first notable attempt in China at systematic and critical intellectual history. At his death he was compiling a similar survey for the Sung and Yüan dynasties. Huang's range of interests included mathematics, calendrical science, geography, and the critical study of the Classics, as well as literature and philosophy. In most of these fields, however, his approach is that of an historian, whose underlying bent is reflected further in the fact that his most outstanding disciples and followers in the Manchu period also distinguished themselves in historical studies. Huang was an independent and creative scholar, who re-examined some of the age-old prejudices of the Confucian literati and came to his own conclusions (as, for instance, to the role of Law). Nevertheless, he felt no urge to break with Confucian tradition as a whole; for him it provided the basic principles for the reform of existing evils. Therefore it is not so much as a strikingly original thinker that Huang holds a high place in Chinese intellectual history, but as one who combined the broad scholarship characteristic of the Chu Hsi school with the active interest in contemporary affairs shown by the best of the Wang Yang-ming school. Though a competent classical scholar, he gave more attention to the study of the recent past than did most others of his time, whose interests were increasingly antiquarian. In this sense, *A Plan for the Prince,* which analyzes the political and economic weaknesses of seventeenth-century China in the light of Huang's extensive historical researches, is truly representative of his best work.

HUANG TSUNG-HSI

A Plan for the Prince

A Plan for the Prince (*Ming-i tai-fang lu*) [1] is probably the most systematic and concise critique of Chinese imperial institutions ever attempted from the Confucian point of view. Besides dealing with the theory and structure of government, it takes up the problems of education, civil service examinations, land reform, taxation, currency, military organization, and eunuchs—all of them closely related to the problem of government or affected by the activities of the state. Huang's views on only a few of these can be set forth here. Though not representative of any sustained or effective movement in Chinese political thinking at the time, Huang's views were not untypical of Confucian scholarly

[1] The Chinese title is not susceptible of literal translation; we give the general sense of it as indicated by Huang's preface to the work.

opinion outside the official class; the great Ku Yen-wu, for instance, expressed himself as in agreement with "sixty or seventy percent of it."

[From *Ming-i tai-fang lu,* 1b–3b]

ON THE PRINCE

In the beginning of human life each man lived for himself and sought to benefit himself. There was such a thing as the common benefit, yet apparently no one promoted it; and there was common loss, yet apparently no one eliminated it. Then a man appeared who did not think of benefit in terms of his own personal gain, but sought to benefit all under Heaven; and who did not think of loss in terms of his own personal disadvantage, but sought to spare all under Heaven of loss. Thus his labors were thousands of times greater than the labors of ordinary men. But to work a thousand or ten thousand times harder without benefiting oneself is certainly not something which human desires seek after. Therefore in those early times some men, considering what was involved in it, refused to become princes—Hsü Yu and Wu Kuang [2] were such. Others undertook it, and then quit—Yao and Shun, for instance. Still others, like Yü, became princes against their own will and later were unable to quit. How could they have felt differently? Indeed, to love ease and hate strenuous labor has always been the natural inclination of man.

However, with those who later became princes it was different. They believed that since they held the power over benefit and loss, there was nothing wrong at all in taking for themselves all the benefits and leaving to others all the loss. They made it so that no man dared to live for himself or seek to benefit himself. Thus the prince made his own private interests the common end of all. At first the prince felt some qualms about it, but his conscience eased with time. He looked upon the world as an enormous estate to be handed on down to his descendants, for their perpetual pleasure and well-being. Of Han Kao-ti it is said that he asked: "Considering the estate I have acquired, which of us, Brother Chung, or myself, has done better for himself?" [3] In these words he betrayed his overweening selfishness. The reason for [these contrasting attitudes] is this: In ancient times the people were considered hosts and the prince was the guest. All of his life the prince spent working for the sake of

[2] Legendary Taoist heroes who refused the throne when it was offered them.

[3] The founder of the Han dynasty, after his conquest of China, asked this question of his father, who had always thought his older brother the more capable of the two.

the people. Now the prince is host and the people are guests. Because of the prince people can find peace and happiness nowhere. In order to achieve his ends, people must be harmed and killed and their families broken up—all for the aggrandizement of one man's fortune. Without feeling the least pity for mankind, the prince says: "I want only to establish this estate for the sake of my descendants." Yet when he has established it, the prince still wrings every drop of blood and marrow from the people and takes away their sons and daughters to serve his excessive pleasures. It seems entirely proper to him. It is, he says, the interest on his estate. Thus the greatest enemy of mankind is the prince and nothing but the prince.

If there had been no rulers, each man would have lived for himself and secured what was to his own benefit. Could it be that the institution of rulership was meant to work out like this? In ancient times men loved their prince, thought of him as a father, likened him to God; and truly this was no more than just. Now men hate their prince, think of him as a mortal foe, call him an "outcast"; and this is perfectly natural. . . .

If it were possible for the latter-day princes to preserve such an estate and hand it down in perpetuity, this selfishness would not be hard to understand. But once the world comes to be looked upon as a personal estate, who in the world does not desire it as much as the prince? Even if the prince could tie his fortune down and lock it up tight, still the watchfulness of one man is no match for the greed of all. At most it can be kept in the family for a few generations, and sometimes it is lost in a lifetime. Sooner or later the spilling of blood and loss of life fall upon his own descendants. . . .

Therefore when the function of the prince is understood, as in the time of T'ang and Yü, everyone would just as soon pass the job on to someone else, and men like Hsü Yu and Wu Kuang are not unique. When the function of the prince is not clearly understood, every man in the market place covets the position. It is for this reason that throughout all subsequent time no one has heard of another Hsü Yu or Wu Kuang.

It is not easy to make plain the function of the prince, but any fool can see that a brief moment of excessive pleasure is not worth an eternity of sorrows.

ON MINISTERSHIP

Here Huang sets forth his conception of the true function and status of state officials. Elsewhere he argues especially for a strong prime ministership. The office of prime minister had been abolished by the founder of the Ming, for fear that it concentrated too much power in the hands of a potential usurper.

[From *Ming-i tai-fang lu*, 4a–5b]

The reason for ministership lies in the fact that the world is too big for one man to govern and that it is necessary to share the work with others. Therefore, when I come forth to serve, it is for the whole world and not for the prince; it is for all men and not for one family. . . .

But those who act as ministers today do not understand this concept. They say that a minister is created for the prince, that he rules only because the prince shares part of the world with him and delegates to him some leadership over the people. They look upon the world and its people as personal property in the prince's pouch. . . .

Whether there is peace or disorder in the world does not depend on the rise and fall of dynasties, but upon the happiness or distress of the people. That is why the fall of Chieh and Chou were occasions for peace and order; why, too, the rise of the Ch'in and Mongol dynasties were nevertheless occasions for disorder; and why the rise and fall of Chin, Sung, Ch'i, and Liang had no effect whatever on the stability or instability of the times.

If a minister ignores the plight of the people, then even if he succeeds in assisting his prince's rise to power or follows him to final ruin, it still can never be said that he has followed the [True] Way of the Minister. The governing of the world is like the hauling of great logs. The men in front call out, "Heave!" those behind, "Ho!" The prince and his ministers are log-haulers working together. If some of them, instead of holding tight to the ropes with feet firmly set on the ground, amuse themselves by cavorting around in front, the others behind will think it the thing to do and the business of hauling logs will be neglected. Alas, the insolent princes of later times indulge themselves [in the same way] and do not tend to the business of the world and its people. From among the men of the country they seek out only such as will be servile errand-boys. And if from the country those alone respond who are of the servile

errand-boy type, then when they are protected from cold and hunger for a while, they feel eternally grateful for his majesty's kindness. Such men will not care whether they are treated by the prince with due respect, and will think it no more than proper to be relegated to a servant's status. In the first years of the Wan-li period [1573–1619] Chang Chü-cheng was treated by Shen-tsung with more respect than most ministers are shown, but it was not one-hundredth of what was shown to the counsellors of ancient times. At the time people were shocked because Chü-cheng's acquiescence in these honors seemed unbecoming to a subject. His fault, on the contrary, lay in being unable to maintain his self-respect as a counsellor so that he had to take orders from servant people. Yet he was blamed for exactly the opposite. Why so? Because people's minds had been contaminated for so long by degenerate notions about what a minister was, taking it as the accepted standard. How could they be expected to know that princes and ministers differ in name only, and are in fact the same? . . .

The terms "prince" and "minister" derive their significance from service to mankind. If I have no sense of duty to mankind I am an alien to the prince. If I come to serve him without any consideration for the welfare of mankind, then I am merely the prince's menial servant. If, on the other hand, I have the people's interest at heart, then I am the prince's mentor and colleague. Only then may I really be called a minister.

ON LAW

Huang was rare among Confucianists in the importance which he attached to the form or system of government, rather than simply to the character of the men administering it. Whereas Confucianists had traditionally been hostile to "law," associating with it the concepts of the hated Legalists of old, Huang refused to accept this definition of the term and insisted that "law" could represent something more than the arbitrary and oppressive dictates of despotic regimes.

[From *Ming-i tai-fang lu,* 6a–7b]

Until the end of the Three Dynasties there was law. Since the Three Dynasties there has been no law. Why do I say so? Because the Two Emperors and Three Kings knew that mankind could not do without sustenance and therefore gave men fields to cultivate. They knew that men could not do without clothes and therefore gave them land on which to grow mulberry and hemp. They knew also that men could not go untaught, so they set up schools, established the marriage ceremony to guard against promiscuity, and instituted military service to guard against disorders. This constituted law [4] until the end of the Three Dynasties. It was never laid down for the benefit of one man alone.

Later rulers, once they had won the world, feared only that their dynasty might not last long and that their descendants would be unable to preserve their empire. To prevent what they feared from happening, they resorted to laws. Consequently, what they called "law" was simply instituted for the sake of one family and not for the sake of all mankind.

Thus the Ch'in abolished feudal fiefs and set up commanderies (*chün*) and prefectures (*hsien*) thinking that this system would better serve their own interests. The Han gave domains to members of the royal house, so as to have them stand guard for the dynasty throughout the empire. The Sung abolished the military commanderies because they caused the dynasty some uneasiness. Such being their laws, how could we expect to find in them the slightest trace of consideration for the general welfare? Indeed, could we call them "law" at all?

The law of the Three Dynasties safeguarded the world for the people. The prince did not monopolize all the wealth of the land nor did he jealously keep the right to punish and reward out of the people's hands. Position at court was not particularly considered an honor; to live an obscure life in the country was not particularly a disgrace. Later this kind of law was criticized for its looseness, but at that time the people were not envious of those in high place, nor did they despise humble status. The looser the law was, the fewer the disturbances which arose. It was what we might call "law without laws." The laws of later times safeguard the world as if it were something in the [prince's] treasure chest. It is not desired that anything beneficial should be left to the lowly, but rather that all blessings be reserved for the one on high. If the prince employs a man, he is immediately afraid that the man will act in his own interest, and so another man is employed to keep a check on the first one. If one measure is adopted, there are immediate fears of its be-

[4] The Chinese term *fa* means "system" as well as legal regulation, and is applied here to the political and social institutions of ancient times, which for Huang represented a kind of basic constitution.

ing abused or evaded, and so another measure must be adopted to guard against abuses or evasions. All men know where the treasure chest lies, and the prince is constantly fretting and fidgeting out of anxiety for the security of the treasure. Consequently, the laws have to be made more comprehensive and detailed, and as they become more detailed, they become the very source of disorder. These are what we might call "unlawful laws."

Some say that each dynasty has its own laws and that succeeding generations of the royal house have a filial duty to follow the ancestral laws. Now the "unlawful laws" were originally instituted because the first prince of a line was unable to curb his own selfishness. Later princes, out of the same inability to curb their own selfishness, may in some cases have broken down these laws. The breaking down of the laws was admittedly a cause for suffering among the people, yet this does not mean that the original enactment of the laws never caused the people to suffer. And still some insist that we get involved in this kind of legalistic muck just to gain a little reputation for upholding the dynastic laws—all of which talk is just the secondhand drivel of petty literocrats.

It might be argued that order and disorder in the world are unrelated to the maintenance or absence of law. Now as to this there has been a great change from the past to the present: one complete upheaval which came with the Ch'in dynasty, and another with the Yüan [Mongol] dynasty. Following these two upheavals nothing at all survived of the sympathetic, benevolent, and constructive government of the early kings. So, unless we take a long-range view and look deep into the heart of the matter, changing everything thoroughly until the original order is restored with its land system, feudal system, school and military system, then even though some minor changes are made there will never be an end to the misery of the common man.

If it should be said that there are only men who govern well, not laws which govern well, my reply is that only if there are laws which govern well, will there later be men who govern well. Since "unlawful laws" fetter men hand and foot, even a man capable of governing well cannot overcome the handicaps of senseless restraint and suspicion. When there is something to be done, he does no more than his share, and since he contents himself with trifling accomplishments, there can be no outstanding achievements. If the law of the early kings were restored, there would

be a spirit among men which went beyond the letter of the law. If men were of the right kind, the full intent of the law would be fulfilled; and even if they were of the wrong kind, it would be impossible for them to govern tyrannically and make the people suffer. Therefore I say we must first have laws which govern well and later we shall have men who govern well.

THE SELECTION OF OFFICIALS

For Huang, as for earlier reformers, the operation of the civil service was of crucial importance. Here only his basic principles are set forth, but in the original work he gives a detailed analysis of existing forms of recruitment, examination, and employment, as well as detailed recommendations for their improvement.

[From *Ming-i tai-fang lu,* 17a–18b]

In ancient times the selection of officials was liberal, but the employment of them was strict. Today the selection of officials is strict, but the employment of them is liberal. Under the old system of "state recommendation and village selection," a man of ability did not have to fear that he would go unrecognized. Later on, in the T'ang and Sung, several types of examination were instituted, and if a man did not succeed in one, he could turn around and take another. Thus the system of selection was liberal. . . .

But today this is not so. There is only one way to become an official: through the examination system. Even if there were scholars like the great men of old, such as Ch'ü Yüan, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, Tung Chung-shu, and Yang Hsiung, they would have no other way than this to get chosen for office. Would not this system of selection be called too strict? However, should candidates one day succeed, the topmost are placed among the imperial attendants and the lowest given posts in the prefectures and districts. Even those who fail [the metropolitan examinations] and yet have been sent up from the provinces are given official posts without having to take examinations again the rest of their lives. Would not this system of employment be called too liberal? Because the system of selection is too confined, many great men live to old age and die in obscurity. Because the system of employment is too liberal, frequently the right man cannot be found among the many holding official rank.

The common man, seeing only that in the past two hundred years a few men of character and achievement have appeared among those chosen, concludes that the examination system is good enough and there is no need to look elsewhere. He does not realize that among the hundreds and thousands taken in by the examination system, some men of character and achievement would inevitably find their way in. This means that men of character and achievement may find their way through the examination system, but the examination system does not find them. If we had scholars draw lots and chose them according to the length of the lot drawn, in the course of several hundred years men of character and achievement would naturally appear among those so chosen. But would we call this a good way to choose officials?

After all, the men of today who have character and ability are a far cry from those of the Han and T'ang dynasties. Today we have only mediocre and shallow men cluttering up the world. But it is surely not because Heaven has ceased to produce men of talent, is it? The system of selection is wrong.

Therefore, I would broaden the system for selecting officials, and choose men [not only] through the regular examinations [but also] through special recommendations, through the Imperial Academy, through the appointment of high officials' sons, through [a merit system for] junior officials in prefectures and districts, through special appointments, through [the recognition of] unique scholarship, and through the presentation of [outstanding] memorials.

LAND SYSTEM

In the following pages Huang gives his views on land reform, which echo the ancient ideal of the well-fields and earlier proposals for land redistribution. The greater part of Huang's discussion of the land problem, however, is a lengthy historical analysis of tax systems (not reproduced here), reflecting his belief that the chief evil was oppressive taxation by the state. Unless this were corrected, even the redistribution of land would not help the peasant. A significant feature of Huang's essay is his discussion of the land problem on the basis of statistical evidence, not just in the abstract. The official statistics available were none too accurate, but at least there were the beginnings here of social science, had Huang's line of inquiry been pursued and more accurate evidence compiled.

[From *Ming-i tai-fang lu*, 26a–27b]

After the abolition of the well-fields, Tung Chung-shu proposed a limitation on the amount of land a man could hold.[5] In accordance with this principle Shih Tan and K'ung Kuang decreed that no one could hold more than thirty *ch'ing* [about 340 acres], and that after a grace period of three years the land of those who violated this decree was to be confiscated.[6] Their intentions were good, but whereas in ancient times the wise ruler distributed land so as to provide for the people; today people own their own land and if an attempt is made to deprive them of it by legal means—if, far from distributing land, the government expropriates it—it is [what Mencius] called "doing an act of unrighteousness" and should not be done.

Some people may say: "If we try to restore the well-field system by seizing the land of the rich, disorders will result. We can restore the well-fields only by taking advantage of strife and bloodshed, when the population is small in relation to the vastness of the land. What a pity, therefore, that it was not done when it might have been: when Han Kao-tsu destroyed the Ch'in dynasty [206 B.C.] or Kuang-wu assumed the throne of Han [A.D. 25]!"

Now the early kings instituted the well-fields in order to provide for the livelihood of the people, in order to make them prosper and multiply. And yet such persons seem to regard the massacre of the people as something fortunate, because this makes it possible for them to advance their own projects. Could it be that they would regard it as a misfortune if, after turning the land into well-fields, the people should thrive and multiply and thus make it difficult for them to carry out their proposed reforms?

Among the scholars of later times, none presented so fully as did Su Hsün[7] the reasons why well-fields could not possibly be restored, and none so cogently as did Hu Han and Fang Hsiao-ju[8] the reasons why the well-fields should be restored. Su Hsün believed that without several hundred years of exhausting labor, it would be impossible to establish a system of rivers and highways, canals and roads, waterways and roadways, ditches and lanes, and trenches and pathways.[9] Now if we

[5] See pp. 232–34.
[6] At the end of the Former Han dynasty.
[7] See pp. 461–63.
[8] Early Ming (late fourteenth century) scholars.
[9] As the system was described in the *Rites of Chou*.

actually distributed land to the people, all routes would be kept open for traffic and all irrigation works could be kept in repair. So why need we get bogged down in the secondary details of the system? All the things that Su Hsün worried about were in no way vital to the well-field system.

Hu Han and Fang Hsiao-ju said well-fields should be restored, but were unable to elaborate an effective method for restoring them. Through a consideration of the military farms,[10] however, I have learned how the well-fields may be restored—in just the same way as the military farms were set up. These days scholars admit, when it comes to military farms, that to operate them is quite feasible, but when it is a question of well-fields, they say it cannot be done. They don't even know that two fives make ten!

Each soldier was allotted fifty *mu* which is equivalent to one hundred *mu* in ancient times.[11] Is it not, then, just the same as the hundred *mu* allotted to each man [under the well-field system] in Chou times? The regular grain tax on fifty *mu* of land was twelve piculs which the soldier-cultivator was permitted to use for his own needs; an additional tax of twelve piculs went to the officers and men of the local garrison for pay and supplies. Thus, actually the tax was just twelve piculs, and this amounts to two pecks (*tou*), four pints (*sheng*) per *mu,* just the same as under the tribute system used in the inner and outer districts during the Chou dynasty.

The total area of military farm land at present is 64,424,300 *mu*.[12] In the sixth year of Wan-li [1578], the total land actually under cultivation was 701,397,628 *mu*. If we find the ratio between them, military farm land is seen to occupy one-tenth of the total. [Since all military farm land is government land distributed to cultivators] that part of the total in which land distribution has not been effected is only nine-tenths. To apply to these nine-tenths of the land what is already true of one-tenth would not seem a difficult thing to do.

All land is either government-owned or private. Government land cannot be bought and owned by an individual. Within the area organ-

[10] Farmlands set aside for the support of military households in the Ming dynasty.
[11] Because the unit of measurement was thought to have doubled in the meantime.
[12] Actually Huang's figures are not current but come from the 1587 edition of *The Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* (*Ming hui-tien*).

ized into districts and prefectures, government land occupies three-tenths of the total. Now if we take the total land under cultivation and average it out, with a total of 10,621,436 households in the land, each household would receive fifty *mu* and there would still be 170,325,828 *mu* left over. If the rich were allowed to occupy the remainder, no one need feel that he did not have enough. So why must there be any fuss over property limitations and equalization of land, or this needless to-do about causing the rich to suffer?

WANG FU-CHIH

Wang Fu-chih (Wang Ch'uan-shan, 1619–1692) was born of a scholarly family at the end of the Ming and had already received his first degree when Peking fell to the Manchus. Personally committed to the old dynasty, he raised an armed force and made attempts to support the remnants of Ming rule. When he realized at last the hopelessness of such efforts, he retired to his native place and spent the remainder of his life in seclusion, refusing to have anything to do with the new regime. He wrote and compiled numerous works on the classics, history, philosophy, and literature, employing historical and philological methods of research and at the same time expounding his own political ideas. Because of his isolation and hostility toward Manchu rule, he was little known in his own time. His works were not published until about two centuries after his death when, with the growth and development of anti-Manchu sentiment at the turn of the nineteenth century, they achieved great popularity and influence.

A philosopher of considerable depth and power, Wang Fu-chih reacted strongly against the idealism and subjectivism of the Wang Yang-ming school and turned back to the Sung master, Chang Tsai, for his basic ideas. He attacked the concept of metaphysical categories or principles as existing above or prior to material forms. According to Wang, function alone determines the form of a thing (not abstract principle) and the two can never be considered apart from one another. As applied to his political philosophy, for instance, this meant that the cardinal Confucian virtues of humanity and righteousness had to be conceived functionally as the means by which the ruler "lovingly cared for his own

people" and "regulated his own human relationships" (i.e., performed his obligations to his own kindred).

Having, for a Confucianist, an uncommonly strong sense of racial consciousness, and regarding the preservation of the Chinese people and their culture as the ultimate end of government, Wang insisted that humanity and righteousness were not worth talking about unless they served the preservation of the race. Applying the same principle to political institutions, Wang asserted that there was no ideal system of political, economic, or military organization apart from the geographical conditions or historical circumstances in which they had to function. The institutions appropriate to each age differ, and therefore it is useless to talk of restoring the feudal system or the other institutions described in the Classics, as so many Confucian idealists had urged. Thus despite Wang's realistic attitude in regard to the need for adjusting to changed circumstances, he may be considered a reformer only in a limited sense, since he insisted equally upon the need for reconciling oneself to existing institutions, however defective in certain respects, which had arisen in response to historical changes. Wang, indeed, tended more toward a cyclical or pulsatory view of history than a progressive or evolutionary one. Nevertheless, among reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, his intense nationalism and theory of adaptation to changed circumstances were hailed as anticipating the needs of modern China.

WANG FU-CHIH

Dynastic Rule and the Preservation of the Race

In the following excerpts from the opening portion of his *Yellow Book* (*Huang shu*), Wang argues that the differentiation of species and races is a fundamental principle of nature, and that self-preservation of the people and their culture is the primary duty of the ruler. Because he rejected the Manchus as barbarians and challenged the legitimacy of their rule, great danger attached to the expression of his views. Whether for this reason or for his own idiosyncrasies of literary style, the text is full of cryptic expressions and recondite allusions, as well as censored passages. Because of difficulties in interpretation and reconstruction, the following translation is quite tentative and at some points represents only a rough paraphrase of the original.

[From *Ch'uan-shan i-shu, Huang shu,* 1a–2b]

In the beginning of things how vast and immeasurable were the creative powers of Heaven and earth—metal, wood, earth, fire, wind, and water each producing their appropriate effects as things multiplied and reproduced in the greatest profusion, ebbing and flowing, expanding and contracting, as things were joined together and set apart. Thus the powers of creation and proliferation were limitless in their operation and their end cannot be known. But when the families of things became clearly defined and the lines of demarcation among them were made definite, each was established in its own position and all living things were confined within their own protective barriers. In this way the work of Heaven and earth was accomplished, with the utmost forethought and appropriateness in every detail. For this reason the beasts of the mountain have cloven hoofs, those of the marshlands webbed feet, beasts of burden the power to support things crosswise, and beasts for plowing the power to pull things lengthwise; [those used for] wet cultivation are suited to the southland; [those used for] dry cultivation are suited to the northland. It is not that [Heaven and earth] made these different types because it favored separation and division, but because under the circumstances it was impossible for all things to cooperate and avoid conflict otherwise.

The sage, observing that this was so of all things and that each marked off its own kind from others, took charge of the empire and, serving as its ruler and head, separated the intelligent from the stupid, brought together those who seemed alike, drove out those who would be noxious and contaminating, and raised up walls to keep them apart. In this way he prevented conflict and made it possible for them to cooperate among themselves. Thus the saying that "the sage is co-virtuous with Heaven and earth" was not just empty talk!

Now man partakes of yin and yang, food and breath, equally with other things, and yet he cannot but be distinguished absolutely from other things; the Chinese in their bone structure, sense organs, gregariousness and exclusiveness, are no different from the barbarians, and yet they must be distinguished absolutely from the barbarians. Why is this so? Because if man does not mark himself off from things, then the principle of Heaven is violated. If the Chinese do not mark themselves off from the barbarians, then the principle of earth is violated. And since Heaven and earth regulate mankind by marking men off from each other, if men do not mark themselves off and preserve an absolute distinction between

societies, then the principle of man is violated. Thus these three principles are the guardians of the Triad [Heaven, earth, and man].

In ancient times with the decline of the Chou dynasty the bond between the ruler and the people was broken and in their songs poets expressed disrespect for the king. The old capital fell into the hands of the northwest barbarians and the king of Chou took off to the eastern capital where he continued, at least in name, to preserve the dynasty by performing the dynastic rites. The political order broke down completely, as feudal lords conspired among themselves and daily extended their seizure of territories. Those who cherished the ancient rites and customs and who would have been glad to die for the old order could do nothing but bemoan the disaster which threatened the house of Chou. Yet what the sage [Confucius] was deeply troubled over was something quite different. Writing the *Spring and Autumn Annals,* he strove to make manifest the kingly way. He accepted as his own kind the Chinese within and banished outside the pale of civilization the barbarians without; those who had designs on the Chou throne he censured for their transgressions but took back into the fold; those who pressed in from outside he despised for their meanness and longed to expel from the country. . . .

When kings Wen and Wu had risen up to establish the dynasty, each morning they attended to their duties in caring for the people and each evening they communed with Heaven to learn its will. Preserving the way of the sage-kings and former dynasties, they enfeoffed the various lords in their respective domains so as to hold strategic positions against barbarian incursions. Thus what never ceased to concern the sage-kings was that on the borders of the empire there should be various feudal lords capable of defending against the barbarians, lest the boundary between the Chinese and barbarians not be preserved and the whole empire be thrown into confusion. Now to bring all the feudal states under one ruler, to concentrate in his hands all powers of administration and defense, and to reserve for himself alone all glory and honor rather than share these with other lords—would not even the sage-kings, like any other human being, desire this for themselves? Nevertheless, from the outset of the Chou dynasty rule over the various regions of the empire was entrusted to various dukes and barons, so that they might form a continuous line of defense, with each holding his own position while those more and less powerful came to each others' aid. Therefore those who

stood on the remote frontiers did not face danger all alone, and despite the vastness of the border regions it was not difficult to control them. By such means the rulers of the Chou at its height took care to maintain a strong defense and hold back the barbarians, so that their power and authority never weakened.

After the reigns of kings Yi [894–879 B.C.] and Li [878–828 B.C.] the feudal lords began to assert themselves, Chou hegemony was weakened and as the country was given over to internal contention, external enemies closed in. . . . However, though the emperor was unable to assert his authority, the strongest of the lords rose up, brought the north and south under control and drove off the barbarian tribes, thus performing the great service of preserving the military power and integrity of China. Though their achievements in war did not by any means measure up to the grand design of the sage-kings for ordering the world, nevertheless the sage recognized their merit and praised them for averting a national disaster and rescuing China from total extermination. . . .

Therefore he who is wise enough to make little of himself yet strong enough to govern the empire and protect his own kind becomes the chief, and he who provides security for his group becomes its ruler. Consequently the sage-king first commanded his people and showed them that he alone was worthy of honor. He guarded those qualities which made him worthy of honor and preserved [the basis of his rule] from destruction, so as to pass [the succession] on from generation to generation, or to some later sage. There might be abdications, successions, and even changes of mandate, yet never should a foreign dynasty be permitted to interrupt the succession [of Chinese sovereigns]. Only after first seeing to this did the sage-king then proceed to assist the weak and encourage the strong; raise up the virtuous and cast down the wicked; introduce the ceremonies of social intercourse to grace the lives of the people, the ceremonies of mourning and sacrifice for the expression of their grief, honors, ranks, and grades to regulate them in the proper order, and punishments and punitive campaigns to keep them under control. . . .

Even the ants have leaders who rule their ant-hills, and if other insects come to attack their nests, the leader gathers the ants together and leads them against their enemies to destroy them and prevent further intrusion. Thus he who would lead the ants must know the way to protect his group. Even so, if the ruler of the empire gives no thought to the future and does

not consider well the importance of maintaining its frontiers, then he is unable to command respect or keep order within the empire. When danger threatens from outside, he has no means of warding it off; when natural disasters strike, he has no means of securing the people against them. He is unable to pass the succession on to his own posterity or to protect his own kind. Thus, the kingly way comes to an end. This is what [Confucius in] the *Spring and Autumn Annals* most deplored.

China and the Barbarian Tribes

Here it is clear that Wang is no racist in the modern sense. He does not assert the superiority of Chinese culture over all others, but only that each culture has its own function and each people its own mission.

[From *Tu T'ung-chien lun,* 28:13a–b]

The strength of the barbarians lies in the paucity of their laws and institutions. As long as their shelter, food, and clothing remain crude and barbaric, as long as they continue to foster a violent and savage temper in their people and do not alter their customs, they may enjoy great advantage. And at the same time, because of this China may escape harm. But if they once begin to change and to adopt Chinese ways, then the advantages of their situation will also change. They may thereby in time grow braver and mightier than the Chinese, which will be an advantage gained, but they will also open the way for eventual weakness. Therefore it is said that, as fish forget each other in the rivers and lakes, so men should forget each other and follow their own ways and principles. While the barbarians are content to roam about in pursuit of water and pasture, practicing archery and hunting, preserving no distinctions between ruler and subject, possessing only rudimentary marriage and governmental systems, ranging back and forth over their territory in accordance with seasonal demands, then China can never control or rule them. And as long as the barbarians do not realize that cities can be fortified and maintained, that markets bring profit, that fields can be cultivated and taxes exacted, as long as they do not know the glory of elaborate marriage and official systems, then they will continue to look upon China as a perilous and inhospitable bed of thorns. In like manner the Chinese who are seized and carried off to the lands of the barbarians will regard them with hatred and bitterness and refuse to serve them. The two lands will ignore each

other to the advantage of both. It is in accordance with the ordinances of Heaven and the dictates of human feeling that each should thus find delight only in his own ways.

The Way Does Not Exist Outside of Its Practical Application

[From *Ch'uan-shan i-shu; Chou-i wai-chuan,* 5:25a–b]

The whole world is nothing more than an instrument. One cannot say that an instrument is an instrument of the Way, for what is called the Way is simply the way of using an instrument. We know from human experience that if there is no use for an instrument, then the instrument does not exist; conversely, if an instrument actually exists, we need not worry about whether or not it has a use. . . . If there is no instrument, then there is no Way—this statement is seldom made and yet it is absolutely true. . . . Bows and arrows have never existed without the way of shooting them; carriages and carriage horses have never existed without the way of driving them; sacrificial animals and wine, badges and offerings, or bells and chimes, flutes and strings, have never existed without the ways of ritual and music. Therefore the existence of sons demands the existence of the way of a father, or the existence of brothers that of the way of a brother. (There are, however, many "ways" that potentially could exist but actually do not.) Therefore it is quite correct to say that no way exists independent of its instrument.

Many people simply fail to consider the matter carefully enough. Thus the sages of antiquity were able to make use of instruments, but they were not able to make use of the Way, for what is called the "way" *is* the use of instruments. . . . In using them men speak about them and so names come to be fixed to them. These names are fixed to the things from above, as it were, but they also exist among things. One cannot distinguish between a realm of names existing above and one existing among things. So above physical forms there is no so-called realm of the formless. . . . If one tried to set aside instruments and seek for that which existed before the instruments, one might span all the evolutions of past and present, exhaust Heaven, earth, man, and things, and one would not be able to find anything bearing even a name, much less reality. Thus Lao Tzu was deluded when he said that the Way exists in emptiness, for emptiness must be empty of instruments also, and Buddha was likewise mistaken

when he declared that the Way exists in nothingness, for nothingness must be a nothingness of instruments. One may propound such wild theories endlessly, but one can never escape from instruments, and if one insists upon pronouncing names that are separated from instruments as though one were some god, whom could one hope to deceive?

On the Inapplicability of Ancient Institutions to Modern Times

[From *Tu T'ung-chien lun,* "Hsü-lun," 5b–6b]

The most effective way of governing is to examine the *Book of History* and temper its pronouncements with the words of Confucius. Surely nothing could be better than this. But the crucial point is whether the ruler's heart is reverent or dissolute, and whether his statutes are too lax or too harsh. Those who fall short are lazy, those who go too far do so from a desire to proceed too rapidly. The principal function of government is to make use of worthy men and promote moral instruction, and in dealing with the people to bestow on them the greatest humanity and love. All governments, from those of Yao and Shun, the Three Dynasties, the Ch'in or the Han down to the present must proceed upon this principle. Examining and selecting men according to principles, apportioning taxes and corvees with fairness, keeping order with arms, restraining with punishments, bringing order with statutes and precedents—these are the means by which all governments have achieved success.

But when it comes to setting up detailed regulations or making up directives, then the authors of the *Book of History* or Confucius offer no guidance. Is this because they ignored reality and paid no attention to details? The ancient institutions were designed to govern the ancient world, and cannot be applied to the present day. Therefore the wise man does not try to set up detailed systems. One uses what is right for today to govern the world of today, but this does not mean that it will be right for a later day. Therefore the wise man does not try to hand down laws to posterity. Thus neither the *History* nor Confucius describe feudalism, the well-field system, the triennial and sexennial meetings of feudal lords, the system for punitive expeditions, the establishment of offices or the awarding of benefices. How then should someone who is not the equal in virtue of the emperors Shun and Yü or Confucius still presume on the

basis of his reading to lay down a system of laws for all time? It is quite true that the "Documents of Hsia" contains a section called "The Tribute of Yü." But the system described therein pertains only to the Hsia dynasty; the laws of the Hsia kings were by no means followed in the succeeding Shang and Chou periods. The "Documents of Chou" does in fact contain a section called "Institutes of Chou," but here again these apply only to the Chou. They formed the model for the Chou dynasty and were not carried over from the earlier dynasties of Shang and Hsia. . . .

Times change, conditions are different. How then can a government go along with these changes and keep its people from growing idle? There are crises of the moment to be met in each age, but the expedients used to meet them are not necessarily worthy of constituting a whole theory of government. Before the prefectural system was put into effect the people were supposedly following the principles and practices of the ancient kings, and yet these practices were different from what we read of in the *History* and Confucius. It is not necessary that one consult all the ages of the past and try to follow all their usages. In my writings I have sought the source of success and failure in government and tried to bring my ideas into accord with the fundamental principles of the governments of the sages. But when it comes to questions of particular incidents and laws, then one must follow the times and try to determine what is fitting in each case. Every age has its different points of laxity and strictness [in application]; every affair has its contingent circumstances. It is better therefore to have no inflexible rules, lest one use the letter of the law to do violence to its spirit. Everyone makes mistakes at times, so that one should not try to force the world to follow his own arbitrary views. . . . If these people who try to upset all the established ways of the world and throw everything into panic by putting into effect some private theory derived from their reading are allowed to go on having their way, I cannot say how things will end.

On the Use of Laws

[From *Tu T'ung-chien lun,* 30:13b–15b]

The nation cannot be governed by laws. Yet if all laws disappear, then the people have no way to maintain their livelihood and rulers no way

to guard the people. Therefore if the nation is to be governed, there must first be a leader who will set up laws and institutions to make the people understand that there is a Son of Heaven over them and officials in their midst, and that they are assured of protection so that they may plan for their own livelihood. These laws and institutions that are first set up can never be completely good, and if later ages observe them to the letter, they will bring suffering to the people and incite disorder. In this first and tentative stage, the lawmakers, in an effort to correct evil, may be excessively severe or, following the will of the vulgar, may err in the direction of laxity. They can only make a rough beginning and wait for those who come after to refine and finish. For this reason, the Ch'in laws were not uniformly bad for the people. Ch'in came to power in the confused and chaotic days at the end of the Six States and opened up the way for a new rule by impressing upon the people the fact that laws existed. Then when the Han followed with its broad and tolerant regime, it was able to simplify the laws and abolish those which were oppressive, bringing order to the world. . . .

Therefore I have said that if the nation is to be governed, there must first be a leader to set up laws and institutions. Although they may not be the best, they will be better than no laws at all. Han inherited the laws of Ch'in and reformed them; therefore it could not model its system upon that of the Three Dynasties. T'ang took over the laws of the T'o-pa and Yü-wen dynasties and reformed them, and so its system differed from that of the Former and Latter Han. Sung inherited and reformed the laws of the Kuo and Ch'ai regimes and so could not practice the same ways as the T'ang at its height. When bad laws have once been put into effect and the people have grown accustomed to them over a long period, they will inevitably be intent only upon following these laws. If one can only suppress the evil aspects of these laws and gradually improve them, then the world will eventually attain peace. But if the world is continually in a state of confusion, heir only to the dregs of corrupt government of the preceding dynasty, hastening onward in the decline, completely destroying what was good in the old system, the dissolute attacking each other, military upstarts and petty bureaucrats spreading evil in high positions, and if no one appears to correct or change the laws, then even the wisest of sovereigns will have difficulty in bringing about a speedy reform.

KU YEN-WU, BEACON OF CH'ING SCHOLARSHIP

Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682), born in the last days of the Ming dynasty, had already achieved considerable reputation as a scholar when Peking fell to the Manchus in 1644. The following year he took part in an attempt to defend his native city in Kiangnan against the invading Ch'ing armies. With the fall of the city his foster-mother, who had raised him from infancy, starved herself to death rather than live under the rule of the Manchus, on her deathbed entreating Yen-wu never to serve the new dynasty in any official capacity. Ku remained true to her wishes, spending the rest of his life traveling about North China, working for brief periods at odd jobs of an unofficial nature and carrying on his researches.

During the chaotic days of the end of the Ming, Ku had already become interested in practical subjects such as economics, government, and military defense. The fall of the native dynasty before the Manchu invaders spurred him to pursue these studies with renewed vigor in an effort to find out why the old dynasty had faltered and how its mistakes could be avoided in the future. He bitterly attacked the intuitionism of the Wang Yang-ming school of Neo-Confucianism which, he believed, by its subjectivity and scorn for book-learning had seriously debilitated the intelligentsia of the late Ming. To combat this effete and empty speculation he insisted that scholars must undertake wide and varied research on practical subjects and return to the simple ethical precepts of early Confucianism. He likewise deplored the inordinate attention to literary elegance and belles-lettres that had so often characterized scholars of earlier times, believing that such interests represented only a selfish striving for reputation. When a friend wrote a poem praising him, Ku admonished him with the advice that the writing of such eulogies was no practice for a serious gentleman. "Men must lose themselves and each other in higher principles," he counseled, begging his friend to write no more such poems.[13]

His own works exemplify this new spirit of practical learning. Carrying on the systematic study of phonetics that had developed sporadically in the late Sung and Ming, he perfected the inductive method of research

[13] "Letter in Reply to Tzu-te," *T'ing-lin shih-wen chi*, 4:7b.

which was to be applied with such effect by textual critics of the later years of the Ch'ing. Besides important works on phonetics, he produced voluminous studies on historical geography and epigraphy. But his best-known and most significant work is undoubtedly his *Jih-chih lu* or *Record of Daily Knowledge,* a collection of short essays on problems in the Classics, government, economics, the examination system, literature, history, and philology. Carefully composed and revised during the years of his travels and based on personal observation, wide reading and a painstaking collection of evidence, these essays represent not simply a reworking of old material and restating of traditional views, but a new and constructive contribution to the subjects dealt with. They are, as he himself said, not old coin but "copper dug from the hills."

Like many other scholars of the time, Ku believed that one of the fatal weaknesses of the Ming had been an overconcentration of power and authority in the hands of the central government. He therefore recommended a greater decentralization of authority and the strengthening of local self-government in the provinces, even going so far as to suggest the revival of some of the practices of ancient feudalism.

The originality of his researches, and the new ideals of scientific methodology and practical learning which they embodied, had a marked and beneficent influence upon the men of his age. Under his leadership the way was opened for the great movement of critical research and evaluation that characterized the best of Ch'ing scholarship.

KU YEN-WU

True Learning: Broad Knowledge, and a Sense of Shame

[From "A Letter to a Friend Discussing the Pursuit of Learning," *T'ing-lin shih-wen chi,* 3:1a–2b]

It is a matter of great regret to me that for the past hundred odd years, scholars have devoted so much discussion to the mind and human nature, all of it vague and quite incomprehensible. We know from the *Analects* that "fate and humanity (*jen*) were things which Confucius seldom spoke of" (IX, 1) and that Tzu-kung "had never heard him speak on man's nature and the way of Heaven" (V, 12). Though he mentioned the principle of human nature and fate in the appendices to the *Book of Changes,* he never discussed them with others. When asked about the qualities of a

gentleman, Confucius said: "In his conduct he must have a sense of shame" (XIII, 20), while with regard to learning he spoke of a "love of antiquity" and "diligent seeking," discussing and praising Yao and Shun and transmitting their tales to his disciples. But he never said so much as a word about the so-called theory of "the precariousness [of the human mind] and the subtlety [of the mind of the Tao] and of the [need for keeping one's mind] refined and undivided," [14] but only said "sincerely hold fast to the Mean—if within the four seas there be distress and poverty, your Heaven-conferred revenues will come to a perpetual end." [15] Ah, this is the reason for the learning of the sage. How simple, how easy to follow! . . . But gentlemen of today are not like this. They gather a hundred or so followers and disciples about them in their studies, and though as individuals they may be as different as grass and trees, they discourse with all of them on mind and nature. They set aside broad knowledge and concentrate upon the search for a single, all-inclusive method; they say not a word about the distress and poverty of the world within the four seas, but spend all their days lecturing on theories of "the weak and subtle," "the refined and the undivided." I can only conclude that their doctrine is more lofty than that of Confucius and their disciples wiser than Tzu-kung, and that while they pay honor to the school of Eastern Lu (Confucius) they derive their teachings on the mind directly from the two sage emperors Yao and Shun. . . .

What then do I consider to be the way of the sage? I would say "extensively studying all learning" [16] and "in your conduct having a sense of shame." [17] Everything from your own body up to the whole nation should be a matter of study. In everything from your personal position as a son, a subject, a brother, and a friend to all your comings and goings, your giving and taking, you should have things of which you would be ashamed. This sense of shame before others is a vital matter. It does not mean being ashamed of your clothing or the food you eat, but ashamed that there should be a single humble man or woman who does not enjoy the blessings that are his due. This is why Mencius said that "all things are complete in me" if I "examine myself and find sincerity." [18] Alas, if a

[14] Referring to the *Book of History,* Counsels of Great Yü II, a passage much quoted by Neo-Confucianists.
[15] *Book of History,* Counsels of Great Yü II.
[16] *Analects,* VI, 25.
[17] *Analects,* XIII, 20.
[18] *Mencius,* VII A, 4.

scholar does not first define this sense of shame, he will have no basis as a person, and if he does not love antiquity and acquire broad knowledge, his learning will be vain and hollow. These baseless men with their hollow learning day after day pursue the affairs of the sage, and yet I perceive that with each day they only depart further from them.

Preface to the Record of the Search for Antiquities

[From personal preface to *Ch'iu-ku lu*]

Ever since I was young I have enjoyed wandering about looking for old inscriptions on metal or stone, although I could not understand them very well. Then when I read Ou-yang Hsiu's "Record of Collected Antiquities" (*Chi-ku lu*) I realized that many of the events recorded in these inscriptions are verified by works of history so that, far from being merely bits of high-flown rhetoric, they are of actual use in supplementing and correcting the histories. For the past twenty years I have traveled widely about the country and whenever I visited some famous mountain or great commercial center, the site of an ancestral shrine or Buddhist temple, I never failed to clamber up to the steepest peak, to search the darkest valley, feeling out the toppled stone markers, tramping about the underbrush, cutting down the old tangled hedges and sifting through the rotten earth. Anything that was legible I made a copy of by hand, and when I came across an inscription that had not been seen by my predecessors I was so overjoyed I could not sleep. I can never forget that with each day that passes more of these remaining inscriptions of the men of ancient times disappear. Most men of later times will probably not share my interest in these things, yet even if they should, in the course of several centuries how many of these inscriptions will have vanished away! . . . Being only a commoner, however, when I went on these expeditions I had neither groom nor horse to accompany me, so that often I found myself wetting the tip of my brush and hesitating in perplexity among the forest birds and monkeys. The men of the north can seldom decipher characters and have only scant information on such matters. I was hampered by lack of daylight, while the mountains were so high and the rivers so deep that there were many places I could not get to. Even in the places I visited there must be things that I missed. Thus it is my hope that other men who share my love will carry on my work and make further recordings of their own.

On the Concentration of Authority at Court

That Ku shared much the same view as Huang Tsung-hsi of the Chinese state as over-centralized is clear from this analysis of the weaknesses of local government under an administrative system more in keeping with the Legalist philosophy than the Confucian.

[From *Jih-chih lu*, 9:15a–16a]

He who is called the Son of Heaven holds supreme authority in the world. What is the nature of this supreme authority? It is authority over all the world which is vested in the men of the world but which derives ultimately from the Son of Heaven. From the highest ministers and officials down to the regional magistrates and petty officers, each holds a share of this authority of the Son of Heaven and directs the affairs of his charge, and the authority of the Son of Heaven is thereby magnified in dignity. In later ages there appeared inept rulers who gathered all authority into their own hands. But the countless exigencies of government are so broad that it is quite impossible for one man to handle them all, so that authority then shifted to the laws. With this a great many laws were promulgated to prevent crimes and violation, so that even the greatest criminals could not get around them, nor the cleverest officials accomplish anything by evading them. People thereupon expended all their efforts in merely following the laws and trying to stay out of difficulty. Thus the authority of the Son of Heaven came to reside not in the officials appointed by the government but in their clerks and assistants [who were familiar with the laws]. Now what the world needs most urgently are local officials who will personally look after the people, and yet today the men who possess least authority are precisely these local officials. If local officials are not made known to the higher authorities, how can we hope to achieve peace and prosperity and prolong the life of the nation?

The Feudal System vs. the Prefectural System

[From *T'ing-lin shih-wen chi*, 1:7a–b]

If we understand why the feudal system changed into the prefectural system, we will also understand that as the prefectural system in turn falls into decay it too must change. Does this mean that there will be a return to feudalism? No, this is impossible. But if some sage were to ap-

pear who could invest the prefectural system with the essential meaning of feudalism, then the world would attain order. . . . Today the prefectural system has reached a point of extreme decay, but no such sage appears and people go on doing everything in the same old way. Therefore with each day the people become poorer, China grows weaker, and we hasten down the road to ruin. Why is this? The fault of feudalism was its concentration of power on the local level, while the fault of the prefectural system is its concentration of power at the top. The sage-rulers of antiquity were impartial and public-minded in their treatment of all men, parceling out land to them and dividing up their domains. But now the ruler considers all the territory within the four seas to be his own prefecture, and is still unsatisfied. He suspects every person, he handles every affair that comes up, so that each day the directives and official documents pile higher than the day before. On top of this he sets up supervisors, provincial governors and governors-general, supposing that in this way he can keep the local officials from tyrannizing over and harming the people. He is unaware that these officials in charge are concerned only in moving with utmost caution so as to stay out of trouble until they have the good fortune to be relieved of their posts, and are quite unwilling to undertake anything of profit to the people. Under such circumstances how can the people avoid poverty and the nation escape debilitation? If this situation is allowed to continue unchanged, I am positive that it will lead only to chaos with trouble increasing day by day. If, however, the position of local officials is accorded its proper dignity, and such officials are granted fiscal and administrative authority, if the post of supervisor is discontinued, the enticement of hereditary office held out to officials, and a method whereby they may select their own subordinates put into effect, this will achieve the goal of imbuing the prefectural system with the essential meaning of feudalism, and the decay that has come about in the last two thousand years can be remedied. Rulers hereafter will find that if they hope to improve the livelihood of the people and strengthen the power of the nation, they must heed my words.

THE TWILIGHT OF CONFUCIAN THOUGHT

With the firm establishment of the Ch'ing (Manchu) dynasty in the latter half of the seventeenth century there was a marked change in the

climate of Confucian thought. The reaction against the extreme subjectivism and idealism of the Wang Yang-ming school continued. At its door was laid the blame for all the weaknesses of the Ming regime; while, on the other hand, the philosophy of Chu Hsi, confirmed by the Manchu state as the authoritative teaching and perpetuated as the basis of the civil service examinations, underwent a strong revival in scholarly circles.

The most significant change, however, did not develop along lines of the old philosophical rivalries, nor did it bring victory to either of the established schools. Indeed, they remained in the forefront of intellectual debate only in so far as both together became targets of attack from a new direction—from those who pursued further two important tendencies manifested by the thinkers just discussed, that is, the striving for breadth of learning and the insistence upon practicality of thought.

Of the two, breadth of learning, especially as embodied in classical scholarship, set the tone of the new age. And in the field of classical study no movement had such influence or achieved such remarkable results as the school of Han Learning, whose name derives from the fact that this group, dissatisfied like Ku Yen-wu with the metaphysical speculations of both the Sung and Ming, turned back to the studies of Han dynasty scholars and commentators as guides to the Classics. In other words, by the seventeenth century Confucian thought had come around full circle; where the most creative minds of the Sung had been ready to forego the meticulous scholarship of the Han and T'ang commentators in the interests of a more vital and expansive approach to the classical tradition, Ch'ing scholars were now ready to return to historical and exegetical studies as a corrective to the free-wheeling and mutually conflicting interpretations of the Neo-Confucian schools.

In this process the Han school men made contributions of lasting value to our knowledge of the Confucian Classics. A discovery which had important repercussions on Neo-Confucian cosmology, for instance, was that of Hu Wei (1633–1714). Following a line of investigation opened up by Huang Tsung-hsi and his son, he demonstrated that the diagrams attached to the *Book of Changes,* upon which the Neo-Confucianists had based their theories, were late accretions of Taoist provenance rather than integral parts of the original work. Of equal significance to Confucianism as a state cult was the demonstration by Yen Jo-chü (1636–1704) that the so-called ancient text of the "Documents of the Shang Dynasty" in the