

Neo-Confucian Philosophy and Genre: The Philosophical Writings of CHEN Chun and ZHEN Dexiu

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The history of philosophy has also been a history of genres; this history of philosophical genres has been deliberate.

Adapted from Berel Lang (Lang 1988: 194)

Contemporary philosophy has become thoroughly disciplined. The volume of publications classified under philosophy during the last century no doubt far exceeds that of previous centuries, but, as a byproduct of professionalization, the range of genres in which philosophical inquiry is practiced, or, more precisely, the range of genres which licensed practitioners consider as legitimate forms of philosophical writing, has shrunk. Academic and public philosophers mostly write monographs and journal articles, and craft titles that presume the irrelevance of form to content. The pre-twentieth-century history of philosophical writing, in contrast, is marked by the diversity of genres, the creation of new forms, and changes in their prevalence, uses, and interpretation. Just as European philosophers wrote dialogues, sentences, commentaries, epitomes, questions, guides, confessions, essays, meditations, letters, novels, or critiques, their Chinese counterparts cast thoughts on fundamental questions about life, human nature, socio-political formations, and the cosmos in recorded sayings, conversations, debates, expositions, explanations, commentaries, lectures, questions, responses, instructions, letters, poems, dictionaries, notebooks, encyclopedias, or anthologies.

Does genre matter? Does it matter philosophically? Affirmative answers to these questions have been proposed on differing grounds for different genres. Timothy Engstrom proposes that the choice of the essay allows philosophers like Hume and Rorty to develop critical standards that are not based on epistemic criteria but that emerge from practical and civil discourse. In their essays these philosophers take on the voice of the public conversationalist; they

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cultivate irony, draw on comparative cultural history, and attempt to build community through gentle moral persuasion (Engstrom 1997: 150, 160). Similarly, Berel Lang distinguishes two meta-genres of philosophical writing depending on the author's presence in the text (Lang 1988: 201–202). Meditations, dialogues, confessions and the like are performative genres implicating both author and reader in the act of meditating, conversing, and confessing. In expository genres, on the other hand, one gets the sense that things speak for themselves. In both cases, authors and editors used to include genre references regularly in their titles and thus signaled how their philosophical ambitions ought to be received by readers.

That genre matters in the interpretation of philosophical texts is clearly illustrated in Stephen Kaplan's work on the *kārikā*, a genre of concise verse prevalent in Indian philosophical writing. The *kārikā* was one of several genres of memory texts, highly elliptic types of texts which were written down in a predominantly oral culture. The philosophical inconsistency that strikes modern readers of these texts results from the disregard for and the loss of their discursive context. Kaplan suggests that the gaps between the remaining passages would have been filled out by the philosopher's familiarity with the larger "tradition text": the entirety of the sources, both written and (mostly) oral, through which the ideas of a philosophical school were transmitted (Kaplan 1996; Deutsch 1988: 169–171).

The significance of genre in Neo-Confucian philosophy is most evident in the adoption of the "recorded conversations" (*yulu* 語錄), a genre used in Chan Buddhist philosophy in the mid-tenth century and reminiscent of early Confucian texts such as *The Analects*. Daniel Gardner has shown how the addition of recorded conversations to the repertoire of Confucian discourses in the eleventh and twelfth centuries coincided with a new form of exegesis based on epistemological assumptions different from those underlying interlinear commentary or prose essays. Interlinear commentary on the classics put constraints on the scope of exegetical and philosophical discussion by focusing attention on discrete units of text (paragraphs, lines, or even single characters). In recorded conversations speakers drew together passages and ideas from the entire classical corpus in order to explain Neo-Confucian concepts and beliefs. In interlinear commentary, authority is primarily vested in the classical text as it is; in recorded conversations the speaker (i.e., the Neo-Confucian teacher) becomes the locus of authority.

The authority of the teacher is buttressed by two associated epistemological principles. First, the authority of a contemporary voice over the sanctity of the written tradition of the past is based on the Neo-Confucian tenet that the heart/mind is endowed with the same principles that structure the natural world and the socio-political order, which are also in this view the main subject of the classical corpus. When cultivated, the heart/mind detects the patterns that structure the human and the natural world in real life as well as in the classics. The cultivated heart/mind of a contemporary teacher is an equally reliable, and because of the dialogic situation, a more accessible, path to the discovery of these truths.

Second, the representation of the contemporary teacher responding to student queries underscores the value attached to discussion in the pursuit of philosophical truth. The introduction of contemporary debate in the recorded conversations had a two-fold effect on their readership. Readers could imagine themselves as surrogate disciples asking questions about the more technical aspects of Neo-Confucian philosophy as well as about the application of Neo-Confucian analyses of the heart/mind, human relationships, the socio-political order, and the cosmos to classical texts. They thereby engaged themselves as active participants in contemporary debates, but also deferred to the authority of the master-teacher whose answers provided authoritative explanations. Since recorded conversations regularly featured the master's rebuttal of alternative positions held by competing intellectual authorities, they also provided a model for Neo-Confucian polemics. The master-teacher's discussion of rival views taught students why his criticism was justified and how best to defend his position (De Weerd 2007: 327).

During the twelfth-century the recorded conversations were emblematic of the rise of the Neo-Confucian movement of the Learning of the Way (*daoxue*).¹ Even though this movement, under the leadership of ZHU Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), produced a wide variety of texts, the recorded conversations most emphatically incorporated its philosophical and pedagogical goals. The series of recorded conversations of CHENG Yi 程頤 (1033–1107) and his disciples that ZHU Xi edited between 1159 and 1173, for example, fit into Zhu's effort to demonstrate that the way (universal and metaphysically demonstrable moral truth) is necessarily transmitted through a genealogy of master-teachers and essentially evidenced in practice in a broad sense rather than in writing (De Weerd 2007: 199). This genre does not belong to Berel Lang's meta-genre of performative texts in the strict sense because the author-recorder is not always directly involved in the dialogue. However, the genre embodies the performative thrust of much Neo-Confucian writing (and reading). The disciple's recording of the words witnessed during interactions with the master-teacher, and the editor's collecting of such records were ways of inserting oneself in the living chain of transmitters of the Way. Moreover, for recorders, compilers, and readers recorded conversations were simultaneously records of and guides to moral practice not only because they included discussions on moral theory and practical morality, but also because they recreated the master-teacher's model enactment of the moral life in commonplace interactions.

The valuation of such an action-oriented genre of philosophical writing found justification in ZHU Xi's theory of writing. Writing was for ZHU Xi a

¹ I use "Neo-Confucianism" in the broad sense of the terms, ideas, and institutions established and debated by East Asian thinkers since the eleventh century. "Learning of the Way" I define more narrowly as a tradition of moral philosophy taking on the form of a movement in the late twelfth century, transmitted through a narrowly defined genealogical line of transmitters of the way (*dao*), and captured in a new set of canonical texts. For a more elaborate discussion of the meaning of and historiography on these terms, see De Weerd (2007: 25–46).

test of one's understanding of the structuring principles of the human and natural world. It originated in the ancient sages' capturing of the fundamental patterns of the cosmos. Writing was of secondary significance in truth-seeking in that its value depended on its ability to reflect the author's prior understanding. Such an interpretation of the origins and value of writing led to the condemnation of artifice in composition and a predilection for genres and writing styles approximating speech, especially the kind of speech characteristic of teacher-disciple interactions.

In recorded conversations the authority vested in the master-teacher posed a problem for Neo-Confucian philosophers once the genealogy of transmitters of the way was enshrined by literate elites and endorsed by the court in the early thirteenth century. The ascendancy of ZHU Xi's legacy during this time period resulted in the publication of various editions of his recorded conversations but also in the decline of the genre as none other could claim the status of the great synthesizer that had been conferred on him. Two basic questions faced by his first- and second-generation disciples were therefore how to transmit Neo-Confucian philosophy after the passing of the core masters, and, how to preserve the personal voice and interaction that had become emblematic of Learning of the Way philosophizing. This essay explores some of the genres of Neo-Confucian philosophy that were developed in the face of these challenges. The focus on genre and philosophy provides in my view also a new answer to the question as to why the two authors chosen for this essay have taken center stage in the historiography of Neo-Confucian philosophy after ZHU Xi.

CHEN Chun 陳淳 (1159–1223)² and ZHEN Dexiu 真德秀 (1178–1235) feature in all major works on Neo-Confucian philosophy as two out of a handful of major first- and second-generation disciples of ZHU Xi (e.g., Gao and CHEN 1986; He 2004; Hou et al. 1984). Since the 1980s, rapidly expanding scholarship on their work has highlighted Chen's and Zhen's disagreements with positions attributed to ZHU Xi (e.g., Dai 2008; Zhang 2004; Zhu 2006). Nevertheless, the high profile they have acquired derived in large part from their contributions to the spread of *daoxue* through pedagogical writings. This proposition can be read as an endorsement of the view that CHEN Chun and ZHEN Dexiu were philosophically irrelevant when the formulation of new ideas and rationales for old ideas is concerned (de Bary 1981: 73; Xiang 2005: 2). My main aim here, however, is to explain the philosophical significance of the genres of pedagogical writing for which they became fixtures in late imperial Neo-Confucianism.³

² CHEN Chun's dates are controversial; see Satō (1989: 49 n.1).

³ My discussion is limited to monographic genres and does not cover other types of pedagogical texts such as expositions (*lun* 論), elaborations (*xiang* 詳), discussions (*bian* 辨), clarifications (*jie* 解), responses (*da* 答), lectures (*jiangyi* 講義), or essays (*fati* 發題) found in the collected works of these authors.

Transforming the Self Through the Appropriation of Words

Eliot Deutsch proposed that in Indian and East Asian philosophical traditions the individual philosophical work is part of a “tradition text” and therefore does not possess independent status (Deutsch 1988: 166, 171). The pursuit of knowledge is a quest of self-knowledge; individual authors express the pursuit of self-knowledge in writing that appropriates the sources upon which this knowledge is based. Writing is therefore at once an act of appropriation, self-fashioning, and identification with the core ideas and practices of one’s school. We could consider the Learning of the Way tradition from this perspective and interpret the construction of genealogies of masters and the integration of their work in anthologies in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as an illustration of the contemporary practice to read individuals and their work in the context of a school rather than as self-sufficient textual units.

There were, however, various ways of knowledge transmission and, as a result, various ways in which texts could be read together. One vehicle of knowledge transmission that had become popular among literate elites of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the “classified book” or encyclopedia (*leishu* 類書). *Scrutinizing What is Right from the Gao Studio* (*Gao Zhai shen shi ji* 高齋審是集), for example, was a classified anthology of quotations on concepts central to Learning of the Way philosophy. Such compilations rendered the extensive oeuvre of Learning of the Way thinkers accessible in ways that would have been familiar to contemporary readers used to acquiring information for the purpose of literary composition or for examination preparation in similar fashion (De Weerd 2007: 267).

This tendency to repackage the legacy of the eleventh- and twelfth-century founding thinkers of the Learning of the Way, its “academicization,” has been considered a key characteristic of thirteenth-century Neo-Confucianism (De Weerd 2007; He 2004: 350). CHEN Chun and ZHEN Dexiu could be considered key contributors to this phenomenon. However, even though both thinkers endorsed and explicitly drew upon the written legacy of ZHU Xi and his chosen predecessors, they developed novel types of philosophical self-expression geared towards the personal and integrative appropriation of the tradition text as revised by ZHU Xi rather than the academic exposition of it.⁴

Out of the approximately five hundred first-generation students whose affiliation with ZHU Xi can be documented, CHEN Chun was one of the most loyal and trusted. He met ZHU Xi late in life, in 1190, but had already been studying the latter’s publications for about twenty years prior to their first meeting. Through reading and teaching the emerging canon of the Learning of the Way, CHEN Chun nourished the belief that he was called upon to get involved in the transmission of the Learning of the Way. CHEN Chun’s most

⁴ Some of my findings on CHEN Chun and ZHEN Dexiu have already presented in *Competition over Content*. I thank the Harvard University Asia Center for the permission to use these findings.

influential contributions to the dissemination of the Learning of the Way dated from the period after his first encounter with ZHU Xi. He compiled an extensive collection of notes recording his interactions with ZHU Xi. His records of conversations with the master take up a substantial portion in the current edition of *Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu* (*Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類; 1270), ranking him third in the list of most prolific contributors to this collection. Befitting his lifelong career as a teacher in Zhangzhou 漳州 (Fujian 福建), CHEN Chun was also the author of several primers on the Learning of the Way, each directed at different audiences. He wrote instructions for children and women and introductory texts for adult male students. The latter included three collections of lectures: *Oral Explanations of the Four Books* (*Yu Meng Daxue Zhongyong kouyi* 語孟大學中庸口義), *The Lectures at Yanling Prefecture* (*Yanling jiangyi* 嚴陵講義), and *The Correct Meaning of Terms* (*Beixi ziyi* 北溪字義) (Chan 1986: 5, 12–27; Chen 2007: 151–152; Honma 1993: 1–17; Ichiki 2002: 365–366).

The Correct Meaning of Terms, printed between 1219 and 1223 shortly before his death, is a lexicon providing relatively short definitions of key terms in Confucian philosophy. As the title suggests, *The Correct Meaning of Terms* aimed to define the selected terms through exclusive reliance on the interpretations of the masters of the Learning of the Way who claimed to have rediscovered their true meaning. Each entry resulted from lecture notes on the topic and consists of a discussion of the term in the colloquial style of the recorded conversations. As such it contrasted markedly with other contemporary works on Neo-Confucian philosophy.

CHEN Chun objected to *Scrutinizing What is Right from the Gao Studio* and similar kinds of encyclopedic works. For Chen, concepts such as “the way and virtue,” “humaneness and compassion,” and “nature and emotions” fit into a larger philosophy of moral self-cultivation and should only be explained with reference to this broader framework (Chen 1983b: 14.9a–b). He objected to the reification of the terms for these concepts into categories, whereby each term served as a semantic container for its divergent occurrences in the works of authoritative thinkers. Category books indexing moral concepts in his view undermined the power of the masters’ sayings; they turned them into words dissociated from speech acts. Students using such tools replicated the words of the masters but did not share the masters’ understanding and intent.

The Correct Meaning of Terms provided a model for how to turn the words of past masters into performative statements. By personally selecting appropriate sayings and articulating a personal understanding of the Learning of the Way, this work demonstrated the author’s commitment to the transmission of the Learning of the Way. This commitment was at once a personal response to the imperative of moral self-cultivation and a commitment to the moral transformation of society and polity. CHEN Chun connected the exegesis of technical terminology to an integrative moral understanding in two ways.

First, the arrangement of the topics embodied the message that the topics were not to be read as independent entries but rather as connected elements in a

coherent moral philosophy and as steps in a program of learning that joined understanding and moral action. The sequence of the twenty-five topics in *The Correct Meaning of Terms* was based on the opening sentences of *The Doctrine of the Mean* (Honma 1993: 14–15): “What heaven ordains is called the nature. Following the nature is called the way. Cultivating the way is called teaching.” These sentences defined key concepts in Learning of the Way metaphysics (heaven’s command, the nature, and the way) and outlined the relationship between them. The last sentence links the philosophy of the way (*dao*) to its practice in teaching and learning.

The Correct Meaning of Terms takes its readers along the same trajectory. The first chapter opens with a discussion of heaven’s command and the nature and analyzes other subjects relating to the endowed characteristics of human nature. The second chapter elaborates on the next two sentences. It first defines the way and discusses concepts explaining both its genesis and its operation such as “the Supreme Ultimate” and “coherence.” The last five entries cover subjects that were either encouraged or discouraged in the practice of the Learning of the Way: the practice of ritual, music, ancestor worship, and the pursuit of propriety were encouraged, whereas the pursuit of profit and the practice of uncanonical sacrifices, Buddhism, and Daoism were censured.

The strategy of encapsulating Learning of the Way moral philosophy in particular passages of the Four Books had been tried before. CHEN Chun modeled *The Correct Meaning of Terms* on *A Record for Reflection* (*Jin si lu* 近思錄), the text that had introduced him to the Learning of the Way (Chan 1967: 2; Ivanhoe 1988). ZHU Xi published *A Record for Reflection* as a concise and step-by-step introduction to the path of moral self-cultivation. With the help of LÜ Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–1181), he selected passages from the work of ZHOU Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073), the Cheng brothers (CHENG Yi and CHENG Hao 程顥 [1032–1085]), and ZHANG Zai 張載 (1020–1078) and organized them in a sequence inspired by the process of moral growth outlined in *The Great Learning*: from the essentials of learning and self-cultivation to the handling of sociopolitical affairs. By adopting this sentence from *The Great Learning* as its organizational template, ZHU Xi presented the diverse legacy of the masters of the Learning of the Way as one coherent philosophy reviving the central message of the classics (Honma 1993: 24–27; Tucker 1983: 2–3). Through the selection and organization of the concepts in *The Correct Meaning of Terms*, CHEN Chun presented his work as a direct continuation of the work of earlier transmitters in the genealogy of the Learning of the Way. The layout of his work was based on two prominent texts in the canon of the Learning of the Way promoted by ZHU Xi. *A Record for Reflection* exemplified the use of an axiom from one of the Four Books for capturing the unity and continuity of the Learning of the Way. *The Doctrine of the Mean* provided the conceptual framework for Chen’s work. Through the adaptation of this strategy of integration, CHEN Chun demonstrated how ZHU Xi’s successors could continue to make the tradition text (including its Learning of the Way accretions) their own.

Second, CHEN Chun connected moral theoretical terminology with moral understanding through a mode of explanation in which the authority of the classics, the authority of the master-teachers of the Learning of the Way, and the authority of the moral individual were played off against each other. *The Correct Meaning of Terms* familiarized students with a mode of explanation that allowed them to become participants in the transmission of the Learning of the Way. CHEN Chun clarified the meaning of the terms indexed in *The Correct Meaning of Terms* by quoting and explaining statements from the masters of the Learning of the Way. He quoted verbatim the written work of ZHU Xi's eleventh-century predecessors and inserted passages selected from ZHU Xi's vast written legacy as well as personal communications with him. Such passages conveyed authority. They conveyed the authority of the masters and the transmitter. Their invocation confirmed the authority of the masters; the validity of their sayings was usually not questioned. At the same time the quotation of the masters' writings and sayings conveyed authority to the transmitter. The transmitter clarified Learning of the Way philosophy by recalling appropriate passages from the tradition and explaining their meaning, either through additional quotations or through personal explications. Through his ability to connect the transmitted wisdom of the masters and a personal understanding of Learning of the Way moral philosophy, the transmitter demonstrated authority over the Learning of the Way tradition:

I personally heard Duke Wen [ZHU Xi] when he said, " 'When the thearch is greatly infuriated (Chan 1986: 45 n.27), it is simply that according to the principle of coherence, it should be so. Nothing in the world is honored more highly than coherence, and therefore we call it the thearch (Zhu 1986: 4.63). ' " From this we can understand that heaven is coherence (*li* 理). Thus the blue sky is the body of heaven. The body of heaven is spoken of in terms of vital energy (*qi* 氣), and the operation of heaven is spoken of in terms of coherence.⁵

In this passage CHEN Chun was responding to a question regarding heaven's command, the first topic in *The Correct Meaning of Terms*. The question probed the attributes of heaven as a source providing direction to all things: "When heaven commands, is there really something above that arranges and orders that?" CHEN Chun responded that heaven stands for coherence, the pattern that is unique in each and every thing; yet, by virtue of its prescribing every thing's proper development and roles, it ties them all together in one cosmic order. He justified his answer to this question by invoking the words of CHENG Yi, citing passages from ZHU Xi's commentaries and, as demonstrated in the translated passage above, bearing personal testimony to ZHU Xi's words. The passages from the canonical authors of the Learning of the Way carry normative meaning and thus provide explanatory power, but the transmission of the Learning of the Way also requires the personal articulation of the moral philosophy that underlies the variety of canonical passages. CHEN Chun deduced the truth of the equation of heaven and coherence from the masters'

⁵ I am largely adopting Wing-tsit Chan's translation (Chan 1986: 45).

legacy and clarifies that this equation only holds as far as the operation, and not the material substance, of heaven is concerned.

This mode of explanation was also based on classical models of transmission as they had been construed by ZHU Xi. In his edition of and commentary on *The Doctrine of the Mean* ZHU Xi presents Zisi 子思 (fifth century BC), grandson of Confucius, as a model transmitter of the Way. ZHU Xi claimed that the work consisted of three separate layers in which Zisi respectively noted down the text of the classic as it had been transmitted to him, explained the core text by quoting Confucius' words, and clarified the meaning of the passages he had quoted in his own words based on what he had learned through personal communication with Confucius. CHEN Chun's lexicon was thus not merely a reference text for those new to Learning of the Way philosophy (although it was certainly also used in this way), it was also a model of the personal integration of the tradition text.

Reconfiguring the Tradition Text Through Reading

CHEN Chun's *The Correct Meaning of Terms* was heralded as the most effective introduction to the Learning of the Way as soon as it appeared in print from the 1220s onwards. It was then competing against the kinds of digests of Learning of the Way texts modeled on examination manuals, but it also provided an alternative to another genre aimed at cultivating the moral self through a systematic engagement with the tradition text as it had been revised by ZHU Xi: the notebook or reading log (*dushu ji* 讀書記):

After the prefectural school printed Xishan's [ZHEN Dexiu's] *Reading Notes*, scholars vied to read it. Academician Ye was concerned that the number of categories was excessive and that future students would not be able to make sense of it. . . [WANG] Jia 王稼 (*jinshi* 1235) therefore told him about Mr. Beixi's [CHEN Chun's] *The Correct Meaning of Terms*. (Li 1983: 28.28a)

In this 1247 preface to a new printed edition, *The Correct Meaning of Terms* is presented as an abbreviation of the much more voluminous *Reading Notes*, completed around 1225, just a few years after the first printing of *The Correct Meaning*. The interest of the local magistrates in the wider distribution of both titles (they had earlier financed the printing of *Reading Notes* and were now adding *The Correct Meaning of Terms* to the list of subsidized titles) suggests a similarity between them. Like CHEN Chun, the editor of the first part of *Reading Notes* adopted a framework that allowed for the subsumption of the tradition text under a set of categories forming the core message of the Learning of the Way. An introduction (literally "outline" [*gangmu* 綱目]) to *Reading Notes*, written by TANG Han 湯漢 (ca. 1198–1275), a student of ZHEN Dexiu and the editor and co-publisher of a 1259 edition, clarifies the rationale behind the selection and organization of the keywords:

"That which is ordained is the human nature" is the wellspring of moral principles; therefore it is placed first in this compilation. When the nature is activated, emotions are formed. Since the heart/mind oversees [the operation of] the nature and emotions,

[the topical heading of] “the heart/mind” and then “emotions” follow after [the heading of] “the nature.” Those three are the leading concepts of this entire compilation. The subdivisions are as follows. Humaneness, rightness, propriety, wisdom, and truthfulness define the nature ordained by heaven. The relationships between father and son, ruler and minister, husband and wife, old and young, and between friends define the path dictated by the nature. Therefore “the five virtues” and “the five constant relationships” are next. The behaviors observed by all human beings in common we call the way; what one obtains within oneself is called potency. In fact these two cannot be separated. Therefore, “the way and potency” comes after “the five constant relationships.” “Centrality,” “unity,” “the ultimate,” and “being true to oneself,” these are all different names for the way. Therefore these entries follow behind “the way and potency.” From where should scholars start to seek the way and pursue virtue? Only “learning” is the answer. “Mental attentiveness” is the basis of learning; therefore, this topic precedes “learning.” A broad discussion of learning follows. Then come “the way of the teacher” and “teaching methods”; “the smaller learning” and “the greater learning.” To take “sages and worthies” as teachers, to distinguish between “morally superior and morally inferior human beings” and to differentiate between “our way and deviance,” these are all matters of learning. Therefore these headings follow behind “the greater learning.” The natural pattern of “transformation through *yin* and *yang*” has already been briefly discussed in the above section on the nature. Details that were not discussed there are taken up again at the end of this compilation. (Zhen 1983d: *gangmu*)

Even though the number of subdivisions ZHEN Dexiu and TANG Han used far outnumbered those used by CHEN Chun, they ranked and configured the main categories highlighted in the introduction in the same way. They articulated a theory of moral cultivation that was based on the a priori existence of a coded human nature on a metaphysical level (*xing ming* 性命), its immanence in the individual heart/mind (*xin* 心) as a precondition of human ethics, and the individual heart/mind as the key facilitator of natural, and therefore, good social behavior as it can give precedence to emotions (*qing* 情) elicited from the endowed nature over lesser drives and desires.

After having discussed the core concepts that explain both the necessity and the possibility of moral cultivation, Zhen’s text moves on to an analysis of what constitutes the *a priori* elements of human nature (the five seeds of moral behavior encoded in the human nature and the five types of social relationships; these encompass the full range of social values and of the social relationships that determine how normative social values are to be exercised). Then follows his work on those concepts that posit the accessibility of the *a priori* elements of human nature (and thus the universal patterns of the cosmos with which they coincide) in individual experience. The way and potency are simply synonyms for mental concentration, the undivided self, and being true to one’s nature because the latter are ways to tap into *dao* as it informs human nature. The remainder is devoted to an exposition of the various means (the various ways of learning) by which to achieve the goal of allowing the encoded nature to inform individual behavior fully in all human relationships.

ZHEN Dexiu’s notes move from a discussion of the nature to the way and then to learning and thus replicate the core message of CHEN Chun’s lexicon, which

was itself a transmission of the opening lines of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, the text ZHU Xi regarded as the culmination of the Learning of the Way canon: “What heaven ordains is called the *nature*. Following the nature is called the *way*. Cultivating the way is called *teaching*.”

The substitution of “learning” (*xue* 學) for “teaching” (*jiao* 教) and the much larger space devoted to this topic in Zhen’s work reflect his prioritization of reading and the systematic internalization of the transmission of the Learning of the Way through (a particular kind of) reading. Before explaining why I see this as the major contribution of Zhen’s *Reading Notes*, let me review some of the other reasons ZHEN Dexiu has become a key figure in the thirteenth-century history of Neo-Confucianism. Most intellectual historians underscore ZHEN Dexiu’s contributions to the official recognition of the Learning of the Way and to his efforts in developing Learning of the Way moral theory into a comprehensive political philosophy. Some philosophers, on the other hand, perceive such contributions to the politicization of Neo-Confucianism as a sign of Zhen’s philosophical insignificance (Xiang 2005: 2). Although there is room for debate concerning the extent to which Zhen was influential in reversing the official verdict against Learning of the Way thinkers, there is no doubt that his political success and scholarly acumen raised the political profile of the men whose thought most inspired his own work.

In contrast with the repeated examination failures of CHEN Chun, ZHEN Dexiu obtained the highest examination degree in 1199 at the very young age of twenty-two. Barely six years later, he passed the polymath (*boxue hongci* 博學宏詞) examination, known for the extraordinary level of erudition it required and the minimal numbers of graduates it produced. This last degree qualified him for secretarial posts in the capital. The policy essay he wrote on the occasion of the 1205 examination was an early example of his outspoken advocacy of a Learning of the Way program for political reform; it proposed that the cultivation of the heart/mind was the only practical method to solve such problems raised by the examiner as the slackening of military discipline, the unruliness of local militias, and a depleted treasury. Zhen spent most of his time in office with a seven-year period of retirement (1225–1232) due to his protest against the government of Councilor SHI Miyuan 史彌遠 (1164–1233). His prolonged presence in the capital and his active political profile made him the most conspicuous among the thirteenth-century advocates of the Learning of the Way.

In his scholarly work as well, Zhen extended the reach of the Learning of the Way into political theory and administration more visibly than his more famous predecessors. Scholarly attention has focused on his discussion of the political implications of *The Great Learning* and to a lesser extent on a shorter work on administration, titled *The Classic on Governance* (*Zheng jing* 政經) (discussed below). During his short tenure as Classics Mat Lecturer in 1225, Zhen delivered presentations at court on *The Great Learning* on at least sixteen occasions (de Bary 1981: 85–98). In personal exchanges with Emperor Lizong 理宗 (r. 1225–1264) he upheld this Learning of the Way classic as a complete guide

for imperial government. In 1234, following his reappointment to prestigious central government posts such as Minister of Revenue and Hanlin Academician, he presented the product of his programmatic reading of it to Emperor Lizong.

Titled *Daxue yanyi* 大學衍義 (*The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning*) and first printed in 1229, it set out the responsibilities of the emperor. In Zhen's view the emperor's responsibilities derived from the eight-step program outlined in the classic for achieving political order. More clearly and more elaborately than the classic and its prior commentaries, ZHEN Dexiu set out to demonstrate that the moral reformation of emperor and court was the sole foundation for political order. He did so by amassing documentary evidence culled from the philosophical, literary, and historical record and by devoting his political analysis of the documentary record to the first six stages of the program outlining the progression from the successive stages of moral self-cultivation ("the investigation of things," "the extension of knowledge," "making the will sincere," "rectifying the heart/mind," and "the cultivation of the body") to "the regulation of the family." By leaving out the last two stages ("ordering the state" and "keeping the empire at peace") ZHEN Dexiu underscored the point that political outcomes can be predicted on the basis of the personal and familial aspects of emperorship; some contemporaries pointed out that this call for a retreat from utilitarian administrative reasoning had borne little result during Zhen's time in office.

I will return to this text in the following section, but it is relevant here in that, according to TANG Han, ZHEN Dexiu intended *The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning* to be one of the four parts of *Reading Notes*. By the time Tang issued his revised print edition only incomplete editions were circulating. He wrote that part one and four had been printed earlier under the auspices of the Fuzhou educational officials, but that he had recovered bits of part two from Zhen's family for this edition. He also found that *The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning* had in the original scheme occupied the first half of part two.

Extant Song copies of the Fuzhou edition augmented by TANG Han suggest that currently more widely available editions such as the *Siku quanshu* edition combine the first part and the remaining chapters of the last part into forty chapters, leaving out the twenty-two chapters constituting part two in Tang's edition. This second part is a chronological survey of "the methods by which ministers have assisted in government" (Zhen 1259: *yiji, gangmu*). Culling mostly from SIMA Guang's 司馬光 (1019–1086) *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑; 1085), the dynastic histories, and the prose tradition more broadly, these reading notes fit in well with *The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning* and the two remaining chapters from the last part (chapters 33 and 34 in the combined edition) with regard to both content and source materials. Whereas *The Extended Meaning* covers emperorship, the second half of part two and the remaining chapters of part four cover the responsibilities of those serving in government. Throughout his reading notes ZHEN Dexiu's use and presentation of source materials was reminiscent more of the encyclopedists who systematically culled from a wide range of genres than

of Learning of the Way philosophers who had hitherto tended to focus on orally transmitted truth and the more narrowly construed emerging Learning of the Way canon.

The original design of *Reading Notes* is thus a further indication of the philosophical claims already implicit in the introduction to part one translated above (and in the combined edition used as the introduction to the entire work). Through a systematic reconfiguring of the written tradition, ZHEN Dexiu set out to demonstrate the validity of the core message of the Learning of the Way. The second and fourth parts of *Reading Notes* supplied the answer to one question that had yet to be answered in the *summae* of Learning of the Way moral theory: how does learning that seeks to free the encoded nature and have it fully inform individual behavior in all human relationships translate into socio-political order? To the three key concepts derived from *The Doctrine of the Mean* (nature 性命, way 道, and teaching/learning 教/學), Zhen added a discussion of the key question raised by the other of ZHU Xi's two most favorite classical texts, *The Great Learning*: in what kind of political behavior does learning result both in the case of emperor and in the case of the civil servant? Through case studies of emperors and ministers, Zhen explained how the theory of self-cultivation provided standards to monitor all aspects of political behavior and thus sought to validate its application to governance.

Whereas his main source of inspiration, ZHU Xi, had laid the foundation for the creation of a coherent intellectual and textual community through the compilation of commentaries, the creation of a genealogy of transmitters of the Learning of the Way, the edition of the work of his chosen intellectual ancestors, and the application of Learning of the Way moral theory to history in separate and voluminous works, ZHEN Dexiu demonstrated how the individual could and ought to use the core message of the Learning of the Way as the logic guiding everything they learned. Learning was, as the *Reading Notes* project implied, accomplished primarily through reading. As befitted a holder of the polymath degree, ZHEN Dexiu tended to be less selective in his list of recommended readings than many of his Learning of the Way contemporaries. Scholars have noted his interest in the philosophy of LU Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139–1193) and the compatibility between his defense of LU Jiuyuan's legacy and the prominence of the cultivation of the heart/mind in his writings on moral and political philosophy. The syncretizing tendencies, which modern scholars have regarded as a second broader influence, besides politicization, on the development of Learning of the Way philosophy in the thirteenth century, stood in sharp contrast to CHEN Chun and other first-generation disciples trained in rebutting the claims of ZHU Xi's main rivals.

These tendencies can to a certain extent also be read as a byproduct of the methods and goals of the encyclopedist. CHEN Chun determined the meaning of the keywords of Learning of the Way moral philosophy by invoking the authority of oral transmission, written record, and personal evaluation. He took upon himself the responsibility for the transmission of the revised tradition text by continuing to speak in the polemical lecture-style colloquial reminiscent

of the recorded conversations. ZHEN Dexiu built implicit arguments by juxtaposing documentary evidence from a broad array of written sources. Qing scholars and modern historians in their wake credited Zhen's systematic reliance upon the classics, the histories, current affairs, and the essays of other scholars (de Bary 1981: 90; He 2004: 346). The application of an argumentative strategy that culls systematically and explicitly from a broad archive of classical, historical, administrative, and philosophical texts may have been an innovation in the Learning of the Way philosophical literature, but arranging evidence on this basis had become a common device in historical and administrative encyclopedias targeted at students preparing for the civil service examinations (De Weerd 2006). The classification of evidence according to generic and chronological criteria not only facilitated the identification and selection of source material but also matched and reinforced a rhetorical strategy common to all manner of writing about current affairs whether they were of a political or socio-cultural nature. The construction of a persuasive argument depended upon the successful comparison (defense and/or refutation) of cases pulled throughout history and of different solutions proposed by authorities past and present.

ZHEN Dexiu's adaptation of this model of argumentation in *Reading Notes* (especially in those parts relating to government) may have been an obvious part of the larger goal to extend Learning of the Way moral theory into all aspects of administrative theory. However, his reorganization of the written record differed in crucial respects from that of other encyclopedists of the time. In administrative and historical encyclopedias featuring documentary sections that classified texts according to broad genre distinctions like *The Epitome of Eminent Men Responding at the Imperial College* (*Bishui qunying daiwen huiyuan* 璧水群英待問會元; ca. 1245) and *A Net to Unite and Order the Massive Amounts of Information in All Books—An Enlarged Edition from the Imperial College* (*Taixue zengxiu qunshu jie jiang wang* 太學增修群書截江網; ca. 1250) the topics covered all manner of areas of administration (related to the functional divisions of administration reflected in the bureaucracy itself) and included excerpts from standard authorities as well as little known examination candidates. The goal was to provide relevant sources even when their authors articulated differing and competing positions.

Zhen's work brought together the various sources on which Learning of the Way philosophers had drawn and those which could be reconciled with and integrated into the project to broaden the transmission of the Learning of the Way. Despite the broader range of sources included when compared to earlier appropriations of the revised tradition text (ZHU XI's *A Record for Reflection* or CHEN Chun's *The Correct Meaning of Terms*), ZHEN Dexiu's notebook followed in the footsteps of these works as it predominantly excerpted and indexed the work of Learning of the Way philosophers and used a template derived from Learning of the Way moral theory to digest all materials covered.

The sections on reading (“the sequence of reading” and “the method of reading”) are a good illustration of Zhen's reading and note-taking strategies.

The topics echo ZHU Xi's views on the subject as the chapters on "the method of reading" in *Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu* reveal. The notes include quotations in large font, which signal major points such as the sequence from more accessible texts such as *The Great Learning*, *The Analects*, and *Mencius* to the text that should be considered the measure of all texts, *The Doctrine of the Mean*; the need to make the text reflect upon one's personal existence and experience; slow and iterative reading, concentration, and questioning as means by which effective and personalized reading can be achieved; respect for the integrity of the text, the bracketing of personal opinion and preconceived notions, the assumption of the transparency of the text, and the avoidance of indecipherable archaic passages as rules to open the text to normative and integrative interpretations and to prevent idiosyncratic creative takes on selected passages; and, finally, the never-ending process of appropriating the universal truths embedded in the written legacy.

Zhen's chapter thus summarizes the key points of ZHU Xi's reading program. He similarly justifies these rules on the basis of an epistemology that holds that the encounter with the universal moral principles in the written record mobilizes the very same principles embedded in the human nature. Concentration prepares the heart/mind for the activation of normative behaviors dictated by the human nature and simultaneously allows the heart/mind to uncover those universal principles in texts that will consequently reverberate with the same principles embedded in the nature. ZHEN Dexiu concluded his notes on reading with a poetic inscription by ZHANG Shi 張栻 (1133–1180), a twelfth-century thinker whose collected works ZHU Xi edited in 1184:

Well scholars,
 you have to know how to read.
 It is not done for the sake of accomplishment;
 But only to seek the original state.
 What is the original state?
 It is what you are naturally.
 If you activate it through books,
 You will know it in its full extent.
 Just recite and sing,
 Investigate and restore.
 Just immerse yourself in it;
 Don't indulge and don't repress.
 Calm your heart/mind,
 In order to collect its principles. (Zhen 1983d: 25.24a; Zhang 1983: 36.10a–b)

The quotations are arranged by genre, moving from classical sources (*The Doctrine of the Mean*) to a chronologically arranged list of Song dynasty thinkers who spoke or wrote on the subject. There is, however, no doubt about the dominant source of inspiration for Zhen's notes on reading. Even though a variety of Learning of the Way thinkers including the Cheng brothers, YIN Tun 尹焯 (1071–1143), ZHANG Zai, YANG Shi 楊時 (1053–1135), LI Tong 李侗 (1093–1163), and ZHANG Shi are quoted in addition to ZHU Xi, the intralinear comments that follow each quotation are virtually exclusively based on ZHU Xi's

work. Moreover, the quotations attributed to pre-ZHU Xi Song thinkers mostly derive from works written or edited by him such as *A Record for Reflection*, LI Tong's biography, or ZHANG Shi's collected work.

The art of transmission changed significantly in ZHEN Dexiu's hands. His *Notes* summarized and indexed Learning of the Way philosophy more thoroughly than earlier anthologies and dictionaries. The sections on reading not only abstracted material from a variety of chapters in the current edition of *Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu* (representing a mixture of note-takers); when tracing all sources for the quotations it becomes evident that he also drew widely from letters and other prose genres in his collected works.

The reliance on ZHU Xi's written oeuvre coincided with a retreat of the personal voice in the transmission of Learning of the Way philosophy. The occasional "personal notes" (*an* 按) in the footnotes to the quotations provide source information and clarify the context of the quotation. In *Reading Notes* (excepting *The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning*) the personal elaborations on and evaluations of quotations found in CHEN Chun's work no longer set the tone. ZHEN Dexiu's appropriation of the tradition text is guided through his reading of ZHU Xi's work.

This approach to the transmission of the tradition text became paradigmatic and constituted the premise of the new condition of Learning of the Way philosophy by the mid-thirteenth century. ZHEN Dexiu's work contributed to its recognition as official ideology. Like CHEN Chun's lexicon ZHEN Dexiu's reading notes were a response to the accumulation of the Learning of the Way philosophical literature and its masterful synthesis in the massive oeuvre of ZHU Xi. Whereas Chen modeled his response to the question of transmission on the personal apologetics of Learning of the Way moral theory in the recorded conversations, ZHEN Dexiu pursued ZHU Xi's theory of reading, testifying in elaborate detail to the immanence of the patterns of moral order in texts across genre and thematic boundaries and in the process documenting for his contemporaries how moral theory could be applied to all aspects of emperorship and civil service.

Extending the Classics

Of devoting oneself to the essentials and expanding one's learning,
 Which of these comes first?
 Since I have come to serve as prefectural magistrate,
 I have been painfully aware of the danger of losing track.
 I have picked and gathered maxims,
 In order to cleanse my heart/mind.
 With my inner room resplendent,
 The incense rises up from the burner at the dawn of day.
 Solemnly I open a book,
 To serve my inner master. (Zhen 1983b: 25a–b)

In these final sentences of his poetic tribute to *The Classic on the Heart/Mind* (*Xin jing* 心經), a work he compiled while serving as Magistrate of Quanzhou 泉州 (1232–1233), ZHEN Dexiu reminds us of the impetus behind his work: reading and cultivating the heart/mind are mutually reliant activities upon which depend the realization of our capacity to be human, that is, to perform the socio-political roles for which we are naturally destined. A magistrate runs the risk of becoming overwhelmed by the conflicting demands of local constituencies, colleagues and family, by bureaucratic routines, and by the desire for self-promotion. To avoid the risk of a heart/mind distracted by conflicting demands, Zhen begins to read and searches for wise words in what he reads. The opening question could be read as a rhetorical one in two ways. It is obvious that going back to the essentials comes first for Zhen, as that alone guarantees clarity of heart/mind. However, expanding the heart/mind through reading is not of secondary significance; reading is necessary to focus and cleanse the heart/mind and does so as long as the premise of heart/mind cultivation guides the reading process.

The search for maxims hinted at in the lines translated above explains the creation of a third genre of transmission texts among ZHU Xi's intellectual inheritors: the new classic in the form of an anthology of classical passages presented as adages for practitioners of Learning of the Way philosophy. ZHEN Dexiu compiled two works which carry in their titles a genre designation that had for more than a millennium been reserved for works that had come down from the cultural heroes of Antiquity and set out the parameters of civilization. "Classic" (*jing* 經) referred to canonical texts that became by their very canonization embodiments of enduring principles (*jing* 經). As repositories of principles discovered in the process of creating and maintaining organized social life, they remained indispensable in ordering the world. *Jing* also acquired the sense of sacred text in Daoist and Buddhist traditions; religious sects continued to add texts revealed by transcendental powers to the Daoist and Buddhist canons. Applying this designation to new compilations was, however, uncommon; and, claiming and attributing authorship for a new classic to an ordinary mortal even less so (Lewis 1999: 297–300; Nylan 2001).

The Classic on the Heart/Mind consists of passages selected from the classics (*The Book of Documents* 書經, *The Book of Odes* 詩經, *The Book of Change*, *The Record of Rituals* 禮記, and, from the extended list of classics, *Mencius* 孟子). Each excerpt is followed by commentary selected from both the pre-Song commentarial tradition and, predominantly, from Learning of the Way philosophers including the Cheng brothers, ZHANG Zai, XIE Liangzuo 謝良左 (1059–1103), YANG Shi, and ZHU Xi. As the title suggests, the passages and the Song commentary focus on those classics and those passages that most directly address the nature, the operation, and the rectification of the heart/mind.

The text opens with the Sixteen-Character Dictum, a brief quote attributed to the sage ruler Yu 禹 in the *The Book of Documents*. "The human heart/mind is insecure; the moral heart/mind is barely perceptible. Have utmost refinement and singleness of heart/mind" (Tillman 1992: 123). ZHU Xi selected it as the core

message of the Learning of the Way because it outlined succinctly the difference between the moral heart/mind that preserved moral coherence and the human heart/mind that was prone to human desire, and simultaneously pointed the path to the restoration of the former. In the preface to his commentary on the *The Doctrine of the Mean, The Doctrine of the Mean in Chapters and Verses* (*Zhongyong zhangju* 中庸章句), he described it as the core of the Learning of the Way. This is also the text which ZHEN Dexiu cited as the authoritative interpretation of this opening passage.

As Wm. Theodore de Bary argued in his reading of the *The Classic on the Heart/Mind*, the classical and commentarial passages translate into a coherent apologetics for moral discipline. The compilation moves from the classics of antiquity to ZHOU Dunyi's rationale for constant vigilance against human desires. In *Penetrating the Book of Change* (*Tongshu* 通書) ZHOU Dunyi argued that even though human beings' original heart/mind is purely good and impartial, the state of incipient activation, which was the spring of activity, might give rise either to good or evil. In order to act morally, human beings need to return to the original mental state of tranquility and non-differentiation. When acting upon the incipient forces, they have to remain true to the original moral nature and remain without desires.

By arranging selections from ZHOU Dunyi's writing after quotations from *Mencius*, the compiler not only expressed support for the Zhou's more controversial pronouncements on the unnaturalness of human desires, but also implicitly validated the canonical status of the work of this Song Dynasty Learning of the Way philosopher and of those who followed in his wake. ZHEN Dexiu's use of *Penetrating the Book of Change* may have been modeled on ZHU Xi's selective use of it in *A Record for Reflection*, where ZHOU Dunyi's analysis of heart/mind cultivation was featured as a major contribution to Learning of the Way moral philosophy. This partially helps explain why ZHEN Dexiu's arrogation of the genre designation "classic" may not have seemed as radical in the mid-thirteenth century as it was later in the eyes of some Qing scholars. The juxtaposition and interweaving of passages from age-old classical texts and eleventh- and twelfth-century writings into a new classic was a manifestation of the broader recognition that the unofficial canon of Learning of the Way texts had achieved by the early thirteenth century. By celebrating an alleged positive review that the compilation received by Emperor Lizong, the publishers of *The Classic on the Heart/Mind* further underscored the legitimacy of the extension of the category of the classic (Chu 1988: 210).

In retrospect, *The Classic on the Heart/Mind* did not bring about the revival of the genre of the classic. It rather marked the beginning of a new type of commentary, distinct from both the canonized Han (202 BC–220 AD) and Tang (618–907) commentaries and early Learning of the Way models of commentary. According to Daniel Gardner, commentary was a critical means for building intellectual community throughout imperial Chinese history (Gardner 1998), and arguably beyond.

Leading philosophers of the Learning of the Way like ZHU Xi transformed commentarial genres and techniques while creating a new type of intellectual community centered on a genealogy of transmitters of the Way. In addition to the discussion of classical passages in the recorded conversations already mentioned above, they attempted to free the classical text from purely philological and situational readings by other means including the revision and reorganization of the transmitted text and line-by-line commentaries setting out systematically the internal philosophical coherence of core texts such as *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*. In the case of the former, CHENG Yi's suggestions for revisions that would more logically set out the significance he attached to the text as a systematic explanation of the heart/mind's investigation of moral principles resulted in ZHU Xi's revised edition complete with philological annotations and philosophical explanations in *The Great Learning in Chapters and Verses* (*Daxue zhangju* 大學章句) (Gardner 1986: 17–45).

The Classic on the Heart/Mind demonstrated that this hermeneutics of integration could be applied across the classical corpus and extended to the new canon of Learning of the Way texts. As in *Reading Notes*, the voice of the compiler recedes into the background as authority is now primarily vested in the maxims excerpted from classical and Learning of the Way texts and the commentary on them by ZHU Xi. The new classic, one of the shorter texts reviewed here, was another way of showing how philosophers of the Learning of the Way could insert themselves within the line of transmission after ZHU Xi. The new classic did not introduce new raw thoughts, but by bringing together passages from the classics, tying them to newly established interpretive authorities, and through ZHEN Dexiu's personal attestation of the efficacy of the hermeneutics of integration, it provided a model for commentary as an extension of the classics. Anthologizing was in this model the principal technique for extending the meaning of the classics.

The model is also evident in the second new classic attributed to ZHEN Dexiu, *The Classic on Government*.⁶ In its extant form, this short work is divided up into four parts, starting with excerpts from the classics, the histories, and contemporary administrative theory, and ending with a handful of bureaucratic communications Zhen issued while serving in local administration. Even though the latter may be later accretions resulting from Zhen's disciples' eagerness to pay tribute to their teacher by including material that demonstrated his engagement with local administration in practice, the concept and design of *The Classic on Government* is very much in keeping with ZHEN Dexiu's lifelong work.

⁶ As the *Siku quanshu* editors pointed out, this attribution is questionable given that it cannot be corroborated in Zhen's other work or in contemporary reference works. The work was, however, already associated with Zhen by 1242, because a combined edition of *The Classic on the Mind* and *The Classic on Government* can be dated to that year (Zhen 1983c: *tiyao*; de Bary 1981: 89).

Regardless of the valid charge that ZHEN Dexiu would not have claimed the genre designation “classic” for a work that included his own writing, to later editors of the text the first three parts must have read as a logical sequel to *The Classic on the Heart/Mind*. The classical passages selected in the first part suggest that, as in the case of heart/mind cultivation, a coherent message of benevolent government focused on educating and caring for the people with legal punishment as a last resort can be pieced together from the entire classical corpus. In contrast to the topical divisions used in contemporary works of administrative theory and history and in the reading notes, the new classic anthologizes.

By listing passages according to genres and chronology rather than by subject category, the new classics followed the model of the anthology which was also the form in which the Five Classics (with the possible exception of *The Record of Ritual*) had been transmitted. The collection of maxims is less concerned about comprehensiveness topically and in terms of source materials covered; in it the compiler brings together classically sanctioned injunctions for mental cultivation and administration. As ZHEN Dexiu’s inscription on *The Classic on the Heart/Mind* attests, these collections resulted from a search to engage the heart/mind in texts that would stimulate the incipient patterns of moral behavior; it invited him or her to concentrate on original texts and corresponding commentary that had proven efficacious in the daily mental discipline of an expert transmitter of the way.

The Classic on Government extended the import of the classical maxims by collecting passages from the histories and from administrative records as models of administrative practice. It featured model Han Dynasty magistrates who developed local production and education and more recent case studies of tax registration methods aimed at reducing malfeasance by brokers. In this respect this new classic also bore the hallmark of Zhen’s consistent effort to extend the reach of Learning of the Way moral theory into areas of literati activity such as local administration and service to the emperor that had so far not been incorporated into Learning of the Way transmission texts. The most influential product of this effort was the aforementioned *The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning*.

Originally part of an encyclopedic book of reading notes, *The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning* was as a separately circulating work presented as a commentary explaining the implied meaning of *The Great Learning*. In his preface ZHEN Dexiu wrote, “Only when one has inquired into the governance of the emperors and kings of antiquity, and found that they invariably take the self as its basis and extend this to all-under-heaven, can one appreciate that this book represents an essential text in transmitting the heart/mind of the sages, and is not just the personal utterance of Confucius alone” (Zhen 1983a: *xu* 1a; translation based on de Bary 1981: 107). Zhen here explains the premise of his commentarial strategy: the universal validity of a classic can be understood only on the basis of the corroboration of historical, philosophical, and other classical texts. The hermeneutic principle that understanding a classic necessarily

implied reading beyond the classic was also evident in the two new classics discussed above.

The “extension” of the meaning of the classic was also an explicit call to act upon the political meaning of this text as already mentioned. It is worth bearing in mind the communicative situation within which the current edition came into existence. ZHEN Dexiu explained that the lectures he gave at court were the basis for this work and eventually presented the complete work for Emperor Lizong’s review. This work later served as teaching material for Yuan Dynasty imperial princes. The choice of this classic in the teaching of imperial princes was not unprecedented. As de Bary has shown, ZHEN Dexiu’s work fits in a tradition of instructions to emperors, and Zhen explicitly allied his work with “the learning of emperorship” (*dixue* 帝學) as it had been established by the early Song politician FAN Zuyu 范祖禹 (1041–1098). However the learning of emperorship was not exclusively a matter for imperial princes; the extension of the political meaning of *The Great Learning* also depended upon officials and those preparing to become officials. ZHEN Dexiu recommended his work to both the emperor and officialdom as follows, “The ruler who fails to comprehend *The Great Learning* lacks the means to arrive at a clear understanding of the source of governance. The minister who fails to comprehend *The Great Learning* lacks the means to exhaust fully the methods of correcting the ruler” (Zhen 1983a: *xu* 1a; translation based on de Bary 1981: 107).

In this work ZHEN Dexiu laid out how the cultivation of self and family at the core of *The Great Learning* maps onto a set of rules for emperorship. Emperorship encompasses the cultivation of the imperial person as well as the emperor’s familial and political roles. The first stages of self-cultivation, “the investigation of things” and “the extension of knowledge,” map onto four main areas of administrative knowledge (“understanding the scholarship on the way”; “judging human talent”; “establishing the basis of rule”; and, “investigating the people’s feelings”). Each of these broader headings is further subdivided into more specific areas of imperial intellectual effort such as “the relative importance of virtue and punishment” and “the relative weight of rightness and profit” in “establishing the basis of rule,” or “the reasons for support and opposition among the people” and “the truth about grief and joy in the countryside” in “investigating the people’s feelings.” The following steps of “making one’s will sincere” and “rectifying one’s heart/mind” correspond to mental discipline interpreted as “honoring mental attentiveness” and “banning wayward desires.” That ZHEN Dexiu read the following step in the *Great Learning* as “the cultivation of the body” is evident from the main subcategories “watching one’s speech and behavior” and “rectifying one’s comportment.” The final step for ZHEN Dexiu, “regulating the family,” involves “paying careful attention to female partners,” “strictly managing the inner quarters,” “consolidating the foundation of the dynasty” (ensuring an orderly succession), and “educating one’s relatives.”

This scheme shows how *The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning* maintains the core message attributed to the classic by Learning of the Way philosophers: the cultivation of the heart/mind of the imperial person serves as

the basis for the last stages of “ordering the state” and “bringing peace to the world.” Zhen underscores the primacy of self-cultivation over administrative reasoning by leaving out the last categories; they appear only implicitly in the historical evidence of imperial rule suggesting how mental attentiveness in personal, familial, and administrative matters leads to political order, and, more frequently in recent history, the lack thereof leads to political upheaval.

The Extended Meaning of The Great Learning was therefore also an extension of existing commentaries on the classic, not in the least the commentary written by his teacher, ZHU Xi. ZHEN Dexiu maintained the core message set out systematically in ZHU Xi’s *The Great Learning in Chapters and Verses*. Unlike his other notes and commentaries, this work featured long explanations cast in Zhen’s own voice. The lecture-style of the explanations reflects the circumstances within which they originated; the more lengthy and colloquial exposition of textual passages and Learning of the Way moral theory were also reminiscent of the commentary of the master, which Zhen’s explanations frequently followed and cited. However, the encyclopedic form in which ZHEN Dexiu elaborated his interpretation of the classic marked a departure from the twelfth-century Learning of the Way classical commentary. The systematic connections forged between the cultivation of the self, the theory of emperorship, and imperial rule more broadly, were yet another way by which to ensure both the transmission of the revised tradition text and the broader application of Learning of the Way moral theory in other areas of literati activity.

Conclusion

In a philosophical tradition that was defined as an intellectual genealogy reaching back to antiquity and only restoring itself in Song times, transmission was a principal concern. Transmission was not only an art aimed at devising new techniques to cope with information overload (Blair 2004), but also an act of self-identification. The Learning of the Way as a genealogical line of transmitters of the Way captured in a new set of canonical texts was ZHU Xi’s creation, but the genealogical discourse he thus promoted also became a means of laying claim to a position in the transmission of the Learning of the Way. Teachers and disciples inserted themselves within a living chain of transmitters by affiliating themselves with teachers and disciples linked to the main figures in the genealogy through personal ties and through the continuation of the transmission. When ZHU Xi became heralded as the great synthesizer and leading interpreter of Learning of the Way moral theory in the early thirteenth century, his successors faced the question of how to continue the transmission after its definitive articulation in the master-teacher’s voluminous oeuvre.

The development of new genres of transmission texts was the result of the new condition of Learning of the Way philosophy in the thirteenth century. In a philosophical tradition in which the tradition text rather than the individual

text is the main unit of philosophical output, transmission is not simply a matter of mechanical reproduction and thus assuring the survival of texts, but rather requires the demonstration of a personal understanding and appropriation of the tradition's principal truth claims. CHEN Chun and ZHEN Dexiu pioneered new genres through which they demonstrated an innovative appropriation of the tradition text as revised by ZHU Xi.

In the lexicon of Neo-Confucian terms CHEN Chun appropriated and integrated the Learning of the Way tradition text through the personal articulation of the systematic relationships among the technical terms that lay dispersed in the exegetical writings and sayings of past masters. In the notebook ZHEN Dexiu reconfigured and expanded the revised tradition text through reading and encyclopedic note-taking thereby incorporating areas of literati and imperial activity that had hitherto not been systematically integrated in the transmission of the Learning of the Way. Similarly, in the compilation of new classics and the encyclopedic expansion of classical commentary he demonstrated how a hermeneutics of integration could extend the transmission of the Learning of the Way beyond the traditional single-classic commentary, into the broader textual tradition, and into administration as a principal area of literati interest.

Like Hume's and Rorty's essays, the genres promoted by Chen and Zhen also served a critical role in philosophical discourse more broadly. Wm. Theodore de Bary has noted that the *The Classic on the Heart/Mind* can be read as a Neo-Confucian answer to the Buddhist sutra of the same title (de Bary 1981: 67). Likewise, ZHEN Dexiu's reading notes were written during a time when others kept track of their readings and organized them according to different schemes. YE Shi 葉適 (1150–1223), for example, produced a voluminous notebook titled *Records and Observations on Practicing Learning* (*Xixue jiyuan* 習學記言) in which he organized his notes according to the traditional bibliographical classification scheme of classics, histories, masters, and collected works. Ye's notebook covered a wider array of texts; its scheme also conveyed the message that the tradition text should be transmitted holistically and true to its historical development rather than through the selective lens of Learning of the Way moral theory. The transmission text genres promoted by CHEN Chun and ZHEN Dexiu were thus not inventions, but rather adaptations of existing genres for a new philosophical purpose and as rhetorical tools in its competition with other schools of thought.

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