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## ZHU XI'S PRAYERS TO THE SPIRIT OF CONFUCIUS AND CLAIM TO THE TRANSMISSION OF THE WAY

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Through an exploration of Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) discussion of ghosts and spirits (*guishen* 鬼神) and his prayers to Kongzi 孔子 (our Confucius, 551–479 B.C.E.), I hope to fill in a lacuna in Zhu Xi studies, or at least a missing link in my own thesis about Zhu Xi's assertion to be the authoritative reader and transmitter of traditions centered on Confucius and the classics. Building on particularly noteworthy recent scholarship on Zhu Xi's discussion of ghosts and spirits,<sup>1</sup> I will point toward a new level of possible significance of his views. My purpose is not to categorize his statements as falling within the modern Western conceptual category of "religion" (rendered originally by Japanese into the Sinitic characters 宗教, pronounced *shūkyō* in Japanese and *zongjiao* in Chinese). Rather, what I seek is to provide an example of how Zhu Xi and his thought are at once both more complexly nuanced and more praxis oriented than retrospective optimized idealizations and rationalistic systemizations have often suggested. In the process, I will be stepping into the gap between my 1987 article in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* on a possible role of *Tian* 天 and its mindfulness or consciousness (*tianxin* 天心) in Zhu Xi's thinking,<sup>2</sup> on the one hand, and my 1992 book about his struggle for ascendancy,<sup>3</sup> on the other. (*Tian* is a difficult term to render into English; Zhu Xi uses it in various contexts to refer to the azure sky, to the physical nature of the cosmos, to the ruler or lord [*zhucai* 主宰] in the heavens above, and to *li* 理 [conventionally glossed as principle, pattern, and coherence];<sup>4</sup> hence, I will simply refer to *Tian* and *li* in the hope that readers will keep the whole range of these key terms in mind.)

Specifically, I will explore what we might learn by juxtaposing and linking two distinct areas or categories of Zhu Xi's comments: those on ghosts or spirits and those on the transmission and succession of the Way (*daotong* 道統). The pivotal link may well be his prayers to the spirit of Confucius, so these prayers—overlooked by most scholars—will be the culminating focus of my analysis. Qian Mu 錢穆, Wing-tsit Chan, and Joseph Needham have understandably and aptly focused on Zhu Xi's discussion of *guishen* as contractive (negative) and expansive (positive) cosmic forces within his rationalistic system of metaphysical philosophy.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, if we were to focus on his remarks about relatively more traditional aspects of *guishen*, as ghosts and spirits, and his prayers to Confucius, what might we learn about Zhu Xi's thinking through an inquiring into his particular, and at times even novel, use of such traditional notions and ritual practices?

*Concepts: Ghosts and Spirits, and the Transmission of the Way*

Zhu Xi used the term *guishen* (conventionally glossed as ghosts and spirits) to refer to a wide range of mysterious and subtle things and events. For instance, he remarked:

Rain, wind, dew, and thunder, the sun, the moon, day, and night—all these are “traces” (*ji* 跡) of *guishen*. These are the fair, even, correct, and straight *guishen* of the bright day. For example, what are called “ghosts howling from the house beams and striking people’s chests” refer to those *guishen* that are incorrect, wicked, and dark, “sometimes existing and sometimes not,” “sometimes going and sometimes coming,” and “sometimes aggregating and sometimes dispersing.” There are also sayings that offering a prayer to them, it is responded to, and addressing a wish to them, it is obtained. And all of these are the same *li* [conventionally glossed as principle, pattern, or coherence]. The myriad things and events in the world are all this *li*; there only are differences of being exquisite or coarse, and small or large.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, in the first sense, *guishen* refers to the natural function and operation of all things in the universe. Utilizing the notion of correct and proper *guishen*, Zhu Xi pointed to nature’s spontaneous, but still mysterious, operations, such as the regularity or constancy of the seasons and the growth cycle of plants. This sense of *guishen* as contractive and expansive forces in all phenomena is what most studies of Zhu Xi’s statements on *guishen* have discussed, because the focus in mainstream scholarship has been his philosophical system.

In the second and more restricted sense, Zhu Xi used *guishen* to refer to markedly mysterious and particularly unfathomable phenomena, such as “ghost whistles and ghost fires.”<sup>7</sup> He discussed such ghosts and monsters not only because some passages in the classics had mentioned them but also because he was willing to concede that the testimony of later people about ghosts could be accepted as partially true. On several occasions<sup>8</sup> he specifically addressed the case of Boyou 伯有 (d. 534 B.C.E.) and endorsed Zichan’s 子產 (581–521 B.C.E.) interpretation, which is widely regarded as the *locus classicus* of orthodox Confucian views of a deceased person’s spirit.<sup>9</sup> The nobleman Boyou took revenge on his murderers for depriving him not only of his life but also of his hereditary office and thus depriving his spirit of sacrificial offerings. To satisfy this “hungry ghost” so that it would disappear, the wise statesman Zichan placed Boyou’s son in the father’s former office. Synthesizing the North China notion of the human spirit as *po* 魄 and the South China notion of the human spirit as *hun* 魂, Zichan explained:

When man is born, that which is first created is called the *po*, and, when the *po* has been formed, its positive part (*yang* 陽) becomes *hun* or conscious spirit. In case a man is materially well and abundantly supported, then his *hun* and *po* grow very strong, and therefore produce spirituality and intelligence. Even the *hun* and *po* of an ordinary man or woman, having encountered violent death, can attach themselves to other people to cause extraordinary troubles. . . . The stuff Boyou was made of was copious and rich, and his family great and powerful. Is it not natural that, having met with a violent death, he should be able to become a ghost?<sup>10</sup>

Zhu Xi's embrace of Zichan's exposition helped secure its standing as "the orthodox doctrine" regarding *hun* and *po* in Confucian philosophy. Although focused on this orthodox tradition, Ying-shih Yü has cautioned us that other, more thoroughly dualistic conceptions of spirits became widely accepted during the Han era and prevailed among most Chinese people.<sup>11</sup> Burial practices and conceptions also varied considerably in different geographical areas of China.

In echoing Zichan's interpretation of ghosts, Zhu Xi highlighted the centrality of *qi* 氣 (conventionally glossed as vital spirit, breath, psychophysical energy, material force, etc.). Explaining why the spirits of some people lingered, especially if they had met violent deaths and thus sought revenge, Zhu said:

In most cases it is a matter of people meeting an untimely death either by drowning, killing, or sudden illness. Because their *qi* hasn't yet exhausted itself, it transforms itself into these creatures. Furthermore, in the cases of sudden death, the *qi* does not disperse entirely; this is because the original endowment of *qi* is generous. But, in the end, over time, it will completely disperse.<sup>12</sup>

As long as the *qi* of such persons did not disperse, it could produce strange effects: "Monstrous and evil ghosts are often those from undispersed *qi* after death; therefore, the *qi* is pent-up and congealed to form the monstrous and evil."<sup>13</sup> In some cases, such evil effects could be destroyed through firecrackers, which helped to disperse the *qi*.<sup>14</sup> Although most cases of residual *qi* becoming ghosts arose from either being killed or committing suicide, Zhu Xi also said that an individual could have such flourishing *qi* that it was not dispersed even upon a normal death.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, based on the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, he accepted the story that one person possessed such loyalty that, upon death, his *qi* became an emerald.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Zhu Xi conceded that spirit mediums (*wu* 巫, often classed as shamans) and cult worship were not without efficacy in dealing with ghosts because the *qi* in people's minds activated and interacted with ghosts and spirits. In other words, "there is a resonance between similar *qi*, and thus the spirit attaches itself to these people."<sup>17</sup>

As evident in such examples, even though Zhu Xi accepted the existence of ghosts, he sought to provide a rational explanation within his philosophical system by discussing strange ghosts in terms of *qi*, especially "incorrect or abnormal" (*bu-zheng* 不正) *qi*. Still, he rarely rejected strange things and events—if reportedly seen by people. For instance, he responded to one disciple's skepticism about strange phenomena with the retort: "It is merely that you have never seen them."<sup>18</sup> Zhu Xi's receptivity to stories of ghosts and strange phenomena show that he was clearly influenced by traditional notions and the cultural environment in Fujian, especially in his base area near Wuyishan 武夷山. Fujian was among the areas where belief in spirits and lore about strange phenomena were particularly strong. Although he quoted and approved of skeptical statements from the classics, such as "keep ghosts and spirits at a distance,"<sup>19</sup> Zhu certainly found it more difficult than classical Confucians to remain aloof from discussions of ghosts. After all, he was deliberately competing with Buddhists, Daoists, and spirit mediums not only for what he regarded as proper social customs but also for people's hearts and minds. His

philosophy of *li* and *qi* provided him a basis for rejecting “superstitious” beliefs about strange phenomena. For instance, by arguing that especially violent deaths produced ghosts, he was denying the Buddhist notion that the rebirth of the dead person’s soul was routine or the norm. Moreover, by demanding that cults be judged by the morals they encouraged among believers, he could advocate the suppression of what he condemned as cults worshiping improper ghosts and spirits in heterodox temples.<sup>20</sup>

In the third sense mentioned above by Zhu Xi, *guishen* referred to that to which one traditionally offered prayers and sacrifices (*jisi* 祭祀) and from which responses came. Ancestral spirits and their responses to sacrificial offerings had for centuries remained crucial to Confucians and their family-centered values, including filial piety. For instance, according to the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), “The breath *hun* (*hunqi* 魂氣) returns to *Tian* above; the bodily *po* returns to earth below. Therefore, in sacrificial offering one should seek the meaning in the *yin-yang* 陰陽 principle.”<sup>21</sup> As Ying-shih Yü’s study documents, it became widely accepted by Han times that the *hun* belonged to the proactive, upwardly oriented *yang*, and that the *po* belonged to the more receptive, earth-oriented *yin*. Therefore, upon the body’s death, the lighter *hun* rose quickly toward the heavens, while the heavier bodily *po* sank slowly into the earth. Hence, in the *fu* 復 ritual, ancient Chinese beseeched the *hun* of recently deceased family members to return, but never the *po*. The dualistic conception with the *hun* rising heavenward and the *po* sinking into the earth also related to ancient Chinese assumptions about a heavenly court or world above and an underworld below, which was early referred to as the “Yellow Springs” (*huang quan* 黃泉). It was further believed that a dead person’s ghost (*gui* 鬼) required food presented in sacrificial offerings; moreover, since descendants were of the same *qi* as the deceased, it was crucial that the sacrificial offerings be made by descendants. If such offerings were not received, the ghost not only could seek revenge or retribution as a “hungry ghost” but also be unable to serve as a medium for auspicious *qi*.

Since such spirits could not survive indefinitely and depended on materialistic factors, the preservation of the corpse became a high priority in burials. Furthermore, as the notion of immortals (*xian* 仙) became popular during the Han era, it was believed that some individuals could harness heavenly *qi* to transform their body and gain longevity. As these immortals were assumed to ascend eventually to *Tian* above, there was a need for a new destination for the *hun* of ordinary mortals. The abode for *hun* became associated with Liangfu 梁父, a small hill near the sacred Mt. Tai 泰 in Shandong, so this site then became the capital of the governor of the dead, that is, their *hun* spirits. This hill had earlier been the spot where sacrifices were made to the supreme earthy deity (*dizhu* 地主), who was transformed into the lord of the underworld (*dixiazhu* 地下主). The abode for *po* became associated with a place at the foot of the Liangfu hill and fell under a separate jurisdiction of underworld government in a court of ghosts, imagined often as in the ancient Yellow Springs.<sup>22</sup> Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) surely articulated a long-standing conception when he said that the *hun* and its *qi* was the basis of man’s spirit and intelligence, while the *po* functioned in hearing and seeing.<sup>23</sup> The Han Confucian text, the “Meaning of

Sacrifice" (*Jiyi* 祭意), succinctly summarized these diverse notions: "[After death] the name of *hun* in life is changed to *shen* 神 and that of *po* to *gui*."<sup>24</sup>

Zhu Xi's statements reveal his allegiance to major aspects of these traditional views. As the *Book of Rites* had done, he presented the *hun* as rising heavenward, but the *po* as descending earthward to dissipate.<sup>25</sup> It is important to note that Zhu apparently set aside the Han development of the concept of the *hun* departing to the realm of Liangfu; thus, *Tian* above was his single focal point for contact with the spirits. He also approved of Zichan's saying that the *po* was prior to the *hun*.<sup>26</sup> Reflecting Zheng Xuan's influence, Zhu further associated the *po* with the body's clarity of seeing and hearing, but the *hun* with the *qi* or breath within the throat.<sup>27</sup>

The third sense of *guishen* centered on (but was not restricted to) the spirits of deceased ancestors, so it is not at all surprising that *guishen* in this sense was what Zhu Xi most often addressed in his discussions with students. For instance, a person's *hun* could linger, or hover around, and be contacted by his descendants during the sacrificial rites to the ancestor. As Zhu assured his audience, "Today, when people offer sacrifices with sincerity, their ancestors will also descend."<sup>28</sup> Here, the general principle of resonance within the realm of vital *qi* was enhanced because of the specific biological relationship and special affinity between blood relatives, particularly on the patrilineal side. Addressing inquiries about the existence of ancestral spirits and the importance of shared *qi*, Zhu remarked:

In the end the descendants are of the same *qi* as the ancestors, so even though the ancestors' *qi* may have dispersed, their roots nonetheless exist right here. By fully exercising sincerity and reverence we are able to summon their *qi* so that it coalesces right here.<sup>29</sup>

The word "roots" (*gen* 根) might be glossed here as the "bloodline" of the ancestors because ancestors and descendants had the same *qi* passed from fathers to sons through the generations.<sup>30</sup>

As implicit in Zhu Xi's statement, an important issue for discussion with his students was: since a deceased person's *qi* dispersed, how could descendants reach the ancestors through the sacrificial service? The answer centered on the particular *qi* that descendants shared with the ancestors. For example, he reasoned:

When a man dies, although his *qi* eventually returns to [the state of] dispersion, there also is [some part that is] not dispersed or exhausted. Therefore, the sacrificial service has the *li* of reaching and moving [the ancestor]. Whether the *qi* of an ancestor of a generation far removed [still] exists or not, it is not possible to know. But since the person who offers the sacrificial service is his descendant, [their *qi*] must be the same *qi*, and therefore there is the *li* of stimulating and penetrating [the ancestor].<sup>31</sup>

The particular *qi* inherited from ancestors was so crucial that Zhu reasoned that "The ancestor's *qi* exists only when the descendant's *qi* exists; however, when it is not the time of sacrificial service, how can it be aggregated?"<sup>32</sup>

Zhu Xi insisted that only a proper patrilineal descendant could evoke the ancestor's spirit; this pronouncement was in line with traditional warnings (e.g., in

*Analects* 2/24) that it was vain and useless to sacrifice to someone else's ancestor. For instance, Zhu gave his philosophical basis to support a claim in the *Zuozhuan*: "The reason 'spirits do not enjoy the offerings of those not their kindred and people do not sacrifice to those not their ancestry' is simply that their *qi* is not related."<sup>33</sup>

By championing the classical dictum about making sacrificial offerings only to one's ancestors, Zhu Xi surely sought to thwart the customary practice of burning incense to Buddhist and Daoist deities; however, he himself made offerings and even built shrines to people who were not related to him biologically. The precedent for doing so went back to the classic *Book of Rites*, which allowed sacrifices to one's teachers. Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133–1180), and subsequently Zhu Xi, expanded upon this tradition to provide a reasoned basis for building shrines to local worthies. Further extending this precedent, Zhang Shi and Zhu Xi built shrines to Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073) and the brothers Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1086) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), even in areas where they had never sojourned, in order to establish their claim to have revived and transmitted the *dao* (Way 道) of the ancient sages.<sup>34</sup> Around the same time, they promoted similar shrines honoring the statesman and military leader Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234).<sup>35</sup> Thus, even though their shrines primarily promoted worthies within the Learning of the Way (*Daoxue* 道學) tradition, they did not restrict themselves to worthies from that tradition.

Writing to commemorate the 1177 restoration of Zhou Dunyi's study on Mt. Lu 廬山, Zhu Xi presented Confucius as setting forth the idea that sages received the Way directly from *Tian* above. Referring to *Analects* 9/5, Zhu commented: "And Confucius always ascribed the rise and decline of 'this culture' (*siwen* 斯文) to *tian*. It is clear that the sage has not deceived us in this regard. Was not Master Lianxi 濂溪 [Zhou Dunyi] one who attained the transmission of the *dao* through the bestowal from *Tian* above?"<sup>36</sup> (This passage should be kept in mind during our subsequent discussions of Zhu's own contact with the spirits of Zhou Dunyi and Confucius.) Zhu further sought to establish a parallel between Zhou Dunyi's *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* (*Taijitu* 太極圖) and the work of the legendary ancient sage Fu Xi 伏羲. Referring to the account in the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) about how Fu Xi had conceived the eight trigrams, Zhu presented both Fu Xi and Zhou Dunyi as having directly perceived the Way and mediated between *Tian* above and the earth below.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, at the end of his pilgrimage to Zhou Dunyi's study on Mt. Lu in 1181, Zhu wrote a ballad that culminated in these lines:

The master is silent, wordless,  
My tears pour down.  
If the spirit is listening and does not reject me,  
I believe the benefit will be immeasurable.<sup>38</sup>

Here, Zhu Xi reveals his own direct interaction and communication with Zhou Dunyi's spirit.

It was on this pilgrimage, during which he communed with Zhou Dunyi's spirit, that Zhu Xi coined the term *daotong* (the succession to, and transmission of, the Way); that concept conveyed Zhu's claim to special access to the Way of the an-

cient sages. Zhu Xi's shrines counterpoised the Song state's Confucian Temples that had enshrined and given special status to Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086), the great nemesis of the Learning of the Way fellowship. As a kind of counterculture, shrines established by Zhu Xi and his associates borrowed much of the organizational patterns and sacrificial rites performed in the state's temples in order to challenge and eventually change the symbolism and message arising from Confucian temples of their era. After decades struggling against government opposition, the Learning of the Way fellowship eventually succeeded in convincing the government both to remove Wang Anshi and to enshrine Zhu Xi and other Dao-learning masters beginning in 1241.<sup>39</sup>

### *An Excursion into a Possible Relationship between Guishen and the Daotong*

Building on this connection between Zhu Xi's coining of the term *daotong* and his communion with Zhou Dunyi's spirit, I wish to explore further evidence of a relationship between Zhu's statements about spirits and the *daotong*—even though these are generally regarded as totally separate areas of his thought. In terms of recent scholarship, I could set my inquiry against the backdrop of somewhat divergent conclusions in modern scholarship. Some scholars locate the origins of the *daotong* imagery as a “filiative genealogy” structure by Zhu Xi in response to Chan Buddhist lineage projects.<sup>40</sup> Other scholars say that both family genealogies and Chan lineages presented an uninterrupted line of transmission, while Northern Song thinkers had long accepted the idea that the transmission of the Way had been interrupted since antiquity.<sup>41</sup> However, the work of social historians, as I understand it, has shown that the newly risen Song literati lineages were indeed broken or at least difficult to trace with any specificity back many generations beyond the tenth century. Having risen relatively recently into elite ranks with resources to commemorate and maintain records of early ancestors, these literati (it seems to me) probably felt a filial compulsion toward retrieval and remembrance. In other words, the fact that most family genealogical records had gaps might have influenced Song men's conception of how the transmission of the Way was retrievable. I will briefly explore my hypothesis in the case of Zhu Xi to see if his comments on *guishen* cast any light on his articulation of the *daotong* as an enhancement of Song notions of a long-interrupted transmission of the Way.

A more direct manner of framing this inquiry would be: what are some of the signs that Zhu Xi might have regarded canonical rites for ancestors and teachers as insufficient to provide spiritual empowerment and thus sought enhanced communion with the dead? Although the evidence is fragmentary, I believe a pattern becomes discernible as we progress through several points.

First, Zhu Xi's experiences with his own ancestors might have influenced his views and heightened his sensitivity to the need to address the issue of *guishen*. His own father's and grandfather's remains were not returned to their native place, but rather were buried near Buddhist cloisters in areas where they resided at the time of their deaths. The father selected these sites near Buddhist cloisters even though



he is highly regarded as having been devoted to the Confucian teachings of the Cheng brothers and the Learning of the Way. Before passing away, Zhu's father also arranged for local friends in the Liu 劉 and Hu 胡 families to take care of his orphans and widow; indeed, the Liu family played a major role in supporting, educating, and forging marriage alliances with the orphaned Zhu Xi and his sister. So integrated was Zhu with the Liu family in Fujian that he apparently had little contact with his patrilineal relatives in Wuyuan 婺源 County (then in Huizhou Prefecture) until his first visit to his ancestral graves at age twenty-one *sui* 歲. His visit apparently moved him profoundly because he donated his father's one hundred *mu* of land there (over a dozen acres) to maintain the ancestral graves. Later, when his mother died when he was almost forty, he did not follow the classical tradition of burying her beside his father, but rather interned her about one hundred *li* (about fifty kilometers) away from her husband. Later on, when he did exhume his father, Zhu did not rebury his father beside his mother, but rather at another location. Centuries later, one Qing-era author of *biji* 筆記 made the observation that among the great scholars in the Southern Song dynasty there were many who buried their father and mother separately, and so this practice could be followed as a model.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, Zhu Xi apparently was not alone in this burial practice, and such Song precedents were deemed noteworthy. Zhu Jieren 朱杰人 pointed out to me while visiting Zhu Xi's tomb in October 2000 that Zhu Xi had selected a particularly auspicious site for his own grave and another auspicious site elsewhere for his wife's tomb; thus, they benefited from occupying more than one strategic or crucial *qi* location. Zhu Xi's choice of these sites was determined by a careful study of geomancy.

Selecting an improper burial site, Zhu Xi believed, would subject the corpse to depleting underground winds that would lead to the financial ruin of the descendants. For instance, in an 1194 memorial, his protest against the selected grave site for Xiaozong 孝宗 (reigned 1163–1189) included the following rationale:

If the body is whole, the spirit consciousness (*shenling* 神靈) will attain peace, then the descendants will flourish and the sacrifices will not be cut off. This is a principle of how things spontaneously happen (*ziran zhi li* 自然之理). . . . Should the selection be defective, making the spot inauspicious, then there will surely be water, ants, and ground wind that will damage the contents and cause the body and spirit to be uncomfortable. And descendants will also have worries about death and extinction [of the descent line], which are very scary.<sup>43</sup>

Zhu Xi's sensitivity to grave sites was surely intertwined with his feelings at the beginning of his teenage years when he lost his father and was suddenly forced into manhood. As the only surviving male, he watched his widowed mother struggle to manage the household; moreover, when she died, he built his first *jingshe* 精舍, or "lodge of wondrous remembrance,"<sup>44</sup> so that he could meditate and study near her grave site. Just how profoundly he believed in grave-site geomancy, which perhaps included *yingong* 陰功 or geomantic grave *qigong* 氣功, is evident not only in his exhuming and reburying his father but also in delaying in 1191 the burial of his son for a year on the advice of an expert in geomancy.<sup>45</sup>

Second, Zhu Xi's concern to accommodate contemporary customs and ritual practices led him to endorse a major departure from established and/or classical grave-site rituals—even over Zhang Shi's objections. For instance, in response to Zhu's draft of the *Family Rituals* (*Jia li* 家禮), Zhang Shi underlined the point that Zhu was going against classical guidelines:

The ancients did not sacrifice at graves. This was not an omission; they knew that the feelings and forms of ghosts and spirits could not receive sacrifices at graves. The spirit tablets are in shrines, and the grave contains the bodily *po*. How can sacrificing at the place that contains the bodily *po* accord with moral principle? Who receives the sacrifice? Those who insist on practicing this [grave-site sacrifice] because of private feelings, even though they recognize that logically it does not work, are serving their ancestors hypocritically.<sup>46</sup>

Justifying his and the Cheng brothers' departure from classical precedents for rites, Zhu Xi replied:

... so the current feeling is that on these days one cannot help thinking of one's ancestors and also offering them the item. Although it is not an orthodox ritual, it is something that, given human feelings, cannot be omitted.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, this was a case of adapting classical precedents on the basis of practical considerations, the feelings of contemporary people, and a concern for ancestral spirits.

Third, whereas Zhang Shi objected to rites for "calling down the spirits" because this part of the capping ceremony (marking a boy's coming of age) would encourage ignorant people to believe in ghosts, Zhu Xi approved of calling down the ancestral spirits.<sup>48</sup> Several passages in the *Yulei* record Zhu's responses to Zhang Shi's more skeptical attitude toward spirits.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Zhu believed that some shamans of his day could "make the spirits descend too."<sup>50</sup> Since he believed that shamans could make the spirits descend, he surely had faith in Confucian rituals for communing with the ancestral spirits. For example, in his shrines, he led his students in invoking the spirits of the sages. For an 1194 ceremony addressed to the spirits of Confucius and others, he wrote: "Presenting our offerings and praying respectfully, trust that the spirits, descending to this place, will draw nigh, communicate and bless with illumination (*guangming* 光明)."<sup>51</sup>

Fourth, Zhu Xi asked: "If we say that nothing comes to accept the sacrificial offerings, why sacrifice?"<sup>52</sup> This rhetorical question suggests that Zhu was not completely satisfied with the classical Confucian injunction (e.g., in *Analects* 3/12) to sacrifice to the spirits merely "as if" they were present. He discussed questions regarding *guishen* and ancestral sacrifices in so many *Yulei* 語類 passages that Yung Sik Kim has concluded that "there could hardly be anything more important than the sacrificial service for him."<sup>53</sup> Still, in line with the traditional Confucian idea that the crucial consideration was the impact of the sacrificial rites on those performing the rites, Zhu insisted that the mind of the descendant be sincere (*cheng* 誠) and reverent (*jing* 敬) so that contact could be made with the ancestors' dispersed *qi* and they could be called back to respond to the sacrificial offerings: "If one exhausts

one's sincerity and reverence in the rites of sacrificial offerings, one can reach the *guishen* of the ancestors."<sup>54</sup> He also said: "If this sincere mind reaches and moves, how can the other's [i.e., the ancestor's] *qi*, which is not completely exhausted or dispersed, not come to receive the food offering?"<sup>55</sup> The emphasis in such passages on being sincere and reverent should not, however, obscure the fact that Zhu Xi encouraged the expectation that sacrificial offerings presented with utmost sincerity would indeed evoke a positive response from the ancestor's spirit.

Fifth, there is considerable evidence that Zhu Xi and his students wrestled with the justification for offering sacrifices to those who did not belong to one's patrilineal line of *qi*. Because of his insistence on the particularly shared *qi* passed down through the patrilineal line, it is not surprising that one of his students raised the question of how to justify participation in sacrificial services to one's deceased wife and/or her ancestors. Since one had not inherited that particular *qi* and "mental spirit" (*jingshen* 精神), how could one reach one's wife's ancestors? The student even proposed a solution that would sidestep the apparent contradiction with Zhu Xi's requirement of directly related *qi*. The student suggested that instead of *qi*, such contact was based on the sincerity in one's heart-and-mind (*xin* 心). However, rejecting this easy resolution, Zhu evoked the philosophical principle of the original oneness or universality of *qi* to justify the customary practice of joining in sacrificial services to one's deceased wife and her ancestors:

But that to which sacrifice is made is their *jingshen*, *hun* and *po*, and none of these are not penetrated. It is probably because [their *qi*] originally flowed out from one source, and in the beginning there were no separate divisions; this is also the same even for the *guishen* of *Tien* and earth, mountains and rivers.<sup>56</sup>

Such a glaring exception to Zhu Xi's insistence on particular *qi* linking descendants and ancestors at the sacrificial service provides another example of the primacy of practical considerations over abstract principles. Nonetheless, despite the importance of justifying participation in services for one's wife's ancestors, the universality of one *qi* would seemingly undermine Zhu Xi's grounds for objecting to Buddhist and Daoist sacrificial services for those outside one's own lineage.

The passage above also draws a parallel between services for a wife's ancestors and sacrifices to the spirits of *Tien*, earth, mountains, and rivers. On another occasion, Zhu went so far as to say that one could reach rain spirits and Buddhist deities because they occupied particularly numinous *qi* sites in mountains and along rivers:

Like praying for rain, one also acts on them [i.e., the spirits in charge of rain] with one's sincerity. Similarly in praying to spirits and buddhas, it is also that the *qi* of the mountains and rivers where they reside can be acted on. The places where spirits and buddhas now reside are all the triumphant and numinous points of the rivers and mountains.<sup>57</sup>

In other words, Zhu Xi apparently conceded that one could reach the buddhas because of the numinous *qi* of the mountains and rivers where their shrines were located.

The parallels above that Zhu Xi drew to sacrifices to spirits of *Tian*, earth, mountains, and rivers prompts us to explore briefly his statements about such spirits. Sacrifices to these spirits were similar to prayers that he made to the spirits for rain: as with sacrificial prayers to ancestor's spirits, one sought a response, so all of these spirits are related to Zhu Xi's third category of *guishen*. He believed that when such spirits were joyous, they responded favorably to prayers and sacrificial offerings. For instance, in explaining the claim in *Mencius* 5A/5 that the numerous spirits joyfully received Yao's 堯 sacrificial offerings, he likened this case to "praying for clear weather producing clear weather, and praying for rain producing rain."<sup>58</sup> Some of Zhu Xi's invocations to the spirits of the land and prayers for rain have been preserved in his collected writings.<sup>59</sup> Unlike some officials, he expressed no reluctance or skepticism concerning performing these ritual prayers for rain. Moreover, he claimed that he expended all of his sincerity when he prayed for rain.<sup>60</sup> Of course, prayers for rain were part of his duties as a local official. Rather than minimizing the relevance of these prayers, his official status while making the prayers is particularly germane to our inquiry.

One's status and relationship to the spirits of the natural world was apparently a crucial consideration for Zhu Xi, for there were rules about who could rightfully offer sacrifices to great natural objects and phenomena. Referring to classical dicta, he said:

"The *Tianzi* 天子 [conventional appellation for the "Son of Heaven," i.e., the emperor] offers sacrifices to *Tian* above and earth below; the heads of the various states offer sacrifices to mountains and rivers; and high officials offer sacrifices to the five domestic spirits." All these are [examples of the case of] one's mental spirit appropriately reaching them [i.e., the spirits to whom one offers sacrifices] and thus being able to stimulate and call them to come. If the heads of the various states offer sacrifices to *Tian* above and the earth below, or if high officials offer sacrifices to mountains and rivers, then it is meaningless.<sup>61</sup>

Hence, one's ability to reach such spirits depended on one's relationship to them, a relationship that was grounded in one's official status.

Zhu Xi even discussed classical rules relating official status and sacrifices relating to the issue of the inappropriateness of offering sacrifices to non-ancestors:

*Guishen* are essentially existent entities. Ancestors are also only of one *qi* with these [descendants here], and there is an inclusive or whole set [of the family]. When the descendants are physically present here, the ancestor's *qi* is also here, and they have a penetrating consanguinity (*xuema* 血脈). Therefore, the reason "spirits do not enjoy the offerings of those not their kindred and people do not sacrifice to those not their ancestry" is simply that their *qi* is not related. In the case of "the Son of *Tian* offers sacrifices to *Tian* above and earth below; the heads of the various states offer sacrifices to mountains and rivers; and high officials offer sacrifices to the five domestic spirits"—even though these are not one's patrilineal ancestors—the emperor is the hosting lord (*zhu* 主) of *Tian* above and earth below, and the heads of the various states are the lords of the mountains and rivers, and the high officials are the lords of the five domestic sacrifices. When one's hosting reaches the other [i.e., the spirits of the ancestors], then their *qi* also all aggregates summarily on one's own body; when it happens like this, there is a locus of interaction.<sup>62</sup>

This difficult passage was important enough to be recorded in the same wording by two different students. Herein, Zhu Xi suggested that the hosting lordship inherent in official status provided a parallel to the consanguinity between descendants and ancestors because there was a bond of lordship or belonging when the appropriate person made the sacrificial offerings. The word *zhu* (host or lord) in the passage above can be better understood by reading a similar passage in which a different character is used. This character *shu* 屬 means “to belong to” or “to be connected with” or “to depend on”; moreover, it has an alternative pronunciation of *zhu* meaning “to be connected with” or “to be near to” or “to entrust to.”

Commenting on *Analects* 3/6, where Confucius sternly objected to the Ji 季 family offering a sacrifice to Mt. Tai because the Ji family was not the lord of the state of Lu 魯, Zhu Xi remarked:

“The emperor offering sacrifices to *Tian* above and earth below and the heads of the various states offering sacrifices to the mountains and rivers in their states” is precisely connected to this [principle that] the “others” [i.e., the spirits] belong (*shu*) to oneself, and so one’s sacrifices reach them. If they do not belong to oneself, the *qi* does not mutually stimulate (*xianggan* 相感), so how can one reach them through sacrifices?<sup>63</sup>

In both of these quoted passages, Zhu Xi made a case that the spirits of the “other” (*ta* 他) really belonged or were connected to the “one” (*wu* 吾, literally “I” or “me”) offering the sacrifice to the “other.”

In another related passage, Zhu Xi explored a different aspect of the canonical dicta (about spirits not enjoying the offerings of those not their kindred) when he gave examples of cases when the *qi* was related—despite the absence of blood relationship. He again cited the example of the emperor appropriately offering sacrifices to *Tian* above—and *Tian* responding—because “there was a *qi* category (*qi lei* 氣類)” shared between them. [The shared *qi lei* seems comparable to the blood relationship or consanguinity (*xuemai*) discussed above. In these contexts it is perhaps significant that he used the traditional reference to the emperor as the “Son of *Tian*” (instead of some other term, such as *huangdi* 皇帝) because “son” would suggest a shared *qi* with *Tian*). Then, after again mentioning the example of the heads of the various states offering their sacrifices, Zhu added: “Now, offering sacrifices to Confucius must be with learning (*xue* 學); his *qi* category can thus be contemplated.”<sup>64</sup> This passage is particularly noteworthy because it juxtaposes the emperor offering sacrifices to *Tian* and educated literati offering sacrifices to Confucius; moreover, the basis for both kinds of sacrifice was a shared *qi* category between the spirits there and the one here making the sacrifices and offerings. As will be explored below, Confucius represented a special case to Zhu Xi that requires further discussion. My fifth point here, in short, is that Zhu found ways of justifying customary sacrifices for those outside one’s lineage; however, he generally did so in ways that imposed rules regarding who could offer sacrifices, and he projected a connecting bond of “belonging” and shared *qi* between those making and receiving proper sacrificial offerings.

Sixth, in sacrificial rites to the sages, Zhu Xi’s statements provide evidence of treating sages as imagined ancestors. For instance, he repeatedly addressed the sages

in the language of a prayerful report (*gao* 告).<sup>65</sup> This genre was comparable to reports (*bao* 報) to one's biological ancestors during family worship. Responding to one question about offering sacrifices to sages and worthies, he replied that since the sages and worthies "gave meritorious achievements to the people, the people should naturally *bao* [i.e., report to, or recompense] them; this is just like the ancients offering sacrifices to the Five Emperors."<sup>66</sup> (The Five Emperors [*wu di* 五帝] were legendary ancestral heroes who made major contributions to the beginnings of Chinese civilization.) In other words, one was thanking and repaying both the sages and the ancestral spirits—as distinct from making requests to or beseeching (*qi* 祈) regular deities for specific favors or blessings.<sup>67</sup> Making a report to ancestors or sages was apparently considered adequate: since they were assumed to be both benevolent and wise, why would one need to beseech them to respond in a specific or particular way to one's difficulties? Reporting and deferring to their wisdom would appear sufficient.

The structure and place for reporting to the sages reinforced the metaphorical identity between sages and ancestors. Besides arranging spirit tablets at academies and study retreats to mirror the generational order in a lineage's ancestral hall, Zhu Xi set a daily schedule for his students to offer obeisance in the ancestral image hall (*yingtang* 影堂), at the shrine of the earth god, and before the portraits of the sages. According to his student's account,

Master [Zhu] arose early every morning and would emerge from his chamber after all the students attending the academy had dressed, rung the bell, and gone to the image hall to await him. After they opened the door, the Master ascended the hall, and led the students, in their proper ranks, in paying obeisance and lighting incense. He paid obeisance again and withdrew. One of the students would be sent to burn incense and pay reverence to the earth god's shrine. Afterwards, accompanying our Master and ascending into the chamber, we would pay reverence to the Former Sage / Former Teacher and then sit in the academy's study hall.<sup>68</sup>

Given that this passage is ascribed to Wang Guo 王過 who recorded sayings at the Zhulin Study Lodge (竹林精舍) after 1194,<sup>69</sup> this must describe activity at that lodge in Fujian, where Zhu Xi is not known to have had any relatives beyond his own immediate family. Yet, the students are referred to in familial terms as "sons and younger brothers" (*zidi* 子弟), rather than as "disciples or students" (*dizi* 弟子); thus, the use of the term *zidi* would lead one to assume a lineage school instead of a study lodge for nonrelatives. Complexity is further enhanced by the fact that the *zidi* first convened in the *yingtang*, a hall generally reserved for ancestral images, and only afterwards went to another chamber to pay their respects before the spirit tablet of Confucius and the sages.

It is striking that the same term *zidi* is used to describe the participants in the whole series of activities. Of course, it is possible that Wang Guo simply and individually misappropriated patrilineal terms to describe activities of the study retreat's members because he regarded them as "family." It seems strange that Zhu Xi would be leading students outside his lineage to pay reverence to the image portraits of his

own lineage. According to Patricia Ebrey, Zhu Xi disapproved of using portraits in ancestor worship and did not use the term *yingtang* (image halls).<sup>70</sup> However, he did approve of using portraits of sages and worthies.<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, in one recorded conversation with his students, he rejected having a large statue of Confucius at the Yuelu Academy (嶽麓書院), but did express flexibility over having a smaller statue of Confucius in a seated posture.<sup>72</sup> Thus, despite Wang Guo's strange passage here, it is thus quite likely that the portraits in the image hall belonged to ancient sages and recent worthies. In any event, this passage treats "disciples or students" as "sons and younger brothers," thus blurring the distinction between disciples and patrilineal relatives. Furthermore, leading students in daily services before the sages' spirit tablets or portraits seems somewhat analogous to one's daily reporting, and paying respects, to one's ancestral parents. It is also noteworthy that the morning rituals culminated in Zhu Xi leading the students in paying reverence to the Former Sage / Former Teacher, that is, Confucius.

Seventh, Confucius appears to have occupied a special place in Zhu Xi's rituals, and he even made confessional prayers to Confucius that appear to suggest a kind of fictive familial tie. On one occasion, Zhu became so exasperated with his inability to control a student's behavior that he addressed Confucius' spirit thus:

I, Xi 熹, am unworthy. I have recently been recommended and appointed as an official in charge of this county, so I obtained responsibility to co-direct school affairs here. There is a certain student under my direction whose bad behavior has stained those in charge. I believe that since I have failed to carry out the *dao* myself, I have been unable to lead and hone others and have allowed [matters] to come to this. Moreover, I was unable [to impose] proper penalties early on in order to punish and control him. As a result both virtue and rules were lax, and disobedient literati ultimately had no restrictions. Therefore, I am reporting to the Former Sage / Former Teacher to request direction in rectifying school rules and in using the punishment of publicly labeling (*mingxing* 明刑) to cause the students to feel ashamed. [According to the classics,] "a wooden ruler is to instruct and punish," and "the two sticks can be effective in bestowing awe." All these are models that the Former Sage / Former Teacher bequeathed to later generations for administering schools. [When] [t]he Former Sage / Former Teacher is approaching from above, how dare I, Xi, not put my palms on the ground and kowtow.<sup>73</sup>

The *mingxing* was a punishment in which offenders had to remove their caps and trappings of status and wear on their backs a placard or poster announcing their offense. It is also noteworthy that Zhu Xi cryptically referred to the "Shun Dian" 舜典 chapter of the *Book of Documents* and the "Xueji" 學記 chapter of the *Book of Rites* as providing a model for inflicting punishment by using a stick to strike (the hands of) the students.<sup>74</sup> Despite his interest in threatening to punish the students, Zhu Xi was obviously also asking for guidance in furthering his own self-cultivation. Furthermore, he might have been expressing his shame in order to shame his students, too, for he wanted the students to be ashamed and thus refrain from improper behavior. This sounds to me like a routine ploy of Chinese parents: criticizing themselves for the mistakes of their children in order to evoke shame and reform in the children.

More importantly, what is of particular interest to us here is how Zhu Xi positioned himself as mediator between his students and Confucius' spirit by assuming both the *zong* 宗 (descent lines)—a term that suggested direct patrilineal descent from the sages. It is noteworthy that even though he did not discuss the *zong* issue in 1176, he incorporated it during the 1180s to become a major theme in his *Family Rituals*.<sup>75</sup> The timing is significant, for it was also during the 1180s that he developed the rubric of the *daotong* in his assertion as the authoritative reader of the tradition. The blending of the *zong* descent-line system and the claim to the *daotong* is clearly pronounced in his 1189 preface to the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong* 中庸). To answer his own question of how the *Mean* had come to be written, Zhu Xi asserted that Confucius' disciples Yan Hui 顏回 and Zengzi 曾子 provided the link to the *zong* descent line of the ancient sages, and Zengzi then passed the transmission on to Confucius' grandson, Zisi 子思, who completed the work. Thereupon the transmission of the *daotong* flowed.<sup>76</sup>

In 1194, Zhu Xi provided an enshrinement version of his *daotong* that again turned to the family imagery of *chuan* 傳, "passing down [inheritance]" and *zong* "descent lines." (It is perhaps significant that this service was done at the same Zhulin Study Lodge, here called the Cangzhou Study Lodge [滄州精舍], whose schedule of daily services Wang Guo described in one of the quotations discussed above.)

I, the later student, Xi, venture prayerfully to entreat the Former and Ultimate Sage, the King of Promoting Culture [Confucius]. Let us celebrate the *dao* legacy [extending] back to Fu Xi and the Yellow Emperor. Its achievements were all assembled by the Original Sage [Confucius], who transmitted the ancient [teachings], gave instructions, and set standards for ten thousand generations. His three thousand disciples were transformed as if [his instructions] had been a timely rain. Only Yan Hui and Zengzi were able to get the legacy of Confucius. It was not until Zisi and Yu 輿 that his legacy was made more lustrous and great. Since then, subsequent followers lost the true transmission in the process of teaching and receiving. The legacy was not continued until more than one thousand years later. What Zhou [Dunyi] and the Cheng brothers learned and taught was that the myriad principles (*li*) had one single origin. As for Shao [Yong] 邵[雍], Zhang [Zai] 張[載], and Sima [Guang] 司馬[光], even though their learning was diverse, they all arrived at the same conclusions about the *dao*. They facilitated us later generations, as if we were moving from a dark night into the dawning of a new day. When I, Xi, was a child, I received instruction from [my late father] because of my limitations. In my youth, I was taught by standard teachers, and in my mature years, I have met those who had the *dao*. Gazing upward respectfully, and even though nothing is heard, [I know that] due to the spirit consciousness (*ling* 靈) of *Tian* above, we are fortunate that nothing [being passed down] has been lost. Now, I am old and retired [from government service], and those who are fond of the same things have gathered here, and we have built this study lodge. At the beginning of our living together, [I] look for the origins and deduce the roots [of our *dao*] because [I] do not dare obscure [our] minds. Presenting our offerings and praying respectfully, trust that the spirits, descending to this place, will draw nigh, communicate and bless with illumination. [We] will then faithfully and untiringly—without rejecting anything—transmit it [the *dao*] without interruption to those coming in the future. Now,



as this is an auspicious day, I will lead the assembled students in celebration, performing the rite of offering food to the spirits [of the sages and teachers named]. Please receive these food offerings!<sup>77</sup>

It is particularly noteworthy that Zhu Xi's insistence on the importance of the *zong* descent line in ancestral rites was matched by his identification of a *zong* descent line within those installed in transmission shrines. His philosophy of *qi* dictated the necessity of continuity of the same *qi* between the ancestor and the proper descendant performing sacrificial rites to the ancestor; moreover, the exceptions, which he did allow, were governed by strict rules of status and "belonging" that were functionally equivalent to consanguinity. Since he portrayed the spirits as coming down from *Tian* above in response to his sacrificial offerings and ensuring that nothing was lost in his inheritance of the *dao*, he obviously felt that he had met his own expressed qualifications for being the proper person qualified to contact the spirits of the sages, especially the spirit of Confucius.

But how could Zhu's critics in the 1190s fail to condemn his claim to a unique relationship with Confucius' spirit? Surely such a radical claim would have made him more culpable in the eyes of his enemies at the emperor's court than their official allegations, such as the charge that he had had illicit sex with two Buddhist nuns.<sup>78</sup> Those charges were strong enough to label him a teacher of bogus learning; moreover, when Zhu died in 1200, his teachings were still officially banned. We should remember that his claim to special access to the spirit of Confucius was initially articulated only within the fellowship gathered at the shrines, heard only by his disciples, and remained unpublished until after he was enshrined in the Confucian Temple in 1241—thus after his claim would no longer seem so radical. Perhaps it is a measure of how much later generations down to the present have taken his privileged status for granted that we have generally overlooked how brash he must have been when he first articulated his claim to having unique access and being special mediator to the spirit of Confucius.

### Conclusion

The present study has queried apparent tensions within some of Zhu Xi's statements about *guishen*. On the one hand, he reinforced classical pronouncements against offering sacrifices to other people's ancestors by elaborating on the necessity of the particular *qi* that descendants inherited from ancestors. On the other hand, when asked to justify participation in sacrificial services for one's deceased wife or her ancestors, he called upon the universality or ultimate oneness of all *qi* as the grounds for effectually reaching and moving these spirits. This statement, citing the oneness of all *qi*, might encourage us to conclude that his endorsement of sacrifices to the sages meant that he was opening up the tradition in such a way as to provide access philosophically for everyone to the sages. Indeed, his boldness in setting up shrines and offering sacrifices to sages and worthies—particularly Confucius—was a challenge to the state-controlled cult of Confucius centered in the Temple of Confucius.

China's political division into competing dynastic governments certainly enhanced Zhu's freedom to claim (at least privately within his group's shrines and academies) access to Confucius directly and outside the state's guidelines for rituals in the Temple of Confucius. Nevertheless, a closer reading of Zhu's statements has shown that he had rules about offering sacrifices to the spirits of nonrelatives. He drew a parallel between the case of sacrificial offerings to one's wife's ancestors and sacrifices to *Tian* above and earth below, as well as to mountains and rivers. Furthermore, he endorsed classical dicta that only the emperor could offer sacrifices to *Tian* above and earth below, and only the heads of the various states could offer sacrifices to the mountains and rivers in their areas. Likewise, local officials were empowered to make offerings to local spirits and pray for rain. Thus, official status in the governmental system was an apparent requirement.

In justifying this exclusivity, Zhu Xi claimed that there was a special lordship operative in such cases. For example, since the emperor was the lord in relation to *Tian* above and earth below, these spirits "belonged to" or were "connected to" him, so they would respond to his offerings and prayers. Zhu further argued that such a connection was based on sharing the same "category" (*lei*) of *qi*; thus, the *qi* category was analogous to the consanguinity of the *qi* shared by matrilineal relatives. Juxtaposing sacrificial offerings that the emperor made to *Tian* above and people's sacrifices to Confucius, Zhu even stated that one's approach to Confucius' spirit must be based on "learning" (*xue*); therein, one could contemplate what the *qi* category of Confucius' spirit was.

Since one's access to Confucius' spirit was determined by one's learning, Zhu Xi's stance again, at first brush, appears very egalitarian, at least among the literati elite; however, closer scrutiny of his statements and ritual actions has found him making metaphorical identity between sages and ancestors in ways to enhance only his own unique standing. He daily led his students in paying respect to the sages in settings and forms that mirrored lineage rites for ancestors; hence, his status was not only the teaching Master but also the *zong* lineage head of the imagined descent group. In his 1194 service at the Cangzhou Study Lodge, he actively drew upon this language imagery of *zong*, a lineage's descent line, and *chuan*, a family's inheritance, to project the transmission of the *dao* from the sages down to himself. Moreover, on occasion, he made confessional prayers to Confucius and beseeched Confucius' spirit for guidance and illumination. In one such instance, confessing his shortcomings and asking for guidelines on how to punish and discipline erring junior members of the group, he acted as mediator between Confucius' spirit and his students.

By respectfully presenting sacrificial offerings to Confucius, Zhu Xi was, in part, following the tradition of honoring teachers and especially the ancient Sage as the archetypal teacher. Yet, in his prayers and confessions to Confucius' spirit, Zhu appears also to be addressing Confucius as an ancestor. His prayers and confessions were, after all, not in the form of petitions (*qi*) for blessings from deities, but rather of reports (*gao*)—similar to the reports (*bao*) one would make to the spirit tablets of one's ancestors. Having at fourteen *sui* lost his father and spending the rest of his life

with only rare contact with the patrilineal relatives who would normally play a major role in a person's maturation and career, Zhu Xi was also more sensitive than some of his close colleagues (such as Zhang Shi) to rites calling down the spirits, performing sacrificial rites at graves, and engaging in grave-site geomancy to ensure the comfort of the spirit and the wholeness of the corpse. His own efforts to follow the instructions from geomancy masters about grave sites—especially when his philosophical penchant pointed in a more purely rationalistic direction—suggest a particularly strong filial need for remembrance and reassurance. His focus on Zhou Dunyi as the one to whom *Tian* bestowed the revival of Confucius' teachings apparently arose from a need higher than systematic philosophy. Indeed, in terms of texts and ideas, he could more easily turn directly to the Cheng brothers; yet, in shrines and in the *daotong* transmission that was conceived therein, Zhou Dunyi took precedence over the Chengs. Zhou Dunyi's direct mediation with *Tian* provided a parallel to Fu Xi and Confucius. Moreover, in his own sacrificial services to the sages, especially Confucius, Zhu Xi asserted that the spirit consciousness in *Tian* above had ensured that nothing had been lost in the transmission of the *dao* to him.

Given Zhu Xi's statements and experiences communing with the dead, we might well conclude that his reverent sincerity in approaching Confucius' spirit tablet reflected a sense of imagined descent. His appropriation of Confucius in this way was surely made a little less difficult by the political division of China, which resulted in the Jurchen 女真 Jin 金 state patronizing one Kong 孔 lineage in the North and the Song dynasty promoting a different one in the South.<sup>79</sup> With the emphasis in Zhu Xi's philosophy of *qi* on the importance of only a proper descendant benefiting from making the sacrificial offerings, he had a special need to perceive of himself as the imagined descendant of Confucius, or at least as particularly connected to Confucius' spirit. If he were spiritually a *zong* lineage descendant of Confucius, he had special resonance with the Sage's mind and a particular inheritance. Although he did not explicitly claim to be Confucius' descendant, he did say that only one with proper status and one to whom the spirits "belonged" enjoyed a kind of consanguinity and thus could effectively make contact with the spirits. The effectual contact with Confucius' spirit was quite clearly portrayed in Zhu Xi's accounts; thus, he succeeded in fulfilling his own rules or requirements for reaching and moving the spirit.

Moreover, since the *qi* category of Confucius' spirit was "learning," Zhu Xi's verbal accounts and bodily kowtows before Confucius' arriving spirit authenticated Zhu's status as authoritative reader of the classics. It is not surprising that students who heard and observed their Master praying and kowtowing to the spirit of Confucius were, after Zhu's death, so insistent on his special status in the *daotong*. Witnessing Zhu's empowerment at the transmission shrines certainly facilitated their acceptance of his genealogical claim about the *daotong* and confirmed their belief in the authority of their Master's articulation of the original Sage's message. The example of Confucius (*Analects* 7/33) and Mencius (*Mencius* 2A/2) served as a restraint against explicitly ranking oneself with the sages; nonetheless, having witnessed Zhu Xi's implicit empowerment in the transmission shrines, his disciples were

prepared to take the culminating step in proclaiming their Master to be a Sage, too. *Guishen* and *wen* 文 (culture and the literary tradition) and *dao* were thus ultimately mutually reinforcing and produced the coherence or pattern (*li*) of his philosophical synthesis. Since this is apparently so, we should not overlook *guishen*, as spirits, when we seek to understand how he fashioned his philosophy.

In summary, the present inquiry has focused on rather abstract, even spiritual aspects of Zhu Xi's philosophy; nonetheless, the primacy of his practical concerns for praxis is quite evident. Besides justifying ritual family practices, he obviously was mindful of establishing positions competitive with religious beliefs among the people. Ultimately, his statements about spirits and especially his prayers to Confucius' spirit served to enhance his confidence that he had gained the transmission of Confucius' *dao* and that "nothing [being passed down] had been lost." By setting forth these claims orally in the presence of his students and by placing himself as mediator between them and Confucius, Zhu Xi harnessed spiritual power toward his practical, even political, agenda of being the authoritative reader and interpreter of the classics and of the Dao-learning Confucian fellowship. Since they witnessed his claim that the sagely spirits from *Tian* above had ensured that "nothing was lost" in the transmission of the *dao* to their Master, their faith in his "completion" of the tradition was surely enhanced. After all, at the culmination of that sacrificial service, Zhu Xi had led them in pledging to "faithfully and untiringly—without rejecting anything—transmit it [the *dao*] without interruption to those coming in the future." In short, in its own small way, the present inquiry into the seemingly abstract topics of *guishen* and *daotong* provides an example of the primacy of practical sociopolitical concerns—praxis over theory—in Zhu Xi's thinking.

#### Notes

A much shorter, preliminary version of this article was first given at the 1999 annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Boston. After some revisions, a Chinese version was presented at the international conferences on Zhu Xi in Shanghai (October 2000) and Taipei (November 2000). I summarized this research as a memorial lecture honoring Dr. Wolfgang Bauer at the Institut für Ostasienkunde-Sinologie at the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität in Munich on February 5, 2001. Having benefited from questions raised at those venues, I have significantly expanded the discussion for this English version; thus, I owe a debt to various scholars, including (but not limited to) Professors Chen Lai, Yung Sik Kim, Tu Wei-ming, Hans van Ess, and Thomas Höllmann. Acknowledgments to others, particularly Lionel Jensen, are made in the notes below. Moreover, I reoriented the original paper to relate to some of Professor Yü Ying-shih's work and presented it at "China's Future and Past," a conference to honor Professor Yü's retirement from Princeton University, May 4–5, 2001. That essay appeared in a festschrift: *Guoshi fuhai kai xinlu: Yu Yingshi jiaoshou rongtui lunwenji* 國史浮海開新路：余英時教授榮退論文集 (National history floating across the sea and opening new venues: An anthology dedicated to Professor Ying-shih Yü on his retirement), ed. Chou Chih-p'ing and Willard Peterson

(Taipei: Lianjing Publishing Co., 2002), pp. 159–204. My travel to these places was supported variously by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (for the Shanghai conference), the Center for Chinese Studies at the National Central Library (for the Taipei conference), and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (for my award trip to Germany). For *Philosophy East and West* and my culminating effort on this topic, I have further reoriented, revised, and expanded my earlier drafts. Margaret Tillman edited my English drafts.

- 1 – I am particularly indebted to Yung Sik Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi, 1130–1200* (Philadelphia: Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, 2000), which helped me to expand my discussion of several points; to Lionel M. Jensen, “Ruins of Remembrance: Image, Text and the Generative Fiction of the Chinese Past” (paper presented at the University of California, Berkeley, in October 1998); and to Jensen’s “When Words Move Stones: Figures, Fictions, and the Chinese Past” (Sabbatical grant proposal and book proposal, 1999). See also Daniel Gardner, “Ghosts and Spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian World: Chu Hsi on *Kuei-shen*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 (4) (1995); Gardner’s “Zhu Xi on Spirit Beings,” in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Chinese Religions in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Yong Sik Kim, “*Kuei-shen* in terms of *Ch’i*: Chu Hsi’s Discussion of *Kuei-shen*,” *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 17 (1985): 149–162; and Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi* (Oxford University Press, 2000), chap. 3. For a more “Neo-Confucian” reading of many of the *guishen* passages, see Joseph A. Adler, “Varieties of Spiritual Experience: *Shen* in Neo-Confucian Discourse,” in Tu Wei-ming and Mary Evelyn Tucker, eds., *Confucian Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2003).
- 2 – Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, “Consciousness of *T’ien* in Chu Hsi’s Thought,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (1) (June 1987): 31–50.
- 3 – Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1992). See also the significantly revised and expanded Chinese version, published under my Chinese name, Tian Hao 田浩, *Zhu Xi de siwei shijie 朱熹的思維世界* (Taipei: Yunchen Wenhua Gongsi, 1996), and the further revised version (Xi’an: Shaanxi Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2002).
- 4 – Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei 朱子語類* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1986), 1.20; for some passages traditional page numbers (within parentheses) will be provided for the Zhengzhong Shuju edition (Taipei, 1962), as here (1.4b). See also Tillman, “Consciousness of *Tian*,” and Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, pp. 55–60.
- 5 – See particularly Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue’an 朱子新學案* (Taipei: Sanmin Shuju, 1971); Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1989); and Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 2 : 490–491.

- 6 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.34–35; translation adapted from Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 92.
- 7 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.37, trans. Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 93. Julia Ching (*The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, p. 276 n. 89) comments, “Ghost fires refer to flashes of light hovering over dark and humid graveyards, possibly due to gases from decayed corpses; ghost whistles probably refer to the whistling of winds in such places.”
- 8 – *Zhuzi yulei*, e.g. 3.37, 38, 41, 44, 45, 49, and 63.1551.
- 9 – On the orthodox Confucian view, see Qian Mu, *Linghun yu xin* 靈魂與心 (Taipei: Lianjing Chubanshe, 1976), and Ying-shih Yü, “‘O Soul, Come Back!’ A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (1987): 365–395. For an overview of traditional Chinese views, see also Anthony C. Yu’s helpful bibliographic survey and study in the same 1987 *HJAS*: “Rest, Rest Perturbed Spirit! Ghosts in Traditional Chinese Prose Fiction.” I use “Confucian” not as an eponym for Chinese tradition, but rather as an artifice for distinguishing some textual communities or strands of intellectuals—who regarded their culture as rooted in the ancient classics ascribed to Kongzi, i.e., our Confucius—from other literati associated primarily with other Chinese traditions, most notably various sects of Buddhism and Daoism.
- 10 – *Zuozhuan*, in James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5, *The Ch’un Ts’ew, with the Tso Chuen* (London: Oxford University Press, 1895), p. 618. The translation here is an adaptation of Ying-shih Yü’s adaptation from Alfred Forke, *Lun Heng* (reprint, New York: Paragon, 1962), 1 : 208–209.
- 11 – Yü, “‘O Soul, Come Back!’ A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (1987): 372–373.
- 12 – *Zhuzi yulei* 63.1551 (25b), trans. Gardner, “Ghosts and Spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian World,” p. 603. See also 3.43, 44.
- 13 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.45 (10b), trans. Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 94.
- 14 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.38 (5b).
- 15 – *Zhuzi yulei* 63.1551 (25b); Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 94.
- 16 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.45. Zhang Heng’s 襄弘 story is in the *Zuozhuan*, the third year of Aikong 哀公. See also Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 94 n. 45.
- 17 – *Zhuzi yulei* 90.2310 (18b), trans. Gardner, “Ghosts and Spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian World,” p. 604; see also Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, p. 68, on Zhu Xi’s comments on spirit possession.
- 18 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.35, trans. Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 100.
- 19 – *Analects* 6/20; see discussion in Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 100.

- 20 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.55 (3 : 19b); see also Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, p. 65.
- 21 – Translation adapted from Yü, “‘O Soul, Come Back!’ A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (1987): p. 374, citing *Liji zhushu* 禮記注疏 (Shisanjing Zhushu, 1815 edition). For a translation of the *Book of Rites*, see James Legge, *The Texts of Confucianism, Part III: The Li Ki*, 2 vols., in F. Max Müller, ed., *Sacred Books of the East* (London: Probsthain, 1917).
- 22 – *Ibid.*, p. 374–377.
- 23 – *Ibid.*, p. 376, citing *Liji zhushu*, 47.14a–15a. See also Julia Ching’s quotation and discussion (*The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, p. 63) of passages from the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*).
- 24 – *Ibid.*, p. 393 n. 80, quoting and citing Kong Yingda’s 孔穎達 *Zhengyi* 正義 in *Zuozhuan zhushu* 左傳注疏 (Shisanjing Zhushu, 1815 edition), 44.13a–14a; see also Yü’s discussion, pp. 378–393.
- 25 – For example, *Zhuzi yulei* 3.37, 38, 45.
- 26 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.49.
- 27 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.45.
- 28 – *Zhuzi yulei* 90.2309.
- 29 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.47, trans. adapted from Gardner, “Ghosts and Spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian World,” p. 608.
- 30 – *Zhuzi yulei* 63.1546.
- 31 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.37, trans. Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, pp. 94–95.
- 32 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.50, trans. adapted from Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 96.
- 33 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.47, trans. Gardner, “Ghosts and Spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian World,” pp. 607–608.
- 34 – Ellen G. Neskar, “The Cult of Worthies: A Study of Shrines Honoring Local Confucian Worthies in the Sung Dynasty (960–1279)” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993). I am citing the dissertation because unfortunately during my travels abroad I could not utilize her recent book to update my citations; however, see also her *Politics and Prayers: Shrines to Local Former Worthies in Sung China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- 35 – See, for instance, the examples in Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, “One Significant Rise in Chu-ko Liang’s Popularity: An Impact of the 1127 Jurchen Conquest,” *Haxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 (Chinese Studies) 14 (2) (December 1996): esp. 13–16.
- 36 – Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi ji* 朱子集 (Chengdu: Sichuan Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1996 edition), 78 : 4074, trans. adapted from Neskar, “The Cult of Worthies,” p. 352.

- 37 – Neskar, “The Cult of Worthies,” pp. 386–388.
- 38 – Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi daquan* 朱子大全 (Sibu beiyao edition of Zhu’s *Wenji*) (reprint, Taipei, 1970), 7:17a, trans. Neskar, “The Cult of Worthies,” p. 389.
- 39 – See particularly Huang Jinxing 黃進興, *You ru sheng yu* 優人聖越 (Taipei: Yun-chen Wenhua Gongsì, 1994), on the history of struggles between emperors and scholars over the Confucian Temple. On the struggle during the Song, see Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1992), esp. chap. 10, and Neskar, “The Cult of Worthies,” chap. 6.
- 40 – Specifically, Thomas A. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
- 41 – Specifically, Neskar, “The Cult of Worthies,” pp. 302–303.
- 42 – *Lüyuan conghua* 履園叢話 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju edition, 1979), 5:141. Achim Mittag brought this passage to my attention.
- 43 – Zhu Xi, *Zhu Wengong wenji* 朱文公文集 (Sibu congkan edition), 15:34a–b, trans. Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China: A Social History of Writing about Rites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 139.
- 44 – Phrase coined by Lionel M. Jensen, “Popular Cults and Confucian *Paideia* in Medieval China” (paper for the Symposium “Religion and Society in China, 750–1300,” held at the University of Illinois, 1988).
- 45 – *Zhu Wengong wenji, xuji* 續集 7.8b, cited in Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, pp. 138–139, and Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies*, pp. 119–120. But Chan says that this decision was certainly a concession to his son’s wife. Chan’s evidence is problematic: he quotes a letter from Zhang Shi inquiring about a burial, but Zhang died eleven years before Zhu’s son, so how could Zhu be inquiring about the burial in question?
- 46 – Zhang Shi, *Nanxuan ji* 南軒集 (Siku quanshu edition), 20.2b–3b, trans. adapted from Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals*, p. 127.
- 47 – *Zhu Wengong wenji*, 30.29a–30a, trans. Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, p. 128.
- 48 – See discussion in *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, pp. 131–132.
- 49 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.34, 35, 37–39, and 63.1550.
- 50 – *Zhuzi yulei* 90.2310 (90:18b), trans. Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, p. 68.
- 51 – *Zhuzi daquan* 86.12b.
- 52 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.51, trans. Gardner, “Ghosts and Spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian World,” p. 607.



- 53 – Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 95.
- 54 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.46; see also 63.1551–52.
- 55 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.38, trans. adapted from Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 95.
- 56 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.50. I am grateful to Yung Sik Kim for drawing my attention to this passage, which would apparently decrease Zhu's emphasis on particular ancestral *qi*. See also Kim's *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, pp. 95–96.
- 57 – *Zhuzi yulei* 90.2292, trans. adapted from Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 97.
- 58 – *Zhuzi yulei* 58.1360, trans. Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 96.
- 59 – *Zhuzi daquan* 85.21a, 86.9a, 16ab.
- 60 – See his letter to Chen Liang 陳亮 in *Zhuzi daquan* 36.17a, trans. Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch'en Liang's Challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Studies Monograph 101, Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 118.
- 61 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.47, trans. adapted from Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 97.
- 62 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.47.
- 63 – *Zhuzi yulei* 25.612 (8b), trans. adapted from Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, p. 97.
- 64 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.52.
- 65 – See, for instance, the various writings in *Zhuzi daquan* 86.
- 66 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.53.
- 67 – On this distinction, see the quotations discussed in Neskar, "The Cult of Worthies," p. 160.
- 68 – *Zhuzi yulei* 107.2674; compare trans. by Neskar, "The Cult of Worthies," p. 196.
- 69 – Chen Rongjie (Wing-tsit Chan), *Zhuzi menren* 朱子門人 (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1982), p. 63.
- 70 – Patricia Ebrey, "Education Through Ritual: Efforts to Formulate Family Rituals During the Sung Period," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee, eds., *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 301.
- 71 – *Zhuzi daquan* 77.14ab, 79.2b, 11a. See also discussion in Neskar, "The Cult of Worthies," pp. 29–31.
- 72 – *Zhuzi yulei* 3.52.

- 73 – *Zhuzi ji* 86.4423; compare translation by Neskar, “The Cult of Worthies,” p. 199; Neskar translates part of this passage, leaving out the model of punishment, and reading the *mingxing* without linking it to a mode of punishment; thus, she interprets the passage purely as an admonition for Zhu’s own self-cultivation.
- 74 – *Book of Documents*; see James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, 3:38–39, and Cai Shen 蔡沈, *Shujing jizhuan* 書經集傳, p. 7, in vol. 1 of *Sishu wujing: Song Yuan zhu* 四書五經：宋元注 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shudian, 1985; photo-reproduction of the Shijie Shuju edition). See also the Xueji chapter of the *Liji*, in Wang Mengou 王夢鷗 *Liji jin zhu jin yi* 禮記今注今議 (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1971), 2:479.
- 75 – See discussion in Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, pp. 134–135. See also Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), esp. pp. 100, 113–114.
- 76 – *Zhuzi ji* 76.3994.
- 77 – *Zhuzi daquan* 86.12ab, or *Zhuzi ji* 86.4446. I have used some of Jensen’s translation (in “Ruins of Remembrance”) of parts of this inscription.
- 78 – Ye Shaoweng 葉紹翁, *Sichao wenjian lu* 四朝聞見錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju edition), pp. 143–146.
- 79 – See Thomas A. Wilson, ed., *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).