known in history as having filled high office with distinction or achieved renown in a wider field of activity. Their energies and their intellects had been so concentrated on the narrow scholarship required for success in the examination system that they had neither the experience nor the adaptability to operate in political life.

The system in the end survived mainly because no other means of selecting a ruling class had evolved. Commerce and industry were for a number of reasons retarded and limited in their rewards and social standing. The military profession, since the disappearance of the aristocracy in the 9th and 10th centuries A.D., had no prestige and was kept in a subordinate social and political role. Landed estates were very much diffused among an enormous class of landlords, none of whom had huge holdings and all of whom had numerous relatives to support on inadequate revenues. The Civil Service was thus their one hope and resource: if they could produce a brilliant son who would pass high in the examinations, he could be expected to occupy some important official post, which in turn would bring his family influence, power and wealth. That it would also bring a further long train of dependent clients, kinsfolk, even fellow provinicals, all expecting favours and advancement in some form from the great man, was the penalty.

The scholar class strove against increasingly hard competition, facing ever more difficult examinations, to attain office which would in turn more often add to the economic burdens of their families, while also rewarding them with the less substantial gains of honour, respect, and social prestige. The hereditary principle had effectively been removed: a man must become a scholar in a difficult subject and submit to ever more difficult examinations in it. Only the rich could afford the necessary education for their sons, prolonged over years; only office could repay them the expense and trouble they had undergone. The examination system was indeed a Hell and those who failed in it suffered the tortures of frustration, decline and often poverty. It is not surprising that, in spite of stringent regulations, corruption in the last age played its part in the examinations.

Australian National University C. P. FitzGerald

CENTRALITY AND COMMONALITY. An Essay on Chung-yung. *By Tu Wei-ming. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii. 1976. 168 pp. $5.00 (paper).*

THE *Chung-yung,* popularly known as the *Doctrine of the Mean,* has been a foundation text of the Confucian tradition since the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). It is a summary of the intimate relationships between self-cultivation, ethics and metaphysics, themes which

were developed more fully in Neo-Confucianism and which provided points of contact with Taoist naturalism and Buddhist psychology. Tu Wei-ming's new book is a scholarly meditation on the *Chung-yung* as scripture, an attempt to evoke again its power for spiritual inspiration and ethical guidance. As such, this study concentrates on the text itself, not on matters of transmission and historical relationships. Here as elsewhere Professor Tu's work is a rare combination of solid scholarship with existential openness to the human meanings at hand.

The central theme of the book is the "ever-deepening subjectivity" of the "profound person" (*chün-tzu*), which leads on the one hand to unity with his cosmic ground, and on the other to more effective action in society. Such a man both completes the way of the universe itself, and provides a model for those around him, for his acts embody the harmonious truth of things he has realized within. From this central focus Professor Tu moves on to discuss the "fiduciary community" and "moral metaphysics," in each case stressing that self-development occurs not in isolation, but within the human community, and in accordance with the essential unity of man and Heaven. In all of this he is concerned to grasp the outwardly aphoristic *Chung-yung* as possessing a structure and intention of its own.

Centrality and Commonality is an attempt to establish "self to self" understanding between us and the ancient Confucians, beyond the usual historical and cross-cultural perspectives. The question is, does it work? I think it does, but I remain a little uneasy about some of the language employed, such as the *chün-tzu*'s concern with the "sightless and soundless processes of the inner self" and "the *real* world within" (p.26). No doubt there was such concern, but this language implies a psychological sophistication which I do not see in the text. I am also dissatisfied with the statement "The profound person has no transcendent reference to rely upon . . ." (p. 49), which is contradicted by the emphasis on the "mutuality of Heaven and man" elsewhere in the book. "Trancendence" is a misleading concept here; what we need is something like Tillich's "openness to the ground of being."

University of British Columbia DANIEL L. OVERMYER

HOUSE UNITED, HOUSE DIVIDED. The Chinese Family in Taiwan. *By Myron L. Cohen. New York: Columbia University Press. 1976. 267 pp. $12.00.*

THIS BOOK draws primarily upon materials collected in the pseudonymous village of Yen-liao, located in the exotically beautiful township of Mei-nung in Kaohsiung county of southern Taiwan. Although it includes (particularly in Chapter 2) rather more complete