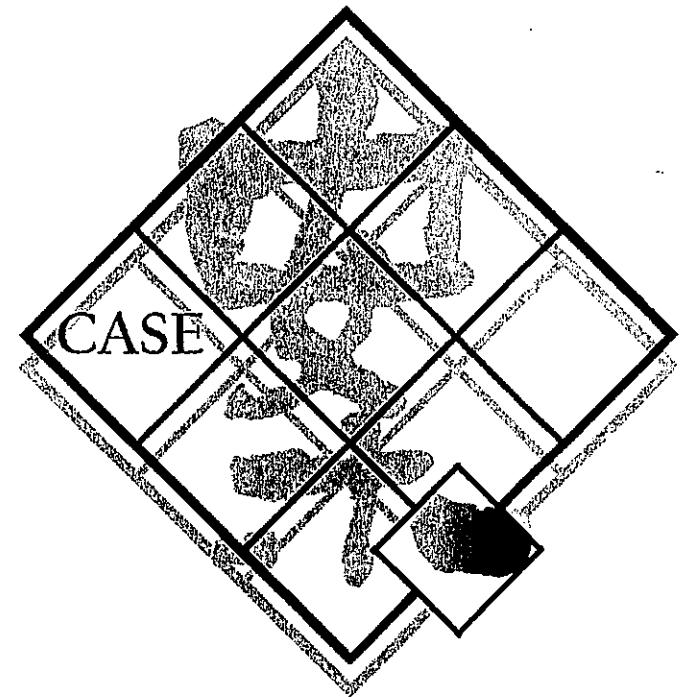


# THINKING WITH CASES

Specialist Knowledge in Chinese Cultural History

*Charlotte Furth,  
Judith T. Zeitlin, and  
Ping-chen Hsiung,*  
editors



University of Hawai'i Press Honolulu

2007

## Confucian “Case Learning” The Genre of Xue’an Writings

HUNG-LAM CHU

*Xue’an* were latecomers to the family of cased-based and *an*-titled writings. The binome *xue’an* translates literally as “learning” and “case,” making a generic title for a specific kind of text, the “case of learning.” It usually took the form of a collection that paired biographies of scholars with selected excerpts from their writings. The earliest known *xue’an* work was written in the late sixteenth century by a Confucian master about the learning of a couple of earlier Confucian masters, to further the understanding of interested Confucian students. Thereafter, *xue’an* works about Confucian learning continued to appear down into the twentieth century.

The generic title apparently gained its popularity because of the publication of Huang Zongxi’s (1610–1695) *Cases of Learning of Ming Confucians* (*Mingru xue’an*,<sup>1</sup> hereafter *Cases of Ming Confucians*) around 1680.<sup>2</sup> The vitality of the genre is attested to by the fact that *xue’an*-titled works known and accessible to us now abound in number. Several lengthy ones, some even bearing no relevance to Confucian learning at all, were published as late as the last decade.<sup>3</sup>

*Xue’an* works are about individual scholars and philosophical schools of thought, often organized by dynastic period. Works in the latter category are as a rule massive. The seminal *Cases of Ming Confucians*, which collects biographies of 212 Confucian masters together with selections from their writings, has a text of about one million characters. Other examples include the *Cases of Learning from the Song and Yuan* (*Song-Yuan xue’an*), a work begun by Huang Zongxi and completed by Quan Zuwang (1705–1755) and first published in 1838. In 1914 *Cases of Learning of the Two Han Dynasties and the Three Kingdoms* (*Liang Han Sanguo xue’an*) appeared, with a preface by Tang Yan (1857–1920). It was followed in 1938 by *Cases of Learning of the Qing Confucians* (*Qingru xue’an*), prefaced by Xu Shichang (1858–1939). With the last publication, every era in which Confucianism was a sanctioned state ideology and in which Confucian learning actually flourished had been analyzed in the *xue’an* genre of writing. The genre thus appears to have been considered appropriate for writing about the history of thought and

philosophy, although the question remains as to whether it was originally conceived as a genre for historical writing.

*Xue’an* writings had no standard format, but one inspired by and modified from the *Cases of Ming Confucians* was frequently used. It consisted of a biography of the scholar concerned, some commentary by the biographer on the scholar’s words and deeds, followed by selections from the scholar’s writings and possibly from other historical documents concerning him. Such selections might include letters, notes, prefaces, essays, diaries, autobiographical accounts, or records of debates or conversations. Sometimes, as in the twentieth-century compilations of Tang Yan and Xu Shichang, the subject’s exegeses and commentaries on the Confucian classics are also included.

Collections that survey the learning of a whole dynasty reveal complexities both of the period and of the author-compiler himself. The reader becomes aware of the philosophical views of individual Confucians, of trends of thought, and of the rise and decline of schools. The scope of coverage varied, but few *xue’an* works stepped outside the boundary of Confucianism to deal with other philosophies. The author-compilers were keen to show their own scholarly views on how Confucianism should be studied and practiced, which differed according to their intellectual persuasions. But all were immediately concerned with how their *xue’an* collections should be used.

Of all the *xue’an* works known to us, Huang Zongxi’s *Cases of Ming Confucians* is indisputably the classic exemplar of the genre and a landmark in its development. It influenced later works in terms of the scholarly rigor demanded for the writing as well as format and style. Scholars have written widely on Huang’s masterpiece and have discussed its organization as well as its philosophical assumptions and relevance to the history of neo-Confucian thought.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, a fuller understanding of the nature of the work as Huang himself saw it and the uses he intended for it may emerge from placing it in the context of the *xue’an* as a genre.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter is an inquiry into the nature of *xue’an* works and the intellectual orientations manifested in them. I offer a comparative study of all known and extant early *xue’an* works, with the *Cases of Ming Confucians* at the center. By asking what kind of works they were supposed to be, what it meant to have them so titled, what uses they served in the context of late Ming and early Qing thought, we may gain insight into philosophical dimensions of “thinking with cases” and into concepts of the substance and method of Confucian learning of Huang Zongxi and his contemporaries.

### DEFINITION OF THE TERM XUE’AN AND CLASSIFICATION OF XUE’AN WORKS

It is curious that, despite the popularity of the term *xue’an* in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writings on Confucian philosophy, neither Huang Zongxi

nor any other contemporary author gave the term any definition.<sup>6</sup> Their silence denies us any ready understanding of the problem. Only more recently do we see scholars engaged in serious discussions of the meaning of the term and its early implications.

Recent scholars have proposed two definitions, both essentially based on reading *Cases of Ming Confucians*. One takes the “archival” view and regards *xue’an* as the scholarly records, files, or dossier of a scholar or a school of thought. This definition rests on the etymology of the key word “*an*.”<sup>7</sup> The other definition takes a “cultural” view, seeing the term as the Confucian equivalent or version of the Chan Buddhist *gong’an* (*koan*). Here *xue’an* are seen as a kind of “scholarly *gong’an*,” which differs from the Chan *gong’an* only in that the doctrinal teaching is expounded in literary form rather than through paradoxical sayings. Advocates of this definition point to the intellectual culture of the late Ming period, when it was popular for master Confucians to be versed in Chan Buddhism.<sup>8</sup> Both these definitions are the result of legitimate inferences, although their merit has yet to be determined.

A second issue concerns bibliographical classification. Modern scholars have been widely influenced by Liang Qichao (1873–1929) and see *xue’an* works as historical writings. This is because in his *History of Chinese Learning and Scholarship in the Last Three Hundred Years* (*Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu shi*), Liang pointed to *Cases of Ming Confucians* as the first formal and complete “history of learning and scholarship” (*xueshushi*) ever written by a Chinese scholar.<sup>9</sup> But it is doubtful that *xue’an* were originally designed as intellectual history in the modern sense. Few scholars on the subject recall that Liang had also stated in his earlier *Abridged Version of Cases of Learning of Ming Confucians* (*Jieben Mingru xue’an*) that *Cases of Ming Confucians* was “a book on the Way.” So Liang with equal clarity claimed that Huang Zongxi intended his book “to show the scholar a gate to the Way” and that his own abridgement was “solely about the essentials of governing one’s own mind and body.”<sup>10</sup> Here Liang treated *Cases of Ming Confucians* as a guide to self-cultivation practice.

Nonetheless, even when Liang Qichao spoke of *Cases of Ming Confucians* as a historical work, he was not only responding to Western historiographical influence,<sup>11</sup> but also appealing to traditional Chinese bibliographical classifications of learning. In the Han dynasty, collected biographies of ancient and modern philosophers were gathered together by Sima Qian (145–ca. 86 BCE) in the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji*), which also includes an authoritative discourse on the gist of six major schools of thought by the author’s father, Sima Tan. Surviving works by or attributed to the philosophers were cataloged by Ban Gu (32–92 CE) in the *History of the Han Dynasty* (*Hanshu*). These sets of biographies and Ban’s biblio-

graphic essays offer analytical accounts of key doctrines of the various ancient schools and of the origins and development of their philosophies.<sup>12</sup> When *Cases of Ming Confucians* arranged biographies and words of the Ming Confucians according to the schools of thought they belonged to, it could be considered to follow this model.<sup>13</sup>

Aspects of its format would also allow *Cases of Ming Confucians* to be considered a kind of “record of words and deeds” (*yanxing lu*)—another recognized genre of historical writings in traditional bibliographic classification. An exemplary work of the “record of words and deeds” type was Zhu Xi’s (1130–1200) *Record of Words and Deeds of Eminent Officials of the Five Reigns* (*Wuchao mingchen yanxing lu*) and its sequel, *Record of Words and Deeds of Eminent Officials of the Three Reigns* (*Sanchao mingchen yanxing lu*). These companion texts recorded entry by entry the deeds and words of eminent officials of the Northern Song dynasty. Other scholars have regarded another work by Zhu Xi on Cheng Hao (1032–1085) and Cheng Yi (1033–1107), the *Sources of the Yi-Luo School* (*Yi-Luo yuanyuan lu*), as the actual prototype of the *xue’an* type of compilation.<sup>14</sup> This book explores the *lixue* or *daoxue* tradition of neo-Confucianism through the two Cheng brothers, including their teacher, friends, and students. But this is also a particular kind of “record of words and deeds,” except that there is a “social biography” for each figure it included.<sup>15</sup> These works by Zhu Xi, meant to complement one another,<sup>16</sup> are actually “records of deeds” in the main, because the words so recorded were those spoken in the course of concrete events rather than in philosophic writings.

The *Cases of Ming Confucians* differs from Zhu Xi’s prototypes not so much because it offers a full narrative biography of each Ming Confucian, incorporating occasional quotations of the subject’s words and also critical and evaluative comments from the biographer, Huang Zongxi; it differs categorically in the inclusion of the subject’s written words or recorded sayings after the biography. The relationship between the biography and the appended selections is such that without the latter the function and the force of a biography still is kept intact, but without the former the selections are only a decontextualized cluster of excerpts. In this hybrid form the biographical narrative and the documentary selections from the subject’s own words were meant to have special implications in relationship to one another. In other words, *Cases of Ming Confucians* could be viewed as a documentary record “of words and deeds” but must have been meant to be more than that.<sup>17</sup>

There are two further problems with treating the Ming and Qing *xue’an* discussed in this chapter as historical works. The first is that Huang Zongxi himself, as well as *xue’an* authors before and after him, do not leave the impression that

they considered their books works of history. The second is that in the standard Qing bibliographies, most early *xue'an* were not classified under history. As a matter of fact, of the six *xue'an*-titled works included in the eighteenth-century imperial library's *Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu*) and reviewed in its catalogue (*Siku quanshu zongmu*, hereafter *Analytical Bibliography*),<sup>18</sup> only *Cases of Ming Confucians* was classified in the Division of History. It appears under the "Section of Biographical Collections in the Subdivision of Biographies" (*Shibu zhuanji lei zonglu zhi shu*).<sup>19</sup> The rest were classified under one or another of the sections devoted to the Confucian Classics and philosophers.

The eighteenth-century imperial cataloguers were working within accepted understandings of the distinctions between history and philosophy that were reflected in their classification of famous works of the past. History was presumed to narrate events and to value objectivity, and biographies as history quoted the words of their subjects as matters of record of events. This was the pattern in such classics as the *Sayings of the States* (*Guoyu*), the *Book of Documents* (*Shujing*), and in Zhu Xi's aforementioned *Sources of the Yi-Luo School*, where a collection of biographical sketches presented the words and deeds of the masters who had contributed to the rise of the Cheng brothers' school of neo-Confucianism in the Northern Song dynasty.

Philosophy was defined as the teachings of the "masters" (*zi*), sages, and worthies of the past and comprised texts that presented the philosopher's thought in his own words or that offered those words supplemented by exegetical commentary. Zhu Xi's *Reflections on Things at Hand* (*Jinsi lu*) made the anthology of topically arranged sayings and writings of several Confucian masters a popular form of philosophical textbook. In this format the carefully ordered compilation of selections from past philosophers served to advance a theory (*lishuo*), in this case Zhu Xi's own doctrine of the learning of nature and principle.

But these boundaries required interpretation. The narration of a past Confucian's words, put in the context of his deeds, that is, biography, could be regarded as history. On the other hand, the life as recorded in a Confucian's biography revealed his philosophy in action. Understanding the person of the philosopher—his biography—matters most. Moreover, when a number of biographies were gathered together, systematic networks of schools and evolving transmissions of teachings could be seen in cross reference—revealing history. When the compilers of the *Four Treasuries* looked at early *xue'an* with these issues in mind, classification was decided by the compilers' judgement about each author's intended purpose for writing. But whether their understanding of the nature of the works in question was in accord with those of the authors is a matter for us to judge. To make that judgment, it will be useful to consider them together as belonging to a previously unrecognized genre, the *xue'an*.

#### THE FIRST XUE'AN AND LATE MING THOUGHT

In the hundred years preceding the publication of Huang Zongxi's *Cases of Ming Confucians* around 1680, five related works were produced that called themselves *xue'an*, all later included in the eighteenth-century *Four Treasuries*. They were *The Case of Learning from the Analects* (*Lunyu xue'an*), written in 1617 by Huang Zongxi's teacher, Liu Zongzhou (1578–1645); *Cases of Learning of the Confucians* (*Zhuru xue'an*) by Liu Yuanqing (1544–1609), written around 1596; *Cases of Learning* (*Xue'an*), written by Wang Shen (fl. 1660s) shortly before *Cases of Ming Confucians*; *Cases of Learning of the Two Cheng Brothers* (*Er-Cheng xue'an*), a work by Huang Zongxi that was completed by his son, Huang Baijia (1643–1709); and *The Case of Learning of [Chen Jian from] Dongguan* (*Dongguan xue'an*), written by Wu Ding (fl. 1750s) in the mid-eighteenth century. These works are thematically related. In addition to claiming the form of the "case," all were engaged to various degrees in the debates over the controversial philosophy of Wang Yangming (1472–1529).

I begin, however, with the earliest text known to have used the term *xue'an* as a title—Geng Dingxiang's (1524–1596) "Cases of Learning of Mr. Lu Jiuyuan and Mr. Yang Jian" (*Lu-Yang er xiansheng xue'an*). This piece, being an essay in Geng's *Collected Works*, was not singled out for review in the *Analytical Bibliography of the Four Treasuries*. But discussion concerning the *xue'an* genre must start here because it obviously inspired the earliest known book-length *xue'an*, the *Cases of Learning of the Confucians* by Liu Yuanqing, who was Geng's devoted student.<sup>20</sup>

Geng's piece is found in the "Biography" section of his collected writings (*juan* 13). It consists of two biographies—of the Song Confucians Lu Jiuyuan (1139–1193) and Yang Jian (1141–1226)—and a concluding note. The career and sayings of Lu are presented chronologically, in separate entries. This presentation makes the account somewhat similar to that of the "records of words and deeds of eminent officials" genre of writing. But the career information and philosophical expressions included are highly selective. The format of the biography of Yang Jian is similar, except that the sources are even more focused on Yang's enlightenment as a result of his discussion with Lu. In sum, these two biographies include only words and deeds bearing on the paths to enlightenment followed by these two Southern Song worthies. The accounts do allow Lu and Yang each to speak for his own philosophical orientation. But Geng Dingxiang seems to want to present his subjects' learning as much through the observation of conduct as through a mere knowledge of words. In the cases of Lu Jiuyuan and Yang Jian, the truth of their learning is to be known only by an observation of their actions.

Geng's postscript is particularly illuminating for our understanding of why he adopted the term *xue'an*. It reveals that he wrote the biographies of Lu and Yang

to correct what he considered a misunderstanding of the learning of these two Confucian masters. Believing that their learning was arrived at through some kind of sudden enlightenment, scholars in their school of thought erred in "talking lavishly about [the greatness of] subtle enlightenment and mysterious comprehension but slighting solid cultivation." Geng wrote their biographies to show the contrary. The record of their actions and words was evidence that Lu and Yang had arrived at their learning through a gradual process, and the correct way to learn from them was for the student to follow a similar slow path: identify his own intention, know his own heart, and correct his mistakes, all the while not insisting upon his personal views but yielding to the opinions of others.<sup>21</sup>

What Geng Dingxiang did here was to reexamine and refute a current opinion. The term *xue'an* here carries the connotation of a legal "case." It is as if his aim was to reverse the verdict. What he actually did was state the facts and judge the matter simultaneously. The evidence of his "case" was the words and deeds of his two subjects, from which he also drew his conclusion. Geng's *xue'an* had the double function of filing a case and passing a verdict on it. The ultimate aim of this case was to present a correct path of learning for the potential followers of the teachings of Lu and Yang. Note that in terms of philosophical lineage Geng Dingxiang's philosophy was derived from the Taizhou school,<sup>22</sup> which in turn was derived from the Yaojiang school of Wang Yangming, whose philosophy was deemed close to that of Lu and Yang. Belonging to this lineage of learning, Geng would consider Lu and Yang as philosophical ancestors. Ultimately his *xue'an* piece aimed to guide Confucians along the right path of learning. Hence it did not stop at the judgment of the right and wrong or the superiority and inferiority of a certain theory or doctrine, but rather aimed to show a path of practice. In this sense, *xue'an* bore the meaning of plan, and learning pointed to a way of living.<sup>23</sup>

Geng Dingxiang's work inspired his student Liu Yuanqing's *Cases of Learning of the Confucians*.<sup>24</sup> The extant text of the latter has a total of twenty-five *juan*, each one for a major Confucian philosopher. The chapter heading for each *juan* always reads the "important sayings [*yaoyu*] of Mr. So and So." Altogether twelve Song Confucians and thirteen Ming Confucians were included, concluding with Liu's teacher, Geng Dingxiang himself.<sup>25</sup> Each *juan* was standardized to include a fairly long biography of the Confucian, followed by a selection of the subject's words drawn from essays or recorded conversations whose sources were not indicated. Liu Yuanqing offered no commentary on his compilation.

Some of the biographies in the book were actually written by Geng Dingxiang and were taken directly from Geng's works. These biographies included Geng's comments wherever available. By means of this borrowing, Liu showed his respect for his teacher.<sup>26</sup> But the "important sayings" of these Confucians appear to have been selected by Liu himself. Although he did not speak of it explicitly, it is clear

that Liu inherited Geng's doctrine and meant for his own compilation to expand on it.

Liu did clearly explain his intention in his preface: to reveal the fact that the learning of both Confucius and Mencius was based on the understanding of human nature. According to Liu, neither Confucius nor Mencius had elaborated on the term "nature." Instead, Confucius regarded realization of one's nature in "learning with a constant perseverance and application,"<sup>27</sup> whereas Mencius considered "giving full realization to one's heart" in order for one to understand his own nature.<sup>28</sup> These aphorisms spoke only of learning and practice and of exertion of one's inborn capacities (which meant for Mencius the development and maturation of the four germs in one's heart—benevolence, dutifulness, observance of the rites, and wisdom).<sup>29</sup> For Liu, human nature could be known through lived experience, but not through philosophical verbalization.

Later Confucians, however, obscured this doctrine of learning. According to Liu, they tried to define human nature in terms of things seen and heard, describing and explaining it only by means of words and perceptual knowledge. Thus their theories were not universal but changed with the times. All new doctrines arose as a result of the demands of change.<sup>30</sup> In fact, the evolution of Confucian learning introduced defects like the partiality and passivity of a Lu Jiuyuan or the incoherence and irrelevance of a Zhu Xi. This process, which saw the rise of one doctrine and the fall of another, was one of internal struggles like those of men "fighting inside a cave" (*xuezhong zhi dou*). For now, those who advocated "im-perceptible agreement in the internal" (the school of Mind) were carrying the day. But there was no guarantee that those who advocated "further seeking from the outside" (the school of Principle) would not make a comeback. As long as learning remained a matter of words and opinions but not genuine practice, there was no way to achieve the kind of learning that had been taught and demonstrated by Confucius and Mencius.

Liu Yuanqing's preface ends by offering his endeavor as a proposed solution to the perennial problem. The key lines read,

Would this fight inside the cave never end? Only now do I understand the greatness of the learning of Confucius and Mencius. [The sages knew that] one may talk about nature or not; and that to speak of what is external [to one's nature] does not negate the internal, and to speak of what is internal does not negate the external. Should this not perhaps be what makes a sage [*sheng*] different from a worthy Confucian [*ru*]? Nevertheless, as all the [Song and Ming] Confucians were surely seeking the light of the path of the sages, how am I to assess [their achievement] when there are no Confucius and Mencius in the world [to be the standard]? Thus I can only "prepare the cases" [*ju'an*] of these Confucians [whose ac-

counts are included in this book]. As for a judgment [*panduan*] of who among them were sages and who were worthy Confucians, so that my long-standing doubts might be cleared up, perhaps I can still come up with one before long, even though I am now old.

To put an end to the internal struggle of the Confucians, Liu tried to point out the sages' way of learning by "preparing the cases" of those Confucians who had sought the light of the sages in their lives. The biographies and "important sayings" of each of them offered models or ways of learning of these past Confucians. The interested student could decide which of them had accomplished the "learning of a sage" and which only the "learning of a worthy Confucian" and accordingly choose who deserved his emulation. It is clear, then, that his aim of producing a *xue'an* was to present for the interested scholars the ways or models of learning of some master Confucians through their own words and the knowledge of their lives. But as the reader could judge simply on the basis of his own study, the strength of abiding adherence to a master-disciple way of learning was bound to be largely reduced.

Liu Yuanqing appeared to be judgmentally neutral, as he merely "prepared the cases" but did not attempt to promote any particular Confucians. But this neutrality was actually superficial. In reality, he thought that some Ming Confucians (e.g., Wang Yangming and his followers) had attained the wisdom of a sage, while the Song Confucians remained at the level of Confucian worthies. This judgment was very mildly and indirectly expressed in this work, but appeared clearer in two other related pieces of writing. One of them, the "Preface to the Biographical Sketches of Song Confucians" (Songru zhuanlue xu), written for a book that in effect was the Song portion of *Cases of Learning of Confucians*, helps reveal the hidden intention of the latter work.<sup>31</sup> A key passage from this preface alerts us to the fact that although Liu Yuanqing "prepared the cases" of the Song Confucians in his *Cases of Learning of Confucians*, he did not see them alone as the best models to follow. Liu cited Geng, saying, "This is because the way [of learning] chosen [*zeshu*] by Song Confucians is slightly different [from that chosen by Confucius and Mencius]." Geng's metaphor of a lamp shining different measures of space according to its position is used to illustrate the point Mencius emphasized that "making careful choice [*shenshu*]"<sup>32</sup> is all important in learning. The sages' way is to be preferred because their words, "though plain, are not estranged from human experience and are boundless in meaning." The Song Confucian "theories are not independent of personal viewpoints [*jian*], which, though profound, are limited in meaning." But, "although Song Confucians surely did not succeed in seeking to illuminate the way of Confucius, as personages they were often men of lofty stature and renowned accomplishments ... far outshining those styled as Confucian

scholars in recent ages but superficially learned, unprincipled and pedantic." Their accomplishments were to be taken as a reflection of their learning.

Liu's greater regard for some Ming Confucians was expressed in another preface, "Preface to Sketches of Confucian Masters of the Present Dynasty" (Zhaodai ruzong jilue xu), written for a biographical collection by Geng Dingxiang, in which the biographies of Wang Yangming and his disciples, Zou Shouyi, Wang Gen, and Luo Hongxian, were included. As the title of the book suggests, these four figures were considered the only true Confucian masters of the Ming dynasty up to the time of the compilation. Liu more than concurred with Geng's judgment on this when he said, "In the past, the learning of Song Confucians split and was daily transmitted erroneously. Scholars analyzed terms and examined sentences in textual commentaries... [But] when Yuyao [Wang Yangming] emerged to raise the doctrine of innate knowledge, [the heart of learning] became thoroughly visible like the sun at noon." Liu also lauded Wang Yangming and his disciples for the right choice in learning they made (*zeshu*), which enabled one to make good his nature.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, Liu Yuanqing and his teacher Geng Dingxiang favored the philosophy of Wang Yangming. Hence the critical review introducing *Cases of Learning of Confucians* in the *Analytical Bibliography* is correct in saying of Liu, "because his learning took root in that of Wang Shouren [Yangming], when it came to writings of the Cheng-Zhu school he chose only those having affinity with the doctrines of Lu Jiuyuan."<sup>34</sup> More important for this analysis is that, as revealed in the two passages quoted above, the ultimate aim of a *xue'an* was to offer a path for "choosing a way" of learning.

Liu Zongzhou's *The Case of Learning from the Analects* is a commentary that elucidates Confucius' canonical text entry by entry. Liu's goal was to expound on the meaning of the sayings and events recorded in each entry and to illuminate their philosophical subtleties. Here the term *xue'an* connotes the author's examination, verification, and judgment of the meaning of the canonical text, a task traditionally addressed in classical commentary, here reinforced by the inclusion of earlier commentators' remarks alongside his own. Accordingly, the *Four Treasuries* classified this work in the subdivision of the *Four Books* in the division of Confucian Canons, thus considering it a classical commentary.<sup>35</sup>

However, Liu's work lay on the far side of the fine line between commentary as classical exegesis and commentary as philosophical interpretation. Liu used analogy and his own reasoning for his explanations and elucidations.<sup>36</sup> As the critical abstract (*tiyao*) of this work in the *Analytical Bibliography* puts it, "Liu in this book gave his own opinions candidly. His arguments are not flawless, but they are nonetheless all expressions of his own solid understanding. They are unlike those Confucian classical commentaries which, though plagiarisms of Buddhist doc-

trines, are boastfully promoted as the attainment of unsurpassable truth." Furthermore, there are also places where by means of his exposition he "criticized the later [and decadent] adherents of the doctrine of innate knowledge."<sup>37</sup> Liu's work exposes the difficulty of achieving a clear-cut categorical distinction between classical and philosophical writing or between commentary and interpretation.

*Cases of Learning (Xue'an)* by Wang Shen is a work that gathered together selections from the pre-Qin classics and the Song neo-Confucian masters.<sup>38</sup> They include the *Four Books*, Zhu Xi's *Regulations for Learning from the White Deer Hollow Academy (Bailudong [xue]gui)* and "Admonitions from the Studio of Reverence" (Jingzhai zhen), as well as *School Rules (Xueze)* by Cheng Duanmeng (1143–1191) and Dong Zhu (1152–1214). The *Analytical Bibliography* maintains that Wang's work expanded on a work of the same nature by Rao Lu (fl. 1256) and "mainly aimed at correcting the faults of the later adherents of the Yaojiang school [of Wang Yangming]."<sup>39</sup> This comment found agreement in Fang Bao's undated preface to the work. But Fang also said that the book "includes the articles [of learning] set by Rao Lu and Zhen Dexiu (1178–1235) as well as the protocols of the meetings of the Donglin Academy set by Gu Xiancheng (1550–1612) and Gao Panlong (1562–1626)."<sup>40</sup>

The texts of the *Four Books* selected by Wang Shen in effect include only sayings attributed to Confucius, Yanzi, Zengzi, Zisi, and Mencius. These sayings were meant to demonstrate the learning of the sages. Zhu Xi's *Regulations for Learning* and Cheng Duanmeng and Dong Zhu's *School Rules* were meant to elucidate the teachings of later advanced learning and elementary learning, respectively. The excerpts from these two books were listed in separate entries, under each of which elucidating notes and rules and regulations were furnished to make the content concrete. These added comments seem to have come from the works of Rao Lu and Zhen Dexiu. The substance of Wang Shen's *Cases of Learning* was conceived as a plan of teaching from the teacher's point of view and as a plan of learning (*xue'an*) from the student's. The connotation of "a plan" for the word *an* followed the usage in the writings of Geng Dingxiang and Liu Yuanqing, only it appears even more clearly in this case, as clear-cut and concise as the title of the book itself. The heart of Wang Shen's argument is equally clear: only by following the steps and articles of learning—the plan of learning—as presented in his book could one achieve the learning that would enable him to become a sage.

One early *xue'an*, *Cases of Learning of the Two Cheng Brothers*, was written early on by Huang Zongxi himself and completed by his son Huang Baijia after Zongxi's death.<sup>41</sup> The *Annotated Bibliography* states the reason for this work thus: "This work holds that the Cheng brothers differed in their attainment of virtues. So it compiled the sayings of the two Chengs and discussions about them by former Confucians into two separate *juan*, one for each of the brothers."<sup>42</sup> This de-

scription of the book's format suggests that the word *an* implied the meanings of making a classification, setting up a file, and passing a judgment. To use the legal metaphor again, the text presented a case in law and proposed a verdict for it. The sayings of the Cheng brothers and the comments on their persons and words were evidence for the verdict. Like Geng Dingxiang's "Cases of the Learning of Mr. Yang and Mr. Lu," the verdict followed from the judge's own argument. Huang Zongxi, the compiler-cum-judge, was arguing that the doctrines of the two Cheng brothers were different and that "Zhu Xi gained his [intellectual] strength mainly from Cheng Yi and might not have thoroughly learned the teaching of Cheng Hao."<sup>43</sup> Likewise, "scholars must be careful to take note that the two Cheng masters guided students in different ways."<sup>44</sup> The implication was that Zhu Xi could not represent the whole of orthodox Confucianism.

The final early *xue'an* to be included in the *Annotated Bibliography* was Wu Ding's *The Case of Learning of [Chen Jian] from Dongguan*, completed in the mid-eighteenth century. This book was specifically written to defend Wang Yangming's interpretation of Song neo-Confucianism by refuting one of his late Ming critics—Chen Jian's (1497–1567) *A General Discussion of Defects of Learning (Xuebu tongbian)*, which was dedicated to critiquing Wang Yangming's *Master Zhu's Final Conclusions Arrived at Late in Life (Zhuzi wannian dinglun)*.<sup>45</sup> Wang's book, by means of a chronological arrangement of Zhu Xi's letters to his friends and students, had concluded that Zhu Xi's philosophy differed from that of Lu Jiuyuan in his younger years but converged with Lu's thought in his old age. Chen Jian, by his own chronological study of Zhu Xi's letters, reached the opposite conclusion and charged that Lu Jiuyuan's version of Confucian learning was not Confucianism but Chan Buddhism. Wu Ding disagreed. "He therefore listed Chen Jian's statements and made his own argument against them one by one."<sup>46</sup> The term *xue'an* here implied a use of documentary evidence to reexamine and repudiate an accepted theory or formulation. As in a litigation case, both evidential statements and judgment are provided.

In these early *xue'an*-titled works we have discussed so far, the purpose of "making a case" for a Confucian was to allow him to "make an argument" or "advance a theory" of his own. The *xue'an* writings drew upon the established neo-Confucian traditions of recording the "words and deeds" of masters, with or without commentary, to teach the learning of the Way. In the hands of a skillful scholar-compiler, the selection, arrangement, and classification of these documentary materials, together with commentary on them, had always constituted a hermeneutics. When these late-Ming scholars began to speak of their compilations as "*an*," the judicial metaphor suggested a subtle shift in assumptions about how the reader was expected to find the truth. A master's words and deeds, instead of being seen as canon or history, were defined as evidence, and the body of the text

on him called for the reader's evaluative judgment (verdict) of the case put together by the author-compiler. To weigh evidence to decide for or against the truth of philosophical claims was particularly called for in the late-Ming context of fierce debate over the ideas of Wang Yangming and his followers. Each of the early *xue'an* weighed in on one side or the other of these debates, justifying the eighteenth-century imperial cataloguers' classification of such works as philosophy. Of these works, those written by Geng Dingxiang and Liu Yuanqing had the deeper meaning of providing models or plans of learning—that is, documenting for the reader records on a variety of masters. Huang Zongxi's *Cases of Ming Confucians* can profitably be examined and understood in the context of these pioneering works that experimented with the forms of a *xue'an*.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE AIM AND NATURE OF CASES OF MING CONFUCIANS

How, then, do we understand *Cases of Ming Confucians* in this intellectual context? First of all, being published around 1680, it was able to look back on the whole Ming dynasty and its philosophical polemics as things of the past. The eighteenth-century *Four Treasuries* compilers, seeing that the work grouped philosophers around regional lineages of masters and disciples, including Huang Zongxi's own teachers, understood the work's organizing principle to be based on tracing philosophical schools of thought. They interpreted the book's structural principles and the implications of Huang's arguments in terms of school rivalries in which he had taken a clear side. Thus they charged that the book was a manifestation of intellectual partisanship inherited from the late Ming, but “not exclusively written for the discussion of learning [*jiangxue*].”<sup>48</sup> In sum, their classification of the work as history allowed readers to avoid the contentious issue of philosophical endorsement of controversial Ming personages. Was that the intention of Huang Zongxi? What about the views of Huang himself and his other readers?

Our examination begins with the two prefaces and the “Organizing Principles” (Fafan) Huang Zongxi wrote for *Cases of Ming Confucians*.<sup>49</sup> These two prefaces, both written in 1693, share common themes but differ in language and ideas. The first preface was written while Huang was gravely ill. It is not as clear and cogent as the revised one he completed after recovering from his illness. However, the first preface is important in that it betrays Huang's immediate concerns while writing.

In both prefaces Huang Zongxi expressed the same opposition to the prevalent scholarly practice of doctrinal partisanship. The revised preface lamented “present-day scholars who insist upon going only one way, forcibly construing the statements [of Zhu Xi] as the standard by which to assess the ancients and the moderns, and slandering as wayward and rebellious whoever slightly differs from

them.” But he also predicted scornfully that the one-way-only scholars were tilling a ground full of “yellow cogon grass and white reeds [*huangmao baiwei*]”—a phrase coined by the great Su Shi (1037–1101) to describe the lackluster performance of infertile soil.<sup>50</sup> Conformity stunted development, as far as Confucian learning was concerned. In opposition to this, Huang emphasized the importance of diversity in approaches to learning, using the analogy of travelers arriving at the same destination by different paths, or of all rivers finding the sea as their final destination. In this spirit he presented the original doctrines of serious Ming Confucians and let the student make his own choice of whom to follow. The Confucians selected were serious because, as the first preface put it, “whether their attainment was profound or shallow, perfect or faulty, they had all given their best efforts, and had exhausted the myriad dimensions of their minds before becoming masters of their own schools.” Huang's contribution, as stated in both prefaces, was to “distinguish between the sources and tributaries [of their learning] to make clear their essential doctrines.” In both prefaces, Huang used the metaphor of a filled water pot to show how *Cases of Ming Confucians* should be used. The student should imagine “a water pot placed at the main thoroughfare. If one carries only a bowl or a wooden ladle there and takes the water, he will not go away unsatiated.” *Cases of Ming Confucians* was a reservoir of learning—a single source, divisible as the thirsty student selects what he needs according to his own measure. A useful sourcebook or reader is apportioned like water into bowls, but water itself is not a divisible thing.

It is also noteworthy that both prefaces quoted Tang Bin's comments on the book: “The doctrines contained in the *Cases of Ming Confucians* are complex and various, but if you know how to read them, you will find that they are not without some unifying thread.”<sup>51</sup> The revised preface also quoted Chen Xigu (1634–1687),<sup>52</sup> who compared the text to a famous Tang painting: “The *Xue'an* is like the *Picture of the King's Audience* [*Wanghui tu*],<sup>53</sup> the sight of which pierces one's mind and startles his eyes. For only in this does one see the greatness of the King, who embraces all in the universe.” These comments conveyed that this book had a broad coverage of rich materials as well as a unifying theme; it was not a grab bag of selections but communicated a doctrine of the author's own.

The first preface included a lengthy critique of Yun Richu (1602–1679), who along with Huang was also an eminent disciple of Liu Zongzhou. In 1669 Yun was residing in Shaoxing editing the many works of Liu into a comprehensive reader, *Essentials of Master Liu's Teachings* (*Liuzi jieyao*). This collection “took Zhu Xi's *Reflections on Things at Hand* as a model, and compiled Liu's works into classifications.”<sup>54</sup> Huang's preface criticized Yun for bias. “Concerning a learning which could be arrived at by different paths and ways of consideration, he still has not been able to move beyond some fixed positions.” Yun was evaluating Liu's theory



of “sincerity of the mind”—a theory Huang insisted was highly original—based on Zhu Xi’s interpretation. Believing that Yun was unable to see the core of Liu’s doctrine, much less to expound on it, Huang declined to write a preface to Yun’s work.<sup>55</sup> In his own preface Huang said that *Cases of Ming Confucians* by contrast offered a faithful presentation of Liu: “I based my argument on [the doctrine of] our late teacher, not daring to alter it.” The fact that Huang went to great lengths to address this issue suggests that in the course of its writing, *Cases of Ming Confucians* had been shaped as a response to Yun’s interpretation of their teacher’s learning.

Why were these matters dropped from the revised preface? The main reason seems to be related to Huang’s emphasis on a scholar’s personal choice in his way of learning. There is no doubt Huang believed in loyalty to his teacher and felt reverence for his teacher’s learning. But on principle, he did not want to present Liu’s philosophy and practice from the vantage point of his own membership in Liu’s lineage of learning. As philosophically the universe was made up of one principle and myriad manifestations of it (*liyi fenshu*)—a proposition shared by practically every neo-Confucian—so Confucian learning might be pursued down a variety of paths. Thus in the way of learning, free choice was better than abiding subscription to some single doctrine. Overemphasis on the intellectual role of doctrinal transmission went against the spirit of seeking the Way through multiple “cases.”<sup>56</sup> This idea was elaborated on in the itemized “Organizing Principles” to *Cases of Ming Confucians*.

The first item of the “Organizing Principles” was a criticism of two contemporary works on neo-Confucianism that on the surface seemed quite similar to *Cases of Ming Confucians*. They were Zhou Rudeng’s (1547–1629) *Orthodox Transmission of the Learning of the Sages* (*Shengxue zongchuan*) and Sun Qifeng’s (1585–1675) *Orthodox Transmission of the Learning of Principle* (*Lixue zongchuan*). Both works were also organized around biographies plus excerpts from the subjects’ words and the authors’ comments on them.<sup>57</sup> Huang saw in these two works of “orthodox transmission” the common defect of obscurity, confusion, and impurity in the identification and presentation of philosophical doctrines. Zhou was overly subjective, letting his own Chan-laden views blur other Confucian masters’ ideas. Sun lacked a sense of discrimination, unable to distinguish adequately the essential points of the Confucian masters. Their documentation was incomplete, their information inadequate. Huang believed that “when a scholar reads my book then he will realize the scantiness, sketchiness, and carelessness of these two authors.” These two works would lead the student along a confined path of doctrinal transmission, which was very different from the solid use of evidence in the way of learning that Huang himself advocated.

Huang’s own way of presenting the learning of the neo-Confucians is spelled out more explicitly in the sixth entry of the “Organizing Principles.” He takes up the criteria for the selection of materials and the intended audience for his book: “In learning, we regard as truth what each person has discovered himself and has made apparent to others. Included in this book are partial opinions as well as opposing. Students should pay attention to the differences. This is the meaning of the same root dividing into myriad branches. To simply add water to water cannot be called learning.”<sup>58</sup> It becomes clear, then, that Huang appealed to students who pursued learning for their own moral development, but not to those “vulgar scholars” or “professional students” “who depend upon other schools and copy from other people.” It follows that the materials included in his book were not to be used as evidence that would distinguish one subschool from another or evaluate the status of the schools. They were reference for interested scholars, which would be “useful to themselves individually and alone.” The cases were irreducibly individual precisely because this book did not aim to teach the lineal transmission of doctrines at all.

The seventh entry of the “Organizing Principles” said that the materials were to help readers attain wisdom by themselves. As Huang emphatically stated,

[T]he ancients did not lightly transmit their teachings, as they wanted students to make their own discoveries. Even the Buddhists fear that when [the riddle of truth] has been given out, people will play with its externals. This book cannot avoid giving many easy generalizations. If students gather information from it without making genuine effort, I would have done injury to the world for having written it.<sup>59</sup>

This book did not aim at a distinction of the origins and developments of schools of thought in order to establish a hierarchy of philosophical doctrines. Understanding schools of thought was useful for the scholar just entering the gate of learning to help him know the essence of the doctrine(s) he proposed to put into practice. The real intention of the book was to provide the scholar with a set of dossiers on those Ming Confucians whose achievements “were not equaled in former times”<sup>60</sup> for his own guidance. But the student had to reflect on their meaning to arrive at his own understanding as a Chan monk had to contemplate the meaning of “public cases” (*gong’an*) for his own enlightenment. Incidentally, it is in this way that the definition of *xue’an* as a kind of scholarly *gong’an* makes any sense.

Significantly, neither the prefaces nor the “Organizing Principles” to *Cases of Ming Confucians* say anything to indicate the work as a “history” of Confucian learning. Terms like “orthodox transmission” (*daotong*), “orthodox lineage” or

“orthodox doctrine” (*zhengzong*), and “doctrinal succession” (*zongtong*) do not appear in the text. Even the fifth entry of the “Organizing Principles,” which accounts for the grouping of the cases around regional lineages of learning or schools of thought, explains lineage-based learning as only one learning strategy among others.

The learning of the Confucians is unlike the learning of the five schools of [Chan] Buddhism, which have to trace back to the Qingyuan and Nanyue schools. Confucius himself did not receive his learning from any particular teacher. Zhou Dunyi arose without any predecessor. What Lu Jiuyuan taught was not what he had learned from anyone else. And yet, from the times of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi to those of He Ji (1188–1268), Wang Bo (1197–1274), Jin Lüxiang (1232–1303) and Xu Qian (1270–1337)—that is, over an interval of several centuries—the norms of the ancestors’ rules were constantly observed. This kind of transmission differs from the Buddhist custom of making only a tenuous association of intellectual lineages. In this book, therefore, divisions into schools of thought are primarily based on their transmissions. [Cases] that arose in isolation and those about less-known later scholars are all collected in the section “Cases of Miscellaneous Scholars.”<sup>61</sup>

This, then, argued to the effect that the value of the genuine Confucian learning of the Ming scholars did not depend upon a long-period, larger “lineal transmission” frame of reference, tracing them back to predecessors. Serious scholars need not rule out the viability of acquiring Confucian learning through clearly and continuously transmitted schools of thought, but acquiring it through one’s personal realization was more cherished. The main point in preparing cases both for Confucians of defined schools of thought and for independent Confucians was to illustrate the actual practice of learning rather than to argue based on the privileging of some tenuous association of school origins. The word “*an*” as here used has a clear connotation of classification, but it was not the schools that really mattered. To sum up the above analysis, it can be seen according to Huang Zongxi’s own words that the *Cases of Ming Confucians* was produced to provide for the student of Confucian learning a wealth of source materials for his further study. The materials themselves were evidence of different models and plans of learning of master Ming Confucians, presented to teach the student how to find his own path in philosophy and practice.

The aim of Huang Zongxi can also be understood from prefaces to the book written before the middle of the Qing dynasty. None of these early readers wrote of it as a historical work, but saw it as a work of philosophy and guide to self-cultivation. This point is especially obvious in the following excerpts from the 1707 preface by Yu Zhun, son of the eminent neo-Confucian minister Yu Chenglong (1617–1684).

[This book] shows the main course and the tributaries [of the river of learning]. It clarifies the intellectual lineage of each scholar and analyzes the achievements and defects of his learning as well as his difference from other scholars so clearly it is as if one were pointing at his own palm. It furthermore records the scholar’s sayings and writings for later scholars to discuss. It is truly the mountain of treasure of this Way and the raft of the scholar [in the course of learning].<sup>62</sup>

The same point is made in different words in the 1691 preface to the first edition by Jia Run, sponsor of the publication of the book, and the 1693 preface by Qiu Zhao’ao (1638–1717), Huang Zongxi’s student. These important prefaces, while noting that the schools of thought included in this book were clearly shown in their origins and developments, believed it to be objective and penetrating precisely because the merits and defects of each was shown in an evenhanded way. As said before, the various sayings and writings that this book selected for inclusion were not to be used solely as evidence for establishing lineages of learning in a hierarchy of transmission, but rather, and more important, as individual examples for readers to consider in seeking the foundations for their own learning practice.

Precisely because the *Cases of Ming Confucians* offered narratives of Confucian learning, each of which aimed to teach its own “doctrine” (*zongzhi*), it was viewed by scholars who advocated a unified and authoritative way of learning as some kind of heterodoxy that must be criticized. Tang Jian (1778–1861), who insisted on unreserved respect for and loyalty to the teaching of Zhu Xi, was one such scholar. Tang, in his *Small Records of the Cases of Learning of the Qing Dynasty* (*Guochao xue’an xiaozhi*), charged Huang Zongxi thus.

Huang Zongxi compiled the *Cases of the Song Confucians*, *Cases of the Yuan Confucians* and *Cases of the Ming Confucians*, in which doctrines appearing in the last several hundred years, whether pure, flawed, correct, false, just or partial, are all included. Scholars are delighted at the breadth of their coverage and the eloquence of the words in them, and as a result believe that the world’s empty and wild talks are all properties of learning. They do not know that instead the core principles of a thousand years’ learning have thus been confused and the hearts of posterity have been damaged and submerged. Confucius said, “The study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed.”<sup>63</sup> Mencius said, “What arises in the mind will interfere with policy, and what shows itself in policy will interfere with practice.”<sup>64</sup> These words do not deceive in the least. . . . Mr. Huang was a student of the Way himself, why did he never think about this?<sup>65</sup>

This is indeed telling. What Tang Jian attacked was Huang Zongxi’s doctrine of learning not from one fixed authority or from one particular school. This none-

theless perfectly reflected the philosophical position of *Cases of Ming Confucians*, a work offering a theoretical argument on the importance of personal choice in the way of Confucian learning.

#### HUANG ZONGXI'S CONCEPTION OF CONFUCIAN LEARNING

A good way to approach the underlying philosophy behind *Cases of Ming Confucians* is to compare it to the works by Zhou Rudeng and Sun Qifeng that Huang Zongxi criticized. All three were late Ming or early Qing readers in Confucian learning. However, the materials in the books by Zhou and Sun were organized to display the "orthodox transmission" of their titles. From their point of view, genuine Confucian learning was transmitted as orthodoxy the way pure blood was transmitted from an ancestor to a descendant. Only when the transmission was pure could the learning claim to be genuine.<sup>66</sup> This principle of teaching and learning, giving and receiving, began with the recognition of an orthodox founder and depended upon a lineage-like "transmission of mind." In the crowded world of Ming Confucians, the effort to distinguish correct from heterodox lineages of learning resulted in bitter scholarly struggles of a partisan nature.

Huang Zongxi, by contrast, did not use metaphors like the Chan Buddhist "transmission of the mind" and "transmission of the lamp."<sup>67</sup> His metaphor was an integrated traffic network of the rivers and the sea. All rivers, so long as they could lead one to the sea, were useful waterways; conceptually there was no reason to prefer the main watercourse to the tributaries. In this way Huang believed more in the superiority of free choice under the conditions of factual comparison. Even though he personally followed the doctrines of Wang Yangming and Liu Zongzhou, it was precisely because they taught reliance on individual insight over dependence on external authority that he confidently conceived of his book as a *xue'an*—with all the connotations we have found.

A Confucian *xue'an*, then, was an alternative to a work on Confucian learning as *zongchuan*, or "orthodox transmission." Both types led students through a broad history of Confucian learning. But from the student's perspective, where *zongchuan* confined him to following the model of particular masters, *xue'an* writings gave him the possibility of freedom. Because of its evenhanded presentation of independent cases, *Cases of Ming Confucians* allowed the student to find the most appropriate and useful model for his practical emulation in accordance with his own aptitude and circumstances.

A significant change in the conception of the conduct of Confucian learning thus appeared to have taken place in the late Ming. Whereas the emphasis of *zongchuan* writings was on the method of transmission—a demand of direct, lineal give and take—the emphasis of *xue'an* writings was on case study—an advocacy of parallel comparison. It is indeed ironic that the first writer of the *zongchuan*

genre, Zhou Rudeng, was presented, mistakenly and intentionally so, as a leading spokesman of the Taizhou school of Wang Yangming thought in the late Ming, which advocated freedom of the self and independent judgment in matters moral and social.<sup>68</sup> *Cases of Ming Confucians* demanded no purity in doctrinal inheritance and conveyed a sense of intellectual independence and openness, which could claim to reflect a deeper understanding of Wang Yangming's principles.

The question remains as to how the *xue'an* writers, in particular Liu Yuanqing and Huang Zongxi, understood both the substance and the method of Confucian learning. Both Liu and Huang turned out to be so absorbed in expounding on epistemological issues that they took ontology for granted in their conception of knowledge. For Liu Yuanqing, the substance of Confucian learning was nature (*xing*)—human nature, to be exact. The issue was how to let this nature work to its fullest capacity. Because he maintained that human nature was substantive but beyond the realm of perceptual knowledge ("not what can be seen" and "not what can be heard"),<sup>69</sup> all the methods of study propounded by the Song masters were only the articulated opinions (*jian*) of worthy Confucians (*ru*) but not the authentic teachings of the sages (*sheng*). Confucians had better learn the way the sages themselves learned, taking their persons as models and their teachings as a standard of learning. Nevertheless, the doctrines of the great Confucians of Song and Ming times were good reference points from which one could better understand the superiority of the sages' teaching. Liu's *xue'an* collection taught by exposing the "problematic" methods of past Confucians for the student to know and to avoid.

Huang Zongxi's ontological premise, as stated in his prefaces to *Cases of Ming Confucians*, was, "That which fills Heaven and Earth is Mind." This "Mind" was understood as referring to the human mind or heart or both, wherein reside the principles of heaven and earth and their unending manifestations, which together constituted knowledge. Again, like Liu Yuanqing, what immediately concerned Huang was the epistemological issue.

Because man and Heaven and Earth are one body, to exhaust and comprehend the principles of Heaven and Earth is to do it in one's mind. Later scholars misunderstood the idea of the past worthy [Zhu Xi], holding that these principles are hanging within Heaven and Earth and the myriad of things, and are accordingly to be comprehended and exhausted. Does this not almost amount to [Gaozi's idea of] "rightness is external" [to human nature]?<sup>70</sup>

Knowledge was locatable in the mind and therefore was to be sought within the mind. Since the myriad manifestations of the principles found unity in the mind, so "the variations in learning and scholarship are exactly what show the infinity of the body of the Way [*Daoti*]." Huang also likened the body of the Way to the sea,

which was the final destination of all rivers large and small. As motion, or change, was the nature of the Way, so variety was the nature of the way of learning. Legitimate methods of learning must be many; what was important was to be knowledgeable about them.

On this methodological issue, Huang asserted that in the “discussion of learning” (*jiangxue*) Ming Confucians surpassed their predecessors of former ages in having completely exposed the fallacies of Buddhist and Daoist doctrines. “Discussion of learning” was almost exclusively understood as the exploration and articulation of methods to arrive at the right knowledge. How did the Ming Confucians achieve this? The key was their flexibility. “The Confucians did not follow a single path in their learning. Some interpreted and elaborated the doctrines of their masters, branching into several schools of thought. Their lifelong learning and scholarship often changed course over time.” This process of advancing new methods of learning was the key to the Ming Confucians’ success.

Huang’s distinction as a thinker lay in his understanding that knowledge is contingent upon a person’s individual endowment and preference. The job he assigned to himself was “to distinguish their [the innovative Ming Confucians’] doctrines [*zongzhi*] as well as the origin and development of their learning . . . and let the student choose from them by himself.” Since that element of choice was the premise, the presentation of individual cases was the logical outcome. And because of choice, the cases as candidates to be considered in making choices would be meaningless if they were not documented reliably. *Xue’an* writings thus created knowledge by providing evidence based on the facts of each Confucian’s progress.

Many of the same ideas and reasoning were also expressed in the variant, earlier preface. On the ontological premise, Huang said, “The Mind has no original substance [*benti*] except what is achieved by its activity [*gongli*]. To exhaust and comprehend principles [*li*] is to exhaust and comprehend Mind’s myriad manifestations rather than the myriad manifestations of all things.” He was here maintaining that the unity of knowledge and action demand knowledge to be found in action—action of the mind, to be exact—but not vice versa. A person gained knowledge in his own way as his ever-active and individual mind responded to what affected it. Thus Huang could conclude, “[As] the recorded dialogs of the former scholars show that each of them was different, although they all reflected the mind-in-itself [*xinti*], which is always changing and quite without rest, one’s insistence upon fixing the situation will turn out to be quite futile and useless.”<sup>71</sup> The validity of a single path of action for all truth seekers to get the truth is therefore unpromising.

But Huang’s insistence that the outside (perceptual knowledge) was subject to the inside (innate knowledge) also brought him logical difficulty. His premise would dictate that the outside was worth knowing only inasmuch as it could con-

firm the inside. Since no particular scholar or school need be followed specifically in the pursuit of truth, one could seek truth only by depending on the functioning of his own mind. Freedom and uniqueness of the mind was proved when knowledge of the multitude of past dialogues was not necessary. Why, then, the compilation of the *Cases of Ming Confucians*? To get away from this difficulty, Huang predicated the seeking of knowledge upon the cultivation of personal virtues: “Only after cultivating virtue could learning be discussed.” This, however, sounds tautological: one has to know how to cultivate virtue in the first place, and the question remains, “by what method?”

To sum up Huang’s peculiar argument, he had two propositions to offer: one based on a subjective ontology (“That which fills Heaven and Earth is Mind”) and one based on an objective epistemology (the case study). The latter counted as a means to arrive at the former. As conveyed in the preface, he was promoting reliable textual information and independent free choice of method of learning. Huang seemed not to have been worried by the logic that relativism in methodology—freedom to select from a variety of models—might lead to relativism in knowledge. In praising the achievements of the Ming Confucians, he said, “Only where they have given the best of their efforts and exhausted the myriad dimensions of their minds, without working fuzzily or falsely appropriating the chaff of others’ learning, have they established schools of thought.” For him the universal seriousness of these scholars was one basis for their common ground.

More abstractly, he sought common ground in the ontological proposition that asserted “the myriad manifestations of a single entity [*yiben wanshu*].” Here the metaphor of a water pot for public use that we have discussed is especially telling. To put this metaphor of water philosophically, the whole has no boundary and in terms of quality knowledge is integral, but when one takes a measure of it to get to the whole a boundary is made. Such boundaries, delineating models and methods, are countless, however, and any model might work, contingent upon the person who seeks it. So the case, the *xue’an*, functions by showing an assortment of models that will suffice depending on the situation of the seeker himself.

The crucial thing in the compilation of a *xue’an* book was therefore the correct presentation of the doctrine(s) of a philosophy in the form of each case, which was to focus on exactly “the place where the thinker in question applied his most effective effort [*deli chu*], which is also the student’s starting point [*rumen chu*].”<sup>72</sup> As for the problem of boundaries set by the various catchwords and aphorisms that summed up different doctrines, Huang dealt with it by quoting a famous statement by the Tang poet, Du Mu: “A ball may roll around on a game-table: horizontally, diagonally, circularly, or vertically. One does not really know all the directions it may take. All one could know for sure is that it will not leave the table.” And Huang added, “This can be applied to the thinkers’ doctrines too.” It

would mean that one needed only to grasp the general principle (the table) to be able to use any method (ball) effectively. Knowledge was to be sought by free play within a defined boundary.

But who or what built the table? Huang had criticized Zhou Rudeng and Sun Qifeng for bias—selectivity in the thinkers they chose to include in their books, exclusivity in defining Confucian learning only in terms of the lineage of *lixue* or *xinxue*. But if their work was tainted with subjective interest, had Huang and other *xue'an* writers achieved objectivity in the selection and presentation of their source materials? Notice this organizing principle from Huang.

Frequently I find that compilers of the former scholars' recorded dialogues tend to select at random some sayings without knowing why they have made such selections. And yet, if the spirit of a man's entire life has not been revealed, how can his learning be made visible? My own work is compiled [directly] from [careful selection of essentials in] the scholars' collected writings and not copied from the earlier anthologies.<sup>73</sup>

Serious as he was, was he also judicious? Huang can be said to have based his authority as a philosopher on his being socially recognized as a universalist, a serious historian, and a loyal follower of his particular Confucian teachers. Yet for all its broadmindedness, Huang's *Cases of Ming Confucians* selected only certain aspects and versions of the body of learning that is called Confucian.<sup>74</sup> For example, the influential but "heterodox" Li Zhi (1527–1602) was noticeably excluded.

Huang's own preferred path for seeking the truth was revealed in his warning that a mere encyclopedic or referential use of his work missed his intention for the book. He was maintaining that truth was to be arrived at through personal practice. Reading, or even language for that matter, was only the starting point of practice. Knowledge was not knowledge and truth not truth until verified by action. Mere informational reading, however conscientious, was no correct way to acquire truth. In this way, Huang was much in the Wang Yangming tradition of philosophizing, and his presentation of the Confucian way in cases reflected his master's doctrines of the unity of knowledge and action.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the foregoing discussion of *xue'an* works produced before the middle of the eighteenth century, it becomes clear that in the two-character term *xue'an* the word "*xue*" means "Confucian learning," which in that historical context was predominantly neo-Confucian learning. The meaning of the word "*an*," however, is manifold. First, it was used in the sense of archival management, meaning to file documents, to set up classified files, to put something into the record, all for future reference. Second, it could be conceived as a Confucian counterpart or ver-

sion of a Chan Buddhist *gong'an*—a linguistic device for one to reach personal comprehension. Third, it was used in the sense of a legal case, in which statements, judgment, and verdict were embedded in a narrative of particulars concerning an individual person. Fourth, it meant a plan of learning, as could be found in a primer that offered rules and guides to action. All these meanings, however, share the common connotation of "case," so it makes sense for us to translate *xue'an* as a "case of learning."

*Xue'an* writings by Geng Dingxiang and Liu Yuanqing, who produced the first works bearing that title, have the following characteristics. First, a *xue'an* made its chief content the description of a number of Confucians' ways of learning; it aimed at providing plans and models of learning for the interested student. Second, *xue'an* authors included the Confucians' words to reveal their cases of learning; they did not pass judgment on the cases, out of respect for the reader's own judgment. Third, *xue'an* authors actually made their judgments by means of the materials they selected for inclusion in their books, thereby consciously guiding the course of their readers' paths. Last but no less significant, the basic scholarly attitude of *xue'an* writers was open and egalitarian. These characteristics are also found in the greatest work of the genre, *Cases of Ming Confucians*. Therefore, like these predecessors, it should be recognized as a philosophical work, even though it also has use as history.

*Xue'an* writings, as best represented by *Cases of Ming Confucians*, use cases to help guide students in a path of Confucian learning (*xue*) where an individual's virtuous practice is the final determinant of the efficacy of his knowledge. An individual *xue'an* case may have the effect of a humanistic narrative, inspiring the reader through empathy with a record of someone's lived experience. A book of *xue'an* cases may roughly produce philosophical knowledge the way a law court may produce legal knowledge. To wit, testimonies are presented in the excerpts of the thinkers' writings and speeches, cross examinations are conducted and references sought from data everywhere in a *xue'an* anthology, verdicts are proposed in the author-compiler's introductions and in the biographies he composed. But the justice of the case is based upon evidence that in the final analysis is presented not by the litigants but by the judge himself. Since the judge—author-compiler—is an interested party in the trial, he is never free from the suspicion that his cases have been subject to manipulation. Can evidence so produced lead to objective knowledge? Isn't the knowledge so generated prescriptive in nature rather than descriptive? For the modern scholar, then, *xue'an* writings can be used to construct a history of thought, but one cannot depend upon them alone faithfully to reconstruct the learning of the Confucians they present. Nonetheless, who is to say that no Ming-Qing student ever found among these cases a satisfactory guide to a virtuous life?

NOTES

- 1 In *The Records of Ming Scholars*, ed. Julia Ching (hereafter *RM*), a collection of English translations of the prefaces and selected biographies from Huang's work, the term *xue'an* is rendered "records of scholars."
- 2 Exactly when the *Cases of Ming Confucians* was written is not known. Huang Zongxi merely stated in both his original and revised prefaces that it was completed after the year 1676, the fifteenth year of the Kangxi reign (1662–1722). Modern scholars dispute the date of its actual completion. Chen Zuwu, *Zhongguo xue'an shi*, 122–131, argues for 1684 or 1685, while Wu Guang, *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo*, 17–19, argues for 1678 or 1679.
- 3 For instance, Yang Xiangkui, ed., *Qingru xue'an xinbian*, 8 vols.; Fang Keli and Li Jinqian, eds., *Xiandai xinrujia xue'an*; and Dai Yi, ed., *Ershi shiji Zhonghua xue'an*. The *Qingru xue'an xinbian*, drawing on the original compilation, is a modern presentation of the biographies and selected writings of major Qing scholars in the fields of neo-Confucian learning, evidentiary studies, and classical studies. The *Xiandai xinrujia xue'an* is the account of eleven scholars who, as the work's "Abstract" states it, "basically belong to the first and second generations of modern neo-Confucians." The *Ershi shiji Zhonghua xue'an* comprises four divisions of learning—learning in a general manner, in history, in philosophy, and in literature—of forty-seven scholars who, according to the work's "Brief Introduction," "have made outstanding or important contributions to the development of twentieth-century Chinese culture." For an earlier, and ambiguously titled, example with no relevance to Confucian learning, see Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Hu Shi chan xue'an*. There are also *xue'an* books for individual scholars, often named after their hometowns or their courtesy appellatives. Well-known works in this category include Rong Zhaozu's *Bu Mingru Dongguan xue'an* for Chen Jian (1497–1567) of the Ming, Hou Wailu's *Chuanshan xue'an* for Wang Fuzhi (1619–1692) of the Qing, and Huang Si'ai's *Nanlei xue'an* for Huang Zongxi, which in actuality covered the "school" of Huang Zongxi.
- 4 For useful recent introductions to the compilation of *Mingru xue'an*, see Chen Zuwu, *Zhongguo xue'an shi*, 111–159; Wu Guang, *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo*, 11–28; Ching, introduction to *RM*; Cang Xiuliang, "Mingru xue'an." For recent discussions on the book's philosophical relevance, see Liu Shuxian, *Huang Zongxi xinxue de dingwei*, 125–163; Gu Qingmei, "Cong Mingru xue'an tan Huang Lizhou"; Hou Wailu, Qiu Hansheng, and Zhang Qizhi, eds., *Song-Ming lixue shi*, 2:781–822.
- 5 For writings especially bearing on this aspect, see, e.g., Qian Mu, "Huang Lizhou"; Huang Jinxing, "Xue'an tcai"; Chen Jinzhong, "Huang Zongxi Mingru xue'an."
- 6 The term *xue'an*, apart from appearing in the titles of the works of Geng Dingxiang (1524–1596) and Liu Yuanqing (1544–1609), which will be discussed later, also appears in the 1618 preface that the well-known Confucian scholar Zou Yuanbiao (1551–1624) wrote for Wang Zajin's (*jinsi* 1592) *Longsha xuelu*. Dr. Lü Miaofen of the Institute of Modern History at the Academia Sinica in Taipei brought my attention to this occurrence. In the context of this book, the term best means "cases of learned expressions of the Confucian masters."

- 7 See Ching, introduction to *RM*, 8; Chen Zuwu, *Zhongguo xue'an shi*, 132, citing Chen Jinsheng.
- 8 See Qian Mu, "Huang Lizhou," 288; Chen Zuwu, *Zhongguo xue'an shi*, 135–137.
- 9 Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo jin sanbai nian*, 46, 48.
- 10 Liang Qichao [Yinbingshi zhuren], "Liyang," 2–4.
- 11 On this point, see Struve, "Huang Zongxi in Context," 479.
- 12 See Chen Zuwu, *Zhongguo xue'an shi*, 6–18.
- 13 Ibid. Some scholars—Chen Zuwu for one—indeed attribute the origins of the "history of learning and scholarship" genre to the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*.
- 14 See *ibid.*, 27–53, for a discussion of the history, content, and value of this book. Chen also notes that the same view has been expressed by Liang Qichao and Chen Yuan (1880–1971).
- 15 See Zhu Xi, *Yi-Luo yuanyuan lu*. Nivison refers to commemorative writings like epitaphs, memorial tablets, obituaries, etc., as "social biography" in his "Aspects of Traditional Chinese Biography," 457–463. Franke, *An Introduction to the Sources of Ming History*, 74, compares it with "historical biography" found in histories.
- 16 See Wang Deyi, introduction to *Yi-Luo yuanyuan lu*.
- 17 Several modern scholars have pointed out the philosophical nature of the *Mingru xue'an*. See, e.g., Chen Jinzhong, "Huang Zongxi Mingru xue'an," 129–139; *RM*, 268–269; Struve, "Huang Zongxi in Context," 479–484.
- 18 For a partial translation of the classification of the *Four Treasuries*, see Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, 270.
- 19 For the imperial cataloguer's "critical abstract" (*tiyao*) of the *Mingru xue'an*, see Yong Rong (1744–1790) et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:58.527.
- 20 For the text of this piece, see Geng Dingxiang, *Geng Tiantai xiansheng wenji*, 13.1a–6a.
- 21 Geng especially highlighted the last point by saying that Yang Jian in his old age realized the classical teaching of "ascertaining the views of all [with whom one associates], giving up one's own opinion and following that of others." This expression comes from the "Da Yu mo" chapter of the *Book of Documents*. For the translation, see Legge, trans., *The Shoo King*, 53.
- 22 For a modern account of Geng Dingxiang by Julia Ching, see Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1368–1644, 718–772. For a sample of his philosophical writings, see *juan* 35 of the *Mingru xue'an*.
- 23 Qian Mu, with reference to the *Mingru xue'an*, also reasoned that "what were called 'xue'an' were the various plans proposed for the learning of the time." See Qian Mu, "Huang Lizhou de Mingru xue'an," 292.
- 24 For the critical abstract of Liu's work, see Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:96.815. The date of this work is not certain. Liu Yuanqing's preface to it was undated in the Wanli (1572–1622) edition of the work. In that copy there is a handwritten note by an anonymous author after the preface dated "mid-spring of the year 1596." The name of Geng Dingxiang (d. 1596) also appears in the last line of the book's table of

contents, but Geng's biography and selected words are not found in the text. It appears that the book was finished and block-cut shortly before Geng's death in 1596 and was ready for print soon after that, so only his name was added to the table of contents as some indication of the book's being yet to be expanded.

25 Note that the critical abstract of *Zhuru xue'an* in the *Annotated Bibliography* (96:25a–b) states that it existed in eight *juan*, not twenty-five *juan*, including twenty-seven Confucians. Two of these Confucians, Jin Lüxiang (1232–1303) and Xu Qian (1270–1337), were not included in the edition found in the *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* collection (SKCM). Also, according to the table of contents, *juan* 14 should be for Hu Juren (1434–1484), *juan* 16 for Luo Qinshun (1465–1547), and *juan* 25 for Geng Dingxiang. All three *juan*, however, are missing.

26 Geng was the original author of the biographies of Xue Xuan (1389–1464), Chen Xianzhang (1428–1500), Wang Yangming, Wang Gen (1483–1541), Zou Shouyi (1491–1562), and Luo Hongxian (1504–1564). In addition, the biography of Hu Zhi (1517–1585) was based on Hu's epitaph, written by Geng. All these biographies are found in *juan* 13 and 14 of the *Geng Tiantai xiansheng wenji*; Hu Zhi's epitaph is found in *juan* 12.

27 Liu is here citing the very first sentence of the *Analects*. I use Legge's translation for the words of Confucius cited here; see Legge, trans., *Confucian Analects*, in *The Four Books*, 1.

28 Liu is here citing Mencius' dictum in Book 7A:1 of *Mencius*. I modify D. C. Lau's translation of Mencius' words here; see Lau, trans., *Mencius*, 182.

29 I follow Lau's translation of "the four germs" for *siduan*. See *ibid.*, 83 (*Mencius* 2A:6).

30 Such were innovations like Zhou Dunyi's doctrine of "regarding tranquility as fundamental" (*zhujing*), Cheng Hao's doctrine of "understanding the nature of humanity" (*shiren*), Zhang Zai's doctrine of "nature in a state of calmness" (*dingxing*), Cheng Yi's doctrine of "self-cultivation" (*hanyang*), Lu Jiuyuan's doctrine of "seeking one's original heart" (*ziqu benxin*), or Zhu Xi's doctrine of "exhausting principles" (*qiongli*). For English translations and discussions of these doctrines, see Chan, trans., and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 463, 523, 525, 562, 574, 610.

31 For the text of this preface, which includes the quotes in the following paragraph, see Liu Yuanqing, *Liu Pinjun quanji*, 4:10b–11b.

32 Liu here was referring to *Mencius* 2A:7; so was Geng Dingxiang as quoted earlier by him in using the expression *zeshu*. Mencius, in the classical text, is citing Confucius' emphasis on the importance of choosing or selecting a place to live, where virtuous manners prevailed, to drive home his own point of making the right choice in the practice of benevolence. See Legge, trans., *The Works of Mencius*, in *The Four Books*, 552–554; Lau, trans., *Mencius*, 83.

33 For the text of this preface, see Liu Yuanqing, *Liu Pinjun quanji*, 4:2a–3b.

34 Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:96.815.

35 For this convention of bibliographical classification of the *Four Treasuries*, see *ibid.*, 1:35.289, introduction to the subdivision of the *Four Books*.

36 The *Lunyu xue'an* is included in vol. 1 of the *Liu Zongzhou quanji*. Some of such entries can be seen on 512, 529, 587.

37 Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:36.303. Note that the copy of the book reviewed in the abstract was of a ten-*juan* edition.

38 A photographic reprint of this work is included in the *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* collection (SKCM). The dates of the work and of its author are both unknown. In an extant copy of the book, an undated preface by Fang Bao (1668–1749), written at the request of the author's grandson, Wang Shu (1668–1743), implies that the book was written in the last years of the Ming dynasty or in the early years of the Qing. The critical abstract writer of the *Four Treasuries* actually counted Wang Shen as a Qing figure, which means that he lived into the early Qing period. Wang was from Jintan County but did not have a biography in the county's gazetteer. Wang Shu's biography is found in the 1921 printing of the *Jintan xianzhi* (9–1:14b), compiled by Feng Xu (1843–1927), according to which he was a *jinsi* of 1712. The same gazetteer's "Monograph of Bibliography" (11:3a) erroneously classified Wang's *Xue'an* in the category of "Biography."

39 Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:97.822. For a background understanding of these "articles of learning" and the personages mentioned here, see Chan, "Chu Hsi and the Academies," 389–413, esp. 396–399.

40 The text of the extant copy, however, does not include the protocols of the Donglin Academy that Fang Bao mentioned. As for the articles set by Rao and Zhen that Fang mentioned, they probably are the same as those listed in the *Xueze*, whose authorship was attributed to Cheng Duanmeng and Dong Zhu in the *Annotated Bibliography*.

41 This work seems to have been later incorporated into the *Song-Yuan xue'an* itself. No extant copy of it has been found, but its content should in all likelihood be the same as that of the *Mingdao xue'an* of Cheng Hao and the *Yichuan xue'an* of Cheng Yi in the *Song-Yuan xue'an*.

42 Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:97.824.

43 *Song-Yuan xue'an*, 13.542, "Mingdao xue'an shang."

44 *Ibid.*, 16.652, "Yichuan xue'an xia."

45 I have no access to Wu Ding's work at issue here. For an earlier review of Chen Jian's work, see Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:98.833.

46 *Ibid.*

47 It is noteworthy that Huang Zongxi had once asked Tang Bin (1627–1687) to write a preface for the *Jishan xue'an*, which is that part of the *Mingru xue'an* for his teacher, Liu Zongzhou. Apparently Huang planned for this independent issue to laud Liu's doctrine. Although this work was obviously never published, its content as found in the *Mingru xue'an* is sufficient evidence that it is a philosophical rather than a historical work. Chen Zuwu, *Zhongguo xue'an shi*, 129–130, maintains that "Jishan xue'an" was Huang Zongxi's original title for the *Mingru xue'an*, and thus the preface that Tang Bin was asked to write was a preface to the latter work. This seems to be unlikely. Tang did respond to Huang's request, although the preface he wrote does not survive. But from Tang's letter to Huang, which mentioned this matter in part, it seems Tang was then dealing with Liu Zongzhou

alone but not with a much larger work such as the *Mingru xue'an*. Tang's letter to Huang, together with an earlier one, is included in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, 11:403–404.

48 See the critical abstract of the *Mingru xue'an* in Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:58.527. For a discussion of the imperial compilers' criticism of Huang Zongxi's engagement in school rivalry in the composition of the *Mingru xue'an*, see also Yamanoi Yū, *Min-Shim shisō shi no kenkyū*, 298–319, esp. 315–317.

49 The text of the “Fafan” is identical in all editions of the *Mingru xue'an*. The text of the prefaces, however, differs in the major editions of the book. Huang Zongxi wrote two separate versions of his preface in 1693. He meant for the second to be the final version. It was printed in the earliest, edited edition of 1693 with some change in wording made by the publisher. In the 1735 reprint of the 1693 edition, the first version was also included, again with altered wording. The originals of both versions, however, are preserved in Huang Zongxi's collected works. The publishers changed the wording of the prefaces to enhance their prestige as sponsors of the book, but many later scholars were misinformed as a result. The two corrupted prefaces of the 1735 reprint are included in many later editions, including the once standard Mo Jin (1761–1826) edition of 1821. The preface translated in *RM*, for instance, is based on the first preface in the Mo Jin version. I base my analysis here on the versions included in Huang's collected works, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, 10:73–76.

50 For the source of the term *huangmao baiwei* and its use by the historian Zhang Xuecheng (1738–1801), see Ye Ying, ed., *Wenshi tongyi jiaozhu*, 216, note 127, 524.

51 The translation is modified from *RM*, 42.

52 *RM*, 44, note 16, mistakes Chen Wenhuan for Chen Xigu, whose epitaph Huang Zongxi wrote and is found in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, 10:432–434. Chen Wenhuan was Chen Xigu's father.

53 The *Wanghuitu* was a picture (or a series of pictures) drawn by the Tang painter Yan Liben (d. 673) of an imperial audience with foreigners from all places. The inspiration of this picture was the “Wanghui” chapter of the *Yi Zhoushu*, which, according to an early commentary, was about King Wu of Zhou giving an audience to the dukes and tribute-paying barbarians in the court of the newly founded capital. For these two titles, see Meng Zhufeng, ed., *Hanyu da cidian*, 4:468.

54 See Yong Rong et al., eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 1:96.817, for the critical abstract of the book.

55 Huang Zongxi gave more reasons for declining to contribute the preface in his letter replying to Yun Richu, which is included in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, 10, 215–217.

56 This actually put Huang Zongxi in a position much different from that of his mentor Liu Zongzhou, whose *Transmission of the Orthodox Way in the Ming* (*Huang Ming daotong lu*), now lost, had much impact on Huang's own book. The “Quotations from My Teacher” (*Shishuo*) entries preceding the main text of the *Mingru xue'an* have been shown to be excerpts from that work of Liu's. For a note on that matter and the entries' relation to Huang's own composition, see Chen Rongjie (Wing-tsit Chan), “Lun *Mingru xue'an* zhi *Shishuo*,” 6–8.

57 For a description of these two works and a discussion of their relationship with the *Mingru xue'an* in the context of late Ming–early Qing world of thought, see Chen Zuwu, *Zhongguo xue'an shi*, 55–109.

58 *RM*, 46, translation modified.

59 *Ibid.*, 46–47, translation modified.

60 These are Huang Zongxi's words in the third entry of the “Fafan.”

61 *RM*, 46, translation modified.

62 This preface and the next two to be cited are not included in the 1735 edition or the 1821 Mo Jin edition or the 1992 punctuated edition, but they do appear in the 1985 punctuated edition.

63 Book II: 16 of the *Analects*. Translation here follows Legge, trans., *Confucian Analects*, in *The Four Books*, 19.

64 Book 2A:2 of *Mencius*. Translation here follows Lau, *Mencius*, 78.

65 See Tang Jian, *Qing xue'an xiaozhi* (reprint), 401–402.

66 This notion is found in many places in the prefaces and postfaces to these two works.

67 The “transmission of the mind” expression was used in Tao Wangling's preface to the *Shengxue zhongchuan*; the “transmission of the lamp” expression was in Cheng Qizhu's colophon to the *Lixue zhongchuan*.

68 For Zhou Rudeng (Chou Ju-teng), see his biography by Chaoying Fang and Julia Ching in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*, 271–274; and by Huang Zongxi in *RM*, 199–201. For Huang Zongxi's misrepresentation of Zhou, see Jie Zhao, “Reassessing the Place of Chou Ju-teng,” 1–11.

69 These phrases appeared in Liu Yuanqing's preface to his *Zhuru xue'an*.

70 These lines and those to be quoted in the following, unless otherwise noted, are from Huang's revised preface to the *Mingru xue'an* (not included in *RM*). Huang is here quoting Book 6A:4 of *Mencius*, in which Mencius refutes Gaozi's theory of human nature that “benevolence is internal, not external; rightness is external, not internal.” See Lau, trans., *Mencius*, 161.

71 *RM*, 41–43, translation modified.

72 These words, as well as those of Du Mu in the next quotation, come from the second entry of the *Mingru xue'an*'s “Fafan.” See *ibid.*, 45.

73 Fourth entry of the *Mingru xue'an*'s “Fafan.” Translation here follows *RM*, 46.

74 This easily involves the conditions of truth, which include knowledge and power, among others. For an analysis of this dialectics, which also bears on the discussion of Huang Zongxi's authority as an author, see Foucault, “Truth and Power.”