

## REDEFINING THE CIVIL GOVERNANCE THE YICHUAN YIZHUAN OF CHENG YI

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### Introduction

Although there has been little disagreement among scholars about Cheng Yi's 程頤 (1033–1107) role in founding the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism, his *Yichuan yizhuan* 伊川易傳 (A commentary on the *Changes* by a reader from Yi River) is always surrounded by controversies. The controversies, surprisingly, began with Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), the major annotator of Cheng Yi's works and the conventionally accepted co-founder of the Cheng-Zhu school. Despite the *Yizhuan*'s critical acclaim after Cheng Yi's death, Zhu Xi criticized him for restricting the *Yijing* to human affairs and thereby distorting the original meaning of the Confucian classic.<sup>1</sup> To draw home his point, Zhu Xi urged his students to read other texts, such as the *Daxue* 大學 (Great Learning), the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Doctrine of the Mean) and the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Poetry), before reading the *Yizhuan*.<sup>2</sup> During the Ming and Qing periods, despite being part of the official commentary on the *Yijing*, the *Yizhuan* was again the center of debate. This time, it was no longer Cheng Yi's interpretation of the *Yijing* that was in question, but the authenticity of two pieces of his writings: a preface to the *Yizhuan* ("Yixu" 易序), and an essay on the meanings of dividing the *Yijing* into two halves ("Shangxia pianyi" 上下篇義). The debate arose from the apparent discrepancies

<sup>1</sup> Zhu Xi took Cheng Yi to task for "using the *Yijing* to suit his understanding of the Principle of the universe." See *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing 1986), p. 1653.

<sup>2</sup> *Zhuzi yulei*, p. 1650.

between the two pieces and the rest of the *Yizhuan*, and in the debate the two pieces of writing were attributed to various writers including Zhu Xi.<sup>3</sup> In contemporary *Yijing* scholarship, views on the *Yizhuan* have become even more diverse. For some, the *Yizhuan* sets a high standard for reading the *Yijing* from an ethical perspective, and, therefore, it should be considered the prime Confucian rendition of the classic.<sup>4</sup> For others, the *Yizhuan* is primarily a metaphysical writing focusing on the Principle (*li* 理) of the universe.<sup>5</sup> For yet others, the *Yizhuan* is a moral-metaphysical work because, according to Cheng Yi, Principle of the universe is a unity of differences (*liyi fenshu* 理一分殊).<sup>6</sup>

While these controversies shed new light on the true nature of *Yichuan yizhuan*, one should also consider the historical context in which it was composed. A critic of the reform of Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086), Cheng Yi completed the first draft of *Yizhuan* in 1099 at his exile home in Sichuan as a “member of a faction” (*dangren* 黨人). In 1022, while he was revising the *Yizhuan*, Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047–1126) disgraced him in public by ordering his name be carved on a stone tablet erected outside the imperial palace.<sup>7</sup> Like the others whose names appeared on the stone tablet, Cheng Yi received severe punishment. His previous writings were banned because they “deceive and mislead readers now and in the future” (*qihuo tianxia houshi* 欺惑天下後世).<sup>8</sup> To make certain that none of his current writings would be disseminated publicly, the local officials were instructed to monitor his activities, and he was not allowed to put his name on any of his writings.<sup>9</sup> These punishments were no small matter to Cheng Yi, because they in effect brought to an end his earlier hope of governing the empire as a Confucian scholar.

In what follows, I offer a historical reading of the *Yichuan yizhuan*. My goal of this historical reading is not to find out whether Cheng Yi was faithful to the original meaning of the *Yijing*. Nor am I going to ascertain whether he followed the accepted *Yijing* commentarial conventions, such as the *Yili* 義理 (meaning and

<sup>3</sup> Zhu Bokun 朱伯崑, *Yixue zhixue shi* 易學哲學史, vol. 2 (Beijing 1988), p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Lin Yisheng 林益勝, *Yichuan yizhuan de chushi zhixue* 伊川易傳的處世哲學 (Taipei 1978), Preface, pp. 1f.; Hu Zifeng 胡自逢, “Cheng zi yixue yuanliu shulüe” 程子易學源流述略, *Kongmeng xuebao* 孔孟學報 43 (1982), pp. 211–234.

<sup>5</sup> Qiu Hansheng 邱漢生, “Yichuan yizhuan de lixue sixiang” 伊川易傳的理學思想 in: *Zhonghua xueshu lunwen ji* 中華學術論文選 (Beijing 1981), pp. 597–632. A similar viewpoint appears in Hou Wailu 侯外廬 – Qiu Hansheng – Zhang Qizhi 張豈之 (eds.), *Song Ming lixue shi* 宋明理學史 (Beijing 1984), pp. 132–153.

<sup>6</sup> Kidder Smith et al., *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton 1990), pp. 142–152.

<sup>7</sup> Chen Jun 陳均, *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao* 皇朝編年綱目備要 (repr. Taipei 1966), 26:1215f.

<sup>8</sup> Chen Jun, *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao*, 26:1224f.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; Li Zhi 李直, *Huangsong shichao gangyao* 皇宋十朝綱要 (repr. Taipei 1967), 16:356; Tuo Tuo 脫脫, *Songshi* 宋史 (Beijing 1985), p. 366.

principle) and *Xiangshu* 象數 (image and number) schools.<sup>10</sup> Rather, my goal is to demonstrate how Cheng Yi came to grips with the issues of his times through an interpretation of the *Yijing*. As will be shown, in the *Yizhuan*, we find not only a new reading of the *Yijing*, but also a glimpse into the hopes and fears of mid-Northern Song literati who attempted to reform the civil governance.

### Cheng Yi and the Mid-Northern Song Reforms

Established in the second half of the tenth century, the Northern Song civil governance was based on two pillars. The first pillar was keeping the military at bay by constantly rotating military generals, and stationing the best armies around the capital, Kaifeng, under the direct control of the emperor. The other pillar was the aggressive recruitment of the literati into the government by expanding the civil service examination system and granting appointments to relatives, dependents, and retainers of major civil officials. These two pillars combined gave the literati an impression that they were “co-ruling” (*gongzhi* 共治) the empire with the emperor.<sup>11</sup>

However, by Cheng Yi's time, these two pillars of civil governance had been blamed for creating the “three excesses” – the excessive size of the army, the excessive number of officials in the government, and the excessive government spending.<sup>12</sup> These “three excesses” created two problems for the mid-Northern Song literati. First, many of them were frustrated by their diminishing chances of entering into the government. Since the 1020s, not only the competition in the civil service examinations became stiff, the government was no longer able to assign jobs to successful candidates.<sup>13</sup> Second, in their attempts to resolve the “three excesses,” the literati were divided into two opposing camps: one supported the aggressive measures undertaken by Wang Anshi in his “New Policies,” and the other preferred the earlier Northern Song model of limited government. After the collapse of the Wang Anshi's “New Policies” in 1085, this “bureaucratic factionalism” (*dangzheng* 黨爭) gave rise to round after round of vicious persecution,

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of Cheng Yi's conformity with the *Yili* commentarial school, see “Tiyao” 提要 (Summary) of *Yichuan yizhuan*, in: *Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei 1983), 9:156; Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞, *Jingxue lishi* 經學歷史 (Taipei 1987), pp. 247-248; Qian Jibo 錢基博, *Zhouyi jieti ji qi dufa* 周易解題及其讀法 (Taipei 1965), pp. 40-42.

<sup>11</sup> See Zhang Qifan 張其凡, *Songchu zhengzhi tanyan* 宋初政治探研 (Guangzhou 1995), pp. 62-69. See also Qian Mu 錢穆, *Guoshi dagang* 國史大綱 (Hong Kong 1989), pp. 415-420.

<sup>12</sup> Qian Mu, *Zhongguo lidai zhengzhi deshi* 中國歷代政治得失 (Taipei 1974), pp. 63-84; Qi Xia 漆俠, *Wang Anshi bianfa* 王安石變法 (Shijiazhuang 2001), pp. 14-27; Ye Tan 葉坦, *Da bianfa: Song Shenzong yu shiyi shiji de gaige yundong* 大變法: 宋神宗與十一世紀的改革運動 (Beijing 1996), pp. 13-22.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the problems of the mid-Northern Song examination system, see Tao Jinsheng 陶晉生, *Bei Song shizu: Jiating, hunyin, shenghuo* 北宋士族: 家庭、婚姻、生活 (Taipei 2001), pp. 27-64; John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Albany 1995), p. 43; Thomas H.C. Lee, *Government Education and Examinations in Sung China* (Hong Kong 1985), pp. 163-171. See also Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2000), pp. 12-25.

thereby paralyzing the government of the late Northern Song.<sup>14</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, Cheng Yi struggled to overcome these two problems throughout his life.

When Cheng Yi was born in 1033, his family, based in Luoyang of present-day Henan province, had already lost its fortunes as one of the early supporters of the Song imperial court. Although Cheng Yi's father, Cheng Xiang 程昞 (1005–1090), was able to attain several central and provincial posts through the system of patronage (*yin* 蔭), the Cheng family was no longer as influential as it had been at the beginning of the Song Dynasty.<sup>15</sup> His father's frustration and disillusionment with the diminishing fortunes of his family must have left a strong impression on the young Cheng Yi. In the extant writings of Cheng Yi, there are two undated letters that he wrote for his father, who wanted to comfort his friend recently assigned to a minor post in a remote area. In these two letters, assuming the voice of his father, the young Cheng Yi told the distressed official not to be discouraged by the bleak prospect of having a minor post, but to take the challenge to be an effective official in the remote area.<sup>16</sup> As a young man, Cheng Yi saw his father and his friends struggling to give meaning to their lives after their dreams of "co-ruling the empire with the emperor" had been shattered.

At the age of fourteen, around 1047, Cheng Yi was sent, along with his elder brother Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085), to study with Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073).<sup>17</sup> Considered by later scholars as a pioneer of Neo-Confucianism, Zhou authored two influential writings on the *Yijing* – the *Taiji tushuo* 太極圖說 (An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate) and the *Yi tongshu* 易通書 (Penetrating the Book of Changes). As Zhou's students, the two Cheng brothers were asked to find out what Confucius and Yan Hui 顏回 loved to learn. According to Zhou, Confucius's favorite student Yan Hui has shown the possibility for embodying the universe by uncovering one's innate human goodness. Using this extremely self-motivated man as a model, Zhou called on his students "to desire what Yi Yin 伊尹 [a Prime Minister of the Shang Dynasty] desired and to learn what Yanzi [Hui] learned."<sup>18</sup>

Later in his life, in 1059, Cheng Yi wrote an essay, "A treatise on what Yanzi loved to learn," when he was studying with Hu Yuan 胡瑗 (993–1059) at the Imperial Academy.<sup>19</sup> That essay was in many respects a systematic response to

<sup>14</sup> On how bureaucratic factionalism affected the government of mid- and late-Northern Song, see Shen Songqin 沈松勤, *Bei Song wenren yu dangzheng - Zhongguo shidafu qunti yanjiu zhi yi* 北宋文人與黨爭——中國士大夫群體研究之一 (Beijing 1998), pp. 1-46; Luo Jiaxiang 羅家祥, *Bei Song dangzheng yanjiu* 北宋黨爭研究 (Taipei 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Zhang Liwen 張立文, *Song Ming lixue yanjiu* 宋明理學研究 (Beijing 1985), pp. 261-262.

<sup>16</sup> "Wei jiajun qing yuwen zhongyun dian hanzhou xue shu" 爲家君請字文中允典漢州學書, and "Zai shu" 再書, *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (Beijing 1981), pp. 593-596.

<sup>17</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu* 伊洛淵源錄, 4:1a; Zhang Liwen, *Song Ming lixue yanjiu* 宋明理學研究, pp. 262f.; Herbert Franke (ed.), *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden 1976), pp. 174.

<sup>18</sup> Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, *Song Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案, *Sibu beiyao* ed. (Taipei), 11:5a.

<sup>19</sup> "Yanzi suohao hexue lun" 顏子所好何學論, *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 577f.

Zhou's question. In the essay, Cheng Yi argued that the search for Yan Hui's joy was tantamount to uncovering one's root in this universe. Depicted in the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects) as an extremely self-motivated student, Yan Hui was in an uninviting situation – having only a single bamboo dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and living in a mean narrow lane.<sup>20</sup> Yet, spiritually, he was always upbeat. Everyday, he studied the classics, debated with his fellow classmates, and asked Confucius for advice. He was so self-critical that he earned a reputation for not committing the same mistake twice. For Cheng Yi, Yan Hui's joy in his brief and strenuous life derived from his broadening of his mind. He saw human destiny not in terms of material comforts or personal gains, but in terms of the full activation of innate human goodness.<sup>21</sup>

By promoting Yan Hui as the favorite student of Confucius, Cheng Yi in effect redefined the nature of Confucian learning. In early Northern Song, when large numbers of literati entered into the government after passing the civil service examinations, Confucianism was understood as the mission of the civil bureaucrats who ruled the empire with the emperor. Powerful government officials like Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052) were the exemplars of the Confucian scholar-officials. But for Cheng Yi, facing diminishing opportunity of serving the government, Confucian learning became a quest for broadening the mind. Perfecting himself in a mean desolate lane, Yan Hui personified a spiritual learning that has to be undertaken by an individual. Of course, serving the government was still important to Cheng Yi, but the starting point of the Confucian learning had changed. Following Zhou Dunyi's famous line, a Confucian scholar would still "desire what Yi Yin desired," but he would begin by "learning what Yanzi learned." Instead of aiming single-mindedly at joining the bureaucracy to rule the country with the emperor, Cheng Yi called on the Confucian literati to serve the country by setting high standards for moral cultivation and social behavior.

Unlike his older brother Cheng Hao, who earned a government post by passing the civil service examinations, Cheng Yi was never successful in the examinations. In this regard, Cheng Yi encountered the same problem that many aspiring scholar-literati were facing in mid and late Northern Song – they found their hopes to serve in the government crushed by their unsatisfactory performance in the examinations. At one point, in 1056, Cheng Yi took extra efforts to prepare for the examinations by enrolling in the Imperial Academy supervised by Hu Yuan.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, due to an unexpected cut in the number of successful candidates in 1059, Cheng Yi did not pass the palace examination (*dianshi* 殿試), which was *pro forma* under usual circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Analects* 6, lines 2, 5, 9. For a translation of these three lines, see William Theodore de Bary – Irene Bloom (comp.), *Sources of Chinese Tradition. From Earliest Times to 1600* (New York 1999), vol. 1, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 578; *Song Yuan xue'an*, 16:4b.

<sup>22</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 4:1a; *Songshi*, p. 12718; Zhang Liwen, *Song Ming lixue yanjiu*, pp. 272–273; *Sung Biographies*, p. 174.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang Liwen, *Song Ming lixue yanjiu*, p. 273.

Although Cheng Yi was not successful in the civil service examinations, he earned his fame by lecturing on the Confucian classics. For instance, when Cheng Yi was at the Imperial Academy, he and his brother impressed their uncle Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077) with their readings of the *Yijing*. According to some accounts, Zhang Zai was so impressed by the two Cheng brothers that he asked his students to study with them.<sup>24</sup> As an expert in the Confucian classics, Cheng Yi was particularly popular among a group of senior scholar-officials such as Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), Lü Gongzhu 呂公著 (1018–1089), Wen Yanbo 文彥博 (1005–1097), and Han Qi 韓琦 (1008–1075), who were known collectively as “the anti-reform group” (*jiudang* 舊黨) for their opposition to Wang Anshi’s reforms. When these officials were in power, they many times recommended Cheng Yi to serve in the court. Using various excuses, Cheng Yi rejected their recommendations and contented himself being a private scholar.<sup>25</sup>

During the “Yuanyou transformation” (*Yuanyou genghua* 元祐更化, 1086–1094), Cheng Yi finally had the opportunity to serve in the imperial court. In 1086, at the age of 53, he accepted the regent Empress Gao’s (1032–1093) offer to teach the Confucian classics to the teenage Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (r. 1086–1100). As part of the attempt of Sima Guang and Lü Gongzhu to undo Wang Anshi’s “New Policies,” Cheng Yi’s duty was to shape the future ruler’s view on governing, so that he would govern the empire based on the principles and policies prior to the Shenzong 神宗 period (1068–1085). During his tenure as the imperial teacher, Cheng Yi earned his fame as a stern moralist. For instance, he admonished the young emperor for breaking willow branches and for banqueting while still in mourning.<sup>26</sup> At court, Cheng Yi’s strict conformity to moral precepts won him both friends and foes. While the veteran statesmen like Wen Yanbo and Lü Gongzhu admired his uprightness, some of his contemporaries such as Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) hated his arrogance.

As a critic of Wang Anshi’s reform, Cheng Yi became entangled in the struggle for power between the pro-reform and the anti-reform groups. He was the head of a faction within the anti-reform group, known as the “faction from the Luoyang area” (*Luodang* 洛黨). For a considerable period of time, Cheng Yi’s faction rivaled with Su Shi’s faction, the “faction from Sichuan” (*Shudang* 蜀黨),

<sup>24</sup> *Song Yuan xue’an*, 17:1b; *Songshi*, p. 12723; *Sung Biographies*, pp. 40 and 74.

<sup>25</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 4:1b–2b; *Song Yuan xue’an*, 15:1a–b; Zhang Liwen, *Song Ming lixue yanjiu*, p. 274.

<sup>26</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 4:3a–7a; *Song Yuan xue’an*, 15:1b–2a; *Songshi*, pp. 12719f.; *Sung Biographies*, p. 176.

despite both groups opposed Wang Anshi's reform.<sup>27</sup> In 1090, when his father passed away, Cheng Yi left the imperial court amid controversy.<sup>28</sup>

In 1093, when the pro-reform group led by Cai Jing regained prominence at the Zhezong court, Cheng Yi and other members of the anti-reform group were blacklisted. Imperial edicts were issued in 1097 to destroy all of Cheng Yi's writings and to banish him to Fuzhou 涪州 in Sichuan 四川 province.<sup>29</sup> It was during his banishment in Sichuan that Cheng Yi wrote his *Yijing* commentary, the *Yichuan yizhuan*. In 1099, Cheng Yi completed the first draft of the commentary and wrote a preface to it.<sup>30</sup> This 1099 preface is commonly known as the "Yizhuan xu" (Preface to the *Commentary on the Book of Changes*), as distinguished from another preface, the "Yi xu" (Preface to the *Changes*), whose authenticity is questionable.<sup>31</sup>

During his final eight years of life, Cheng Yi continued to improve on the *Yichuan yizhuan*. Considering it as one of his major writings, he treated his *Yijing* commentary with utmost care, seldom showing it to his friends and students.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, as part of his punishment for being a "member of a faction," he had to submit all of his current writings, including the *Yichuan yizhuan*, to local officials for approval.<sup>33</sup> Although the anti-reform group briefly gained favor in 1106, Cheng Yi was already too ill to serve in the government. He died in the following year when the pro-reform group was preparing yet another round of persecution of the anti-reform group.<sup>34</sup> Fearing revenge from the pro-reform group, only five brave souls (including one appearing after dark) came to pay their final respects at his funeral.<sup>35</sup>

### Sixty-Four Hexagrams as a Continuous Process

As the editors of the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 have pointed out, one characteristic of the *Yichuan yizhuan* was Cheng Yi's uneven treatment of the *Yijing* text.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Shao Bowen 邵伯溫, *Shaoshi wenjian lu* 邵氏聞見錄 (Beijing 1983), p. 146. For studies of the factional rivalry among the "anti-reform group," see Xiao Qingwei 蕭慶偉, *Bei Song xinjiu dangzheng yu wenxue* 北宋新舊黨爭與文學 (Beijing 2001), p. 31; Shen Songqin, *Bei Song wenren yu dangzheng*, pp. 145-155.

<sup>28</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 4:7a-9a; *Songshi*, p. 12720; *Song Yuan xue'an*, 15:1b-2a; *Sung Biographies*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>29</sup> *Songshi*, p. 12720; *Song Yuan xue'an*, 15:2a; *Sung Biographies*, pp. 177-178; Zhang Liwen, *Song Ming lixue yanjiu*, p. 282.

<sup>30</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 4:9a-10a, 18a-20a; Chen Bangzhan 陳邦瞻, *Songshi jishi benmo* 宋史紀事本末 (Beijing 1977), p. 456; Yingyin Wenyuange *siku quanshu*, 9:156.

<sup>31</sup> Zhu Bokun, *Yixue zhexue shi*, vol. 2, p. 187.

<sup>32</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 4:10a, 18a-20a.

<sup>33</sup> Chen Jun, *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao*, 26:1224-1225; Li Zhi, *Huangsong shichao gangmu*, 16:356; Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, p. 366.

<sup>34</sup> *Songshi*, p. 12720; *Sung Biographies*, p. 178.

<sup>35</sup> Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 4:12b-13a.

<sup>36</sup> See the "tiyao" of *Yichuan yizhuan*, Yingyin Wenyuange *siku quanshu*, 9:156.

While he was lengthy in discussing the sixty-four hexagrams, he was extremely brief in commenting on the *Xici* 繫辭 (Appended Statements). Treating the *Xici* as if it were self-explanatory, Cheng Yi refrained from making any comment on it. What he wrote about the *Xici* was a short essay entitled "Xici."<sup>37</sup> But even in that short essay, his goal was to give a summary of the text rather than to offer an analysis. Since Cheng Yi spent the last eight years of his life to improve on the *Yichuan yizhuan*, it is clear that the brevity of his *Xici* commentary was due to a deliberate decision rather than the lack of time.

Although Cheng Yi did not say much about the *Xici* (whose two parts constitute two writings of the *Ten Wings*), he paid special attention to another piece of writing of the *Ten Wings* – the *Xugua* 序卦 (Sequence of Hexagrams). An essay explaining the meaning in the sequence of the sixty-four hexagrams, the *Xugua* usually appeared as an appendix to the *Yijing*. For instance, in Kong Yingda's 孔穎達 (574–648) *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義, the *Xugua* was placed after the sixty-four hexagrams, along with the other *Ten Wings* like the *Xici* and the *Zagua* 雜卦 (Miscellany on the Hexagrams). Such an arrangement was meant to tell the *Yijing* readers that the *Xugua* was a supplement to the classic, and readers should focus on the sixty-four hexagrams. In *Hengqu yishuo* 橫渠易說, Zhang Zai followed Kong Yingda's arrangement of the *Yijing* text and left the *Xugua* outside of the sixty-four hexagrams.<sup>38</sup> Cheng Yi, by contrast, broke the rules set down by Kong Yingda. He incorporated the *Xugua* into the main text of the *Yijing*. Hence, the *Xugua* comment on hexagram "Tun" 屯 (Difficulty at the Beginning, #3) appears at the beginning of "Tun"; the *Xugua* comment on hexagram "Meng" 蒙 (Youthful Ignorance, #4) appears at the beginning of "Meng," and so on.

The editors of *Siku quanshu* may have been right in suggesting that the Tang exegete Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚 inspired Cheng Yi to incorporate the *Xugua* into the *Yijing*.<sup>39</sup> Or perhaps Cheng Yi learnt the new arrangement from his teacher Hu Yuan, who had integrated the *Xugua* statements into his commentary on the sixty-four hexagrams.<sup>40</sup> Regardless of where Cheng Yi got the idea, the point is that by incorporating the *Xugua* into the *Yijing* text, he saw the sixty-four hexagrams as a single system wherein every hexagram is a factor.

Take, for example, hexagram "Tun" (Difficulty at the Beginning, #3). Cheng Yi began his commentary on "Tun" by quoting the *Xugua* statement,

After heaven and earth have come into existence, individual beings develop. It is these individual beings that fill the space between heaven and earth. Hence, there follows the hexagram "Tun."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Cheng Yi's essay "Xici" can be found in *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 1027–1030.

<sup>38</sup> *Zhang Zai ji* 張載集 (Beijing 1978), pp. 240–241.

<sup>39</sup> "Tiyao" of *Yichuan yizhuan*, Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu, 9:156.

<sup>40</sup> Hu Yuan, *Zhouyi kouyi* 周易口義, Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu, 8:172–448.

<sup>41</sup> The translation of the *Xugua* statement is from Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching*. Transl. by Cary F. Baynes (New York 1950–1952), p. 398, with slight modifications.



Then, he emphasized that the difficulty in “Tun” was a result of the initial interaction of heaven and earth – i.e., the mixing of the *yin* and the *yang* cosmic forces symbolized by the joining of hexagrams “Qian” 乾 (The Creative, #1) and “Kun” 坤 (The Receptive, #2).<sup>42</sup> Thus, for him, it was natural for “Tun” to follow “Qian” and “Kun,” because it symbolized a confusing and yet promising situation where the interaction of heaven and earth just took place. However, in its attempt to resolve the difficulty in the interaction of heaven and earth, “Tun” created a new set of problems, namely, how to attend to those newly created myriad beings. For this reason, Cheng Yi was not surprised to find that “Meng” (Youthful Ignorance, #4) followed “Tun.” Symbolizing a group of youngsters looking for guidance, he considered “Meng” a symbol of training and nurturing.<sup>43</sup> To drive home his point, he opened his commentary on “Meng” with a quotation from the *Xugua*,

When, after difficulties at the beginning, things have just been born, they are always wrapped at birth in obtuseness. Hence there follows the hexagram “Meng.”<sup>44</sup>

In this manner, by quoting from and elaborating on the *Xugua*, Cheng Yi showed that the sixty-four hexagrams are indeed one continuous process.

For Cheng Yi, this continuous unfolding of hexagrams is an allegory of the universe’s self-regeneration. As such, the process does not end with the last hexagram of the *Yijing*, “Weiji” 未濟 (“Incompletion,” #64). For centuries prior to Cheng Yi, many exegetes had found the ending of the *Yijing* perplexing. At first glance, the hexagram “Jiji” 既濟 (“Completion,” #63) appears to be the more logical ending of the classic. With its perfect *yin-yang* alignment and auspicious line statements, “Jiji” offers an assurance that everything is fine after one has gone through all the challenges in life. True to its name – “Incompletion” – the hexagram would provide a closure to the *Yijing*. Instead, the classic ends with the less desirable hexagram “Weiji.” The hexagram is troubled by its line alignment – its *yin* lines and *yang* lines are apparently out of order, with a *yin* line in a *yang* position and vice versa. Also true to its name – “Completion” – the hexagram line statements are filled with warnings about imminent danger and suggestions for more work to be done.<sup>45</sup>

In his attempt to explain this peculiar ending of the *Yijing*, Cheng Yi began his commentary on “Weiji” with a quotation from the *Xugua*, “[t]hings cannot exhaust themselves. Hence there follows, at the end, the hexagram of ‘Weiji.’”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 713-714.

<sup>43</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 718.

<sup>44</sup> The translation of the *Xugua* statement is from Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, p. 406, with slight modifications.

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of how Wang Bi 王弼 and Hu Yuan explained this perplexing ending of the *Yijing*, see Tze-ki Hon, “Eremitism, Sagehood, and Public Service: The *Zhouyi kouyi* of Hu Yuan,” in: *Monumenta Serica* 48 (2000), pp. 67-92.

<sup>46</sup> The translation of the *Xugua* statement is from Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, p. 714, with slight modifications.

Elaborating on this *Xugua* line, he stressed that the entire text of the *Yijing* was to describe the "continuous process of change" (*bianyi er buqiong* 變易而不窮) in this universe. Then, he argued that although a perfect hexagram in terms of its line alignment and the *yin-yang* correspondence, "Jiji" symbolized the exhaustion of things because of its lack of room for further improvement. On the contrary, in Cheng Yi's view, "Weiji" was more desirable despite its apparent problems in line alignment and line statements. There were two reasons. First, with its imperfect hexagram image and inauspicious line statements, it referred to a situation where drastic transformation was absolutely necessary. Instead of stagnation (as in "Jiji"), "Weiji" pointed to the will to change and the need for aggressive action. Second, despite its location at the end of the *Yijing*, "Weiji" was the best hexagram to encapsulate the spirit of the classic. Rather than signifying a closure, it symbolized, according to Cheng Yi, the continuous process of generation and regeneration of the universe.<sup>47</sup>

### Battle between the Great Men and the Petty People

At first glance, there seems to be nothing new in Cheng Yi's incorporation of the *Xugua* into the sixty-four hexagrams. For centuries before Cheng Yi, the *Yijing* exegetes had accepted the *Xugua* argument that the sixty-four hexagrams are one continuous process. Whether or not the exegetes incorporated the *Xugua* into the sixty-four hexagrams, they knew that the sequence of the sixty-four hexagrams was not random. For instance, in the third century, Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) called on his readers to look for one coherent meaning behind the sixty-four hexagrams. He told them: "Things do not err; they always follow a pattern. They are united with their same source, and are grouped together with their same origin."<sup>48</sup> Although in the statement Wang Bi did not specifically mention the *Xugua*, he made clear that the task for an *Yijing* commentator was to find out what lay behind the 64 hexagrams and 384 hexagram lines.

However, in one area, Cheng Yi's incorporation of the *Xugua* into the sixty-four hexagrams was significant to his eleventh-century readers. By inserting the *Xugua* statements into the sixty-four hexagrams, he presented the *Yijing* as a narrative of an incessant battle between the "great men" (*junzi* 君子) and the "petty people" (*xiaoren* 小人). For him, the sixty-four hexagrams symbolize not only the continuous process of generation and regeneration of the universe, but also the incessant tug-of-war between two groups of scholar-officials. In his mind, the balance of *yin* and *yang* in each hexagram represents the balance of power of the public-minded officials and the selfish officials in government. In some hexa-

<sup>47</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 1022.

<sup>48</sup> See Lou Yulie 樓宇烈 (annot.), *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋 (Beijing 1980), p. 591. The translation of this line of Wang Bi comes from Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (New York 1963), pp. 318-319, with modifications. For another translation, see Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York 1994), p. 26.

grams, the public-minded officials (*yang*) are in the upper hand, and in other hexagrams, the selfish officials (*yin*) are in control. Like the self-regeneration of the universe, this struggle between the great men and the petty people will never end. It continues forever as part of the human quest for a good government.

Cheng Yi described vividly this constant battle between the great men and the petty people when he commented on hexagrams "Tai" 泰 (Peace, #11) and "Pi" 否 (Stagnation, #12). In terms of the configuration of hexagram lines, the two hexagrams are completely reversed. "Tai" is made up of three *yin* (broken) lines at the top and three *yang* (straight) lines at the bottom. On the contrary, "Pi" is comprised of three *yang* lines at the top and three *yin* lines at the bottom. In the *Yijing* parlance, "Tai" possesses a "Kun" 坤 (all *yin*) upper trigram and a "Qian" 乾 (all *yang*) lower trigram; in reverse, "Pi" consists of a "Qian" upper trigram and a "Kun" lower trigram. In his commentary, Cheng Yi focused on this reversed *yin-yang* balance of force in the two hexagrams. For instance, in commenting on the *Tuan* statement of "Tai" – "Peace. The small departs, the great approaches. Good fortune. Success" – he offered the following remarks:

"The small" refers to *yin*, and "the great" to *yang*. "Depart" means departing to the upper trigram. "Approach" means approaching to the lower trigram. The *yang* cosmic force descends [to the lower trigram], and the *yin* cosmic force ascends [to the upper trigram]. When the interaction of *yin* and *yang* is harmonious and smooth, then the myriad things grow and boom. There will be peace in heaven and on earth.

Speaking in terms of human affairs, "the great" means the emperor, and "the small" the officials. With trust, the emperor assigns duties to officials; with utmost sincerity, the officials serve their ruler. When ruler and officials freely share their views, there will be peace in the imperial court. The *yang* means the great men, and the *yin* the petty people. When the great men take up position inside [the government] and when the petty people depart from [the government], the great men are in power and the petty people are under control. There will be peace in heaven and on earth.<sup>49</sup>

In the above, having briefly explained the cosmological meaning of "Tai," Cheng Yi immediately turns to its political meaning. He takes *yang* as a symbol of the great men and *yin* as a symbol of the petty people. Equating the *yin-yang* balance in a hexagram with the balance of power in the government, he sees "Tai" as a situation where the great men are in favor in the government. Located in the lower trigram (representing the political center of the government), the great men (*yang*) force the petty people (*yin*) to leave the government. Confined to the upper trigram (representing the periphery of politics), the petty people (*yin*) can do little harm to the government even though they may harbor evil thoughts. For this reason, Cheng Yi regards "Tai" as an auspicious hexagram, showing what it takes to achieve "peace in the imperial court" and "peace in heaven and on earth."

Desirable as it is, "peace in imperial court" does not last long. On the one hand, the great men cannot be in power all the time, and on the other, the petty

<sup>49</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 753.

people will not be happy about being on the periphery of politics. Hence, "Tai" turns into "Pi" as the balance of power shifts. In "Pi," the petty people (*yin*) control the government (the lower trigram), and push the great men (*yang*) to the fringes of politics (the upper trigram). In commenting on "Pi," Cheng Yi highlighted this change in the balance of power:

The *yin* and the soft occupy the lower trigram, and the *yang* and the strong settle in the upper trigram. The great men take position outside [the government], and the petty people take position inside [the government]. This is a time when the petty people are in power, and the great men are in retreat.<sup>50</sup>

For Cheng Yi, "Pi" is horrible. "Pi" is stagnant not only because of no movement in the universe, but also because of no improvement in government. With the petty people in power and the great men out of favor, the government is in shamble. For this reason, to Cheng Yi, the problem of "Pi" is not the lack of interaction between *yin* and *yang*. Rather, its problem is "missing the proper way of ruling the country" (*tianxia wu bangguo zhi dao* 天下無邦國之道) when the great men are forced to retreat to the fringes of the government.<sup>51</sup>

In the early Northern Song, the scholar-officials in the imperial court frequently evoked hexagrams "Tai" and "Pi" to discuss how the literati ruled the empire with the emperor. For instance, during the reign of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (976–997), the Grand Councilor Song Qi 宋琪 (917–996) used these two hexagrams to demonstrate to the emperor the importance of forming a close ruler-official partnership.<sup>52</sup> According to Song Qi, "Pi" and "Tai" represent two opposing situations. With a "Qian" trigram at the top and a "Kun" trigram at the bottom, "Pi" refers to a situation where the material forces of heaven and earth do not mix. By extension, it suggests the lack of communication between ruler (heaven) and officials (earth). In reverse, with a "Kun" trigram at the top and a "Qian" trigram at the bottom, "Tai" signifies a situation where the material forces of heaven and earth are intermixed. Hence, it symbolizes the close partnership of ruler and officials. To rule the empire effectively, Song Qi insisted, ruler and officials must meet frequently to share their views on governing.

In a similar fashion, during the reign of Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (997–1021), the classicist Feng Yuan 馮元 (975–1037) used "Tai" and "Pi" to underscore the need for a close ruler-official partnership. For Feng, the two trigrams of "Tai" represent the descent of *yang* and the ascent of *yin*. By extension, they symbolize an exchange of views between ruler (*yang*) and officials (*yin*) as equal partners. Subtly suggesting "Pi" (stagnation), Feng warned Zhenzong of the severe consequences if he failed to allow a free exchange of views between him and his offi-

<sup>50</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 759.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Jiang Shaoyu 江少虞, *Songchao shishi leiyan* 宋朝事實類苑 (Shanghai 1981), pp. 13–14.

cials. He reminded the emperor that if there was no frequent and frank exchange of views between ruler and officials, the empire would soon fall apart.<sup>53</sup>

In comparison, Cheng Yi's reading of "Tai" and "Pi" was substantially different from those of Song Qi and Feng Yuan. Cheng's reading focused on the struggle for power among different groups of the literati, rather than their sharing of power with the emperor. He was less concerned about whether the literati would play a pivotal role in ruling the empire as scholar-officials. But he was keenly aware that the split of the literati into opposing camps would have disastrous consequences. Certainly, he was vague as to who the great men and the petty people were. Nor was he clear about the criteria for separating one group from the other. Yet, he was certain that the division of the two groups of scholar-officials was permanent, and there was little one could do to mend the fences. Also, he was convinced that the struggle for power between the two groups of literati would last for a long time, and there was no way to tell whether the great men would eventually triumph over the petty people.

### Good Officials Make Good Government

In his times, Cheng Yi was not alone in reading "Tai" and "Pi" this way. During the "*Yuanyou* transformation" when the anti-reform group led by Sima Guang was in power, high-ranking officials like Wang Di 王覲, Sun Sheng 孫升, and Fan Chunren 范純仁 (1027-1101) cited "Tai" and "Pi" in their memorials to highlight the distinction between the great men and the petty people.<sup>54</sup> Like Cheng Yi, these scholar-officials read the two hexagrams as symbols of the constant power struggle between two types of literati. Invariably, they underscored the urgency for putting the right persons in the government, and warned Emperor Zhezong (and implicitly the regent Empress Gao) of the danger of letting the pro-reform group return to power. Granted that Cheng Yi opposed Wang Anshi's reform and he was a target of Cai Jing's revenge, it is tempting to read his *Yijing* commentary as a political statement, equating the great men with the anti-reform officials and the petty people with the pro-reform officials. But throughout the *Yichuan yizhuan*, Cheng Yi never made such a claim. Nor did he provide any example, historical or current, to clarify who these two groups of people were. It appears that Cheng Yi simply wanted his readers to be aware of this continuous struggle between these two groups of literati, without caring about who these people might be.

Yet, despite the ambiguity in the identity of these two groups of literati, it is clear that Cheng Yi regarded the selection of officials as the cornerstone of a good government. His political vision was such that he gave premium to the rule by qualified officials over the rule by legislation. Take, for instance, his commen-

<sup>53</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwen* 涑水記聞 (Beijing 1989), p. 124; Jiang Shaoyu, *Songchao shishi lei-yuan*, p. 27; Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, pp. 9821-9823.

<sup>54</sup> Li Tao 李燾, *Xu zizhi tongjian chang bian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing 1986), pp. 9263-9267, 9434f., 9757f.

tary on hexagrams "Jin" 晉 (Progress, #35) and "Mingyi" 明夷 (Darkening of the Light, #36). Similar to "Tai" and "Pi," hexagrams "Jin" and "Mingyi" are opposite. "Jin" consists of a "Kun" lower trigram (three *yin* lines) and a "Li" 離 upper trigram (one *yin* line sandwiched by two *yang* lines). "Mingyi" is the reverse. It is comprised of a "Li" lower trigram and a "Kun" upper trigram. In addition, the meanings of the two hexagrams are opposite. Whereas "Jin" refers to the celebration of progress, "Mingyi" describes the dampening of mood due to recent setback. For Cheng Yi, this pair of opposite hexagrams shows the importance of putting the right people in the government.

As a hexagram, ["Mingyi"] consists of a "Kun" upper trigram and a "Li" lower trigram. It symbolizes light hidden underneath the earth. Since "Mingyi" is the reverse of "Jin," its meaning is the reverse as well. "Jin" represents brightness and prosperity; it refers to a time when an enlightened ruler (*mingjun* 明君) brings good people into the government. "Mingyi" represents the darkening of the light; it refers to a time when an unenlightened ruler (*anjun* 暗君) brings harm to good people.<sup>55</sup>

Seemingly plain and conventional, Cheng Yi's interpretation of "Jin" and "Mingyi" had a special meaning to the mid-Northern Song reform debate. As recent studies have shown, Wang Anshi's reform presented a vision of government drastically different from that of his opponent, Sima Guang. "Their views," Peter K. Bol writes,

presented the literati with a classic choice between an activist government, which sought to manage social and economic developments in the interest of all, and a more limited government, which sought to maintain necessary public institutions at minimum expense to private interests.<sup>56</sup>

There were two key issues in this reform debate. First was the cause of the Northern Song problems. Both sides agreed that the government of the mid-Northern Song was plagued with the "three excesses" – the excessive size of the army, the excessive number of officials in the bureaucracy, and the excessive government spending. But they disagreed on what caused those problems. Whereas the supporters of Wang's reform regarded the problems as structural requiring drastic and extensive measures to correct them, the supporters of Sima Guang's reform considered the problems as minor, needing only a few changes to fix them. Second was the solution to the Northern Song problems. In the reform debate, both groups presented their methods of governing as part of "the grand tradition of the ancestors" (*zuzong zhifa* 祖宗之法). But they had different ancestors in mind. For the supporters of Sima's reform, they looked back to Fan Zhongyan's "ten-point" reform of the Renzong 仁宗 reign period (1023–1063) for justification to improve the selection of officials. For the supporters of

<sup>55</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 878.

<sup>56</sup> Peter K. Bol, "Government, Society and State," in: Robert P. Hymes – Conrad Schirokauer (eds.), *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1993), p. 128. For a comparison of the reform programs of Wang Anshi and Sima Guang, see Ye Tan, *Da bianfa*, pp. 73–108.

Wang's reform, the "New Policies" of the Shenzong era (1068–1085) were their model to bring wealth and power to the empire through the state intervention in trade and economy.<sup>57</sup>

In this regard, Cheng Yi's interpretation of "Jin" and "Mingyi" clearly shows where he stood in the mid-Northern Song reform debate. Between reforming the selection of officials and reforming the structure of government, he preferred the former to the latter. Between inheriting "the grand tradition" of Renzong and that of Shenzong, he preferred the early model to the later model. For him, a good government required a discerning ruler who knew how to put the right people in the government. Like the ebb and flow of *yin* and *yang*, the political prospect of the Song government would also be a back and forth swing between an effective government under an "enlightened ruler" (*mingjun*) and a crippled government under an "unenlightened ruler" (*anjun*). With or without drastic political restructuring, there would be no end to this swing between good and bad governments. What the literati had to do, according to Cheng Yi, was to prepare for both situations. In time of a good government, they served the government and ruled the world with the emperor (as hexagram "Jin" had suggested). In time of a bad government, they looked for other alternatives and waited for the next round of good government to come (as hexagram "Mingyi" had recommended).

### Protecting One's Interest by Forming a Faction

If indeed the battle between the great men and the petty people will last forever, then what should the literati do to prepare themselves for this incessant struggle? This question was particularly pertinent to the late eleventh-century readers of the *Yichuan yizhuan*, who were experiencing round after round of policy changes and factional politics. First, immediately following Wang Anshi's death, Sima Guang discontinued the "New Policies." During the "Yuanyou transformation," backed by the regent Empress Gao, Sima Guang and his supporters reinstated many policies prior to the Shenzong period.<sup>58</sup> Then, when the young Emperor Zhezong took power in 1094, he continued Wang's "New Policies" in the name of "carrying on a task started by one's father" (*shaoshu* 邵述). Of course, by "one's father," Emperor Zhezong meant his own father, Emperor Shenzong. With the continuation of Wang's "New Policies," he wanted to continue Shenzong's mission to build an activist government.<sup>59</sup> Following the death of Zhezong in 1100, a

<sup>57</sup> For a further discussion of the basic differences between Fan Zhongyan's "ten-point" reform and Wang Anshi's "New Policies," see Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘, *Bei Song zhengzhi gaigejia Wang Anshi* 北宋政治改革家王安石 (Shijiazhuang 2000), pp. 137–153; Qi Xia, *Wang Anshi bianfa*, pp. 54–169; Ye Tan, *Da bianfa*, pp. 27–72. On Wang Anshi's economic reform, see Paul S. Smith, "State Power and the 'Green Sprouts' Loan Policy," in: Robert P. Hymes – Conrad Schirokauer (eds.), *Ordering the World*, pp. 76–127.

<sup>58</sup> Chen Jun, *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao*, 22:986; Li Zhi, *Huangsong shichao gangmu*, 12:274–275; Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, pp. 317–337.

<sup>59</sup> Chen Jun, *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao*, 24:1081–1123; Li Zhi, *Huangsong shichao gangmu*, 13:297–300; Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, p. 341.

second round of restoring the pre-Shenzong policies appeared when three empresses ruled the country as regents. Again, like what Emperor Zhezong had done, when the young Emperor Huizong 徽宗 took control of the government in 1102, he reinstated Wang's "New Policies." For the rest of his reign, Emperor Huizong appointed Cai Jing to lead the government in implementing the "New Policies."<sup>60</sup>

This back-and-forth swing between discontinuing and reinstating Wang's "New Policies" not only brought instability to the late Northern Song government, but also divided the civil bureaucrats into pro-reform and anti-reform groups. Each time the government changed its position on Wang Anshi's "New Policies," the two groups of civil bureaucrats became more hostile to each other. As mentioned earlier, a prime example of this rising hostility between the two groups was the reformer Cai Jing's decision to take revenge against the anti-reform officials. In 1102, with Emperor Huizong's approval, he carved the names of 119 anti-reform officials on a stone tablet in front of the entrance to the imperial palace. Those whose names appeared on the stone tablet were labeled as "members of a faction," regardless of whether they were alive or dead. For those who were alive (e.g., Cheng Yi), they found their writings burnt, their ranks demoted, their jobs reassigned to remote areas, and their relatives' chances of entering into government diminished. For those already dead (e.g., Sima Guang), their descendants were not allowed to marry members of the imperial family, and had little chance to enter into the government.<sup>61</sup>

To survive in the age of factional rivalry, the advice that Cheng Yi gave to his readers was to protect their interests by forming a faction (*dang* 黨). As mentioned earlier, "Tai" consists of a "Qian" lower trigram (three *yang* lines) and a "Kun" upper trigram (three *yin* lines). In his commentary on "Tai," Cheng Yi stressed that the two trigrams of the hexagram represented two opposing factions. For him, the "Qian" lower trigram of "Tai" symbolized the faction of the great men, and the "Kun" upper trigram the faction of the petty people. To drive home his point, he focused on the first line of "Tai" where a reference was made to "pulling up ribbon grass."

To advance, the great men have to group together. It is not merely to form a group or to partake in a worthy mission, but also to allow the participants to help one another. Therefore, whether a great man or a petty person, one cannot act still. He must seek assistance from his own kind.<sup>62</sup>

For Cheng Yi, like a bundle of ribbon grass, both the great men and the petty people should act and react as a group. To advance their interests, they need to group together to lend support to one another.

<sup>60</sup> Chen Jun, *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao*, 26:1200-1159; Li Zhi, *Huangsong shichao gangmu*, 16:350-360; Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, pp. 349-360.

<sup>61</sup> Chen Jun, *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao*, 26:1215-1216; Li Zhi, *Huangsong shichao gangmu*, 16:349-360; Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, pp. 365-366.

<sup>62</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 754-755.



In the same vein, Cheng Yi read hexagrams "Bo" 剝 (Splitting Apart, #23) and "Fu" 復 (Return, #24) as symbols of groupings. With respect to their hexagram images, "Bo" and "Fu" have a great deal in common. Both consist of five *yin* lines and one *yang* line, with *yin* in overwhelming majority and *yang* in absolute minority. However, there is one important difference between the two hexagrams. In "Bo," the lone *yang* line is located at the top, having been pushed by the five *yin* lines to the edges of the hexagram. In "Fu," by contrast, the lone *yang* line is at the bottom, symbolizing a fresh force to challenge the dominance of the five *yin* lines. To explain why the solitary *yang* of "Fu" is in a better position than that of "Bo," Cheng Yi wrote,

At this stage [of "Fu"], the solitary *yang* is extremely weak. It cannot defeat the formidable group of *yin* lines to give birth to the myriad things. To carry out its task of giving birth to the myriad things, it has to wait for the arrival of other *yang* lines. Hence, [the hexagram line statement says:] "Friends come, without blame."<sup>63</sup> ... That is to say, the Way of the great men returns after a period of diminution. But at this initial stage of return, the great men will not be able to defeat the petty people. To defeat them, the great men need help from their own kind, and they have to wait for the growth of power of their own kind.<sup>64</sup>

Like his comments on "the ribbon grass" in "Tai," Cheng Yi is concerned with grouping with one's own kind. Certainly there is only one *yang* line in "Fu" and it is powerless compared to its formidable opponents. But the solitary *yang* line of "Fu" is in a better position than that of "Bo." It is located at the beginning of the hexagram, which means that it has time to wait for help. As *yin* gradually loses its control, the solitary *yang* will have the opportunity to gather force to challenge the dominance of *yin*.

### Literati's Power in Bureaucratic Factionalism

In mid-Northern Song, Cheng Yi's position on factionalism was controversial. For decades, the mid-Northern Song literati had been debating on whether they should form factions to advance their interests in the government. The debate began in 1044 when the eunuch Lan Yuanzhen 藍元震 accused Fan Zhongyan of forming a faction with Yin Zhu 尹洙 (1001–1047), Yu Jing 余靖 (1000–1064), Cai Xiang 蔡襄 (1012–1067), and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) to promote reform.<sup>65</sup> The accusation triggered a fury of writings from Fan's supporters, and thus formally opened the debate on bureaucratic factionalism.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, p. 97.

<sup>64</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 818.

<sup>65</sup> To accuse Fan Zhongyan of factionalism, Lan Yuanzhen submitted to Emperor Renzong a memorial, "Lun Fan Zhongyan jiedang zou" 論范仲淹結黨奏. See Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 *et al.* (eds.), *Quan Song wen* 全宋文 (Chengdu 1988), 14:605.

<sup>66</sup> Among the writings defending Fan Zhongyan was a series of poems composed by Cai Xiang, "Si xian yi bu xiao shi" 四賢一不肖詩. See *Cai Xiangji* 蔡襄集 (Shanghai 1996), pp. 8–11.

After decades of debate, there were at least four different perspectives on bureaucratic factionalism. The first perspective, advanced by Sun Fu 孫甫 (998–1057), held that only the petty people formed factions. For Sun, since the literati were the co-rulers of the empire, they completely identified with the emperor's interests. Hence, they had no need to form factions, and bureaucratic factionalism was a betrayal of their mission to rule the empire with the emperor.<sup>67</sup>

The second perspective, suggested by Yin Zhu, blamed the emperor for creating bureaucratic factionalism. Yin argued that the emperor created an environment for bureaucratic factionalism when he abruptly changed his policies. To cover up his inconsistency, the emperor would call those policies he supported "the views of all" (*gongmou* 公謀), and named those policies he disliked "opinions aired by a faction." Therefore, bureaucratic factionalism was the emperor's ploy to hide his policy changes.<sup>68</sup>

The third perspective, made known by Fan Zhongyan, accepted bureaucratic factionalism as part of government politics. According to Fan, bureaucratic factionalism was unavoidable because scholar-officials tended to divide themselves into groups in accordance with their common interests and shared perspectives. Hence, there was nothing intrinsically good or bad about factionalism, but a fact that rulers and scholar-officials had to live with.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, to support his view, Fan Zhongyan quoted the *Xici* statement, "Events follow definite trends, each according to its nature. Things are distinguished from one another in definite classes."<sup>70</sup> Decades before Cheng Yi wrote the *Yichuan yizhuan*, the *Yijing* had been the *locus classicus* of bureaucratic factionalism.

The fourth perspective, expressed by Ouyang Xiu, was the most complex. It built on the third perspective but also modified it. On the one hand, Ouyang agreed with Fan Zhongyan that bureaucratic factionalism was a result of the human tendency to group together to promote their interests. On the other hand, he went beyond Fan by making a categorical distinction between the "genuine faction" (*zhenpeng* 眞朋) of the great men and the "fake faction" (*jiapeng* 假朋) of the petty people.<sup>71</sup> Whereas the former was based on long-term interests and the desire to serve the common good of the empire, the latter was built on immediate concerns and personal interests. While the former would last for a long time and contribute to the well-being of the empire, the latter was subversive and would quickly disappear once the immediate needs of the participants had been fulfilled.

Despite their differences, these four perspectives were to address one fundamental issue of the Northern Song civil governance: whether the literati had the right to create their own power base to advance their interests. The heart of the matter was how the emperor and the literati viewed their partnership in co-ruling

<sup>67</sup> Sun Fu, "Bian pengdang" 辨朋黨, *Quan Song wen*, 13:267-270.

<sup>68</sup> Yin Zhu, "Lun pengdang shu" 論朋黨疏, *Quan Song wen*, 14:246-247.

<sup>69</sup> Jiang Shaoyu, *Songchao shishi leiyuan*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* The translation of the *Xici* statement is from Wilhelm, *The I Ching*, p. 280.

<sup>71</sup> Ouyang Xiu, "Pengdang lun" 朋黨論, *Quan Song wen*, 17:729-730.

the empire. From the emperor's perspective, since the civil governance was to replace the military governance of the late Tang and the Five Dynasties, he would not want to see groups of powerful civil officials to dominate the Song government like groups of military generals and aristocratic families had done to the late Tang court. By "co-ruling the empire," the emperor meant the literati's wholehearted service to him and their total subjugation to his absolute rule. For this reason, the early Northern Song emperors, especially Emperors Taizu 太祖 (r. 960-976) and Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997), took various measures to make certain that no single group of civil officials would dominate the government. One of these measures was the separation of power. A prime example was separating the administrative branch of the government from the military and the finance, such that the three agencies operated independently. Another measure was giving the censors – originally a low ranking post – the mission to monitor civil bureaucrats of all ranks. Reporting directly to the emperor, the censors became the emperor's agent to check the power of civil bureaucrats.<sup>72</sup>

For the literati, the civil governance was a partnership between equals. As the co-rulers of the empire, they felt that they had the duty and moral obligation to build a good government. For them, there was no way to build a good government without putting good people in the government, and there was no way to rule the empire effectively without diverse opinions being expressed in policy debates. Forming a pressure group with one's like-minded colleagues was therefore a measure to check the autocracy of the emperor and a means to ensure that different voices were heard. As the mid-Northern Song reform debate gradually tore the fabric of the literati community, it had become politically necessary for the scholar-officials to form factions. For the mid- and late Northern Song scholar-officials, forming a faction was not only an important part of their political game, but also a necessary measure to protect their interests when things turned bad.

Compared with the other four perspectives on bureaucratic factionalism, Cheng Yi's view was unique. On the one hand, adopting the views of Fan Zhongyan and Ouyang Xiu, he regarded bureaucratic factionalism as a necessary part of governing. However, different from Ouyang Xiu, he found no need to distinguish the "genuine factions" of the great men from the "fake factions" of the petty people. For him, great men or petty people, the literati were entitled to form their own factions to voice their opinions. As the co-rulers of the empire, they were equal to the emperor in shouldering the responsibility for building a good government. Because of that, they should have the right to form a faction to protect their interests and to ensure their voices being heard. On the other hand, like Yin Zhu, Cheng Yi took the emperor to task for allowing bureaucratic factionalism to appear. He argued that if the emperor was an "enlightened ruler," he should be able to distinguish the great men from the petty people, and to recruit only the

<sup>72</sup> For a study of various measures that early Northern Song emperors employed to check the power of civil bureaucrats, see Qian Mu, *Guoshi dagang*, pp. 393-414; Deng Guangming, "Songchao de jiafa yu Bei Song de zhengzhi gaige yundong" 宋朝的家法與北宋的政治改革運動, in: *Bei Song zhengzhi gaigejia* Wang Anshi, pp. 347-369.

great men into his government. Turning the table against the emperor, Cheng Yi considered the existence of bureaucratic factionalism as a testimony of the emperor's failure in distinguishing the good people from the bad.

### New Meaning of Co-Ruling the Empire

Implicit in Cheng Yi's support for bureaucratic factionalism was his tacit acknowledgement of the danger of imperial autocracy. As the "co-rulers" of the Song, Cheng Yi knew that the literati were in a precarious situation. On the one hand, they were the Northern Song emperors' tools to check the power of the aristocratic families and military generals. On the other hand, in the name of co-ruling the empire, they were given the opportunity to order the world and to put in practice their Confucian vision. To make certain that they were not puppets of an autocratic ruler, they needed to create a mechanism to check the power of the emperor. Hence, bureaucratic factionalism became an effective way for them to reduce the emperor's power and to protect their right to dissent. As Alan T. Wood has found in his study of the Northern Song commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, many Northern Song literati "hoped to appropriate for themselves the emperor's power through their dominance of the government bureaucracy."<sup>73</sup> Would it not be a good idea to dominate the government bureaucracy by putting one's like-minded colleagues in the government and protecting them with one's bureaucratic power?

Thus, in the 1090s and 1100s, when writing the *Yichuan yizhuan* at his exile home in Sichuan, Cheng Yi was re-examining the literati's role in the age of factional politics. By re-defining the meaning of the literati to rule the empire with the emperor, he made something good out of the eleventh-century factional politics. In emphasizing the right of the literati to form factions and their duty to transform society through moral education, he gave the educated elite a new identity. This new identity was quite different from the one half a century ago. In the 1040s, the literati saw themselves primarily as civil bureaucrats who run the government for the emperor. Believing that they were co-ruling the empire with the emperor, the great reformer Fan Zhongyan called on the literati to be "the first in worrying about the world's troubles and the last in enjoying its pleasures."<sup>74</sup> In the 1090s, the literati had a broader understanding of "co-ruling the empire with the emperor." "The failure of Wang Anshi," William Theodore de Bary observes,

had demonstrated that [the ideals of the sage-kings] could only be approached through a long process of education and moral reform, which would prepare the people to accept such changes and bring about a personal reformation in their rulers.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Alan T. Wood, *Limits to Autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a Doctrine of Political Rights* (Honolulu 1995), p. x.

<sup>74</sup> Fan Zhongyan, "Yueyang lou ji" 岳陽樓記, in: *Fan Wen Zheng Gong ji* 范文正公集 (Taipei 1986), p. 95.

<sup>75</sup> William Theodore de Bary, "A Reappraisal of Neo-Confucianism," in: Arthur F. Wright (ed.),

Thus, for Cheng Yi and his contemporaries, gaining entry into the government was only a small part of the civil governance. In their minds, the civil governance was a long process of social and educational reform that would train leaders to serve the country in different capacities. As the new men of letters, the mid- and late Northern Song literati would first establish their footing in society as scholar-literati, and then, when political circumstances allowed, serve in government as scholar-officials. They wanted to make sure that, whether the emperor was "an enlightened ruler" or "an unenlightened ruler," they would still be able to partake in ruling the empire in a manner befitting their Confucian learning.

### 《伊川易傳》與北宋黨爭

程頤《伊川易傳》體大思精，幾百年來，被公認為易注中的佳作。惟至今《易傳》與北宋中期激烈黨爭的關係，學者還沒有詳細考察。本文從程頤的家世，北宋文人政府的演變，及新舊黨爭三方面探討程頤對《易經》的詮釋。本文指出，程頤除了對《易經》經文和卦像有新穎看法之外，他對北宋文人政府的發展也有獨特的見解。

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*Studies in Chinese Thought* (Chicago 1953), p. 105. In *Song Ming lixue gailun*, pp. 30-32, Qian Mu also makes a similar argument by distinguishing the early Northern Song intellectual scene (*Songxue zhi chu* 宋學之初) from the late Northern Song intellectual scene (*zhongqi Songxue* 中期宋學).