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# The Philosophy of Ch'eng I



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# Preface

This book represents an attempt to acquaint English readers with the philosophy of Ch'eng I,<sup>1</sup> a founder of one of the two main schools of Neo-Confucian thought, and a key man in the history of Chinese philosophy whose ideas furnish an essential clue to the understanding of the Neo-Confucian background of modern China. It is written for a triple purpose: firstly to provide literature about the great thinker, whose philosophy, owing to the lack of adequate introduction, still constitutes a missing link in the Neo-Confucian publications available in Western languages; secondly to contribute basic material to, and help clear the ground for scholars whose interest lies in the comparative study of the cultures of the East and the West; and lastly to endeavor to effect a methodological approach to the technical problem of the philosophical difference between Ch'eng I and his brother Ch'eng Hao,<sup>2</sup> a problem of great importance which has in recent years engaged the attention of a number of scholars. The entire source material of 52 documents has been subjected to a process of higher criticism. A large number of reliable texts have subsequently been carefully selected, translated, classified, and systematically arranged in order that the reader may have a maximum access to the philosopher's own words.

I am grateful to Prof. Horace L. Friess of Columbia University for his kind counseling and encouragement throughout the research, to Prof. Arthur Jeffery of Columbia and Union Theological Seminary and Prof. L. Carrington Goodrich of Columbia for going through the MS and making many valuable suggestions, and to Prof. Chi-Chen Wang and Dr. August Karl Reischauer of Columbia and Union, respectively, for their helpful advice.

Professor F. W. Dillistone of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass., spent many an hour discussing problems of philosophy and terminology with me. He read through the MS and made many suggestions. To him I owe a great many thanks. I was also fortunate in securing the advice of Mr. E. R. Hughes, formerly Reader in Chinese Religion and Philosophy in the University of Oxford,

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced as *cherng yee*; 1033–1107 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Pronounced *cherng how*; 1032–1085 A.D.

who during the early part of the research discussed principles of translation with me and read through most of the translated texts used in the first three chapters. His kind offer to take the responsibility of proofreading if and when the book goes to the press after I leave the country has been accepted with gratitude. Professor William Hung of Harvard University, my former teacher of historical criticism, and Prof. Derk Bodde of the University of Pennsylvania were consulted in the beginning of the project, and from them good advice has been received.

Acknowledgment is also due for the good services rendered to the author by the Far Eastern Collection of Columbia University Library and the Harvard Yenching Institute Library at Harvard. To the Right Reverend Ronald O. Hall of Hong Kong and South China and to several other friends and institutions, I owe the moral and material support which made possible our stay in the USA at a time when my country has been going through the agony of revolution. To a number of friends, I owe many thanks for their kind help in various ways during the research for and in the preparation of the MS. Last but not least, I owe a great deal to my good wife who has shared with me in the entire undertaking, and whose help, secretarial and otherwise, has been indispensable for the successful completion of the work.

Amherst, MA, USA  
March 1950

Yung-ch'un Ts'ai

*The original version of the book was revised:  
City name of the author has been changed  
and the co-publisher text has been updated.  
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# Signs, Abbreviations, and Explanatory Notes

## References

1. All references to the *Complete Works of the Two Masters Ch'eng* are based on the *Ssu Pu Pei Yao* edition published by the Chung Hua Book Co., Shanghai, 1933. This edition has been used for the simple reason that it is the most easily procurable and is actually owned by many libraries, although we are not unaware of the fact that the printing is imperfect. The general order followed in all footnotes and references is: title of work, number of book, leaf, side a or b, and number of line in the page.
2. All references to the Confucian scriptures are made according to James Legge's arrangements. The order of sequence is generally: title, numbers of part, book, section, chapter, and paragraph, though it varies from book to book. References are given in this way instead of page numbers with the hope that those who do not have access to Legge's translations may still be able to find the passages.
3. References to the *I Chuan* (\* IC) or *Commentary on the Book of Changes* are followed by references to the text in the *Book of Changes* on which Ch'eng I was commenting. These latter references are put in parentheses, e.g., \*IC, II, 1b: 8. (YK, App.I, Hex. 15:2).
4. All references to a person's age are based on the Chinese way of calculation which counts both the year in which he was born and that in which he passed away as one year each. Hence, the figure is generally one year more than the actual number of full years lived.

## Abbreviations used for the Books of the Complete Works of the Two Masters Ch'eng

CS	<i>Ching Shuo, or Scriptural Expositions of the Master Ch'eng</i>
IC	<i>I Chuan, or Commentary on the Book of Changes</i>
ICWC	<i>I Ch'uan Wen Chi, or Collected Writings of Ch'eng I</i>
IS	<i>I Shu, or Collection of Sayings of the Two Masters Ch'eng</i>
MTWC	<i>Ming Tao Wen Chi, or Collected Writings of Ch'eng Hao</i>
SY	<i>Sui Yen, or Choice Sayings of the Two Masters Ch'eng</i>
WS	<i>Wai Shu, or Secondary Collection of Sayings of the Two Masters Ch'eng</i>

## Signs and Certain Other Abbreviations

- \* All passages marked with \* are Class A material, because they are from Ch'eng I's own writings and are therefore most reliable. Sayings from authentic records belong to Class B and are unmarked.
- # Passages written or sayings recorded before his brother Ch'eng Hao's death in 1085 are marked with #. These may possibly reflect the latter's influence or be mixed up with his sayings.
- Hex. Hexagram: one of the 64 symbols treated in the *Book of Changes*
- YK *Yi King*, or the *Book of Changes*
- YK, App. I *T'uan*, or *Treaties on the T'uan* (as rendered in Legge's translation: the same in the following)
- YK, App. II *Hsiang*, or *Treatise on the Symbolism of the Hexagrams*
- YK, App. III *Hsi Ts'u*, or the *Great Appendix*
- YK, App. IV *Wen Yen*, or *Supplementary to the T'uan and Yao*
- YK, App. V *Shuo Kua*, or *Treaties of Remarks on the Trigrams*
- YK, App. VI *Hsü Kua*, or *Orderly Sequence of the Hexagrams*
- YK, App. VII *Tsa Kua*, or *Treatise on the Hexagrams Taken Promiscuously etc*

## Texts Used

### 1. Complete Works

The *Ssu Pu Pei Yao* printed edition, 1933.

The *Tan Ya T'ang* printed edition, 1908.

These are the only two printed editions the author has been able to secure. Both editions have a number of misprints, and in many cases the misprints are similar. These similar mistakes indicate that they had a common origin in some previous imperfect edition. Fortunately, most of the books included in the *Complete Works* have been published singly and are available, so that it has been possible to check the doubtful places in the texts.

### 2. Single Publications

*I Shu*

*Wan Yu Wen K'u* ed. = *Kuo Hsüeh Chi Pen Ts'ung Shu* ed. Commercial Press, Shanghai.

This is a good text. Practically all the passages quoted from this important document have been checked with this text.

*I Chuan*

*Chin Ling Shu Chü*, 1866 ed. (collated and published by Li Hung-Chang):  
reprinted by Chiang Nan Shu Chü, 1883. A good text.

*Ku I Ts'ung Shu* reprint of the Yüan (Dynasty) Chih Cheng edition of 1349.

All doubtful places in the *Complete Works* editions have been checked with either one or both texts.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction



### 1.1 The Man and the School

#### 1.1.1 Chinese Philosophy in the Early Sung Period

The period of Sung (960–1278 A.D.) has been called the golden age of Chinese philosophy.<sup>1</sup> It was a time when the nation suffered from the military invasions of her northern neighbours. But at the same time her arts and learning, especially philosophy, soared to a height rarely seen in Chinese history. Indeed, as Prof. Ch'en Yin-k'o has put it, the birth of Sung Neo-Confucianism was the one event for which 1200 years of the history of Chinese thought had been a preparation.<sup>2</sup> It was the one event because after long centuries of contact and competition with native Taoism and imported Buddhism, Confucianism, the main trend of indigenous thought, was finally able to take control of the situation, assimilate what was complementary in both and develop a fuller system of its own. The beginnings made by the masters of Classical times were brought to maturity by the Sung philosophers. Upon the foundation of the former, a gigantic superstructure was built. The patterns of thought thus formulated have been moulding Chinese life for the last 900 years until the impact of Western philosophy was felt in the latter part of the last century.

Confucianism began with Confucius (551–479 B.C.) and was developed by Tzu Ssu, Confucius' grandson, Mencius (371–289 B.C.), Hsün Tzu (fl. c. 298–238 B.C.) and a number of thinkers whose names have been lost to us.<sup>3</sup> In the post-Classical

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<sup>1</sup>The term “philosophy” is used in the broad sense. Cf. statement at the beginning of Chap. 2—See Liu I-cheng, *Chung Kuo Wen Hua Shih*, Book II, chap. XVIII, esp. p. 96; Forks, *Geschichte der neueren chinesischen Philosophie*, pp. 5–8.

<sup>2</sup>Ch'en Yin-k'o, “Examination Report III”, Appendix, *History of Chinese Philosophy* by Fung, Chinese Ed.

Hu Shih, *The Chinese Renaissance*, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup>For instance, “Author B” of *the Doctrine of the Mean*, the author of the *Great Learning*, and the authors of the “Appendices” of the *Book of Changes*.



period, which fell in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.), scholars were chiefly engaged in the collection, collation, textual criticism and work of commenting on the scriptures. Meanwhile, philosophical Taoism resurged and reached the height of prosperity roughly from 100 A.D. to 300 A.D. Then, Buddhism became powerful and occupied the stage from that time until the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the eleventh century, that is from 300 to 1000 A.D. in round numbers.

The year 1000 A.D., however, does not mark a weakening of Buddhist influence. It marks only the beginning of the new force, namely Neo-Confucianism, which was soon to take its place in the mind of thinking Chinese. Ch'anism, which was then the most popular among the Buddhist sects, was a great power. Devout Confucians of that time deplored the fact that nearly all scholars had gone over to Ch'anism.<sup>4</sup> Neither had Taoism diminished in influence. Great philosophers like Chou Tun-I, Shao Yung, Chang Tsai and Ch'eng Hao<sup>5</sup> all studied Taoism at one time or another during their lives.<sup>6</sup> For about nine hundred years after the period of Classical Confucianism, the Chinese mind had been steeped in Taoism and Buddhism. Though long centuries of influence, the teachings of these two religions had provided, as it were, axioms for the life of the people. Buddhism had been teaching about the analysis of the mind and about the enlightenment which leads to the emancipation of life and to the achievement of Buddhahood. Taoism had been teaching about the ways and means of attaining immortality. Consequently, the matter of ultimate concern for the thinking people of the eleventh century was the nature and destiny of man. They did not find any attraction in Confucianism, because Classical Confucianism dealt chiefly with man's ethical conduct on the plane of everyday life. It did not take up the more ultimate questions. Although as early as the T'ang Dynasty, Han Yü (768–824 A.D.) and his disciple and friend Li Ao (died c.844) in their controversy with Buddhism and apologetics in defence of Confucianism did bring out certain aspects of Confucian teaching which came nearer to meeting the need of the times, their influence was but little felt. In the Sung period, there arose a number of great Confucian masters, such as Hu Yüan (993–1059), Shih Chieh (1005–1045), Fan Chung-yen (989–1052), Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–1072) and Szu-ma Kuang (1019–1086). But they taught traditional Confucianism in the traditional way and failed to answer the spiritual demand of the people of the age.

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<sup>4</sup>For example, WS, XII, 7a: 18f.

<sup>5</sup>\*ICWC, VII, 6a: 12.

<sup>6</sup>See "Pioneers of Neo-Confucianism" below.

### 1.1.2 *Pioneers of Neo-confucianism*

The great contribution of the Neo-Confucian masters lies in the fact that they were able to see the challenge of the times and dared to break away from the traditional way of interpreting Confucian scriptural teaching. They picked out those portions from the scriptures which had direct bearings on the questions everybody was asking, and interpreted them in terms which were familiar to the men of their age. This was not all. Having gone into the question of human nature and its destiny, those masters were further able to point out the mistakes of both Taoism and Buddhism in their negligence of social duties and to direct the way to perfect manhood through the fulfilment of daily obligations which is part and parcel of Confucian teaching.

The first great master to pioneer in this line of approach was Chou Tun-I (1017–1073) also known as the Master of Lien Ch’I. His most important contribution was the establishment of a cosmological basis for Confucian ethics, this having been weak in traditional Confucianism. He based his system chiefly on a text in the Appendix of the *Book of Changes*<sup>7</sup> which reads, “In the *I* there is the Supreme Ultimate, which produced the two Forms”. Developing the concepts of the Supreme Ultimate, the two energies of yin and yang, and the five elements of water, fire, wood, metal, and earth, he tried to explain how the universe came into being, what man’s position in it is, what constitutes the ethical norm, and how man may attain sagehood or perfect manhood. He even went so far as to make use of a Taoist diagram to illustrate his teaching. It is interesting to note how by the use of a Taoist term “Wu Chi” or “The Ultimate” in the opening of his famous treatise “T’ai Chi T’u Shuo” or “Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate Explained”, he roused a great controversy among Confucian scholars, especially between Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yüan, over the question whether the treatise could have been written by Chou Tun-i.<sup>8</sup>

A second great master of this period is Shao Yung (1011–1077) who called himself “An Lo Hsien Sheng” or the “Master of Happiness”. His essential contribution is also cosmological though naturally he did not stop there. He was said to have learned a number of diagrams from a great Taoism named Li Chih-ts’ai.<sup>9</sup> These diagrams were chiefly concerned with the trigrams and hexagrams and their constituent parts. By various ways of arranging these symbolisms, Shao Yung was able to elucidate a system of cosmology which was the most comprehensive of all those produced by the Neo-Confucianists. He also made a Chronological Diagram of the History of the World, in which he developed a cyclical view of history. According to him, the golden age of the world fell in the time of Yao, a legendary sage-emperor said to be of the twenty-fourth century B.C. History is thus

<sup>7</sup>YK, Appendix III, I, XI, 70.

<sup>8</sup>*Sung Yüan Hsüeh An*, XII. For a reproduction of the diagram and an English version of the Explanation see Bruce, *Chu Hsi and His Masters*, p.128 ff.

<sup>9</sup>*Sung Yüan Hsüeh An*, IX.

on the decline, until the present cycle comes to an end when another will make a new start. His metaphysical and ethical teachings as revealed in the “*Kuan Wu P’ien*” or “*Treatise on the Observation of Things*” covered practically all the important concepts taught by the other great Neo-Confucianists, for example, the Supreme Ultimate, Tao, spirit, Li or natural law, T’ien Li or the heavenly law, human nature, destiny, ch’i or energy, numbers, the problem of good and evil, and sagehood. His teaching impresses one as being very extensive and diffuse. A certain degree of crystallization is reached in the doctrine that the right attitude of life is one which is objective, impartial and disinterested towards life and all things.

A third master of the formative period of Neo-Confucianism to be mentioned is Chang Tsai (1020–1077), also known as the Master of Heng Ch’ü. In his younger days, he was fond of the study of military tactics. He visited Fan Chung-yen, a great Confucian scholar-statesman, who persuaded him to study the *Doctrine of the Mean*. This set him on a quest for truth. He was a man of strict discipline and strenuous endeavour. He had some background of Buddhist and Taoist learning. Now, he devoted all his energy to the study of the Confucian scriptures. After long years of hard work and quiet meditation, he emerged with a system of thought that was to leave a permanent stamp on the history of Chinese thought.

His greatest contribution is the concept of Ch’i or energy. Ch’i means other. It is here rendered “energy” because it comes near to the idea of energy in modern physics. He explained the generation and destruction of all things by the condensation and dispersion of energy. He also declared that “the Great Void is energy”, which is a powerful and obvious denial of the Buddhist idea of vacuity. This concept of Ch’i later became one of the foundation stones of Neo-Confucian thought. From his time on, the great masters continued to teach it until about a century later Chu Hsi made it one of the main concepts in his great synthesis.

Although Chang Tsai’s main contribution is cosmological, his metaphysical and ethical teachings derived from his cosmology are not to be ignored. His most important writing in this connection is the famous “Hsi Ming” or “The Western Inscription”, which has been translated into English, French and German.<sup>10</sup> The main idea of the “Hsi Ming” is that since all men and all creatures and things are of the same Ch’i, the body of Heaven and Earth are, as it were, my own body, all men are my brothers, and all things and creatures are my kin. Heaven and Earth are to be served as my parents. All who are in need are to be helped as members of the family. Elsewhere he taught that the sage sees all things as if they were all part of himself. A perfect man does not identify himself with his small self, but considers himself co-extensive with the universe.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>See Bibliog., 1, 13–15.

<sup>11</sup>Based on *Chang Tzu Ch’üan Shu*. See also *Sung Yüan Hsüeh An*, XVII–XVIII.

### 1.1.3 *Ch'eng I and His Brother Ch'eng Hao*

Chou Tun-i, Shao Yung and Chang Tsai represent the first phase of Neo-Confucianism, when creative thinking was chiefly directed towards the understanding of the universe outside of man and man's relation to it. By the time Chang Tsai expounded his doctrine, Neo-Confucian cosmology had reached a point of maturity, and the stage was set for a development in some other direction. This was taken up by the brothers Ch'eng Hao (1032–1085) and Ch'eng I (1033–1107). The two brothers were contemporaries of the three cosmologists. While they were still in their teens, their father introduced them to Chou Tun-i under whom they studied for a time. But in their mature years, they followed their own lines of thinking and did not claim Chou Tun-i as their master.<sup>12</sup> They lived in the same city with Shao Yung and were close friends of his. They had frequent discussions with him over philosophical questions.<sup>13</sup> But the two brothers did not agree with Shao Yung in the numerical interpretation of the *Book of Changes*.<sup>14</sup> Chang Tsai was a cousin of the father of the Ch'engs. There was much that they could share with him, though they did not always agree with him. Ch'eng I thought that Chang Tsai reached his conclusions by rigorous thinking and not by intuitive enlightenment so that his opinions are often onesided and his mental state strained and he did not hesitate to tell him so.<sup>15</sup> But he thought extremely highly of Chang Tsai's "*Western Inscription*" and recommended it for careful study to his disciples.<sup>16</sup>

The contribution of the two Masters Ch'eng lies in the fact that in their hands Neo-Confucianism as a new doctrine came to be fully established.<sup>17</sup> Although they did not agree completely with the teachings of the three cosmological masters, they nevertheless endorsed many of their ideas while they developed their own lines of thought. All the new ideas thus evolved they attempted to work into the traditional Confucian teaching. The net result was the emergence of a new and comprehensive system (or systems) of thought which has all the metaphysical and cosmological aspects in which the man of that age was deeply interested, and yet which remains a teaching essentially Confucian in spirit, pointing to the achievement of perfect manhood as the goal of life. The full and natural expression of this ethical goal was to be found in nothing other-worldly, but rather in the service of men and in building up of an ideal social order. The systems thus built up represented the new Orthodoxy of Confucianism which was virtually a fulfilment of the old and from which the Neo-Confucianists have not departed since.

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<sup>12</sup>They referred to him by name instead of calling him master. Ref. e.g. ICWC, Appendix 5a: 3–5.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>WS, XII, 6b: 6–7; ICWC, Appendix 3b:1–2.

<sup>15</sup>\*ICWC, V, 4a.

<sup>16</sup>\*ICWC, V, 12a: 13ff.; IS, XVIII, 11b: 5–8; WS, XII, 13b: 10.

<sup>17</sup>Ch'ien Mu, "Erh Ch'eng Hsüeh Shu Shu P'ing", *Ssu Hsiang Yü Shih Tai*, No. 45.

### 1.1.4 *Philosophical Differences of the Two Brothers and the Question of Methodology*

The Ch'eng brothers asserted that they represented the true succession of Confucian orthodoxy.<sup>18</sup> Ch'eng I, who survived his elder brother by twenty-two years, told his disciple Chang I in his latter days that his teaching and that of his brother were the same.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, that was the prevalent belief of all their disciples. It is not to be denied that they had many things in common, and yet it is equally certain that they had many divergences. They were similar in that they both held scriptural Confucianism to be the norm of all thinking, both were devoted to the study and transmission of the learning concerning Li or natural law, human nature and destiny based on the scriptures, and both were interested in training disciples who would be able to live up to the Confucian ideal of sagehood. But from the point of view of modern philosophy they seemed to be essentially different in their fundamental presuppositions. Forke, for instance, thinks that Ch'eng Hao is more synthetic while Ch'eng I is more analytic, that the former is more inclined to idealism while the latter more inclined to realism, and that the former is a Monist while the latter is a dualist.<sup>20</sup> Dr. Fung Yu-lan believes that the main issue between the two was one of fundamental philosophical importance. "It was one as to whether the laws of nature are, or are not, legislated by the mind or Mind. That has been the issue between Platonic realism and Kantian idealism, and may be said to be the issue in metaphysics".<sup>21</sup>

In trying to make a thorough-going distinction between the philosophical systems of the two masters, however, the student is faced with a great problem in the source material. Each brother left behind rather scanty writings of his own. Ch'eng Hao wrote nothing that could be called a book, while Ch'eng I left only one which is complete. All that we find in their respective *Collected Writings* are chiefly official documents, letters, miscellaneous articles, etc. The main bulk of their teachings was preserved not in their own writings but in their sayings noted down by their disciples. Now the difficulty arises first that any recorded saying, unless it is a verbatim record, is by its very nature not absolutely reliable. There is no guarantee that it represents accurately the idea of the person who is supposed to have said it. This is especially true when these notes were written by men in the eleventh century when shorthand systems were unheard of. However, comparing the notes by different disciples of what looked like the same saying made on the same occasion, we find that there was a wide variety in the disciples' ability to understand the minds of the masters, in the selection of the contents to be put down, and in the words and expression used and the orders followed.<sup>22</sup> A careful study also gives the

<sup>18</sup>\*ICWC VII, 7b: 6-9; op. cit. Preface, 6b: 7-9; 7a: 4-5; op. cit., II, 8a: 7-9.

<sup>19</sup>ICWC, Contents, 7a: 4-5.

<sup>20</sup>Alfred Forke, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>21</sup>Fung, *Short Hist. of Chinese Philosophy*. p. 281.

<sup>22</sup>For example, IS XV, 3b: 10-4a: 8 = 9b: 13-10a: 4, 11-10b: 4. Again IS, XV, 4b: 10 = 15b: 7 = 17b: 5 = 18b: 5. See Introduction Sect. 1.2, Footnote 98.

impression that many of the notes were not written down on the spot, but look more like having been recorded from memory. This might have been only a matter of a few hours, but the exact expressions, etc., would thus partially lost or altered.

The other and even more serious difficulty is that for some years<sup>23</sup> the two brothers taught in the same place with a joint following. The disciples who believed that their points of view were identical, and whose one purpose was to learn the doctrine for their own edification, did not think it necessary to distinguish the sayings of the one from the other, with the result that many of the sayings were indiscriminately collected together in the same notebook without any indication as to which item was said by which one of the two masters. One good example of this is Book I of the *I Shu* recorded by a disciple by the name of Li Yü. Ch'eng I during his life had seen these notes and had commented that they were good and accurate notes. When a student of the history of philosophy gets hold of such a document, he would naturally expect to rely on it as an authoritative source. But unfortunately, Li Yü rarely attached names to the sayings to that there is no clear way of telling which was made by which master. The same is also true of a number of other records. Of the fifteen books of sayings in the *I Shu* recorded by various disciples before the elder of the brothers died in 1085, only four books were labelled as sayings of Ch'eng Hao and one labelled Ch'eng I. All the rest were simply sayings of "the two Masters". This difficulty continues until the death of Ch'eng Hao.

### 1.1.5 *Methods of Research*

Because of the difficulty just stated and because of the importance of distinguishing between the philosophical systems of the two Masters, it seems essential to work out a method by which the difficulty may be overcome. The steps of the methodology the writer proposes to adopt are as follows:

- (1) Since the purpose of this study is to work out the distinctive systems of the two Ch'eng Masters whose source material is partially intermingled, it is advisable to deal first with those parts of the source material which are identifiable, with a hope that the result thus gained will help towards the identification of some of the important sayings found in the unidentified sources.
- (2) Following the same principle, it seems wise first to study Ch'eng I who is the younger of the two and deal with Ch'eng Hao afterwards, for the obvious reason that Ch'eng I left more writings behind him than Ch'eng Hao did. The number of recorded sayings labelled with his name is also much larger than that of his brother. The case being so it would seem easier to find out Ch'eng I's system than Ch'eng Hao's.

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<sup>23</sup>For example in 1072–1075 A.D. both brothers were at home in Loyang. See *Sung Ch'eng Ch'un Kung Nien P'u* (Chronology of Ch'eng Hao) by Yang Hsi-min, 12a, b.

- (3) In the study of Ch'eng I, data which came from Ch'eng I's own writings are to be treated as Class A, and those which came from the disciples' records are to be treated as Class B or C depending on the merits of the respective records.
- (4) Among Ch'eng I's recorded sayings only those definitely marked to be his are to be used, all the rest are to be strictly avoided.
- (5) Among Ch'eng I's sayings labelled with his name, those recorded after 1085 (namely the year of his brother's death) are to be regarded as more valuable than sayings before that date: for two reasons. Firstly, as the brother was then dead, there was no chance whatsoever for the disciples to confuse their sayings. The other reason is that while both brothers were teaching, it is always possible that they would have influenced each other in ideas and expressions. After 1085 when Ch'eng Hao was dead and when Ch'eng I grew from his fifties to his seventies, his ideas would have gradually crystalized into something which was to become more and more definitely his own.
- (6) After the completion of the study on Ch'eng I, it is logical to go on with a study of Ch'eng Hao in the same manner.
- (7) After Ch'eng Hao's system is worked out, one may proceed to make a study of what might be called the "common material" of the two brothers. Having thus made out the distinctive systems of the two, one might find it easier to identify some of the significant yet unidentified sayings without great risk of mistake.

The author is conscious of the fact that by following this methodology some of the most important and often quoted sayings will have to be left untouched until the very last step. But he is convinced that this is the only scientific and sure way to arrive at dependable conclusions. It was the author's original plan to follow through the whole process of study. Unfortunately, having had to work under the pressure of time, he regrets that he was forced to limit himself to the study of Ch'eng I alone, leaving the rest to some future opportunity.

### ***1.1.6 Ch'eng I (1033–1107 A.D.)***

#### **1.1.6.1 His Parents**

Born in 1033 A.D. only one year after his brother Ch'eng Hao,<sup>24</sup> Ch'eng I came from a typical Confucian scholar-official family. His father, who lived to eighty-five years of age, and survived Ch'eng Hao, spent most of his life in the civil service.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>\*ICWC, VII, 6a: 5; IS, Appendix 7b: 2; 12a: 10. The year "Kuei Yu" in which Ch'eng I was born lasted from Feb 3, 1033 to Jan 22, 1034.

<sup>25</sup>ICWC, VIII, 1b: 7–8.

He was described by Ch'eng I as a calm detached Confucian who was fond of the practice of long quiet meditations, lived simply, and was Stoic towards life's adversities, being not easily disturbed by external circumstances.<sup>26</sup> His mother<sup>27</sup> was beautiful and a rare character. Highly intelligent, she was during childhood taught by her father to read and write as few girls were. She wrote poems, was fond of history, and often discussed public affairs with her father with such a degree of understanding that the latter was reported to have sighed in surprise, "Alas, would that you were a boy!" She gave birth to six sons and four daughters, of whom only the two masters and two of their sisters lived to adulthood.<sup>28</sup> The way she taught her children was admirable. Ch'eng I ascribed his simplicity of living, carefulness of speech, control of temper, the love of helpful friends, and a number of other good habits to her education and influence.

### 1.1.6.2 His Character: A Sketch

Ch'eng I and his brother grew up to be quite different in character. The brother was gentle, poetic, friendly, and generally attractive, while Ch'eng I was a lonely man characterized by an attitude of seriousness. He was not interested in writing poems, although three poems are found in his works.<sup>29</sup> He did not make jobs.<sup>30</sup> He looked serene and solemn.<sup>31</sup> It was said that on the way to his banishment in Fu Chou in Szechuan, on crossing the Han River, there was an accident and the boat was on the verge of turning over. All the people on board screamed in agitation. Ch'eng I alone sat quietly as if nothing were happening. The story goes on that upon arrival at the other shore an elderly man who was on the same boat asked him why he had been able to be so calm. Ch'eng I answered and said, "Simply because I have been practicing an attitude of sincerity and reverent devotion". The old man said, "It is good that you are making such good efforts in your mind. But it would be even better if you would do away with your mind altogether". Ch'eng I wanted to have further talk with him, but he was gone.<sup>32</sup>

Now to come back to Ch'eng I's seriousness. He thought a great deal about the significance of being a teacher and was extremely serious about it. His brother Ch'eng Hao early saw his possible contribution in this respect when he predicted

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<sup>26</sup>\**Ibid.*, 5b, "Life".

<sup>27</sup>\**Ibid.*, 6a ff, "Life".

<sup>28</sup>\**Ibid.*, 1a: 13.

<sup>29</sup>\*ICWC, IV, 5a: 7f; 7a; IS, XVIII, 42b: 11 ff.

<sup>30</sup>WS, XII, 16b: 13f.

<sup>31</sup>IS, XXII A, 10a: 11ff; WS, XII, 3a: 5-9; 11a: 4-7; 12a: 8 ff.

<sup>32</sup>WS, XII, 3b: 3-5. Cf. 17a: 6-7; 18b: 13 ff. Among the three different versions of the same story the one here quoted seems the best.



that if any man were ever going to raise the position of the teacher to a level of high dignity it would be Ch'eng I.<sup>33</sup> And this he did. An anecdote is related in the writing of his wife's brother Hou Chung-liang, which will serve as a good sketch.<sup>34</sup> Two of his prominent disciples Yu Cha and Yang Shih had just come to follow him. In one of those early days, they went together to visit their master in his residence. It happened that the master was sitting in quiet meditation with his eyes closed. The two disciples approached him with fear and trembling. Then feeling that the only adequate thing to do was to stand by his side without disturbing him and reverently keep him company like sons with a father, they very quietly took up their positions beside him. Hours must have elapsed before the master opened his eyes. He took notice of them and said in a dignified air: "Are you still here, boys? It is getting late, you may go home and rest". They had come in under a bright sun. But when they went out they stepped into snow which had piled one foot deep. Later when he became Expositor of Canonical Texts at the imperial court,<sup>35</sup> he insisted that as a teacher it was not right for him to follow the modern practice of giving his lectures standing. The right way was to do it sitting down.<sup>36</sup> The then highly respected Prime Minister Wen Yen-po was present at some of those lectures. People who had seen them together in the lecture hall were impressed by the contrast between the reverent attitude of the premier and the dignity of Ch'eng I.<sup>37</sup> In spite of all that has been said, however, there is a complementary side to his character which needs to be mentioned in order to give a fair picture of our philosopher. This again can best be represented by an incident. In a little pond in front of Tzu Shan T'ang where His Majesty's Expositors of Canonical Texts had their offices, some little pet fishes were kept. Ch'eng I was so fond of them that when he had to leave the capital suddenly, he thought of the fishes and what would happen to them when winter came. Being unable to do anything about it himself he sent a message to Fan Tsu-yü, Compiler of the Han Lin Academy, requesting his favour to put the little fishes into the river so that they might be safe during the cold weather.<sup>38</sup> Ch'eng I was himself conscious that he lacked the appearance of ease and gentleness<sup>39</sup>; he evidently found it part of his constitution and could not help it. But at heart he was tender and compassionate.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>IS, Appendix 12a: 12 ff.

<sup>34</sup>WS, XII, 7b: 13 ff.

<sup>35</sup>See Footnote 43.

<sup>36</sup>\*ICWC, II, 3b: 8–10; 11a: 11.

<sup>37</sup>WS, XII, 3a: 5–9.

<sup>38</sup>WS, XII, 2a: 10–11.

<sup>39</sup>IS, XXII A, 10a: 11 ff.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. \*ICWC, IV, 6af; IS, XXII A, 3b: 2–3.