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Huang Zongxi (Huang Chung-hsi)

Lynn STRUVE

Huang Zongxi (also known as Huang Lizhou, 1605–1695) was a vastly learned man whose scholarly accomplishments stand out even in a century notable for intellectual giants in China. He left to us broadly informed, incisive writings in almost every field that was of major interest to scholars in his day—history (especially the history of Confucian learning), classicism, governance, (historical) geography, literary appreciation, (mathematical) astronomy, and calendrics. It was indeed unfortunate that his life from young adulthood to middle age coincided with the terrible events and nationwide disruptions that attended the fall of the Ming dynasty and the establishment of the Qing. But it was fortunate, in a backhanded way, that the effect of those troubles on Huang was to steel his dedication to certain modes of thought and inquiry, and to ensure that he would spend his maturity using those modes in extraordinary scholarly productivity, rather than in a bureaucratic career.

The foundation of Huang's outlook on life was the leadership of his father, Huang Zunsu, a prominent Ming official, in the Donglin partisan opposition to the arrogation of imperial power by eunuchs in the early 1620s. That Zongxi thus received early initiation to

the trench warfare of reform politics, and that his father was put to death in prison for persistently struggling against the eunuch faction, dictated that he would remain strongly, bitterly concerned about politics for the rest of his life. This concern soon took the form of active participation in the Fushe reform movement, which succeeded the decimated Donglin. Then, with the Manchu-Qing invasion of 1644, Huang wholeheartedly joined the Ming loyalists' struggle in Zhejiang Province and its offshore islands and did not give up overt or covert resistance to the Qing until the middle 1650s. Thereafter Huang evaded recurrent pressure to enter Qing officialdom, and, while his attitude toward the new dynasty seems to have softened with time, he cooperated with the Qing government, through private channels, only in matters concerning the compilation of the standard history of the Ming dynasty. Far from being eremitic after the Qing conquest, however, Huang was repeatedly engaged to lecture at various sites in Zhejiang, was invited to use the libraries of famous bibliophiles, and was consulted personally and through correspondence by other leading intellectuals of his day. He was keenly attentive to relations between politics and academics, especially

the competition among different schools of thought from the late Ming for favor with the early Qing court. Most of Huang's major writings can be seen as attempts to dissuade scholars and scholar-officials from accepting as orthodox ideas and interpretations that he had come to reject as a young adult during the Ming, but which he saw gaining ground in his later years under Qing rule.

Another fateful factor in Huang's life course as a scholar was the fact that his father, when facing probable execution, placed Huang's schooling in the hands of a close compatriot in the Donglin movement, the renowned teacher Liu Zongzhou, an outstanding expositor of the school of Confucian thought that in Ming-Qing times was called the "learning of mind" (*xinxue*). Huang Zongxi thus became one of Liu's most devoted disciples, studying with him for almost twenty years, from 1626 until Liu's martyrdom by suicide in 1645. After a decade-long hiatus, during which Huang learned mainly from adversity, in the middle 1650s he began to deepen his understanding of Liu's philosophy through a careful study of his deceased mentor's writings. From 1665 through 1670 Huang produced several works illuminating Liu Zongzhou's life and thought, and he lectured on Liu's teachings for study societies in Ningbo and especially at the Zhengren Academy in Shaoxing, which was established in memory of Liu. Furthermore, in 1676 Huang completed the peerless *Mingru xuean* (Cases in Ming Confucianism), which give Liu the seat of honor at a veritable banquet of rich Confucian learning from the Ming period.

Huang was somewhat supercilious in claiming to be the only surviving student who truly understood Liu Zongzhou's teachings, and—exemplifying a much-changed generation of intellectuals—he did not replicate Master Liu in his general scholarly profile. This has led some commentators to cast aspersions on Huang's status as Liu's successor in Confucian philosophy. However, careful analysis in recent studies has shown that Huang indeed intimately understood even Liu's most esoteric points and articulated them faithfully. Differences in Huang's teachings are mainly a matter of emphasis; they arose because Huang's identification of the current main challenge to valid Confucian learning differed from Liu's identification in his day. We can see both Huang's fidelity to Liu Zongzhou's philosophy and those significant shifts in emphasis principally in Huang's disagreements with certain of Liu's other surviving pupils, in the *Mengzi shishuo* (My teacher's teachings on the Mencius) and in the *Mingru xuean*.

Among Liu's close disciples had been his son, Liu Shao, who in 1653 initiated collaborative efforts to edit and publish his father's collected works. Huang

Zongxi refused to go along with Liu Shao's desire to expurgate passages in which his father had directly disagreed with founding figures of the Cheng-Zhu school. Later, in 1669, Huang declined to write a preface for a synopsis of Liu Zongzhou's teachings prepared by another of Liu's principal disciples, Yun Richu, apparently because Yun obscured the very matter that Huang thought not only distinguished Liu most clearly from Zhu Xi but also made him a crucially reconstructive critic of Wang Shouren (Wang Yangming): the reality of primary will (*yi*) as the cardinal capacity in the heart-mind (*xin*), and the reflective and reflexive functioning of human nature (*xing*). More extensively documented are Huang's objections to the ideas of a scholar who had studied only briefly with Liu, but who wrote a record of Liu's oral teachings (partly from materials previously supplied by one of the master's long-time disciples, who had since died), and who credited Liu with setting him on the path of Confucian moral-ethical learning—Chen Que. To cite just one telling point, in works on the human nature and on the *Daxue* (Greater learning, or Great learning), Chen argued that the goodness of inborn human nature is developmental, that it can be known to us and brought to full fruition only through the exercise of our talents and intelligence in learning and in carrying out just, humane acts. Huang Zongxi countered that Chen wrongly gave priority to outward efforts while slighting the effort that must, as a prerequisite to true good action, be applied in realizing the source of goodwill, the always fully good operation of human nature as heart-mind (*xin*). If the source of inner strength in heart-mind and the role of primary will as the self-guide and self-control (*zhuzai*) of heart-mind is not directly apprehended, Huang wrote, then one might as well say that from our bad behavior we know our human nature to be bad.

In the *Mengzi shishuo*, Huang takes advantage of the relative congeniality of the *Mencius* toward the "school of mind" classical interpretation to repeatedly batter Zhu Xi. Zhu is taken to task for splitting the properly unitary principle *li* (principle, pattern) and *qi* (ether, material force), creating a dichotomy between human nature and its *xin* function, and devaluing *qi* and *xin* in ways that led to misconstructions of moral and spiritual effort (*gongfu*). In this work, Huang purported to set forth Liu Zongzhou's teachings based on the *Mencius* because Liu himself, though he wrote treatises on all the other Four Books, had never done so for the *Mencius*, whose interpretation so readily reveals differences between the Cheng-Zhu and Yangming philosophies. Indeed, Liu had never stressed his differences with the Cheng-Zhu school, having been

more concerned to correct crucial problems within the Yangming tradition.

In the *Mingru xuean*, also, can be seen Huang's concern to remove his mentor farther from Cheng-Zhu teachings than Liu Zongzhou had cared to do for himself, as well as a tendency to portray adherents of Cheng-Zhu whom he respected (such as Gao Panlong and Gu Xiancheng) as having really belonged to the Yangming camp. The work as a whole is unique in the long history of Chinese sectarian "genealogies" for its keenly discerning, capacious examination of different points of view among thinkers and its presentation of itself as a resource for readers in making up their own minds on philosophical issues. Nevertheless, it also unmistakably advances Huang's own vision of Ming Confucianism as having lived for and through Yangming learning and having reached its perfection in Liu Zongzhou. Admiration of the *Mingru xuean*, especially in the twentieth century, has been such that present-day scholars cannot easily envision Ming Confucian thought in other ways.

Huang was moved to adopt a more trenchant attitude toward Cheng-Zhu learning because the healthy revitalization of that tradition, which Liu Zongzhou had seen in his time, had by the 1660s and 1670s turned into aggressive dogmatism. Huang observed that this dogmatism, vehemently inimical to the school of mind, was gaining imperial favor through the influence of such highly placed officials as Xiong Cili and was growing among scholars at large through the influence of such well-known essayists as his erstwhile friend Lu Liuliang. Huang's response was not only to point out, ever more vigorously, flaws in Zhu Xi's ontology, epistemology, and ethics, but also to rescue from obscurity Liu Zongzhou's focus on primary will in the good functioning of *xin*, because he regarded that as the key corrective to problems which had been weakening the Yangming position.

Also broadly evident in Huang Zongxi's writings is a general emphasis on the ontological priority of *qi* as the stuff of all phenomena, and the importance of the most refined activity of *qi*, the *xin* function of the human nature, as the medium in which regularity (*li*, pattern or principle) appears. In this, Huang does not depart from Liu Zongzhou, but he presents with more distinctness than we usually see in Liu (who was more concerned with moral self-cultivation than moral ontology) differences from the Cheng-Zhu tradition, which gives priority to a reified *li* and identifies that with a separate, fixed *xing* (human nature). Huang's tendency to underscore the primacy of *qi* and *xin*, is related, of course, to his opposition to the dogmatism of Zhu Xi's followers. But his emphasis on *qi* as the

stuff of the universe and his tendency to refer to *xin* in general terms, without probing its finer workings, also evinces the marked outward thrust of Huang's inquisitiveness, compared with the intense interiority of Liu Zongzhou's contemplative style of exerting conscientious effort. Quintessential here are the leading statements in Huang's original preface to the *Mingru xuean*:

Only *qi* fills heaven and earth. Its transformations are unfathomable; it cannot but take myriad forms. *Xin* (heart-mind) has no substance-in-itself (*benti*); the extent of its effort (*gongfu*) is its fundamental being (*benti*). So, to exhaust [our understanding of] *li* (principle, pattern) is to exhaust the myriad manifestations of *xin*, not the diverse manifestations of myriad things.

Where Liu's effort had been mainly to realize the glow of primary will within, Huang's effort is distinctly to test the resonance of *xin* with the endless permutations of *qi* in the world.

Having given the *qi* of *xin* such a range of inquiry in which to get lost, Huang naturally found essential Liu Zongzhou's teaching about *zhuzai*, the capacity of *xin* for self-control and self-guidance. Liu had used *zhuzai* (reminiscent of Xunzi's concept of *xin*) to reinforce his own concept of the absolutely subjective self-reliance of primary will, independent of ordinary experiences and volition. Huang understood that, but he tended to use the sense of *zhuzai* to advocate having a *zongzhi*, a main idea or aim, in all forms of inquiry. Since a valid *zongzhi* could be developed only by opening one's mind completely, Huang regarded it as the true antithesis of bias, which is born of ignorance and self-interest. In this way Huang adapted a philosophy of ethical autonomy to a need for conceptual and modal control in empirical study.

By practicing what he preached, Huang became noted for his ability to penetrate complex issues with lucidity and to mine mountains of material for gems of insight. In all his major works, his *zongzhi* is clear. For instance, in the *Mingyi daifang lu* (De Bary, trans., *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince*), Huang's most widely read work in the twentieth century, he draws on the best and boldest ideas of the Donglin and Fushe movements of his youth to formulate the most compelling critique of autocratic governance that appeared in the later imperial era—at a time when the Manchu-Qing conquest state was adding yet another tier to the usual Chinese hierarchy of dictatorial political power. In his enormous anthologies of Ming prose literature—the *Ming wenan*; the *Ming wenhai*; and a distillation from the latter, the *Mingwen shoudu*—as well as in a great deal of literary criticism, Huang pro-

moted the expressive theories characteristic of the late-Ming Gonggan school of writing, which can be seen as an extension of Yangming thought into literary activity. This was at a time when archaism, with its emphasis on imitating past models, was regaining dominance. And Huang's very important but little-studied *Yixue xiangshu lun* (On image and number in studies of the Classic of Changes) offered a devastating critique of various common numerological and associational theories about meanings in the *Yijing* that he felt were not firmly grounded in the text as a document of ancient life and thought, rational mathematics, or empirical knowledge. He attacked with special vigor the abstract numerical and symbolic systems of the Song scholar Shao Yong, which had become part of *Yijing* orthodoxy through the auspices of Zhu Xi. Again, Huang's work was written just as the young Kangxi emperor was being inculcated with Zhu Xi's approach to the *Classic of Changes*.

Although Huang's enterprise to uphold the persuasiveness of Yangming learning ultimately failed in the early Qing period, he succeeded eminently in adapting certain strengths of the school of mind—the immanent monism of *qi*, the emphasis on the power and range of *qi* as *xin*, and faith in the power of *xin* for self-regulation—to the needs of a more pragmatic generation and the interests of an age that valued broad learning and textual-empirical research.

See also Confucianism: Ming; Liu Zongzhou.

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Hui Shi (Hui Shih)

Whalen LAI

Hui Shi (380–305 B.C.E.), one of the two major logicians of the school of names, was the chief minister to King Hui of Wei. Ideologically, Hui was the reverse of the logician Gongsun Long but was a like-minded friend of Chuang-tzu, who mourned when Hui died.

Whereas Gongsun Long was known for “separating hard and white,” Hui Shi was remembered for “equalizing semblance and dissemblance.” Gongsun had uncovered very clear, logical differences (*X* is not

like non-*X*); Hui Shi would reverse or erase them. As scholars of names (*ming*), they had both rejected the correspondence theory of language, which assumes that the name “horse” describes the animal horse (i.e., is a sign serving as a direct reference); instead, they chose to explore a sign pointing to or networking with other signs (intralinguistic sense). But Gongsun Long came up with a good logic of sense, while Hui Shi exposed that as the “non-sense” of logic.