The Records of the Ming Philosophers
An Introduction

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The Records of the Ming Philosophers (Ming-ju hsüeh-an)\(^1\) is one of the best-known, and in some ways, the best history of Chinese philosophy. It is an indispensable source of knowledge for those who wish to discover, in some depth, the philosophical ideas and intellectual movements of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which, following the metaphysical heights attained during the Sung dynasty (960–1279), marks the second great climax of thought for the later development of Confucian philosophy.

The superiority of The Records of the Ming Philosophers as a history of philosophy is better appreciated when this work is compared with two others: the Sheng-hsüeh tsung-chuan\(^2\) (The Orthodox Transmission of the Doctrine of the Sages) compiled by Chou Ju-teng (1547–1629), finished in 1606, and the Li-hsüeh tsung-chuan\(^3\) (Orthodox Transmission of the Philosophy of Reason), compiled by Sun Ch'i-feng (1584–1644), an older contemporary and friend of the author of The Records of the Ming Philosophers itself\(^4\). The former, a work of 18 chüan, traces the succession of sages and their disciples from the time of the earliest sage-kings to that of Wang Yang-ming's disciples, concluding with Lo Ju-fang (1515–88), Chou's own mentor. As Chou himself was an advocate of a fusion of Confucian and Buddhist thought, the work he has compiled reflects his own philosophical bent, as well as a desire to trace a "lineal" transmission of ideas from the time of the legendary sages to that of himself and his teacher—a historically impossible task. The latter, with 26 chüan, embraces the philosophical schools of the Sung and Ming times, as well as other historical and biographical accounts based on geographical regions and case-studies, and represents much better scholarship and a greater objectivity of viewpoint. Sun's grandfather had been a disciple of Tsou Shou-i (1491–1562), a direct disciple of Wang Yang-ming. But Sun himself is careful to point out the merits of both the schools of Chu Hsi and of Wang Yang-ming, while taking the position of a conciliator, who sees no sense in defending one against the other. He finished this work in 1666 and presented a copy of it to Huang Tsung-hsi in the following year\(^5\). Huang would benefit from these earlier works for his own writing and compiling, as he also profited from exchanges with another scholar, Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682), author of Jih-chih lu (Record of Daily Learning), the result of thirty

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\(^1\) Huang Tsung-hsi, Ming-ju hsüeh-an (MJHA), a project of the Regional Seminar for Neo-Confucian Studies (Columbia University).

\(^2\) No characters are given for those persons, who have biographies either in Eminent Chinese of the Ch' ing Period or in the Dictionary of Ming Biography.

\(^3\) I have consulted the Sheng-hsüeh tsung-ch'uan (1606) and the Li-hsüeh tsung-ch'uan (1666). The latter is a reprint made by the Yi-wen press, Taipei (1969). For a comparison of these two works with that by Huang Tsung-hsi, see also Huang's own introductory remarks (fan-li) to the Ming-ju hsüeh-an. See especially Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Chung-kuo chin-san-pai nien hsüeh-shu shih (A History of Chinese Scholarship of the Past Three Centuries), (Shanghai, 1941), 40–46; see also Wing-tsit Chan, tr., Instructions for Practical Living, (New York, 1963), 312.

\(^4\) For Ku Yen-wu, see Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, ibid., 60–63.
years' work and a collection in 32 chüan of encyclopedic scope. Ku's manifest dissatisfaction with Ming philosophy could have also performed some kind of dialectical function in preparing Huang for his own philosophical reflections and writings.

Huang Tsung-hsi himself has left behind his judgements of both Chou Ju-teng's Sheng-hsüeh tsung-chuan and Sun Chi-feng's Li-hsüeh tsung-chuan. This is what he has to say:

Each school has its own doctrine, but Hai-men (Chou Ju-teng) gives preference to the learning of Ch'an [Buddhism], melting gold, silver, copper and iron into one vessel. This represents the doctrine of one man: Hai-men [himself], and is not the doctrine of all the schools. [Sun] Chung-yüan (Chi-feng) has collected [materials] indiscriminately, without making the proper distinctions. His annotations and commentaries have not necessarily covered the essentials; his knowledge is like Hai-men's. Scholars could read my book, and then know the negligences of the other two works.

This may appear to be a self-centered and boastful expression. But for those who know Huang Tsung-hsi's superb historical knowledge as well as his careful research and keen philosophical training, the statement is fair and appropriate. Huang Tsung-hsi was by far the better philosopher, scholar, and historian, and his work, the Records of the Ming Philosophers, stands as a classic of historical and philosophical scholarship, which has rendered the other two books largely obsolete, except for the curious specialist.

The Author

Huang Tsung-hsi (Nan-lei, Li-chou, 1610-95), the author and compiler of the Records of the Ming Philosophers, was a man of many parts, a colorful figure whose long life spanned the last three decades of the Ming and the first five and a half decades of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911). He combined in himself the gifts and training of a scholar, an official, a philosopher and a historian, with the fiery ardour of a filial son, a devoted disciple, and a life-long patriot and Ming loyalist. His father Huang Tsun-su (1584-1626), a scholar of the Tung-lin school, had held a post at Peking as a censor (1623), and the eldest son, Tsung-hsi, had ample opportunity for education and for meeting scholarly contacts at an early age. Huang Tsun-su's denunciation of the powerful eunuch Wei Chung-hsien and his faction cost him his official post (1625) and led to his imprisonment and death (1626). His three sons, bereaved in youth, attached themselves to Liu Tsung-chou (H. Nien-t'ai, Chi-shan, 1578-1645), their father's friend, who became their teacher as well as a second father. Liu was a man of remarkable independence. He was close to the Tung-lin movement but deplored many of the partisan politics which it advocated. He was also a thinker of the Wang Yang-ming school who perceived the shortcomings of the Yang-ming school itself and especially of its latter-

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3 For Ku's work see Jih-chih lu chi-shih[4], SPPY ed.
4 See his Introductory Remarks to the MJHA.
6 See MJHA, ch.61. See also ibid.
7 Huang Tsung-hsi had two brothers: Huang Tsung-yen (1616-86) and Huang Tsung-hui (1618-63). All studied under Liu Tsung-chou and were ardent patriots as well as talented scholars. Huang Tsung-yen was a noted classicist and a painter; Huang Tsung-hui, the youngest, was most affected by the change of dynasties and died earliest. See Tu Lien-che's biography of Huang Tsung-yen in ECCP, v.1,355.
day disciples. He took a position of reconciliation between the Yang-ming school and
the school of Chu Hsi. Liu Tsung-chou is known especially for his emphasis on quiet
meditation and his doctrine of vigilance in solitude (shen-tu)[5], derived from the Doc-
trine of the Mean where it is stated: "the gentleman watches over himself when alone"[8].
Huang Tsung-hsi was to be his most famous disciple.

The young Huang had been pained and shocked by the unjust arrest of his father who
died of torture in prison. In 1628, at the accession of a new emperor (Ssu-tsung), he had
set out for Peking from his native Chekiang with an awl in his sleeve and a memorial in
his hand, intending to revenge his father's death and vindicate his good name. Before he
reached the city, however, the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien had already died and his prin-
cipal followers had been punished, while their victims were given posthumous honors.
But Huang Tsung-hsi personally stabbed the jailor at whose hands his father had died.
The emperor was touched by his filial piety and refrained from punishing him. He was
then eighteen years old[9].

Huang Tsung-hsi was accepted early into the literary and political circles of his days.
He joined the group called Fu-she[7] in 1630 during a sojourn in Nanking, becoming
thereby a part of a nation-wide movement with literary as well as political importance,
and recognized sometimes as a continuation of the Tung-lin movement itself[10], al-
though its followers lacked the philosophical propensity of the earlier Tung-lin scholars.
Huang also began a detailed study of Chinese history, in deference to a last wish expres-
sed by his father. In two years he covered the "Veritable Records" of the first fifteen
reigns of the Ming dynasty, as well as the entire corpus of the Twenty-one Dynastic His-
tories[11]. In 1644, on hearing the news of the fall of Peking, he followed his teacher Liu
Tsung-chou to Hangchow in Chekiang. They tried to raise volunteer troops for the
Ming cause against the peasant rebels who had overtaken the capital. Together with his
two younger brothers and several hundred volunteers, he assisted in battle against the
Manchus as they pushed south to the Ch'ien-t'ang river. He was later made a censor and
a secretary in the ministry of War by the Prince of Lu, Administrator of the Realm
(1646). That same year, together with five hundred others, Huang Tsung-hsi set up bar-
cricades in the Ssu-ming mountains in Chekiang which served as guerrilla headquarters
for the Ming loyalists gathered under Wang[8]. In 1649 he joined Prince Lu on the
Chusan islands but decided to retire from active politics and return home when he per-
ceived that he could do little to advance the Prince's cause and because his mother's life
was being jeopardized by his own activities. It appears that Huang might have under-
taken a journey to Nagasaki, Japan in the company of an official Feng Ching-ti[9] to re-
quest military aid for the Ming cause, but the exact circumstances of this mission and
Huang's part in it remain unclear.

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[5] Doctrine of the Mean, ch.1, J. Legge, tr., The Chinese Classics, Oxford 1892, 384. See also
MHIA ch.62.
[6]  See CH'UAN Tsu-wang's funerary essay in honor of HUANG Tsung-hsi, in Li-chou yi-chu hui-
k'un (Collected Writings of Huang Tsung-hsi), edited by HSÜH Feng-ch'ang[6], and included in
Ming-Ch'ing shih-liao hui-p'ien (A Collection of Historical Materials for the Ming and Ch'ing
Times), v.6.
[7]  For the Fu-she, see William S. ATWELL, "From Education to Politics: the Fu-she", in W.T.
DEBARY, ed., The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism (New York, 1975), 333-68.
From 1649 on, Huang Tsung-hsi lived in Yü-yao and devoted himself wholly to the work of teaching and scholarship. He showed a remarkable productivity. Today the Imperial Catalogue lists only fifteen of his works, of which six were copied into the Imperial Manuscript Library. But about one hundred titles are attributed to him, and these are either extant or included in various catalogues. He also displayed an astonishing versatility. His writings on the Classics—especially on the Book of Changes—show a keen sense of discernment in matters regarding documentary evidence. He attacked the so-called "Yellow River Map and Lo River writing", respectively attributed to Fu-hsi and Emperor Yü, as lacking in historical authenticity. His political treatise, Ming-i tai-fang lu (1662), antedated Rousseau's Social Contract by some thirty years. It is his critique of despotic government and gives his ideas for institutional reform. It was much praised by his friend Ku Yen-wu who differed otherwise from him on ideas of philosophy. Classified as a forbidden book during the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-95), the book was privately published and circulated in the late nineteenth century by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and his friends, and exerted at the time a strong influence in promoting reformist and constitutional ideas. Huang's anthology of Ming literature [actually a collection of biographies and selected texts] remains incomplete with 482 chüan, and he also began anthologies of Sung and Yuan literature as well. His own poetry and short prose pieces reveal his literary gifts and his highly diversified interests. Huang also had a remarkable understanding of mathematics and astronomy, writing learned treatises on these subjects, and producing a calendar for the use of one of the southern Ming princes. Besides all this, he has also left behind a work on musical theory which has been highly considered. Huang refused to accept the hung-po degree offered him by the Manchu government (1679) and declined the official invitation to work on the Ming dynastic history. But his works were assembled at the bureau of historiography where many of his disciples worked, consulting him frequently in cases of doubt. The present Ming Dynastic History itself is derived mostly from the draft version compiled by his most famous disciple, Wan Ssu-t'ung.

If Huang, the philosopher and historian of philosophy, was at the same time an accomplished classicist and historian, political theorist, mathematician and astronomer, a man of letters as well as of music, he was, in a sense, the last "universalist" of his generation. Many of the Ch'ing Confucian scholars might possess in their own ways the compe-
stances of a philologist and classicist, of a documentary historian and poet-essayist. But few of them engaged in deep philosophical reflection, or concerned themselves with questions of metaphysics and history of thought.

**The Structure of the Book**

In his *History of Chinese Philosophy*, the modern Confucian philosopher Fung Yu-lan explains how Westerners have written histories of philosophy in what he calls a narrative style, whereas the Chinese have produced "histories of selected anthologies" with the compiler's comments on the philosophical ideas represented. Huang Tsung-hsi's work falls under this second category. Fung himself sees a certain advantage in this kind of historical work which permits the reader to come into direct contact with the philosophers' words, although he acknowledges that such a genre suffers from a certain lack of systematization. His own *opus magnum* would represent a conscious fusion of both styles. It is an example of how Huang Tsung-hsi's model still has its modified modern imitations.

How does a compilation of selected anthologies permit the expression of the compiler's own views? Here the selection and ordering of the material in the anthologies represents becomes very important. In the case of *The Records of the Ming Philosophers*, Huang Tsung-hsi would forego a strictly chronological order which had been followed by his predecessors Chou Ju-teng and Sun Ch'i-feng. Rather he organized the book in such a way as to focus on two central figures: Wang Yang-ming, around whose philosophy the entire work revolves, and Liu Tsung-chou, Huang's own teacher and Wang's re-interpreter. For this reason, after the usual prefaces, he presents excerpts from Liu Tsung-chou's sayings on various Ming philosophers and then begins his history with the school of Wu Yu-pi and his disciples – Hu Chu-jen, Lou Liang, Ch'en Hsien-chang (ch. 1-6) – to set the stage for the emergence of the school of Wang Yang-ming. The schools of Hsüeh Hsüan (ch. 7-8) and Wang Shu (ch. 9) then follow, allowing the contrast between Wu Yu-pi's devotion to self-cultivation– which is to become subsumed into Wang Yang-ming's highly integrated philosophy – and Hsüeh Hsüan's unstinted adherence to intellectual pursuit to come to greater light. Thus it could be said the first nine *chüan* of the book lead up gradually to the first and principal climax of the entire work, the school of Wang Yang-ming (ch. 10). After that we witness the unfolding of the many schools started by Wang Yang-ming's disciples, arranged according to their geographical centers of influence, beginning with those of Chekiang (ch. 11-15), Wang's home province, and Kiangsi (ch. 16-24), where Wang spent so much time as administrator and teacher, and going on to the central provinces, Kiangsu (ch. 25-28) and Hunan and Hupei (ch. 28), to the north (ch. 29), and to the south– Kwangtung and Fukien (ch. 30). Then comes the school of Li Ts'ai (ch. 31), the pretentious "imitator" rather than authentic disciple of Wang Yang-ming, and the controversial school of Wang Ken, based especially in T'ai-chou, Kiangsu (ch. 32-36), which inspired a popular movement of protest in the name of individual freedom in the late Ming times, and which became later a kind of "scapegoat" for the downfall of the Ming dynasty itself.
Huang Tsung-hsi takes up in turn the school of Chan Jo-shui (ch. 37-42), Ch'en Hsien-chang's disciple and Wang Yang-ming's good friend, and the second most important thinker of Wang's generation. Besides, the close relationship between his disciples and Wang's, even after the two masters' deaths, clearly justifies placing Chan's school right after those of Wang's disciples. Then and only then follow the "Miscellaneous scholars". Within this section, the first part includes the early Ming political martyr Fang Hsiao-ju (ch. 43), a careful follower of the school of Ch'eng Yi and Chu Hsi whose death dealt a severe blow to the cause of the Ch'eng-Chu philosophy itself, the virtuous and diligent Ts'ao T'uan (ch. 44), and several other scholarly but minor figures (ch. 45-46). The second part presents some of Wang Yang-ming's contemporaries, mostly scholars and philosophers of the Ch'eng-Chu persuasion: Lo Ch'in-shun (ch. 47), Wang Chün [13] (ch. 48), Ho T'ang (ch. 49), Wang T'ing-hsiang (ch. 50), and others (ch. 51-52). The third part (ch. 53-57) deals with a later generation, including Lü K'un (ch. 54), Ho Chin (ch. 55), Huang Tao-chou (ch. 56), the historian of thought Sun Ch'i-feng (ch. 57) and many others.

Then comes the Tung-lin school (ch. 58-61) of Ku Hsien-ch'eng, Kao P'an-lung, and Huang Tsung-hsi's father, Huang Tsun-su, as well as many other philosophers, scholars and political martyrs. Huang Tsung-hsi evidently gives it a certain importance, all the more on account of his own familiarity with its teachings and history. Besides, out of Tung-lin would emerge also Liu Tsung-chou, his teacher, disciple of the masters of the later school of Chan Jo-shui as well as friend and sympathizer of the Tung-lin gentlemen.

**Intellectual Horizons**

Before examining in greater detail the contents of *The Records of the Ming Philosophers*, it seems imperative to compare Ming thought as a whole with the earlier Sung variety. Are there significant differences? Is it accurate to say that Ming thought represents both a continuation of the Sung legacy—especially in its "orthodox" form in the school of Ch'eng Yi and Chu Hsi, as well as a protest against this orthodoxy in the school of Wang Yang-ming?

This has often been the explanation given of the similarities and dissimilarities between Sung and Ming philosophers. But this explanation remains simplistic. It will be seen that Ming Confucian thought, whether in "orthodox" or "protest" form, has its own character, at the same time dependent upon and yet significantly different from Sung Confucianism. Ming Confucians are much more inner-oriented, almost exclusively concerned with the self—with questions of the mind and human nature, where Sung Confucians of the school of Ch'eng Yi and Chu Hsi have shown a much greater interest in the external world, in questions of cosmology. For this opinion we have the support of both Ku Yen-wu, the inveterate critic of Ming thought, as well as Huang Tsung-hsi himself. Ku says:

It is a matter of great regret to me that for the past hundred odd years, scholars have devoted so much discussion to the mind and human nature, all of it vague and incomprehensible... The gentlemen of today... set aside broad knowledge and concentrate...
upon a search for a single, all-inclusive method; they say not a word about the distress and poverty of the world within the four seas, but spend their days lecturing on theories of "the weak and subtle", "the refined and undivided". . .”.

And Huang Tsung-hsi asserts:

I have held the opinion that Ming [achievements] in literature, letters and exterior accomplishments are all behind [those of] earlier ages, but that its [achievements] in Lihstieh (Philosophy), singularly supercedes those of the earlier ages. [Ming thinkers] have not refrained from analyzing matters as refined as the ox’s hair and the cocoon’s silk. They have really been able to disclose and develop that which earlier scholars have not. [Earlier], Ch’eng Yi and Chu Hsi offered rather complex critiques of Buddhism, but [stopped at] the surfaces. They had not been able to point out that which is close to principle (li) and almost resembles truth. The Ming Confucians were able to point out all this, even with regard to differences of infinitesimal proportions, allowing nothing to escape [their scrutiny].

Whether criticizing Ming thought for its emptiness and petty preoccupations or praising it for its depth and subtlety, Ku and Huang agree that it is essentially concerned with problems of "mind and nature"—and see this concern as marking out an important difference between Ming thought and its Sung model. But where the Sung period witnessed an impressive array of thinkers, the Ming was largely dominated by the appearance of one single thinker: Wang Yang-ming. No other philosopher exerted as much influence over the period as he. Critics and admirers of Ming thought, therefore, tend to be critics or admirers of Wang Yang-ming and his philosophy. Thus it is no wonder that Huang Tsung-hsi should have focused The Records of the Ming Philosophers upon the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming and the many schools developed by his disciples.

In the sixty-two chüan work which is The Records of the Ming Philosophers, the schools of Wang Yang-ming and his disciples take up twenty-seven chüan, almost two-fifths of the entire book. Considerable space is especially devoted to the controversial debates on mind and human nature, goodness and evil, aroused by Wang Yang-ming’s teachings which continued after his death. The school of Chan Jo-shui (ch. 6), as well as the Tung-lin school (ch. 4), are important particularly on account of their participation in such debates and their efforts in collaboration with the Chekiang and especially Kiangsi schools of Wang’s disciples—to bring about a more rational and balanced response to these questions which had generated so much emotional heat.

However, in the mind of Huang Tsung-hsi, it is also evident that the second most important thinker of The Records of the Ming Philosophers is not Chan Jo-shui but Liu Tsung-chou. To him, Liu’s teaching represents a final and culminating effort to reconcile certain contradictions manifest in the teachings of Wang Yang-ming, and in this way, a continuation of the efforts of both the Chan Jo-shui and the Tung-lin schools. Besides, Huang has painstakingly attributed much of his own thought and scholarship to the tutelage of Liu Tsung-chou. He has prefaced the Records of the Ming Philosophers with a special introduction: the collected sayings of Liu Tsung-chou on various Ming thinkers. In a sense, he regards the Records of the Ming Philosophers as almost a collaborative work—his and his teacher’s. That their opinions are not always the same can


20 See Huang Tsung-hsi’s Introductory Remarks.
be clearly seen. But that Liu's ideas have exerted an important and formative influence upon Huang's is also not open to doubt. For Huang Tsung-hsi, Liu's new synthesis of Ming Confucian philosophy, especially as formulated in the doctrine of shen-tu—vigilance in solitude—is a major achievement in the evolution of Confucian thought. Indeed, it represents his own personal philosophy as well. For Huang Tsung-hsi has not left behind another book describing his own philosophical beliefs. He is essentially a disciple of Wang Yang-ming and Liu Tsung-chou. And the Records of the Ming Philosophers, voicing as it does, his assessments of Wang Yang-ming and of other Ming thinkers, is an expression of Huang Tsung-hsi's personal philosophy as well as a history of Ming thought.

The Philosophical Problems

The central philosophical concern of the Records of the Ming Philosophers is self-understanding and self-transcendence. This is formulated in terms of relationships between the mind and human nature, and the relevance of each and both to the quest for wisdom and sagehood—a quest which is supposed to involve a certain methodology. In this, the Ming Records differs from the Sung ones (Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an) in which metaphysical concerns are expressed much more in cosmological orientations, even if the self is not neglected. Neither did the Ming thinkers overlook the external world. In each case, the basic age-old Chinese assumption that "Heaven and Man are one" assures a certain continuum between self and the world, in spite of the divergent starting points of the Sung philosophers and their Ming successors. But the Ming Confucians prefer to regard the world from the vantage point of the mind and human nature, particularly of mind—that which is in control of nature and emotions. Huang Tsung-hsi begins the General Preface to the Records of the Ming Philosophers with: "Heaven and Earth are all Mind (hsin)". For him, as for the other Ming philosophers included in his history, the word "mind" is somehow synonymous to that of "reality"—the reality present in both man and the universe. It is in one's own mind that the self conceives an understanding of the world and its ultimate principle, as well as of himself as related to this world. It is to represent the immanence of this reality, the One behind the Many within the self, that he calls it also "Mind".

The Philosophy of Mind

With the greater emphasis of mind over nature—whether human or universal—comes also more interest in the principle of ch'ü (vital force, matter-energy?) as both opposed to and somewhat co-ordinated with li (rational and moral principle). This li-ch'ü[14] distinction, which resembles in some ways the Aristotelian form-matter dichotomy, provided for the Sung philosophers a basis for their new explanation of both the world and man—with the capacities for good and evil present in human nature. Where "moral nature" in itself is apprehended in terms of li as the principle of goodness almost inaccessible to evil, "physical nature" which comes with ch'ü is the source of human emotions, the excess of which results in evil intentions and behavior. But the Ming philosophers, by giving more prominence to mind over nature, state their preference for the dynamic

21 HUANG Tsung-hsi's Preface to the MJHA.

[14] 理気

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principle over the static, bringing also into greater focus the problem of the ubiquitous ch'i, that which is at once vital and changing, the existential as seen against the essential (li). In the case of Wang Yang-ming a follower of Chu Hsi's rival Lu Chiu-yuan[15], "mind" becomes also liang-chih[16], a Mencian term which receives metaphysical overtones without losing its ethical implications. And "mind in-itself" (hsin-t'i)[17] is described as neither good nor evil--in a statement which became the occasion for centuries of controversy. Much of the Records of the Ming Philosophers following upon ch.10 (Yao-chiang hsiuh-p'ai)[18] is given to interpretations and re-interpretations of this statement, which Liu Tsung-chou, Huang Tsung-hsi's master, ascribes to Wang Chi rather than to Wang Yang-ming himself.

The Philosophy of Mind proposes to overcome the tension between self and the world while also offering a "method" for the achievement of sageliness, which is said to consist in the very realization of self-transcendence through a consciousness of the oneness of all things. This "method" refers back to the self-determining power of the mind, or liang-chih, based upon the presence of the seeds of sagehood within the self. It is said that one need merely to discover this truth to find it realized. But such a "method" does not offer a systematic approach toward such realization. It merely indicates that ultimate reality (pen-t'i)[19] is already present in the quest for the ultimate, a quest which involves self exertion (kung-fu)[20]--a life of personal discipline usually including some form of meditation. The great Ming philosophers, such as Wang Yang-ming and Liu Tsung-chou, all emphasize the interaction of activity (tung) and passivity or tranquility (ching)[21] in one's spiritual quest.

The careful reader of The Records of the Ming Philosophers cannot but be impressed by the pervading concern for finding wisdom through a life of virtuous action, which honors man's social and political responsibilities whenever possible, and which is balanced by the practice of meditation or quiet-sitting (ching-tso). The unity of the inner-outer dimensions are usually recommended, although emphases differ regarding the importance of gradual cultivation (hsin)[22] or of a sudden experience of enlightenment (wu)[23] -- which is supposed to reveal to the heart the meaning of Tao or pen-t'i[24]. Interestingly enough, there is no particular association of action with "cultivation" or of meditation with "enlightenment". Many followers of the T'ai-chou branch of the Yang-ming school advocate the finding of an enlightenment experience without particular reliance on meditation. They frequently seek for enlightenment in activity. This appears also as an expression of their belief in the dynamic power of the mind itself to achieve wisdom in action. It became the duty of the followers of the Kiangsi branch, as well as of the Kan-ch'üan school and of the Tung-lin school, to restore the balance between activity and tranquillity by a return to the practice of quiet meditation.

This explains also the influence of Buddhism, especially of Ch'an or Zen Buddhism, both in its gradualist or Ts'ao-tung[24] form, and in its subtlist or Lin-chi[25] form, upon...
the evolution of Ming Confucianism. True, Sung Confucianism began as a rationalist movement reacting against the non-rational and anti-social teachings of the Buddhist religion. But it did so in part with what it had learned from Buddhist logic and metaphysics, reconstituting a lost Confucian heritage and its teachings of sagehood with the assistance of Buddhist methods of cultivation and near-monastic discipline. Ming Confucianism continued to criticize Buddhism and Taoism, while developing further a philosophy of immanence and a method of inner concentration, centered more and more on enlightenment. The influence of Pure Land Buddhism is also felt in the philosophy of Wang Chi, a follower of Wang Yang-ming, who advocates the achievement of enlightenment through "faith" in liang-chih. And so, the continued decline of Buddhist religion in Ming times is accompanied by the increasing religiosity of Confucianism itself. Huang Tsung-hsi speaks himself of accusations laid against Confucian philosophers for being "Buddhists in disguise". Later scholars of the Ch'ing times would especially focus upon this development, associating it with Wang Yang-ming's teaching of the mind-in-itself, as being "neither good nor evil". For them, this was responsible in large part of the individualism and factionalism which characterized the behavior of late Ming intellectuals and which allegedly led to the eventual disintegration of Ming state and society. The Ch'ing period became a time when metaphysical interests were discouraged while classical philology experienced its great revival.

The k'uang-chüan[26] characterizations

It is useful to call attention to Huang Tsung-hsi's classification of Ming philosophers according to their ardour or caution in their quest for sagehood. Here he makes use of Confucius' characterization of disciples as being either "madly ardent" (k'uang) for the truth, or "extremely cautious" (chüan) and therefore reacting slowly. The perfect man is the man of the Mean (chung-hsing)[27], whose behavior is not inclined to these extremes. But such is seldom to be found, and the sage himself states his satisfaction with men of "mad ardour" or of "extreme caution". The Sung and Ming philosophers themselves have frequently made reference to these characterizations. In the Records of the Ming Philosophers, Huang Tsung-hsi speaks of Ch'en Hsien-chang as exemplifying the quality of "mad ardour" or eccentricity, and Hu Chü-jen as representing the more "cautious" seeker of sagehood. He also relates Wang Yang-ming's self-characterization as a man who was "madly ardent" about achieving sagehood. Although he did not say so explicitly, later scholars referred to Huang's own master, Liu Tsung-chou, whose philosophy of shen-tu emphasized the cultivation of a sense of moral and religious self-consciousness, as a man of "extreme caution". In grounding his history of Ming thought on the two principal representatives, Wang Yang-ming and Liu Tsung-chou, Huang Tsung-hsi might therefore be said to have presented a certain dialectical profile of Ming thought, with the pendulum swinging between k'uang and chüan. And since his own position remains somewhere in between that of Wang Yang-ming and Liu Tsung-chou, it may also be said to point toward the transcending of these dialectical differences, in the view of increasing harmonization.

25 Ibid., Introduction.
27 See Julia Ching, To Acquire Wisdom, ch.1.
The Geographical Factor

The geographical factor has always had a certain importance in the development of philosophical ideas in China. Both Buddhism and Taoism are known to have developed "northern" and "southern" schools. In the case of Neo-Confucianism, the inspiration had originally come from the north, from the region near Loyang and K'ai-feng, in the Sung times, a region which produced Chou Tun-i, Chang Tsai, Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng I. But the war with the Jurchen and the division of China into two parts changed the situation. The great philosophers of the southern Sung, Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yuan, came from Fukien and Kiangsi respectively, although their ancestors were originally northerners. The flowering of Confucianism in southern China was not accompanied by any parallel development in the Jurchen north, where the philosophy of Chou Tun-i and the Ch'eng brothers were also neglected until after the reunification of the country under the Mongols (1279). Northern China gained the reputation for being less concerned with philosophical questions and more interested in classical scholarship, whereas the south continued to produce the speculative thinkers, especially during the Ming times. Interestingly enough, Wang Yang-ming, a man of Yü-yao, Chekiang, would become especially associated with the area of Kiangsi, the home province of Lu Chiu-yuan, his predecessor in philosophy. The geographical distribution of the many branches of the Yang-ming school becomes itself an interesting question. Huang Tsung-hsi paid special attention to this question, making note of the origins of these branches and their interrelationships. This does not necessarily mean that all the followers of a certain school of thought must be natives of a certain region. Rather, the geographical region usually represents the place of origin of their principal representatives, as well as the area where his philosophy was best known.

It is important to remark here that the school of Wu Yü-pi, with which the book begins (ch.1-4), is also based in Kiangsi, the province where Wang Yang-ming spent much time as administrator and teacher of philosophy. Wu Yü-pi, of course, was the teacher of Lou Liang (1422-91), who is sometimes regarded as having transmitted Wu's teaching to Wang — although this appears more conjecture than fact, even if their brief meeting had exerted its influence upon Wang's development. Ch'en Hsien-chang, another student of Wu Yü-pi, merits more attention (ch. 5-6). He was the best known of all Wu's disciples and a southerner from Kwangtung, the home province also of Chan Jo-shui, his own best known disciple. Ch'en's philosophy, with its inner-oriented focus, was a clear development of Wu Yü-pi's concerns, while foreshadowing the emergence of Wang Yang-ming's philosophy. Indeed, some people have asserted that Wang had been strongly influenced by Ch'en, although the two never met, and Wang's extant writings contain no mention of Ch'en. But Wang was, of course, a close friend of Ch'en's disciple Chan Jo-shui, the founder of the Kan-chüan school, based also in Kwangtung.

28 See *Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an* for biographies of thinkers concerned.
29 See Liu Shih-p'ei, "Nan-peili hsüeh pu-t'ung lun", (Why Neo-Confucianism is Different in the North and the South), in *Liu Shen-shu hsien-sheng i-shu* [1936] (Surviving Works), [V.15], 4a-6a.
a) The Northern Schools

The northern schools are presented in ch.7-9. These include the school of Hsüeh Hsüan, or the Ho-tung school, based in Shansi, Shensi, and Honan, east of the Yellow River, and the region which had produced the great Sung philosophers: Shao Yung (1011-77), Chang Tsai, Ch'eng Hao, and Ch'eng I, and the San-yüan[29] school of Wang Shu, also of Shensi. As mentioned earlier, Northern China had witnessed the flowering of Confucian philosophy during the northern Sung period but fell afterwards into the hands of the Jurchen who established the Chin dynasty. By the Ming times, it was evident that the focus of philosophical concern and interest would remain in the south, especially in the Yang-tze area, but also further down — extending to Kwangtung. The north would be, even more than before, identified with conservative influences and a kind of stagnatism in the letters as well as in philosophy. In *The Records of the Ming Philosophers*, Huang Tsung-hsi displays some sympathy for Hsüeh Hsüan, the diligent student whose shoes dug holes in the stone floor under his desk, and who would be regarded by others — Wang Yang-ming for one — as a man who carried to excess his fervour for book learning. He hints at the possibility that Hsüeh might have finally achieved interior enlightenment. He also has some kind words for Lü Nan, Hsüeh's disciple. He considers the San-yüan school to be derived from Hsüeh's, giving special mention to the high moral principles evinced by scholars from that part of Shensi, the home province of Chang Tsai. Such were the "orthodox" Confucian thinkers of early Ming: virtuous men, but without much originality.

b) The Yang-ming Schools of Chekiang and Kiangsi:

Geographical distribution stands out once more in Huang Tsung-hsi's description of the schools of Wang Yang-ming and his many disciples (ch.10-31). Huang Tsung-hsi says:

The scholarship [and thought] of the Ming dynasty had its beginnings in [Ch'en] Po-sha (Hsien-chung), and began to grow brilliant only with Yao-chiang[30] (Wang-ming). For, before them, [scholars] merely studied by rote the known teachings of the earlier Confucians, without seeking a personal understanding and realization, [without also] making explicit the most hidden [truths]. This is what [one means] by every man being an interpreter of Chu [Hsi]... With the same conviction Kao Chung-hsien (P'an-lung) says: "In the Recorded Sayings of Hsüeh Wen-ch'ing and Lü Ching-yeh (Lü Nan), there is not much real understanding, through enlightenment[31].

Wang Yang-ming was a native of Yü-yao, in Chekiang, a fellow countryman of Huang Tsung-hsi himself. Huang gives some importance to Wang's influence in his home province.

The teaching of Yao-chiang [spread] from near to far. His earliest students were only the scholars of his own native place. Only after [Wang's] experience in Lung-ch'ang (Kweichow) did disciples come to him from the four directions[32].

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[29] The San-yüan school
[30] Yao-chiang is another name for Yü-yao, Wang Yang-ming's native place. It comes from the name of a river which is also called Shun-shui.
[32] *MJHA* ch.11 (Preface to the section on the Central Chekiang branch of the Yang-ming school).
Of Wang's disciples from Chekiang, Huang Tsung-hsi devotes some attention to Hsü Ai, Wang's brother-in-law and best friend, whose life was cut short at the age of thirty one, and to Ch'i'en Te-hung, an early disciple and probably the most faithful. But he gives special importance to Wang Chi (to whom is devoted one entire chüan), certainly the most metaphysically inclined as well as the most controversial. He then mentions Chi Pen, an independent and balanced thinker, and Huang Wan (1477–1551), protector and father-in-law to Wang's son, who later developed his own philosophy in conscious opposition not only to Wang Yang-ming but also to Chu Hsi. Huang also gives some attention to a group of Wang's fellow countrymen which included the older scholar Tung Yün, a commoner, Lu Ch'eng, several of whose letters to Wang Yang-ming have been included in the Ch'üan-hsi Lu, part 2 (ch. 14), Wan Piao and several others (ch. 15). He then moves on to Kiangsi, asserting that scholars of that region alone have transmitted the correct teaching of the Master. The most important figure of this group is Tsou Shou-i (ch. 16), the next, Ou-yang Te and Nieh Pao (ch. 17). All three were direct disciples of Wang Yang-ming. After these came a man who knew Yang-ming but was recognized as his disciple after his death: Lo Hung-hsien (ch. 18). Then follow the many Lius of An-fu, especially Liu Wen-min, Liu Pang-ts'ai and Liu Yang (ch. 19). Coming after them are the representatives of the following generation, disciples of Tsou and the Lius, especially Wang Shih-huai (ch. 20). Teng Ting-yü (ch. 21), Hu Chih (ch. 22), Tsou Yuan-piao (ch. 23) and others (ch. 24).

c) The Central Provinces and the South

From Kiangsi, Huang goes on to Kiangsu, dealing first with those Yang-ming disciples who came from the areas outside of T'ai-chou. He speaks especially of Huang Hsing-tseng (ch. 25), Tang Shun-chih (ch. 26) and Hsü Chieh (ch. 27). These were all Wang Yang-ming's own disciples. He then deals with the scholars of Hukuang, remarking here that Keng Ting-hsiang, a native of that province, was more accurately classified as a disciple of the T'ai-chou school. Wang had few disciples from Hukuang. Chiang Hsin (ch. 28) was equally influenced by Chan Jo-shui, perhaps even more than by Wang. Moving northward, Huang then points out the small number of Wang's followers (ch. 29). In the south, Kwangtung and Fukien, there were Hsüeh K'an and Chou Tan (ch. 30).

d) The T'ai-chou branch of the Yang-ming School

And then, after a chapter on Li Ts'ai (ch. 31), a soldier as well as a teacher of philosophy, and a disciple of Tsou Shou-i of the Kiangsi school, who set up his own teaching with a formula chih-hsiu (cultivation and self-examination), Huang Tsung-hsi moves on to the school of T'ai-chou (ch. 32–36) in northern Kiangsu. This branch of the Yang-ming school exerted a great popular influence, while also arousing

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much controversy. The group of thinkers included here cuts across traditional class lines as well as educational backgrounds. Its principal leader, Wang Ken\(^{34}\), a disciple of Wang Yang-ming, was a man of little formal education and a salt merchant by profession. His own disciples included a woodcutter, a potter and a farm-worker who were all barely literate. But other followers of T'ai-chou were Chao Chen-chi\(^{43}\) of Ssu-ch'uan, a scholar of Taoist propensities, Lo Ju-fang, also a ch'in-shih, and more influenced by Buddhist ideas of meditation, Keng Ting-hsiang, ach'in-shih and a Censor, as well as Chiao Hung, the optimus of the 1589 examination, a man much influenced by Buddhism and a predecessor of the later philological revival. They shared a certain enthusiasm about Wang Yang-ming’s teaching of sagehood and its universal accessibility, making of it a doctrine of the common man as a "ready-made sage".

The T'ai-chou school has been subject to much criticism for promoting ideas of social protest and non-conformist individual behavior, ideas which grew out of its exaltation of the common man. For the same reason, it has been praised by modern scholars in the People's Republic of China. Possibly, Huang Tsung-hsi places it at the end of his treatment of the Yang-ming school and its offshoots on account of the known controversies. Following upon this school comes the school of Chan Jo-shui and his disciples: the Kan-ch'üan school (ch.37-42), an offshoot of the school of Ch'en Hsien-chang, many—although not all—of whose disciples are from the southern province of Kwangtung. It occupies six solid chapters, a testimony to the importance of its teachings.

\textit{Kwangtung: the school of Kan-ch'üan}\(^{35}\)

The southern province of Kwangtung did not produce many Yang-ming followers, but was base and center for the Kan-ch'üan school, named after Chan Jo-shui (ch.37-42), the disciple of Ch'en Hsien-chang and friend of Wang Yang-ming. While Yang-ming taught the "extension of liang-chih", Chan Jo-shui emphasized the "realization everywhere of the Heavenly principle (t'ien-li)\(^{44}\)". They differed over the interpretation of the doctrine of "investigation of things (ko-wu)\(^{45}\)". For Wang, it refers to the moral rectification of the mind; for Chan, it includes intellectual inquiry. In this way, Chan remained closer than Wang to the teachings of Chu Hsi. Huang Tsung-hsi has compared the interaction between the schools of Wang Yang-ming and Chan Jo-shui to that between those of Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yuan:

The two schools of Wang and Chan each had its particular teachings. While Chan did not have as many disciples as Wang, many scholars of the time either studied under Chan and then went to Wang, or else, studied under Wang and then went to Chan, as did the disciples of Chu and Lu\(^{36}\).

In the later Ming times, the followers of the Kan-ch'üan school attempted to remedy the effects of the extremist tendencies of the T'ai-chou school, which proclaimed that everyone was already a sage, and did not require any discipline, intellectual or moral, to help him awaken to this reality present in himself. Among other things, the Kan-ch'üan school encouraged the practice of quiet meditation as a method for the discovery of the

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\(^{34}\) See W.T. DEBARY, "Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought", in \textit{Self and Society in Ming Thought}, 157–225.

\(^{35}\) Kan-ch'üan was another name for Chan Jo-shui.

\(^{36}\) MJHA ch.37 (Preface to the Kan-ch'üan school).


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heavenly principle. Its greatest representatives are: Lü Huai[46] (ch.38), Hung Yüan[47] (ch.39), T'ang Shu[48] (ch.40) and Hsü Fu-yüan[49], Feng Ts'ung-wu[50] (ch.41) and Wang Tao[51] (ch.42).

The Tung-lin School[37]

The Tung-lin school derives its name from the Tung-lin Academy in Wusih, Kiangsu, founded by Yang Shih in Sung times and revived in the Ming by Ku Hsien-ch'eng and Kao P'an-lung (ch.58). In The Records of the Ming Philosophers, it takes up four chüan (ch.58-61). In philosophical questions, the Tung-lin school shared the concern of the Kan-ch'üan school and strove to bring about a certain reconciliation between the tendencies represented by the Yang-ming school and those of the orthodox philosophy of Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi. In political matters, it stood for independent discussions and a government free from corruption in high places. It took certain positions on issues surrounding the question of Emperor Shen-tsung's succession, and on the events following upon his death and that of his successor, Emperor Kuang-tsung (1620). For these reasons, it was hated by the dominant eunuch party, especially by their chief, Wei Chung-hsien. Many adherents of the Tung-lin "party" — for that it became — found themselves accused of alleged political crimes, brought to prison and even death. The political martyrs included Huang Tsung-hsi's father, Huang Tsun-su (ch.61). As already mentioned, Huang himself associated with many Tung-lin scholars, especially with those of them who were engaged in the struggle against the Manchus. His teacher, Liu Tsung-chou, was also in close relations with the Tung-lin school.

"The Miscellaneous Philosophers[38]"

These make up a group of forty-three persons (ch.43-57) who possess no common philosophical bond. They have been placed together for a negative reason: their lack of direct or indirect connections with any of the principal schools of Ming thought, with geographical areas of influence and "transmission" lineages. This is not to say that they have little philosophical influence. Many of them are quite important in their own right. We have, for example, Fang Hsiao-ju, the early Ming scholar and follower of the Ch'eng-Chu school, whose martyrdom in the cause of political loyalty to a usurped sovereign hampered the development of Ch'eng-Chu philosophy itself. We also have other thinkers like the orthodoxy-conscious Ts'ao Tuan, and Lo Ch'in-shun, who argued with Wang Yang-ming over questions of investigation of things (ko-wu) as well as over Yang-ming's views on Chu Hsi and his philosophy. There are, besides, Wang T'ing-hsiang (1474–1544), an explicit follower of Chang Ts'ai's philosophy of ch'i, Lü K'un, and Huang Tao-chou, who argued for the philosophy of li and of hsing (nature).

That there should be so many thinkers who could be grouped together in this way shows the vitality of Ming thought itself, and the independence of mind of many of the philosophers and scholars. The chapters on these "Miscellaneous Philosophers" make up, in fact, one-fifth or more of the whole Records of the Ming Philosophers with its two

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[38] The "Miscellaneous Philosophers" include mostly scholars who have some philosophical interests but who did not establish their own schools of thought.
hundred entries. Huang Tsung-hsi has made such arrangements clearly in order to highlight the central importance of the Yang-ming school and its many branches. It is interesting to note also that he has chosen to place these “Miscellaneous Philosophers” before the Tung-lin school, with its conscious efforts of reconciling the Yang-ming philosophy with that of Chu Hsi, and in order to show forth the intellectual association of Liu Tsung-chou with the Tung-lin school. The chapter on Liu Tsung-chou is, of course, the final one of the entire book. And here it should be remembered that the book also begins with Liu Tsung-chou – with his diverse comments on various Ming thinkers, entitled *Shih-shuo* [52] (Sayings of the Master) by his disciple Huang Tsung-hsi.

The Text and the Editions

The Japanese scholar, Yamanoi Yū, reports that there are eight known editions of the *Records of the Ming Philosophers*, although only three of them are of importance: the Chia edition (1693), the Cheng edition, and the Mo edition 39. Before evaluating these editions, I should first like to give an account of the process of development which led to their emergence, and which will also explain their quality and worth.

Huang Tsung-hsi reports that he finished his *opus magnum*, the *Records of the Ming Philosophers*, in 1676, over three decades after the establishment of Manchu power in China, much of which time he presumably spent collecting material for this work. According to his own account, various hand-written copies then began to circulate, before parts of the book were put to print, first by Hsü San-li 54 of An-yang, and then by a Fan family 55 of Yin-hsien, Chekiang. In 1691, Wan Yen, son of Wan Ssu-nien, Huang’s disciple and a noted historian in his own right, published about one-third of the entire work. This would become the basis of the later Cheng edition 40. Huang was then in his eighty-second year.

1. The Chia edition. This earliest complete edition of the *Records of the Ming Philosophers* was published by Chia Jun and his son Chia P’u 56. The younger man was Huang Tsung-hsi’s disciple’s disciple, and had received from his teacher, so it seems, a hand-copied version of the work. He showed this to his father, who, upon reading it, decided to put it to print, beginning to do so in 1691, but died before finishing the task. Chia P’u himself finally did so in 1693. It is not known whether Huang Tsung-hsi himself was at all consulted, or whether his approval was sought. But this is the edition described in the *Imperial Catalogue* of the Four Libraries. It includes a preface by Ch’ou Chao-ao and comments by Chia Jun 14. The ordering of the contents of this edition is different from that of the later ones.

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39 Yamanoi Yū, “Minjugakuan no shikoteiyo ni kansuru nisan no mondai” [53], (Some Questions in the Imperial Catalogue Concerning the MJHA), Tōkyō Shinagakusho 12 (1966), 75–95. Prof. Yamanoi gives a list of eight editions on pp. 77–78. See also Ch’en T’ieh-fan, Sung Yüan Ming Ch’ing ssu-ch’ao hsüeh-an so-yin (Index to the Records of the Philosophers of the Four Dynasties), (Taipei, 1974), Introduction.
40 Ibid., 80–81. See also Hsieh Kuo-cheng, Huang Li-chou hsüeh-p’u, 9–16, 120.
41 Yamanoi Yū, op. cit., 80–81, and also 95, n. 3.
2. The Cheng edition. After Huang's death in 1695, the original manuscript was kept in the Cheng family of Tz'u-hsi (Chekiang). Cheng Chen[57] was a close friend of Huang Tsung-hsi, and his son, Cheng Liang[58], was Huang's disciple. Cheng Liang's son, Cheng Hsing[59], built a special library for the keeping of Huang's works, which included, so it seems, other manuscripts besides the Records of the Ming Philosophers.

In 1739, Cheng Hsing planned with Huang's grandson, Huang Ch'ien-ch'iu[60], to print that portion of the Records of the Ming Philosophers which had not been included by Wan Yen earlier. They began the work in 1735, completing it in four years. Cheng Hsing wrote a preface to this edition, to which Huang Ch'ien-ch'iu added a foreword.

This complete edition included Wan Yen's earlier portion (ch. 1–18, 20, 21), as well as the part edited by Cheng Hsing (ch. 19, 22–61), and the final chapter (ch. 62), which was simply ascribed to Huang Tsung-hsi himself, presumably without any editing. Cheng declared in his preface that Chia P'u's edition had included miscellaneous comments not found in the original manuscript. His own publication was intended at making known Huang Tsung-hsi's authentic and integral work.

A very important edition which appeared much later is that of 1821, published jointly by Mo Chin and Mo Hsieh[61]. They had allegedly worked on a hand-copied version, checking it against the Cheng edition. It carried Huang's original preface and Mo Chin's preface of 1821, which explains how the earlier Chia edition had tampered with the order of the schools of Ming thought originally determined by Huang Tsung-hsi, putting the Ho-tung [62] school of Hsüeh Hsüan before the Ch'ung-jen[63] school of Wu Yü-pi, which Huang had placed at the head of his book, and changing the title of the "schools of Wang Yang-ming" to that of "schools of transmission"[64].

An Evaluation

Why has the Chia edition not remained faithful to Huang's own work? It appears that Chia Jen was not entirely happy with the original version as it came from the author and compiler. In his own essay, reviewing the book, he stated that while the early Ming thinkers, including Fang Hsiao-ju, Hsüeh Hsüan, and Wu Yü-pi, had largely remained faithful to the Sung philosophy, the late-comers, especially Ch'en Hsien-chang and Wang Yang-ming, had sought particularly the learning of the Mind, and might be held responsible for the revival of Ch'an Buddhism which took place in the later years of the reign of Emperor Shen-tsung (r. 1572–1619). Chia criticized Huang's book for giving a central importance to the school of Wang Yang-ming without clearly discerning between its merits and its defects. He proposed that it would be better to expand upon the material concerning the early Ming schools, and to diminish those relating to the latter ones. This, however, he regretted that he was unable to undertake personally on account of his poor health. It would therefore appear probable that he did make certain adjustments in editing Huang Tsung-hsi's work.

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[62] 河東 [63] 崇仁
What about the Cheng edition which is based essentially on the original family manuscript handed down by Huang himself? Has it been entirely faithful to this manuscript, or has it not?

The problem with the Cheng edition emerges when it is compared with both the Chia edition and the later Mo edition. It appears that several of the figures included in the Chia edition are absent in the Cheng edition. It appears also that the Cheng edition contains something unique: certain supplements not found anywhere else. The editor, Cheng Hsing, claims that he had used a copy written in Huang Tsung-hsi's hand and transmitted by a Yen family. Owing to the close relations between Huang's family and Cheng's, his statements can hardly be subject to doubt. What one may question is whether these supplements were intended by Huang Tsung-hsi to form an integral part of the definitive *Records of the Ming Philosophers*.

The Mo edition has become the best known and standard edition. It gives the order of the schools of thought set down by Huang Tsung-hsi himself and followed by the Cheng edition. It does not include the Cheng supplements. The figures it includes are exactly the same as those found in the Chia Edition. It became standard, however, in the later part of the Ch'ing period, especially on account of the judgement of Fan Hsi-tseng, the noted bibliographer.

Which is the superior edition, Cheng's or Mo's? This problem has not yet been resolved. Where philosophical content is concerned, the differences appear to be minor and cannot affect in each case the work as a whole. Possibly, the Cheng version might have served better as standard text rather than Mo's.

**The Criticisms of the Imperial Catalogue**

What has the Catalogue of the Four Libraries Series to say about the *Records of the Ming Philosophers*? Here we encounter an instance of prejudiced judgement, an unfortunate occurrence, but characteristic of the narrow philosophical outlook which underlies this great source of bibliographical information. The description of the book given is that of the Chia edition, which places the Ho-tung school before the Ch'ung-jen school. But the writer says in his comments:

[Huang] Tsung-hsi was born in Yao-chiang. He was reluctant to discredit Wang [Yang-ming] and honor Hsüeh [Hsüan]; yet he did not dare to discredit Hsüeh Hsüan and honor Wang Yang-ming. So he gives importance to Hsüeh's disciples in an exterior manner, but criticizes them in his text. He also gives an impression of attacking Wang's disciples in an exterior manner, while defending them in his text. Now the teachings of both schools have their merits and limitations. The defects of their latter...

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43 YAMANOI Yū, op.cit., 83–85. Prof. YAMANOI doubts that the Mo edition was based on an original manuscript, considering it rather to be a 'harmonization' of the Chia and Cheng editions. His preference is for the Cheng edition.

44 See Shu-mu ta-wen pu-cheng (Revised and enlarged edition of Chang Chih-tung's Handbook on Bibliography) (Peking reprint, 1963), 128. For Prof YAMANOI's objection, see above, n.42.
day disciples would be such that these aroused much polemical discussion, which in turn led to partisanship, love-hate relationships and mutual recriminations. From the time of Cheng-[te] and Chia-[ching] (1506–66) on, even worthy men were not free of such [partisan spirit]. Huang Tsung-hsi’s book is another example of Ming factionalism. It is not just written for the sake of *chiang-hsüeh*[^66], philosophical teaching[^45].

It appears that Chia’s re-arrangement of Huang’s original text has been to a great extent responsible for this biased attack on Huang’s work. The commentator, however, has a few words of positive appraisal as well:

However, in relating the unity and diversity of the Confucian schools, [Huang Tsung-hsi] has presented a rather detailed account, which yet allows [the reader] to discern their merits and limitations, and learn the causes of the calamities of the late Ming factional politics. It gives, therefore, a good mirror of history[^46].

Given the fact that the Chia edition had departed from the sequence of the schools given in the original manuscript, one could therefore say that the criticisms voiced in the Catalogue of the Four Libraries Series are invalid, especially where it claims that Huang Tsung-hsi “gives importance to Hsüan’s disciples in an exterior manner, but criticizes them in the text, [and] … gives an impression of attacking Wang’s disciples in an exterior manner, while defending them in his text”[^47]. But I believe that the commentator is right in voicing the opinion that Huang Tsung-hsi considers Wang Yang-ming to be a much greater Confucian philosopher than Hsüeh Hsüan, who was regarded as more faithful to the spirit of Chu Hsi, more “orthodox”. Surely, Huang Tsung-hsi was very conscious of the problem of orthodoxy as this was determined by the state. The school of Wang Yang-ming had never been recognized as orthodox, even if its popularity was such as to induce Emperor Shen-tsung to include Wang himself in the Confucian temple[^48]. The first two Manchu emperors did not at once enforce a rigid concept of state orthodoxy. But soon after Huang’s death, the country would experience the harsh intellectual persecutions of Emperor Kao-tsung (Ch’ien-lung), the best known victim being the family of the scholar Lü Liu-liang (1629–83)[^49]. At the same time, the Manchu rulers were careful to affect a love of the philosophy of Ch’eng I and Chu Hsi, and to frown upon that of Wang Yang-ming. Certainly, Huang Tsung-hsi was aware of the danger of courting proscription by writing a history of philosophy which is blatantly in favor of Wang Yang-ming. Neither did he wish to produce a work that would merely flatter the state authorities. For these reasons, he decided to give the book a special structure. He would not overtly speak in favor of Wang Yang-ming’s philosophy. But he would express his opinions through the very structure and organization of his work. It is therefore important for the student of Ming thought to use an edition of the book which reflects faithfully the author’s original intentions.

[^45]: SK 1285–6.  
[^46]: Ibid., 1286.  
[^47]: Ibid.  
[^48]: See Wang Yang-ming’s biography, *MJHA* ch. 10.  
[^49]: For Lü Liu-liang, see his biography by his son Lü Pao-chung in *Lü Wan-ts’un hsien-sheng wen-chiü*[^67] (Collected Writings of Lü Liu-liang), (Taipei reprint, 1967), Supplement.
Besides the Ming-ju hsüeh-an, Huang Tsung-hsi is known for compiling also the Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an (Records of the Sung and Yüan Philosophers). Most probably, he began the latter work right after the completion of the former (1676). He was then in his sixty-sixth year and would live on for another two decades. But such a work could not be done by one man alone in this much time. Huang Tsung-hsi’s drafts were taken over by his son, Huang Po-chia, who did some work of editing, but died himself without finishing. It took especially a third man, Ch’üan Tsu-wang (1705–75), also a native of Chekiang, who gave at least ten years of time to the task, to finish the Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an. As the work stands, the greater part has been edited and expanded by Ch’üan Tsu-wang who also added much to the original draft. Still, Ch’üan was unable to put it to print. This could take place only after his death, with the help of his own family and disciples, as well as Huang Tsung-hsi’s descendants, in whose hands the work was once more copied and edited. A final scholar who made some contribution was Wang Tzu-ts’ai, who checked and amended the text, arranging it in one hundred chüan according to Ch’üan Tsu-wang’s earlier wish. It appeared in print for the first time in 1838, the result of scholarly collaboration lasting several generations – and over a century.

Even more than Huang Tsung-hsi, Ch’üan Tsu-wang was responsible for the completion of the Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an. However, the relationship between the Sung philosophy and the Ming philosophy is such that one could hardly speak of Ming-ju hsüeh-an without speaking of the Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an. Certainly the second work represented a more difficult task, on account of its wider scope as well as the greater distance of time between its compilers and the Sung and Yüan. But the Ming-ju hsüeh-an would serve as a model for the completion of the Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an. Besides, Ch’üan Tsu-wang was also Huang’s fellow countryman and a follower, like Huang, of the Wang Yang-ming school. The work could therefore maintain a consistency of perspective with the Ming-ju hsüeh-an. It may come as no surprise that the section on the school of Lu Chiu-yüan has been reported as the best in the book, with those of Chang Tsai, Ch’eng Hao and Ch’eng I, Lü Tsu-ch’ien, Ch’en Liang and Yeh Shih, as coming next. The section on Chu Hsi is reportedly mediocre, while that on Wang An-shih is considered even more so.

Conclusion

Huang Tsung-hsi has himself described for us the methods of research according to which he compiled his famous work. He went to the original sources, rather than merely using secondary references or copying from these. He was careful in distinguishing between the main doctrines of each of the schools of thought represented in his work, taking note especially of their differences. He produced a classic which is at the same time comprehensive in its inclusion of two hundred thinkers and scholars, and in the

50 LIANG Ch’i-ch’ao, Chung-kuo chin san-pai-nien, 91–93. An Index to Persons in the Sung-Yüan Hsüeh-an and its Supplement has been published by KINUGAWA Tsuyoshi, KYÔTO, 1974. Moreover Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an is included in the index compiled by CH’EN T’ieh-fan mentioned above note 39.
51 Ibid.
52 See Huang Tsung-hsi’s Introductory Remarks to the Ming-ju hsüeh-an.
wide scope of philosophical ideas and movements represented by these men. In a well-known work, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao states four conditions for the writing of any history of thought and scholarship. I shall give them in summary form:

1. All the important schools of that epoch should be included according to impartial norms of selection.
2. The essential characteristics of each school should be reported so that readers may acquire a clear notion of what each represents.
3. The true features of all the schools should be given according to objective evaluations.
4. The lives and times of all the figures concerned should be narrated so that the personalities of each may be known.

According to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Huang Tsung-hsi's work has fulfilled all these conditions and remains a useful model for all who wish to write histories of philosophy, even if, "in matters of organization, there are places which can be improved." The Records of the Ming Philosophers is an integration of philosophical judgment and historical scholarship. In the former, Huang Tsung-hsi shows himself a true heir of Ming thought. In the latter, he is predecessor to the Ch'ing emphasis on documentary evidence and objective scholarship. He has done well. For he has left us not only with a history of philosophy but also with a work which is in itself a classic – of both history and philosophy. Modern readers may wish that the work was otherwise, that it be a directly personal production written in a narrative style and following a stricter philosophical method. But they cannot deny that Huang Tsung-hsi's work has already become a classic in its own genre. It remains a history of selected anthologies from various – two hundred – philosophers with their biographies and with the compiler's comments. But it has preserved for us certain materials which are no longer extant elsewhere. It allows us not only to have direct experience of the philosophers themselves through their collected sayings, but gives us also Huang Tsung-hsi's evaluations – the evaluations of a great philosopher-scholar himself.

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53 Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Chung-kuo chin-san-pai-nien, 48-49.
54 Ibid.