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**Anne D. Birdwhistell    The concept of experiential knowledge in the thought of Chang Tsai**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Scholars have generally agreed that epistemological problems were of but minor interest to most Chinese philosophers.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, however, the study of Chinese science and scientific thought has presented new material which gives reason to believe that data largely ignored in the past should be reconsidered.<sup>2</sup> Certain aspects of Chinese thought, hitherto insufficiently recognized, seem to call for reexamination and, perhaps, reevaluation.<sup>3</sup> Stimulated by these developments, I focus in this article on Chang Tsai's<sup>a</sup> concept of *wen-chien chih chih*<sup>b</sup>, literally, knowledge from hearing and seeing, or what I call experiential knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

In Confucian philosophy a fundamental separation was made between experiential knowledge and moral knowledge, *te-hsing chih chih*<sup>c</sup>.<sup>5</sup> This distinction was present in the thought of the pre-Ch'in<sup>d</sup> philosophers, who contrasted the ordinary knowledge of the common person with a higher, moral knowledge of the superior man or sage, and it found its classical expression in the *Chung yung*<sup>e</sup>, with the phrase, "... The superior man honors his virtuous nature (*tsün te-hsing*<sup>f</sup>) and maintains constant inquiry and study (*tao wen-hsüeh*<sup>g</sup>). . . ." <sup>6</sup> Chang Tsai (1020–1077), however, was the philosopher who explicitly fixed this epistemological division for all later philosophical thought, and thus it is his conception of experiential knowledge that is considered here.<sup>7</sup>

The separation of moral and experiential knowledge was not concerned with the philosophical distinction, important to many Western philosophers, between "a priori" knowledge and empirical knowledge. Rather, the issue involved such problems as method, purpose, and object of knowledge. In the view of most Chinese philosophers, including Chang Tsai, all knowledge had an empirical foundation. The Confucian position, stated in a famous passage in the *Ta hsüeh*<sup>h</sup> was that moral cultivation and knowledge involved a process of "extending one's knowledge" (*chih-chih*<sup>i</sup>) by "investigating things" (*ko-wu*<sup>j</sup>).<sup>8</sup> Not all knowledge, however, served to further one's moral improvement or help bring proper order to the family or state. Only moral knowledge had that purpose.

Chang Tsai's discussion of experiential knowledge and, indeed, all his thinking about it occurred within the context of its relationship with moral knowledge. His preference for the latter certainly shaped his attitude towards the former, but for philosophical reasons he could not safely ignore the topic.<sup>9</sup> That he was somewhat reluctant to regard the problems of experiential knowledge as legitimate concerns in themselves may be seen in how he dealt with the subject. His reservations are important, however, for they show some of the concerns and tensions within the philosophical tradition.

With the discussion here, my aim is to contribute to a further understanding of

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the role of experiential knowledge in Neo-Confucian thought.<sup>10</sup> Also it is to analyze the means by which Chang Tsai made experiential knowledge an essential element in the conceptual framework. Pragmatism and empiricism were strong themes in Chinese culture, and they could scarcely have survived without the support, whether implicit or explicit, of the major philosophical tradition.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the concept of experiential knowledge seems to reflect the idea, stated by Needham, that "... there flourished these other convictions that true knowledge had grown, and would continue to grow, immeasurably more if men would look outward to things and build upon what other men had found reliable in their outward looking."<sup>12</sup>

## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

Chang Tsai began the chapter entitled "Ta hsin<sup>k</sup>" (Expanding the mind) with the following statement:

If one expands one's mind, then one can embody all the things of the world. If some things are not yet embodied, then one's mind still has things outside of it. The minds of ordinary people stop with the narrowness of hearing and seeing. The sage, however, completely develops his nature and so does not restrict his mind to seeing and hearing. He sees the world as not having a single thing that is not himself. Mencius said that if one completely develops one's mind, then one will know nature and Heaven, and thereby know that Heaven is so vast that there is nothing outside of it. A mind which has things outside of it cannot unite itself with the mind of Heaven. Knowledge from seeing and hearing is knowledge derived from contact with things. It is not what one's virtuous nature knows. What one's virtuous nature knows does not sprout from seeing and hearing.<sup>13</sup>

This quotation from Chang Tsai's *Cheng meng*<sup>1</sup> presents the context in which Chang Tsai thought about experiential knowledge, or, knowledge from hearing and seeing. Such knowledge was differentiated from moral knowledge and yet linked to it. Never explicitly examined, experiential knowledge was also somewhat vague in conception. It tended to be described more in terms of what it was not rather than what it was. While excluding moral knowledge, it apparently included most other kinds of knowledge, such as perceptual, empirical, historical, emotional, psychological, and the general beliefs of the common people. Although Chang Tsai's various comments indicate that his ideas about experiential knowledge ranged from a simple perceptual concept to a more complex one, he always retained the notion that it was paired with moral knowledge in a dichotomous relationship.

Chang Tsai also had the following comments:

When awake, one's form (*hsing*<sup>m</sup>) opens up and one's willful thoughts (*chih*<sup>n</sup>) intermingle with the outside world. When asleep in a dream, one's form closes up and one's energy (*ch'i*<sup>o</sup>) is devoted only to the inside. The waking state is the time when we learn (*chih*<sup>p</sup>) new things from our ears and eyes. The dream state is the time when we go over (*yüan*<sup>q</sup>) old things from our experiences and mind. . . .<sup>14</sup>

People say that they already have knowledge and that it is derived from the ears and eyes. The fact that people have learned (*shou*<sup>r</sup>) something is due to the

blending of the inner and outer. If the intellect blends the inner and outer beyond the senses, then the result is true knowledge. It extends far past the human world.<sup>15</sup>

Chang Tsai began with the assumption that knowledge originates when the senses and the mind (*hsin*<sup>s</sup>) interact with the world of things outside of one's body. Originally developed in part by the Mohists, this view had become commonly accepted by most Confucian philosophers by the beginning of the Han<sup>t</sup> dynasty.<sup>16</sup> The basic premise was that knowledge arises from a "meeting" (*chieh*<sup>u</sup>) of the sense organs (*kuan*<sup>v</sup>) with their respective areas of experience. Thus the eye sees objects but does not hear them, and the ear hears sounds but does not see them. Knowledge only arises, however, when the functioning of the mind is added to sense experience. This phenomenon was called the "blending of the inner and outer."<sup>17</sup> Without the element of thinking, or the functioning of the mind, there would be only looking without seeing, listening without hearing.

Perceptual knowledge was the simplest kind of experiential knowledge. The process of learning at this level was thought of as merely "receiving." Chang Tsai emphasized that things were gained from outside oneself. Experiential knowledge resulted from the activity of "contact with things," in which one's mind, the "inner," received various kinds of stimuli via the senses from the external world of things. Its method, then, entailed the use of the senses. Basic to this conception of knowledge was the idea of a close relationship between the outer phenomenal world and the active functioning of the senses and the mind. Fortunately, Chang Tsai, as well as most other philosophers, did not have to contend with the problem found in some Western philosophy, that of Descartes for example, of an unbridgeable gap between mind and matter, because for Chang Tsai all things formed a metaphysical unity.<sup>18</sup>

The following passages indicate further some of the characteristics of experiential knowledge.

Experiential knowledge is also knowledge. But since it is not able to complete sincerity by introspection, then what is known still comes from the outside. Therefore it is called small knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

Experiential knowledge sees the sides but does not know the whole. It understands the flow but does not know the source. Therefore it is small.<sup>20</sup>

Among the bright things in heaven, nothing is greater than the sun. Therefore we have eyes to see (*chieh*) it, but we do not know how many tens of thousand *li*<sup>w</sup> high it is. Among the sounds of heaven, nothing is greater than thunder. Therefore we have ears to hear (*chieh*) it, but no one knows how many tens of thousand *li* far off it is. Among the unlimited things of heaven, nothing is greater than the *T'ai-hsü*<sup>x</sup>. Therefore the mind's knowledge enlarges itself, but no one examines its limits. The defect of humans is that they see and hear with their ears and eyes. They involve their minds and yet do not exhaustively apply their minds. Therefore one whose thoughts exhaust his mind certainly knows where the mind comes from and only then is able to do things.<sup>21</sup>

As indicated here, experiential knowledge originated from outside oneself, and it depended on the senses and one's physical nature. It also had as its object

things in the phenomenal world. To borrow Wang Chih's<sup>y</sup> phrase, this "knowledge is enclosed in things."<sup>22</sup> Since it was derived initially from perceptual knowledge, no matter how complex it became, it was regarded as forever tied to events and things of this world.

Insofar as experiential knowledge pertained to things, it also was involved with the processes of making distinctions, classifying things, and giving names to things. Its aim was knowledge of the "what," as opposed to the "why." Things and events that were recognized as such made up what Hua Hsi-min<sup>z</sup> called the "flow," and knowledge of it contrasted to that kind of knowledge which was concerned with the "source."<sup>23</sup> Chang Tsai made this distinction clear when he said:

If one knows the transformations of things, then one is good at describing their activities. But if one penetrates to the spirit of things, then one is good at continuing their purpose.<sup>24</sup>

The feature of recognizing differences, or "seeing the sides," meant that experiential knowledge dealt merely with parts and not with the whole. Furthermore, the characteristic of partiality was seen as related to the method, that is, to the fact that the senses were used. In elaborating on Chang Tsai's ideas, Chu Hsi<sup>aa</sup> said:

If one experiences (*chien wen*<sup>ab</sup>) a matter in the usual way, one only learns one principle (*li*<sup>ac</sup>). But if one reaches complete understanding, then everything is one principle.<sup>25</sup>

Part of the background to this passage is the fact that there were no explicit assumptions about the process of inference being an integral or important part of experiential knowledge. The emphasis was on the particular experience or event and not on how, that is, by what principles, the objects of knowledge were related to each other. Although Chu Hsi introduced an additional element here which was not prominent in Chang Tsai's thought, namely, that the object of experience was the *li* (principle) of a thing rather than the thing itself, he did not distort the primary emphasis of experiential knowledge.

Although Chu Hsi and others assumed that knowing how one thing was different from another entailed knowing the principle of each thing, the empirical element was present in experiential knowledge long before the Sung<sup>ad</sup> development of principle (*li*) as a philosophical concept. For the Chinese philosophers, moreover, empiricism generally meant an atomistic kind of empiricism, in which relationships or patterns among things and events were not recognized as real, unless they reflected the patterns of *yin*<sup>ae</sup> and *yang*<sup>af</sup> or the five phases.<sup>26</sup> Thus, with experiential or empirical knowledge, it was only one thing or one principle that one knew. This kind of knowledge was based on particular experiences of particular people. The problem for Chang Tsai was that there seemed to be no legitimate way to get beyond the limitations of the particular, even if that knowledge were possessed by a large number of people.

In contrast, moral knowledge was not so enclosed or limited. It was potentially boundless because it originated with one's virtuous nature, which was identified with Heaven or the whole. It involved a "complete understanding," in which parts were not differentiated. As such, it was not restricted to the phenomenal world, the world of limited things.

Since experiential knowledge emphasized the outer world, a separation between the knower and the known was required, not in metaphysical terms but in terms of one's recognizing a difference between oneself and other things. An awareness of things beyond oneself was an important aspect which distinguished it from moral knowledge. From a modern point of view, we might say that this characteristic leads to at least three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of facts, knowledge of acquaintance, and knowledge of how to do something.<sup>27</sup> Chang Tsai, however, was not interested in this kind of analysis, but he seemed content to maintain a position similar in some respects to that of Chuang Tzu<sup>28</sup>, the Taoist.<sup>28</sup>

The methods of moral and experiential knowledge differed as much as the objects and aims. Moreover, it was recognized that the method used was crucial to the type of knowledge possible to attain. Moral knowledge primarily used the method of introspection, or what Chang Tsai called "expanding the mind." On the other hand, the method of experiential knowledge involved the use of the senses in receiving stimuli from outside oneself.

In addition to the above comments, Chang Tsai said:

The knowledge obtained from sincerity and enlightenment is the innate knowledge of Heavenly virtue. It is not the small knowledge derived from hearing and seeing.<sup>29</sup>

Wang Chih also commented:

The capacity of the human being is boundless, but what the selfish person sees is nothing more than what is in front of his ears and eyes.<sup>30</sup>

The characteristics of experiential knowledge were compared to those of moral knowledge. The fact that they were not the same was interpreted as an indication of their defectiveness. Experiential knowledge was judged to be a small kind of knowledge which was lower in status than moral knowledge. This evaluation was related both to how one gained this knowledge and the object of this knowledge. Since the senses were recognized as limited in their capacities, the knowledge resulting from their use was also regarded as limited. Moreover, the object of experiential knowledge consisted of individual things or events and not grand theories which explained the "why" of things. Knowing such theories, however, was valued much more highly than merely knowing things. Thus, since things were regarded as lowly, experiential knowledge also was judged in an equivalent manner.

Important here too was the belief that the nature of one's knowledge reflected

the kind of person that one was. The possessor of limited, narrow knowledge was judged shortsighted, selfish, and as small-minded as his knowledge was. Characteristics of one's knowledge were translated into judgments of quality and worth of one's character.

Although this claim does not make much sense to the modern reader, it did so to Chang Tsai's world because the senses were seen as having the potential to hold back the moral development of one's mind or nature. Although necessary, experiential knowledge could also be a roadblock on the way to moral perfection if one valued the things of this world too highly. In other words, if one concentrated too much on that kind of knowledge which was focused on the senses, one would not become a truly moral person, for moral cultivation by the time of Chang Tsai entailed not only the pursuit of virtuous behavior, but also a mystical experience of merging with, or embodying, the whole. This experience was seen as a process of letting one's mind freely develop and expand unencumbered by the senses and the distinctions that they recognized. The Taoist influence is of course apparent here. Experiential knowledge was somewhat like Chuang Tzu's fish trap or rabbit snare and moral knowledge like the catch.<sup>31</sup>

### III. THE PATTERN OF THE DICHOTOMY

Before proceeding with this examination of the concept of experiential knowledge and the problems associated with it, I would like to address the question of how this dualistic pattern of knowledge in Chang Tsai's thinking was related to other characteristics of his thought.<sup>32</sup> The problem is whether or not the relationship between moral and experiential knowledge had a broader theoretical basis. The question is important, for an affirmative answer would help to explain how Chang Tsai integrated the concept of experiential knowledge into the structure of Neo-Confucian thought so that it could not be discarded.

Two things are important here: Chang Tsai's metaphysical position and his explanation of movement and change. His metaphysical view was one of a basic unity to all things. Everything in the universe consisted of *ch'i*<sup>ah</sup>, which can be translated by such terms as matter, ether, or breath. *Ch'i* ranged in form from a solid and condensed state to a gaseous and rarified state. Although things varied in their degree of clearness or opaqueness, integration or disintegration, organized form or chaotic formlessness, still everything consisted of *ch'i* in some state.<sup>33</sup>

With everything forming a unity, there was the need to explain how movement and change occurred, and a great part of Chang Tsai's thought is concerned with this very problem. Here of course we see the influence of the theoretical structure of the *I ching*<sup>ai</sup>, its associations of concepts, and its concept of association. Chang Tsai saw change as possible because of the dependent and complementary interaction between pairs of "substances," or states, of *ch'i*. All qualities, actions, events, or states of matter belonged to a continuum whose two extremes formed a dualistic pair. Both members of a dualistic pair were necessary, both were

recognized as separate states (at least temporarily), and both functioned in a complementary relationship with each other. In any single event or pattern of activity, the interaction of the two opposing poles was required for change to occur. Chang Tsai said:

If the two are not established, then the one cannot be seen. If the one cannot be seen, then the functioning of the two ceases. The two “substances” are emptiness and reality, movement and rest, integration and disintegration, purity and turpitude. In the end, however, they are one.<sup>34</sup>

From this passage we can see Chang Tsai’s idea that all movement was patterned on the model of *yin* and *yang*. Both of the opposing aspects, forces, states, and ideas of the pair were necessary. Moreover, each was constantly in the process of being transformed into its alternative. Nothing was stable or forever remained unchanged.<sup>35</sup> Although there are many passages in Chang Tsai’s *Cheng meng* which elaborate on this idea of temporary dichotomies in an ultimate unity, one further passage may be useful for expressing this idea. Chang Tsai said:

Things do not have independently established principles. Unless a thing, in revealing itself, resembles or differs from something else, contracts or expands, or ends or begins, then even though it may appear to be a thing, it is not a thing. Things must have beginnings and ends before they are completed. When they mutually interact with one another, unless they are similar to or different from other things, or exist or do not exist, then one cannot see their completion. If one cannot see their completion, then even though it may seem to be a thing, it is not a thing. Therefore it is said: “With the mutual interaction of contraction and expansion, benefit is produced.”<sup>36</sup>

Chang Tsai’s thoughts on experiential and moral knowledge fit structurally into this pattern of mutual interaction and dependency. Like these other pairs of concepts, the two kinds of knowledge worked together in a single pattern to form a unity. The dichotomy in knowledge however, was not quite parallel to these other dichotomies. Its parts were valued differently, whereas the parts of the others were valued equally, as in the prototype of *yin* and *yang*.

The two kinds of knowledge also belonged to different kinds of experience. In all the other pairs of concepts, both parts functioned on the same grade of theoreticity, or level of abstraction.<sup>37</sup> Beginnings and ends, clearness and opaqueness, contraction and expansion—all such concepts occurred on the same level of closeness to or remoteness from the empirical experience. The dichotomy in knowledge differed because it was not a horizontal type of relationship, as these others were, but a vertical one. Experiential knowledge had to occur first. Moreover, it occurred on the phenomenal level. Moral knowledge could only come afterwards, and its meaning and significance extended beyond the world of things and forms. Although just as real, it dealt with more abstract kinds of experiences.

The fact that Chang Tsai was able to apply this model to knowledge, even



though the fit was not exactly right, allowed him a solid and acceptable theoretical base for his thinking about knowledge. Experiential knowledge was given a specific place in the theoretical structure of Neo-Confucian thought because Chang Tsai linked it, as part of a dualism with moral knowledge, to his ideas about movement through the interaction of interdependent, complementary pairs. Although Confucian philosophers were not interested in analyzing experiential knowledge, they had long agreed that it was necessary and could not be eliminated. What Chang Tsai thus did was to offer a basis for this position by providing experiential knowledge with a place in the broader conceptual framework. Once it had its recognized niche in the overall pattern of thought and knowledge, experiential knowledge could be accepted as the anchor of knowledge, although certainly not the ultimate aim.

#### IV. PROBLEMS

##### A. Accuracy

Given this theoretical structure as the context of Chang Tsai's thinking, we are now prepared to examine some of the problems raised by the concept of experiential knowledge. Following the standards set for moral knowledge, Chang Tsai assumed that accurate knowledge had to be complete knowledge. One of the criticisms of experiential knowledge, then, was that it was incomplete or biased and so not accurate. As Hua Hsi-min said, it "sees the sides but does not know the whole."<sup>38</sup> The bias of experiential knowledge emerged from its source, from the fact that it was based on what an individual person experienced. It could only represent what one person knew, and that of course had severe limitations. Moreover, any generalizations derived from the experiences of individuals were not regarded as valid principles.

Important here is the model of visual sense perception.<sup>39</sup> Experiential knowledge was compared to seeing and the fact that one cannot see all of the sides of an object at one time. Furthermore, it was assumed that only a view of all the sides at the same time was equivalent to complete and accurate knowledge. The conclusion was unavoidable. Knowledge resulting from a partial view could only result in partial knowledge. Therefore, experiential knowledge was judged defective and so not true.

Change Tsai said:

When one sees alone and hears alone (*tu-chien tu-wen*<sup>aj</sup>), then although the differences may be small between what different people experience, the knowledge that one gains is idiosyncratic (*kuai*<sup>ak</sup>), and it results from hastily jumping to wrong conclusions. If people see together and hear together (*kung-chien kung-wen*<sup>al</sup>), then although there may be great differences between what they experience, the knowledge that they gain is true, for it emerges from the correctness of *yin* and *yang*.<sup>40</sup>

Chang Tsai indicated here that an individual's knowledge merely represented a personal or idiosyncratic opinion, just as his view of something was

one-sided. With the model of visual perception, if everyone looked at something together, it was assumed all sides would be seen, and therefore the resulting knowledge would be reliable and accurate. This concept of knowledge, which was gained by everyone's participating in such experiences as seeing and hearing, and which was the correction for biased, individual knowledge, was a communal or consensual knowledge. It was a result of the efforts of the entire group and was the only accurate type of experiential knowledge.

In his use of the concept of consensual knowledge, Chang Tsai was dealing with an epistemological problem deeply rooted in Chinese philosophy. Consensual knowledge was communal knowledge, or, the broad set of beliefs, values, and customs accepted without question by a community. It was a topic touched on, in varying contexts, by many philosophers, including Mo Tzu<sup>am</sup> in his references to ghosts, Mencius in his political advice about paying attention to the people's opinion, Wang Ch'ung<sup>an</sup> in his criticism of Mo Tzu, and Shao Yung<sup>ao</sup> in his discussion of objective observation (*fan kuan*<sup>ap</sup>).<sup>41</sup> Consensual knowledge was set in opposition to individual knowledge, which included both the particular abilities of an individual person to do certain things and the claims of a person to know certain things. Since knowing was regarded as analogous to seeing, it followed that in the realm of experiential knowledge an individual person's knowledge was less complete than that of a community.

Wang Chih commented on Chang Tsai's ideas:

In seeing and hearing alone, if it's the form and appearance of ghosts (*kuei wu hsing hsiang*<sup>aq</sup>) that one sees and hears, then even though there are only small differences between what people experience, the resulting knowledge is still idiosyncratic. Either it comes from hastiness in jumping to conclusions or it is loose talk. In seeing and hearing together, if the sun is eclipsed and the stars change position, then even though there are great differences in what people experience, the resulting knowledge is true and it comes from the correctness of *yin* and *yang*. Moreover, it is not hasty or reckless.<sup>42</sup>

Here, Wang Chih reinforced Chang Tsai's position that only the knowledge of the people as a whole, their consensual knowledge, could be accurate. In the matter of accuracy or truth, the standard of completeness, which belonged to moral knowledge (on the individual level), was applied to experiential knowledge. Accuracy in such knowledge entailed a kind of perception in which everyone participated. Although an individual's perceptions were limited, the perceptions of everyone together were regarded as not. This complete or perfect kind of perception escaped the ordinary limitations of the senses precisely because everyone was involved. Thus, communal perception or experience was the only way to overcome the deficiencies of the senses so that truth could be attained.

To digress for a moment to the judicial system, we can see the value put on consensual knowledge in very practical terms. The inquest after a death was public and open.<sup>43</sup> The motives for having a public process were varied, but

among them was “the importance placed on assent.”<sup>44</sup> The public nature of the process increased, in a regulated manner, the participation of nonspecialists, such as relatives and neighbors, so that knowledge was contributed in various ways and by people with different roles. It was believed that the resulting decision was not only less able to be contested later, but also more likely to be closer to the truth.

The complete, consensual knowledge of all the people, which contrasted with the incomplete, experiential knowledge of individuals, was viewed as equivalent to the knowledge of Heaven (*t'ien*<sup>ar</sup>). As a collective group, the people thought for Heaven, and their consensual knowledge was the knowledge of Heaven. Chang Tsai thus said:

Heaven's knowledge of things is not through ears, eyes, and the mind's thoughts; and yet the principle by which it knows things surpasses the ears, eyes, and mind's thoughts. Heaven sees and hears through the people, and it is brilliant and majestic through the people. Therefore the so-called imperial mandate of Heaven of the *Shih*<sup>as</sup> and *Shu*<sup>at</sup> simply resides in the mind of the people.<sup>45</sup>

This statement by Chang Tsai corresponds to the words from the *Shu ching*<sup>au</sup>:  
Heaven's hearing and seeing is from the people's hearing and seeing.<sup>46</sup>

Chang Tsai also said:

Heaven has no mind. Minds all are human minds. One person sees in a biased way (*ssu chien*<sup>av</sup>) and therefore his mind cannot arrive completely at what the mind of all the people knows.<sup>47</sup>

In another passage, comparing the *Tao*<sup>aw</sup> of Heaven to the mind of Heaven or the mind of the people, Chang Tsai said:

The *Tao* of Heaven cannot be seen. One merely observes it in the people. What the people delight in, Heaven certainly delights in. What they hate, Heaven certainly hates. The *Tao* simply is the consensus (*chih kung*<sup>ax</sup>) of the people's minds (*jen hsin*<sup>ay</sup>).<sup>48</sup>

Chang Tsai shared the Confucian view that although, individually, people could be stupid and ignorant (*chih yü wu chih*<sup>az</sup>), when they worked together as a group, they formed a collective mind.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, when they agreed, they were able to form a consensus (*chih kung*). This collective mind of the people (*min hsin*<sup>ba</sup>) was none other than the mind of Heaven or the *Tao* of Heaven.<sup>50</sup>

Since knowledge was viewed on the model of visual sense perception, the mind of Heaven had to be equated with the collective mind of the people in order for there to be a way for Heaven to possess knowledge. Heaven clearly had no form or body. It had no way to acquire knowledge by itself nor did it have any way to reveal its knowledge. It did not have the capability to act or express itself in the way that humans did. Its mind was known, however, because it was reflected in the people, in their collective desires, thoughts, and acts. Heaven knew all

because all the people looked, listened, and experienced things, and they left no side unseen.

The problem of accuracy remained unsolved when it was a matter of the knowledge belonging to individuals. Only when all the people were involved was accuracy possible, for then a consensus could be reached. The consensus of the people, moreover, was seen as reflecting the mind of Heaven.

### *B. Verification*

A second and related problem of experiential knowledge was how to verify the reliability of claims to knowledge which people made. Here we are dealing not so much with the problem of individual bias as with the problem of how to test the accuracy of statements about what individual people say they have experienced. This problem is one which Mo Tzu faced in his chapter, "Ming kuei<sup>bb</sup>," (Explaining ghosts), in which he seems to set out to prove the existence of ghosts but does not.<sup>51</sup> It also is one which Wang Ch'ung discussed.<sup>52</sup>

Chang Tsai said the following:

The thunder, lightning, grass, and trees of Heaven and Earth may be thought to be very eccentric, but because they have fixed forms (*ting hsing*<sup>bc</sup>) they are not eccentric (*pu kuai*<sup>bd</sup>). The human act of constructing a boat or cart may be thought to be eccentric, but because boats and carts have fixed principles (*ting li*<sup>be</sup>) their construction is not eccentric. Now those who talk about ghosts cannot see their forms. Some say there are those who have seen the forms of ghosts and they are not fixed. It is difficult to believe this. First, the idea that one can take a thing without form and change it into a thing with form cannot be inferred according to principles. There is a second reason that makes it difficult to believe. One ought to infer that no man can make the thunder, lightning, grass, and trees of Heaven and Earth. Also neither Heaven nor Earth can make a boat or cart constructed by human methods. Now in talking about ghosts and spirits, if one considers that they lack form, then they are like Heaven and Earth. If one talks about their movements and activities, however, then they are no different from human beings. How can one claim that the ghosts of dead people can possess the capabilities of both Heaven and mankind?<sup>53</sup>

The issue here is the problem of verifying claims of knowledge that take the form of statement of individual testimony. Also involved is the problem of legitimizing the methods of verification. One of the important questions deals with the process by which some methods become accepted as legitimate ways to verify knowledge, whereas other methods do not become accepted as legitimate. As we have seen, Chang Tsai acknowledged that public experience was more reliable than individual or private experience. The former was legitimate; the latter was not. Still, however, there seemed to be a problem about distinguishing between truth and opinion. Certainly they were not the same.

Chang Tsai discussed this problem in the framework previously established by Mo Tzu and Wang Ch'ung, who both earlier had attempted separately to solve the problem of the verification of claims of knowledge. In order to test the truth

of a theory, Mo Tzu proposed that it should be tested against three standards.<sup>54</sup> These included the idea of asking a community for its experience as well as determining whether it agreed with the ancient sages and whether it worked when implemented by the government. He suggested the method of using a “community of observers” to try to prove or disprove an individual’s observation about ghosts. In this effort, he contributed to the initial development of the concept of consensual knowledge. Mo Tzu erred of course in assuming that public opinion and agreement were the same as accurate knowledge. He furthermore confused the issue by not allowing for differences between statements of description and statements of existence.

Wang Ch’ung attempted to correct Mo Tzu’s error in method by adding the element of critical thinking.<sup>55</sup> Wang Ch’ung realized that after questioning a “community of observers” about their experiences and opinion, one also had to analyze the result because it was possible for people to be deceived. Wang Ch’ung knew that one’s senses could fool one, so that claims of knowledge based solely on sense experience, even if it were the experience of everyone, still might not be reliable. Therefore the addition of thought was necessary. In both cases the discussion focused on the question of whether or not ghosts exist. This choice was unfortunate, for questions of existence pose their own peculiar problems certainly different from descriptive claims.

Basing himself on what was established so far, Chang Tsai added a new element to this discussion by insisting on examining the object of knowledge or what that claim of knowledge was about. Chang Tsai distinguished between those things that have fixed forms or fixed principles and those that have no fixed forms or principles. Secondly, he distinguished between those things that belong to the realm of nature (Heaven and Earth) and those that belong to the realm of humans.<sup>56</sup> This difference was not one of concreteness or abstractness, nor was it one of existence versus nonexistence. It was merely a matter of which aspect of reality, either the human world or the world of nature, was the object of the knowledge claim. Each realm of reality had its own characteristics and activities. Moreover, Chang assumed that things could not switch back and forth between, or belong to, both realms.

Chang Tsai made the following argument concerning the question of the existence of ghosts. Such things as thunder and lightning, grasses and trees, all belong to the realm of nature. These things can be perceived by the senses. They also all have fixed forms, whether auditory, visual, or tactile, and thus their forms are not eccentric or unpredictable. Furthermore, the actions of nature are responsible for these things happening.

On the other hand, the construction of a boat or cart belongs to the human realm of existence. Although people cannot actually see the principles by which vehicles are constructed, still there are fixed principles according to which they are made. Their construction is not without plan. It is not whimsical or un-

predictable. Furthermore, construction of such types of things is due to the activities of humans.

Now, Chang Tsai argued, if one accepted those claims affirming the existence of ghosts, one would have to reject this view of reality (which of course cannot be rejected). Also there are difficulties in believing those who claim to have seen ghosts. One involves the fact that ghosts do not have fixed forms and indeed have no form. However, if one saw a ghost, it would have to have a fixed form because the nature of seeing is such that it requires an object. Thus there is a contradiction here. Moreover, one cannot change from something without form to something with form and still retain all the characteristics of the previous state.

The second problem in believing is that each sphere of reality has certain kinds of activities of which it is capable, and these activities cannot be transferred from one sphere to the other. Only humans are capable of human-type activity and only nature is capable of nature-type activity. The problem with accepting the existence of ghosts is that they are like nature insofar as they lack form. However, the activities of ghosts are like those of humans. In other words, ghosts are like nature in “substance” (*t’i<sup>bf</sup>*) and are humans in “function” (*yung<sup>bg</sup>*).

Nothing, however, can belong to both realms at once. A thing cannot both be formless like nature and yet behave like human beings. If it is like nature, it is restricted to the kinds of activities that belong to nature. If it can do things that humans do, it also must have a form similar to human form. Thus given the assumptions about the nature of reality that the Chinese shared, the existence of ghosts was an impossibility for Chang Tsai. Nothing can possess the characteristics of both humans and nature.

In responding to those who claimed to have seen ghosts, Chang Tsai said that this kind of knowledge was merely eccentric and resulted either from jumping to conclusions too quickly (in which case one may have been tricked by one’s senses) or simply from careless and irresponsible talk (that is, groundless theories). The fact that people’s experiences of ghosts were very similar had no effect on Chang Tsai’s position. He realized that it was possible for everyone to be mistaken. It is here that Chang concurred with Wang Ch’ung’s criticism of Mo Tzu’s method and required something more than just finding out what people have experienced.

Chang Tsai also made the further point that people could experience great differences in things (the sun fully bright and darkened by an eclipse, for example) but that the discrepancies may not be reason to discredit their claims to knowledge. Two widely differing claims about a thing may both be accurate if these claims were based on correct principles or accurate interpretation of experience. The amount of difference in people’s experiences of a particular object had no bearing on the accurateness of their report. Here Chang Tsai was referring to descriptive claims about objects whose existence was not questioned. This is a very different matter from challenging whether the object exists or not.

Chang Tsai insisted on two tests to establish the truth of a claim to knowledge. One was that the existence of a thing be theoretically possible, that is, be consistent with the view of reality that his culture had.<sup>57</sup> The existence of a thing had to accord with generally accepted views of the world and fit with correct principles. The other was that it agree with the knowledge of the collective mind of the people. This kind of knowledge was consensual knowledge, not individual opinion.

In spite of Chang Tsai's insights, there are difficulties in the way that he handled the problems of accuracy and verification in respect to experiential knowledge. He simply was not consistent in what he was talking about. When the question of accuracy arose, he emphasized knowledge as analogous to visual perception and the fact that one cannot see all sides at the same time. In this view, he equated accuracy with completeness. However, when there arose the problem of verifying what people claim to have experienced, he ignored the question of different descriptions of the same object (and even would accept different descriptions) and instead turned the problem into one of accepting or rejecting the existence of ghosts. Differences in description of an acknowledged object were not a problem of concern because he was not interested in problems of perception or in the objects of nature as worthy of study in themselves. He simply accepted Chuang Tzu's position that descriptions of a thing are relative depending on where and when one observes the thing.<sup>58</sup>

In dealing with the problem of verification in this way, it appears that Chang Tsai possibly gets himself into a trap. He rejects the existence of ghosts on the grounds that their existence is physically and logically impossible. A thing cannot have the characteristics or capabilities of both realms of reality because it can only be in one realm. However, when Chang equates the consensual knowledge of the people with the knowledge of Heaven, then he is imputing to Heaven a kind of activity (that is, knowledge) which he denied was possible with ghosts. The only way out of this problem seems to be that this consensual knowledge was never thought of as the knowledge of individuals. It was the knowledge which resulted when everyone experienced something together, and so it was more than the sum of the parts.

This defense of Chang Tsai may not be adequate, however, for while we may accept that partial knowledge is different from complete knowledge, still it remains that the collective knowledge of the people was gained in the human world. Consensual knowledge was a result of human activity. Therefore it should not also be attributed to Heaven if we accept Chang's earlier assumptions and reasoning in regard to rejecting the existence of ghosts. To do so would be to mix the two realms of reality, and if that is done, Chang Tsai's argument against the existence of ghosts on logical grounds also is in trouble.

Chang Tsai was stuck over two problems. One was the problem of method, which had to be solved before he could solve the problem of verifying experiential knowledge. The other was the difference between descriptive and existential

claims. What Chang Tsai did was to take the method of introspection, which was used in moral knowledge and which allowed it to become complete and perfect, and turn it inside out. In other words, he took the concept of *ta-hsin* (expanding the mind) and substituted the eye for the mind. While adding the element of universal participation so that all was seen or known, he retained the model of introspection. However, instead of thoroughly exhausting inwardly, he would thoroughly expand outwardly via consensual or collective knowledge, and thereby he would overcome the limitations of the individuals' senses.

Although it is hard to see how the results of this method could be anything other than public opinion, another of his suggestions had potential. As mentioned above, Chang Tsai also suggested that there were fixed principles in things. If he had suggested that we try to understand the principles in things or that we try to apply fixed standards by which we observe things, he might have developed another method. His interest, however, was not in that direction.

### C. Necessity

Despite the defects of experiential knowledge, Chang Tsai did not ignore it and he did not reject it. He realized the necessity of giving it a recognized place in his thinking about knowledge. Since his aim, however, was not to construct a theory of knowledge, his comments about experiential knowledge serve mainly to defend it, in a minimal way only, and not to explore it. From the types of arguments that he brings to bear, it is clear that his interest had one main purpose. Namely, he wanted to save his thinking on the mind (*hsin*) from attacks of being Buddhist in disguise.<sup>59</sup> Thus he had to emphasize the phenomenal base of all knowledge.

Chang Tsai said:

Although the ears and eyes involve one's physical nature, still they have the virtue of uniting the inner and the outer, and thus they are necessary for stimulating knowledge.<sup>60</sup>

As just mentioned, Chang Tsai emphasized that both the mind and phenomenal things were necessary for knowledge. The "inner" in the above quotation referred to the mind, or more specifically, according to Wang Fu-chih<sup>bh</sup>, the mind's spirit (*hsin chih shen*<sup>bi</sup>).<sup>61</sup> As Chang Tsai said, "What completes my body is Heaven's spirit."<sup>62</sup> The "outer" referred to the appearances or images of things (*wu chih fa-hsiang*<sup>bj</sup>), or the phenomenal world.<sup>63</sup> Chang Tsai's emphasis here was on the process of knowing itself and not on what aspects of the phenomenal objects were known. In contrast to certain Western philosophical attitudes, there was a kind of looseness in his discussion, for both "things" and the "appearances of things" seemed to be satisfactory objects of knowledge.<sup>64</sup> Hua Hsi-min commented that:

Chang Tsai feared that if people, relying on the above passage, followed their desires and neglected their ears and eyes, and solely concentrated on knowing the mind, then they would enter into Buddhist learning.<sup>65</sup>



Hua also went on to say that this desire to avoid any possible identification with Buddhism stimulated Chang Tsai to take the position that all knowledge began with the experiences of the ears and eyes.

Li Kuang-ti expanded Chang Tsai's comments by pointing out that one who is involved with one's physical nature is obscured by things because the sense organs do not think. One who is helped by his mind, however, hears and sees much in order to involve his virtue.<sup>66</sup> Li's remarks indicate that sense experiences are not "bad" in themselves, and they should not be avoided or overly restrained.<sup>67</sup> In regard to reaching the goal of the higher kind of knowledge, moral knowledge, sense experience is neutral because it can be a help or a hindrance. What is important is one's attitude and aim. If one concentrates totally on the phenomenal world, one stays enmeshed in the world of the senses. If on the other hand one uses one's mind in conjunction with one's experiences, then sense experience can contribute in a positive way to cultivating virtue. Thus sense experience and experiential knowledge did not at all preclude moral cultivation.

Chang Tsai also said:

Hearing and seeing are not sufficient to exhaust things and yet they are also necessary. If there were no ears and eyes, then it would be just a case of wood and stone. If we have them, we have the way of blending together the inner and the outer. If one does not hear or see, what experience can there be?<sup>68</sup>

This passage unequivocally expresses Chang Tsai's view that although sense experience alone cannot lead one to the highest kind of knowledge, it is the beginning point of knowledge. All knowledge presupposes experience in the phenomenal world. By taking this position, Chang Tsai avoided any implication that he was sympathetic to the Buddhist idealistic position of the unreality of the phenomenal world. Chang Tsai also rejected "a priori" knowledge. He claimed that even the knowledge of a sage comes from without and that a sage does not initially have his wisdom.<sup>69</sup> Chang Tsai thus emphasized that experiential knowledge cannot be rejected or ignored, but one must go beyond its range to gain moral knowledge. The two types of knowledge simply formed a dichotomy in which the parts were complementary, not exclusive.<sup>70</sup>

Chang Tsai's position was to affirm both phenomenal reality and the reality of moral experience. He realized that experiential knowledge, while necessary, was not the source of moral knowledge, for the motivation for moral behavior did not come from experiential knowledge.<sup>71</sup> Rather, it came from the mind. Although Chang Tsai's main interest was in the knowledge that only the moral mind could lead one to, he certainly was acutely aware of the phenomenal grounding of all knowledge.

#### *D. The Role of the Mind*

The conception of the mind and its role occupied a central place in Chinese philosophical thinking about knowledge. Although this topic is a complex one,

there is one aspect of it that is pivotal to the problem under discussion here and so must be discussed. This concerns the contrasting roles of the mind in experiential and moral knowledge and the consequences of its being a linkage point between the two kinds of knowledge. These were two very different kinds of knowledge, and the mind did not function in the same way in relation to each. Moreover, although only one term was used, that is, *hsin*, at least two different conceptions of the mind were actually involved.

Chang Tsai himself certainly recognized more than one concept of the mind. He said:

From images (*hsiang*<sup>bk</sup>) one becomes aware of (*shih*<sup>bl</sup>) the mind. By following (*hsün*<sup>bm</sup>) images, one loses the mind (*sang hsin*<sup>bn</sup>). That which knows (*chih*<sup>bo</sup>) images is the mind. A mind which preserves images (*ts'un hsiang*<sup>bp</sup>) is merely images. Can it really be called a mind?<sup>72</sup>

The mind associated with experiential knowledge contained images, which were gained from involvement with the phenomenal world, somewhat in the manner of reflections in a mirror. The existence of these images in one's mind provided the basis for assuming that one had a mind. Here the mind was conceived of as a sense organ (*kuan*). Its function was to think (*ssu*<sup>bq</sup>) just as the function of the eye was to see and the ear was to hear. It used images from outside itself as its material, just as the eye used objects. A complementary relationship was recognized in which the mind was regarded as the inner in contrast to things (*wu*<sup>br</sup>), which were the outer. As Wang Chih commented, "The inner and the outer' was simply talk about the mind and things."<sup>73</sup> Although the mind was thought of as a sense organ, Chang Tsai would also have agreed with Mencius that it was the greatest of the sense organs.<sup>74</sup> Nonetheless, in this context the mind was conceived somewhat in physical terms, and the conception of its activities was on the model of the other sense organs.

A second concept of the mind applied to the sphere of moral knowledge. Chang Tsai here talked about the mind as something that can be fettered by hearing and seeing.<sup>75</sup> Somewhat more elusive, this concept of the mind referred to one's moral capabilities, qualities, and potential. It was identified with one's inborn moral nature (*te hsing*) and was conferred on humans by Heaven. Indeed, it was the link between Heaven and human beings.

In this sense, it was meaningless to talk about the mind as a "thing" having a "function." Rather, it was identified with Heavenly principles that existed outside of the senses but were also inherent in things. As one's moral nature, the mind was involved with the pursuit of virtue and with the expansion of awareness. It was both one's conscience and ultimate empty "substance." It was this latter conception that prompted Chang Tsai to urge one to empty the mind of images. Expanding one's mind (*ta hsin*), a mystical experience, and exhausting one's nature or mind (*chin hsing*<sup>bs</sup>, *chin hsin*<sup>bt</sup>), a moral experience, were ultimately the same thing. One expanded one's awareness to the point of embodying

(*t'i'*<sup>bu</sup>) everything in the world, while the extreme of being virtuous also involved total identity with Heaven and the *Tao*.

From the fact that there existed these two radically different conceptions of the mind, it can be seen that the mind itself was at the center of the problem which allowed experiential knowledge to be judged by the standards of moral knowledge and always to come up short. For the latter, the standards were perfection and completeness, and the aim was to expand the mind to the point of embodying the universe or to know Heaven. The moral self did not end with the physical body but was part of all things in the universe. Conferred by Heaven and so without limits, the mind was able to realize the unity of all things. It was not limited as the senses were to the physical body.

In experiential knowledge, however, the mind was a sense organ, not a boundless quality. Its standards were to perceive as acutely or clearly as possible. Its aim, moreover, was to know things, not to know Heaven. Things by their very nature have limitations, however, for they are recognized only when their boundaries are known. With experiential knowledge the mind had to focus on things and could not try to reach beyond them.

The mind was superficially the connecting link between both kinds of knowledge, but clearly different concepts of the mind were involved. In experiential knowledge the mind remained connected to the phenomenal world, but in moral knowledge the mind was able to go beyond it. Thus, the concepts of the act of knowing, the knower or the mind, the object of knowledge, and the methods all differed with these two kinds of knowledge. Experiential knowledge had no way to measure up to the standards and aims of moral knowledge. While the name (*hsin*) stayed the same, the reality changed, and separate standards were not established that were appropriate to experiential knowledge.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this article I have examined Chang Tsai's concept of experiential knowledge. Chang Tsai, in pursuing this topic, was actually continuing a discussion that had gone on periodically for over a thousand years. The contribution that Chang Tsai made was to provide a theoretical basis for the dichotomy between experiential and moral knowledge. Thus he answered the question, at least temporarily, of how these two kinds of knowledge were related.

Although not subjected to sophisticated analysis, experiential knowledge was recognized as having certain characteristics. These included having the phenomenal world, or things, as its object; using the senses and sense experience as its method; advocating acuteness in discriminating between things as its aim; recognizing its bias and incompleteness; and serving as the foundation of all knowledge. The standards of moral knowledge were inappropriately applied to experiential knowledge, however, and so the latter was inevitably regarded as defective.

Chang Tsai also recognized several problems that were raised by the concept

of experiential knowledge. The most important were those of accuracy, verification, necessity, and the role of the mind. He integrated experiential knowledge into the structure of Neo-Confucian thought by making it part of a dichotomy with moral knowledge. Although this dichotomy was not theoretically equivalent to the other dichotomies which were extensions of the fundamental forces of *yin* and *yang*, it functioned in the same way pragmatically. By providing a place for experiential knowledge in the overall philosophical framework, Chang Tsai eliminated any potential threat that an interest in such knowledge might have had to the pursuit of moral knowledge. In so doing, however, he also removed the challenge to investigate it for its own characteristics and for its potential as a kind of knowledge useful for understanding the phenomenal and social world of human beings.

#### NOTES

1. See, for example, Frederick W. Mote, *Intellectual Foundations of China* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971); Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. by Derk Bodde, 2 vol. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952–53) (hereafter cited as Fung, *History*); Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963) (hereafter cited as Chan, *Source Book*); H. G. Creel, *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-tung* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

2. To mention only a few works, see Joseph Needham and others, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1954–) (hereafter cited as Needham, *Science and Civilisation*); Shigeru Nakayama and Nathan Sivin, eds., *Chinese Science: Explorations of an Ancient Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1973); A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1978); Janusz Chmielewski, "Notes on Early Chinese Logic," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* (1962–1969); Brian E. McKnight, trans., *The Washing Away of Wrongs: Forensic Medicine in Thirteenth-Century China* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1981) (hereafter cited as McKnight, *Washing Away*).

3. Among these aspects I would include a number of epistemological problems which the Chinese seldom directly discussed but often obliquely addressed. These problems include such topics as the relation between name (word) and referent (thing), kinds of knowledge, sources of knowledge, relation between knowledge and action, limits of knowledge, and standards for valid knowledge. For general presentations outlining some of the Chinese philosophical discussion on knowledge, see Chang Tai-nien<sup>by</sup>, "Chung-kuo chih-lun ta-yao<sup>bw</sup>," *Tsing Hua Hsüeh Pao*<sup>bx</sup>, vol. 9, no. 2 (1934): 385–409, and Yü T'ung<sup>by</sup>, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh wen-i'i shih*<sup>bz</sup> (Hong Kong: Lung-men Shu-tien, 1968), pp. 493–579. A recent work relating to this area of study is Alfred Bloom, *The Linguistic Shaping of Thought: A Study in the Impact of Language on Thinking in China and the West* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Erlbaum Associates, 1981), reviewed by Benjamin Elman in *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 1983): 611–614.

4. I have discussed the early development of this concept in "Knowledge Heard and Seen: The Attempt in Early Chinese Philosophy to Analyze Experiential Knowledge," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 4, no. 4 (December, 1983).

5. There appear to be two different but related dichotomies involving moral knowledge. One contrasts moral knowledge with "intellectual" knowledge, which is gained from the written word (the Classics, histories, and so forth), and the other contrasts moral knowledge with "experiential" knowledge, which has a much broader base and which I discuss in this article. See Ying-shih Yü, "Some Preliminary Observations on the Rise of Ch'ing Confucian Intellectualism," *Tsing Hua*

*Hsüeh Pao*, n. s. 11, no. 1 & 2 (December 1975): 105–146, particularly pp. 106–110; hereafter cited as Yü, “Observations.” Although Professor Yü translates *wen-chien chih chih* as “intellectual knowledge,” I prefer to use a term which seems broader and which also conveys the vague range of meaning through its very imprecision. Also see Wei Cheng-t’ung<sup>ca</sup>, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang shih*<sup>cb</sup>, 2 vols. (Taipei: Ta-lin Hsüeh-shu Ts’ung-k’an, 1980), vol. 2, pp. 921–922; hereafter cited as Wei Cheng-t’ung, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang shih*. Although he would add the element of *ching-shih chih yung*<sup>cc</sup> (political activity) to make a three-part focus of interest, Wei Cheng-t’ung, in referring to this epistemological division, used the terms *hsin-hsing chih hsüeh*<sup>cd</sup> (moral learning) and *ching-shih chih hsüeh*<sup>ce</sup> (classical and historical learning).

6. *Chung yung* (The doctrine of the mean), XXVII.6. See James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (hereafter cited as Legge, *Chinese Classics*), vol. 1, *The Doctrine of the Mean* (Oxford, 1894), p. 422.

7. Chang Tsai’s comments on *wen-chien chih chih* are almost all contained (in scattered places) in his *Cheng meng* (Discipline for beginners or Correcting youthful ignorance). References here are to the edition with the commentaries of Wang Chih (Ch’ing<sup>cf</sup> dynasty) and others, *Cheng meng ch’u-yi*<sup>cg</sup>, in Wang Yün-wu<sup>ch</sup>, ed., *Ssu-k’u ch’üan-shu chen-pen*<sup>ci</sup> (Taipei: Shang-wu, n.d.), vols. 148–149; hereafter cited as *CMCY*.

8. *Ta hsüeh* (Great learning), 4, 5. See Legge, *Chinese Classic*, vol. 1, *The Great Learning*, pp. 357–359.

9. Buddhism was still regarded as a threat in the Northern Sung (960–1126), and one of its particularly repugnant aspects was its philosophical idealism, which stressed the unreality of the phenomenal world. See W. Theodore de Bary, “A Reappraisal of Neo-Confucianism,” in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Studies in Chinese Thought* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 81–111.

10. For a related discussion, see Benjamin Schwartz, “Some Polarities in Confucian Thought,” in David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 50–62.

11. See Joseph Needham, *Science in Traditional China: A Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), particularly chapter 5, “Attitudes toward Time and Change as Compared with Europe,” pp. 107–131.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

13. *CMCY*, 7:2a–2b; also translated in Fung, *History*, vol. 2, p. 491, and in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 515, no. 59. The reference is to *Mencius*, 7.A.1. See Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 2, *The Works of Mencius*, p. 448. For Ch’eng I’s<sup>ci</sup> remarkably similar statement, see Yü, “Observations,” p. 110.

14. *CMCY*, 5:11a–11b. Although Chuang Tzu also talked about dreams, and there are some similarities between the opinions of Chang Tsai and Chuang Tzu regarding experiential knowledge, these two philosophers differed considerably in their comments on dreams. See *Chuang-tzu* chapter 2, “Ch’i wu lun<sup>ck</sup>,” and chapter 6, “Ta tsung shih<sup>cl</sup>,” in Burton Watson, trans., *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), pp. 43, 45, and 85; hereafter cited as Watson, *Chuang Tzu*. Also see *CMCY*, 1:47a.

15. *CMCY*, 7:7a–7b. *Shou* literally means to receive.

16. Birdwhistell, “Knowledge Heard and Seen.”

17. The *Chung yung*, XX. 19, mentions several elements involved in (the highest kind of) knowledge. These include extensive study, accurate inquiry, careful reflection, clear discrimination, and earnest practice. See Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 1, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, p. 413.

18. See *Descartes: Philosophical Writings*, selected and trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: The Modern Library, 1958). Chang Tsai’s metaphysical position will be discussed briefly in what follows.

19. *CMCY*, 6:2a. Commentary by Li Kuang-ti<sup>cm</sup> (1642–1718), who wrote *Chu chieh Cheng meng*<sup>cn</sup>.

20. *Ibid.*, 6:2a–2b. Commentary by Hua Hsi-min (1672–?).

21. *Ibid.*, 7:8a–8b. *T’ai-hsü*, literally, “great emptiness,” is a term referring to the ultimate oneness of the universe. The images at the beginning of this passage echo those in a passage by Hsün Tzu<sup>co</sup>, in his *Hsün-tzu*, chap. 17, “T’ien lun<sup>cp</sup>,” See Homer H. Dubs, trans., *The Works of Hsüntze* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1928), p. 182.

22. Ibid., 7:5a.

23. Although not identical, this distinction has some similarities to the kind made by Chuang Tzu. For example, see Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, pp. 34–37.

24. *Chang Tzu ch'üan-shu*<sup>ㄅ</sup>, 1:4b, *Ssu-pu pei-yao*<sup>ㄅ</sup> ed., vols. 1441–1443; hereafter cited as *CTCS*.

25. *CMCY*, 7:2b–3a. The concept of *li*, principle or pattern, was one of the major concepts in Neo-Confucian thought. See Wing-tsit Chan, “The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept *Li* as Principle,” *Tsing Hua Hsüeh Pao*, n. s. 4, no. 2 (1964): 123–149. *Li* came to have two distinct meanings. On a “lower” level, it referred to the organizing pattern of a particular thing, and on a “higher” level it meant the way of the universe and was equivalent to the concept of the *Tao*.

26. Needham, *Science and Civilization*, vol. 2, *History of Scientific Thought*, pp. 161–164, and *passim*.

27. David Pears, *What is Knowledge?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 5.

28. Although both Chuang Tzu and Chang Tsai used the term *hsiao chih*<sup>ㄅ</sup> (small knowledge or little understanding), they were actually dealing with different philosophical issues. Space is not sufficient here to do justice to a comparison, but I would say briefly that Chuang Tzu's distinction between small knowledge and true knowledge (*chen chih*<sup>ㄅ</sup>) was tied to the problem of categorization and the notion (rejected by Chuang Tzu) that the distinctions we make through the use of words are somehow actually “out there” in nature. For Chuang Tzu, true knowledge involved the recognition that all distinctions are merely conventions of human society. In referring to knowledge of the phenomenal world, Chang Tsai, however, used the concept of small knowledge as a way of indicating comparative value. It did not have the high prestige of moral knowledge, which was not knowledge of things but was the behavior involved in becoming a sage.

29. *CMCY*, 6:2a. The terms *ch'eng*<sup>ㄅ</sup> (sincerity) and *ming*<sup>ㄅ</sup> (enlightenment) come from the *Chung yung*, XXI; see Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 1, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, pp. 414–415. This kind of knowledge refers to moral knowledge, the *liang-chih*<sup>ㄅ</sup> and *liang-neng*<sup>ㄅ</sup> of Mencius; see Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 2, *The Works of Mencius*, 7.A.15.1, p. 456. Also translated in Fung, *History*, vol. 2, p. 492, and in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 507.

30. Ibid., 7:6a.

31. *Chuang-tzu*, chapter 26, “Wai wu<sup>ㄅ</sup>.” See Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, p. 140.

32. For discussion of another dualism involving knowledge, see David S. Nivison, “The Problem of ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Action’ in Chinese Thought Since Wang Yang-ming,” in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Studies in Chinese Thought* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 122–145.

33. For a discussion of Chang Tsai's metaphysical position, see Fung, *History* vol. 2, pp. 478–498, and Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957), pp. 170–182.

34. *CMCY*, 1:41a. Also translated in Fung, *History* vol. 2, p. 479, and in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 505. As Chan points out, there is disagreement over the meaning of “the two” and “the one.” I should also emphasize that the word “substance” as a theoretical term does not at all necessarily mean anything physical with weight and volume.

35. For discussion of pairs of opposites, see Hellmut Wilhelm, *Heaven, Earth, and Man in the Book of Changes* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1977), pp. 107–115. The *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, was one of the Classics and was fundamental to Neo-Confucian thought.

36. *CMCY*, 5:7a–7b. Also translated in Fung, *History* vol. 2, pp. 483–484. Reference is to the *I Ching*, Appendix III.

37. The term, grades of theoreticity, comes from W. V. Quine, “Grades of Theoreticity,” in Lawrence Foster and J. W. Swanson, eds., *Experience and Theory* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), pp. 1–17.

38. *CMCY*, 6:2a–2b. Acuteness or sharpness in seeing was also important but insufficient as long as it pertained only to particular people.

39. For a selection of Western philosophical writings on the relation between perception and knowledge for comparative purposes, see Robert J. Swartz, ed., *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing: A Book of Readings from Twentieth Century Sources in the Philosophy of Perception* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965).

40. *CMCY*, 5:9b. Earlier philosophers, such as Wang Ch'ung (27–96) of the Han dynasty, also recognized that the question of hearing and seeing either alone or together was in some way relevant

to the problem of true knowledge. For example, see Wang Ch'ung, *Lun heng chi-chien*<sup>ca</sup>, 2 vols. (Taipei: Shih-chieh Shu-chü, 1958), chap. 26, "Shih chih p'ien<sup>da</sup>," p. 519.

41. For references to Mo Tzu and Wang Ch'ung, see text following in section B. For Mencius, see *Mencius*, 1.B.7 and 4.A.9; Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 2, *The Works of Mencius*, pp. 166 and 300. For Shao Yung, see his ideas about the sage's use of the eyes and ears of the world in my article, "Shao Yung and his Concept of *Fan Kuan*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 9, no. 4 (December 1982): particularly pp. 383–384.

42. *CMCY*, 5:10b.

43. McKnight, *Washing Away*, pp. 20–21 and 37–38.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

45. *CMCY*, 3:10a–10b. *Shih* and *Shu* refer to two of the Classics, the *Shih ching*<sup>db</sup> (Book of poetry) and the *Shu ching* (Book of documents).

46. See Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 3: *The Shoo King*, p. 74; *CMCY*, 3:10b.

47. *CMCY*, 3:10b. This passage is a quotation from Chang Tsai's *Ching-hsüeh li-k'u*<sup>de</sup> (Assembled principles of classical Learning), *Shih Shu p'ien* (Section on the *Shih ching* and *Shu ching*); see *CTCS*, 4:7b.

48. *Ibid.*, 3:10b–11a.

49. *Ibid.*, 3:11a. Passage from *Ching-hsüeh li-k'u*, *Shih Shu p'ien*<sup>dd</sup>.

50. See *Mencius*, 1.B.7, in Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 2, *Mencius*, p. 166. Also, *CMCY*, 3:11a.

51. *Mo Tzu*, chap. 31, "Ming kuei," in Burton Watson, trans., *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 94–109; hereafter cited as Watson, *Mo Tzu*. I have discussed the problem of verification as it relates to this chapter in "An Approach to Verification Beyond Tradition in Early Chinese Philosophy: Mo Tzu's Concept of Sampling in a Community of Observers," *Philosophy East and West* 34, no. 2 (April, 1984).

52. Wang Ch'ung's comments on this topic are scattered in various places in his *Lun heng*. For example, see *Lun heng chi-chieh*, chap. 62, "Lun ssu<sup>de</sup>," pp. 414–422; chap. 63, "Ssu wei<sup>df</sup>," pp. 423–434; chap. 65, "Ting kuei<sup>dg</sup>," pp. 448–456; chap. 67, "Po tsang<sup>dh</sup>," pp. 461–464.

53. *CMCY*, 5:10a.

54. *Ting-pen Mo Tzu chien-ku*<sup>di</sup>, 2 vols. (Taipei: Shih-chieh Shu-chü, 1958), chap. 35, "Fei ming<sup>dj</sup>," p. 164; Watson, *Mo Tzu*, pp. 117–118.

55. There are a number of relevant passages in the *Lun heng*. See, for example, chap. 20, "Lun ssu," pp. 414–422, and chap. 29, "Tui tso<sup>dk</sup>," pp. 574–578. Also, see the discussion in Hsü Fu-kuan<sup>dl</sup>, *Liang Han ssu-hsiang shih*<sup>dm</sup>, 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Chung-wen Ta-hsüeh Ch'u-pan, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 441–442.

56. This second distinction concerning different realms of reality was a fundamental assumption in all schools of Chinese philosophy and goes back to the pre-Ch'in period.

57. For a twentieth-century discussion of what the possibility of verification means, see Hans Reichenbach, *Experience and Predication: An Analysis of the Foundations and the Structure of Knowledge* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1938; reprint, 1976), pp. 38–42.

58. See Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, pp. 31–45.

59. Chang Tsai attacked Buddhist ideas in various places in his writings. For example, see Li Kuang-ti, *Chu-chieh Cheng meng*, part 1, pp. 61a–63a, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen chiu-chi*<sup>dn</sup> ed., vol. 176.

60. *CMCY*, 7:9B. In his excellent discussion of the *Cheng meng*, T'ang Chün-yi<sup>do</sup> points out the necessity of experiential knowledge as a counter to Buddhist ideas of illusion and idealism (T'ang Chün-yi, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yüan-lun: Sung Ming ju-hsüeh ssu-hsiang chih fa-chan*<sup>dp</sup> (Hong Kong: Hsin-Ya Yen-chiu Suo, 1975), pp. 82–83). For a further attack on Buddhism by Chang Tsai, see *CMCY*, 7:15b–16a.

61. Wang Fu-chih (1619–1692), *Chang Tzu Cheng meng chu*<sup>da</sup> (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1975), p. 124; hereafter cited as Wang Fu-chih, *Chang Tzu*.

62. *CMCY*, 7:10a.

63. Wang Fu-chih, *Chang Tzu*, p. 125.

64. Immanuel Kant (18th century), for example, distinguished between things as known (that is, reality as it appears) and things-in-themselves (that is, reality as it is). This kind of problem was not of interest to Chang Tsai and Confucian philosophers in general.

65. *CMCY*, 7:9b.  
 66. *Ibid.*, 7:9b–10a.  
 67. See Chan, *Source Book*, p. 511.  
 68. Quotation from Chang Tsai's *Yü lu*<sup>dt</sup>, cited in Wei Cheng-t'ung, *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang shih*, p. 1106.  
 69. *CTCS*, 14:2b.  
 70. See Wei Cheng-t'ung's discussion, in *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang shih*, p. 1107.  
 71. Ts'ai Jen-hou<sup>dt</sup>, *Sung Ming li-hsüeh: Pei Sung p'ien*<sup>dt</sup> (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng Shu-chü 1977), p. 182.  
 72. *CMCY*, 7:6b.  
 73. *Ibid.*, 7:7b.  
 74. *Mencius*, 6.A.14, 15, in Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 2, *Mencius*, pp. 416–418.  
 75. *CMCY*, 7:2a.

a 張載  
 b 聞見之知  
 c 德性之知  
 d 秦 (221–207 B.C.)  
 e 中庸  
 f 尊德性  
 g 道問學  
 h 大學  
 i 致知  
 j 格物  
 k 大心  
 l 正蒙  
 m 形  
 n 志  
 o 氣  
 p 知  
 q 緣  
 r 受  
 s 心  
 t 漢 (206 B.C.–A.D. 220)  
 u 接  
 v 官  
 w 里  
 x 太虛  
 y 王植  
 z 華希閔  
 aa 朱熹  
 ab 見聞  
 ac 理  
 ad 宋 (960–1279)  
 ae 陰  
 af 陽  
 ag 莊子

ah 氣  
 ai 易經  
 aj 獨見獨聞  
 ak 怪  
 al 共見共聞  
 am 墨子  
 an 王充  
 ao 邵雍 (1011–1077)  
 ap 反觀  
 aq 鬼物形象  
 ar 天  
 as 詩  
 at 書  
 au 書經  
 av 私見  
 aw 道  
 ax 至公  
 ay 人心  
 az 至愚無知  
 ba 民心  
 bb 明鬼  
 bc 定形  
 bd 不怪  
 be 定理  
 bf 體  
 bg 用  
 bh 王夫之  
 bi 心之神  
 bj 物之法象  
 bk 象  
 bl 識  
 bm 狗  
 bn 喪心



- bo 知  
bp 存象  
bq 思  
br 物  
bs 盡性  
bt 盡心  
bu 體  
bv 張岱年  
bw 中國知論大要  
bx 清華學報  
by 字同  
bz 中國哲學問題史  
ca 韋政通  
cb 中國思想史  
cc 經世之用  
cd 心性之學  
ce 經史之學  
cf 清  
cg 正蒙初義  
ch 王雲五  
ci 四庫全書珍本  
cj 程頤  
ck 齊物論  
cl 大宗師  
cm 李光地  
cn 注解正蒙  
co 荀子  
cp 天論  
cq 張子全書  
cr 四部備要  
cs 小知  
ct 真知  
cu 誠  
cv 明  
cw 良知  
cx 良能  
cy 外物  
cz 論衡集解  
da 實知篇  
db 詩經  
dc 經學理窟  
dd 詩書篇  
de 論死  
df 死僞  
dg 訂鬼  
dh 薄葬  
di 定本墨子閒詁  
dj 非命  
dk 對作  
dl 徐復觀  
dm 兩漢思想史  
dn 四庫全書珍本九集  
do 唐君毅  
dp 中國哲學原論：宋明儒學思想之發展  
dq 張子正蒙注  
dr 語錄  
ds 蔡仁厚  
dt 宋明理學：北宋篇