

Cheng Yi as a “Ritualist”*

Christian Meyer (Leipzig)

A Introduction

Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), the predecessor of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), is known by posterity as the Neo-Confucianist par excellence before Zhu Xi’s synthesis, and thus as one of the most important “philosophers” of China.¹ This accolade makes sense in the general view of the history of ideas, but at the same time we know that this is a view produced by later generations. On the one hand, this agenda was pushed by Zhu Xi himself,² who constructed a genealogy of the “*Dao(xue)*” 道(學) (*Daotong* 道統), whose culmination Zhu Xi himself became for following generations. On the other hand, the idea of Neo-Confucianists as “philosophers” is a modern phenomenon and applies a concept of clearly western categories to a culturally foreign matter.

But how did the perspective *through* Zhu Xi change the perception of the Cheng Yi of the 11th century? Is it possible to reconstruct some of the authentic Cheng Yi behind Zhu Xi’s and our own modern views? For this purpose it may be helpful to go back to the historical context and ask who was the Cheng Yi of the 11th century?³

Cheng was definitely not a philosopher by modern Western standards. But, if he is a philosopher “before (modern) Philosophy,” what are the characteristics of his thinking? What were the starting point, context, and more concrete questions that instigated his thinking?

In the past, several clear answers have been given, mostly in the tradition of the history of ideas (or philosophy):

- a) Firstly, it has been correctly observed that Cheng Yi, as shown by his various statements against Buddhism and Daoism, answered those challenges on a level of cosmology and ethics based on a renewed reading of the Confucian Classics.
- b) Secondly, the Old text style (*gwen* 古文) movement, with its orientation toward reviving antiquity, formed a context and background for Cheng’s thinking.⁴ But it remains unclear

* This article is based on a paper given at the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, November 25, 2002. I am especially grateful to Philip Clart (University of Missouri-Columbia) for his critical reading of this article and many suggestions which improved this draft in a later stage.

1 See e.g., as the still most important Western monograph, A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers. Ch’eng Ming-tao and Ch’eng Yi-ch’uan* (London: Lund Humphries, 1958).

2 Thomas Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way. The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995). For the *Daotong*, see especially app. B (260–265), e.g. *daotong zhengxi tu* 道統正系圖 (262–263), and ch. 5: Controversial Progenitors: Conflicting Interpretations of the Northern Sung Confucian “Revival” (197); Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1992). For the historical development from Cheng Yi to Zhu Xi, see Hans van Ess’s study *Von Ch’eng I zu Chu Hsi. Die Lehre vom rechten Weg in der Überlieferung der Familie Hu* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003).

3 At the same time this does not preclude *interpreting* tradition in a *second* step, as long as we are aware of the “otherness,” of the past, and therefore of a gap of time and context.

4 Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) as representative of the Tang dynasty *gwen* movement is often seen as a forerunner of Neo-Confucianism. See e.g. Shimada Kenji, *Die Neo-konfuzianische Philosophie. Die Schulrichtungen Chu Hsi und Wang Yang-mings*, trsl. Monika Übelhör (Berlin: Reimer, 1987). In his day, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽

how the thinkers of this movement influenced early Neo-Confucianism – and Cheng Yi in particular.⁵

- c) In general, it is obvious that Neo-Confucians like Cheng Yi were still thinking in the tradition of the “Confucian Classics,” but a characteristic was their role as teachers and educators, especially in so-called private academies (*shuyuan* 書院).⁶ Unfortunately, this observation obstructs our view of most of the concrete political or societal involvement of these thinkers.⁷
- d) Further, it has been claimed that Cheng Yi developed his thinking in contrast and opposition to the New Policies (*xinzheng* 新政) and New Learning (*xinxue* 新學) of Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086)⁸ which made up the political background of his time.⁹

While the first three observations – and even the fourth – are at least partly true and make sense in a broader view of the history of Chinese philosophy and ideas, this article shall add a hitherto widely neglected perspective of “Cheng Yi as a ritualist,” which leads more concretely into the disputes and discourses of his day focused on the prominent topic of ritual (*li* 禮).

In this light it may also become clear that basic ideas of his were not developed in opposition to but rather *before* Wang Anshi’s dominance in the political and intellectual arena. Therefore other factors have to be traced as origins of Cheng Yi’s thinking, and here especially his ritual thinking.

The idea of Cheng Yi as a ritualist originates from my own observations as well as from recent literature about Cheng Yi and his contemporaries. I found a formulation of Cheng Yi as

修 (1007–1072) was especially influential, although his influence is rather denied by Neo-Confucian tradition in favor of direct continuity to Mencius or rather to the *san xiansheng* 三先生 of the same generation, i.e. Sun Fu 孙复 (992–1057), Shi Jie 石介 (1005–1045) and Hu Yuan 胡瑗 (993–1059). In the *Song Yuan xue’an* 宋元學案 by Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (1610–1695), Ouyang had already been treated as a forerunner of Neo-Confucianism, while in earlier western Sinology he has also been counted among the Neo-Confucians in a broader sense. See James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967).

- 5 For the later development of *different* “Neo-Confucian” schools in Southern Song, see Hilde de Weerd, “Canon Formation and Examination Culture: The Construction of *Guwen* and *Daoxue* Canons,” *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 29 (1999), 91–134.
- 6 For the development of *shuyuan* and their connection to the *daoxue* movement, cf. e.g. Linda A. Walton, *Academies and Society in Southern Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), esp. 25–49.
- 7 In this sense Peter Bol also describes Cheng Yi as a “literatus.” See Peter Bol, “Cheng Yi as a Literatus,” in *The Power of Culture: Studies in Chinese Cultural History*, ed. Willard J. Peterson, Andrew Plaks and Ying-shih Yü (Hongkong: Chinese University Press, 1994), 172–194.
- 8 For Wang’s political and scholarly program, see e.g. Joachim Mittag, “Das *Shi-jing*-Studium in der Song-Zeit (960–1279). Vorstufen zu einer Neubetrachtung der Song-Klassikergelchrtsamkeit” (PhD diss., Universität München, 1989, Nördlingen: Steinmeier, 1993) and Michael Dennis Freeman, “Lo-yang and the Opposition to Wang An-shih: The Rise of Confucian Conservatism, 1068–1086” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1973).
- 9 For the influence of the faction struggles on the formation of a canon and the idea of a Confucian Orthodoxy, see Peter Bol, “Examinations and Orthodoxies: 1070 and 1313 Compared,” in *Culture and State in Chinese History*, ed. Theodore Huters et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 29–57. A late clear evidence of influence of the faction struggles on Cheng Yi can be found in his *Yijing* commentary. Cf. Hon Tze-Ki [韓子奇], “Redefining the Civil Governance. The *Yichuan Yizhuan* of Cheng Yi,” *Monumenta Serica* 52 (2004), 199–219 and idem, *The Yijing and Chinese Politics. Classical Commentary and Literary Activism in the Northern Song Dynasty, 960–1127* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), esp. 110–140.

a “ritualist” in Don Wyatt’s 1996 work about Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077), *The Recluse of Loyang*,¹⁰ shortly after I started my research about Cheng Yi and the ritual discussions. The context was that of Cheng Yi helping Shao Yong to find a place to bury his father. It shows Cheng Yi for the first time serving as a ritual expert for others. Wyatt claims to rely on Peter Bol’s “This Culture of Ours.” Bol writes about the interest shown by Cheng Yi in ritual on those pages quoted by Wyatt. However, Bol does this without calling him a ritualist and without making it a specific concept of his chapter about Cheng Yi.¹¹ Wyatt himself, on the other hand, did not develop further his interest in Cheng Yi.¹² In general, ritual as a main interest of Cheng’s thinking has attracted rather little attention.¹³ It will be the task of this article to show that an interpretation of Cheng Yi as an acknowledged expert of ritual contributes to the understanding of his person.¹⁴

10 Don Wyatt, *The Recluse of Loyang, Shao Yung and the Moral Evolution of Early Sung Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996), 88–89 and 127, see also Index 332.

11 In a personal conversation in May 2005 Bol even denied this idea.

12 This is generally even valid for the Chinese works about Cheng Yi. Although *li* 禮 is mentioned in some works in different contexts, there are only some short subsections of chapters about Cheng Yi’s ritual thinking or practice, e.g.: a subdivision of a chapter about *keji fuli* 克己復禮 in Pan Qingfang 潘清芳, “Er Cheng zhexue sixiang tanze” 二程哲學思想探曠 (PhD diss., Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue, 1984), 454–461; a section about *chengjing cunyang yu jingzhi yu nei, lizhi yu wai* 誠敬存養與敬制於內、禮制於外 in Pang Wanli 龐萬里, *Er Cheng zhexue tixi* 二程哲學體系 (Beijing: Beijing hangkong hangtian daxue, 1992), 246–254 and about “zongfa” 宗法 in Guan Daozhong 管道中, *Er Cheng yanjiu* 二程研究 (Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1937), 183–186. Most monographs have no chapter about ritual at all.

13 The only article about Cheng Yi’s and Cheng Hao’s Ritual teaching (or theory) I have found so far is that by Yamane Mitsuyoshi 山根三芳 (“Ni-Teishi reisetsu kō” 二程禮說考, in *Yoshioka bakushi kanreki kinen Dōkyō kenkyū ronshū: Dōkyō no shiso to bunka* 吉岡博士還曆記念道教研究論集：道教の思想と文化 (Tōkyō: Kokusho kankōkai, 1977). He collects important materials mainly from the talks (*yulu*) and discusses them, but on the other hand it does not show Cheng clearly as a ritualist well known for his expertise or the important implications for the understanding of Cheng Yi. None of them discusses the importance of the topic, the general discourse background or influences on Cheng Yi in this question. A basic, but short, article about “The Status of Li 禮 in the Cheng Brothers’ Philosophy,” *Dao. A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 3 (2003), 109–119, has recently been written by Wong Wai-ying. However, its content is only based on a limited selection of the two Chengs’ sayings about *li* (ritual). The special role of Cheng Yi and his strong emphasis on ritual in practice is neglected. The connection to *li* (principle) is discussed but also appears limited. Therefore, although there is the merit of firstly drawing attention in Western literature to the Chengs’ attitude to *li*, the statements in Wong’s article are highly problematic.

14 As shown in my article here, the Chengs definitely did not “downgrade *li*” (Wong 116), thereby “giving *li* a metaphysical ground.” On the contrary, Cheng Yi especially had a strong emphasis on *li* (ritual), not only as an external, but also as a hierarchical, even universal principle. As this is not the case for Cheng Hao, it is therefore necessary to differentiate between the two brothers. Besides, even for the Chengs *jing* is never just a “state of the unity of mind” which “should not be bound to particular objects” (Wong 114). This very much evokes the Buddhist ideas of emptiness of mind (*kong* 空) and attentiveness or concentrative states of mind, as in one of the higher Buddhist dhyanas, which has at its best “nothing” as its object or content of its consciousness. On the contrary, for Cheng Yi the object of performing with the attitude of *jing* may change. It maybe the father or the twig of a tree, but it will never be just a state of mind. It is necessarily relational and so never without an object. Therefore, for Cheng Yi, the comprehensive understanding of heavenly pattern (principle, *tianli* 天理) would be attained through accumulated “investigations” of single concrete “things” (*gewu* 格物). cf. *Yishu* 18.188: 或問：「格物須物物格之，還只格一物而萬理皆知？」曰：「怎生便會該通？若只格一物便通眾理，雖顏子亦不敢如此道。須是今日格一件，明日又格一件，積習既多，然後脫然自有貫通處。」

Further preliminary attention has to be drawn to the meaning of the term “ritualist.” Apart from Wyatt’s hints, I will develop my own definition of the expression. I would like to differentiate between two meanings of “ritualism” or “ritualist,” respectively, in the Chinese context:¹⁵

On the one hand, anyone who understands and deals with ritual may be called a ritualist. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) and Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) were not only experts in general classical scholarship and history. By their broad classical knowledge they could also speak about rituals. In this way they may be called ritualists or even ritual experts – in a broader sense. From the Confucian perspective *li* (ritual) was an integral part of their learning, and most Confucian thinking at least implied ritual. But as some representatives of Confucianism, such as Xunzi 荀子, put much more emphasis on ritual (*li*), others like Mengzi 孟子 put much less. It may, therefore, be useful to differentiate and thereby possibly find a range of attitudes to ritual, ranging from disinterest to high concern and intensive practice.

I want to add two further criteria. A person may be called a ritualist in some more specific way, firstly as someone who is more explicitly *recognized* by others or himself/herself as a particular *expert* in ritual; secondly, a ritualist is someone whose intellectual concerns may be at least partly dominated by questions of ritual, even if not to the exclusion of other interests.¹⁶ In this way this article may show that Cheng Yi, like Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077) or Li Gou 李覲 (1009–1059), was much more a ritualist and a recognized ritual expert than for example Ouyang Xiu or Su Shi, although both could still be called Confucians.

Therefore one task of this approach is to demonstrate that there were not only single statements, single interests and single projects which Cheng Yi followed from a *general* background of his overall education and world view, but that he was specifically interested in Chinese ritual (*li* 禮) itself. Secondly, that he was even been recognized as a well known ritual expert and thinker in his time. A third task will be to show how Cheng’s ritualism as a major, but not sole, aspect is related to his leading concept of *li* 理 (pattern/principle) and how it fits into the whole of his thinking.

In order to show this, I will first examine Cheng Yi’s work and, life, and the concrete contexts and discourses of his time.

15 As far as I can see in the English historical context, the term has been predominantly used for representatives of the 19th century ritualist movement in the Anglican (“High”) church tradition, and therefore more for an *ideological* position or representative of a *movement* than only for a special concern with ritual. A Chinese contextual interpretation of the term would rather imply a *lixuejia* 禮學家, an *expert* of ritual studies, which is meant here, although such a (modern) term was never directly applied to Cheng Yi in his time. What deserves to be differentiated from a general ritual expert is furthermore that one is an expert (and commentator) of the “three ritual classics” (*san li* 三禮), the *Yili* 儀禮, *Liji* 禮記, and *Zhouli* 周禮. Cheng Yi was definitely not an expert of this sort, since he did not leave a full commentary of any of these Classics, except short interpreted quotations of single sentences, and of the treatises “Daxue” 大學 and “Zhongyong” 中庸 of the *Liji*. But ritual knowledge draws on sources (mostly from other Classics or historical works) beyond these considered the three Ritual Classics. Another kind of “ritual expert” was the *lisheng* 禮生 who, however, was only a subordinated official in the Song bureaucracy who participated in some sacrifices. A *lisheng* can also mean an unofficial “Confucian” ritual expert in some areas, who is asked to perform local temple and family rituals. (I thank Philip Clart for this information.) What is meant here, however, is a kind of intellectual expertise in ritual.

16 There is no question that Cheng Yi identified himself as a literatus (*shidafu* 士大夫) by social status and addressed his statements to *shidafu* as his audience, as Bol has shown in his article (see footnote 7 above).

B Evidence for Cheng’s ritual expertise

I The sources

For evidence of Cheng Yi’s ritual interests, different kinds of material shall be presented and analyzed. One may differentiate between four or five kinds of material:

a) the material usually quoted from *Yishu* 遺書 (the most reliable part of his *Yulu* 語錄, edited from several collections by Zhu Xi) with short and longer passages about ritual (*li* 禮) using the expression or dealing with particular rituals from the talks and teaching to his “disciples” written down by them. For this material the Japanese indices for the talks (*yulu*) of the Cheng brothers are useful: altogether there are 249 entries for the character *li* 禮 and combinations (*liyì* 禮義, *liyí* 禮儀, *liyue* 禮樂).¹⁷

Many of them are quotations from the classics, especially the *Lunyu* 論語. These entries from the talks of both Chengs (with a higher percentage of Cheng Yi) show a *typical* Cheng as a classical scholar, teacher and systematical thinker as expressed in this medium in this time. Some of the sayings shall be examined further below.

Already the relatively high amount of entries shows the interest of the Chengs, and – as we will see – especially that of Cheng Yi. Unfortunately, this material is mostly not clearly datable and thus beyond a relatively concrete discourse or biographical context. Because this type of material was prevalent in the research about Cheng Yi, this may explain why the scattered materials about ritual amongst them found relatively rare comprehensive and systematical attention, while the other eminent and contemporary “Neo-Confucian” thinker Zhang Zai was earlier recognized as a ritualist or ritual thinker.¹⁸

b) A second and most revealing source is that of the collected writings (*wenji* 文集), especially the memorials to the throne.

These texts have different invaluable advantages, since they consist of longer passages, a good part of them dealing with ritual. While the older brother Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085) also mentions ritual *li* 禮 several times in his memorials (according to Yao Mingda 姚明達 dating from the late 1060’s),¹⁹ we find more concrete materials in Cheng Yi’s writings:

One of these texts is the small collection of basic family rituals, altogether ten pages in the *Er Cheng ji* 二程集,²⁰ some of it dealing with wedding rites (*hunli* 婚禮), some with selec-

17 *Ni-Tei zensho sakuin* 二程全書索引 (Kyōtō: Kyūshū Daigaku, Chūgoku Tetsugaku Kenkyūshitsu 九州大學中國哲學研究室, 1973–1974). The first part, *Ni-Tei isho sakuin* 二程遺書索引, is an index to the *Er Cheng yishu* 二程遺書, the second part, *Ni-Tei gaisbo Suigen sakuin* 二程外書粹言索引, contains indices to the *Er Cheng waishu* 二程外書 and the *Er Cheng cuiyan* 二程粹言. Because there are many repetitions of the *Yishu* quotations, I only counted the first one. Not included are the independent parts of *Er Cheng wenji* 二程文集 and Cheng Yi’s *Yijing* 易經 commentary and *Jingshuo* 經說). Not counted are also specific, technical ritual terms, e.g. for sacrifices (*ji* 祭, *si* 祀 etc.), or the important sayings about the revived concept of *zongfa* 宗法. References to the *Yishu*, *Waishu* and *Wenji* are to the *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 edition first published 1981 by Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.

18 For Zhang Zai, see below in the paragraph about influences on Cheng Yi’s ritualism.

19 See, for example, Yao Mingda, *Cheng Yichuan nianpu* 程伊川年譜 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1937), 56. Here, Cheng Hao speaks with regard to the “regulations of the rituals” (*lizhi* 禮制) about a revival of the old family rituals and sacrifices (古者冠婚喪祭) as the last of ten points of a broader reform program.

20 Cf. footnote 17.

tion of a burial plot, and some referring to sacrifices (*ji* 祭) (to the ancestors); this seems to echo his brother's earlier request for the revival of ancient family rituals,²¹ but deals with it in much more detail. This project seemingly started before 1086, but was pursued again in the 1090's.²²

In general, this collection fits in with some materials of statements about family rituals and family organization according to the *zongfa* 宗法 ("lineage organization") model, as has been examined by Patricia Ebrey.²³

But there are three other cases from the *wenji*, datable memorials, also showing how Cheng Yi was in fact seen and treated as an expert of ritual, especially in cases of death, and as a burial expert:

The first one deals with the Puyi 濮議 case, the discussion about the correct ritual features for the biological father of the adopted emperor, dating from the beginning of 1066, in which Cheng Yi was consulted by Peng Siyong 彭思永, an elderly official who had just been appointed to the censorate and who was a friend of the family. Cheng's expertise in ritual must have been known already – at least in a smaller circle – so that others consulted him as an expert, a person who could argue well in ritual matters.²⁴ Cheng Yi's contribution shows interesting details tending toward a milder position than those of the other censors and Sima Guang. Interesting, too, is the use of the term *tianli* 天理 – which is so typical of the Chengs – already in early 1066 by a relatively young Cheng Yi.²⁵

Two other memorials among Cheng Yi's six extant memorials before 1086 deal with questions of burial and tomb (of the former Emperors Yingzong and Renzong, respectively). They mirror Cheng Yi's interest especially in grave and burial questions on the level of public discussions. Both are done for other people, as he himself – being without an official position –

21 See below; *Wenji* 1.447–448.

22 *Wenji* 10.620–629, cf. *Yishu* 18.239 which mentions a "[ritual handbook for] the six sorts of rituals (*liuli* 六禮) 70 % of which were completed by Cheng Yi when he was summoned to Court (in 1086). At the time of the recorded interview (the collection of sayings in chapter 18 has been written down in the 1090's) he hoped to be able to finalize the book, having retired from court for several years due to illness. Probably the extant collection in *Wenji* 10.620–629 can be identified with this project, but only three aspects of the six sorts of ritual (*Yishu* 18.240: capping, wedding, mourning, ancestral sacrifices, local and guest rites) are treated, namely: wedding, burial (as connected to mourning), ancestral sacrifices – The following pages in *Yishu* 18.239–246 all discuss matters of ritual. – Sima Guang seems to have worked on his family ritual handbook (*Shuyi* 書儀) at least partly simultaneously in the 1080s, but published it already in 1081.

23 More material is found, for example, in *Yishu* 15.150–151, 163, 165, 167 and 17.177–180; cf. also Patricia B. Ebrey, "Conceptions of the Family in the Sung Dynasty," *Journal of Asian Studies* (JAS) 43 (1983/84), 219–243; eadem, *Chu His's Family Rituals: A Twelfth-Century Chinese Manual for the Performance of Cappings, Weddings, Funerals, and Ancestral Rites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China. A Social History of Writing about Rites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

24 This case, the "Puyi," is a major topic of my dissertation *Ritendiskussionen am Hof der nördlichen Song-Dynastie (1034–1093). Zwischen Ritengelehrsamkeit, Machtkampf und intellektuellen Bewegungen* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica, 2008), in which I have dealt at length with it. [The original subtitle of my PhD diss., Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, 2003, was: "Ein Beitrag zum ritologischen Kontext des Wiedererstarkens des Konfuzianismus und der Entwicklung des Neokonfuzianismus im China des 11. Jahrhunderts."]

25 Who was born in 1033, therefore he was just thirty-two.

had no direct access to public discussions at court. There is one for his father in 1067,²⁶ the other one for the old former chancellor Fu Bi 富弼 in 1080.²⁷ Fu Bi was an older friend of Sima Guang who played the same role for Cheng Yi. While the first two were members of the “opposition in Luoyang,”²⁸ these memorials also show how Cheng Yi, who had been living and teaching not far away on the estate of his father near Luoyang since 1072,²⁹ took part in the opposition network. Therefore, although without any office which would have allowed him to speak in his own capacity, other people asked him to write memorials for them as an expert in rituals, especially concerning burial questions.

c) This impression is deepened when we look at evidence also found outside of the writings of the Chengs: Already in 1064 Cheng Yi appears, assisting Shao Yong in burying his father Shao Gu 邵古:

In the *Wenjianlu* 聞見錄 of Shao Bowen 邵伯溫 (1057–1134) we find the passage:

康節謀葬大父，與程正叔先生同卜地于伊川神陰原。不盡用葬書，大抵以五音擇地，以昭穆序葬，陰陽拘忌之說，皆所不信。³⁰

When K'ang-chieh was planning Grandfather's burial, he went with Master Cheng [I] Cheng-shu to divine land at the I River's Shen-yin graveyard. They did not follow the burial manual completely but, instead, generally relied on the five tones to select the spot and buried him according to the *chao-mu* order. They gave no credence to anything concerning the taboos or *yin* and *yang* [theory].³¹

It had been the will of the deceased to avoid any Buddhist offerings or geomancy.³² Cheng Yi's ideals go back to the simple rules of classical ancient custom adapted to this last wish. Wyatt judges:

Ch'eng probably acted as much out of the desire to advance his growing reputation as a youthful but strict ritualist as to respect the venerable relationship between Shao Yung and his own father.³³

d) Another example – more than twenty years later – is also a burial case, which became a classical, well known struggle between Cheng Yi and his *Luodang* 洛黨 / *Luoxue* 洛學 on the one side and Su Shi 蘇軾 (Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1036–1101) and his *Shudang* 蜀黨 on the other. In this famous case, Cheng had been put in charge of Sima Guang's burial in 1086. It is not surprising, given the former examples of Cheng Yi's expertise, that he was chosen rather than Su Shi, who was not known as a ritual expert or ritualist, although he was as much a friend and follower of Sima Guang as was Cheng Yi.

26 *Wenji* 5.527–529.

27 According to *Wenji* 5.532.

28 See the title of Freeman, “Lo-yang and the Opposition to Wang An-shih” (see footnote 8).

29 Cf. Yao Mingda, *Nianpu*, 70–71.

30 Shao Bowen, *Shaoshi wenjianlu* 邵氏聞見錄, ed. Li Jianxiong 李劍雄 and Liu Dequan 劉德權 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 21997), 20.221.

31 Translation by Wyatt, *Recluse*, 127. This occurrence is – as far as I can see – not mentioned in the *Er Cheng ji*.

32 Wyatt, *Recluse*, 127.

33 Wyatt, *Recluse*, 126.

At the time of Sima Guang's death and the following mourning period in the 9th month of 1086 an important Mingtang ritual was taking place – in this year replacing the normal Nanjiao 南郊 ritual³⁴ which included an official banquet held by the court.

There were several accounts³⁵ of the clash between Su Shi and Cheng Yi, but there is a kind of a consensus: One day when Cheng Yi was supervising the burial and mourning matters, Su Shi came by from the Mingtang 明堂 banquet held for higher court officials (normally some time after the Mingtang ritual itself) and found it suitable – apparently with some colleagues or friends – to come together to commemorate Sima Guang. There seemed to be no explicit rule against such behaviour. However, Cheng Yi objected and wanted to hinder them with an argument from *Lunyu* about Confucius:

於是日哭，則不歌。³⁶

When he had wailed at a funeral, during the rest of a day he did not sing.³⁷

Obviously, for him it was not only a personal anecdote of Confucius, but he found a general ritualistic rule in it: this example of the sage Confucius had to be applied to oneself and even to contemporary society. Further, in the general Confucian ritualistic tradition there was a principle of the differentiation of auspicious (*ji* 吉) and inauspicious ritual (*xiong* 凶). Sacrifices or banquets were part of the former, mourning and burial (*sang* 喪 and *zang* 葬) of the latter. They stood for different feelings of joy or sadness expressed by ritual. In the casuistics of Chinese ritualism this became relevant when these cases coincide on the same day. Mourning – at least for the main mourners – would then normally have priority; festivities or music should be omitted at inauspicious occasions, and only main sacrifices of the state would still be held.

But there was no definite rule known for the mourning of a chancellor that forbade participation in official banquets. In this case the banquet even belonged to the important state ritual of the Mingtang. His argument, then, depended mainly on the authority of Confucius and an interpretation of the related *Lunyu* text.

Surely, one characteristic of Cheng's classical ritualism was that it tried to return beyond traditional accumulated rules to the "real" ideal of Confucius and his time. Inconveniently for Cheng Yi, the saying from *Lunyu* showed a slightly different order of the two phrases, so Su Shi could reject Cheng's challenge by hinting at the fact that in this case he joined first the feast (which is "auspicious"), and only later came to mourn (or commemorate). In the *Lunyu* phrase Confucius did not show happiness (by singing) *after* he had mourned that very day. Besides the formal differences and the intention to argue with Cheng Yi, Su Shi may actually have been convinced of the propriety of his actions. Also for him, ritual had to follow natural human feelings (*renqing* 人

34 On this practice in the Song since 1050 see my dissertation, cf. also T. C. James Liu's article about the Mingtang ritual: "The Sung Emperors and the *Ming-t'ang* or Hall of Enlightenment," *Études Song – Sung studies. In memoriam Étienne Balazs. Série II: Civilisation*, ed. Françoise Aubin (Paris: Mouton, 1973), 45–58.

35 See chapter 4 in Luo Jiaxiang's 羅家祥 *Beisong dangzheng yanjiu* 北宋黨爭研究 (Taipei, Wenjin), 179–180.

36 *Lunyu* 7.10.

37 Translation according to Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1938), 124 (counted under VII, 9), Waley puts the saying in one paragraph together with the preceding sentence which also helps to understand the context for Cheng Yi's reading: "If at a meal the Master found himself seated next to someone who was in mourning, he did not eat his fill."

情), an important keyword of his thinking.³⁸ Rather than being a pedant, he was much more flexible by attitude and in classical interpretation, open to rather easy and livable, rather than strict, interpretation.

e) One last confirmation comes from a biographical note in the *Yishu*:

有人勞正叔先生曰：「先生謹於禮四五十年，應甚勞苦。」先生曰：「吾日履安地，何勞何苦？佗人日踐危地，此乃勞苦也。」³⁹

Somebody worried about Master Zhengshu (Cheng Yi): “You, Master, have been attentive to ritual (*li* 禮) more than 40 years, it is surely very fatiguing.” – The Master answered: “In my life days I have walked in peaceful places, what kind of trouble, what kind of bitterness should I have? Other people daily step on dangerous places – that is really trouble and bitterness.”

This probably shows Cheng Yi as an old teacher (after “more than 40 years”), who stayed away from the dangerous court politics, at least most of the time, and spent his time in the practice of a teacher and ritual master.

This all shows Cheng Yi again as a serious and strict ritualist, the pedantry being possibly a typical attitude of a ritualist. This seriousness, together with the connected attitude of respect (or: “awareness”) (*jing* 敬)⁴⁰ is also shown in the famous anecdote of Cheng Yi which may be dated to the time after 1086. There he is depicted in the only time in his life in which he was an official at court, being a personal teacher and tutor of the young Emperor Zhezong, blaming the latter for thoughtlessly plucking leaves from a tree.⁴¹ Ritualism, as we will see below, is here widened to a more universal, more comprehensive understanding.

II Some basic content of Cheng Yi’s ritualism

The point above leads to the question of the understanding of Cheng Yi’s ritualism. Unfortunately, since there is a vast quantity of sayings and writings of Cheng connected to ritual, as mentioned above, this task can not be done in a comprehensive way in this article. Some major aspects shall therefore be selected:

1) Firstly, as in general the classics are Cheng Yi’s main source, Cheng Yi’s works can be seen primarily as exegetical. Much of Cheng Yi’s ritual philosophy seems to stem especially from the *Lunyu*. Many of his exegetical comments, which he unfolded in talks, were not only edited by Zhu Xi in the *Yulu*, but partly also recollected and rearranged by Zhu Xi in his commentaries to the Four Books (*Sishu* 四書) (including *Lunyu*).⁴²

38 For the relevance of the concept of *renqing* 人情, see Mittag, “*Shi-jing-Studium*” (see above footnote 8), and my dissertation.

39 *Yishu* 1.8.

40 For the importance of *jing* 敬, see also Wen Weiyao 溫偉耀, *Chengsheng zhi dao: Beisong Er Cheng xiuyang gongfulun zhi yanjiu* 成聖之道北宋二程修養工夫論之研究 (Taipei: Wenshizhe, 1996), 134-141 (also Kaifeng: Henan daxue, 2004, 106-111).

41 Ting Ch’uan-ching 丁傳靖, *Songren yishi huibian* 宋人軼事彙編, selected and translated by Chu Djang 章楚 and Jane C. Djang 朱璋, *A Compilation of Anecdotes of Sung Personalities* (Jamaica, New York: St. John’s University Press, 1989, repr. Taipei), 401.

42 Cf. the exegetical commentaries to the classics, *jingshuo* in *Er Cheng ji*, 1027-1165; except the *Yijing* commentary, the first part of the *Chunqiu* 春秋 commentary, and the textual changes of the *Daxue*, these commentaries were later compilations.

Here already we find a combination of a ritualist and teacher that was also typical of others, like Confucius himself. The aim of his teaching was in general to understand the meaning or intention of the former kings in or behind the texts (*ming jing* 明經). This may be seen in a saying of one of the Chengs, that one could reform rituals according to the intentions of the former kings of antiquity.⁴³ Teaching and lively practice were one single project in Cheng Yi's teaching.

2) Secondly, if we look for more generally used statements of Cheng about ritual, we find some quotations used again and again. One is the famous *Lunyu* passage 12.1 about a conversation of Confucius with his favorite disciple Yan Hui:

顏淵問仁。子曰：「克己復禮為仁。一日克己復禮，天下歸仁焉。為仁由己，而由人乎哉？」顏淵曰：「請問其目。」子曰：「非禮勿視，非禮勿聽，非禮勿言，非禮勿動。」顏淵曰：「回雖不敏，請事斯語矣。」

Yan Hui wanted to know what *ren* 仁 is. Confucius answered: “To overcome yourself, and reestablish the rituals (*keji fuli* 克己復禮), that is *ren*. ... (I) do not look at it, unless it is in accordance with the rites, (I) do not listen to it, unless it is in accordance with the rites. (I) do not speak, unless it is in accordance with the rites, (I) do not move, unless it is in accordance with the rites.”⁴⁴

Cheng Yi comments on this saying as early⁴⁵ as in his first datable piece presented to his teacher Hu Yuan 胡瑗 about Master Yan's love of learning. According to this quotation, he asserts that in all modes of behavior or all situations (looking, listening, speaking, moving) one should act according to ritual. By training or learning (*xue* 學) one could become a sage (*shengren* 聖人).⁴⁶ Besides the educational aspect one can see here already a kind of universalizing tendency to find ritual in all situations of human life. Both Cheng Yi as well as Cheng Hao mainly emphasized the aspect of overcoming oneself or the human desires (*renyu* 人欲) as the basis of the reestablishment of ritual.⁴⁷

The aspect of universal validity of “ritual” (*li* 禮) is expressed even more clearly in the exegesis of the equation of ritual and music as order and harmony (*xu* 序 and *he* 和). Cheng Yi explains that all things have order (*xu*) and harmony (*he*) and so all things have “ritual” *li* 禮

43 See *Yishu* 2.23: 學禮者考文，必求先王之意，得意乃可以沿革。

44 This translation is partly owed to D.C. Lau, *Confucius. The Analects (Lun yü)* (Hongkong: The Chinese University Press, 1983). See also Waley, *Analects*, 162. The last four sentences could either be understood as a statement (“I, Confucius”) or as an imperative.

45 *Wenji* 8.577f. For similar quotations of *Lunyu* 12.1, see also *Yishu* 1.2, 2A.18, 15.144, 17.181, 18.201, *Wenji* 8.588 and elsewhere. Sima Guang quotes the same sentence (“*keji fuli*”) in his *Zhongbelun*, cf. Philip Clart, “Ritual und Familie bei Sima Guang (1019–1086)” (MA thesis, Universität Bonn, 1989), and idem, “The Concept of Ritual in the Thought of Sima Guang (1019–1086),” in *Perceptions of Antiquity in China's Civilization, Past and Present*, ed. Dieter Kuhn (Heidelberg: Edition Forum) [forthcoming].

46 About Cheng Yi's teaching of the sage (*shengren*) see the thesis of Prof. Chung Tsai-chun (Zhong Caijun) 鐘彩鈞, “Er Cheng shengren zhi xue yanjiu” 二程聖人之學研究 (PhD diss., Taipei, 1990).

47 For Cheng Yi, see e.g. *Yishu* 15.144. The interesting saying *Yishu* 2.18 probably comes from Cheng Hao: 克己則私心去，自然能復禮，雖不學文，而禮意已得。“If one overcomes oneself, and the selfish heart-mind is deleted, then automatically (*xiran*) one is able to reestablish rituals; even although one did not learn the texts, the intention or meaning of ritual is already attained.”

and music *yue* 樂.⁴⁸ This already reminds one strongly of the other important term *li* 理 (principle, pattern) which is also meant to be found in everything.⁴⁹ *Li* 理 (principle/pattern) is said by Cheng Yi to be one, but existing in different roles or manifestations (*liyi er fenshu* 理一而分殊)⁵⁰. This saying may also be best understood in terms of social differentiations and roles (*fen* 分), and so as a comment to the unifying idea also present behind ritual and its different expressions. Other sayings provide additional evidence for this pattern in Cheng Yi’s thought.

3) Thus, thirdly, in some of Cheng Yi’s sayings⁵¹ we find the quotation from *Liji*⁵² that ritual (*li* 禮) is equated with principle/pattern (*li* 理). Zhu Xi later preferred the more distanced view of *li* (ritual) as *jiwen* 節文 (concretization) of *li* (pattern, principle). But the identification of ritual (*li*) and principle/pattern (*li*) fits very well with Cheng Yi’s statement that “ritual” is found everywhere. In this way ritual really becomes similar to a universal principle, and in some way there is really not much difference with *li* (principle, pattern) any longer. The terms *li* (ritual) and *li* (principle/pattern) in Cheng Yi’s interpretation come closer from both sides: by universalizing *li* (ritual) (as shown above), and – as we will see – by identifying *li* (principle/pattern) with the more social context of *li* (ritual). Of special interest is the following saying:

視聽言動，非理不為，即是禮，禮即是理也。不是天理，便是私欲。人雖有意於為善，亦是非禮。無人欲即是天理。⁵³

If looking, listening, speaking and moving are not according to *li* (principle/pattern), one should not do it, because this means acting according to *li* (ritual), and *li* (ritual) is actually *li* (principle/pattern)! If it is not (according to) the heavenly pattern (*tianli*), then it is egoistic desire. Even if humans have the intention to be good, still it is against ritual (*li*). If there are no human desires, then it is according to the heavenly pattern (*tianli*).

In a first step Cheng starts with the latter part of *Lamyu* 12.1, to act never without *li*, surprisingly replacing *li* (ritual) by the homophonous *li* (principle/pattern). In the second step he gives the reason for this in the quotation from *Liji* with its traditional equation of *li* (ritual) and *li* (principle/pattern). In the third step he puts the *heavenly principle/pattern* in contrast to the egoistic desires, later called the human desires. In the fourth step he states the necessity of *li* (ritual) as regulation for the good inner will, by quoting the contrasting key words “*tianli* 天理” and “*renyu* 人欲” from the *Liji*,⁵⁴ making it as a last step in the last sentence the tool for eliminating of human desires and reaching the heavenly pattern.

48 *Yishu* 2.18: 推本而言，禮只是一箇序，樂只是一箇和。… 天下無一物無禮樂。Cf. *Liji* chapter “Yueji” 樂記 (*Liji zhuzi suoyin* 禮記逐字索引 *A Concordance to the Liji*, edited by the Institute of Chinese Studies, hereafter: ICS. Hong Kong: Shangwu, 1992), 19.4/99/23: 樂者天地之和也，禮者天地之序也。

49 Cf. *Yishu* 19.247: 物物皆有理 und *Yishu* 18.193: 天下物皆可以理照，有物必有則，一物須有一理。

50 This saying is from the answering letter to Yang Shi about Zhang Zai’s *Ximing* 西銘, for similar sayings (*wanshu* 萬殊 instead of *fenshu*) in Cheng Yi’s works, see Chen Rongjie 陳榮捷 (Chan, Wing-tsit), *Song Ming lixue zhi gainian yu lishi* 宋明理學之概念與歷史 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenzhesuo, 1996), 143.

51 E.g. *Yishu* 15.144.

52 *Liji* chapter “Zhongni Yanju” 仲尼燕居 (ICS, 29.4/137/18): 禮也者，理也。

53 *Yishu* 15.144.

54 *Liji*, chapter “Yueji,” the only occurrence of *tianli* in the Confucian classics (ICS, 19.1/99/2): 滅天理而窮人欲。

Here the three above mentioned quotations from the classics are combined into one complex argumentation, and in this way *li* (ritual) becomes by equation a part of the realm of *li* (principle/pattern), with heaven (*tian* 天) and the original good will⁵⁵ as its base. And in the same argumentation, *li* (principle/pattern) is combined with the moral or practical aspect of *li* (ritual), and the practical exercise of *li* (ritual) in all situations (looking, listening,...) finds its place next to the learning and understanding of the principles/patterns (“*qiongli* 窮理”) from the classics as mentioned in other sayings.

4) On the other hand, *li* (principle/pattern) is, according to Cheng Yi, not only the rule how something should be,⁵⁶ but also that *by which* and *why* something is what it is (*suoyiran* 所以然), e.g. fire is hot and water is cold.⁵⁷ This is surely what the term *li* (ritual) could not suggest, which always has a normative meaning.

Further, if we take the famous saying *liyi er fenshu* 理一而分殊, it may be possible to speak about one *li* (principle/pattern) (later equated by Zhu Xi with the Taiji 太極), but not about “one ritual” (*li*). The necessary plurality of rituals, especially in their socially defined meaning, rather finds its place in the second part of the saying (*fenshu* 分殊), understood according to social roles.⁵⁸

Thus, while *li* (ritual) denotes rather concrete things or norms (rules), *li* (principle/pattern) indicates even more the “reason”⁵⁹ in or behind the more concrete rituals. Only by this difference from ritual (*li*) can he speak about *li* as the one universal pattern which is concrete in the many applications, as indicated in the statement *liyi er fenshu*. So, if we insert for the many applications (roles) “rituals”(*li*) in its plurality, then the many socially defined rituals as the normative applications⁶⁰ find their unity not only in the intention of the former ancient kings, but also have their base in a surely more abstract, but unifying and even heavenly (*tian*)*li* (principle/pattern) as their deeper reason.

One may conclude that Cheng Yi’s theory of principle/pattern (*lixue* 理學) has always, more strictly taken, to be seen as a theory of ritual(ism) (*lixue* 禮學) or a universally conceptualized ritualism with *li* 理 (principle/pattern) only as a means for a deeper understanding of *li* 禮, the rituals. In other words, for Cheng Yi himself much of his thinking about *li*

55 Here spoken of the intention (*yi* 意) as being good (*shan* 善), however this surely points to the original goodness of human nature (*xing* 性).

56 Cf. *Yishu* 18.193: 有物必有則，一物須有一理。

57 *Yishu* 19.247: 凡眼前無非是物，物物皆有理。如火之所以熱，水之所以寒，至於君臣父子間皆是理。 Later the two meanings of *li* 理 have been differentiated as *suoyiran zhi gu* 所以然之故 (“the reason or cause why something is”) in contrast to the normative *suodangran zhi ze* 所當然之則 (“the rule how something should be”). See Graham, *Philosophers*, 8 with reference to Xu Heng 許衡 (1209–1281).

58 See the definition of *li* 禮 (ritual) as (social) “difference” (*bie* 別) in *Yishu* 2.14: 禮，別也。 See also the similar interpretation of *xu* 序 above, which was also primarily to be understood in a social sense.

59 In this way, *li* (principle/pattern) can serve as a reason for *li* (ritual): So Cheng Yi uses the term (*tian*)*li* (heavenly principle/pattern) also in the Puyi memorial and other ritual *argumentations* (e.g. *Yishu* 15.167 about the number of ancestors: 其疏數之節，未有可考，但其理必如此。).

60 According to Liu Shuxian 劉述先, one has to emphasize that “*liyi (er) fenshu*” in Cheng Yi’s context is still meant in an ethical sense, with *fen* 分 as social identity or position. See his *Liyi fenshu* 理一分殊 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi, 2000), 2.

(principle/pattern) is still based in ritual (*li*) thinking but was then perceived more abstractly and universalized as a general cosmological entity as (heavenly) principle/pattern (*tianli*).⁶¹

The difference between both was made clearer and more distinct only by Zhu Xi. Firstly, while for Cheng Yi, *li* (ritual) is everywhere, for Zhu Xi, *li* (ritual) seems to be restricted to the human world and its concrete human moral context, where it is close to *li* (principle/pattern) as the “moral principle.” Only *li* (principle) can be understood in the broadest cosmological-universal sense. Secondly, while *li* (ritual) could also be understood by Cheng Yi on a level of principle or legitimating reason, for Zhu Xi this function is fully assumed by *li* or *tianli* 天理, of which ritual is the possible concretization (*jiwen* 節文). This differentiation is not yet found in Cheng Yi’s speaking and writing about ritual.

III The origin of Cheng Yi’s ritualism

Where does Cheng Yi’s ritualism come from? Did it only originate in his own thinking, reading, and learning from the classics (as suggested by his exegetical way of arguing and teaching)? Or did it rather stem from a more concrete context of discourse and an atmosphere of arguing about ritual in which Classical texts played their traditionally strong role?

I want to show that the latter was the case, and that his ideas did not derive from “empty space” or reliance on the classics alone. This will be shown in two ways: The first way is to consider the general atmosphere of ritual thinking by pursuing the direct influence from individuals like Hu Yuan, Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao, Zhang Zai and others. The second way is by pointing to the concrete debates which may have caused an atmosphere in which it was usual to talk and argue about ritual. I will start with the latter. Instead of a detailed analysis I will focus on the connection of these debates to Cheng Yi:⁶²

1 Major ritual debates in the lifetime of Cheng Yi

a) One of the most continuous debates was that about the *yayue* 雅樂, the elegant music, i.e. the ritual music. After early changes under Taizu there were music reform activities under Renzong, at first around 1034–1038, then again in 1050–1053. In both cases Hu Yuan, the later teacher of Cheng Yi at the Imperial University (*Taixue* 太學), took part in the discussions; in the early 1050’s he was the person in charge of a new cast of bronze bells and other instruments.⁶³

The debates were taken up again in the 1080’s (1080–1082 and after 1086 by Fan Zhen 范鎮 (1007–1087), a friend of Sima Guang), before the question was decided under Huizong at the end of the Northern Song.

61 This hypothesis has, as far as I can see, not been put forward earlier. Alan Wood sees *li* (principle/pattern) in Cheng Yi’s interpretation of the *Chunqiu* already as replacing *li* (ritual)’s role in Sun Fu’s *Chunqiu zunwang fawei*. See Alan Thomas Wood, “Politics and Morality in Northern Sung China: Early Neo-Confucian Views on Obedience to Authority” (PhD diss, University of Washington, 1981).

62 For a detailed analysis based on mainly official documents and additional unofficial writings, see my PhD thesis. The detailed examination of these debates makes up the main part of my analysis which shows how different debates about rituals influenced the general public discussions, public opinion, and even contributed to the social and political networks of its time.

63 In *Yishu* 2A.47–48, Cheng discusses the method of defining the pitches by measuring the length of pitch pipes (*li* 律) through filling up 1200 millet-seeds for the length of the basic *huangzhong* pitch as suggested by Hu Yuan. The arguments put forward as regards the characteristics of the millet (*shu* 黍) from Yangtou 洋頭 mountain are similar to those of the expert Fan Zhen 范鎮 (1008–1088) in *Yishu* 6.85.

- b) Another discussion was that of the *Puyi* in which Cheng Yi was indirectly involved when he was writing for the censor Peng Siyong 彭思永⁶⁴ in the 1060's (see above).
- c) Other major activities and discussions were those about the Mingtang 明堂 – a major topic and activity brought up again and again since its first grandiose performance in 1050 – and the later debate about heaven and earth sacrifices at the Nanjiao 南郊 and Beijiao 北郊, the north and south suburban altars. Moreover, there were lesser debates such as the *di* 禘- and *xia* 禘-sacrifices in the ancestor temple in which Sima Guang took part, and which were discussed also by Zhang Zai (one chapter of his major work *Zhengmeng* 正蒙⁶⁵ is called after it) as well as by the Chengs, or even smaller debates.⁶⁶

We may assert that the atmosphere of these years was influenced by ritual discussions, and that ritual was one constant and highly symbolically loaded topic of public discussion.

2 Direct influence of individuals on Cheng Yi's ritualism

Aside from general influences, who among the closer relatives, friends, or teachers may have influenced Cheng Yi to such an extent that he became even more interested in ritual than most of his contemporaries?

- a) One of the people closest to and with some influence on Cheng Yi was, of course, his older brother Cheng Hao. Cheng Hao seemingly claims for himself that the two characters *tianli* 天理 as a general doctrine came from himself.⁶⁷ Both brothers were in close contact. Many of the sayings collected in the *Er Cheng ji* are not individually attributed, and may thus belong to either of the brothers. In regard to ritual activity, however, as demonstrated above Cheng Yi seems to have been the more interested and active.

We find much more material about ritual in writings or sayings clearly attributed to Cheng Yi, while for example in Cheng Hao's memorials rituals are mentioned, but not elaborated.⁶⁸ So, Cheng Hao, older by one year, by virtue of his position as an official may have been the politically more influential of the brothers until his early death in 1085, but in the question of ritual he probably was influenced by his younger brother.⁶⁹

64 He was the father in law of Cheng Yi's brother Cheng Hao. See "Mingdao xiansheng xingzhuang" 明道先生行狀 in *Wenji* 10.630. For the question of ritual consequences of adoption ("wei renhouzhe 為人後者") relevant also in the Puyi 濮議 case, see *Yishu* 2A.47–48.

65 For a German translation of this work, see *Chang Tsai: Rechtes Auflichten: Cheng-meng*, by Michael Friedrich, Michael Lackner, and Friedrich Reimann. Hamburg: Meiner, 1999.

66 For comments of Cheng to the *Beijiao* 北郊 debate in the *Yulu*, see *Yishu* 21A.267 and 22A.287, for the question of assigning ancestors as "hosts" at the Jiao and Mingtang 明堂 sacrifices (*pei* 配), see *Yishu* 15.168: 郊祀配天, 宗祀配上帝, 天與上帝一也。在郊言天。Cf. *Yishu* 4.70. For the *dixia* sacrifices in the work of Cheng Yi, see also the essay by Yamane Mitsuyoshi (cf. footnote 13).

67 According to *Waisbu* 12.424, Cheng Hao claimed the "two characters" *tianli* as his (or their) own concept: 明道嘗曰: 「吾學雖有所受, 天理二字卻是自家體貼出來。」 It is, however, still unclear if Cheng Hao claims it as his personal or both their discovery as there is no clear differentiation of singular or plural in Chinese. The first datable use of *tianli* which I could find is the one in Cheng Yi's memorial concerning the above mentioned Puyi case in 1066. Cf. also *Wenji* 10.630–639: "Mingdao xiansheng xingzhuang" (Cheng Yi's biography for his brother).

68 See esp. *Wenji* 1.452-4.

69 Of the father or other direct relatives we do not know much, and nothing is known about a ritual interest.

b) Another important influence possibly came from the teachers. In fact, Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073) has often been mentioned as a friend of their father, and teacher of the young brothers on a middle school level. But the evidence is rare and this detail has been questioned.⁷⁰ In questions of ritual Zhou Dunyi does not appear as a prominent figure, although in his main work *Tongsbu* 通書, “ritual and music” (*liyue* 禮樂) also find their place.⁷¹

It is different with Hu Yuan. He actually seems in some way an exemplary model of the combined type of private scholar, ritualist, and private teacher, similar to Cheng Yi. The importance of Hu Yuan has been emphasized as early as in the *Song Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案 by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695) (amongst others); later by Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990) and Lin Yisheng 林益勝: and recently by Hon Tze-ki’s essay, with special attention to the *Yijing* 易經.⁷² However, ritual connections between the two have never been explored.

Hu Yuan was himself deeply involved in the above mentioned ritual music (*yayue*) debates. By his fame as well as through the networks of the early reformers of the Qingli period (1043–1044), and later the recommendations by Fan Zhongyan and his followers, he became a very popular professor at the famous Imperial University (*taixue*), with hundreds of students. There the young Cheng Yi met him and was recognized by Hu Yuan –it is said – for his piece about Yan Hui 顏回 as an example of “learning to become a sage” (see above B.II.2.).

Hu Yuan himself was known for his adherence to ritual even in everyday life. He exemplified ritual in the school setting by emphasizing the “ritual between student and teacher,” ritual clothing, and other details.

When Cheng Yi wrote the above mentioned essay about Yan Hui under Hu’s tutorship, emphasizing that action of any kind should never be without ritual, he seemed to reflect his teacher’s own attitude and his actual training by ritual to accomplish the goal of sagehood.

Hu Yuan, himself a type of teacher-scholar, probably became the role model for Cheng Yi, who had missed and rejected an official career to become a teacher.

The importance of the school as a social setting not only for Neo-Confucianism (*lixue* 理學), but also for this new type of ritualism, cannot be overestimated. In Song dynasty China it provided not only a place for the independent personal training of ritual, but also fulfilled a social function, that of complementing the political public sphere on a level between state and individual. Here public opinion about topics like ritual could be born and develop. Thus, before Hu Yuan was summoned to court, he taught in a local school, where he developed his independent thinking. The same may be said about Cheng Yi, who never served at court except for a short period after 1086. However, it is interesting to see, as shown above, that both Hu and Cheng

70 The main evidence is found in *Yishu* 2A.16: 昔受學於周茂叔 (attributed to Cheng Hao). By contrast in Cheng Hao’s *xingshuang* biography written by his brother Zhou Dunyi is not addressed as teacher (*xiansheng* 先生), cf. Yao Mingda, *Nianpu*, 8; and in *Yishu* 6.85 Zhou Dunyi is derogatively called “a poor Zen-fellow:” 周茂叔窮禪客, cf. Freeman, “Opposition,” 175.

71 See Zhou Dunyi, *Tongsbu*, “*Liye pian*” 禮樂篇 (第十三), in *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, ed. Zeng Caozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1988–), vol. 25, 269. Here we also find the equation “*Li li ye*” 禮, 理也. Similarly in “*Shengjidepian*” 誠幾德篇 (第三) (in vol. 25, 266): “*Li yue li*” 理曰禮.

72 See Hon Tze-ki, “The *Zhouyi konyi* of Hu Yuan,” *Monumenta Serica* 48 (2000), 67–92, here 67. For Lin Yisheng 林益勝, see his *Hu Yuan de yili yixue* 胡瑗的義理易學 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1974).

were also strongly interested and engaged in discussions about state ritual, the most important public model of ritual for other levels. China had not yet “turned inward.”⁷³

c) A similar picture can be given for Zhang Zai, an uncle of the Chengs. He was a teaching colleague, and together with them, as well as Zhou Dunyi and Shao Yong, counted as one of the five early Neo-Confucian masters, along with Zhu Xi.⁷⁴

Zhang Zai’s ritualism is better known than Cheng Yi’s. He emphasized ritual in his teaching and fostered at least one other famous student and scholar of ritual, Lü Dalin 呂大臨 (1046–1092). Later, shortly before his death in 1077, he even served as a ritual official (in the *Taichang liyuan*) for a short time. A conversation about problems discussed there with the Chengs has come down to us in several records in the works of the Chengs.⁷⁵

The emphasis on ritual in Zhang’s teaching is documented by others like the Chengs, Xie Liangzuo 謝良佐 (1050–1103), Lü Dalin, Sima Guang. This aspect is also mentioned in his biography in the official history of the Song dynasty (*Songsbi* 宋史).⁷⁶ But his interest in ritual was almost unrecognized in Western research until an article by Chow Kai-wing.⁷⁷ Some recognition has been shown in works in the Chinese language about Zhang Zai.⁷⁸ His famous motto (or “pedagogical method”) of moral education through ritual practice (*yi li wei jiao* 以禮為教)⁷⁹ seems similar to Hu Yuans’s practice and Cheng Yi’s seriousness in correct (ritual) behavior.

There was much scholarly contact between the Chengs and Zhang, and so it is more than probable that there was a mutual influence. But Zhang Zai, although some years older, is not

73 In the words of Prof. James T. C. Liu with his title *China Turning inward: Intellectual-political changes in the early twelfth century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988) who characterizes the change of mental orientation from Northern to Southern Song due to decreasing chances of an official career for the growing group of the educated elite.

74 All of these mostly private scholars and teachers emphasized teaching as much as later Zhu Xi who revived the tradition of academies which became even more a place of ritual activity; for Zhu Xi’s ritualism, see Patricia Ebrey, “Education through Ritual. Efforts to Formulate Family Rituals During the Sung Period,” in *Neo-Confucian Education*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 277–306; also Ebrey on Zhu Xi’s family rituals (above, footnote 23) and Qian Mu’s 錢穆 chapter “Zhuzi zhi lixue” 朱子之禮學 (in *Zhuzi xinxue’an* 朱子新學案, vol. 4, 127–200, part 14 of *Qian Binsi quanji* 錢賓四全集. Taipei: Lianjing, 1994–1998).

75 The matter discussed was the ritual treatment of dragon princesses (*longnü* 龍女), recorded in *Yishu* 21A.270, *Yishu* 18.198, *Waishu* 10.406; without the context in *Yishu* 15.147; Yao Mingda, *Nianpu*, 89–90.

76 *Yishu* 2A.23, *Yishu* 10.114: 子厚言：關中學者，用禮漸成俗。For Xie Liangzuo, see Ron-guey Chu, “Recorded Sayings of Hsieh Liang-tso (Shang-ts’ai hsien-sheng yu-lu). An Annotated Translation with Introduction” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1982), 21. See also Thomas W. Selover, *Hsieh Liang-tso and the Analects of Confucius: Humane Learning as a Religious Quest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

77 See Chow Kai-wing, “Ritual, Cosmology, and Ontology: Chang Tsai’s Moral Philosophy and Neo-Confucian Ethics,” *Philosophy East and West* 43 (1993), 201–228.

78 Chen Meiyuan 陳美圓: “Zhang Zai zhi lixue” 張載之禮學 (MA thesis, Taipei: Guli zhengzhi daxue, 1981, 232 pp.), Chen Junmin 陳俊民, *Zhang Zai zhexue yu guanxue xuapai* 張載哲學與關學學派 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng, 1990), and the Japanese article by Yamane Mitsuyoshi 山根三芳, “Chōshi reitsetsu kō” 張子禮說考, in *Nihon Chugoku gakkaisho* 22 (1970), 72–92.

79 See Chow, *Ritual*, 202; it is even mentioned in the *Yishu* 2A.23: 子厚以禮教學者，最善，使學者先有所據守。

known as a teacher of the Chengs. Rather, according to the record of their first encounter in 1056, he was described as being impressed by *their* understanding, at least of the *Yijing*.⁸⁰

There are some similarities in statements of Zhang Zai and Cheng Yi, especially in relation to quotations from the classics.⁸¹ Like Cheng Yi, Zhang equated *li* (ritual) with *li* (principle/pattern) (following a quotation from *Liji*).⁸² And in his writings we can find a passage about ritual as a universal pattern even more elaborate than any found in the *Er Cheng ji*.⁸³

This evidence shows the closeness in thought of the Chengs and Zhang Zai. But as at least the idea of (*tian*)*li* (天)理 (principle, pattern) is claimed normally for the Cheng brothers (esp. Cheng Hao),⁸⁴ and although Zhang Zai was surely a prominent “ritualist,” we do not have any hint that he functioned as a “ritual teacher” of Cheng Yi. The relations of their scholarship, especially of their classical exegesis, but also connections between their ritual conceptions, deserve further detailed research.⁸⁵ A rather complex interdependent relationship is the most probable.⁸⁶

d) Aside from concrete ritual discussions and close contacts one has to recognize another source of influence on Cheng Yi: the major opinion leaders of his time. This includes Ouyang Xiu, who was a dominant figure in the earlier periods of Cheng Yi’s and Cheng Hao’s lifetime, until his retirement as vice chancellor in 1067. His early text *Benlun* 本論 propagated ritual as a means of return or re-establishment of ancient times and rules (*jiugu* 復古), against the foreign influence of Buddhism.⁸⁷ In this he followed the famous Confucian Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) of the Tang. Also, Ouyang can be found involved in ritual debates and thereby using terms like *li* 理 (principle or pattern), *renli* 人理, or especially the concept of “natural human feelings” (*renqing* 人情) as arguments in his reasoning on ritual and in ritual discussions. Although there are differences, motifs like *renqing*, found in the works of the Chengs,

80 Cheng Yi’s famous *Yijing* study is surely influenced by Hu Yuan’s, see footnote 72 for Hon Tze-Ki and Lin Yisheng. According to Hon “Lin argues that Hu Yuan was the reviver of the *Ten Wings* school of the *Yijing* tradition in the Northern Song.” (Hon, “*Zhouyi kouyi*,” 69, fn. 7).

81 A phrase which is frequently quoted is e.g. *keji fuli* 克己復禮 (*Lunyu* 12.1). See also *Zhang Zai ji*, 264.

82 *Zhang Zai ji*, 326: 禮者理也。Here we also find the interesting statement that “who knows principle/pattern (*li*), is able to produce rituals (*li*): 知理則能制禮。And in 259 he speaks in the context of the *zongfa*-chapter even about the heavenly principle/pattern (*tianli* 天理), cf. Chow, *Ritual*, 216. See also footnote 71 for Zhou Dunyi.

83 Chow, *Ritual*, 216f; *Zhang Zai ji*, 264.

84 See Graham, *Philosophers*, 2.

85 For differences between Cheng Yi’s and Zhang Zai’s teaching, see the indirect criticism of Zhang Zai’s teaching as mainly based on ritual, but unsuccessful because not understood by his disciples – in favor of Cheng Hao’s combination with deeper explanations and stress on *jing* 敬, practicing “respect” or “awareness” – by Xie Liangzuo, one of the famous students of Cheng Yi, see Chu, Ron-Guey, *Hsieh Liang-tso*, 21 and for the Chinese Text appendix No. 11.

86 For the general relationship of both see, Graham, *Philosophers*, 176–178 in his Appendix III.

87 Cf. similarly Cheng Yi in *Yishu* 18.236: 秦以暴虐，焚詩書而亡。漢興，鑒其弊必尚寬德，崇經術之士，故儒者多。雖未如聖人，然學宗經師、有識義理者？，故王莽之亂，多守節之士。世族繼起，不得不廢經術，褒尚名節之士，故東漢之士多名節。知名節而不能不節之以禮，遂至於苦節。苦節之士，有視死如歸者。苦節既極，故晉、魏之士，變而為曠蕩，尚浮虛而亡禮法，禮法既亡，與夷狄同，故五胡亂華。

are unthinkable without Ouyang's influence.⁸⁸ The extensive use of *li* 理 (principle/pattern), although more often used as *renli* 人理 by Ouyang, relativizes the uniqueness of the Chengs' "invention." The achievement of the Chengs was rather to have made *li* 理 (principle/pattern) a more comprehensive term, and to have propagated it rather as "heavenly pattern" (天理 *tianli*) than only "human pattern" as used by Ouyang Xiu, thereby not only adding a cosmological and even metaphysical aspect, but also identifying *li* 理 with the good inner human nature (*xing* 性) conferred by heaven. Nevertheless, general concepts of the time widely used and propagated by the preceding generation and its leaders like Ouyang Xiu should not be underestimated as influential for the Chengs, who resumed and synthesized them in their new system under the leitmotif of *li* 理.

e) Another important opinion leader was Sima Guang (1019–1086), the later central figure of political opposition to Wang Anshi. He was a couple of years younger than Ouyang Xiu, but still older than the Chengs. Although his mainly historical and political thinking differed from that of the Chengs, ritual was also a major concept for him, as evinced in the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑.⁸⁹ Moreover his ritual handbook, *Shuyi* 書儀, from 1081 also shows his interest in family ritual. In other of his works (especially in his treatise "*Qing bian* 情辨") we find an interest in conceptualizing *dao* (the universal moral principle) and emotions (*qing*) as coherent aspects of one cosmological and moral reality, explaining emotion as natural expression, but also as needing to be restricted and led by ritual.⁹⁰

It was surely Cheng Yi's scholarship which led Sima Guang to recommend him as a tutor and teacher of the young Emperor Zhezong in 1086. But after Sima's death it was also Cheng Yi's rigorous pedantry in ritual matters which made him an annoying character in the political landscape after 1086. Cheng Yi took part in the struggles for power within the formerly unified coalition against Wang Anshi, after they had gained power under Sima Guang in 1086. Cheng Yi lost his position early, but still suffered exile and persecution after the return of the reformers in 1093, and the following proscriptions. What was left was his fame as a teacher and a scholar. This combination of scholar, teacher and ritualist – following his teacher Hu Yuan – included his ritual seriousness and regulation of life in the school setting. Most interestingly, he was followed by Zhu Xi not only in the concept of *li* (principle/pattern), but also in emphasis on schools and ritual interests.⁹¹

88 For Ouyang Xiu, see *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, *Jushiji* 18.136: 是以堯舜三王之治。必本於人情。 *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, *Puyi* 4.993: 聖人之以人情而制禮也。 For the Chengs, see *Yishu* 6.87: 聖人緣人情以制禮。 and *Yishu* 11.127: 禮者因人情者也，人情之所宜則義也。三年之服，理之至，義之盡也。 *Yishu* 17.180: 物有自得天理者，如蜂蟻知衛其君，豺獾知祭。禮亦出於人情而已。 The term "*renqing*" alone appears altogether 15 times in the *Yishu* (cf. *Ni-Tei zensho sakuin*, vol. 1: *Ni-Tei isho sakuin*, 11.); eight of these entries can be clearly attributed to Cheng Yi; for this, see my thesis, chapter IV.1.

89 For the *Zizhi tongjian*, see Demerie Paula Fäitler, "Confucian Historiography and the Thought of Ssu-ma Kuang" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1991), 58–59 and Peter Bol, "*This Culture of Ours*": *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 238–346, in German see Werner Eichhorn, "Die Wiedereinrichtung der Staatsreligion im Anfang der Sung-Zeit," *Monumenta Serica* 23 (1964), 205–263, esp. 205–208.

90 For his further ritual teaching and *shuyi*, see Yamane Mitsuyoshi 山根三芳, "Shiba Kō reitsetsu kō" 司馬光禮說考, in *Mori Mikisaburō bakushi kōshō kinen Tōyō gaku ronshū* 森三樹三郎博士頌壽紀念東洋學論集 (Tōkyō: Hōyū shoten 1979), 641–657 and Clart, *Ritual und Familie und Concept of Ritual*, see footnote 45.

91 For Zhu Xi's interest in ritual, see above (footnote 74).

C Summary and Conclusions

The material presented has shown that although he can still be seen as a major advocate of *li* 理 (pattern), it is also reasonable to think of Cheng Yi as a ritualist. The emphasis on both, *li* 禮 (ritual) and *li* (pattern), does not represent a contradiction, as the two concepts complemented each other, and both were even explicitly identified in some sayings.

Cheng developed his interests and views in a climate of general interest in ritual in middle Northern Song public discourse, taking part in some discussions himself. Being specialized in ritual, especially in matters of tombs, burial, and mourning ritual, he was accepted as an expert as early as in the 1060’s.

Even beyond the realm of family rituals he was consulted by others, and involved in state ritual debates like the “*Puyi*.” Later he was chosen to be in charge of the burial of the famous Sima Guang.

At the same time he is rather an independent type, mostly non-official teacher-scholar, belonging – distinct from other earlier teachers and private scholars – to the new specific group of idealistic people who wanted to attain sagehood or at least moral education, instead of a “selfish” career. Different from the stereotype evoked by the idea of a philosopher, he did not want to reach this goal only by studying, but also by personal bodily exercise, practicing the model of the sages of the past, preserved in the rules and regulations of ancient rituals (“*lizhi*” 禮制). In this he followed his teacher Hu Yuan. Zhang Zai has to be seen as a close friend, relative and colleague also, with regard to their shared interest in ritual. All of them were followed by Zhu Xi, whose revival of the *shuyuan* academies gave schools (and their ritual practice) an even firmer independent place in Chinese society.

As a first result, we may conclude that Cheng Yi’s works not only contain scattered material about ritual, but show him – by adducing further materials of evidence – as a recognized ritual expert and even ritualist. With Cheng Yi as an early important Neo-Confucian and special forerunner of Zhu Xi (in the Cheng-Zhu line of Neo-Confucianism), ritual practice and thinking were integral to so-called Neo-Confucianism from its very beginning.

Together with other aspects mentioned above, the perspective from *li* (ritual) may give a clearer look at the authentic Cheng Yi, as reconstructed from the discourses of his time.

Although I tried to examine in this article the importance of the concept of ritual (*li*) for Cheng Yi and its connection to the other prominent concept of *li* (pattern), major questions are still open for research: How much did the concept of ritual influence that of the homophonous term *li* (pattern)? While it is clear that Cheng Yi had an interest in ritual as early as 1057, as documented in his essay about “Master Yan’s Learning” presented to Hu Yuan, when did he or his brother “discover” or for the first time use the term *li* 理 (pattern) or *tianli* as a major concept? And while we definitely find statements by Cheng Yi that ritual (*li*) has a universal or cosmologic character, how can this more systematically be related to similar sayings about *li* (pattern)? Is there a development in Cheng Yi’s thinking, which starts from an emphasis on *li* (ritual) in practical and theoretical regard, then introduces *li* (pattern) as a new but perhaps related concept, before later giving more attention to *li* (pattern) as the more comprehensive concept?

This would fit well with Alan Thomas Wood's observation of a shift from *li* (ritual) as a major norm in historiography⁹² still found in Sun Fu's famous and influential Chunqiu commentary (*Chunqiu zunwang fawei* 春秋尊王發微), to *li* (pattern) which replaces the former's role as normative principle in Cheng Yi's unfinished *Chunqiu* commentary. The change could possibly be ascribed to Cheng's own development from an earlier emphasis on ritual to a later one on pattern (*li*). This replacement of the normative *li* (ritual) by *li* (pattern), that could accordingly be (at least partly) associated with Cheng Yi, was later attempted to be revised by some thinkers in the early Qing, at the height of the ritualist revival. An example is Ling Tingkan 凌廷堪 (1757–1809) who postulated a replacement of *li* (pattern) by the more concrete *li* (ritual) (*yi li dai li* 以禮代理).⁹³ Although the reverse replacement of *li* (ritual) by *li* (pattern) probably originated in Cheng Yi, in his day and relating to Cheng this demand was probably not urgent, as Cheng Yi had always a strong concern with ritual even when he later applied the concept of *li* (pattern) rather than *li* (ritual) in theoretical matters.

92 Wood, *Politics passim*. Wood's focus is on the *Chunqiu* commentaries of Sun Fu and Cheng Yi. Similarly, *li* (ritual) had still played this role in Ouyang Xiu's and Sima Guang's writing. For the importance of Chunqiu studies in Song times see Mou Ransun 牟潤孫, "Liangsong Chunqiu xue zhi zhuliu" 兩宋春秋學之主流, *Songsbi yanjiu ji* 3 (1966, 21984), 103–121.

93 Cf. Zhang Shou'an (Chang So-an) 張壽安, *Yili daili – Ling Tingkan yu Qing zhongye Ru xue sixiang zhi zhuanbian* 以禮代理—凌廷堪與清中葉儒學思想之轉變 (Ling Ting-kan and the Transition of Confucian Philosophy in mid-Ch'ing Period) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1994).

For the ritualist revival in early Qing dynasty see Chow, Kai-wing [周啟榮], *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China. Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, repr. Taipei 1996).