



The Association for  
Asian Studies

---

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Mind and Human Nature*. by Mou Tsung-san

Review by: Wei-ming Tu

Source: *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (May, 1971), pp. 642-647

Published by: Association for Asian Studies

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2052470>

Accessed: 13-05-2019 02:27 UTC

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Association for Asian Studies* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Asian Studies*

Sometimes a piece of Waleyesque embroidery has a way of changing the whole pattern. On page 696, we have Yūgiri visiting Princess Ochiba, the widow of his friend Kashiwagi. Here is Waley's description of the impression her rather melancholy dwelling makes upon him:

"There was a dignity, a severity about the place; and looking round him he felt that he who broke in upon this flat tranquility with so much as a hint of common passions and desires, who fluttered this decorous stillness by any coarse vehemence or unwarranted familiarity, would be guilty of a breach of taste, for the condemnation of which no word could be strong enough."

All the original (once again, the texts consulted for the variorum edition) says is: "Though neglected, the grounds still wore an air of elegance, and beds of flowers in the foreground, catching the evening light in a rich profusion, were alive now with insect songs."

Waley has put thoughts into Yūgiri's head for which there is no sanction in the original at all; and they must be described as rather pompous thoughts. Might it be that Waley wishes to strengthen the impression we have elsewhere of Yūgiri as a bit of a stuffed shirt? But this is not the place to do so. "Yokobue," the chapter in which the passage occurs, is one of the best in the whole long narrative, and a good part of its appeal has to do with the fact that Yūgiri emerges as such a thoroughly likeable person, however intent upon killing joy he may seem as he grows older.

I have been talking about a book which Professor Morris did not choose to write. On one score, the book he did choose to write, or edit, may be taken mildly to task: it implies strongly that since the garden Waley cultivated was perfection, only fools will venture in upon it. "Later I realized," says Professor Morris himself, on page 71, about the Waley *Genji*, "that what enabled him to do this was a rare mastery of style and a self-assurance that allowed him, after he had thoroughly understood a Chinese or Japanese text, to recast it entirely in supple, idiomatic, vibrant English, rather than stick to a phrase-by-phrase or sentence-by-sentence rendering, which might convey the surface meaning but would inevitably mar the artistry of the original."

Inevitably? That does discourage a person; and a person suspects that Waley, prepared to admit (page 155) that Sam Houston Brock's translation of "Sotoba Komachi" might be superior to his own, would not have approved of such prejudging.

EDWARD SEIDENSTICKER, *University of Michigan*

---

**Hsin-t'i Yü Hsing-t'i (Mind and Human Nature).** BY MOU TSUNG-SAN. Taipei: Cheng-chung, 1968-69. Vol. I, 657 pp.; Vol. II, 546 pp.; Vol. III, 556 pp. Paper, n.p.

One of the most fundamental concerns of Confucian humanism is how to become a sage through self-effort. Since the emphasis is on the experiential how rather than on the cognitive why, the road to sagehood is basically a matter of spiritual quest and not merely of intellectual argumentation. Yet since the time of Mencius, the

problems of mind (*hsin*) and human nature (*hsing*) have become prominent, for the commitment to attain sagehood (the most authentic, genuine, and sincere manhood) rests upon an ontological understanding of true humanity. Such an understanding probes into the being of man, not only as a social reality but also as an ethical-religious agent.

Indeed, man is more than the sum of genes, plus psychic energy, plus sociological forces. He is also a creative participant of the cosmic process. And, according to Confucian philosophy, it is in this very process that the ultimate meaning of human existence really lies. Therefore one of the pivotal notions in Confucian symbolism is "the establishment of the ultimacy of man" (*li jen-chi*). The notion, which presupposes an appreciation of man's metaphysical status, is according to Professor Mou Tsung-san first conceived in the classical Confucian writings such as *Mencius*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Chung-yung*), and the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*). Professor Mou further contends that these three classics together with the *Analects* constitute the most authentic manifestation of Confucian philosophy.

In such a philosophy human nature is understood to be good, for the ultimate basis of man's self-perfection lies in the very structure of man. Indeed, man can become what he ought to be not by the interference of any transcendent reality, or the "wholly other," but by the process of self-transformation, which is an incessant process of spiritual "appropriation." This is not in any sense an argument for anthropocentrism because the process of spiritual appropriation necessarily involves the creative process of Heaven and Earth, which form a triad with the ontology of man. Thus, man is that being which through self-transformation, a kind of inner illumination, realizes not only the moral goodness which is intrinsic to his nature but also the cosmic creativity which embraces the universe in its entirety.

Professor Mou maintains that such a philosophical formulation of the notion of man in Confucianism is due to a primordial insight into the mind as both an ontological being and a cosmological activity. Since the mind is that which makes man uniquely human, it is in Mencian terminology the "great self" (*ta-t'i*), or the true human nature. Similarly Confucian God-terms such as *tao* (the Way), *jen* (Humanity), *ch'eng* (Sincerity) and *chung* (the Mean) all point to that human-reality which is both ontological and cosmological. Professor Mou suggests that the philosophical heritage in classical Confucianism has already pointed to the way of constructing a "moral metaphysics," an intellectual enterprise which Kant failed to develop in his metaphysics of morals. This suggestion, which is only briefly discussed in Professor Mou's *Prolegomenon* (*Tsung-lun*), becomes the central theme of another book entitled, *Chih te chih-chüeh yü Chung-kuo che-hsüeh* (*Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy*), soon to be published in Taipei by the Shang-wu Book Company.

In light of the above, Professor Mou describes the Neo-Confucian development as both a natural fruition of the germinal wisdom first conceived in the Mencian tradition of Confucianism and an ingenious departure from the same spiritual orientation just mentioned. The former refers to what may be called the "authentic line" of Neo-Confucian philosophy which is further divided into two complementary streams: (1) Chou Tun-i (Lien-hsi, 1017-1073)—Chang Tsai (Heng-ch'ü, 1020-1077)—Ch'eng Hao (Ming-tao, 1032-1085)—Hu Hung (Wu-feng, 1100-1155)—Liu Tsung-chou (Chi-shan, 1578-1645), and (2) Lu Hsing-shan (Chiu-yüan, 1139-1193)

—Wang Yang-ming (Shou-jen, 1472–1529). The latter refers to what may be called the “actual line” of Neo-Confucian philosophy which mainly consists of Ch’eng I (I-ch’uan, 1033–1107) and Chu Hsi (Yüan-hui, 1130–1200). Contrary to commonly accepted dichotomous categorization of the Neo-Confucian tradition into the Ch’eng-Chu School (the Rationalist School or the School of Principle) and the Lu-Wang School (the Idealist School or the School of Mind), Neo-Confucianism is here analyzed into three, clearly distinguishable trends.

What is the nature of this interpretation, and what kind of justification is there to hold such a view? Of course, the inadequacy of the dichotomous categorization has been recognized by other scholars as well. Professor Wing-tsit Chan in his *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* carefully transcends such a classificatory scheme by employing generic concepts appropriate to the thought-contents themselves. Professor Tang Chün-i, in a series of philosophical treatises on Chu Hsi, Lu Hsiang-shan, and Wang Yang-ming, also seeks to go beyond the conventional demarcation of Ch’eng-Chu on the one hand and Lu-Wang on the other. (Cf. his most recent article on this issue in *Hsin-ya hsüeh-pao*, IX:1, 1969.) Furthermore, as A. C. Graham has shown in his critical study on the key concepts of the two Ch’eng brothers, their philosophical orientations are essentially different. (See Graham’s *Two Chinese Philosophers*, London, 1958.) This may be cited to support the prevalent view that Ch’eng I was the originator of the Ch’eng-Chu School and his elder brother Ch’eng Hao was closer in spirit to the Lu-Wang School. Where does the originality of Professor Mou Tsung-san’s formulation really lie then?

According to Mou’s contention, although the Lu-Wang School truly transmitted the germinal wisdom of classical Confucianism and the Ch’eng-Chu School, despite its departure from the basic intention of the Mencian tradition, made original contributions to Confucian thought, the most remarkable and significant line of development in the Neo-Confucian period was from Chou Tun-i to Liu Tsung-chou by way of Chang Tsai, Ch’eng Hao and Hu Hung. Professor Mou remarked in his private letter to the reviewer that he was impelled to take this provocative position by more than a decade of painstaking philosophical inquiry and scholarly research. The central concern of his decade-long intellectual pursuit was to understand Chu Hsi, not merely the genetic development but also the philosophical import, of his ideas. Only after Mou believed that he had truthfully comprehended the hierarchical structure of Chu Hsi’s philosophical system did he feel confident to “relocate” Chu Hsi, as it were, and to reorder the entire tradition of Neo-Confucianism.

It is commonly accepted that despite Chu Hsi’s conscious efforts to understand Mencius, due to his own metaphysical presuppositions he failed to apprehend some of the most crucial issues in Mencian moral philosophy. It is also widely known that despite Lu Hsiang-san’s Ch’an-like demonstration in the “Goose Lake Debate” with Chu Hsi (1175), he captured the basic intention of Mencius whom he regarded as his main source of inspiration. We may add that it is also generally understood that despite tension and conflict between the two Ch’eng brothers in terms of basic philosophical orientations, Chu Hsi accepted Ch’eng I as the legitimate interpreter of his brother’s ideas. Professor Mou takes these opinions seriously and engages in a careful analysis of the original texts so as to substantiate the philosophical meaning of these assertions.

Professor Wing-tsit Chan has stated, “No one has exercised greater influence on

Chinese thought than Chu Hsi, except Confucius, Mencius, Lao Tzu, and Chuang Tzu. He gave Confucianism new meaning and for centuries dominated not only Chinese thought but the thought of Korea and Japan as well." (*Source Book*, p. 588.) To argue that Chu Hsi was not authentically Confucian is to invite criticism, or at least to incite polemics. Professor Mou seems to be fully aware of the grave consequences of his position. In fact it may very well be said that the kernel of his three-volume study is to present a critique on Chu Hsi so as to put the true Confucian message, as he sees it, in a proper perspective. We may even go so far as to characterize his work as a search for the reality of Chu Hsi's philosophy, if only for the sake of refuting it. What is the matter with Chu Hsi, or rather what is Professor Mou's real *problematik*?

From the viewpoint of Chinese intellectual history, it was Chu Hsi who selected and grouped together the *Analects*, the *Book of Mencius*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (the latter two are chapters of the *Book of Rites*), known to this date as the Four Books. It was also he who first established the "orthodox" line of Confucian transmission from Confucius through Mencius, Chou Tun-i, Chang Tsai, Ch'eng Hao, and Ch'eng I. As the greatest philosophical synthesizer in China for the last millennium, Master Chu was instrumental in providing a philosophical framework for the concept of *tao-t'ung*. However, it is undeniable that in addition to his abortive attempt to understand Mencius, Chu Hsi relegated the *Book of Changes* to a work on divination, a position radically different from his predecessors who relied heavily on it for much of their philosophical inspiration. His single-minded devotion to the *Great Learning* further separated him from his spiritual fathers, except Ch'eng I, to whom he owed the initial formulations of many of his major theses. Therefore, it seems understandable that Professor Mou depicts Chu Hsi as an intellectual genius who by his own philosophical strength not only created a novel tradition within Neo-Confucianism but also assumed the de facto leadership for the Neo-Confucian tradition as a whole.

From the viewpoint of the "typology of ideas," however, Chu Hsi's philosophical approach cannot veritably accommodate the intention of the early Sung masters. On the contrary, his ingenious appropriation of many of the great themes of his precursors mainly contributes to the resourcefulness of his own system, which is a departure from, rather than a fulfillment of, the germinal wisdom mentioned above. Professor Mou takes pain to show in concrete terms how the ontological insight into the structure of the mind as both being and activity undergoes a fundamental change in Chu Hsi's thinking. To be sure, Chu Hsi also maintains that human nature is good, but he insists that human nature is good because it itself is *li* (principle). Since *li* as the ultimate ground of existence is being and not activity, the energy of cosmic activity is assigned to the concept of *ch'i* (material or vital force). When *li* and *ch'i* are described as two mutually interacting and yet discrete realities, the ultimate ground of existence (being) no longer identifies with the principle of actualization (activity). As a result, the mind despite its having the potentiality of conforming itself to *li* is essentially a delicate stuff of the *ch'i*.

Chu Hsi's dualistic tendency to separate static being from dynamic activity on the metaphysical level necessarily brings about a variety of binary structures such as *li-ch'i*, *hsin-li*, *hsin-hsing*, and *hsing-ch'ing* (feeling). Consequently, the dynamic process of internal self-transformation is de-emphasized and a set of new moral disciplines cen-

tering around Ch'eng I's saying that "self-cultivation requires seriousness; the pursuit of learning depends on the extension of knowledge" becomes the *sine quo non* of Confucian self-identity. It is only natural that the concept of *ko-wu* (investigation of things and affairs) in the *Great Learning* occupies a pivotal position in Chu Hsi's philosophy. To be sure, Chu Hsi's main concern is still how to become a sage through self-effort, for his concept of *ko-wu* is ethical-religious rather than empirical-scientific. Yet it seems advisable to describe his road to sagehood as different not only from that of Mencius but also from those of the early Sung masters.

To argue his case in the concrete, Professor Mou devotes his volume III entirely to Chu Hsi. Basing upon the Ch'ing scholar, Wang Mou-hung's authoritative account of Master Chu's intellectual biography (*Chu Tzu nien-p'u*), Professor Mou studies the development of Chu Hsi's philosophy in chronological order. Especially notable are his penetrating analyses of Chu Hsi's intellectual maturation under the guidance of his teacher Li T'ung (Yen-p'ing, 1088-1163), Chu Hsi's philosophical debate with Chang Shih (Nan-hsien, 1133-1180) and his associates in a series of letters written in his late thirties, Chu Hsi's meditative thinking on the issue of *chung-ho* (centrality and harmony, key concepts in the *Doctrine of the Mean*) in his early forties, Chu Hsi's original insights as shown in his prominent treatise on humanity (*Jen-shuo*), Chu Hsi's cosmological ideas as presented in his tripartite demarcation of *hsin*, *hsing*, and *ch'ing*, Chu Hsi's completion of his metaphysics in the systematic treatment of the binary structure of *li* and *ch'i*, and Chu Hsi's views on learning, on his own spiritual attainment, and on methodology in his later years.

Although the study on Chu Hsi is sequentially the last of the three-volume work, genetically it seems to have been Professor Mou's first concern. In fact, an early version of Chu Hsi's encounter with the issue of *chung-ho* was published by him almost a decade ago. (Cf. his article on "*Chu Tzu k'u-t's'an chung-ho te ching-kuo*" in *Hsin-ya shu-yüan hsüeh-shu nien-k'an*, 1961.) Actually, only against the background of Chu Hsi's debate with Chang Shih can we appreciate Professor Mou's insistence on the importance of Hu Hung, Chang Shih's intellectual master, as a key figure in the Neo-Confucian transmission. Indeed, one of the unique features of volume II is a series of detailed analyses of excerpts from Hu Hung's *Understanding Words* (*Chih-yen*), a much neglected work by a relatively unknown philosopher. According to Professor Mou, the decline of the Hu School of Neo-Confucianism, which was founded by Hu An-kuo (Wen-ting, 1073-1138) and expounded by his son Hu Hung, was due mainly to the inability of Chang Shih and his Hunan-based associates to squarely face the challenge of Chu Hsi. Yet in terms of philosophical orientation as such, the position of the Hu school is very much in line with that of the early Sung masters. Thus we are told that in the writings of Hu Hung it is not difficult to point out his conscious attempts to digest the central ideas of Chou Tun-i, Chang Tsai, and Ch'eng Hao. Especially remarkable is his experiential appropriation of Mencius' concept of mind and Ch'eng Hao's concept of humanity into his own philosophy. It is in this sense that Professor Mou characterizes Hu Hung's approach as "*nei-tsai te ni-chüeh t'i-cheng*" (an experiential verification through immanent retrospective enlightening, Vol. II, p. 430), which is reminiscent of the germinal wisdom in Mencian Confucianism.

Therefore, in a systematic way Professor Mou presents us with a series of highly original inquiries into Neo-Confucian philosophy. Although the scope of his involve-

ment is rather extensive, the quality of his analysis remains at a very high level of intellectual sophistication. His ability to strike a balance between comprehensiveness and depth of analysis is mainly due to a very perceptive selection from a large quantity of unpunctuated texts only of those key passages which will reveal the "true faces," so to speak, of the great Sung masters. Indisputable landmarks in Neo-Confucian philosophy are carefully brooded over, sometimes line by line. Works which receive such treatments include: Chou Tun-i's *T'ai-chi t'u-shuo* (*An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*) and *T'ung-shu* (*Penetrating the Book of Changes*); Chang Tsai's *Hsi-ming* (the *Western Inscription*) and *Cheng-meng* (*Correcting Youthful Ignorance*) in volume I; Ch'eng Hao's *Shih-jen p'ien* (*On Understanding Humanity*) and *Ta Chang Heng-ch'ü ting-hsing shu* (*Reply to Master Heng-ch'ü's Letter on Calming Human Nature*); Ch'eng I's sayings on issues such as *hsing-ch'ing*, *li-ch'i*, and *chung-ho*; Hu Hung's *Chih-yen* in volume II; and Chu Hsi's *Jen-shuo* (*A Treatise on Humanity*) in volume III.

In a deeper sense, however, Professor Mou's work only represents an important stage in his continuous reflection upon Chinese philosophy in general. As one of the most brilliant modern Chinese thinkers, his study is more than an intellectual exercise; it symbolizes a series of experiential "dialogues" with those great historical masters who made his own way of thinking meaningful. It should be pointed out, nevertheless, that in the present study Professor Mou only completes his investigation with Chu Hsi. The development from Lu Hsiang-shan to Wang Yang-ming has only been highlighted in the context of the Sung philosophers. (For his early views on Wang Yang-ming, see *Wang Yang-ming chih-liang-chih chiao*, Taipei, 1954.) We thus look forward with anticipation to probably a fourth volume on the philosophical transformation in Ming China (1368-1644). We would also like to know how he proposes to relate his approach—a critical analysis of types of ideas as integral parts of discrete philosophical systems—to that of Professor T'ang Chün-i, who has engaged himself in a serious attempt to probe into the interpenetration and complementarity of ideas belonging to seemingly incompatible philosophical systems.

In conclusion, it can be confidently said that throughout this three-volume work Professor Mou delights us with penetrating insights and abashes us with new and crucial information. What has been accomplished is not merely an inspiring interpretation of a great cultural phenomenon by a creative scholar but also the record of a genuine quest for a deep understanding of human reality by a seminal mind.

WEI-MING TU, *Princeton University*