

Scholarly Autonomy and Political Dissent of Local Academies in the Early Ch'ing

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In its over nine hundreds years of history, local academies in China became the most powerful educational and scholarly institutions. Academies (*shu-yüan*) were founded in the tenth-century Sung China in increasing number by families and communities to provide for their children's education, which was unavailable from the government. By the twelfth century academies developed into influential teaching and

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learning institutions, where scholars were trained and intellectual issues were discussed. Academies grew in size and in importance in subsequent dynasties. To date there is still no comprehensive survey of academies. According to one estimate, there were 29 academies in the Northern Sung (960-1125), 140 in the Southern Sung (1126-1279)^① (or 397 according to another estimate),^② 227 in the Yüan dynasty (1280-1367). Then came the dramatic increase in the Ming (1368-1643) (1,239) and in the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911), which had about two thousand academies.^③ The number itself does not tell the whole story of the academies. Most of them are small institutions that exist for a short period of time. Moreover, in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties a great number of academies are in fact state schools in disguise. If we only focus on academies that had country-wide reputation in history, their number is relatively small. For example, the official history of the Ming dynasty, the *Ming shih*, mentions about 40 academies (out of the estimated total of 1,239). Furthermore, if we limit our study to those academies engaging in *chiang-hsüeh*, a distinct style of lecture and discussion on philosophical and moral issues, the number probably is even smaller. The *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* (Case Studies of Ming Confucianism), for instance, contains references to slightly more than 20 academies.^④ In this paper I will limit myself to

① Meskill, pp. 12, 13.

② Ch'en Yüan-hui, 1981, p. 30.

③ Ch'en Yüan-hui, 1981, pp. 52, 65-6, 90.

④ This paper represents the first installment of my on-going research on academies in the first ninety years of the Ch'ing dynasty (from 1644 to 1733). The cut-off date was the year when Yung-cheng emperor issued the decree promulgating academies, a watershed event ushering in the period of increasing state control of the academies.

discussing the revival of academies engaging in *chiang-hsüeh* in the early years of the Ch'ing dynasty. I especially draw on the experiences of the Ming loyalists, who became leading scholars and great propagators of Neo-Confucian thought as well as "Chinese" cultural identity (vis-a-vis the Manchu) in the new regime that they didn't like very much. What I will discuss is only an aspect of the phenomenon of local academies, but, in my opinion, an important one as far as intellectual history is concerned.

The term *shu-yüan* encompasses several different kinds of educational establishments. In the Ming there were increasing numbers of academies that were built and run by the government. These were no different from prefectural or district schools, except in names. Moreover, some academies were entirely devoted to preparing students for examinations. These in fact became supplemental schools serving students who could not get into the prefectural schools or chose not to go there. As a general rule, academies offer a better quality of education than the public schools. However, *shu-yüan* owes its reputation to the philosophy-oriented institutions. The translation of *shu-yüan* as "una academia di letterati" has been credited to Matteo Ricci who recognized "philosophical discussion" (*chiang-hsüeh*) as the main characteristic of academies when he visited the White Deer Hollow Academy in Chiang-hsi in 1595.^⑤

Of various kinds of academies with different functions and purposes, it is difficult to designate which is public, which is private. Some are clearly private in the sense that they are established and run by private individuals. But most come into existence or are sustained by a combination of public support and private efforts, as

^⑤ Meskill, p. x.

expected in traditional Chinese society where public and private interests usually intersect and intertwine. Most *chiang-hsüeh* academies can be regarded as private, but some are clearly officially sponsored.^⑥ Therefore, I prefer to use the term “local academy” and stay away from the thorny issue of private vs. public interests.

Academies and thought enjoy a symbiosis relation. Since the twelfth century, academies were the springboard by which Neo-Confucian ideas and values were spread to the countryside and to the commoners. Often a certain academy came into existence in order to propagate a certain brand of Neo-Confucian thought and accordingly came to ruin because the support for its ideas had run out. However, academies served a multiple functions in the local community, including educational, social, moral, and religious. In the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries local academies witnessed a tremendous growth, inspired by Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528) and Chan Jo-shui (1466-1560) and their followers. At the end of the dynasty, several leading academies sprang into the forefront of politics, the most celebrated one being the Tung-lin Academy. Not every academies chose to step into the limelight of politics, but unfortunately academies in general suffered the ramifications of political actions taken by the Tung-lin. There were four persecutions of academies in the late Ming, in 1537, 1538, 1579, and 1625. The last led to the destruction of the Tung-lin Academy. But government suppressions aside, the *chiang-hsüeh* tradition was in steady decline, as the Wang Yang-ming school, which did

⑥ Kuan-chung Academy, where Li Yung lectured, can be considered as a public academy because it was renovated by a local official and it maintained a close tie with the local government. How did it stand in relation to the imperial authority is a question needs to be studied.

much to bring education and Neo-Confucian values to the common people through academies, ran out of steam. In 1622 the White Deer Hollow Academy began to offer the "academy examinations" (*shu-yüan k'e-chü*), linking it directly to the examination system.^⑦

Transition

It appears that the traumatic transition from the Ming to the Ch'ing did not inflict serious damages to the academies, with the exception of the usual casualties of wars and peasant rebellions. There seems to be few noticeable interruptions in the operations of several nationally well-known academies, whose records are available. Possibly due to the crisis situation, government intervention of academies seemed to be minimum too. Probably many academies were simply left languished for some years. But when the revival came, it arrived with a vengeance. As far as I know, almost all scholars of Chinese academies suggest that academies in the early Ch'ing remained dormant, due to strict government control and intimidatating persecutions of the intellectuals.^⑧ My research indicates just the opposite. The speed and frequencies of renovating existing academies, the extensiveness of building new ones, and the degree of the freedom with which they were allowed to operate seemed to be quite remarkable.

The initial policy of non-intervention by the Ch'ing government undoubtedly helped to facilitate the renovation of the academies. The

^⑦ Meskill, pp. 150-1.

^⑧ Okubo Eiko in *Min Shin jidai shoin no kenkyū* (p. 61) divides the history of academies in the Ch'ing into the following three periods: 1) 1644-1733, period of stagnation due to political suppression; 2) 1733 to the end of Ch'ien-lung reign(1820), the period of the greatest expansion; 3) Tao-kuang and Kuang-hsü reigns, the period of decline.

first emperor Shun-chih (r. 1644-1661) in 1652 declared that no new academy should be built but permitted the existing ones to be renovated.^⑨ This allowed precious breathing room for academies to recuperate. Even the infamous Tung-lin Academy, which was ordered dismantled tile by tile and stone by stone in the late Ming, but came back to life shortly after Wei Chung-hsien (d. 1628) died, was allowed to be renovated in the early Ch'ing. Since the Tung-lin Academy was associated with political activism and later with Ming loyalists, the fact that it was permitted to carry on the *chiang-hsüeh* activities says something about the degree of tolerance in the early Ch'ing.

The White Deer Hollow Academy did not suffer any significant damage in the dynastic transition. It probably had something to do with the fact that the last two directors of the academies, Liao Wen-ying and Li Ming-chün, surrendered to the Ch'ing. Both later served the new regime. Li Ming-chün even was appointed as the Prefect of Nan-k'ang and restored the academy in 1670,^⑩ which had been renovated twice already.^⑪

The White Deer Hollow Academy was a good example for how soon academies had bounced back. Earlier when Huang Tsung-hsi (1610-1695) visited the academy in 1660, he reported that the buildings were in good condition.^⑫ In the Ch'ing it underwent three major renovations in less than forty years. Later in the K'ang-hsi reign (r. 1662-1722) several halls were added. The Academy seemed to

⑨ Ch'en Yüan-hui, 1981, p. 89; *Chung-kuo ku-tai chiao-yü shih-liao hsi-nien*, p. 750.

⑩ Li Ts'ai-tung, 1989, p. 131.

⑪ Li Ts'ai-tung, 1989, p. 178.

⑫ Li Ts'ai-tung, 1989, p. 130.

have some leeway in selecting its directors. It was mandatory by this time for the governor or prefect to make important personnel decisions for the academy, a practice started in the late Ming to tighten the control on the academies. In 1652 a prefect of Nan-k'ang, Hsü Shih-yin, recommended Fang I-chih (1611-1671) and his step-father Fang Wen (1612-1669) to be the director and lecturer respectively of the White Deer Hollow Academy. Both were great scholars, but they were also dedicated Ming loyalists. Unfortunately, Fang I-chih had already taken the tonsure and become a Buddhist monk.¹³ While more study undoubtedly is needed to decide the extent of government control and manipulation of local academies in this period,¹⁴ this seems not to be an isolated instance. My research suggests that the control and manipulation were not quite stringent or sophisticated compared to those imposed in the eighteenth century and that the enforcement of government regulations were not effective in all cases all the time. This at least can explain in part why the leading Ming loyalists were able to organize study societies or to lecture in academies with seemingly no government intervention at all.

The resumption of civil service examinations undoubtedly spurred the revival of academies. Many academies in the early Ch'ing incorporated preparations for the examinations in their curriculum. In the Nan-chang Academy, for example, Yen Yüan (1635-1704) set up

¹³ Li Ts'ai-tung, 1989. p. 178. While becoming a monk might give Fang more freedom, it would be difficult for him to accept the appointment. See Willard Peterson and Yu Ying-shih.

¹⁴ Alexander Woodside discusses the state's control and manipulation of academies in the eighteenth century in an article in *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*. Although more research is needed, I think his observation does not apply to academies in the first two reigns of the Ch'ing.

six subjects of studies, the civil service examinations being one of them.¹⁵ But, a more important reason was the reorientation of the commitment of the Ming loyalists to teaching and scholarship. People like Huang Tsung-hsi had to come to terms with the harsh political reality. Having given up the hope of restoring the Ming imperial house, he put his reform ideals in the *Ming-i tai-fang lu* (A Plan for the Prince), and devoted the rest of his life to writing and lecturing in the academies. The prince whom he awaited never arrived, but the academies flourished instead.

The *chiang-hsüeh* academies reached the apex in the later years of the K'ang-hsi reign.¹⁶ Shortly after the Yung-cheng (r. 1723-1735) emperor ascended the throne, the emperor issued a decree for the promulgation of academies in 1733. The decree, marking a turning point in the history of academies, called for an academy to be built in the capital of each province with government money and the appointment

¹⁵ Yen Yüan considered the study of the eight-legged essays and li-hsüeh to be compromises to reality. He would eventually remove these two subjects from the curriculum when the appropriate time comes. See his "Chang-nan shu-yüan chi" quoted in Ch'en Tsu-wu, "Ts'ung Kuan-chung, Chang-nan erh shu-yüan kan Ch'ing ch'u te Kuan-hsüeh yü pei-hsüeh" (The Kuan-chung school and the Northern school in the early Ch'ing seen from Kuan-chung and Chang-nan Academies) in *Yüeh-lu shu-yüan i-ch'ien ling i-shih chou-nien chi-nien wen-chi*, vol. 1, Ch'ang-sha: Hunan ch'u-pan she, 1986, p. 308.

¹⁶ According to Okubo's statistics in *Min Shin jidai shoin no kenkyu* (p. 123), the number of new academies at the end of K'ang-hsi reign reached 269, far more than the Yung-cheng reign. If one includes all types of academies, there has been a steady increase in number from K'ang-hsi reign on, and the number peaked in Ch'ien-lung reign. However, the *chiang-hsüeh* academies reached the apex in the K'ang-hsi reign and declined since then, partly because textual study became the dominant scholarship.

of the director of the academy to be charged to the governor.¹⁷ Step by step the government tightened its rein on the academies.

Looking from historical perspective, the life of the leading academies is punctuated by the cycle of revival, neglect, decay, and more revival. Their survival and prosperity depended on local initiatives and supports, while their demise more often than not was the consequence of neglect and decay, rather than governmental proscription. Like great scholarly institution elsewhere, academies often identified themselves with great teachers and rose and fell with them.

Revival

With the collapse of the Ming in 1644, some intellectuals decided to die with the dynasty and became martyrs, while others continued to live under the new regime but declared their intention not to serve the Manchu government. The most celebrated representative of the former is Liu Tsung-chou (1578-1645), who starved himself to death. Those who survived had available to them several options for making their determination known, by becoming a monk (like Fang I-chih), a Taoist (like Fu Shan, 1607-1684), or a recluse (like Li Yung, 1627-1705), or simply by declining persistently government appointments (such as Huang Tsung-hsi). There were many more scholars who accepted the Manchu regime with resignation and there were plain collaborators (like Ch'ien Ch'ien-i, 1582-1664).¹⁸ Even the most die-hard

¹⁷ For the imperial decree, see *Ch'ing shih-lu* (Veritable Records of the Ch'ing), ch. 127 (pp. 665-555), Beijing: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1985.

¹⁸ Wakeman discusses the spectrum of reactions of Ming survivors, from nostalgia, guilt, repentance, and rebellion in ch. 15 of *The Great Enterprise*.

patriots like Huang Tsung-hsi, who continued to carry out military resistance against the Manchu after the fall of the Ming and followed the succeeding Ming courts all over southeast China, had to give up any hope of restoring the Ming empire when the last legitimate successor to the Ming throne was killed in 1662. They faced with the unpleasant reality of having to live a compromised live.

These Ming loyalists, however, did not waste their lives away in remote mountain caves. On the contrary, they remained active in scholarly works and involved with social issues. Even after becoming a monk in 1650, Fang I-chih "received a stream of visitors"^{①⑨} in Ch'ing-yüan Temple (Chiang-hsi) and took time out to fulfill his filial duty of mourning for the death of his father (1655).^{②⑩} All of his major works were completed or published in this period. His "withdrawal" turned out not only to be a means to "escape retribution from the Ch'ing for participating in the southern Ming courts,"^{②⑪} but an opportunity to rededicate himself to scholarship for the sake of posterity. It was indeed a mixed blessing, at least for our sake. In many ways Fang I-chih was a typical Ming loyalist and one finds parallels in his mid-life crisis in the careers of many others like Sun Ch'i-feng (1584-1675), Li Yung, Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682), Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692), and Huang Tsung-hsi. In their "retirement," Sun Ch'i-feng, Li Yung and Huang Tsung-hsi were particularly enthusiastic about *chiang-hsüeh* in local academies or in classics study

①⑨ Willard Peterson, "Fang I-chih: Western Learning and the 'Investigation of Things,'" p. 375.

②⑩ Chang Li-wen and Mo Ming-che, eds., *Chung-kuo ku-tai chu-ming che-hsüeh chia p'ing-chuan*, vol. 3, part II, p. 721, written by Mao Huai-hsing and Chin Lung-te.

②⑪ Willard Peterson, p. 375.

societies, and are credited with the revival of academies and scholarship in the early Ch'ing.

Like Fang I-chih, Sun Ch'i-feng was a political activist who withdrew from society when the Ming dynasty ended. He earned his courageous reputation for opposing the eunuch minister Wei Chung-hsien. His later years were entirely devoted to teaching and writing. He became a major proponent of Chu Hsi's thought in his times. As a farmer-scholar, he led a self-sufficient life, resisting attempts to recruit him for government office.²²

Coming from a very modest background, Li Yung did not have a formal education, nor attained any degree in the examination system. However, he managed to teach himself the Confucian classics, Buddhist, Taoist and Neo-Confucian texts. Eventually he achieved the high reputation of scholarship that was equal to those of Huang Tsung-hsi and Sun Ch'i-feng.²³ As the person who revived the six-hundred year tradition of Kuan-chung school, the strength of his thought lies in breaking away from the influences of the Wang Yang-ming school. In 1670 he was invited by the prefect of Ch'ang-chou (Chekiang) to give lectures there. Consequently, he lectured at Tao-nan Academy, Tung-lin Academy and Yen-lin Academy,²⁴ among other places, and had met with great success everywhere he went. Audience at his

²² Chiang Fan, *Sung-hsüeh yüan-yüan chi*, p. 3.

²³ Praised by Ch'üan Tsu-wang in the tomb inscription he wrote for Li Yung. See *Chi-ch'i t'ing chi*, ch. 12, quoted in *Chung-kuo ku-t'ai chu-ming che-hsüeh-chia p'ing-chuan*, 2nd series, vol. 4, p. 517.

²⁴ Chiang Fan, *Sung-hsüeh yüan-yüan chi* (The Origins of the Sung School), Shanghai: Shanghai shu-tien, 1983, p. 5. The Yen-lin Academy was established especially for him. See Yang Hsiang-k'uei, *Ch'ing-ju hsüeh-an hsing-pien*, vol. 1, p. 203.

lectures was said to exceed several thousand people.²⁵ In 1673 when Kuan-chung Academy was restored, he was invited to be the chief lecturer. After repeatedly declining, he finally accepted the invitation. The reception for him at the academy was overwhelming, where nearly a thousand people attended his lectures.²⁶ However, he decided to leave after teaching only for three months because the governor of Shan-hsi was persistently recommending him for office. Even in such a brief period of time, Li Yung was able to make a long-lasting mark on the history of the academy, leaving behind a memorable legacy including the rules of association (*hui-yüeh*) and a curriculum.²⁷

In his well-received *chiang-hüeh* activities, Li Yung discussed almost exclusively philosophical issues and moral concerns.²⁸ It would seem then that he had completely turned his back on politics. However, his pure academic discussions might carry a significant political undertone if we examine the context in which he philosophized. Although Li had not participated in any political movement in late Ming (he was too young) and the demise of the Ming dynasty seems to have little traumatic impact on him (he was eighteen at the time), he showed great concerns for the declining state of government and society in his early years and had written four books on statecraft

²⁵ *Chung-kuo ku-tai chu-ming che-hsüeh chia p'ing-chuan*, p. 513. Also see Yang Hsiang-k'uei, vol. 1, p. 263. His lectures at the Tung-lin Academy are in the collection of his writings, *Erh-ch'ü chi*.

²⁶ *Erh-ch'ü li-nien chi-lüeh*, cited in Ch'en Tsu-wu, p. 302.

²⁷ *Chung-kuo ku-tai chu-ming che-hsüeh chia p'ing-chuan*, 2nd series, vol. 4, pp. 513-4.

²⁸ One of his "rules of association" is to forbid any discussion about the competence of officials, the faults of people, and the business of the imperial court." Cited in Ch'en Tsu-wu, p. 315. This was a common precaution taken by academies in this period.

and contemporary politics. Emulating Wang Yang-ming, he took great interest in military strategy. However, his aversion to the Manchu regime was clear and intense. Out of frustration and for the sake of protest, he decided to devote himself exclusively to scholarly and spiritual endeavors. Therefore, his detachment from society was not voluntary, but as a form of political protest. Moreover, in his late years, he could not completely remain outside politics. He was recruited four times by the imperial court and each time he resisted vigorously, and would rather kill himself than to serve the alien regime. Furthermore, while he recommended the *Four Books* and the five classics as the basic texts for students, he still advised students to read statecraft writings such as Chen Te-hsiu's (1178-1235) *Ta-hsüeh yen-i* (Extended Meaning of the *Great Learning*) and Ch'iu Chün's (1420-1495) *Ta-hsüeh yen-i pu* (Supplement to the Extended Meaning of the *Great Learning*).²⁹ Therefore, from Li Yung's personal conduct and the curriculum he proposed one could see a certain political message in them.

Perhaps Huang Tsung-hsi represents the paragon of political activism and the excellence of scholarship of the Ming loyalists more than anyone else. In a colophon for a portrait of him in later years, he described his life in these words: "At first I was persecuted as a member [of T'ung-lin], then was labeled as a wandering fighter. Finally I have found my place among scholars. These have been three transformations of my life."³⁰ As a young man, Huang sought to

²⁹ Preface to *Ssu-shu fan-sheng lu*, ch.1, quoted in Yang Hsiang-k'ui, vol. 1, p. 270.

³⁰ Huang Tsung-hsi's *Nien-p'u*, quoted in *Chung-kuo ku-tai chu-ming che-hsüeh chia p'ing-chuan*, vol. 3B, p. 654.

revenge the death of his father who was murdered as a "Tung-lin clique." He later barely escaped the pursuit of the Ming government acting under the eunuchs because he belonged to the Restoration Society (Fu She) and had signed a proclamation denouncing the eunuch Luan Ta-ch'eng (1587-1646). Huang probably was as much persecuted by the Ming government, to which he claimed his allegiance, as by the Manchu, if not more. After he ceased overt hostilities to the Ch'ing, he spent more than four decades of his later life on teaching and writing. This undoubtedly is the most productive period of his life and one does not see any slackening of the pace of his activities as he proceeded into the new regime. He authored many books, including a political treatise on dynastic rule, *Ming-i tai-fang lu* (A Plan for the Prince). He did not shy away from politics, nor was he hesitant to build a tremendous scholarly reputation or to lecture to large assemblies. In 1667 he restored Cheng-jen Academy and helped to form a classics study society (*chiang-ching hui*) in neighboring Yin prefecture. Huang concentrated his efforts on Cheng-jen Academy and lectured there in 1667, 1668, and 1669,³¹ because the academy was founded by his teacher Liu Tsung-chou, thus a perfect vehicle for propagating Liu's thought. There were several hundred students attending his lectures.³² He gave lectures mostly in Chiang-nan area, but attracted scholars from all over the country. For nearly two decades (1667-1685) he kept up busy activities of *chiang-hsüeh*, and only stopped when the ban on study society was reimposed in 1686.³³

The classics study society spurred the revival of scholarship in

³¹ Ch'en Yüan-hui, p. 112.

³² Chiang Fan, *Han-hsüeh shih-ch'eng chi*, p. 128.

³³ *Chung-kuo ku-tai chu-ming che-hsüeh chia p'ing-chuan*, vol. 3B, pp. 668-670.

the early Ch'ing. By making scholarly study of classics as its goal, this kind of private and informal gatherings was able to escape the control and restrictions of the state, which outlawed formation of learning or literary societies. Moreover, while the long-term and implicit goal was to express members' political ideals through the study of classics, the societies in the short run helped prepare participants for the examinations.³⁴ Thus, it found an important place between politics and scholarship in the intellectual milieu of seventeenth century.

The classics study society fulfills almost all the functions of an academy, but without the burden of an institution. It is in fact an academy without walls. The society in Yin prefecture was established by Ch'en Ch'ih-chung (1627-1687), Huang Tsung-hsi's disciple, who served as lecturer. They met twice a month at the residence of a member of the group. Each time lecture was given on the classics, followed by discussions. The group collected more than a hundred commentaries on the classics and in a few years had gone through the *Book of Change*, the *Odes*, and the three texts on the rituals (*san-li*, namely, the *Li-chi*, and commentaries of the elder Tai and the junior Tai).³⁵ The society started out with about ten members, but its membership and importance grew over the years. Great historians and scholar like Wan Ssu-t'ung (1638-1702), Wan Ssu-ta (1633-1683), and Huang Pai-chia (b. 1643) were all graduates of the society. It undoubtedly had exerted tremendous influences on the movement of

³⁴ Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no kōkyokai ni tsuite" *Toho gakuho* 36 (Oct. 1964), 637.

³⁵ Huang Tsung-hsi, essay in celebration of the fiftieth birthday of Ch'en Ch'ih-chung, cited in Yang Hsiang-k'ui, vol. 1, pp. 163-4. See Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no kōkyokai ni tsuite," pp. 639-646.

textual study that would become the mainstream scholarship later.

While Huang Tsung-hsi was feverishly engaged in *chiang-hsüeh*, he denounced the kind of learning and discussion that was unconnected to the self and society, the empty chatters of Ming scholars “who repeated the dregs in the recorded sayings and did not place their foundation on the six classics. They allowed their books to gather dust on the shelves and devoted themselves only to empty talks.”³⁶ In order not to become a useless scholar, Huang advised that “students must first carry out exhaustive study of the classics because the art of the classics (*ching-shu*) is the means to the governance of the world (*ching-shih*).”³⁷ There had been criticisms of *chiang-hsüeh* as irrelevant and self-indulgent before. Ku Yün-ch’eng (1554-1607), a member of the T’ung-lin group, observed that scholars who were doing *chiang-hsüeh* in his days had expressed no concern for the earth shattering events of the day.³⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi’s friend, Ku Yen-wu also derided teachers of his times for doing *chiang-hsüeh* in order to make a name for themselves. However, what constitutes “concern” and how should one relate one’s learning to the outside world seem to be a matter of considerable different opinions. For instance, whether overt criticism of the government is a means for expressing one’s concern was an issue in late Ming. When Shou-shan Academy decided not to discuss court politics and the conduct of ministers, Lu Shan-chi (1572-1636) was furious, saying, “Learning that excludes discussions of the duties of ministers is useless learning and the sages and worthies who practice this kind of learning are useless persons.”³⁹ However, Chou

³⁶ Chiang Fan, *Han-hsüeh shih-ch’eng chi*, p. 128.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, ch. 60, p. 1469.

³⁹ Huang Tsung-hsi, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, ch. 54, p. 1305.

Yüan-piao (1551-1624), who founded the academy, maintained that learning of self-cultivation was indeed what makes people's mind good or evil, and eventually determined the order or disorder of the state.⁴⁰

Huang Tsung-hsi could not agree more with Chou Yüan-piao that personal virtues were the foundation of good government, which is a long-standing tenet that defines Confucian government as one governed by virtue. However, Huang saw the danger of over-occupation with personal cultivation in the Wang Yang-ming school, of which Chou was a member, at the expense of social actions to bring about real change. There is little wonder that Huang's teacher Liu Tsung-chou left the Shou-shan Academy out of disagreement.⁴¹ Huang proposed the "art of classics" (*ching-shu*) as a way of rooting one's personal cultivation in the classics and of making connection to the larger world through "penetrating the classics and learning from the past" (*t'ung-ching hsüeh-ku*).⁴² While moving in academic circles and engaging in *chiang-hsüeh*, Huang saw his actions as having a wider and real implication. The key for understanding his mind-set and that of the Ming loyalists lies in his conviction that ancient classics were the living truths. "The six classics are the vehicles of the Way," Huang stated.⁴³ A statement as simple as this in fact clarifies the conduct of the Ming loyalists and brings their motivation into great relief. Seen in this light, one begins to understand why Wan Ssu-t'ung would plunge into the study of the classics to find ways for relieving

⁴⁰ Huang Tsung-hsi, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, ch. 23, p. 534.

⁴¹ Huang Tsung-hsi, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, ch. 62, p. 1512.

⁴² Essay in celebration of the fiftieth birthday of Ch'en Ch'ih-chung, quoted in Yang Hsiang-k'ui, vol. 1, p. 164.

⁴³ "Hsüeh li chih-i hsü," in Yang Hsiang-k'ui, vol. 1, p. 164.

people's sufferings.^④ Then, how should we re-evaluate the political implication of their innocuous *chiang-hsüeh* activities and their "pedantic" study of ancient texts?

It is inevitable that whatever the Ming loyalists do, their actions will have some political ramifications one way or another. Their "withdrawal" itself was a strong political statement of defiance and rejection. How much more so if they gather hundreds of people on regular basis, even to discuss government approved subjects? The fact that they continued to teach, write and publish clearly suggests that they intended to bring their struggle to a different plan field. In the process they galvanized the morale of the intellectuals and was able to recreate the *chiang-hsüeh* movement prevalent in the late Ming. While none of them harbored any real political ambition, one should not overlook the political implication of their scholarly activities.

Huang Tsung-hsi's work in *chiang-hsüeh* was carried on by his disciple Ch'üan Tsu-wang (1705-1755) who greatly revived Chi-shan Academy and Tuan-hsi Academy (in Kuang-tung). In his teaching career, he was involved with more than twenty academies.^⑤

The *chiang-hsüeh* activities in local academies and the societies for the critical study of classical texts presented to the intellectuals the alternatives to the mediocre education offered by state schools and to the humdrum career path promised by the examination system. While there were no explicit condemnation of examinations by academy scholars, one often encounters stories about idealistic youths who gave up their efforts to pass the examinations after they found the true

^④ Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no kōkyokai ni tsuite," p. 654.

^⑤ Tu Ch'eng-hsien, "Ch'üan Tsu-wang shu-yüan chiao-yü ssu-hsiang shu-p'ing" in *Yüeh-lu shu-yüan i-ch'ien ling i-shih chou-nien chi-nien wen-chi*, vol. 1, p. 290.

goal of their lives during their stay at academies. Whatever their effects on the minds and hearts of the students, the *chiang-hsüeh* and the critical study of classics did create an alternative kind of education that was in competition with state educational program. How much competition did the local academies pose to the authority is difficult to gauge. Their numbers were small, but they had attracted the best and the brightest of the intellectuals. Under the banners of famous Ming loyalists, they enjoyed a high degree of visibility in society. At the least, the local academies and classics study societies were important players in early Ch'ing education and serious contenders for the hearts and minds of the intellectuals.

Scholarship as solution

As a young man, Fang I-chih was a care-free, self-centered, and ambitious person who knew how to enjoy good life. After being shaken up by a peasant rebellion in his home town, he began to contemplate deeper meaning in life and wrote a fictional account "of a self-conscious, frustrated young man's sorting through the alternatives that seemed available to him for a meaningful life...Rejecting uncritical pursuit of success in the civil examinations, unscrupulous accumulation of wealth, association with others for the purpose of taking action in the corrupt world, submission of lofty recommendations to the emperor, retirement to a refuge in the mountains, and escape through drugs or magical arts that promised longevity, riches, and pleasure, the fictional protagonist (and Fang I-chih?) resolved his frustrations by realizing he should use his superior talents in scholarship so as to leave a legacy for later man."⁴⁶ This sudden awareness of history and one's

⁴⁶ Willard Peterson, p. 371.

place in it becomes the engine that drives his life. Probably many Ming loyalists have experienced the transformation of Fang I-chih's fictional protagonist. After living through the period of "heaven falling apart and the earth rent asunder" (*t'ien-peng ti-chieh*), an apt description of the chaotic transition from the Ming to the Ch'ing, there must be a strong yearning among the Ming loyalists to seek and preserve their "Chinese" cultural identity and what they believed to be the truth to posterity. Writing history of this period and collecting documents seem to be some of their major undertakings. It was their hope that their stories and their legacy could be passed on to later generations. But this need to be heard and this intense historical awareness permeated every action they took and imbued their scholarship with a certain spirituality. Many turned to the study of Confucian classics because the classics had always been esteemed by tradition as the depository of ever-lasting truths. There is nothing unusual about this. But they approached the classics with a pressing urgency of wanting to know what went wrong and what could be done to make it right. Having most of the options of expressing their ideas closed for them, they naturally embraced scholarship with all their minds and hearts.

Statecraft is another major area where they have made substantial contributions.⁴⁷ The Chinese Don Quixote, Ku Yen-wu, wandered about

⁴⁷ Wakeman suggests that the statecraft loyalists have doubts about the worth of their works on statecraft and experience "gnawing doubts about the gap between the books they wrote and the world they refused to govern. That, of course, is why they wrote so much." *The Great Enterprise*, p. 1085, n. 26. I think if we understand how they reformulated their sense of history and revised they own place in history, perhaps their doubts, if any, will not render their own works useless exercises.

the northwest region of China for over a decade to study the strategic values of that area and produced many books on statecraft. Perhaps the most famous work in this period is Huang Tsung-hsi's *Ming-i tai-fang lu*, completed in 1661.⁴⁸

For the Ming loyalists, scholarship provides both a refuge and a useful outlet for their energy. This was the reason why K'ang-hsi emperor held the special examination in 1679 and then "invited the successful candidates to help compose the official Ming History."⁴⁹ Granted that some of their writings are profuse with nostalgia, they wrote mostly with a strong sense of purpose.⁵⁰ (Can one imagine Ku Yen-wu, the Chinese Don Quixote, to be a romantic figure? He is too heart-broken to be romantic.) They wanted to preserve their voice and they wanted to be useful.

While Confucian tradition always dictates scholars in crisis to look back to the past for answers for solving current problems, the question remains whether the Ming loyalists in embracing scholarship only demonstrate their impracticality and simple-mindedness. Leaving this difficult question aside, at least one can be sure about one thing, that is, for them scholarship is an active means to engage with society and to connect themselves to the larger world. The Ming loyalists simply transfer their struggles with the corrupt Ming government and the alien ruler to the broader historical stage.

⁴⁸ See de Bary's *Waiting for the Dawn*.

⁴⁹ Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, p. 1083.

⁵⁰ I do not think the Ming loyalists "turn away from moral cultivation" to scholarship in response to the collapse of the Ming dynasty, as Etienne Balazs has maintained. If anything, they deepened their efforts in moral cultivation after the fall. Balazs' view is cited by Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, d. 1082, n. 19.

Independence

While the K'ang-hsi emperor was enlightened enough to pardon the "rebellious activities" of the Ming loyalists, the dissenting intellectuals were not left alone on a long leash. Selected persecutions of intellectuals for their "seditious" writings were carried out in 1663 and 1667 and a great number of scholars in Chiang-nan area were arrested.⁵¹ Added to this was the prohibition against forming literary society and setting up new academies, where scholars might gather. There were also great pressures from the Ch'ing government to force those who declared their intention to withdraw from society to change their minds. Consequently, the Ming loyalists had to constantly fend off successive "invitations" to serve in the government. Fang I-chih was presented with the unhappy choice of "donning the garments of a Ch'ing official, thus manifesting his willingness to surrender and accept an appointment from the Manchu government, or being killed with the sword held ready."⁵² Fang chose the latter and fortunately was let go.

As Li Yung quietly established his scholarly reputation and attracted an increasing number of followers in Kuan-chung area, the Ch'ing government began to apply pressure on him for the support of the new regime. The first recommendation of him as a "recluse" arrived in 1669 and Li was able to decline with relative ease. The second enlistment came in 1673 with ever more persistence and Li had to feigned illness and stayed in bed. But the officials started to harass him, visiting his house frequently with carriage standing by to send

⁵¹ Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no kōkyokai ni tsuite" *Toho gakuho* 36 (Oct. 1964), 633.

⁵² Willard Peterson, p. 374.

him off to the capital.⁵³ A few years later (1678) a more urgent invitation was dispatched, this time Li said he was examined in bed and treated like a common criminal. He then started a hunger strike for six days and injured himself with a knife, only then the officials took pity on him and released him from the imperial order.⁵⁴ But this is not the end of it. Two years before he died at age seventy-seven, K'ang-hsi emperor issued a decree, summoning him to attend an audience with the emperor when the latter traveled to the western region on an inspection tour. Upon hearing the decree, Li sighed, "This certainly means my death." He then sent his son to the capital to plead for him. K'ang-hsi emperor eventually rescinded the order and allowed Li to live. Relying on his own reputation and personal integrity, Li Yung clearly had stood up against the government and against the all-powerful K'ang-hsi emperor. Perhaps Li was more concerned with preserving his own moral integrity than with lodging a political protest. Nevertheless, it is difficult not to read any political message in Li's conduct. After all, he was a survivor of the previous dynasty and his refusals to comply with imperial orders could only mean that he was unwilling to lend his loyalty to the Manchu.

Li Yung's heroic resistance was something of a legend in the early Ch'ing. Ku Yen-wu cites the miserable lot of Li to demonstrate the bad consequence of doing *chiang-hsüeh*.⁵⁵ It is probably a

⁵³ *Chung-kuo ku-tai chu-ming che-hsüeh chia p'ing-chuan*, 2nd series, vol. 4, pp. 513-4.

⁵⁴ Li's letter to a friend, in *Erh-ch'ü chi*, quoted in *Chung-kuo ku-tai chu-ming che-hsüeh chia p'ing-chuan*, 2nd series, vol., 4, p. 515. Also see Chiang Fan, *Sung-hsüeh yüan-yüan chi* (The Origins of the Sung School), p. 5.

⁵⁵ Chiang Fan, *Han-hsüeh shih-ch'eng chi* (Records of the Transmission from Masters to Masters in the School of Han Learning), ch. 8, p. 134.

combination of the stubbornness of Li and the high stature he enjoyed that resulted in such visible confrontations. Many tried to persuade the imperial court to rescind the invitation orders indirectly. Compromises often had to be made. Huang Tsung-hsi was presented with a similar problem in 1678, when the court made him a *po-hsüeh hung-ju*. But he was able to get out of it with the help of his student. However, when the invitation to compile the history of the Ming arrived, he was really torn between preserving his integrity and preserving the history of the dynasty he loved so much. In the end he declined repeatedly, but as a compromise, he sent his son in his place and allowed his student Wan Ssu-t'ung to participate in the history project.^⑥ Huang's friend, Ku Yen-wu, reacted to the same invitation with the threat of taking his own life. He let the court officials know that he had a knife and a rope standing by and that they should not force him to use them.^⑦ His defiance was unbelievable.

Although these are isolated instances of defiance of the Manchu government, one cannot under-estimate the heroism of the individuals who put their lives on the line. In this contest of will, the authority apparently backed down and could not make these scholars obey. This is quite remarkable because the Ming loyalists were not well treated at all by *their* previous government and were now showered with all kinds of favors and honors. There was also the threat of persecution under the slightest pretext looming not too far on the horizon. But armed with their own moral conviction, these brave individuals persevered to the end.

Is it possible that we exaggerate the importance of their defiance

^⑥ Chiang Fan, *Han-hsüeh shih-ch'eng chi*, p. 129.

^⑦ Chiang Fan, *Han-hsüeh shih-ch'eng chi*, p. 133.

and therefore their independence? Yes, there is the possibility. The Ch'ing government by then was well established and could have made them martyrs if it so chose. And individual heroic actions are no match for the brute force of the imperial power. However, I think there are two sides to this encounter. While the dissenting individuals could not effectively act as a counter balance of the imperial power, there is a limit as to what the imperial authority can do to them. The authority could not extract submission or loyalty from those who were publicly resisting its legitimate rule. However, neither could the dissenting intellectuals bring their opposition to bear in real politics in the long run.

How independent were the local academies remains a difficult question. The small number of representative academies that I have examined closely appears to operate without any serious state intervention. It seems that the prerogative for the private individual to set up academy in this period had not been dampened by repeated imperial orders to ban the construction of new academies. It is not unreasonable to assume that a large number of academies engaging in *chiang-hsüeh* were sponsored by local authority. Li Yung's Kuan-chung Academy was built by the governor of Shan-hsi. Therefore, there seems to be an intersection of private interests and public (mainly local government) support that led to the proliferation of local academies. In comparison, the classics study societies ("academy without walls") were completely private enterprise. These societies were small, transient, and portable. They were where their members were. It was much harder for the government to control them. They deliberately held meetings at different places, which made it even harder for the authority to keep track of them. But their existence

was by no means secret. Somehow they escaped the banning of literary societies and enjoyed a considerable amount of freedom to assemble.

How prevalent were the classics study societies in the early Ch'ing is a question needs further research. My preliminary research indicates that it was a fairly wide-spread association, involving many leading scholars of the time. It would seem that these societies were repackaging of literary societies (*wen-she*) and other political action groups (such as Fu She) in the late Ming. The Yin prefecture society certainly regarded itself as the heir of the Tung-lin and Fu She, having Huang Tsung-hsi as its guiding force. Their goal and aspirations seemed to be shared by most, if not all, classics study societies.

Concluding Remarks

There are four passages in Huang Tsung-hsi's *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* about the last words uttered by Liu Tsung-chou. For a man who was about to give his life to his country, his parting words were strangely unpolitical, at least this being the image Huang Tsung-hsi intended to project to his readers. The account says nothing about the social, political turmoil, or about the evil deeds of eunuchs or about the anguish Liu must have felt for the corruption and incompetence of Ming emperors. Instead, Liu talked about sincerity, reverence, personal cultivation, quiet-sitting, and about his forthcoming suicide as not wanting to become a "betrayed minister and a robber's son."⁵⁸ He certainly died without any bitterness. While fasting for twenty

⁵⁸ Huang Tsung-hsi, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, ch. 62, Beijing: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1985, p. 1546.

days with the same quiet determination until his last breath was a true testimony of the strength of his will and of the perfection of his moral character, it is also very revealing about the way he saw his own death as a personal matter, a natural expression of his moral integrity and conviction. Therefore, it is perhaps not difficult to understand why he did not discuss political events that in fact were the catalyst for his death. What matters in his slow and painful path to terminate his own life is the state of his moral being. In a sense Liu Tsung-chou would not accept martyrdom. He died for the sake of his own personal integrity, not even for the Ming emperors or for his country.

Many of the Ming scholars who survived to the Ch'ing shared the same moral and spiritual goals as Liu Tsung-chou. They felt frustrated, but not bitter. For them, the greatest task was to pass on the torch of tradition and preserved their ideas in the works of solid scholarship for the perusal of posterity. It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that the beginning years of the Ch'ing dynasty witness a tremendous explosion of scholarship.

If one understands the mind-set of the Ming martyrs and the loyalists and their overwhelming concerns for spiritual cultivation and scholarship, one might see that there is a remarkable continuity from late Ming to early Ch'ing in the way the intellectuals find meaning in their works and lives. Despite differences in the degree of political activism and participation, not to mention the complete change in political scenery, the central concern of the intellectuals throughout the entire period has remained the same, namely, the cultivation of the self and the pursuit of scholarship. Even at the heyday of the Tung-lin movement, personal cultivation and academic research

remained the high priorities of their activities. Virtues of course are regarded as the foundation of politics and scholarship scholars' natural duty.

Therefore, it is a misconception to regard that the Ming loyalists withdrew from society and locked themselves in their tranquil studies, cultivating their interior lives and researching on antiquarian subjects. They would be the first to protest this kind of description. As the heirs of the Tung-lin movement, they were busy with *chiang-hsüeh* at academies or at home, searching for answers in the classics and standing up against the Manchu government. Therefore, the Tung-lin scholars and Ming loyalists were political dissidents of the same tripe, but of different courts. To be able to fend off the impositions of the authority so that one can carry on one's teaching and research indicates that the Ming loyalists probably enjoyed as much freedom and independence as their predecessors who could openly criticize a defunct government. Seen in this light, the revival of local academies and the *chiang-hsüeh* tradition provides evidences for a scholarly community in the early Ch'ing that is both independent and politically involved.

Perhaps the thornier question remains whether the local academies in this period can be construed as some sort of civil society. I do not see any strong objection why they cannot. Most of the academies were built and run by scholars independent of state authority. Many Ming loyalists lectured in them. The government, though claimed nominal control over them, had no means to enforce every government regulation or decree all the time. Moreover, although there were official proscriptions against organizing literary or study societies, the classics study societies seemed to flourish unimpeded. The transitional

years of the Ch'ing dynasty may have provided a vacuum for local academies and study societies to propagate. But my research seems to show that as the empire consolidated itself, the activities of academies and study societies continued to intensify.⁶⁹ Perhaps partly because they took advantage of the imperial sponsorship of Confucian tradition and examinations system, they could devote themselves to *ch'iang-hsüeh* and critical study of ancient classics, even if their actions carried a certain political undertone. Perhaps on account of the combination of the limitation of the imperial power and the determination of the Ming loyalists to carry on the Tung-lin spirit, the local academies and classics study societies can be regarded as civil societies.

However, the local academies are usually short-lived and transitory and consequently unable to establish a more permanent locally based institution to effect long-termed change. Added to this lack of continuity are their overwhelming concerns for moral perfection and the tendency to look to the past for solution. These elements often render them ineffective in dealing with the real politics and power-plays.

It is understandable that with the agony of the deceased dynasty still fresh and the threat of a "barbarian regime" menacing, scholars advisably retreated to the tranquility of their studies. But at what point had their studies turned into the ivory towers? Perhaps each tradition, however great it may be, contains the seed of its own destruction. While the activism of Tung-lin movement in the late Ming was perpetuated in a different form in the first ninety years of the Ch'ing, the failure to revitalize its activist spirit and to reconnect to real politics over a long period of time may have transformed the

⁶⁹ See Ōkubo (1964).

study rooms, where the dissenting scholars occupied, into icy prison cells.

An epilogue to the story of autonomy and dissent concerns Huang Tsung-hsi. Huang perhaps was the only visionary scholar in this period who sought to preserve the legacy of the past and at the same time achieved a breakthrough. In the *Ming-i tai-fang lu* (A Plan for the Prince), he delivered a scathing indictment of dynastic rule and the morality that supported it and proposed fundamental changes. He no longer looked backward to history and classics for answers and guidance, but rather sought to initiate a new beginning. After completing this masterpiece, he put it away and never talked about it. Meanwhile, he took up lecturing for more than two decades until the end of his life. Will this shed new light on the way we see his *chiang-hsüeh* activities and his tremendous scholarship? How should we connect his revolutionary ideas in the *A Plan for the Prince* and his not-so-revolutionary expositions of the meanings of moral cultivation and classics?

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Glossary

- Ch'ang-chou 常州
 Ch'en Ch'ih-chung 陳赤衷
 Ch'ien Ch'ien-i 錢謙益
 Ch'ing (dynasty) 清
 Ch'ing-yüan 清源
 Ch'iu Chün 邱濬
 Ch'üan Tsu-wang 全祖望
 Chan Jo-shui 湛若水
 Chen Te-hsiu 真德秀
 Cheng-jen 證人
chiang-ching hui 講經會
 Chiang-hsi 江西
chiang-hsüeh 講學
 Chiang-nan 江南
ching-shih 經世
ching-shu 經術
 Chou Yüan-piao 鄒元標
 Fang I-chih 方以智
 Fang Wen 方文
 Fu Shan 傅山
 Fu She 復社
 Hsü Shih-i 徐士儀
 Huang Pai-chia 黃百家
 Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲
hui-yüeh 會約
 K'ang-hsi 康熙
 Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武
 Ku Yün-ch'eng 顧允成
 Kuan-chung 關中
 Kuang-tung 廣東
 Li Ming-chün 李明睿
 Li Yung 李顥
Li-chi 禮記
 Liao Wen-ying 廖文英
 Liu Tsung-chou 劉宗周
 Lu Shan-chi 鹿善繼
 Luan Ta-ch'eng 阮大鉞
Ming shih 明史
 Ming (dynasty) 明
Ming-i tai-fang lu 明夷待訪錄
Ming-ju hsüeh-an 明儒學案
 Nan-ch'ang 南昌
 Nan-k'ang 南康
po-hsüeh hung-ju 博學鴻儒
san-li 三禮
 Shan-hsi 陝西
 Shou-shan 首善
shu-yüan k'e-chü 書院科舉
shu-yüan 書院
 Shun-chih 順治
 Sun Ch'i-feng 孫奇逢
 Sung (dynasty) 宋
t'ien-peng ti-chieh 天崩地解
t'ung-ching hsüeh-ku 通經學古
Ta-hsüeh yen-i pu 大學衍義補
Ta-hsüeh yen-i 大學衍義
 Tao-nan 道南
 Tuan-hsi 端溪
 Tung-lin 東林
 Wan Ssu-ta 萬斯大
 Wan Ssu-t'ung 萬斯同
 Wang Yang-ming 王陽明
 Wang Fu-chih 王夫之
 Wei Chung-hsien 魏忠賢
wen-she 文社
 Yen Yüan 顏元
 Yen-lin 嚴林
 Yin 鄞
 Yüan (dynasty) 元
 Yung-cheng 雍正

清初書院之學術自主性及其反政治意涵

朱 榮 貴

本文探討清朝初年順治、康熙二朝書院之講學活動，並進而討論書院擁有多少學術自由，以及講學家對政治的反抗。一般學者都忽略了清初書院之復興及講學風氣之盛行。雖然順治帝頒布禁令，不準興建新書院，可是新舊書院之復建極其可觀。科舉考試恢復之後，更有助於書院之茁壯。明末遺民如李顥和黃宗羲等更是投身於教育與學術研究，使東林、證人、關中等書院之講學風氣相當蓬勃。他們極具強烈的歷史意識，一方面想保存文化傳統，另一方面想以學術濟世。這些明末遺民非但不肯做滿清的官，更刻意地以己身之學術地位與高尚之人格和康熙皇帝作對。雖然書院享有相當大的自由活動的空間，講學家的講學、講經活動亦帶有反政治之意圖，清初書院是否構成一個「民間社會」(Civil Society) 則有待進一步討論。