will not have the opportunity to develop bad habits, and hence a bad character. Under the proper tutelage and government of the sages, deviations from the mean were rare. Therefore, it was much easier for people living in the Three Dynasties to learn propriety, since their social environment was virtually free of incidents of impropriety. In contrast, it was only when, being unbalanced in one's endowment, one grew up in an environment pervaded with immoral examples that one was prompted to seek the excessive gratification of one's appetites.

In Chang's view, therefore, the process by which a person acquired a bad character was originally a historical one. With the disappearance of sage-kings, human society since the Golden Age had suffered from the loss of their teachings, and hence people failed to conduct themselves properly, succumbing to all sorts of "vices." Since those who violated propriety and broke laws were too numerous to be executed, people born thereafter could not but be influenced by immoral conduct, giving them free rein to their selfish desires.³⁰ It was more difficult to learn to be moral even if one so wished.³¹ The relevance of Chang's historical explanation of what he regarded as the social "vices" of human society will become apparent when social practices in the early Sung are considered.

Buddhism and Society in the Northern Sung

In Chang's times, scholar-officials and official aspirants grew up in a society pervaded by Buddhism. Most had not only taken Buddhism to be true but had also grown up accepting many Buddhist practices as natural and indispensable facets of their daily life.³²

武宗 Buddhism might have suffered a brief period of decline after the suppression by Wu-tsung in 845. But it bounced back and rapidly grew in strength when the successor to the throne rescinded the policy. The number of Buddhists in the early Sung exceeded that of the T'ang, and there was evidence that Buddhism had become a much more powerful religion affecting the social life of all classes.³³ It was customary for emperors to visit Buddhist temples during important festivals. Students of the imperial university would gather in Buddhist temples to mourn the death of high officials.³⁴ Buddhist monasteries continued to serve as rendezvous for informal meetings and feasts for the literati. Successful candidates of the palace examination were entertained in monasteries by order of the emperor.³⁵ Public bathhouses owned and operated by Buddhist monasteries were frequented by urban dwellers in cities like

K'ai-feng, Lo-yang, and Hang-chou.³⁶ Most Buddhist monasteries provided travelers with accommodation and food.³⁷ Merchants, craftsmen, and peddlers chose to convene at Buddhist temples. The Hsiang-kuo temple in K'ai-feng was a notable example.³⁸ Ironically, despite their anti-Buddhist stance, the Ch'eng brothers and Chang Tsai, like other literati, frequented monasteries.³⁹

開封 洛陽 杭州

相國寺

Buddhism in the early Sung was more than a physical presence in society; it was also firmly entrenched in the realm of cultural symbolism—the realm where social actions were given their meaning. The importance of many ceremonies that define the meaning of the major events of the human life cycle—such as birth and death—were perceived in Buddhist terms. In the early Sung, it was common for families in K'ai-feng prefecture to hire Buddhists to perform rituals, and “barbarian music” was used in the ceremony. Despite injunctions issued by the imperial government in 970 and 981 against the use of the service of Buddhists and Taoists in funeral processions, most families in the prefecture continued to violate the regulations as late as the 1220s.⁴⁰

Ou-yang Hsiu's idea of using ritual and music to occupy the peasants so that they would not have time for Buddhist practices is well known.⁴¹ Ssu-ma Kuang, Ch'eng I, and other neo-Confucians were very critical of the use of Buddhist services in funerals.⁴² The Buddhists provided a wide range of services pertaining to funeral and mourning rites: experts leading funeral processions and the offering of vegetarian meals, sermons, and the postmortem seven weekly services or “seven sevens.”⁴³ Buddhist temples also provided storage for unburied dead.⁴⁴ The widely held belief in geomancy that often resulted in the delay of burial made it necessary to employ the service of Buddhists.⁴⁵ For those who chose cremation to dispose of the dead, the Buddhist not only provided a cheaper alternative to expensive ground burial but a justification for such a choice as well.⁴⁶ The use of these Buddhist services perpetuated and reinforced the Buddhist teachings about the meaning of life, death, and spirits. The performance of “seven sevens,” music, and cremation could only be justified in Buddhist terms that denied physical life absolute value and which held that the ultimate goal was the speedy delivery of the dead.

歐陽脩

The pervasive presence of Buddhism in the Northern Sung was a major source of what Chang called the “bad” habits of his contemporaries. Their physical nature, or character, was “bad” because they had internalized Buddhist and non-Confucian patterns of conduct. They confused the Confucian way of life with that of the Buddhist. Worse still was their ignorance of the impropriety of their conduct. To create a Confucian society—a common goal of neo-Confucians of the Northern Sung—Chang Tsai did not and could not start from scratch. The only way to realize such a goal was to transform social customs so that they would be free of Buddhist influence.

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The Process of Acquiring Morality

In the light of the pervasive influence of Buddhism in Chang Tsai's times, the connection between the stress on transforming improper conduct and the anti-Buddhist thrust of his ethical thought becomes clear. It should be noted that in Chang's explanation, evil, or improper conduct such as Buddhist practice, arose as a result neither of the mere "unbalanced constitution" nor of the exclusive impact of environment but of the combined effects of both. While a human being's unbalanced constitution was the necessary precondition, the social environment was the precipitating cause. Immoral conduct was a result of a person's own making in the absence of a moral environment. Therefore, anyone born after the Three Dynasties would almost without exception have developed a bad character by virtue of his or her "unbalanced constitution" and the immoral environment in which that person lived.

According to Chang, improper conduct began in childhood, and even in the womb prior to birth. With the advance of age, having continuously given free rein to one's natural inclinations, one came to develop a "bad nature" in the form of bad habits.⁴⁷ Before coming to realize one's own improper behavior and resolving to become good, one had already developed a personality with a mixture of good and bad patterns of conduct.

Just as a person's bad character is the product of a developmental process, so, too, is the acquisition of the good. The work of moral cultivation, therefore, calls for a continuation of the good behavior one has already acquired along with the uprooting of improper behavior.⁴⁸ The work of transformation thus consists of two parts: the persistent performance of good deeds (*chi-shan*) and the extirpation of evil thoughts and acts (*ch'u-o*). These two types of effort were necessary because in any given individual were present both good and evil.⁴⁹ And these two different kinds of effort were to be undertaken simultaneously, since an individual was constantly pulled in both directions. Chang's view of the initially indeterminate quality of one's physical nature was clearly expressed in the following remark: "When [one's] nature is not yet fully developed (*ch'eng*), both good and evil tendencies coexist. Hence, one's nature is good only if one practices good conduct assiduously. The good will be accomplished when every bit of evil is eliminated."⁵⁰

Only when one is committed to eradicating evil and performing good deeds will one be able to "establish one's nature" (*ch'eng-hsing*) and thereby bring it to resemble the undifferentiated state of cosmic essence. This human effort in cultivating a moral personality is what Chang calls "transforming physical nature" (*pien-hua ch'i-chih*). But where exactly was the line between good and evil, or good and bad habits? Who set the criteria? How did an individual know about them?

集善
除惡

成

成性

變化氣質

Experiential Knowledge and Moral Knowledge

Indeed, in Chang Tsai's view, the individual's ignorance of right and wrong prevented him or her from doing good consciously and consistently. The common people had no notion of right and wrong because they only lived by their experience. They were molded by the customs and commonly accepted practices of society.

Chang therefore cautioned against learning through one's senses and personal knowledge of others' experience. Knowledge acquired through one's "eyes and ears" (*wen-chien chih chih*) is not to be depended on as a guide to moral conduct.⁵¹ There are several inherent defects in this type of knowledge. First, experiential knowledge was mostly no more than an extremely small accumulation of unexamined records of social practices. The limited experience of an individual tended to reinforce the impression that there were no morals beyond the social customs with which people were familiar. Such parochialism, in fact, more often than not, led to the mistaken notion that conformity to social practices constituted propriety. As Chang lamented, those "mean people" (*hsiao-jen*) of wit, who have developed a bad character, may even use experiential knowledge to justify their improper conduct. Others might do it in good faith. The knowledge that other members of society were doing exactly the same thing would even strengthen their conviction in the rectitude of their conduct.⁵² Moreover, experiential knowledge, being an amalgam of fragmentary knowledge of customary conduct, provided no clear guidelines for proper conduct. The common people, including the literati, would not be able to distinguish good from bad. It was harmful if one mistook bad conduct for good deeds, which in Chang's view was what most people did in his times. Without a firm grasp of knowledge of proper conduct, the scholar should not hastily begin changing his habits.⁵³ Chang knew that habits die hard. For these reasons—limited experience and inability to distinguish good from evil—experiential knowledge could not be trusted as a guide to moral development. It is in this sense that Chang rejected experiential knowledge acquired through one's senses. Nonetheless, Chang did not fall back on intuition exclusively for a knowledge of morality. He admitted that there were moral lessons to be learned from the experience of exemplars of moral excellence.⁵⁴

In Chang's view, to learn to be good always began with learning to do virtuous things or, in Aristotle's term, "the that."⁵⁵ The quest for knowledge of virtue (*te-hsing chih chih*) was therefore the first task of those who aspired to become worthies and sages. If moral knowledge was external to the individual, it followed that moral cultivation called for "extensive learning" (*po-wen*) in order to accumulate a knowledge of virtue—propriety and duty (*po-wen i chi-i*).⁵⁶ For Chang, "extensive

聞見之知

小人

德性之知

博文

博文以集義

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讀書 learning” essentially meant the study of books (*tu-shu*), which was an integral part of Chang’s program for moral transformation. “Extensive learning” did not mean indiscriminate pursuit of knowledge. The relevance of knowledge was defined in terms of the purpose of learning. In Chang’s case, to be a sage was the goal of learning; hence all knowledge required for achieving that goal had to be acquired.

義理 Chang designated the Classics, the *Analects*, and the *Mencius* as core readings and dismissed Buddhist and Taoist writings as dispensable.⁵⁷ Reading the right books was important, for it was through learning that moral knowledge could be accumulated. The broader the learner’s knowledge, the more profound the learner’s moral knowledge would become.⁵⁸ And more important, the better that person would be able to comprehend moral principles (*i-li*).

Chang clearly believed that most individuals could learn to be good. But there were very few scholars who could do good persistently, regardless of the circumstances. The common scholar might do good under duress or as the state of his emotions and mind dictated. The common scholar did not always do the same thing whenever the situation demanded such an action. Put differently, morality remained in an unsettled state. It was not the character of the scholar to behave consistently in response to the same situation. The discrepancy between knowledge and action always generates tension, conflict, and displeasure in those individuals whose performance of the good depends on whether they succeed in overcoming the tendency of their character to respond improperly. As Chang had noted, one major obstacle to the development of moral conduct was psychological. Chang was perhaps the only neo-Confucian to stress the reluctance of ordinary people, including scholars, to shed their bad habits because of their fear of being ridiculed. He therefore did not recommend drastic change in reforming rituals.⁵⁹ The lack of consistency among scholars could not be changed without realigning their actions with moral rules.

Learning to Be a “Great Man”

As Alasdair MacIntyre has aptly stated: “moral concepts change as social life changes.”⁶⁰ In any given society, learning to be good is always defined by culturally and socially sanctioned models of virtuous conduct. To develop moral conduct requires a clearly defined model or goal. To be a sage was the highest goal in all neo-Confucian moral discourses. In Chang Tsai’s thought, the sage represented the highest stage of moral cultivation. Chang, however, preferred to use the term “great man” (*ta-jen*) to denote the highest stage of moral achievement. *Ta-jen* was a term Chang borrowed from the *Book of Changes*. In his exposition on the *Book of Changes*, Chang distinguished the *sheng-jen* (sage) from the *ta-jen* (great man). The sage naturally followed heavenly principles with-

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out the help of external learning or the need for self-discipline.⁶¹ Such perfection and effortless moral conduct were almost beyond human capacity.

For Chang, sages were not ordinary people. Sages could not be completely understood by ordinary human beings. Sages were born, not made, and humans could therefore never completely become sages. Chang said: "sagehood cannot be known; it is the natural endowment of heavenly virtue."⁶² Elsewhere he said: "Sagehood, like heaven, has no stairs whereby one can ascend."⁶³ What Chang is saying is that the sages' conduct was perfect without exertion, a feat that could not be emulated by ordinary scholars. Chang's teachings therefore focused entirely on how an ordinary scholar could learn to become a "great man." Nonetheless, according to Chang, when scholars resolved to make progress in their moral development, they could eventually reach a stage comparable to the moral qualities of the sages. When a scholar became a "great man," his morality was so firmly established that his nature was perfectly in accord with the heavenly virtues of natural sages. At that stage it was difficult to distinguish between sages and great men. Although great men were still aware of the differences between themselves and Confucius, others might have difficulty making such a distinction.⁶⁴

Sages and "great men" differed in that the moral perfection the latter attained was a result of great resolve and persistent effort of cultivation. In brief, human resolve and unflinching effort could elevate one to the level of a sage. Chang therefore rejected the view that sagehood could be attained without "moral cultivation" (*hsiu*) and "learning" (*hsüeh*).⁶⁵ Chang's stress on moral cultivation can be seen as a refutation of those scholars who, under the influence of Ch'an Buddhism, argued that sagehood was attainable without studying and cultivation.⁶⁶

修 學

Learning Ritual and Good Habits

For Chang Tsai, to become moral, one had to learn proper conduct. In his times, to learn proper conduct entailed changing most of one's current patterns of behavior. To learn morality, one had to undo the immorality that had taken form in the individual as character traits. In Chang's view, learning to practice ritual was the most effective way to transform one's deep-rooted habits by gradually eradicating the settled state of bad character traits and by consistently molding one's conduct in accord with clearly prescribed rules. Chang's idea of learning to be a moral person through habituation in some ways resembles Aristotle's approach to moral development.⁶⁷ The morals of a given individual are the result of the development of good habits rather than the mere acquisition of knowledge of propriety.

The centrality of rituals in Chang's ethical thought is well epitomized in several expressions he often used. First, Chang understood morality in

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terms of ritual practice. "Rituals are the established rules of sages; there is no morality (*tao*) without rituals."⁶⁸ In his commentary on the *Book of Changes*, Chang explained his teaching of *chih-li ch'eng hsing* (fashioning one's nature or character through learning rituals). He insisted that rituals were the ground on which one stood and that only through learning rituals could one settle one's character. With the firm establishment of good character, moral conduct would emanate unfailingly. Then one's actions would always correspond to moral principles as naturally as the transformation of things operates with the fixity of the positions of heaven.⁶⁹

Chang knew extremely well that a person with moral knowledge has yet to become moral. One's physical nature with its deep-rooted habits prevented one from acting in accord with one's understanding. There is a gap between knowledge and behavior. One may break any rule with full knowledge of its impropriety because of the settled state of one's character. To bring one's emotions and actions into line with one's knowledge of proper conduct calls for extreme self-control. Any exclusive appeal to the intellect for generating moral conduct will not always work since most people are weak-willed.

One advantage of ritual as a method of cultivating proper conduct is its efficacy, derived from the fact that the participants do not analyze the pattern of relationships prescribed by the ritual.⁷⁰ Whether strong-willed or weak-willed, the participants are required to follow the rules in ensemble. Chang argued that ritual practice as a vehicle for moral cultivation was most effective in transforming one's "improper habits" (*hsi-ch'i*) and internalizing patterns of proper behavior.⁷¹ He wrote:

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[One may] know them [the moral imperatives of heaven], but, if one does not internalize them as one's nature through ritual practice, they are not yet an integral part of one's self (*pu i li hsing chih*). Therefore, learning ritual to realize one's [essential] nature (*chih li ch'eng hsing*) will result in the manifestation of the Way (*tao-i*).⁷²

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Ritual and the Stages of Learning

Chang recommended the learning and practice of ritual to all, including children and scholars aspiring to become sages. Chang stressed that learning ritual was the most important task for scholars.⁷³ There were several advantages to learning rituals. Rituals helped to cultivate moral character. Furthermore, they provided a constant pattern of rules for action. Rituals helped to develop spontaneous responses to specific situations without reasoning and without the internal conflict between reason and action. Finally, studying rituals would increase one's moral knowledge.⁷⁴

Chang distinguished two stages of learning, using Confucius and his disciples as the scale: the first began with learning for a scholar and

ended with achievements equal to Yen Hui's. Among the disciples of Confucius, Yen was most venerated by the Sung neo-Confucians. The second stage began with the level of Yen's learning and ended with the perfect character of Confucius.⁷⁵ But these two stages of learning only applied to scholars who were already educated.

In fact, in addition to these two stages, there was the period from childhood through the "first stage." Therefore, there were actually three stages in Chang's learning program. According to Chang, the learning process began even in the mother's womb.⁷⁶ After a child's birth, the family provided the most important learning environment. Children developed a character as they learned from other members of the family, who, more often than not, conducted themselves improperly. Before children were old enough to receive formal education, they had already acquired improper habits, which had become fixed as character traits. It was therefore important that children should be taught to do sweeping and to conduct themselves properly toward elders before they developed "bad" habits in these respects.⁷⁷

Though aware of the importance of education during childhood, the focus of Chang's teachings about learning was on the scholar. After committing himself to the goal of learning to be a sage or a "great man," the initial difficulty involved in learning for the scholar was the question of how to "transform" his physical nature or character. The transformation was difficult, for it demanded "overcoming oneself" (*k'o-chi*), which involved undoing one's conditioned state of improper conduct.⁷⁸

克己

The need to learn ritual practice was not the exclusive concern of beginning scholars. Although Chang Tsai distinguished between two stages of learning, he did not relegate ritual practice to only the second stage.⁷⁹ Even Yen Tzu had to learn and practice rituals throughout his life. How much more important, then, was it for ordinary scholars to learn ritual practice? Literati would be indistinguishable from mean people if the former concerned themselves with nothing but sensual and material satisfaction, paying no heed to the importance of ritual and duties.⁸⁰ Here it is clear that Chang Tsai's main concern was how to establish the distinctive patterns of behavior of the elite. The function of ritual as a "class" marker is unmistakable—a point to which we shall return.

Rituals and Principles

It is now clear that by moral knowledge, Chang Tsai primarily meant rules of proper conduct befitting the social status and role of the individual. It is the knowledge of how to conduct oneself in relation with others in all conceivable daily situations. He was not concerned with the question of how one can reach a moral judgment about action in an unusual situation, especially one that involved a conflict of values and duties. Chang's program of learning morality consisted essentially of learning

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what, not learning *why*, because the reason was not a particular reason for a specific action in an unexpected situation. It was a general reason for a prescribed action for the same occasion under normal circumstances. Chang Tsai's view of moral education therefore called for the learning of both the concrete rules of proper conduct and the general reasons for those rules. These reasons, for Chang Tsai, were based on moral principles. In his writings he sometimes speaks of ritual in terms of concrete ceremonies, decorum, etiquette, or institutions. Sometimes he refers to ritual in the sense of the general reason or principle of proper conduct.

不變 It is therefore no surprise that a casual reading of Chang's writings seems to suggest that there were two kinds of rituals: those that changed with time and those that were absolute (*pu-pien*). In fact, what he was referring to were two aspects, rather than two categories, of rituals. Rituals had their form—the outward, public act—and their meaning—the reason for the need to perform these formalized acts. While the form might and often should change with circumstances, the meaning, or, in his terminology, the principle, was permanent. It is in this sense that Chang spoke of the identity of ritual with principle.⁸¹

A formalized act can lose its symbolism but retain its pattern of behavior as social custom. Customary practices can be observed without comprehension of their meanings on the part of the participants. The alienation of symbolism from ritual act makes it possible for the performance of ritual in a totally different context of meaning. Social practices often contained "improper" rituals and duties.⁸² These were often the result of the "erroneous" matching of meaning and ritual forms. A simple example was the performance of a Buddhist rite to fulfill a Confucian obligation—such as the use of a Buddhist service in funerals and burials to express the grief and filial emotions of the bereaved.⁸³ According to Chang, these were the kinds of improper ritual practices that needed to be abandoned. There were others that should be changed under new circumstances.⁸⁴ What kinds of rituals were correct? How could scholars know these rituals? More fundamental questions were how the general criteria were to be obtained whereby specific rituals could be evaluated, and how the criteria were constituted. These criteria were, in fact, the types of rituals that Chang regarded as absolute, permanent rules of human society.

In Chang's thinking, "absolute rituals" were more than customs and social practices. They had a cosmological basis.⁸⁵ "Rituals are principles," Chang explained.⁸⁶ Although rituals were mostly created by humans, Chang claimed that "the rituals of heaven and earth exist of themselves." One of these absolute rituals or principles was hierarchy. Chang said:

There are rituals that need no change. [They are] like the order and laws of heaven, how can they be changed? . . . Heaven begets things with differential images of superior and inferior, big and small. All man should do is to observe these [principles]; this is what rituals should be. There are scholars who think that all rituals were created by man; they are not cognizant of the fact that rituals are rooted in the nature of heaven.⁸⁷

Chang is, in fact, claiming that social distinctions are not artificial but an extension of the natural order. Hierarchy is a basic principle of the universe. It is inevitable and natural that things occupy different positions within the universe. As demonstrated above, Chang's ontology may lend itself to a radical interpretation of egalitarianism; but his view of the "unbalanced" endowment of human existence provided the needed justification for his stress on social distinction, which only becomes apparent in his writings on moral cultivation and ritual.

The function of rituals was twofold: to distinguish and to integrate.⁸⁸ As Hsün Tzu had pointed out long before, individual human beings can only survive by forming a society, which provides a set of common rules regulating the conduct of its members. These common rules and institutions—*li* (ritual)—are essential means of integration. But the pattern of integration takes the form of hierarchy, and ritual serves to define, institutionalize, and reinforce the structure of social differentiation. For Chang Tsai, ritual was essential to defining mankind both as a group having a common bond in their origins in the cosmos and as individual members of a social hierarchy with specific roles and stations (*fen*).

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The question of the criteria for evaluating the propriety of ritual rules was not a concern for either the common people or the beginning scholar, for they did not understand heavenly principles, and, therefore, they only needed to learn from the sages. The institutions and rules of human conduct prescribed by the sages of the Three Dynasties without doubt were the sources of proper rituals. Since for the Sung neo-Confucians the teachings of the sages had been lost for over one thousand years since Confucius and Mencius, the revival of ancient rituals posed considerable difficulties. But Chang, like other Sung neo-Confucians, believed that the *tao* had been rediscovered in his times. Those who comprehended the *tao* would be able to create "moral principles" (*i-li*).⁸⁹ This was only possible when one had "learned extensively" (*po-wen*) the moral principles contained in the Classics.⁹⁰ Chang at one point summarized the relationship between learning, principles, and rituals:

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What are called ritual rules are principles. It is necessary to learn principles exhaustively; rituals are principles put into practice. When [one] knows the principles, [one] can create rituals; therefore, rituals come out of principles.⁹¹

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Although Chang had the modesty not to claim sagehood for himself, he did regard himself a “great man” (*ta-jen*). He had already argued that there was little difference between a natural sage and a great man who strove to learn the sagely principles.⁹² The fact that he called his study on the Classics “The Repository of Principles of Classical Learning” (*Ching-hsüeh li-k’u*) is strong evidence for his belief in his ability to understand the principles contained in the Classics.⁹³ It is therefore no surprise that he had already written extensively on rituals. Firmly believing in his comprehension of moral principles, Chang took liberty in creating rituals, so much so that he incurred Chu Hsi’s criticism.⁹⁴

Ritual, Aristocracy, and Social Hierarchy

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The transformation of society could be made with less difficulty if the emperor supported such a cause. But unfortunately for the neo-Confucians, most emperors of the Northern Sung—T’ai-tsu (r. 960–975), T’ai-tsung (r. 976–997), Chen-tsung (r. 999–1022), Jen-tsung (r. 1023–1063), and Ying-tsung (r. 1064–1067)—were great patrons of Buddhism. Sung emperors also erected buildings for the translation of Buddhist scriptures, from 982 through 1082.⁹⁵ Without the support of the emperors, the neo-Confucians could only hope to win over the literati. To create a class of Confucian literati entailed initially overcoming the Buddhist beliefs and practices that had been internalized by them. It was therefore necessary to establish the goal of attaining Confucian sagehood for the literati, thereby refuting competing definitions of good and bad conduct offered by the Buddhists. To “transform” their character, or physical nature, entailed replacing Buddhist rituals with Confucian rituals.

理一分殊

It is time to take up the question of the “class” dimension in Chang Tsai’s thought. Although barely noticeable in his ontological and cosmological thinking, this dimension figured prominently in his writings on ethics and rituals. In fact, Chang’s class interest is so obscure in his ontology that it deceptively savors of egalitarianism. When Yang Shih, a student of Ch’eng I, pointed out that Chang’s ontological egalitarianism might be compared to Mo Tzu’s notion of universal love, Ch’eng I denied the comparison and stressed that the main idea of Chang’s treatise was *li i fen shu* (unity of principle and differentiation in social stations).⁹⁶ As Donald Munro has pointed out, the Ch’eng-Chu school of cosmology drew heavily on the attributes of a clan-based society. Hierarchically arranged position is one such attribute.⁹⁷ Chang Tsai’s cosmology is no exception to this mode of thinking that analogized the social hierarchy to nature. For if Chang’s contribution had to do only with the universalism of his ontology without also explaining “differentiation” or different stations, he would be endorsing what he took to be the Buddhist position. It is therefore appropriate in this connection to discuss the social vision underlying Chang’s view on rituals.

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The society that Chang Tsai envisioned was one dominated by a small number of hereditary families with an independent economic basis.⁹⁸ They were also to serve as the guardians of the common people, providing them with instructions for proper life-style and norms of conduct. Ritual rules would serve to institutionalize the elite's privileges and would make an effective instrument for the uprooting of Buddhist influence in society.

We have already seen that Chang projected a hierarchical structure onto the cosmos, which included the order in which things come into existence. The hierarchical nature of the cosmos was used to explain and sustain a parallel social hierarchy. Chang explicitly said that distinctions were natural. The basic function of ritual was to “distinguish” (*pieh-i*).⁹⁹ Indeed, individuals differed in their physical endowment. Humans were more intelligent as a species than animals and things despite their common origins in the cosmic *ch'i*. But within the human species, individuals varied considerably in terms of their intellectual capacities.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, some were more intelligent than others. Some had natures so “clear” (*po*) that they could easily be enlightened and attain sagehood. On the other extreme, however, were those whose nature was so “thickly obscured” (*hou*) that they could never be enlightened.¹⁰¹ This natural difference in human endowment justified a social hierarchy, and the main function of ritual was to define and reinforce distinctions between individuals. On one occasion, Chang clearly revealed the audience he was addressing when he noted that the ritual practice of the common people was simple. He did not demand observance of rituals from them for they did not have the resources for expensive rituals. Besides, they could not comprehend the meanings behind the rituals.¹⁰² Chang believed that the common people were the least endowed in intelligence.¹⁰³

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Much of Chang's teachings about the stages of learning discussed earlier, and in fact his entire program of learning, were not meant to apply to all classes. The “scholar” or “learner” to whom Chang always referred could not possibly include the common people of the lower classes (*hsia-min*). Chang at times made this explicit in his writings.¹⁰⁴ He believed that there were human beings whose “physical nature” had so thoroughly settled into bad habits that they had become “impenetrable and closed” to transformation.¹⁰⁵ But the educated class could transform their character by ritual practice.

下民

Neo-Confucian Sages and Ritual Reforms

Strong interest in rituals was by no means idiosyncratic in Chang Tsai's thought, nor was it confined to the *Tao-hsüeh* neo-Confucians such as Ch'eng I. Eminent politicians such as Ssu-ma Kuang and other Confucians, including Shih Chieh and Li K'ou (1009–1059), also expressed strong concern about the need to “revive” Confucian rituals.¹⁰⁶ It should

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be noted that even though Sung neo-Confucians had great interest in rituals, they, unlike scholars in the T'ang, were more interested in the role of ritual in moral cultivation and in preserving the family. They did not look to the imperial state as the center through which Confucian rituals could be promulgated.¹⁰⁷

When Chang Tsai called for the forming of habits in accordance with proper rituals, he was not simply demanding the determination and endeavor to practice some well-defined and clearly prescribed rituals authorized by the government. He was making a plea for reforming or reinventing rituals for the scholar-official class. It should be noted at this point that Chang, like most Confucians in the Northern Sung, was not anachronistic when it came to details of specific rites. They recognized the need to change the specific form of ancient rites so that the material conditions of the times could be taken into consideration.¹⁰⁸ Chang justified his recommendations for rituals in terms of the lack of interest in the investigation of principles on the part of the Sheng-tsung emperor.¹⁰⁹ And as the discussion above has shown, Chang believed that there was little difference between a "great man" and a sage. When a great man had investigated the principles of humanity, he was equally qualified to authorize rituals. Chang was confident that he had comprehended enough moral principles to reform and create rituals on his own authority.¹¹⁰ Chang had written prescriptions on funerals, burial, mourning, and ancestor worship.¹¹¹

Perhaps for Confucians no individual rite was more important than paying homage to the ancestors to whom the entire family and kinship group owed their existence. Tu Yen (978–1057), Han Ch'i (1008–1075), Fan Tsu-yü (1041–1098), Ch'eng I, Ssu-ma Kuang, Chang Tsai, Lü Ta-fang (1027–1097), and Shih Chieh all had expressed different opinions about the proper ceremony for ancestor worship.¹¹² Han Ch'i wrote an account of instructions for sacrifice to ancestors at the grave.¹¹³ Although they strove to reform popular practice, their flexible approach to ritual forms resulted in the accommodation of some customs.¹¹⁴

Of the various rituals Chang wrote about, none were more important than those designed to strengthen kinship ties. Like many neo-Confucians in the Northern Sung, Chang attempted to revive the *tsung-fa* (rule of descent) system, which required the practice of primogeniture, keeping properties and official rank in the hands of the "son of the descent line" (*tsung-tzu*).¹¹⁵ Chang regarded the rule-of-descent system as crucial to the preservation of family wealth and official status. He lamented the fact that the system had fallen into disuse and that no official families could survive two generations.¹¹⁶ But with the revival of *tsung-fa*, the heir to the descent line would be able to use his wealth to support his kinsmen and so cultivate kinship solidarity. And, more im-

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portant, the kinsmen who were qualified for official appointment could transfer their privileges to the heir. If the heir proved to be incompetent, the next of kin with the highest virtue would be made the heir.

For Chang the *tsung-fa* system was a heavenly principle. But no doubt the system was designed to centralize the resources of a kingroup so that the best person would receive official appointment and at the same time manage the lineage property in support of the entire kingroup.¹¹⁷ This hoary institution, Chang hoped, would keep officials from losing their privileges and wealth, which was the inevitable consequence of the civil service examination system.¹¹⁸ Chang Tsai strongly opposed the civil service examination, and he always taught his students to focus on learning to be sages rather than on success in the examinations.¹¹⁹

Chang's advocacy of the revival of the *tsung-fa* system is a clear indication of his vision of a new Confucian society—a society governed by a small number of hereditary elite families. The institutional bases of these families were the *tsung-fa* and the “well-field” system. The *tsung-fa* system would guarantee a small number of elite families the perpetual ownership of land and an uninterrupted access to official appointment. While the *tsung-fa* system would concentrate land and political resources in the heir of the descent line, the “well-field” system would ensure the economic independence of the elite families. Chang believed that if the emperor was “benevolent” enough to revive the “well-field” system by parceling out land to officials as permanent holdings, it could be easily done without the need to punish one dissident. The ultimate goal, however, should be the full installation of the feudal system (*feng-chien*).¹²⁰

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To conclude, against the social background of Buddhism and the effort of neo-Confucians to rebuild a Confucian society, it can easily be understood why Chang Tsai's program of moral cultivation stressed the transformation of character or human physical nature. Even the scholars who served in the government took Buddhism as a higher truth and practiced Buddhist rites as much in earnest as did the commoners. Buddhism had come to constitute so essential a part of their character that any attempt to challenge and undermine it by disputations and criticism would have been to no avail. The recreation of a hierarchical society dominated by the scholar-official class involved nothing less than a thorough undoing of behavioral habits promoted by Buddhist teachings and rituals. Confucian rituals had to be created and propagated in order to remold social conduct. Chang's profound insight into the process of behavioral development led him to emphasize the role of ritual in the cultivation and changing of character. It also explains why ritual occupies a central place in Chang's moral philosophy.

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NOTES

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- 錢穆
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上山春平
朱子の[家禮]と[儀禮經
傳通解]
朱子語類
- 禮
- 宗
- Philosophy East & West
- 1 – There are two essays in *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage* that focus specifically on Sung neo-Confucian teachings about properly ritualized conduct in the family. But neither is concerned with an explicit analysis of the role of ritual at a higher level of neo-Confucian education such as the cultivation of the mind. See M. Theresa Kelleher, “Back to Basics: Chu Hsi’s *Elementary Learning (Hsiao-hsüeh)*,” and Patricia Ebrey, “Education Through Ritual: Efforts to Formulate Family Rituals During the Sung Period,” in *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and John Chaffee (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 219–251, 277–306. With a few exceptions, the importance of ritual in neo-Confucian ethics has received no greater attention among Chinese and Japanese scholars. See Ch’ien Mu’s comprehensive study of Chu Hsi, *Chu Tzu hsin hsüeh-an* (Taipei: San-min Shu-chü, 1971), vol. 4, pp. 112–179. Ueyama Shunpei has treated Chu Hsi’s theory of human nature in relation to ritual in “Shushi no ‘karei’ to ‘girei kyōden tsūkai,’” *Tōhō gaku* 54 (1981): 173–256.
 - 2 – Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* (Classified conversations of Master Chu) (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1986), 126:3019, 126:3027.
 - 3 – *Ibid.*, 6:101, 6:109. The term *li* will be translated as ritual rules in this article, a rendering I borrow from Donald Munro. See his *Images of Human Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 8. *Li* in its broadest sense includes formal aspects of ritualized conduct, social and political institutions, and the principles and meanings in whose terms they are justified.
 - 4 – For an interpretation of Confucius’ thought that stresses the centrality of ritual and its magical power, see Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius—The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). For a discussion that grants ritual the power of cultivating the inner qualities of the participants in addition to shaping behavior by ceremonial rules, see Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 67–75.
 - 5 – For a discussion of the interest and significance of the ancient institution of kinship—the *tsung* system, ancestor worship, the compilation of genealogy, and the setting up of sacrificial fields—see Patricia B. Ebrey, “The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organization,” in *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000–1940*, ed. Patricia B. Ebrey and James L. Watson (Berkeley: University

of California Press, 1986), pp. 35–50. For a discussion of the use of family ritual to mold behavior by neo-Confucians in the Sung, see Ebrey's "Education through Ritual," pp. 277–306.

- 6 – Ira Kassoff, *The Thought of Chang Tsai* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); T'ang Chün-i, "Chang Tsai's Theory of Mind and Its Metaphysical Basis," *Philosophy East and West* 6, no. 2 (July 1956): 113–136; Huang Siu-chi, "Chang Tsai's Concept of Ch'i," *Philosophy East and West* 18, no. 4 (October 1968): 247–260.
- 7 – To give just a few examples: Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 477–498; Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, vol. 1 (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957; reprint, New Haven: The New College and University Press, 1963), pp. 159–182; Hou Wailu, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih* (A general history of Chinese thought) (Peking: Jen-min Ch'u-pan She, 1957), vol. 4, pt. 1, pp. 545–570; Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 466–470; Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 495–517; Huang Siu-chi, "The Moral Point of View of Chang Tsai," *Philosophy East and West* 21, no. 2 (April 1971): 154–155. Ira Kasoff has begun to take note of this understudied aspect of Chang's thought even though his treatment does not do full justice to the centrality of ritual in Chang's theory of moral cultivation (Ira E. Kasoff, *The Thought of Chang Tsai*, pp. 81–82, 128).
- 8 – Chang Tsai, *Chang Tsai chi* (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1978), p. 383 (hereafter *CTC*).
- 9 – *CTC*, pp. 387–388.
- 10 – T'o T'o, *Sung Shih* (Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1977), 427:12724.
- 11 – For a general discussion of the importance of cosmogony to ethics, see *Cosmogony and the Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics*, ed. Robin W. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), "Introduction."
- 12 – *CTC*, pp. 7–9.
- 13 – *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8, 66.
- 14 – *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 15 – Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, vol. 1, p. 178.
- 16 – *CTC*, p. 21.
- 17 – *Ibid.*, p. 341.

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- 18 – Ibid., p. 63.
- 19 – Ibid., p. 63.
- 20 – Ibid., p. 324.
- 21 – Ibid., p. 23.
- 22 – Ibid., p. 324.
- 23 – Ibid., p. 23.
- 24 – Ibid.
- 25 – Chang Tsai said, “Heaven does not have mind; the mind is in the mind of man” (*CTC*, p. 256; see also pp. 185–189).
- 26 – Chang Tsai, however, did not give the names of these Confucians (*CTC*, pp. 64, 267).
- 27 – See Donald Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 15–16.
- 28 – *CTC*, p. 23.
- 29 – Most studies of Chang’s thought do not identify “physical nature” with character.
- 30 – *CTC*, p. 355.
- 31 – Ibid., p. 274.
- 32 – Ibid., pp. 64, 350.
- 33 – Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T’ang* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 134, 153, 166; Huang Min-chih, *Sung-tai Fo-chiao she-hui ching-chi lun-wen chi* (Essays on the social and economic history of Sung Buddhism) (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng Shu-chü, 1989), pp. 349–355.
- 34 – Huang Min-chih, *Sung-tai Fo-chiao*, p. 271.
- 35 – Those who succeeded in obtaining the *chin-shih* degree were granted a feast in K’ai-pao Buddhist temple in 979. See Wang Yung, *Yen-i mou lu* (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1981), 1:4.
- 36 – Fang Hao, “Sung-tai Fo-chiao tui lu-yu chih kung-hsien” (Sung Buddhism’s contribution to tourism), in *Fang Hao liu-shih chih liu-shih-sze tzu-hsüan tai-t’ing kao* (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng Shu-chü, 1974), pp. 124–126; Huang Min-chih, “*Sung-tai Fo-chiao*,” pp. 432–434.
- 37 – Fang Hao, “*Sung-tai Fo-chiao*,” pp. 115–121.
- 38 – Wang Yung, *Yen-i i-mou lu*, 2:20.
- 39 – Ch’eng I, *Erh Ch’eng chi* (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1981), p. 26; *Sung-jen i-shih hui-pien* (Collection of anecdotes of Sung person-ages) (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1981), p. 452.

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- 40 – Wang Yung, *Yen-i i-mou lu*, 3:24.
- 41 – See James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp. 164–165.
- 42 – Han Yü and Li Ao were critics of mixing Buddhist and Confucian rituals. See David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 154.
- 43 – Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 88–89.
- 44 – Fang Hao, “Sung-tai Fo-chiao,” pp. 159–165; Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism*, pp. 94–95; Huang Min-chih, *Sung-tai Fo-chiao*, p. 431.
- 45 – Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism*, pp. 93–98.
- 46 – Patricia Ebrey, “Cremation in Sung China,” *American Historical Review* 95 (1990): 406–428.
- 47 – *CTC*, pp. 329–330.
- 48 – *Ibid.*, pp. 187–188.
- 49 – *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.
- 50 – *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 51 – *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 63, 269.
- 52 – *Ibid.*, p. 269.
- 53 – *Ibid.*, p. 271.
- 54 – *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 313, 328.
- 55 – Aristotle argues that morality begins with learning about virtuous actions, or the “that,” in contrast to learning the “because,” or the explanation and justification of virtuous action. For discussion, see M. F. Burnyeat, “Aristotle on Learning to be Good,” in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 71–72.
- 56 – *CTC*, p. 286.
- 57 – *Ibid.*, pp. 277–278, 284.
- 58 – *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 269–270, 275.
- 59 – *Ibid.*, p. 312.
- 60 – Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1966), p. 1.
- 61 – Chang said: “The sage transforms himself spontaneously” (*CTC*, pp. 73, 17–18, 27–28, 78).
- 62 – *CTC*, pp. 76, 17–18, 28.

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- 63 – Ibid., p. 76.
- 64 – Ibid., pp. 76–77.
- 65 – Ibid., p. 64.
- 66 – Ibid.
- 67 – For a discussion of Aristotle’s idea about the role of developing good habits in cultivating morality, see M. F. Burnyeat, “Aristotle on Learning to Be Good” (see note 55 above), pp. 69–88.
- 68 – *CTC*, p. 264.
- 69 – Ibid., p. 191.
- 70 – A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), p. 25.
- 71 – *CTC*, pp. 279, 330.
- 72 – Ibid., p. 37.
- 73 – Ibid., pp. 279, 330. His student Lü Ta-lin pointed out that Chang always told scholars about the need to learn ritual in order to transform their bad character (*CTC*, p. 383).
- 74 – Ibid., pp. 279, 330.
- 75 – Kassof, *The Thought of Chang Tsai* (note 6 above), pp. 76–103, 128.
- 76 – *CTC*, p. 329.
- 77 – Ibid., p. 31.
- 78 – Ibid., pp. 281, 130.
- 79 – Kassof thinks that ritual is important only in the first stage, not in the second stage (*The Thought of Chang Tsai*, pp. 81–82, 128). But in fact, Chang clearly said: “it is not possible to attain the state of Confucius without learning the *Book of Songs* and the *Records of Rites*” (*CTC*, p. 278).
- 80 – *CTC*, p. 31.
- 81 – Ibid., pp. 259, 326.
- 82 – Ibid., pp. 51, 328.
- 83 – Ch’eng Hao lamented that his family was among only a few families in Lo-yang that did not use the Buddhist service in a funeral (*Erh Ch’eng chi*, p. 114 [see note 39 above]).
- 84 – *CTC*, pp. 264, 328.
- 85 – The idea that ritual had its roots in the cosmos can be traced back to no later than Hsün Tzu (A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, p. 259).

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- 86 – *CTC*, p. 326.
- 87 – *Ibid.*, p. 264.
- 88 – *Ibid.*, p. 261.
- 89 – *Ibid.*, p. 274.
- 90 – *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 275–278.
- 91 – *Ibid.*, p. 326.
- 92 – *Ibid.*, pp. 77–79.
- 93 – *Ibid.*, p. 288.
- 94 – Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu yü-lei*, 84:2183.
- 95 – Kuo Pang, *Sung Yüan Fo-chiao* (Buddhism in Sung and Yüan times) 郭朋, 宋元佛教 (Foochow, Fukien: Jen-min Ch'u-pan She, 1981), pp. 1–5.
- 96 – This rendering reads *fen* as station, rather than divisions. I owe this rendering to Professor K. C. Liu. For a similar translation, see Peter Bol and Kidder Smith et al., *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I-ching* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 145. For Ch'eng I's praise of Chang's "Western Inscriptions," see Ch'eng I, *Erh Ch'eng chi*, p. 22.
- 97 – Donald Munro, "The Family Network, the Stream of Water, and the Plant: Picturing Persons in Sung Confucianism," in *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values*, ed. Donald Munro (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 1985), pp. 264–269.
- 98 – Chang Tsai wished to resurrect the "feudal" system (*feng-chien*), which he recognized to be impossible. The best alternative was to make local government office hereditary (*CTC*, pp. 250–251).
- 99 – *CTC*, p. 261.
- 100 – *Ibid.*, pp. 341, 322, 374.
- 101 – *Ibid.*, p. 341.
- 102 – *Ibid.*, p. 317.
- 103 – *Ibid.*, p. 256.
- 104 – *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 317.
- 105 – *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 374.
- 106 – For a discussion of Li K'ou's advocacy of *Chou-li* as the foundation of "Ultimate peace" (*t'ai-p'ing*), see Hou Wai-lu, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih*, pp. 408–414 (see note 7 above).
- 107 – David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, p. 117. For discussion of the importance of state rituals for T'ang scholars, see chap. 4.

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- 108 – See Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism*, chap. 3.
- 109 – *CTC*, p. 327.
- 110 – *Ibid.*, p. 288.
- 111 – *Ibid.*, pp. 258–265, 289–303. For a detailed discussion of rituals by Chang Tsai and other Sung neo-Confucians, see Ebrey, *Confucianism*, chaps. 3 and 4.
- 112 – Ebrey, “Education through Ritual,” pp. 286, 292 (see note 1 above). For Shih Chieh, see *Tsu-lai hsieh-sheng wen-chi* (Collected writings of Shih Chieh) (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1984), pp. 234–235.
- 113 – Ebrey, “The Early Stages,” pp. 24–25 (see note 5 above).
- 114 – Ebrey, *Confucianism*, chap. 3.
- 115 – Ebrey, “The Early Stages,” pp. 35–39. See also her *Confucianism*, chap. 3.
- 116 – *CTC*, p. 259.
- 117 – *Ibid.*, pp. 258–261.
- 118 – *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 382. See also Chu Hsi, *Reflections on Things at Hand*, trans. Wing-tsit Chan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 199–200.
- 119 – *CTC*, p. 382.
- 120 – *Ibid.*, pp. 248–252.