

Meeting of Minds: Intellectual and Religious Interaction in East Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Honor of Wing-Tsit Chan and William Theodore De Bary

IRENE BLOOM and JOSHUA A. FOGEL, eds. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. 391 pages. ISBN 0-231-10352-2.

This volume is a fitting *festschrift* to two scholars and teachers who, separately and in collaboration, have made a tremendous impact on the study of East Asian philosophy and religion, especially the Neo-Confucian tradition. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the eleven articles collected here address Confucianism, either wholly or in part. But the greatest value of the book is precisely the extent to which it sheds light on the wider context in which Confucian thinkers were in contact and in dialogue with other traditions, including popular religion, and in this respect the book lives up to the promise of its title.

Irene Bloom's opening article is an original and perceptive study of a topic close to the heart of the Confucian tradition throughout its long history: the concept of *jen* (humaneness) as understood by Confucius, Mencius, and Chu Hsi. Bloom analyzes the differences among the three thinkers and the historical development of the idea, from Confucius' basically behavioral approach, to Mencius' psychological approach, to Chu Hsi's metaphysical approach, each stage subsuming the prior to varying degrees. The most significant difference lies between Mencius' and Chu Hsi's contrasting perspectives on human emotions. Mencius, who was chiefly arguing against Yang Chu and Mo Ti, placed great value on the emotional life as the natural source of moral inclinations. Chu Hsi, on the other hand, was arguing mainly against Mahāyāna Buddhism, in which the emotions are a source of trouble even though the ordinary mind is revalorized. Bloom argues that Chu's effort was "to distinguish valid from invalid emotional expressions" and "to order and control the emotions and to reaffirm them as fundamental to a life lived, not in emptiness and quietude, but within the family, the society, and 'the wide house of the world'" (32).

Rodney Taylor's article on Chu Hsi and meditation situates Chu's views on meditation in the context of the intellectual journey that shaped the development of his system of thought and practice. Early in his adult life, he had been a student of Li T'ung (1093-1163), who had taught "quiet sitting" [*ching-tso*] as an important method of apprehending the moral-metaphysical order [*li*] in the "unmanifest" [*wei-fa*] or quiescent [*ching*] mind. Later he was influenced by the Hunan school, represented by his friend Chang Shih (1133-1180), which stressed that *li* could only be apprehended in the active mind and moral activity. He eventually reached a compromise in which he taught quiet-sitting as a state of mind subsuming both activity and stillness, rejecting Buddhist meditation for seeking absolute quietude (apparently ignoring certain comparatively recent developments in the Ch'an sect). But he was also interested in meditation for its benefits to health and longevity, especially (alas) in his later years. A point that Taylor does not acknowledge is that this understanding of meditation is clearly related to Taoist theory and practices that were well-developed in the Sung dynasty.

Julia Ching pursues Chu Hsi's interests in Taoism, surveying his views and commentaries on Taoist and Taoist-related texts (*Lao-tzu*, *Chuang-tzu*, *I ching*, *Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i*, *Yin-fu ching*, and *Ch'u-tz'u*) and his acceptance of some of the arts of immortality, like meditation and breath-control, even while he lamented the historical "devolution" of Taoism from a credible worldview to a religion unfortunately influenced by shamans and the like. Some of his harshest criticisms were leveled against the Taoist pantheon, for its "confused borrowing from Buddhism" (e.g., the Three Pure Ones as an imitation of the Three Bodies of the Buddha) and its "treasonous" elevation of Lao Tzu, a mere former human being, to a celestial position higher than the Lord-on-high or Jade Emperor (123).

Patricia Ebrey's article on Sung Neo-Confucian views of geomancy elucidates the tension in Neo-Confucian thought between the preference for rational explanations (i.e., those based on *yin-yang* theory) and their sometimes reluctant acceptance of such practices as divination and geomancy, which had clear canonical authority. While some Neo-Confucians—notably Ssu-ma Kuang and Ch'eng I—rejected them nonetheless, most accepted them and interpreted them in naturalistic terms. Chu Hsi's interpretation of geomancy according to *yin-yang* principles, for example, was fully consistent with his theory of *li*, and he rejected those principles of geomancy that were inconsistent.

Buddhism is the specific focus of two very substantial articles: Chün-fang Yü's "The Cult of Kuan-yin in Ming-Ch'ing China," and Koichi Shinohara's "Ta-hui's Instructions to Tseng K'ai." Yü focuses on three aspects of Kuan-yin: her manifestation as the legendary Princess Miao-shan, her relationship to the practice of cutting off a piece of one's flesh [*ko-ku*] to be used in a broth to cure a parent's serious illness (an element in the story of Miao-shan), and her aspect as the White-Robed Kuan-yin, a fertility goddess. She argues that "the unambiguous Buddhist messages in the legend of Miao-shan became Confucianized" through various forms of "domesticated religiosity" (151). These included the begetting of sons through the grace of the White-Robed Kuan-yin (often to Confucian literati) and such supreme acts of filial piety as *ko-ku*. "Kuan-yin had to become Miao-shan, a living woman, so that she could be worshipped as a Chinese goddess" (145). In this article Yü shows not only how Buddhism and Confucianism interacted in Ming-Ch'ing China but also how "conventional terms, such as *elite* and *popular* culture, are no longer very useful heuristic devices in analyzing the religious situation of that time" (165).

Shinohara, drawing heavily on the work of Araki Kengo, takes a detailed look at the correspondence between the great Ch'an master of the Sung dynasty, Ta-hui, and Tseng K'ai, a vice-minister of rites who appears in the Confucian anthology *Sung-Yüan hsiieh-an*. Tseng had studied with a student of the Ch'eng brothers and also with the Buddhist Yüan-wu, and actively sought out Ta-hui's advice on his personal practice. Clearly he and others like him "did not conceive of their Ch'an studies as something that implied rejecting Confucianism" (187). This is an important corrective to the prevailing impression that followers of Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism belonged to mutually exclusive communities—a notion that has been influenced by the greater attention paid to the Ch'eng-Chu school of Neo-Confucianism, whose strong anti-Buddhist rhetoric (despite considerable contact with Buddhists and

borrowing of their practices) has tended to give us an unbalanced picture of literati life in the Sung.

Judith Berling's article is on "the collapse of the unitary vision of Chinese religion in the early Ch'ing." After briefly surveying the discourse of "the unity of the three teachings" in the Ming, she focuses on the unitary vision of millenarian Buddhism and the factors during the Ch'ing that opposed it. Among these were the Manchu emperors' support of Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy, the Ch'ien-lung emperor's policy of censorship, and the *k'ao-cheng* movement's emphasis on early texts, which contained less syncretism than later ones. Confucian polemics disdained the popular, emotional appeal of the millenarian sects, while some Buddhists argued that Buddhism, through its theory of moral retribution, was better than Confucianism as a basis for social stability and morality. Nevertheless, the unitary vision survived in such rare thinkers as P'eng Shao-sheng (1740-1796), who argued for the compatibility and complementarity of the three teachings, especially Buddhism and Confucianism.

The last four articles focus on Japan and are somewhat more uneven than the first seven. And since for the most part they fall outside the purview of this journal, I will comment more briefly on them. Minamoto Ryōen, in "The Acceptance of Chinese Neo-Confucianism in Japan in the Early Tokugawa Period," uses *shingaku*, or the "learning of the mind-and-heart," as a general rubric including aspects of both the Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming schools of Neo-Confucianism as well as elements of military theory. Minamoto argues that the emphasis on *shingaku* in Japan made possible a greater unity-in-diversity than was found in China during the same period.

Peter Nosco, in "Confucianism and Nativism in Tokugawa Japan," argues cogently that the adversarial relationship of Confucianism and nativism [*kokugaku*] during the eighteenth century, rather than characterizing their relationship throughout the Tokugawa, was in fact a departure from their relationship during most of the period, when they were "components of an essentially singular scholarly discourse" (279). The core of the article is Nosco's discussion of four historically-specific reasons for their temporary bifurcation in the eighteenth century.

Okada Takehiko's contribution is a long, translated article, originally written in 1952, entitled "Mastery and the Mind," focusing on the concept of skill, know-how, or mastery (Japanese *waka*; Chinese *chi*) and the connection between mind and *ch'i*, primarily in the martial arts. It basically boils down to the claim that "...anywhere skill is cultivated success is something only attained through the cultivation of mind and *ch'i*" (330). The article is extremely dated both in style and content, and one wonders whether a more recent article by this eminent scholar would not have made a better choice for this volume.

The concluding article, by Joshua Fogel, is on the travel diary of the Japanese Sinologist Uno Tetsuto (1875-1974), who spent eighteen months in China (based in Beijing) in 1906-07. Constrasting Uno's dry, almanac-like accounts of most of his side trips with the more passionate descriptions of his single trip to Shantung, where he visited Mt. T'ai and Ch'ü-fu, the birthplace of Confucius, Fogel concludes that this was essentially a Confucian pilgrimage for Uno. Having come with an idealized picture of China based solely on classical texts, Uno had a difficult time reconciling the China that he "knew" from what he saw during the waning

years of the Ch'ing dynasty. Fogel places this pilgrimage in useful perspective by comparing it with medieval Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

The majority of the articles in *Meeting of Minds* are, taken individually, important contributions to the field of East Asian thought and religion. The book as a whole leaves the reader with a stronger, clearer impression of the variety and depth of the interactions among thinkers and intellectual-religious traditions in East Asia. It demonstrates the actual fluidity of the boundaries that we imbibe and use in our scholarly work, and underscores the claim that we tend to reify them too readily.

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