"The Four Masters of Mingzhou": Transmission and Innovation among the Disciples of Lu Jiuyuan (Xiangshan)

Linda Walton

> *The learning of Guangping* 廣平 *[Shu Lin* 舒璘*] was [like] the spring wind, harmonious and balanced. It originated with Nanxian [Zhang Shi] and began to prosper with Xiangshan [Lu Jiuyuan]. Jinhua [Lü Zuqian] and Wuyi [Zhu Xi] wrote commentaries on it. The learning of Dingchuan* 定川 *[Shen Huan* 沈煥*] was [like] the autumn mist, reverently accomplished, gazing outward. Cihu* 慈湖 *[Yang Jian* 楊簡*] was [like] the moon rising amid the clouds, gazing outward. Jiezhai* 絜齋 *[Yuan Xie* 袁燮*] was [like] the luster and clarity of jade, returning to the source. They all followed the Lu brothers.*
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> (Shu 1966: *fulu*, xia, 29a)

With these poetic words, the Southern Song patriot Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 described the Four Masters of Mingzhou 明州 (modern Ningbo 寧波), known as the most important followers of Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139–1193). The rubric "Four Masters of Mingzhou" identified these four thinkers—Lu's major disciple, Yang Jian (1141–1226), and Yang's fellow Mingzhou natives, Yuan Xie (1144–1224), Shu Lin (1136–1199), and Shen Huan (1139–1191)[1]—both by intellectual genealogy as transmitters of Lu Jiuyuan's thought and by their shared geographical origins.[2] For the purposes of this paper, I leave aside the

[1] For a guide to biographical sources on the Four Masters, see Chang (1974–1976: 4:3142–3144; 3:1859–1860; 4:3058–3059; 2:681–682). For brief biographies of Yang Jian and Shu Lin by Wing-tsit Chan, see Franke (1976: 1218–1222; 880–881).

[2] Tsuchida cautions against over-interpreting the connection between region and thought (Tsuchida 1996: 436–437), but it is worth noting the distinction between judgments that historical actors themselves made in identifying thinkers by region and modern attempts to understand what that categorization meant. For an example of this kind of inquiry, see Walton (2003).

L. Walton (✉)
Professor of History, Portland State University, USA
e-mail: waltonl@pdx.edu

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interesting questions posed by the interweaving of genealogical and geographical narratives of intellectual history in the Song and focus instead on the reception and transmission of Lu's ideas, showing how his doctrine of the heart/mind (*xin* 心) was interpreted and adapted by the Four Masters. In addition to documenting their roles as Lu's primary disciples, and therefore their importance in the development of Neo-Confucianism in the Southern Song, the meaning of their collective identity as the Four Masters will also be considered. This study is based largely on the writings of Yang Jian and Yuan Xie, with significantly less attention devoted to Shen Huan and Shu Lin, in part due to the relatively limited sources available for them.

The Four Masters: Local Ties, Intellectual Background, and Political Careers

Hailing from different counties within the prefecture, the Four Masters' local ties as residents of Mingzhou were first recognized when they were students together at the Imperial University around 1165.[3] These ties deepened when they became followers of Lu Jiuling 陸九齡 (1132–1180), Lu Jiuyuan's elder brother, who was an official at the Imperial University. Shu Lin, together with his brothers, had received instruction from Lu Jiuyuan while they were students in the capital. Yuan Xie also studied with Lu Jiuyuan when he was a student there, and Shen Huan remained a disciple of Lu Jiuling. Shen Huan's father had been a student of the Cheng brothers, and his younger brother, Bing 炳, was a disciple of Lu Jiuyuan.

Both Yang Jian and Shen Huan took their *jinshi* degrees in 1169, Shu Lin, in 1172, and Yuan Xie, in 1181. In the same year, near the close of his political career, the powerful chief councilor and Mingzhou native, Shi Hao 史浩 (1106–1194), recommended fifteen men for office, including Yang Jian and Yuan Xie.[4] Shi Hao subsequently retired to his home in Yin county and became a patron of scholars there. He built a study on Bamboo Islet in West (or Moon) Lake in the southwestern part of the city, where Lü Zujian 呂祖儉 (Lü Zuqian's younger brother and Granary Intendant of Ming in 1182), Shen Huan, and his brother Bing gathered. Shen Huan and his brother lived on the island, while Lü went back and forth from his official duties (Shen 1966: *fulu* 2.23b–25a). During this time Yang Jian lectured for Shi Hao on Jade Islet in West Lake, and Yuan Xie taught at Lou Yue's 樓鑰 family school at the Lou residence in the city. Only Shu Lin was away in office (Huang et al. 1966: 51.952). Shu Lin had earlier (ca.1175) gone to hear both Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian lecture when they were in Wuyuan county (Huizhou). Shen Huan had exchanged letters with Zhu Xi and had studied together with the Lü brothers in Jinhua around the same time (ca.1177). Thus all Four Masters had come under the influence of Zhu Xi and

[3] Yang was from Cixi 慈溪; Yuan, from the metropolitan county, Yin 鄞; Shu, from inland Fenghua 奉化; and Shen, from Dinghai 定海 on the coast.

[4] For background on Shi Hao and the Shi family in Mingzhou, see Davis (1986).

Lü Zuqian, as well as that of Lu Jiuyuan and his brother. Three of them—Yang Jian, Yuan Xie, and Shen Huan—were patronized by the politically prominent Shi family. In addition to shared native place, political patronage, and intellectual influences, the Four Masters were also connected by affinal ties.[5]

In contrast to these common experiences, the political careers of the Four Masters varied greatly, although all of them held educational posts of one sort or another, either in the capital or in local government. Shen Huan took second place in the 1169 *jinshi* examinations, ranking ahead of Yang Jian, and he was named to a position at the Imperial University in 1181. This appointment was his only central government post, and the remainder of his official career was spent in local positions or at home in Yin under Shi Hao's patronage. He died in 1191 at the relatively young age of 53. Throughout his entire career, Shu Lin held only local government posts, and died in 1199 at the age of 64. In 1194 Yang Jian was appointed to the position of Erudite in the Directorate of Education (*guoxue boshi* 國子博士), and in 1195 Yuan Xie took up a post at the Imperial University. Both were blacklisted in the 1195 False Learning (*wei xue* 偽學) prohibition because of their support of Zhao Ruyu 趙汝愚 (1140–1196) and forced out of office. In 1208 Yang Jian returned to hold office in the central government, and in the same year Yuan Xie also was appointed to a central government post. Over the next few years both held a variety of offices, including several in the Bureau of Historiography. Yang Jian's last major official appointment came in 1213, but he was awarded numerous titles in various academic agencies over the remaining years until his death in 1226 at the age of 86. Yuan Xie reached the highest position in the educational bureaucracy when he was named Chancellor of the Directorate of Education (*guozi jijiu* 國子祭酒) in 1215. Like Yang Jian, who had requested appointment outside the capital in 1210 and been made prefect of Wenzhou, Yuan, too, was named prefect of Wenzhou in 1220 before retiring home, where he died in 1224 at the age of 81. Longevity surely played a role in Yang Jian's and Yuan Xie's official achievements as well as in their productivity as thinkers—at least measured in terms of their writings—especially in comparison with the other two of the Four Masters, Shu Lin and Shen Huan.

In order to gain a sense of how the Four Masters interacted with each other and to assess the nature of their personal and intellectual relationships, we can examine their extant writings for evidence of communications among them as well as writings about each other, including letters and funerary inscriptions. There are no letters from Yang Jian to any of the other Four Masters, but there are letters extant from the others to him as well as letters that were written among the other three. Yang Jian wrote funerary inscriptions for Yuan Xie and Shu Lin, and Yuan Xie wrote the "record of conduct" (*xing zhuang* 行狀) for

[5] Sons of Shu Lin were married to daughters of Yang Jian and Shen Huan; and another son of Shu Lin was married to a woman of the yuan surname, likely related to Yuan Xie (Walton 1978: 144).

Shen Huan. In his funerary inscription for Shu Lin, Yang Jian calls him "friend" (Yang 1966: *bubian*, 3b).[6] As appropriate for a eulogy, Yang praised Shu Lin's scholarly qualities, and he compared himself and Shu Lin to the late Tang literary lights Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan, saying that just as Han Yu "knew the depths of Liu Zongyuan," so he, too, knew those of Shu Lin (Shu 1966: *fulu, zhong*, 3b). Both Yuan Xie and Yang Jian wrote sacrificial prayers for Shu Lin. Yuan Xie referred to him as "elder brother," and Yang Jian called him "friend" as he had in his funerary inscription (Shu 1966: *fulu, xia*, 25b–26b). In this piece Yang Jian compared Shu Lin to Confucius' disciple, Zengzi. At the close of his funerary inscription for Yuan Xie, Yang Jian says that he and Yuan were "fellow lecturers," but claims that he could not measure up to Yang (Yang 1966: *bubian*, 9a). Finally, Yuan Xie wrote the "record of conduct" for Shen Huan, and edited his "words and actions" (*yan xing* 言行) (Yuan 1966: *xia*, 1a–8a). Yang Jian wrote a brief sacrificial prayer for him, as did both Shi Hao (who had been Shen Huan's patron at home in Mingzhou) and Zhu Xi (Shen 1966: *fulu* 2.17b–20a). Glimpsed in these elegiac or biographical writings, the social bonds that connected Yang, Yuan, Shen, and Shu—along with shared intellectual influences—contributed to their representation as the Four Masters and provide important context for understanding their role as the major disciples of Lu Jiuyuan.

Yang Jian, Yuan Xie, and the Subitist Strain of Neo-Confucian Philosophy

In addition to their study with Lu Jiuling at the Imperial University, all of the Four Masters except Shen Huan had some contact with Lu Jiuyuan and thus came under his direct influence. For Yang and Yuan this influence was manifested in an immediate and powerful experiential form. Yang Jian's father, Yang Tingxian 楊庭顯, had been a friend of Lu Jiuyuan, and Lu, who rarely agreed to write epitaphs, wrote one for him (Lu 1980: 28.325–328; Ishida 1981: 426). In it, Lu described an awakening experienced by Yang Tingxian (Lu 1980: 28.326). Yang Jian later recounted his own awakening while a student at the Imperial University, an awakening inspired by recollection of his father:

> When I was 28 years of age, I resided in the Imperial University's Xunli Hall. In the seventh month, when evening fell my companions lit the lanterns. I sat on the bed and remembered my late father's admonition to reflect frequently. I thereupon reflected, and suddenly realized (*jue* 覺) emptiness, without inner or outer, without division. Heaven, earth, and man, the myriad things, transformations, and affairs, the obscure and the clear, existence and non-existence, were all penetrated as one. (Yang 1966: *xuji*, 1.1a)

[6] In tandem with recent interest in "soft" social ties or "sociability" in Japanese scholarship on the Song, Oka Motoshi (2003) has analyzed the meaning of "friend" among the Wenzhou elite.

There was thus already a family predisposition for this kind of mental awakening prior to Yang Jian's famous encounter with Lu Jiuyuan in 1172 while in his first official post as registrar of Fuyang county (near Hangzhou):

> He had reflected and perceived that the myriad things of heaven and earth are all one body. There is nothing outside one's own heart/mind. Lu Xiangshan [Jiuyuan] came to Fuyang, and at night there was an assembly in the Double Clarity Pavilion. Xiangshan repeatedly brought up the term "the original heart/mind" (*benxin* 本心). The master [Yang Jian] asked what was meant by the original heart/mind? Xiangshan answered: "You have recently been considering the fan [vendor] dispute. In resolving that dispute, there must be one who is right and one who is wrong. If you can see who is telling the truth and who isn't, then you can decide which is right and which is wrong. What is not the original heart/mind?" The master listened to him and suddenly apprehended this heart/mind, clearly and purely. Finally he asked, "Is it only like this?" Xiangshan shouted in response, "What more is there?" The master withdrew and sat with his arms folded until daylight. Then he paid his respects and was called disciple. After that, he spent the night in the mountains amid the branchless trees, critically scrutinizing texts. With the sun about to rise, at the point of dawn, suddenly as if there were something thrown off, this heart/mind thereupon was clear. (Huang et al. 1966: 74.1397)[7]

In 1174, 2 years after his meeting with Lu Jiuyuan in Fuyang, when he was arranging his mother's burial, his emotional state of grief over his mother's death brought about a deepening of his realization of the interconnectedness of everything and the manifestation of this unity in the experiences of daily life (Huang et al. 1966: 74.1397).

Yang Jian was not alone in experiencing these awakenings. Yuan Xie's biography in the chapter in *Song-Yuan Case Studies* (*Song-Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案) devoted to him and his followers similarly relates his awakening under the influence of Lu Jiuyuan:

> When he met Xiangshan in the capital, Xiangshan's explanation of the original heart/mind was clear and penetrating. So [Yuan] served him as a teacher.... He sat for an entire day, and suddenly had a great awakening (*wu* 悟). Because of this, he wrote a letter saying: "Using the heart/mind, seek the way.... The way does not lie outside [this]." (Huang et al. 1966: 76.1429)

Thus both Yang Jian and Yuan Xie were said to have had "awakenings," described by the terms *jue* 覺 or *wu* 悟, also used for Buddhist enlightenment. The accounts of these experiences were used to disparage their ideas (particularly Yang Jian's thought) in later times as tainted with Chan. For example, in the *Song-Yuan Case Studies*, Huang Baijia 黃白家 (Huang Zongxi's son; b.1643) asserted that "following Yang Jian, most of the [Lu] school went into Chan and regarded not reading books as learning" (Huang et al. 1966: 87.1647).

Among contemporaries of Yang and Yuan, Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159–1223), the author of the *Chen Chun's Correct Meaning of Terms* (*Beixi ziyi* 北溪字義), attacked both Yang and Yuan on these grounds. According to Wing-tsit Chan,

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[7] This episode is also recounted in Yang Jian's elegy for Lu Xiangshan (Yang 1966: 4.4a; Xu 1990: 114–115). See also Tillman (1992: 245–246).

this attack was based more on what Chen observed among Lu's followers in Chen's native place, Yanling, than because of what either Yang or Yuan actually did or said (Chan 1986: 27–31). Chen Chun is quoted in the chapter on Yang Jian in *Song-Yuan Case Studies* as criticizing both Yang and Yuan:

> In a letter to Chen Shifu, Chen Beixi [Chun] wrote: "The school of Lu Xiangshan has prospered in Zhe[jiang] in recent years. The most outstanding of these disciples are Yang and Yuan. They do not read books and they do not exhaust [the study of] principle [as they should]. They specialize in the technique of sitting in a Buddhist meditation posture (*dazuo* 打坐) and consider the experience of awakening through seeking the movements of form and body as marvelous and esoteric (*miaojue* 妙訣). They appropriate the words of the sages to accommodate Buddhist meanings, and use literary means to conceal what they have done." (Huang et al. 1966: 74.1404)

We get quite another perspective from a later contemporary of Chen Chun who was also associated primarily with the Cheng-Zhu school. Zhen Dexiu 真德秀 (1178–1235) wrote two colophons concerning Yang Jian: one on Yang Jian's record of conduct written by his disciple, Qian Shi 錢時; and one on Yang's "instructions" (*xunyu* 訓語). In the latter piece, Zhen vigorously defended Yang's teachings on the heart/mind, distinguishing them carefully from Chan Buddhism:

> When he spoke of the way, he considered the original heart/mind as orthodox. When he spoke of virtue, he considered the upright heart/mind (*zhengxin* 正心) as central. Thus what he discussed was completely balanced and true, unlike those who talk about emptiness and the mysterious (*miao* 妙). . . . Among the things he said was: "In order to complete the self, there is nothing better than revering books." (Yang 1966: 18.29a)

Zhen also composed Yuan Xie's record of conduct (Yuan 1966: *fulu* 1.1a–26a). Even though such compositions are formulaic and heavily focused on official careers, the very fact that Zhen Dexiu was asked to write this—and that he did it—highlights his positive view of Yuan Xie.[8] Despite condemnation by their contemporary, Chen Chun, writings by Zhen Dexiu on Yang and Yuan provide evidence that they were viewed by others identified primarily with the school of Zhu Xi as sharing a common intellectual bond with them.[9]

There is also plentiful evidence that Yang and Yuan considered reading and study essential. In response to a letter from Shu Lin's eldest son, Xing 鈃, Yuan encouraged Xing and his brother Xian 銑 in their studies:

> Shunzhong [Xian] has recently been studying without stop, hasn't he? One cannot be dilatory about such things [since] investigating the heart/mind lies in this. . . . As for books, which of them can be neglected? In this Hezhong [Xing] takes the lead and directs his younger brother to follow. Your virtuous elder brother day and night works hard at his studies, and the benefits daily increase. It is in this, therefore, that the elder

[8] Zhen is also known for authorship of the *Classic on the Heart/Mind* (*Xinjing* 心經). For background on this, and the concept of heart/mind in the Cheng-Zhu tradition, see de Bary (1981 and 1989); see also Hilde De Weerdt's essay in this volume.

[9] There are also letters from Zhu Xi to Shen Huan (Shen 1966: *fulu* 1.1a–2b); and a prayer written at Shen Huan's death by Zhu Xi (Shen 1966: *fulu* 2.18a–b).

> and younger brothers are companions [*pengyou* 朋友]. How excellent!..It is appropriate to have daily lessons in one classic and one history to become an even more excellent scholar. Merely to aspire to the high and distant without examining antiquity and the present is the greatest of harmful things. (Yuan 1966: *shang*, 6a–7a)

Fellow Mingzhou natives, Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–1296) and Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705–1755), each wrote colophons on this letter. Wang's colophon praises Yuan Xie's view of learning, and says that, although he was a follower of Lu Jiuyuan, he had not become "slanted" in his views but instead reflected Zhu Xi's idea of rooting the cultivation of moral nature in questioning and learning (Yuan 1966: *shang*, 7a–7b). Quan's colophon on this letter notes that Yuan Xie was cautioning against a tendency of followers of Lu Jiuyuan when he urged them not to "aspire to the high and distant without examining antiquity and the present"—in other words to ground their thinking in the study of the classics and history, not just the innate heart/mind. Quan claimed that Yang and Yuan distinguished themselves in this way from Lu's other main disciples, and according to Quan, in his own time both pieces (Yuan's letter and Wang's colophon) were respected by the young (Yuan 1966: *shang*, 8b–9b). From the perspective of these two local scholars, writing some 500 years apart, Yang and Yuan–as the two principal members of the Four Masters—transmitted the ideas of their teacher in a balanced way that also reflected their own commitment to learning and study as well as to the concept of the heart/mind.[10]

Despite the measured assessment of such an authority as Quan, prevalent orthodox views of Yang Jian were reflected in the eighteenth-century *Simplified Annotated Catalogue of the Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu jianming mulu* 四庫全書簡明目錄), which neatly summed up Yang Jian's thought in its reference to his collected works: "The learning of Lu Jiuyuan came near to Chan, but was not Chan; the one who brought it completely into Chan was [Yang] Jian" (Yong et al. 1985: 673). Echoing these evaluations in the twentieth century, Shimada Kenji (1966) traced the negative views of Yang Jian as a transmitter of Lu Jiuyuan's thought, generally affirming the judgment that Yang's ideas were an extreme version of Lu's that did in fact verge on a kind of Buddhist-Daoist monism in which understanding was achieved through a Chan-like experience of sudden enlightenment. Subsequently, some modern scholars have attempted to untangle the varied representations of Yang Jian's ideas, both in his own time and later (Ushio 1975; Ishida 1981). Fortunately a substantial body of the writings of both Yang and Yuan is extant for us to try to understand them as directly as possible within the context of their times, both as transmitters of Lu Jiuyuan's ideas and as innovative thinkers in their own right.

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[10] Admittedly, Wang and Quan had their own axes to grind: Wang, to reconcile Zhu and Lu; and Quan, to promote a lineage of regional scholarship. But their views still matter as expressions of Yang's and Yuan's reputations in the late thirteenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The Thought of Yang Jian

Unlike his teacher, who equated the heart/mind with principle (*li* 理), for Yang, the heart/mind alone was the ultimate, originary source of knowledge, ethics, virtue, and morality. Two essays in his collected works provide a summary of his core ideas: "The Self and [the *Book of*] *Changes*" ("Ji *Yi*" 己易) (Yang 1966: 7.1a–13b) and "A Record of the Four Abstentions" ("Jue si ji" 絕四記) (Yang 1966: 2.8a–11b).[11] He also wrote a 20-*juan* commentary on the *Book of Changes*, which stressed the unity of the heart/mind threaded throughout, in contrast to the commentaries of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, both of whom interpreted this text in terms of "normative principle" (*yili* 義理) (Ushio 1975: 34).[12]

"The Self and *Changes*" begins: "The process of change is the self and none other. It cannot be regarded simply as a book and not as the self. Nor can it be regarded as the transformations of heaven-and-earth and not of the self. Heaven-and-earth is my own heaven-and-earth, and its transformations are my own transformations" (Yang 1966: 7.1a; Fung 1983: II:581). Yang explicates this idea by relating it concretely to the physical body:

> If one does not consider heaven-and-earth, the myriad things, transformations, and patterns (*li* 理) as the self, but instead takes the ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and four appendages as the self, then this breaks up the completeness of my body and slices up into pieces what makes it whole [the skin covering it]. This is to be fettered by blood and breath such that one is inherently selfish and small. It is not that my body stops at [a measure of] six feet and that is the self. Seated in a well and observing heaven, not knowing how large heaven is, [is like] being fixed on blood and breath and observing the self, not knowing the expansiveness of the self (Yang 1966: 7.4a).
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> Eyes can see, but what is it that makes sight possible? Ears can hear, but what is it that makes hearing possible? The mouth can eat, but what is it that makes [the process of] eating possible? The nose can smell, but what is it that makes smell possible? Hands can grasp, bend, and stretch, but what is it that makes grasping, bending, and stretching possible? Feet can walk, but what is it that makes walking possible? Blood and breath can circulate, but what is it that makes circulation possible? The mind can think and deliberate, but what is it that makes thought and deliberation possible?
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> Eyes are visible, but sight is invisible. Ears are visible, but hearing is invisible. The mouth is visible, but [the process of] eating is invisible. The nose is visible, but [the sense of] smell is invisible. Hands and feet are visible, but [what causes] their grasping and walking is invisible. Blood and breath are visible, but what causes them to circulate is invisible. The brain is visible, but what makes possible thought and deliberation is invisible. (Yang 1966: 7.5b–6a; Chang 1957: 339)

He continues the rhetorical device of repetition to shift from the human body to the unity of all aspects of human life and the universe through the invisible concept of the heart/mind:

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[11] These are also the writings selected by the editors of the *Song-Yuan Case Studies* as representative of Yang's thought.

[12] See also Smith (1990) for extended discussion of the role of the *Book of Change* in Song thought. Chapters 5 and 6 deal specifically with Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi.

> [This principle of invisibility is the same whether in] day or night, sleeping or waking, living or dead, heaven or earth, sun or moon, the four seasons, ghosts and spirits, going or stopping, antiquity or today, before or after, this or that, the myriad or the single, the sages or the common people. (Yang 1966: 7.6b)

Yang's argument then takes on a distinctly Daoist flavor, with overtones reminiscent of the *Daode jing* in apparently rejecting rational, intellectual understanding of the invisible concept of the heart/mind, and particularly in critiquing naming as a process that creates false distinctions and interferes with the unity of the heart/mind and the universe:

> It is inherently possessed (*zi you* 自有), but not inherently apprehended (*zi cha* 自察). It is expressed in the entire physical self but without knowing its way. Sageliness does not add to it, and stupidity does not detract from it. It is inherently clear [but also] inherently obscured. . . . It is when clarity is obscured that names are created. If there is no obscurity, then clarity itself will not be named. Obscurity and clarity are named by humans, not by heaven. Heaven is the same as the way, the *qian* hexagram, the *Changes*, and humans. Heaven and humans are also just names [for the same thing]. (Yang 1966: 7.6b)

Yang, however, also directly criticized Zhuangzi in a passage discussing Confucius in relation to the *Changes*:

> Zhuang Zhou drowned in the learning of emptiness – this is not the great way of the sages! Confucius said: "The *Changes* is the utmost!" Now the *Changes* is the means by which the sages elevated morality and spread their teachings. These are the words of Confucius. The sages are just the *Changes*, and morality and teachings are just the *Changes*. . . . Those who are skilled at studying the *Changes* entirely seek the self and do not seek books. The sages of antiquity created the *Changes* in order to explain the heart/mind. They did not entirely seek the self through books. Doing so would not make it clear as the sages of antiquity meant. . . . If the sages of antiquity pointed east, the scholars would seek west. Those who read books fill the world, [but] those who reflect on themselves are one in a thousand or ten thousand. (Yang 1966: 7a–8a)

On the surface, at least, in this passage Yang seems to reject the value and purpose of reading books. Perhaps his focus on the *Book of Changes*—including his extensive commentary—is related to the very nature of this particular text as an explication of cosmic symbols, in contrast to others based on ideas represented only by words.

He turns then to Mencius, whose concept of the original heart/mind (*benxin* 本心) provided the *locus classicus* for Yang's:

> What Mencius studied was called humaneness (*ren* 仁). It is the human heart/mind (*ren xin* 人心). He furthermore said: "All humans have an empathetic heart/mind and a heart/mind that [knows] shame and dislike. . . . [Even] today if people see a child about to fall into a well, they will all experience feelings of alarm and distress, not because they wish to win the favor of the parents, nor seek the praise of their friends and neighbors". Indeed! This is sufficient to point out clearly the fundamental goodness of the human heart/mind (人心之本良). (Yang 1966: 7.9b–10a)

Yang equates the heart/mind with *dao*, claiming that contemporary people have doubts that should be resolved by the parable of the child and the well, which confirms the "true heart/mind of empathy" (惻隱之真心) (Yang 1966: 7.10a).

In this essay, Yang returns continually to the idea of the unity of the self and the universe, expressed in myriad ways, from the body to daily activities and the processes of nature. For Yang, the *Book of Changes* is both the manifestation of the original heart/mind and the means for us to apprehend it (Ushio 1975: 34–35). To summarize: throughout all creation there are differences in form, but a single unifying heart/mind penetrates everything.

Given this, how does one explain the existence of evil? For this we can look to Yang's essay on the "Four Abstentions," a title derived from a statement in the *Analects* 9.4 about Confucius: "The Master abstained from four things: he had no preconceptions, no predetermination, no obduracy, and no egoism" (Legge 1974: 217 mod. slightly). The essay begins:

> The human heart/mind is in itself clear and in itself spiritual. It is only when preconception arises, egoism becomes established, and predetermination and obduracy block the path that this understanding and spirituality are lost. In the daily questions and answers between Confucius and his disciples, the faults from which he constantly warned them to abstain were, generally speaking, four in number: preconception, predetermination, obduracy, and egoism. If a disciple had any one of these, the sage invariably prohibited it... for he realized that all men equally possess a nature that is utterly understanding, utterly spiritual, and broad and sagely in its wisdom. It need not be externally sought for or gained, but is inherent and innate, being spirit-like in itself and clear in itself. When, however, the seeds of preconception appear, it becomes obscured; when there is predetermination, it becomes obscured; when there is obduracy, it becomes obscured; when egoism exists, it becomes obscured. All the beginnings of obscurity stem from these things. Therefore, whenever one of these evils took form, [Confucius] warned against it. (Yang 1966: 2.8a; adapted from Fung 1983: 2:582–583)

Yang Jian again refers to Mencius in support of his argument for the heart/mind as the innate capacity of humans, but follows it with an attempt to explain in more depth his understanding of the idea of "preconception":

> Mencius said: "All people have the capacity for commiseration (*ceyin* 惻隱), for shame and dislike (*xiu'wu* 羞惡), for modesty and equanimity (*gongjing* 恭敬), and [to know the difference between] right and wrong (*shi fei* 是非)." Humaneness, rightness, rites, and knowledge do not flow from external sources but are originally possessed (我固有之).
>
> What is meant by "preconception" (*yi* 意)? The slightest stirrings [of the heart/mind] mean preconception, but the slightest interruptions [of these stirrings] also mean preconception. The manifestations of preconception are innumerable. They may result in profit or harm, right or wrong, advancement or withdrawal.... Whether we expend the energy of a day or year, and whether we speak up and down or back and forth, extensively or intensively, we shall never be able to exhaust all the instances of this sort. How, then, are we to distinguish the [true] heart/mind from such preconception? The two are not originally divided. It is only through the process of beclouding that they come to be so. What is unitary is the heart/mind; what is dual is preconception. What is upright is the heart/mind; what is forked is preconception. What flows through is the heart/mind; what blocks it up is preconception.... Mencius clarified the heart/mind, and Confucius prohibited preconception. Lacking preconceptions, then this heart/mind is clear. (Yang 1966: 2.8b–9a; adapted from Fung 1983: 2:583)

Yang's concept of the unitary heart/mind, viewed in light of this discussion of preconception, cannot escape the paradox of preconception—and therefore evil

thoughts and deeds—arising from the heart/mind itself (Ushio 1975: 39). But for him, the means to prevent preconceptions—or to expel them once they have arisen—is to still the heart/mind and release it from attachment to the material world and historical reality (Ushio 1975: 41).

The Heart/Mind and Learning

Yang lived in the historical reality of Southern Song China, and had a fruitful scholarly and official career. How did he reconcile the practical need to study (as he did) for the examinations with his belief in the heart/mind as apprehended through the subitist experience of awakening? How did he understand the concept of learning (*xue* 學)? This is a crucial issue, for if truth is innate and need only be apprehended, then how can there be value in reading texts and studying the world? Although Yang's claims for the innate heart/mind appear to be based on a distinction between true knowledge of the heart/mind and textual knowledge, one might say that his view of the purpose of study was to discover innate sagehood, not to achieve sagehood by understanding the patterns (*li* 理) of phenomena (Ushio 1975: 44). So it would be inaccurate to say that he disdained study. In his essay on learning ("Fan lun xue" 汎論學), Yang in fact related the impact of a line of text on his perception and grasp of the heart/mind:

> When the student first becomes aware of the heart/mind, there is nothing that is not mysterious (*xuanmiao* 玄妙) about it. . Frequently, even though [his effort] is sufficient, he does not know how to advance his learning. So what he has previously learned becomes difficult and quickly lessens. . . . After I achieved a modest understanding at the age of 32, I experienced this kind of difficulty. More than 10 years later I realized that I had not advanced for a long time, and I considered this a serious problem. *Suddenly I encountered the admonitions of the ancient sages*, saying that when one first studies the way, the heart/mind is one, and for a long time it is pure and simple, [but] by thought (*si* 思) it becomes confused. When at first I boldly observed [these things], I made some modest improvement, and later I saw the sages of antiquity in a dream personally give their admonition, telling me that I had not yet separated myself from the form of preconceptions; realizing this, it was easier to penetrate, and all thought and action were completely whole and completely marvelous. (Yang 1966: 15.2b–3a)

This enlightenment experience he describes at the age of 32 was the result of the encounter with Lu Jiuyuan in Fuyang. In his *A Record of Things Seen and Heard during the Four Reigns* (*Sichao wenjian lu* 四朝聞見錄) the Southern Song scholar Ye Shaoweng 葉紹翁 said that the phrase "[S]uddenly I encountered the admonitions of the ancient sages" (偶得古聖遺訓) referred to a passage in the *Kong Family Masters Anthology* (*Kong Congzi* 孔叢子), a work traditionally attributed to Kong Fu 孔鮒 of the early Han period (Ye 1989: 41; Cui 1984: 139; Xu 1990: 116–117). The passage is "The pure spirit of the mind is called 'sageliness' " (心之精神是謂聖) (Kong 1998: *shang*, 20b). Despite the fact that the authenticity of this text was already in doubt by the Song, Ye claimed that it was

this passage that convinced Yang to become a disciple of Lu Jiuyuan. Whether Ye's claim is correct or not, the power of text to inspire Yang is apparent from his own words, and attests to the value of texts in apprehending the heart/mind.

Yang's inscription on the 1193 rebuilding of the Leping 樂平 County School where he was magistrate reveals some of his thinking about learning in relation both to the heart/mind and to the problem of preconceptions:

> Everyone is possessed of human nature that is good. Its purity and clarity have always resided in the self (*gong* 躬) [but] people's desire to conceal it is like clouds covering the sun. For this reason, learning is essential. Learning is not seeking externally, but [it lies within] the human heart/mind, which is of itself good (*shan* 善). An infant [instinctively] knows love for its parents and when the child matures, it knows respect for its elder sibling. It is not through learning that this is possible, nor through deliberation (*lü* 慮), that [the child] knows [love and respect]. The human heart/mind is naturally humane.
>
> As for the myriad losses and transgressions, how are they not produced from preconceptions and thought? Preconceptions are brought about by love and hate and thus cause transgressions. Preconceptions are brought about by sound and color and therefore cause transgressions. Preconceptions are brought about by speaking and acting and therefore cause transgressions. This is why Confucius always prohibited his students' preconceptions, and his disciples summed it up by saying "No preconceptions!" (Yang 1966: 2.12a, 13a)

Learning is essential to cultivate innate human nature, but it must be tempered by inner focus that does not allow external distractions to interrupt the process of learning. If we were to try to define Yang's idea of learning, it would be apprehending the heart/mind without the intercession of disruptive influences such as emotions (love and hate) and sensory perceptions (sound and color), or speech and action.

Where, then, does this leave us in trying to understand the contradiction implied by Yang's ideas in the context of his life as a Southern Song scholar official who had studied texts intensively to pass the civil service examination? Some light is shed on this in the "record of conduct" compiled by Yang's principal disciple, Qian Shi 錢時, where he quotes Yang on the examinations in connection with the renovation of the Leping County School:

> The state established the examinations for the purpose of seeking the true and virtuous. Truly can this order the empire! The establishment of schools also seeks to cultivate the true and virtuous. Truly can it bring about advancement in the examinations! It is definitely not mere formality. However, students' attending school for the purpose of taking the examinations frequently is spoken of [simply] as being skilled in interpretations of the classics, poetry, and policy discussions. Even if students did away with this, it would do no harm to the high[est level of] examinations. What else can be used to grasp this heart/mind? Reading the sages' books [in this way] not only misses the point of the sages' explicating and clarifying learning, it also misses the point of the state's cultivation [of the worthy] through schools. (Yang 1966: 18.5b–6a)

Qian Shi then inserts some of the same language used in Yang's inscription on the Leping County School about the innate good of human nature and the good heart/mind (*liang xin* 良心). Yang was not rejecting study, but he was criticizing

those who read the works of the sages in a particular way. Like others of his time, he derided the rigid focus on formal, objective, and standardized testing as opposed to an appreciation of the more fundamental talents and abilities that come from cultivation of innate qualities. Holding the post of Erudite in the Directorate of Education placed Yang firmly in the educational establishment of the Song court, where he could advocate for a more genuine kind of learning. Nevertheless, he surely had to accommodate the realities of examination competition.

The Heart/Mind and Politics

We can observe the application of Yang's concept of the heart/mind in the political realm through his recorded interactions with Emperor Ningzong during the crisis over Zhao Ruyu's expulsion.[13] When Zhao was demoted shortly after the accession of Ningzong in 1195, Yang used the concept of the heart/mind to appeal to the emperor on Zhao's behalf:

> This heart/mind is that of Yao, Shun, and the Three Ages. Acting in accord with this heart/mind causes the flourishing of Yao, Shun, and the Three Ages to be seen again in the present day. Your majesty now acts in accord with this sacred heart/mind... Zhao Ruyu supported the emperor as a heroic member of the [imperial] clan, and he truly is praiseworthy. At the beginning of his administration he honored the Learning of the Way, and worthy men advanced. Public discourse was harmonious and enthusiastically extended throughout the realm. It is said that our dynasty unifies and continues the pulse of the Two Sovereigns and Three Kings. What could not be attained by the Han and Tang lies principally in the proclamation and clarification of this way. Human knowledge of propriety and rightness derives from this. (Yang 1966: 18.7a–8a)

However, Zhao Ruyu's fortunes were in decline, and Yang's fell along with them. Yang's clear support for the Learning of the Way shown here led to his being condemned along with Zhu Xi and his followers in the 1195 prohibition against False Learning.[14] After his return to office in 1204, Yang wrote two memorials that identified the way with heart/mind in the course of offering administrative proposals:

> The empire has this way and that is all. Heaven is covered by it and earth is supported by it. The sun and moon are made bright by it. The four seasons move by it. And isn't human society ordered by it? It is for this reason that there is no chaos between heaven and earth. If this way is obtained, then there will be good government; if it is lost, there will be danger. If it is obtained, there will be benefit; if it is lost, there will be harm. This is the myriad, ancient, ceaseless, and unchangeable pattern (*li*). From the Han on, there was confusion because of overlords. Therefore, good government daily receded while

[13] For a detailed account, see Chaffee (1990–1992).

[14] Ishida makes the point that Yang's political ideas did not differ dramatically from those of Zhu Xi, and that Zhu, in fact, held a high opinion of Yang in this regard (Ishida 1981: 434–435).

> chaos daily increased. This heart/mind is just the way, but if preconceptions arise, it will be lost. (Yang 1966: 18.8b)[15]

Drawing on ideas developed in his "Essay on the Four Abstentions," Yang continues here to describe to Emperor Ningzong the benefits that may be obtained from cultivating a "heart/mind of transparency (*xuming* 虛明) that does not give rise to preconceptions" (Yang 1966:18.8b–9a). In a later audience with Ningzong in 1210, Yang queried the emperor, seemingly to ascertain his grasp of the heart/mind:

> "Does your majesty himself believe in this heart/mind as the great way?" Ningzong replied: "The heart/mind is simply the way. . . ." [Yang] asked him: "In daily life, what is it like?" Ningzong responded: "It requires only learning to be established." [Yang] said: "Its establishment does not lie in the use of learning, but in avoiding the arousal of preconceptions [so that] it is naturally and quiescently made clear." The emperor said: "In daily use, it is only to lack preconceptions, and that's all. . . ." On the same day he further said to the emperor: "When preconceptions and thought do not arise, do you already comprehend it like a great emptiness?" Ningzong said: "Yes, it's like this." He asked: "The worthy and unworthy, true and false, are they successively clear or not?" Ningzong answered: "I am already enlightened (*zhaopo* 照破)."[16] The master said: "If so, then the empire is fortunate indeed!" (Yang 1966: 18.15a–b)

Yang's dialogue with the emperor and his admonitions to him concerning the avoidance of preconceptions suggest the early Daoist notion of *wuwei* rulership. One possible way of understanding this in the Southern Song setting is to see it as reflecting the desire of the bureaucracy to represent the ruler as a figure of distant symbolic authority, removed from the fray of daily politics and administration. The ruler should leave the mundane affairs of government to his appointed officials, rather than attempting to engage directly in activist policy-making. Yang's own writings, including recommendations for improvements in government, demonstrate his engagement with political affairs, so we may reconcile his focus on the heart/mind with the practical realities of the political world he inhabited by the example of his tutoring Ningzong to cultivate clarity of the heart/mind—at least as recounted in Yang's biography by his disciple Qian Shi—and the implied extension of the ruler's clarity to the entire realm.

The Thought of Yuan Xie

According to the assessment of Quan Zuwang in the eighteenth century—acknowledging that the Mingzhou Zhu Xi scholar Huang Zhen 黃震 (1213–1280) said this first—Yang Jian's thought was "vague and confused"

[15] I interpret Yang's use of *li* 理 here as a general idea of pattern, that is, not in the Zhu Xi sense of principle/pattern.

[16] This term has a distinctly Buddhist connotation, meaning "the brightness of wisdom illuminating the dark" (Morohashi 1966: 7:19226.131).

in comparison with that of Yuan Xie, whose "words set a standard" (Huang 1966: 75.1429; Cui 1984: 166).[17] And the editors of the *Simplified Annotated Catalogue of the Imperial Library* judged Yuan Xie to have been a more authentic transmitter of Lu Jiuyuan's teachings than Yang Jian (Yong et al. 1985: 673). Yet, like Yang, Yuan equated the heart/mind with *dao* and understood the original heart/mind according to its Mencian roots:

> This heart/mind, this *dao* – it lacks nothing. It is completely balanced, straight, great, and pure. It sets the standard for the myriad generations of scholars (Yuan 1935: 7.103). . . . The human heart/mind is completely spiritual 靈 – there is no right or wrong, good or evil, that it does not know (ibid.: 8.118). . . . The original heart/mind is entirely complete in its myriad goodness, as when a child is seen about to fall into a well, all experience feelings of alarm and compassion. (ibid.: 8.118)

Drawing upon Lu Jiuyuan's broadening of the meaning of the heart/mind to incorporate the principles of humaneness, justice, and ethics, Yuan Xie developed this latter aspect further to see the heart/mind as the origin of ethics, not just consciousness (Xu 1990: 120; Cui 1984: 166–167). For Yuan, nurturing morality (*daode* 道德) did not lie in mere consciousness (*zhijue* 知覺), nor in the act of cognition; rather, morality was the clear expression of the original heart/mind. Yuan believed that people's actions in society were a manifestation of the heart/mind and therefore that both the social and the political world were produced by the heart/mind.

Political Philosophy

Like Yang Jian, in his role as a court official Yuan Xie also used the concept of the heart/mind in presenting his views to Ningzong. In 1209, he remonstrated with the emperor about what he believed to be the unjust demotion of the late Peng Guinian 彭龜年 (1142–1206):

> The emperor remembered Guinian, so [Yuan] approached the throne and sighed: "If this man were still alive, he would certainly be employed, as we now deeply recognize his loyalty. The heart/mind of the emperor at this time is like that of the Two Sovereigns and Three Kings' respecting the remonstrations of worthies. [One who has] the eternally existing heart/mind, [in times of] urgency listens to sincere words and promotes upright scholars. Those who are loyal like Guinian will continue [to serve]. Even though Guinian has died, if he were to be promoted [posthumously], how could we lament the empire's not being well-governed?" (Yuan 1966: *fulu*, 3.5a)

He later wrote in an administrative memorial to Ningzong:

> In antiquity, the source of the way of good government for the minister was covered by a single phrase: it was the spirit (*jingshen* 精神) of this heart/mind and nothing more! The

[17] An ardent advocate of Zhu Xi's thought, Huang Zhen may have made this point more to criticize Yang Jian than to praise Yuan Xie. Huang was also critical of Yuan Xie (Hayasaka 2003: 26–28: 39–40: 32–35).

> spirit of the heart/mind penetrates everything with no spaces between – in the Nine Territories and the Four Seas there is nowhere that is not illuminated by it. . . . I request the emperor. . . day and night to be spurred on. . . to refine your spirit. (Yuan 1935: 1.1–2)

Yuan continues in this passage to relate "spirit" to human talents, finance, the army, and the general welfare of the people, making the point to the emperor that his ability to comprehend the heart/mind was the foundation of good government for the empire.

According to Yuan, everything in society was a manifestation of the "spirit of the heart/mind" (Yuan 1966: 8.128; Cui 1984: 168–169). Yuan equated heaven and humans through the heart/mind:

> Heaven and humans were originally one—how was this so? It was simply because this heart/mind originally lacked distinction between heaven and humans. Heaven obtains this heart/mind and becomes heaven. Earth obtains this heart/mind and becomes earth. Humans obtain this heart/mind and become human. But now we are attached to physical forms, and therefore see differences. If we examine this and think about it, how do the so-called forms exist? Physical forms are something we either possess or not, so how can [this be the reason for] differences between heaven and humans? (Yuan 1998: 2.28a–b; Cui 1984: 170)

Yuan brought this idea of the unitary nature of heaven and humans into the realm of political theory, where his ideas had the greatest impact (Cui 1984: 170–171). His political thought was shaped by the recognition that, even though according to Mencian doctrine the interests of the people are to be held above those of the ruler, in reality it was the opposite. Yuan thus promoted the idea that the ruler and people have mutual needs that make them interdependent, and that neither is superior nor inferior (Xu 1990: 121). He objected to the division between the ruler and people that elevated the ruler at the expense of the people:

> The ruler and the people are of one body. People certainly cannot lack rulers, and rulers cannot lack people. Whose strength is it after all that enables the people of All-under-Heaven to reside in peace, eat at leisure, and live and die peacefully? The ruler does this. This is why people without rulers cannot be supported. Thus the people are the foundation of the country, and it is the foundation that makes the country peaceful. How would the ruler be able to stand alone without the people? (Yuan 1998: 5.21b)

Learning

Yuan's belief in the heart/mind as the source of political ethics and morality did not in any sense obviate the need for study of the classics and histories. His emphasis on studying may well have been related to influence from the historical school of Lü Zujian and the utilitarian thought of Chen Fuliang (Yuan 1966: *fulu*, 3.22b). From Lu Jiuyuan's point of view, studying for the examinations could cast a cloud over the original heart/mind (Ichiki 1993: 93). But it was studying sheerly for examination success that was problematic, not studying

itself, which Lu regarded as of utmost significance since he saw it as the means to cultivate heart/mind. Lu's well-known statement that the "Six Classics are my footnotes" connects the authority of the classics to the self; and from the perspective of the awakening of the original heart/mind, it is not that the classics do not hold authority but that the purpose of studying them lies in the cultivation of the consciousness of the original heart/mind (ibid.: 94). For Yang Jian, learning was obtained within the self (*zide* 自得). For Yuan, what was obtained within the self was not an end, but a means to cultivate the heart/mind through study (ibid.: 95). It is in this regard that Yuan expanded the meaning of learning and developed a view that was different from that of both Lu and Yang. He articulated this in the letter he wrote to Shu Lin's son, encouraging him to study, and using Yang Jian himself as an example:

> The purpose of study should be to penetrate and know antiquity and the present in order to be familiar with former words and conduct. This was the means by which the ancients accumulated virtue. . . . How is it possible not to read books? [Otherwise] learning would never reach its ultimate goal. The longer [one studies], the deeper it becomes. After his middle years, Yang Jian was still willing to read books and that is why he improved and expanded his knowledge and ability. (Yuan 1966: *shang*, 6b–7a)

Yuan's own reading experience is documented in the *Jiezhai* [*Yuan Xie*] *Family School Documents* (*Jiezhai jiashu shuchao* 絜齋家塾書鈔). This was not his own work, but rather a compilation of his lectures and notes by his son Fu 甫, who published it in 1231 and presented it to Xiangshan Academy (象山書院) (Ichiki 1993: 95; Yuan 1936: 11.166–167). This work explains the *Book of Documents* from the viewpoint of the Lu school's original heart/mind theory. Perhaps especially because of his official role as head of the Directorate of Education, Yuan was compelled to integrate his philosophy with the practical demands on literati to master texts for the examinations as well as for self-cultivation. The *Jiezhai jiashu shuchao* shows Yuan the scholar at work on exegesis of the *Book of Documents*, applying the theory of heart/mind to this classic. In his commentary on the "Counsels of the Great Yu," for example, Yuan discusses the relationship between the human heart/mind (*renxin* 人心) and the moral heart/mind (*daoxin* 道心):

> The heart/mind that all people have is called the human heart/mind. The moral heart/mind is the good heart/mind (*liangxin* 良心). When the human heart/mind is in peril, then it is difficult to achieve equilibrium. When the moral heart/mind is obscured, then it is difficult to be clear. What is called the moral heart/mind is just this heart/mind's recognition of moral principle (*daoli* 道理). The human heart/mind daily comes into contact with things, and is easily seduced by things. . . . If moved by joy or anger, or enticed by wealth and rank; or if moved by sound and color, how can [the human heart/mind] not be imperiled? Now if one uses moral principle to observe the sources of joy and anger, then what is joyful and what causes anger, what is connected with sound and color, what is good or not, what is right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, will be brilliantly clear. What is it that enables our knowing right and wrong, beautiful and ugly? It is simply our original heart/mind. This is what is called the moral heart/mind. (Yuan 1998: 2.31b–32a; Ichiki 1993: 95)

Yuan's perspective on this important problem—the relationship between the human heart/mind and the moral heart/mind—place him in between the views of his teacher Lu Jiuyuan, for whom the human heart/mind and the moral heart/mind were identical, and Zhu Xi, who espoused a dualistic theory that drew a clear distinction between the two.[18] Yuan's explication here seems to be nuanced in a way that seeks compromise between the views of Zhu and Lu, consciously or unconsciously.

Yuan between Zhu and Lu

As much as Yuan was a noted follower of Lu Jiuyuan and close colleague of Yang Jian, some aspects of this thinking are indeed congruent with those of Zhu Xi: "Although human nature is essentially one, people's *qi* 氣 coheres differently. Now, being produced between heaven and earth, how can this nature be dual? Just as when *qi* accumulates in the mountains and rivers, and varies from day to day, so the essence of *qi* cannot but vary (不能無偏)" (Yuan 1998: 1.52a). As an explanation for the existence of good and evil and for the differences among human beings, Yuan Xie agreed with Zhu Xi, who used exactly the same phrase (不能無偏) to explain differences in *qi* (Cui 1984: 172; Zhu 1997: 4.52).

In fact, Zhu's estimation of Yuan Xie was quite high, at least in part because Yuan represented Lu's earlier ideas that were closer to Zhu's own (Ichiki 1993: 91). Although Yuan Xie and Yang Jian both collaborated with Lu Jiuyuan's Jiangxi followers to compile Lu's collected works—and Yuan Xie wrote a preface for it (Yuan 1935: 8.107–108)—beyond this there was relatively little contact between the Jiangxi Lu school and the Four Masters in Mingzhou after around 1187 (Ichiki 1993: 78–79). This meant that the interpretation of Lu's thought transmitted by Yuan and the other Four Masters was based on those ideas that had been developed before 1187, when the disagreements between Zhu and Lu intensified, and therefore the Zhedong Lu school was closer to Zhu Xi's ideas than the Jiangxi Lu school which transmitted Lu's later thought (ibid.: 93).

Regardless of the relative compatibility of some of Yuan's ideas with those of Zhu, his thought still exhibited distinctive influence from Lu. The particular complexity of Yuan's position between Zhu and Lu can be seen in the relationship between "seriousness" (*jing* 敬) and "quietude" (*jing* 靜). For Lu, "seriousness" incorporated internal reflection, so there was no essential contradiction between these two concepts (Lu 1980: 19.238; Ichiki 1993: 90–91). In Zhu Xi's view, "seriousness" was the fundamental attitude to be cultivated in order to carry out the "investigation of things and the extension of knowledge"

[18] de Bary references Zhu Xi's commentary on this same passage in the *Book of Documents*, although Zhu's reading differs from that of Yuan Xie (de Bary 1989: 9–10).

(Chan 1986: 100–103). For Zhu, however, "quietude" or "quiet-sitting" connoted too close an association with Buddhist meditation in which introspection became an end in itself, rather than a purposeful focusing of the heart/mind to remove distractions that would impede understanding. Even though in other ways Yuan Xie's ideas were compatible with those of Zhu Xi, the conflation of "seriousness" and "quietude" in Lu's thinking influenced Yuan through his contact with Lu during the earlier period of Lu's philosophical development.

For Yuan, "quietude" was never something that was to lead to extinction in a Buddhist sense, rather it was "active quietude" (*dong jing* 動靜) (Kusumoto 1963: 373). In fact, "quietude" is at the heart of Yuan's concept of the original heart/mind, and he elaborated on it in an essay on a friend's study that was named "Quietude Study" (Jing Zhai 靜齋):

> I believe that the purpose of study is to obtain the original heart/mind and nothing more. When thought has not yet sprouted, and joy, anger, grief, and pleasure have not yet come forth, what is expressed internally, pure and unsullied, with not even an iota of confusion – this is the ultimate "quietude." At the beginning, it was so, and embracing it and nourishing it, it is always just as it was. Even when experiencing myriad transformations, peaceful quietude still comes from the self, and thus one does not lose the original heart/mind. Now, if thunder strikes the earth and the sound reverberates for a hundred *li*, this could be called powerful. But there was no intention (*yi* 意) for it to be so. Therefore, even in the extremity of the fear of thunder, there has still always been "quietude". . . . The sun goes and the moon comes, the moon goes and the sun comes – this is the nature of heaven's form (天象之自然). Cold goes and heat comes, heat goes and cold comes – this is the nature of heaven's seasons (天時之自然). How can there be intention in this? Humans are also like this. The eyes see and the ears hear, hands grasp and feet walk. [These are the] mechanisms of heaven (*tianji* 天機), not responses to decisions [to do these things]. In winter wearing a heavy robe and in summer a light one, eating when hungry and drinking when thirsty, in daily activities – what of these is not natural? Stopping when it's time to stop – this is not because of an intention to stop. Going when it's time to go – this is not because of an intention to go. This is what is called "without thought and without action" (無思無為), quietly unmoving. (Yuan 1935: 10.154)

Here Yuan echoes Yang Jian's admonition to Ningzong to avoid preconceptions. He uses the same term *yi* 意, but gives it a somewhat different cast by juxtaposing it with the natural "mechanisms" of heaven as well as the human body, rather than representing it as the preconceptions that cloud the ability to apprehend the heart/mind. This example reflects more generally the independence of Yuan Xie's thought, influenced not only by Lu Jiuyuan and Yang Jian, but also by other ideas that circulated among thinkers during the mid-Southern Song.

Shu Lin and Shen Huan

Unlike both Yang and Yuan, Shu Lin and Shen Huan left no formal exposition of their thought. What we have are some letters and biographical writings, along with compilations of their "words and conduct." Using these we can piece

together a sense of their ideas, which reveal a pragmatic orientation to heart/mind as a guiding ideal in social life.

Beginning with his studies at the Imperial University with Zhang Shi and the Lu brothers, Shu Lin was influenced by a wide range of thinkers, including Lü Zuqian and Zhu Xi. He and his brothers studied with Lu Xiangshan. The eclectic nature of Shu Lin's ideas helped to bridge the gap between those of Lu Jiuyuan and Zhu Xi (Cui 1984: 178–179). According to Yang Jian: "There is no book that Yuanzhi [Shu Lin] has not penetrated.... Even more, on his own he 'polished' the learning of Huiweng [Zhu Xi], Donglai [Lü Zuqian], Nanxian [Zhang Shi], and Xiangshan [Lu Jiuyuan], penetrating them in a unified way" (Shu 1966: *fulu, zhong* 2a–2b).

Shu Lin shared the Lu school's belief in the primacy of the heart/mind. For Shu, however, the original heart/mind was not apprehended immediately by the kind of awakening that both Yang and Yuan experienced under the influence of Lu Jiuyuan; rather, it was a moral quality that had to be gradually perfected (Xu 1990: 125; Cui 1984: 176). In an inscription on a shrine to Shu Lin after his death, Yuan Xie wrote: "His brothers intensely followed Master Xiangshan, and they both had awakenings. Yuanzhi said: 'I am not able to be like them. I am at just this day and night, "cutting and polishing" to improve. Daily I renew the effort and "may thus likewise not transgress the boundaries" ' " (Yuan 1935: 9.136–137; Legge 1974: 193). Shu Lin quoted this well-known passage from the *Analects* to emphasize his gradualist approach to comprehending heart/mind in contrast to his brothers (and to his colleagues Yang and Yuan).

Shu Lin saw heart/mind not so much as a philosophical concept that pervaded the cosmos, but as a fundamental source of morality to guide daily life:

> [Heart/mind] is originally clear.... Because of this [original clarity], by reading books, one accumulates morality; because of this, managing the household is harmonious; and because of this affairs are settled as they should be.... Confucius taught... saying: "When entering, be filial; when going out, be brotherly. Words [should be] loyal and sincere, and conduct [should be] genuine and serious". It is the same as when going out the gate and seeing guests, people greet them. This principle is of itself clear. How could the undertakings of the sages and worthies be otherwise? (Shu 1966: 1.5b, 1.2b)

As depicted here, Shu Lin brought heart/mind into the mundane world of social interaction. He departed from Yang and Yuan in his application of the heart/mind to concrete social practice in the realms of family and community. Far more than Lu, Yang, or Yuan, Shu Lin saw the heart/mind in the activities of daily life rather than in the abstractions of philosophical discourse. In his funerary inscription for Shu Lin, Yang Jian commented on the many practical administrative reforms Shu had undertaken while in office (Yang 1966: *bubian,* 4b–5a). In his position as Huizhou Prefectural School Professor, Shu is said to have improved the morals of the local scholarly elite. Of course, this was not in itself a dramatic accomplishment, as this kind of praise was frequently heaped on local officials in their epitaphs, but in this case Shu Lin's accomplishments even drew the attention of Prime Minister Liu Zheng 留正, who dubbed him "the number one educational official in the empire" (Huang et al. 1966: 76.1440).

Like his colleague Shu Lin, Shen Huan's thought was oriented toward everyday practice and compromise, incorporating ideas from a broad range of thinkers (Cui 1984: 181). His "Admonitions" exemplify the use of homilies based on family life to expound on his view of learning:

> The means (*gongfu* 工夫) of learning should begin in the home – there is nothing more than this! Contemporary people [just] go after a good name. Accordingly, they meet with disappointment because their learning has no foundation if it is not cultivated in the home. For this reason, I say that the means are not [grounded in] reality. When they proclaim that they understand the way, they are simply deceiving themselves.
>
> Observing the wives and children in the morning, and arranging the beds at night – if in these two things one is without shame, then one can begin to speak of learning.
>
> Infants play at their parents' side, and when they cry they go to be held and are completely happy. [In this] there is no distinction [between the infant and parents]. [This is an example of] learning [an aspect of] the eternal heart/mind that can be called "filial piety." (Shen 1966: 2.1a–1b)

In addition to his fundamental belief in the heart/mind, Shen Huan's thought reflects a pragmatic, institutional approach to solving the problems of society. He was credited with establishing a number of charitable institutions to aid the needy, including a community charitable estate in Yin county in collaboration with his patron Shi Hao (Huang et al. 1966: 76.1445). Shen's experience of living at Moon Lake under Shi Hao's patronage, together with Lü Zujian, also connected him and his brothers with Lü Zuqian's historical school. According to Quan Zuwang, "The learning of the Shen family can truly be considered one school (*pai* 派) with that of Mingzhao [Lü Zuqian] but there are few in the world who know it" (Zhang 1966: 2.24b).

For Shen, cultivating the moral character of each individual was the central focus, not the cosmic, universal heart/mind of Lu's philosophy. Still, as a student of the Lu brothers, Shen Huan's thought also exhibited their influence. In an inscription on a Buddhist temple, he wrote: "When I observe the unity of heart/mind, the purity and sincerity to which it reaches, even though heaven is high and earth is broad, the pigs and fishes are minute, and metal and stone lack sentience, there is a feeling that must penetrate [everything]" (Shen 1966: 1.7a). Of course, a Buddhist temple was an appropriate place for contemplation of cosmic unity, and for Shen—like other literati of his day—writing inscriptions on Buddhist temples was a familiar activity that typically inspired such thoughts (Halperin 2006). But both Shen and Shu, to the extent that we can know their ideas, were firmly grounded in the application of the heart/mind in daily life.

Conclusions

Reflecting the adoption of Zhu Xi's ideas by the Yuan government, the *Yuan History* opines: "At the end of the Song, the Mingzhou area completely followed the school of Lu Xiangshan, and the Zhu Xi school was not transmitted

until Cheng Duanli 程端禮 took it up with Shi Mengqing 史蒙卿 [a scion of the local Shi family]" (Song et al. 1995: 190.4343). In contrast, in his 1292 inscription commemorating the restoration of an academy dedicated to Yang Jian, Wang Yinglin linked both Yang and Lu Jiuyuan to Zhu Xi, suggesting that in the early Yuan these thinkers were seen as part of a broad intellectual movement rather than as leaders of fundamentally opposed schools of thought (Yang 1966: *fulu*, 7b). Whereas the authors of the *Yuan History* sought to portray the ascendancy of Zhu Xi's ideas, Wang was interested in accommodating various schools of thought, placing Lu, Yang, and Zhu together on a broad synthetic canvas. In the seventeenth century, focusing on Yang, Yuan, Shu, and Shen, Huang Zongxi stressed their coherence as an intellectual group:

> Yang Jian, Shu Lin, Yuan Xie, and Shen Huan are the so-called Four Masters of Mingzhou. Yang Jian always took up the spirit of the heart/mind and called it "sageliness" (*sheng* 聖), whereas Yuan Xie called it "gentlemanliness" (*jun* 君). He also said that this concept of "gentlemanliness," used in antiquity as the fundamental and original way of good government, was nothing more than the heart/mind. These ideas can be used to convey the unity of the Four Masters' learning method. (Huang et al. 1966: 76.1445)

Although Huang's description of what constitutes coherence in the thought of the Four Masters is not particularly illuminating, his attempt nonetheless suggests that these four thinkers were clustered together on the assumption that their ideas shared some common ground. We are thus faced with two questions. To what extent did the Four Masters—although Huang focuses specifically on only two of them—reflect a unitary philosophical perspective? Were the Four Masters primarily transmitters of the teachings of Lu Jiuyuan, or did they represent broader currents in Southern Song philosophy? Let us consider the evidence presented here to answer these questions.

In the case of Yang Jian, as perhaps befits the principal disciple of Lu Jiuyuan, we can trace his ideas directly to Lu, beginning with his awakening experiences. However, as other commentators have pointed out, he did alter Lu's understanding of heart/mind, uncoupling it from the concept of principle. Peter Bol has shown how belief in unity of the heart/mind pervaded Neo-Confucian thought, but with distinctive shadings of intensity and meaning (Bol 2008: 213). Yang Jian both transmitted his teacher's concept of heart/mind and intensified it, unknowingly preparing the way for Wang Yangming in the Ming. Since the thought of Lu Jiuyuan and his followers precipitously declined in influence at the end of the Southern Song, it is unlikely that anyone actually read Yang Jian's writings until at least 1525, when his collected works were published by Qin Yue 秦鉞, a fellow Cixi native whose motivation was to honor Yang Jian as a Cixi man rather than to promote his thought (Wu 1999:2). By then, Yang's ideas resonated with the thought of Wang Yangming and his followers, and so Yang's writings gained a wide audience both as a disciple of Lu and as a thinker in his own right.

What of the Buddhist accusations, both in his own time and later? Mark Halperin (2006) and others have made clear the degree to which Buddhism was

part of the lives and thought of the Song elite. Hoyt Tillman (1992) has shown how the rise of Zhu Xi's thought was embedded in a competitive discourse among members of the "fellowship of the Way." From the perspective of Zhu Xi's followers—who sought to establish their own claims to truth in contrast to Buddhism—Yang Jian's (and Yuan Xie's) awakening experiences were dangerously close to what practitioners of Chan sought. It served the interests of the Zhu Xi school to attack Yang and Yuan on these grounds, since it reinforced their position with regard to Buddhism, and these accusations continued into the Ming and Qing. This did not mean, however, that their ideas were somehow less Neo-Confucian and more Buddhist than their contemporaries.

Yuan Xie differed substantially from Yang Jian, despite sharing a common experience of enlightenment under the influence of Lu Jiuyuan. As shown here, in some respects Yuan's ideas fit with those of Zhu Xi. In his essay on "The Learning of Zhedong" ("Zhedong xueshu" 浙東學術), the eighteenth-century scholar Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1735–1801) linked three generations of the Yuan family to Zhu Xi:

> The learning of Zhedong, although it was produced in Wuyuan [Zhu Xi], flowed out from the three Yuan [Xie, his son Fu 甫, and Fu's son Jue 桷], who greatly revered Jiangxi Lu [Jiuyuan]; but they also penetrated the classics and served the ancient, not just mouthed empty words about moral nature. Thus they did not go against the teachings of Master Zhu. (Zhang 1964: 52)

But since both Yuan Fu (*jinshi* 1214) and Yuan Jue (1266–1327) lived during the late Southern Song and Yuan, when Zhu Xi's ideas became dominant, their identification with Zhu is not surprising.

Yang and Yuan both applied the concept of the heart/mind to politics in their audiences with Emperor Ningzong, and both remonstrated with Ningzong about officials who had been unfairly demoted. As government officials, they were compelled to ground their political proposals in ethical notions derived from their belief in the unity of the heart/mind. Yuan, it is true, had a more developed ethics rooted in his concept of the heart/mind than did Yang. Both held important posts in the educational bureaucracy, which circumscribed their ability to apply their understanding of learning in public office. But it was the definition of learning that lay at the heart of their philosophy of the heart/mind.

The awakenings of Yang and Yuan highlight a subitist strain among the followers of Lu Jiuyuan, yet the intensity of these experiences did not eliminate the need for reading books and in other ways expanding their understanding of the heart/mind. If Neo-Confucians viewed learning as the means "to become conscious of the moral guides innate to us as human beings" (Bol 2008: 157), then the conceptions of learning held by Yang and Yuan—as heirs of Lu Jiuyuan—fall well within a Neo-Confucian spectrum of relative importance assigned to apprehending innate heart/mind through intuitive means as opposed to external ones, such as studying texts. Yang wrote extensively not only on the *Changes*, but also on the *Odes* (*Yangshi Shichuan* 楊氏詩傳; 20 *juan*); he wrote shorter commentaries on a portion of the *Documents* (*Wugao jie* 五誥解;

5 *juan*), and on the teachings of the sages (*Xiansheng daxun* 先聖大訓; 6 *juan*). In addition to his commentary on the *Documents*, collected by his son Fu as the *Jiezhai [Yuan Xie] Family School Documents*, Yuan Xie's extant writings also include the *Classics Mat Lectures on the Mao Odes* (*Jiezhao Mao shi jingyan jiangyi* 絜齋毛詩經筵講義; 4 *juan*). These writings are testimony to the value both Yang and Yuan attached to traditional textual scholarship.

For Shu and Shen, the heart/mind was less an abstract concept of innate good than it was the shared values that ordered family and community. These values drew on knowledge of classical precedents, but they were equally grounded in domestic social practice, illustrated by Shen Huan's maxims for family life. As Shu Lin set himself apart from his brothers' subitist understanding of heart/mind, steadfastly adhering to a slow grinding away at his own path, he was also focused on the practical matters of daily life.

In the end, what meaning we can attribute to the Four Masters in the history of Neo-Confucian philosophy is found in the ways their ideas transmitted and expanded upon Lu Jiuyuan's concept of the heart/mind, preserving—and altering—it until the rise of Wang Yangming and his followers in the Ming. It should come as no surprise, however, that their ideas were neither homogeneous nor neatly circumscribed by the category "School of Heart/Mind." Despite their shared educational experiences, intellectual influences, and social ties as native sons of Mingzhou, the cohesion of the Four Masters as a philosophical group is to a large extent a fiction created by later writers and thinkers inclined toward regional narratives of intellectual history (Walton 2003; Hayasaka 2002).

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