

Chapter One

Zhu Xi, Zhou Dunyi, and the Confucian *dao*

The world into which Zhu Xi was born, as he came to understand it, was in crisis. In 1127, three years before his birth, the capital of Song China, Kaifeng, had been overrun by Jurchen forces from the northeast,¹ and both Emperor Qinzong 欽宗 (r. 1126–1127) and the recently abdicated Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101–1126) had been abducted. The Song court had fled south and had reestablished itself at the “temporary” capital of Lin’an (modern Hangzhou). The Jurchen, under their Jin dynasty, ruled the northern half of China until 1234, when they in turn were conquered by the Mongols, who proceeded to conquer the rest of China in 1279. So Zhu Xi lived his entire life (1130–1200) with almost half of his homeland under foreign rule, facing the very real threat of a complete loss. These circumstances deeply affected his worldview: China, he felt, needed to reassert itself both militarily and culturally. His father, Zhu Song 朱松 (1097–1143), had been part of the faction that had opposed the appeasement policy followed by Chief Councilor Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090–1155), arguing for more aggressive military action against the Jin,² and in his earlier career Zhu Xi had argued along the same lines. But

1. The Jurchen (Nuzhen 女真 in Chinese) were the ancestors of the Manchus, who later would overthrow the Ming 明 dynasty (1368–1644) and establish the last imperial Chinese dynasty, the Qing 清 (1644–1911).

2. Chan, “Chu Hsi,” in Franke, *Sung Biographies*, vol.1:282. For Zhu Xi’s official biography see Tuo, *Song shi*, 188:12751–770.

as he matured he came to direct his efforts primarily toward the moral and cultural “self-strengthening” (to use a nineteenth-century term) that he felt was necessary for Song China to regain its rightful place in the world.³

In *Analects* 18:6, Confucius is quoted as saying, “If the Way prevailed in the world (*tianxia you dao* 天下有道) I would not be trying to change things.”⁴ This was also how Zhu Xi conceptualized his own situation. The Way (*dao* 道) as he understood it was the underlying moral order of the cosmos and norm of human behavior, both on the individual and social/political levels.⁵ The problem was that, although the Way was somehow immanent in the world, it was not “prevailing,” or being put into effect; social institutions, rites, and the conduct of human relations were no longer aligned with the “Way of Heaven” (*tian dao* 天道). The loss of the North to the Jurchen was ample evidence of this, and a large part of the responsibility for the catastrophe, according to Zhu, had come from within: in particular, the divisive factional politics of the Northern Song period. Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086), as prime minister, had instituted ambitious institutional reforms (the “New Laws”), which were overturned by his successor Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), and then reinstated by Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047–1126) shortly before the Jurchen conquest.⁶ Wang’s reforms were ostensibly based on his reading of one of the ancient ritual texts, the *Zhou li* 周禮 (Rituals of Zhou), which was part

3. See Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, 169–80, and Qian, *Zhuzi xin xue’an*, 5: 75–84. Zhu Xi was by no means alone in seeing the occupation of the North as an unmitigated catastrophe. For some, it was not only a political and cultural disaster but a threat to the cosmological vision of China as the Middle Kingdom (*Zhongguo* 中國) occupying the center of the “civilized” world. According to Chen Liang (1143–1194), Jurchen control of the Chinese heartland gave them access to the more vital *qi* of the central plains, so the longer they held their position the stronger they would become, while the Chinese would become progressively weaker. See Tillman, “Proto-Nationalism in Twelfth-Century China?” 417–21, and *Utilitarian Confucianism*, ch. 6.

4. This is undoubtedly a very late addition to the *Analects*, possibly two hundred years after Confucius’s death in 479 BCE (see Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, 173–75, where the passage is dated to 262 BCE). Song Confucians, however, considered it to be the authentic words of the sage.

5. Zhang Dainian summarizes the range of meanings of the word *dao* in *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, 11–26.

6. See Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, and Levine, *Divided by a Common Language*. On the opposition to Wang Anshi by Zhu Xi and his predecessors in the Cheng school see de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 609–28.

of the Confucian canon. This kind of reform was therefore well within the parameters of what Confucians in the Song regarded as proper application of the Confucian Way. Yet Wang was strongly opposed by a group of Confucian scholar-officials centered on Sima Guang, the Cheng brothers, and their associates—a group later called the Yuanyou (元祐) party, after the name of the reign period (1086–1093) during which Sima Guang was in power. Their opposition was based not so much on the policies themselves, most of which were quite reasonable and progressive, but on the forceful manner in which they were instituted. The Yuanyou party felt rudely excluded from the decision-making process and their written works were put under a ban during the reform period.⁷ Even aside from the animus this engendered in the later followers of the Cheng school in the Southern Song (including, of course, Zhu Xi), it seemed evident to them in hindsight that this rough and tumble internal political conflict was a distraction from the real and imminent danger posed by the Jurchen.

COMPETING VISIONS OF THE *DAO*

Zhu Xi concluded from this unfortunate recent history that one pole of the Confucian project—the perfection of society through good government—had been emphasized during the Northern Song at the expense of the other pole—the perfection of the self through moral cultivation. Because of the extraordinary influence that Zhu Xi exerted in the last couple decades of the twelfth century, this “inward turn” came to characterize late Southern Song Confucianism.⁸ But the external threat posed by the Jurchen was only part of the crisis he perceived. The other part, and a contributor to the weakness that had led to the fall of the North, was the internal threat of Buddhism, especially the Chan 禪 (Zen) school of Mahayana Buddhism.

Song Confucian objections to Buddhism, although often based on caricatures of Buddhist thought, had both ethical and metaphysical grounds. While some were attracted by the Buddhist notion of self-perfection based on inherent Buddha-nature, with its obvious parallels to Mencian thought, many Song Confucians were repelled by Buddhism’s alleged socioethical failings. Confucianism, of course, had always strongly supported full, active

7. See Schirokauer, “Neo-Confucians Under Attack.”

8. See Liu, *China Turning Inward*. For Zhu Xi’s influence see Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s Ascendancy*.

engagement with the world, especially in the family and in government. Scholars such as Cheng Yi, therefore, repeatedly accused the Buddhists of selfishness in leaving behind social and familial relationships. Even though their teachings may be “lofty and profound,” Cheng said, they are essentially wrong because one simply cannot deny one’s relationships even if one flees from them.⁹ According to this view, Buddhism was a debilitating influence on Chinese culture because it undermined the traditional social-mindedness of the Chinese spirit and the Confucian sense of responsibility to work for the betterment of society, primarily through government. By encouraging men and women to live in monasteries, Buddhism did serious harm to the single most important institution in Chinese society—the family—and contravened the most fundamental Confucian value: filial respect (*xiao* 孝) for elders. Confucius had said (quite prominently in the second passage of the *Analects*) that filial respect was the “root” of the Way.¹⁰ Hence the seriousness of this issue for committed Confucians.

On the metaphysical questions, Zhu Xi said that the major difference between Buddhism and Confucianism could be seen in their different interpretations of the first line of the *Zhongyong* (Centrality and Commonality), “What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature.”¹¹ Buddhists, he said, understand “human nature” (*xing* 性) as “empty awareness,” while Confucians interpret it as “concrete principle.”¹² The Confucian interpretation meant, for

9. Chan, *Source Book*, 555, 564. This was also the theme of Han Yu’s critique of Buddhism (ibid., 454–56). For a short history of anti-Buddhist polemic through the Tang, see Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, ch. 3 (“Buddhism as a Foreign Religion”).

10. *Analects* 1:2 in full: “Master You said, ‘A young person who is filial and respectful of his elders rarely becomes the kind of person who is inclined to defy his superiors, and there has never been a case of one who is disinclined to defy his superiors stirring up rebellion. The gentleman [*junzi*] applies himself to the roots. Once the roots are firmly established, the Way will grow. Might we not say that filial piety and respect for elders constitute the root of Goodness [*ren*, or humanity]?’” (trans. Slingerland, *Confucius: Analects*). Note the connection with the larger social order.

11. Chan, *Source Book*, 98.

12. Ibid., 616, 647–48. The Mahayana Buddhist concept that all things are “empty of own-being” is really equivalent to saying that they are interdependent with all things. This is quite different from saying that things do not exist or are void of all content. The Confucians never engaged with this important point, although they were most likely aware of it, as most of them had studied Buddhism seriously for a time before “returning” to the Confucian Way. Their philosophical arguments against Buddhism tended to caricature it, whether deliberately or not.

Zhu Xi, that even when the mind is “vacuous” or unoccupied and peaceful it is “full” of moral principle, since every thing (including the mind) has a principle/pattern/order (*li* 理), and the *li* of the mind is the moral nature. “Principle” in Mahayana Buddhist theory refers to the principle that all elements of existence (*dharmas* / *fa* 法) are “empty” (*śūnya* / *kong* 空) of “own-being” (*svabhāva* / *zixing* 自性); that is, they have no self-existent, knowable nature. Principle for Confucians has definite, intelligible, and ultimately moral content. And self-actualization, or the process of becoming a sage, requires knowledge and fulfillment of the “five-fold nature”—the nature characterized by the “five constant virtues”—not the realization of an “empty” Buddha-nature. As Mencius had said, “He who fully develops his mind knows his nature; knowing his nature he knows Heaven. To preserve the mind and nourish the nature is the way to serve Heaven” (*Mencius* 7A1). Thus, while Buddhism was attractive (especially to literati) because of its highly sophisticated theories of mind, ignorance, and human suffering, these very theories denied the ultimate truth of the cognitive categories and socioethical values and institutions that were so central to the Confucian worldview.

The Confucian Way that was at stake here was not simply one way among others, like a martial art or a skilled technique.¹³ It was the one true Way, a universal set of *principles* (not specific rules)¹⁴ that governed the natural world and constituted the guidelines for a flourishing life and flourishing society. For the Song Confucians it was the Way of the Sages who had first intuited it and had recorded its various dimensions in the Scriptures (or “Classics”). This was the Way that the Cheng-Zhu Confucians appropriated as the name for their particular path: the Learning of the Way (*daoxue* 道學).¹⁵

13. E.g., the “Way of tea” (*cha dao* 茶道), or the Japanese art of *kendō* 剣道 (Way of the sword).

14. For a good discussion of this distinction between principle and rule see Liu Shu-hsien, “A Philosophical Analysis of the Confucian Approach to Ethics,” 421–25.

15. “*Daoxue*” had been used by the Cheng brothers and by Zhang Zai (their father’s cousin) in the eleventh century, and was widely used by Zhu Xi and his followers in the twelfth. Over the course of the twelfth century, mainly through Zhu Xi’s influence, it gradually narrowed in scope until it came to refer specifically to the Cheng-Zhu school, as defined by Zhu Xi. See Hoyt Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, where he aptly refers to this group as the *daoxue* “fellowship.” See Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 178, n. 4, for uses of the term by the Chengs, Zhang Zai, and Chengs’ student, Yang Shi.

Zhu Xi's lifelong mission was to assist the literati (*shi* 士) of his time to learn and practice this Confucian *dao*, which would help revitalize the moral and cultural fiber of Chinese civilization. For Zhu this meant defining the Confucian *dao* as the tradition created by the ancient sages and transmitted by Confucius and Mencius, and distinguishing it clearly from both the Daoist *dao*—which he understood as the teachings of the Daoist classic *Laozi* 老子 and the cultivation practices of the Daoist religion—and the Buddhist *dao*, or “Eightfold Path.” Of these two, Chan Buddhism was the chief rival for the affections of Song literati.

Until about the 1990s, the conventional wisdom concerning the history of Chan Buddhism in China was that its “Golden Age” was the Tang 唐 dynasty (618–906), when Huineng 惠能 (638–713), an illiterate monastic kitchen helper, became the Sixth Patriarch and a series of charismatic successors developed the iconoclastic teachings and practices that we associate today with Zen, especially as practiced in Japan.¹⁶ During the Song, according to this view, Chan Buddhism began a long period of decline: no new teachings or schools were developed and a gradual process of syncretism with Pure Land Buddhism began, resulting in the virtual disappearance of Chan as a distinct school of Buddhism in China.¹⁷ The major story of the Song period (again according to this conventional view) was the rise of “Neo-Confucianism,” which displaced Buddhism as the most vital and innovative Chinese religio-philosophical tradition.

This story no longer reflects the consensus of academic opinion. To put it succinctly, the Huineng story has been shown to be a complete fabrication, and scholars today agree that Chan developed its characteristic teachings and practices in the Song dynasty, not the Tang.¹⁸ It was during the Song that the three major genres of Chan literature were developed: discourse

16. The Huineng story comes from the seminal Chan/Zen text, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Yampolsky 1967). The fact that Japanese Zen Buddhism was one of the earliest Buddhist schools to become well known in the West—basically by historical accident—has strongly skewed our view of Chinese Chan.

17. See Wu, *The Golden Age of Zen*, and Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*.

18. For the Huineng story see McRae, *Seeing Through Zen*; and Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch*. For more on Chan in the Song see Gregory and Getz, *Buddhism in the Sung*; Hershock, *Chan Buddhism*; and Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*. It should be noted that the syncretism with Pure Land Buddhism did in fact occur, and that Buddhism in Ming-Qing China was not characterized by the institutionally distinct schools that developed in Japan since the Kamakura period (1185–1333).

records (*yulu* 語錄), “lamp” records (*denglu* 燈錄), and *gongan* (*kōan* 公案) collections.¹⁹ It was in these works that the view of the “mind to mind transmission” of the Buddha’s wordless teaching and the colorful stories of the Tang dynasty masters, which today we associate with Chan/Zen Buddhism, were developed. Chan Buddhism thrived institutionally during the Song with considerable government support, especially for the large public monasteries, almost all of which were designated as Chan.²⁰ Buddhist monks and Confucian literati moved in the same social circles,²¹ and virtually all of the major Song Confucian thinkers took Buddhism quite seriously, either before turning strictly to Confucianism or as a continuing contributor to their views of the Way.²²

While Chan Buddhism was the major competitor to Song Confucianism, Daoism was also a thriving alternative.²³ One of the two major Daoist sects of today, the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) tradition, began in the Song, as did several other sects. Two emperors of the Northern Song, Zhenzong (r. 998–1023) and Huizong (r. 1101–1126), actively supported Daoism.²⁴ “Inner alchemy,” other forms of Daoist meditation, and other forms of self-cultivation were widespread. The Daoist focus on the human body as the locus of spiritual practice contributed significantly to traditional Chinese medicine, which was beginning to be systematized and professionalized during the Song.²⁵ It was

19. Discourse records are collections of “encounter dialogues” of individual Chan teachers, along the lines of the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) of Confucius. “Lamp” records are collections of encounter dialogues of multiple teachers in a tradition, illustrating the mind-to-mind transmission of the Buddha’s “lamp” of enlightenment, such as the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄, or *Transmission of the Lamp of the Jingde Era* (the reign period, 1004–07, when the book was compiled). *Gong’an* collections contain short encounter dialogues of various teachers that are thought to be especially useful as teaching devices.

20. See Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism.”

21. See Gimello, “Learning, Letters, and Liberation in Sung Ch’an.”

22. Two important examples of the second variety were Zhang Jiucheng 張九成 (1092–1159) and Yang Shi 楊時 (1053–1135), the student of the Cheng brothers who brought their teachings to the south. On Zhang see Ari Borrell, “Ko-wu or Kung-an?”; on Yang see Jameson, *South-Returning Wings*.

23. See Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, chs. 15–19; Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*; Hymes, *Way and Byway*; and Kohn, *Daoism and Chinese Culture*, chs. 7–9.

24. Hymes, *Way and Byway*, 27.

25. See Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 6, part 6, 95–113.

widely accepted that Daoist practices of nourishing the essence (*jing* 精), breath (*qi* 氣), and spirit (*shen* 神), although long and arduous, could lead to extension of the normal lifespan or preservation of the body after death.²⁶

Both Buddhism and Daoism claimed special access to the *dao*: Chan through its unbroken line of “patriarchs” or ancestors (*zu* 祖) going right back to the Buddha; Daoism through its claim that the human body was a microcosm of the *dao*, embodying (in potential form that must be activated by cultivation practices) all the spiritual powers that animate the universe. The universalistic meanings of the word *dao* were first expressed in the *Laozi* or *Daodejing* 道德經. This scripture of classical Daoism, compiled in the third century BCE from earlier sources, spoke of the *dao* as the Way of nature, the spontaneous patterns of cyclical growth that characterize the natural world, which human beings should emulate if they wish to enhance their lives and rulers should emulate to enable their states to flourish. The roughly contemporaneous *Analects* of Confucius, by contrast, does not develop the trans-human dimensions of the Way. In the *Analects* the Way is the ideal sociopolitical order, the Way of good government and the Way of life to be followed by a morally noble person (*junzi* 君子).²⁷ When Buddhism entered China in the first century CE, it came with its own “Path” or Way, the Eightfold Path of right wisdom, morality, and meditative practice.²⁸ This too originally lacked a cosmic dimension. But the broader Daoist meaning of *dao* eventually influenced both the Confucian and Buddhist meanings in China. While the term never had the prominence in Buddhist literature that it came to have in Song Confucianism,²⁹ in the latter it came to be nearly synonymous with *li*, the natural/moral order.

26. Even as strong an opponent of Daoism as Zhu Xi accepted these claims; see Hu Guang, *Xingli daquan shu*, 28:15b.

27. As mentioned earlier, the *Analects* began to be compiled shortly after the Master’s death in 479 BCE, a process that continued for one or two hundred years. Given that the earlier, oral sources of the *Laozi* must have circulated long before they were written down, the two texts can be considered roughly contemporaneous, although the earlier parts of the *Analects* predate the first known written form of the *Laozi*.

28. Right views and intention are considered wisdom (*prajñā*); right speech, action, and livelihood are morality (*sīla*); right effort, mindfulness, and concentration are meditative practice (*samādhi*).

29. We do see trans-human implications in the seminal Chan text, the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*: “Tao [*dao*] must be something that circulates freely; why should he impede it? If the mind does not abide in things the Tao circulates freely; if the

THE CONFUCIAN *DAO*

The idea of a line of Confucian sages who transmitted the *dao* goes back to Mencius (fourth century BCE), who spoke of the “Way of the sages” (*shengrenzhi dao* 聖人之道) beginning with the mythic sage-kings Yao 堯 and Shun 舜:

After the death of Yao and Shun, the way of the Sages declined, and tyrants arose one after another. They pulled down houses in order to make ponds, and the people had nowhere for repose. They turned fields into parks, depriving the people of their livelihood. Moreover, heresies and violence arose. With the multiplication of parks, ponds and lakes, arrived birds and beasts. By the time of the tyrant Zhou [the evil last king of the Shang],³⁰ the Empire was again in great disorder. The Duke of Zhou helped King Wu to punish Zhou. . . .

Lofty indeed were the plans of King Wen [founder of the Zhou dynasty]!

Great indeed were the achievements of King Wu!

Bless us and enlighten us, your descendants,

So that we may act correctly and not fall into error.

When the world declined and the Way fell into obscurity, heresies and violence again arose. There were instances of regicides and parricides. Confucius was apprehensive and composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. . . . No sage kings have appeared since then. Feudal lords do as they please; people lacking in official position are uninhibited in the expression of their views, and the words of Yang Zhu and Mo Di fill the empire.³¹

mind abides in things, it becomes entangled” (trans. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, 136). However, most Buddhist usage of the term, including in the *Platform Sutra*, is in the sense of “the Buddha Way,” which mainly implies the Way of thought and practice.

30. The names of the tyrant Zhou and the Duke of Zhou are different, unrelated homonyms.

31. *Mencius* 3B.9, trans. D. C. Lau. The quoted verse is from the *Shujing*. Yang Zhu was considered a “hedonist,” and Mo Di, or Mozi (Master Mo), argued for “universal love,” or love without distinctions, which Confucians considered wrong because one should love one’s relatives more than others.

From Yao and Shu to Tang [founder of the Shang dynasty] it was over five hundred years. Men like Yu and Gao Yao knew Yao and Shun personally, while those like Tang knew them only by reputation. From Tang to King Wen [founder of the Zhou dynasty] it was over five hundred years. Men like Yi Yin and Lai Zhu knew Tang personally, while those like King Wen knew him only by reputation. From King Wen to Confucius it was over five hundred years. Men such as Taigong Wang and Sanyi Sheng knew King Wen personally, while those like Confucius knew him only by reputation. From Confucius to the present it is over a hundred years. In time we are so near to the age of the sage while in place we are so close to his home, yet if there is no one who has anything of the sage, well then, there is no one who has anything of the sage.³²

Mencius clearly emphasizes here the discontinuity or interruptions in the propagation of the Way. But he also implies that even over a span of five hundred years it is possible for the rare, “prophetic” individual to “repossess” the Way.³³ This became the standard structure of Confucian accounts of their Way in later periods. The fact that the Confucian transmission of the Way was discontinuous is, of course, an important difference from the continuous lineage of teachers claimed by the Chan school of Buddhism, and posed a serious problem for Zhu Xi, as we shall see.

In the Tang dynasty (618–906), Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824)—considered one of the precursors of the “Neo-Confucian” revival of the Song—specifically

32. *Mencius* 7B.38, trans. D. C. Lau, replacing Wade-Giles with *pinyin* romanization. For the other names in this passage, see Lau’s “Glossary of Personal and Place Names.”

33. The words in quotation marks are those of Wm. Theodore de Bary, in *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart*, where he defines “prophetic” as “an extraordinary access to and revelation of truth not vouchsafed to everyone, which by some process of inner inspiration or solitary perception affords an insight beyond what is received in scripture, and by appeal to some higher order of truth gives new meaning, significance, and urgency to certain cultural values or scriptural texts. Confucian tradition does not customarily speak of such a revelation as ‘supernatural,’ but it has an unpredictable, wondrous quality manifesting the divine creativity of Heaven” (9–10). de Bary develops the idea further in *The Trouble with Confucianism*, ch. 1. Although a reluctance to import terminology from alien traditions is a good general principle, it should not rule it out completely—if (and only if) we limit its usage to our analysis and refrain from injecting it into the texts themselves. In this case I believe it sheds useful light on the Confucian tradition, and I shall return to it later.

identified Daoism and Buddhism as the major opponents of the Confucian Way. Both had been flourishing for about five hundred years by his time, while the teachings of Yang Zhu and Mo Di had faded into relative obscurity. In his “Inquiry into the Way” (*Yuan dao* 原道), Han Yu said that the succession had ceased altogether after the death of Mencius:

What Way is this? It is what I call the Way, not what the Daoists and Buddhists have called the Way. Yao passed it on to Shun, Shun to Yu, Yu to Tang, Tang to King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Zhou; then these passed it on to Confucius, who passed it on to Mencius. But after the death of Mencius it was not passed on.³⁴

Han Yu may be the first to describe the Confucian *dao* as a universal, cosmic Way.³⁵ In addition to his spirited defense of the Confucian Way, he was known for his elegantly simple prose style. He was the originator of the *guwen* 古文 (“literature of antiquity”) movement: an attempt to return to the simpler prose style of the Zhou dynasty and to avoid the flowery, overly structured styles that had become popular since the Han dynasty. This movement was continued by the Song Confucians, and is another reason why Han Yu was held in high esteem by them. Early in the Song, Shi Jie 石介 (1005–1045)³⁶ wrote an essay, “Revering Han [Yu],” in which he ranked Han higher than Mencius. But he made another innovation that is particularly relevant to our study of Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi:

The Dao began with Fuxi and was brought to completion by Confucius. The Dao had already been realized, and yet sages were not produced. Thus, in the 2,000 or so years since Confucius, no sages have been born. Men like Mencius, Yang Xiong, Wang Tong, and Han Yu transmitted [the Way of] Confucius and revered him

34. Han Yu, *Yuan dao* 原道 (On the origin of the Way), in de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 573; and in *Han Yu wen*, 1–7. King Wu, the son of King Wen, was the king under whom the Zhou conquered the Shang in 1045 BCE. When King Wu died, his son was too young to rule, so King Wu’s brother, the Duke of Zhou, acted as regent until the young King Cheng came of age. The doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven is traditionally attributed to the Duke of Zhou. See also Hartman, *Han Yü*.

35. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*,” 127.

36. For Shi Jie see Huang and Quan, *Song Yuan xue’an*, 2:33a–42a.

as a teacher. But their knowledge was [only] sufficient for them to become worthies (*xian*). After Confucius the Dao was repeatedly neglected and blocked up. It was discussed by Mencius and greatly clarified by [Han Yu]. . . .

Alas! Fuxi, Shennong, Huangdi, Shaohao, Zhuanxu, Gaoxin, Yao of Tang, Shun of Yu, Yu, Tang, [kings] Wen and Wu, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius—of these fourteen sages Confucius was the most perfected sage. Alas! Mencius, Xunzi, Yang Xiong, Wang Tong, Han Yu—of these five worthies, [Han Yu] was the most perfected worthy.³⁷

Here, in addition to his relative denigration of Mencius (a point that most later Confucians rejected), Shi Jie introduces the category of “worthy” (*xian* 賢), one step below “sage” (*sheng* 聖). This too became a standard Confucian category, reflected for example in the ranking of figures in Confucian temples. But Shi Jie’s most striking innovation was to push back the origin of the Way beyond Yao, Shun, and Yu 禹 to the primordial sages Fuxi 伏羲, Shennong 神農, and Huangdi 黃帝. Zhu Xi followed this pattern, giving special weight to Fuxi, for reasons that will be developed presently.

While the identities of the sages who transmitted the Way varied, the basic structure remained: a discontinuous transmission from ancient times to the present, punctuated by “heroic” or “prophetic” individuals, who either reestablished benevolent government after periods of tyranny (e.g., the end of the Shang) or disunity (the Warring States period), or recovered the teachings of the prior sages (e.g., Confucius and Mencius). This discontinuity stood in stark contrast to the continuity of transmission claimed by the Chan Buddhists. After Han Yu, the Confucian Way was understood as the ultimate source of moral values, which periodically required the appearance of an extraordinary individual—a sage—to apprehend it anew and resume its transmission. The theory developed by the Song Confucians to explain how their sagely Way was in fact accessible in the present, despite the gaps in its transmission, combined the models used by the Buddhists and the Daoists. They, like the

37. Translated by Neskari, *The Cult of Worthies*, 340–41, with Wade-Giles replaced by pinyin romanization. Fuxi was the inventor of hunting and fishing, and the creator of the hexagrams and divination system of the *Yijing*. Huangdi (the Yellow Emperor) was the inventor of government; Shennong (the Divine Farmer) the inventor of agriculture. All of these are mythic culture-heroes. Shaohao, Zhuanxu, Gaoxin were Huangdi’s son, grandson, and great-grandson.

Chan Buddhists, claimed to have a line of ancestors/patriarchs, which they called sages. And like the Daoists, they claimed that the human body/mind/heart was where the *dao* was to be found.

THE CHENG BROTHERS

Zhu Xi's most important predecessor in the Northern Song was Cheng Yi, the younger of the two Cheng brothers. The Chengs were born and spent most of their lives in Luoyang, near the Yellow River in Henan province. Cheng Hao, the elder brother (by one year), had the more distinguished political career. His reputation was that of a kind, warmhearted man, while his brother came to be known as more of a hardheaded moralist. When Cheng Hao died at the age of fifty-three, his brother composed a eulogy in which he spoke of the restoration of the Confucian *dao* in the Song:

After the demise of the Duke of Zhou, the Way of the sages was not carried on, and after the death of Mencius the teaching of the sages was not transmitted. When the Way was not carried on there was no good government for a hundred generations, and when the teaching was not transmitted, there were not true scholars for a thousand years. Even without good government, scholars could explain the way of good government for the edification of men and transmission to later generations, but without true [Confucian] scholars the world fell into darkness and people lost their way, human desires ran amok, and heavenly principles were extinguished. The Master [Cheng Hao] was born 1,400 years after Mencius and was able to recover the untransmitted teachings that survived in the classics, resolving to enlighten the people with this Way.³⁸

And in his brief biography of Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi says:

38. *Er Cheng ji*, 640, translated by de Bary, *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy*, 3–4 (de Bary inadvertently omits the word *untransmitted*). Cheng Yi outlived his brother by twenty-two years. Note also the two different kinds of discontinuity outlined by Cheng Yi: the Way was *practiced* during the reigns of Kings Wen and Wu and the Duke of Zhou, after which it fell into disuse. The Way was *taught* by Confucius, his disciples, and Mencius, although it was not currently being put into practice. The second kind of disruption was worse than the first.

In his pursuit of learning, when he was fifteen or sixteen, the Master heard Zhou Maoshu 周茂叔 of Runan 汝南 [Zhou Dunyi] discuss the Way. He gave up forthwith the endeavor to prepare for civil service examinations and enthusiastically made up his mind to seek the Way. As he did not know the essentials, he drifted among the different schools and went in and out of the Daoist and Buddhist schools for almost ten years. Then he returned to seek the Way in the Six Classics, and found it there. . . . He said that, after Mencius, the Learning of the Sage was no longer transmitted, and he took it as his own responsibility to restore the cultural tradition.³⁹

These two pieces by Cheng Yi were well known by the Chengs' many disciples, both during the remainder of the Northern Song and in the Southern Song. The eulogy clearly identifies Cheng Hao as the first to revive the Confucian Way since Mencius. The biography introduces a slight ambiguity, in that he "heard Zhou [Dunyi] discuss the Way" before he "returned to seek the Way in the Six Classics, and found it there." But in the end the meaning is the same in both pieces, because after studying with Zhou—along with Cheng Yi, incidentally—Cheng Hao "drifted among the different schools and went in and out of the Daoist and Buddhist schools for almost ten years." So despite having heard Zhou discuss the Way, he failed to get it himself for a long time, and when he did get it, it was from the classics. So it cannot be said, according to this account, that Zhou Dunyi transmitted the Way to Cheng Hao. At best one could say that Zhou inspired Cheng to seek the Way, but when he did so he eventually got it himself. This interpretation does give Zhou a significant role in the transmission of the Way, but it is clearly not the role of an independent "repossessor" of the Way.⁴⁰

This was the prevailing view among the followers of the Chengs in the early Southern Song. No one since Mencius had fully understood and transmitted the Confucian Way until Cheng Hao, the elder of the two brothers. After much confusion and dalliance with Buddhism and Daoism, he had "returned" to the Confucian classics, apprehended the Way on his

39. *Er Cheng ji* 2:638, translated by de Bary, *ibid.*, 4.

40. The term "getting it" sounds a bit like English slang, but in fact it is an accurate translation of *de* 得, which is often used in this context. For example, Zhu Xi later argued that one should engage in learning to "get it for oneself" (*zide* 自得), meaning that the purpose of learning is to become a sage, not to gain a career.

own from the classics, and with his brother taught it to their disciples. Zhou Dunyi's role was decidedly secondary.

The Chengs and their students came to be known as the Luo school, after the Luo River that flows into the Yellow River near their hometown Luoyang, in Henan province (north-central China).⁴¹ The Chengs were also associated with Shao Yong, who was their colorful and somewhat reclusive friend and also lived in Luoyang; Zhang Zai (1020–1077), who was their father's cousin; and of course Zhou Dunyi, who was briefly their teacher when they were teenagers.⁴² One of the Chengs' students, Yang Shi 楊時 (1053–1135), later moved south to Zhu Xi's home province of Fujian on the southeast coast, bringing the teachings of the Chengs with him.⁴³ One of Yang's students, Luo Congyan 羅從彥 (1072–1135), became the teacher of Zhu Xi's father, Zhu Song. And another of Luo's students, Li Tong 李侗 (1093–1163), became Zhu Xi's teacher. So Zhu Xi was a fourth-generation disciple of the Cheng brothers. Yang Shi, Luo Congyan, and Li Tong later became known as the Daonan 道南 school, because it derived from Yang Shi, who had brought the *dao* south (*nan*).

Meanwhile, another branch of the Cheng school developed in Hunan province (in the interior, west of Fujian). Zhu Xi's relationship with this Hunan 湖南 school (also called the Hu-Xiang 湖湘 school)⁴⁴ is a crucial part of the puzzle we are attempting to solve, and will be developed further in chapter 3. The founder of the Hunan school, Hu Anguo 胡安國 (1074–1138), had a nephew, Hu Xian 胡憲 (1082–1162), who was one of three men asked by Zhu Song to be Zhu Xi's teacher after his father's death when Zhu Xi was thirteen (well before he went to study with Li Tong). More significantly, Hu Anguo's son, Hu Hong 胡宏 (1106–1161)—who had also been a student of Yang Shi and is sometimes considered the founder of the Hunan school—became an important figure for Zhu Xi, although they never

41. They were also called the Yi-Luo 伊洛 school, adding the name of the Yi River (Yichuan, which was also Cheng Yi's honorary name) that flows into the Luo near Luoyang. The Chengs themselves were usually referred to as the Chengs of Henan.

42. Zhou Dunyi is sometimes identified as the "Lian school" 濂學 after the stream along which he built his retirement home; Zhang Zai and his disciples are sometimes referred to as the "Guan school" 關學 after his home area of Guanzhong (the area of Chang'an, or modern Xi'an).

43. See Jameson, *South-Returning Wings*.

44. Xiang 湘, the name of a river in the province, is an alternate name for Hunan.

met personally. Zhu Xi was a severe critic of Hu Hong, yet Hu Hong's student, Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133–1180), became Zhu Xi's very close friend and a crucial collaborator with Zhu on the elevation of Zhou Dunyi to the position of first sage of the Song.

ZHOU DUNYI

Although Zhou Dunyi's family had originally come from Henan province, he was born in Hunan and spent most of his life in the south. His father died when he was about fourteen, and he was adopted by his maternal uncle, Zheng Xiang 鄭向, through whom he received his first government position. He never received the *jinshi* 進士 degree, the highest level of the civil service examination system. He spent his official career in a series of mid-level government positions in Hunan, Jiangxi, Guangxi, and Sichuan.⁴⁵ In 1046 the Cheng brothers, in their mid-teens, came to study with him for a year or two, because their father had met Zhou and had been highly impressed by him. But Zhou never achieved any position of prominence during his lifetime, either as a private teacher or as a government official. Except for one or two people with whom Zhou is said to have discussed the Way, he is not known to have had any other students besides the Cheng brothers.⁴⁶ As mentioned in the Introduction, he is best known for his “*Taiji* Diagram” (*Taijitu*), the short “Discussion of the *Taiji* Diagram” (*Taijitu shuo*), and the *Tongshu* (*Penetrating the Scripture of Change*). He also developed a lasting reputation as a humane, kind-hearted man who exemplified the Confucian notion of being “authentic” (*cheng* 誠): expressing in thought and behavior one's moral nature (*dexing* 德性). Huang Tingjian (1045–1105) said of him:

Maoshu [Zhou's “style” or professional name] is a man of lofty character, fresh and vigorous as a breeze in sunlight, or the bright

45. Chan, “Chou Tun-i,” in Franke, *Sung Biographies* 1:277–81, where Yingdao (present-day Dao) county is mistakenly identified as being in Henan (277)—one of many typographical errors in this book. Zhou's birthplace was Chongling village, Yingdao county, Daozhou prefecture; about fifty miles south-southeast of present-day Yongzhou city in Hunan. For a more detailed account of Zhou's life see Liang, *Zhou Dunyi pingzhuan*.

46. See Huang and Quan, *Song Yuan xue'an* 11:1a. According to Zhu Xi's student, Wei Liaoweng (1178–1237), Zhang Zongfan, from Sichuan, “received instruction” and praise from Zhou (Wei Liaoweng, “Hezhou jian Lianxi xiansheng citang ji”; see also Huang and Quan, *Song-Yuan xue'an*, 12:25a), but faded into obscurity.

moon. An avid reader, his elegant thoughts forest the valleys and he is ever unflappable and forthright. Modest in striving for renown yet ardent in seeking [self-realization], he is indifferent to worldly success yet steadfast in friendship.⁴⁷

A popular story about Zhou was that he refrained from cutting the grass around his house because he didn't want to suppress the spirit of life.⁴⁸ Such an attitude could be understood in terms of the evolving Confucian reverence for life, as expressed by Cheng Yi ("The mind of Heaven and earth is to give birth to things") and Zhang Zai ("Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst").⁴⁹ But it also might have been related to his understanding of Buddhism; Zhou, like many Song Confucians, associated freely with Buddhist literati, such as Shou Ya 壽崖.⁵⁰ And after the three works mentioned above, his next best-known piece of writing was a poem, "On the Loving the Lotus" (*Ai lian shuo* 愛蓮說)—the lotus flower being first and foremost a Buddhist symbol.⁵¹

According to A. C. Graham, "Zhou Dunyi was not known as a philosopher in the eleventh century," and "the works of Zhou Dunyi were little known in the eleventh century."⁵² There are no extant contemporary documents, including the extensive writings and recorded conversations of the Cheng brothers, that claim any kind of special role for Zhou Dunyi. Li Xinchuan's 李心傳 (1166–1243) *Daoming lu* 道命錄 (Record of the Fate of the Way)—a collection of official documents concerning the *daoxue* school from 1083 to 1224—begins with Sima Guang's recommendation of Cheng Yi for an

47. Quoted by Qian Mu, *Zhu Xi xin xue'an*, 1:17. Translated by Kirill Ole Thompson in *An Overview of Zhu Xi's Learning*, by Qian Mu (unpublished).

48. Related by one of the Cheng brothers in *Henan Chengshi yishu*, 3 (*Er Cheng ji*, 60).

49. Cheng Yi was elaborating on *Yijing*, *Xici* B.1.11 ("The great virtue of Heaven and earth is life"; *Zhouyi benyi* 3:18a). Zhang's statement is the first line of his "Western Inscription" (Chan, *Source Book*, 497).

50. See Part II, "Introduction" to the Supreme Polarity Diagram.

51. In Buddhist iconography, Buddhas are often depicted sitting on lotus thrones, and one of the most influential Mahayana scriptures is the *Lotus Sūtra*. The lotus also symbolizes the Mahayana conception of enlightenment, as the purity of the flower (the enlightened mind) rises from the muck at the bottom of the pond (ordinary life with its suffering and mental defilements, or *kleśa*).

52. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 156, 166.

appointment as imperial tutor.⁵³ The same text contains a memorial written by Hu Anguo in 1137 (ten years after the fall of the north) requesting posthumous honors for the first generation of *daoxue* scholars—Shao Yong, Zhang Zai, and the two Chengs—but not for Zhou.⁵⁴ The earliest document in the *Daoming lu* mentioning Zhou Dunyi is dated 1211, when Zhu Xi's influence was already well established.⁵⁵ Li Yuangang 李元綱, in his 1170 diagram *Daozhuan zhengtong* 傳道正統 (Legitimate succession of the transmission of the Way), lists the Cheng brothers (equally) as the successors to Mencius.⁵⁶ And Hu Hong (1106–1161), in his preface to Zhou's *Tongshu*, says that “the followers of the Learning of the Way all say [in roughly the mid-twelfth century] that it was Cheng Hao who continued Mencius' untransmitted learning.”⁵⁷

It was probably Hu Hong who first claimed that Zhou Dunyi had “continued Mencius' untransmitted learning.”⁵⁸ Here is Hu Hong's undated preface to the *Tongshu*:

Preface to Master Zhou's *Tongshu*
(*Zhouzi Tongshu xu* 周子通書序) by Hu Hong⁵⁹

The *Tongshu*, in forty sections, was written by Master Zhou. Master Zhou, whose name was Dunyi 敦頤 and style name Maoshu 茂叔,

53. Li, *Daoming lu*, 1:1a–2a. On this text see Hartman, “Bibliographic Notes.” On Li Xinchuan see Chaffee, “Sung Biographies”; Chaffee, “The Historian as Critic”; Wang and Ching, “Li Hsing-ch'üan.”

54. *Ibid.*, 3:10b. Hu Anguo says explicitly that the Cheng brothers revived Mencius' Way in his epitaph for Yang Shi (reproduced in Zhu Xi's *Yi-Luo yuan-yuan lu*, 10:1048). But see chapter 2 at note 71, where he seems to give the credit to Zhou Dunyi.

55. *Ibid.*, 8:6b–10a (“Memorial on education, Zhu Xi's Four Books and acolyte status [in the Confucian temple] for Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong, the Cheng brothers, and Zhang Zai,” by Li Daochuan [Li Xinchuan's brother]).

56. The diagram is found in Li Yuangang (fl. 1170s), *Shengmen shiye tu* (Diagrams of the accomplishments of the sages).

57. *Hu Hong ji*, 161.

58. There is contradictory evidence on whether Hu Hong's father, Hu Anguo, shared this view (see above, note 54, and chapter 2, note 71). But the bulk of the evidence suggests that Hu Anguo went along with the prevailing view that Cheng Hao had independently revived the Way.

59. *Hu Hong ji*, 160–62 (also in Zhou *Lianxi ji*, 7:1b–2b, with a few significant textual variants that seem to be errors). I am grateful to my colleague Yang Xiao for his help with this translation.

was from Chongling 春陵.⁶⁰ Speculating on where his Learning of the Way (*daoxue* 道學) came from, some say that the transmission of the Taiji Diagram came from Mu Xiu, that [Mu] Xiu received [it and] the Xiantian 先天 (Prior to Heaven, or *A Priori*) Diagram from Chong Fang 种放, and that [Chong] Fang received [both] from Chen Tuan 陳搏 (d. 989). But is he [Chen Tuan] then the only teacher [source] of Zhou's learning? He is not the ultimate one. Mr. Xiyi 希夷 [Chen Tuan] had concerns for the world, but when he died he was associating with only five recluses.⁶¹ In comparison to the Sage's [Confucius's] indifference [to living in retirement from society],⁶² it seems that he [Chen Tuan] did not measure up to him.⁶³

Teacher Cheng Mingdao used to say to his disciples, "In the past, when I received learning from Master Zhou, he told me to seek for what Zhongni [Confucius] and Master Yan [Yan Hui 顏回] enjoyed (*yue* 樂)."⁶⁴ And Teacher Mingdao himself looked back to how Master Zhou "sang of the wind and moon."⁶⁵ The followers of the Learning of the Way all say that Cheng Hao continued Mencius' untransmitted learning. So how could Master Zhou have been limited to the learning of Chong [Fang] and Mu [Xiu]? If we examine antiquity, Confucius taught the Way of the Three Kings and established the methods by which the hundred kings could manage the world. Meng Ke (Mencius) rejected Yang [Zhu] 楊朱 and Mo

60. See above, note 45.

61. "Recluses" is a loose rendering of *feng ge he diao* 鳳歌荷蓑 (phoenix song, shoulder basket), which seems to be an allusion to *Analects* 18:5 and 18:7, two stories of recluses who meet Confucius.

62. Alluding to *Analects* 18:8.

63. I.e., Chen Tuan was too extreme in his preference for a reclusive life.

64. *Analects* 6:3: "There was one [disciple] named Yan Hui who loved (*hao* 好) learning" and 6:11: "What a worthy man was Yan Hui! Living in a narrow alley, subsisting on a basket of grain and gourdful of water—other people could not have born such hardship, yet it never spoiled Hui's joy (*yue* 樂)" (trans. Slingerland, *Confucius: Analects*, 53, 56). What Yan Hui loved or enjoyed, according to Cheng Yi, was "learning to attain the Way of the sage" ("Essay on what Master Yan loved to learn" [*Er Cheng ji* 8:1a; trans. Chan, *Source Book*, 547–50]).

65. *Yin feng nong yue* 吟風弄月. In *Henan Chengshi yishu* 3 (*Er Cheng ji*, 59) the phrase is not attributed to either brother specifically. It became a standard characterization of Zhou Dunyi.

[Di] 墨翟, and further clarified Confucius' beneficence, so that the myriad generations would not be cut off [from the Way]. Indeed it is said that Mencius' achievement was no less than Yu's. More recently, Master Zhou revealed his [Mencius's] untransmitted learning to the elder and younger Chengs, returning at once to the brilliance of the myriad ancients. Like the sun hanging in the sky, he benefitted a hundred generations. Like water spreading over the earth, his merit was like that of Confucius and Mencius. People see the brevity of his writings (*shu* 書) but do not understand the greatness of his Way. They see the quality of his writing (*wen* 文) but do not understand the essence of his ideas. They see the simplicity of his words but do not understand the extent of their flavor.

How can I be up to understanding him? I have been taking this to heart for years. I will try one or two statements so that like-minded [comrades] may benefit from my attempts. [Master Zhou] worried about people who are concerned with having deliberate plans, healthy bodies and prosperous families, and enjoying worldly favors. Thus he said: "Be intent on having Yi Yin's intention [to learning the Way]."⁶⁶ He also worried about those who exhaust themselves on sensory knowledge, not wanting to wait for [positions of] value and selling themselves short.⁶⁷ Thus he said: "Learn what Yan Hui learned."⁶⁸ People who are truly able to establish Yi Yin's intention and to cultivate Yan Hui's learning will only then understand the extreme greatness contained in the words of the *Tongshu*, and the inexhaustibility of the sagely enterprise.

Thus what this single-scroll book begins to show people is to model themselves after the various excellent masters, and to flow out [extend one's virtue] to the world along with the Yi (Changes), *Shi* (Odes), *Shu* (Documents), *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn), [*Lun*] *yu* (Analects), and *Meng[zi]* (Mencius). Therefore tell [others] about it and store it. When you meet "good *literati*" in the world who want to "ascend to discuss" prior worthies and read their books, pass it on to them.⁶⁹

66. *Tongshu*, section 10c.

67. Alluding to *Analects* 9:3.

68. *Tongshu*, section 10c.

69. Quoting *Mencius* 5B.8.

Hu Hong's estimation of Zhou Dunyi was probably, in some way, influenced by the fact that Zhou, like Hu, lived most of his life in Hunan. Hu's argument for Zhou had minimal influence until it was picked up by Zhu Xi later in the twelfth century. But there is one other record of Zhou being considered the reviver of Mencius's Way before Zhu Xi's campaign: a text written probably in the early 1160s (around the time of Hu Hong's death) by students of Zhang Jiucheng (1092–1159), called *Zhuru mingdao ji* 諸儒鳴道集 (Record of various Confucians propagating the Way).⁷⁰ This text, the first known Neo-Confucian anthology, begins with Zhou's *Tongshu*, but does not include his *Taijitu shuo*. Zhang Jiucheng, like Hu Hong, had been a student of Yang Shi, so Yang seems to be a crucial link in this story.

Zhu Xi first read the writings of Zhou Dunyi in 1152, at the age of twenty-two, but he later says he didn't understand them at that time.⁷¹ Zhu at that time was seriously studying both Chan Buddhism and Daoism, including the Daoist practical arts of immortality.⁷² He had begun studying with the Chan monk Daoqian 道謙 six years earlier.⁷³ Daoqian was a student of the most famous Chan teacher of the Song, Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163). Three years after Daoqian's death in 1152, Zhu paid a visit to Dahui, who referred to him as "Layman Zhu."⁷⁴ This suggests that Dahui considered Zhu a serious student of Chan. And the fact that Zhu first read Zhou Dunyi during this period, when he was also studying Daoist texts, suggests that Zhu may have considered Zhou to be at least a Daoist-influenced writer. This would be entirely consistent with Zhou's reputation at the time. Zhu Zhen 朱震 (1072–1138) had proposed two decades earlier that Zhou had received the *Taiji* Diagram from Mu Xiu 穆修 (979–1032), who had received it from Chong Fang 种放 (956–1015), who in turn had received it from the famous Daoist priest Chen Tuan 陳搏 (d. 989). This claim was well known in Zhu Xi's circles, and Zhu makes a weak attempt to refute it in his 1179 postface to Zhou's *Taijitu shuo* and *Tongshu*.⁷⁵ Lu Jiuyuan repeated it in his first letter

70. Hoyt Cleveland Tillman discusses this text in *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy*, 29, 117–18.

71. See Zhu's Preface to the *Tongshu*, translated in Part II.

72. Shu Jingnan, *Zhuzi Nianpu changbian*, 153.

73. *Ibid.*, 104.

74. *Ibid.*, 188.

75. *Wenji* 3652 (translated in Part II). His refutation consists merely in referring to Hu Hong's claim that the teaching of Chen Tuan and his followers was not at Zhou's level.

to Zhu Xi (1188), focusing on the fact that the term *wuji* was first used by Laozi. In his letter in response to Lu, Zhu Xi merely says that Zhou used the term in a different sense than Laozi, and he doesn't even mention Zhu Zhen's claim that the *Taijitu* was given to Zhou by Daoists.⁷⁶

In 1153, Zhu began visiting and corresponding with Li Tong, developing a close master-disciple relationship that lasted until Li's death. Li did not like Buddhism and turned Zhu Xi's interest back to Confucianism. In particular, Li taught Zhou Dunyi's idea of "emphasizing stillness" (*zhu jing* 主靜, in the *Taijitu shuo*) and the practice of "quiet-sitting" (*jing zuo* 靜坐), a Confucian form of meditation that both of the Cheng brothers had taught.⁷⁷ This emphasis on stillness/quietude (*jing*) became the hallmark of the Daonan school. So in 1160, Zhu read Zhou Dunyi's writings again and began discussing them with Li.⁷⁸ In 1163, the same year that Li Tong died and two years after Hu Hong died, Zhu met Zhang Shi of the Hunan school (Hu Hong's student), and they became fast friends. It is very likely that Zhu Xi received Hu Hong's preface to the *Tongshu* (translated above) from Zhang Shi. This, in combination with Li Tong's use of Zhou's ideas, may have planted the seed of Zhu Xi's eventual reevaluation of Zhou Dunyi. The key to that reevaluation was the "spiritual crisis" that Zhu Xi experienced and resolved in the late 1160s, which is the topic of chapter 3. First we will examine the evidence for the reevaluation itself.

76. *Wenji* 1566–70.

77. Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue'an*, 1:106. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

78. *Nianpu*, 251.