



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
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<i>Student Name: Yifang Sun</i>	
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The Great Learning¹ 大學

1. The Way of great learning lies in letting one's inborn luminous virtue shine forth, in renewing the people, and in coming to rest in perfect goodness.

[Zhu Xi's commentary explains that heaven endows all human beings at birth with perfect virtue (*mingde* 明德). The goal for each of us is to give expression to that inborn virtue in everyday life. This requires effort, however. For just as each of us is born with perfect virtue, so each of us is born with a psychophysical endowment constituted of *qi* 氣, which can perhaps be best understood as the matter and energy that informs and constitutes the entire universe.² Unlike the luminous virtue, which is one and the same in all human beings, the particular endowment of psychophysical stuff differs with each individual. This endowment can be more or less balanced, more or less refined, more or less clear. The less balanced, the less refined, the less clear it is, the more likely it will cloud over the individual's innate virtue and keep it from shining forth. Further, the less balanced, the less refined, the less clear the endowment, the more likely it will give rise in the individual to creaturely desires that will inhibit the expression of this inherent virtue.

It is essential to note that no person ever loses the endowed virtue nor does the virtue ever lose its original luminosity or perfection. It

¹ The *Great Learning*, according to Zhu Xi's arrangement of the text, is divided into eleven chapters: the first chapter, the most important, contains the words of Confucius, and the next ten are a commentary on the "classic portion" prepared by Zengzi, Confucius' disciple. Whereas over the centuries other scholars offered other arrangements of the classic, it was Zhu's that remained the standard. All seven paragraphs of the classic portion are presented here; so too is Chapter 5 of the Zengzi commentary portion.

² The terms "*qi*," "psychophysical stuff," and "stuff" are used interchangeably throughout this book.

simply becomes obscured. The Way of great learning is the process of bringing balance, refinement, and clarity to our psychophysical endowments so that the inborn virtue in each of us will be unobscured, becoming fully manifest toward others. By manifesting it toward others, we, through the traditional Confucian power of moral example, lead others to engage in a similar process of self-renewal. In short, once we have made our inborn luminous virtue shine forth we are obligated to help bring about the same moral perfection in others.

Zhu's practice of reading and understanding the Four Books in light of contemporary philosophical concerns is apparent in this very first passage of the *Great Learning*.]

2. Knowing where to come to rest, one becomes steadfast; being steadfast, one may find peace of mind; peace of mind may lead to inner serenity; inner serenity makes reflection possible; only with reflection is one able to reach the resting place.

[Once we recognize where it is that perfect goodness lies, namely, in letting our inborn luminous virtue shine forth and in renewing the people, we feel assured, clear about the direction we are to follow. We become focused and less distracted. Calmness and equilibrium come to prevail. Effective reflection is now possible, and such reflection is sure to lead us to the right place.]

3. Things have their roots and branches; affairs have a beginning and an end. One comes near the Way in knowing what to put first and what to put last.

[Great learning follows a set order. Making perfect virtue shine forth is the foundation; bringing moral renewal to others grows from it. Similarly, knowledge of what constitutes perfect goodness necessarily comes before its achievement.]

4. Those of antiquity who wished that all people throughout the empire would let their inborn luminous virtue shine forth put governing their states well first; wishing to govern their states well, they first established harmony in their households; wishing to

establish harmony in their households, they first cultivated themselves; wishing to cultivate themselves, they first set their minds in the right; wishing to set their minds in the right, they first made their intentions true; wishing to make their intentions true, they first extended knowledge to the utmost; the extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things.

[To bring about moral self-realization in others depends on a program of neatly articulated steps. Cultivation of our own selves makes possible the renewal of others, and self-cultivation itself rests on efforts to investigate things (*gewu* 格物). Thus, the grand Confucian moral agenda—cultivation of the self and the betterment of others—depends on this first step, the investigation of things. But what this classic, the *Great Learning*, means by the term “investigation of things” had long been a matter of debate. Only with the two prominent Neo-Confucian commentators of the twelfth century, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, was general agreement reached. Investigation of things for them, and most of the later Chinese tradition, was the process of probing and apprehending the principle (*li* 理) that inheres in each and every thing and affair in the universe. By studying or investigating the principle in all things, we come to understand better the true, underlying nature of those things; and, as our efforts accumulate, our ability to comprehend the world and to relate appropriately—that is, morally—to all things in it deepens.]

5. Only after things are investigated does knowledge become complete; knowledge being complete, intentions become true; intentions being true, the mind becomes set in the right; the mind being so set, the person becomes cultivated; the person being cultivated, harmony is established in the household; household harmony established, the state becomes well governed; the state being well governed, the empire becomes tranquil.

[Zhu Xi comments that the steps from the investigation of things to cultivation of the self relate to “letting one’s inborn luminous virtue shine forth.” The steps from establishing harmony in the household to bring tranquility to the empire relate to “renewing the people.” He also comments that Confucius was speaking very freely here and that one

step in the sorites does not necessarily or automatically lead to the next. In particular, he suggests, advancing from the completion of knowledge to making the intentions true, and from making the intentions true to setting the mind in the right, requires considerable discipline and effort.

This passage, together with the previous one, held special significance for Neo-Confucians. The stress placed on the inner quest for self-perfection and on the role of the mind in that quest resonated strongly with the philosophical concerns that had come to preoccupy literati ever since the middle of the Tang period. At the same time the text remains true to the traditional Confucian responsibility of ordering family, society, and empire. Thus, prominent literati such as Han Yu (768–824) and Li Ao (d. 844) found in the text of the *Great Learning* canonical license to reflect on the process of self-cultivation—without opening themselves to charges that concern with the self was a preoccupation that came at the expense of social commitment.]

6. From the Son of Heaven on down to commoners, all without exception should regard self-cultivation as the root.

[There are two assertions here. First, self-cultivation (*xiushen* 修身) is to be in no way limited to the elite. Each and every person, irrespective of social, political, and economic status, is to make the effort to refine himself³ morally, to permit his luminous virtue to shine forth. After all, it is not the Son of Heaven (the traditional Chinese term for the emperor) alone who is endowed with an “inborn luminous virtue.” Second, successfully fulfilling the Confucian ideal has its beginnings in the self, in bringing it about that the humanness with which we are all born is unobstructed, luminously manifest to the world.

Late imperial thinkers associated with Neo-Confucianism, men such as Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yangming (1472–1529), were profoundly committed to the text of the *Great Learning* in large part

³ Masculine pronouns have been used consistently throughout all of the texts in this book—within both the translated material and the commentary—in view of the original authors’ having written at a time when the readership was almost exclusively male.

because it argues for the applicability of the Confucian self-cultivation process to all people. Any person could practice the program for self-cultivation outlined here; anyone had the potential to manifest perfect humanness and become a sage.]

7. It is impossible that the root be unhealthy and the branches healthy. Never should the important be treated as trivial; never should the trivial be treated as important.

[The root and branch analogy is a common one in the Chinese tradition and is generally used to distinguish between what is the foundation or the basis and what grows out of and depends on the foundation or the basis.

With this passage, what has traditionally been treated as the heart of the *Great Learning*, the portion attributed to Confucius himself, comes to a close. Reading passages #6—7 as a summing up of passages #4—5, Zhu Xi comments: "the 'root' refers to the 'person' and the 'important' refers to the 'family.'" Zhu, with this commentary, is attempting to point up the strong coherence of the text, the close interrelationship among passages within it.

The following passage is part of what Zhu and the later tradition take to be the portion of the *Great Learning* in which Confucius' disciple Zengzi offers his commentary on the words of his Master. In studying and reflecting on this portion, Zhu Xi concluded that its original fifth chapter, the Zengzi commentary on "the investigation of things" and "the completion of knowledge," had been lost and so he "reconstructed" it. Ever since, the Chinese tradition has regarded this, the "supplemental" fifth chapter by Zhu Xi, as part of the body of the *Great Learning*, and indeed as the most important chapter in the text next to the portion above by Confucius himself:]

What is meant by "the extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things" is this: If we wish to extend our knowledge to the utmost, we must probe thoroughly the principle in those things that we encounter. Now every person's intellect is possessed of the capacity for knowing; at the same time every thing in the world is possessed of principle. To the extent that principle is not thoroughly

probed a person's knowledge is not fully realized. For this reason, the first step of instruction in the *Great Learning* teaches students that, encountering anything at all in the world, they must build on what they already know of principle and probe still deeper, until they reach its limit. Exerting themselves in this manner for a long time, they will one day suddenly become all penetrating; this being the case, the manifest and the hidden, the subtle and the obvious qualities of all things will all be known, and the mind, in its whole substance and vast operations, will be completely illuminated. This is what is meant by "the investigation of things." This is what is meant by "the completion of knowledge."

[Zhu Xi, in "filling in the lacuna" here, as he puts it, lays out the meta-physical foundations of his Neo-Confucian vision of self-cultivation. It is a process of self-cultivation available to everyone, as everyone has the faculty for knowing. The process requires that this faculty for knowing, in all affairs, relationships, and things in the universe, seeks to understand principle; over time such investigation of principle in the affairs, relationships, and things around us can result in a full understanding of the universe, of what gives coherence and real meaning to the universe and everything in it. It should be pointed out that the ultimate goal of the Neo-Confucian program of self-cultivation is not the understanding of the true nature of things. The goal is moral action, moral behavior: on the basis of having probed and understood principle, we know precisely how to comport ourselves as required by the nature of everything that we encounter. In all of life's situations we behave as we should interrelationally. Thus, as outlined in #4—5 in the portion by Confucius, we can readily bring good governance and harmony to family, state, and empire.

If in fact there was a lost fifth chapter, it is safe to observe that it would not have been expressed in the terms Zhu Xi uses here. Principle and the search for it only became part of the Confucian vocabulary with thinkers associated with the "learning of the Way," or the Neo-Confucian movement, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nonetheless, from the time of Zhu on, this passage would be read as a chapter of the classic itself, replacing the "lost chapter" transmitted by Zengzi and his disciples.]

THE GREAT LEARNING.

大學

子程子曰，大學，
孔氏之遺書，而
初學入德之門
也。於今可見古
人爲學次第者，
獨賴此篇之存，
而論孟次之，學
者必由是而學
焉，則庶乎其不

My master, the philosopher Ch'ang, says:—'The Great Learning is a Book transmitted by the Confucian School, and forms the gate by which first learners enter into virtue. That we can now perceive the order in which the ancients pursued their learning is solely owing to the preservation of this work, the Analects and Mencius coming after it. Learners must commence their course with this, and then it may be hoped they will be kept from error.'

TITLE OF THE WORK.—大學, 'The Great Learning.' I have pointed out, in the prolegomena, the great differences which are found among Chinese commentators on this Work, on almost every point connected with the criticism and interpretation of it. We encounter them here on the very threshold. The name itself is simply the adoption of the two commencing characters of the treatise, according to the custom noticed at the beginning of the Analects; but in explaining those two characters, the old and new schools differ widely. Anciently, 大 was read as 太, and the oldest commentator whose notes on the work are preserved, Ch'ang K'ang-ch'ang, in the last half of the 2nd century, said that the Book was called 大學, 以其記博學, 可以爲政, 'because it recorded that extensive learning, which was available for the administration of government.' This view is approved by K'ung Ying-ta (孔穎達), whose expansion of K'ang-ch'ang's notes, written in the first half of the 7th century, still remains. He says—大學, 至道矣, '大學 means the highest principles.' Ch'ü Hsi's definition, on the contrary, is—大學者大人之學也, '大學 means the Learning of Adults.' One of the

paraphrasts who follow him says—大是大人, 與小子對, '大 means adults, in opposition to children.' The grounds of Ch'ü Hsi's interpretation are to be found in his very elegant preface to the Book, where he tries to make it out, that we have here the subjects taught in the advanced schools of antiquity. I have contented myself with the title—'The Great Learning,' which is a literal translation of the characters, whether read as 太學 or 大學.

THE INTRODUCTORY NOTE.—I have thought it well to translate this, and all the other notes and supplements appended by Ch'ü Hsi to the original text, because they appear in nearly all the editions of the work, which fall into the hands of students, and his view of the classics is what must be regarded as the orthodox one. The translation, which is here given, is also, for the most part, according to his views, though my own differing opinion will be found freely expressed in the notes. Another version, following the order of the text, before it was transposed by him and his masters, the Ch'ang, and without reference to his interpretations, will be found in the translation of the Li Chi.—子程子, —see note to the Analects, I. i. r. The Ch'ang here is the second of the two brothers, to whom reference is made in the prolegomena. 孔氏, 'Confucius,' = the K'ung,

后定而后善。止親明道。大^二學差矣。
 能定而后知^二於民德在明之矣。
 靜而有止至在在明之矣。

THE TEXT OF CONFUCIUS.

1. What the Great Learning teaches, is—to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.

2. The point where to rest being known, the object of pursuit is then determined; and, that being determined, a calm unperturbedness may be attained to. To that calmness there will succeed a tranquil repose. In that repose there may be careful deliberation,

as 季氏 is found continually in the Analects for the Chi, i. e. the chief of the Chi family. For how can we say that 'The Great Learning' is a work left by Confucius? Even Chū Hsi ascribes only a small portion of it to the Master, and makes the rest to be the production of the disciple Tsāng, and before his time, the whole work was attributed generally to the sage's grandson. I must take 孔氏 as = 孔門, the Confucian school.

THE TEXT OF CONFUCIUS. Such Chū Hsi, as will be seen from his concluding note, determines this chapter to be, and it has been divided into two sections (段), the first containing three paragraphs, occupied with the heads (綱領) of the Great Learning, and the second containing four paragraphs, occupied with the particulars (條目) of those.

Par. 1. The heads of the Great Learning. 大學之道, —'the way of the Great Learning,' 道 being = 修爲之方法, 'the methods of cultivating and practising it,' —the Great Learning, that is. 在, 'is in.' The first 明 is used as a verb; the second as an adjective, qualifying 德. The illustrious virtue is the virtuous nature which man derives from Heaven. This is perverted as man grows up, through defects of the physical constitution, through inward lusts, and through outward seductions; and the great business of life should be, to bring the nature back to its original purity. —'To renovate the people,' —this object of the Great Learning is made out, by changing the character 親 of the old text

into 新. The Ch'āng first proposed the alteration, and Chū Hsi approved of it. When a man has entirely illustrated his own illustrious nature, he has to proceed to bring about the same result in every other man, till 'under heaven' there be not an individual, who is

not in the same condition as himself. —'The highest excellence' is understood of the two previous matters. It is not a third and different object of pursuit, but indicates a perseverance in the two others, till they are perfectly accomplished. —According to these explanations, the objects contemplated in the Great Learning are not three, but two. Suppose them realised, and we should have the whole world of mankind perfectly good, every individual what he ought to be!

Against the above interpretation, we have to consider the older and simpler. 德 is there not the nature, but simply virtue, or virtuous conduct, and the first object in the Great Learning is the making of one's self more and more illustrious in virtue, or the practice of benevolence, reverence, filial piety, kindness, and sincerity. See the 故本大學註

辨, in loc. —There is nothing, of course, of the renovating of the people, in this interpretation. The second object of the Great Learning is 親民 = 親愛於民, 'to love the people.'

—The third object is said by Ying-tā to be 'in resting in conduct which is perfectly good (在止處於至善之行),' and here also, there would seem to be only two objects, for what essential distinction can we make between the first and third? There will be occasion below to refer to the reasons for changing 親 into 新, and their unsatisfactoriness. 'To love the people' is, doubtless, the second thing taught by the Great Learning. —Having the heads of the Great Learning now before us, according to both interpretations of it, we feel that the student of it should be a sovereign, and not an ordinary man.

Par. 2. The mental process by which the point of rest may be attained. I confess that I do not well understand this paragraph, in the relation of its parts in itself, nor in relation to the rest of the chapter. Chū Hsi says: —'止 is the ground where we ought to rest; —namely, the highest excellence mentioned above. But if

靜而后能安，安而后能慮，慮而后能得。^三物有本末，事有終始，知所先後，則近道矣。^四古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者，先脩其身；欲脩其身者，先正

and that deliberation will be followed by the attainment of the desired end.

3. Things have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in the *Great Learning*.

4. The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts.

this be known in the outset, where is the necessity for the 慮, or 'careful deliberation,' which issues in its attainment? The paraphrasts make 知止 to embrace even all that is understood by 格物致知 below.—Ying-tā is perhaps rather more intelligible. He says:—'When it is known that the rest is to be in the perfectly good, then the mind has fixedness. So it is free from concupiscence, and can be still, not engaging in disturbing pursuits. That stillness leads to a repose and harmony of the feelings. That state of the feelings fits for careful thought about affairs (能思慮於事), and thence it results that what is right in affairs is attained.' Perhaps, the paragraph just intimates that the objects of the Great Learning being so great, a calm, serious thoughtfulness is required in proceeding to seek their attainment.

Par. 3. The order of things and methods in the two preceding paragraphs. So, according to Chū Hsi, does this paragraph wind up the two preceding. 'The illustration of virtue,' he says, 'is the root, and the renovation of the people is the completion (literally, the branches). Knowing where to rest is the beginning, and being able to attain is the end. The root and the beginning are what is first. The completion and end are what is last.'—The adherents of the old commentators say, on the contrary, that this paragraph is introductory to the succeeding ones. They

contend that the illustration of virtue and renovation of the people are *doings* (事), and not *things* (物). According to them, the *things* are the person, heart, thoughts, &c., mentioned below, which are 'the root,' and the family, kingdom, and empire, which are 'the branches.' The *affairs* or *doings* are the various processes put forth on those things.—This, it seems to me, is the correct interpretation.

Par. 4. The different steps by which the illustration of illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom may be brought about. 明明德於天下 is understood by the school of Chū Hsi as embracing the two first objects of the Great Learning, the illustration, namely, of virtue, and the renovation of the people. We are not aided in determining the meaning by the synthetic arrangement of the different steps in the next paragraph, for the result arrived at there is simply—天下平, 'the whole kingdom was made tranquil.'—Ying-tā's comment is—章明己之明德使徧於天下, 'to display illustriously their own illustrious virtue (or virtues), making them reach through the whole kingdom.' But the influence must be very much transformative. Of the several steps described, the central one is 修身, 'the cultivation of the person,' which, indeed, is called 本, 'the root,' in par. 6. This re-

而物。知其者、誠其者、正其心、
 后物^五在知先其意、先其誠心、
 知格、格致致意欲誠心欲

Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

5. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their

quires 'the heart to be correct,' and that again 'that the thoughts be sincere.' Chü Hsi defines 心 as 身之所主, 'what the body has for its lord,' and 意 as 心之所發, 'what the 心 sends forth.' Ying-tâ says:—總包萬慮謂之心, 'that which comprehends and embraces all considerations is called the 心;' 爲情所意念謂之意, 'the thoughts under emotion are what is called 意.' 心 is then the metaphysical part of our nature, all that we comprehend under the terms of mind or soul, heart, and spirit. This is conceived of as quiescent, and when its activity is aroused, then we have thoughts and purposes relative to what affects it. The 'being sincere' is explained by 實, 'real.' The sincerity of the thoughts is to be obtained by 致知, which means, according to Chü Hsi, carrying our knowledge to its utmost extent, with the desire that there may be nothing which it shall not embrace. This knowledge, finally, is realised 在格物. The same authority takes 物, 'things,' as embracing, 事, 'affairs,' as well. 格 sometimes = 至, 'to come or extend to,' and assuming that the 'coming to' here is by study, he makes it = 窮究 'to examine exhaustively,' so that '格物' means exhausting by examination the principles of things and affairs, with the desire that their uttermost point may be reached.—We feel that this explanation cannot be correct, or that, if it be correct, the teaching of the Chinese sage is far beyond and above the condition and capacity of men. How can we suppose that, in order to secure sincerity of thought and our self-cultivation, there is necessarily the study of all the phenomena of physics and metaphysics, and of the events of history? Moreover, Chü Hsi's view of the two last clauses is a consequence of the alterations which he adopts in the order of the text.

As that exists in the Li Chi, the 7th paragraph of this chapter is followed by 此爲知本, 此爲知之至也, which he has transferred and made the 5th chapter of annotations. Ying-tâ's comment on it is:—'The root means the person. The person (i.e. personal character) being regarded as the root, if one can know his own person, this is the knowledge of the root; yea, this is the very extremity of knowledge.' If we apply this conclusion to the clauses under notice, it is said that wishing to make our thoughts sincere we must first carry to the utmost our self-knowledge, and this extension of self-knowledge 在格物. Now, the change of the style indicates that the relation of 致知 and 格物 is different from that of the parts in the other clauses. It is not said that to get the one thing we must first do the other. Rather it seems to me that the 格物 is a consequence of 致知, that in it is seen the other. Now, 式, 'a rule or pattern,' and 正, 'to correct,' are accepted meanings of 格, and 物 being taken generally and loosely as = things, 在格物 will tell us that, when his self-knowledge is complete, a man is a law to himself, measuring, and measuring correctly, all things with which he has to do, not led astray or beclouded by them. This is the interpretation strongly insisted on by 羅仲藩, the author of the 古本大學註辨. It is the only view into any sympathy with which I can bring my mind. In harmony with it, I would print 致知在格物 as a paragraph by itself, between the analytic and synthetic processes described in paragraphs 4, 5. Still there are difficulties connected with it, and I leave the vexed questions, regretting my own inability to clear them up.

Par. 5. The synthesis of the preceding processes. Observe the 致 of the preceding paragraph is

至知至而后意識意誠
而后心正心正而后身
脩身脩而后家齊家齊
而后國治國治而后天
下平自天子^{六節}以至於庶
人^{七節}壹是皆以脩身為本。
其本亂而末治者否矣
其所厚者薄而其所薄
者厚未之有也。

thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.

6. From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of *everything besides*.

7. It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well ordered. It never has been the case that what was of great importance has been slightly cared for, and, at the same time, that what was of slight importance has been greatly cared for.

changed into 至, and how 治 (the second, or lower first tone) now becomes 治, the 4th tone. 治 is explained by 攻理, 'the work of ruling,' and 治 by 理效, 'the result.' 后 is used for 後, as in par. 2.

Par. 6. The cultivation of the person is the prime, radical thing required from all. I have said above that the Great Learning is adapted only to a sovereign, but it is intimated here that the people also may take part in it in their degree. 天子, 'Son of Heaven,' a designation of the sovereign, 以其命于天, 'because he is ordained by Heaven.' 壹是 = 一切, 'all.' Ch'ang K'ang-ch'ang, however, says:— 壹是, 專行是也, '壹是 means that they uniformly do this.'

Par. 7. Reiteration of the importance of attending

to the root. Ch'ü Hsi makes the root here to be the person, but according to the preceding paragraph, it is 'the cultivation of the person' which is intended. By the 末 or 'branches' is intended the proper ordering of the family, the State, the kingdom. 'The family,' however, must be understood in a wide sense, as meaning not a household, but a clan, embracing all of the same surname. 厚薄, 'thick,' and 'thin,'—used here metaphorically. 所厚, according to Ch'ü Hsi, means 'the family,' and 所薄, 'the State and the kingdom,' but that I cannot understand. 所厚 is the same as the root. Mencius has a saying which may illustrate the second part of the paragraph.— 於所厚者薄, 無所不薄, 'He, who is careless in what is important, will be careless in everything.'



右經一章，蓋孔子之言，而曾子述之，其傳十章，則曾子之意，而門人記之也。舊本頗有錯簡，今因程子所定，而更考經文，別爲序次如左。康誥曰：克明德。

The preceding chapter of classical text is in the words of Confucius, handed down by the philosopher Tsäng. The ten chapters of explanation which follow contain the views of Tsäng, and were recorded by his disciples. In the old copies of the work, there appeared considerable confusion in these, from the disarrangement of the tablets. But now, availing myself of the decisions of the philosopher Ch'ang, and having examined anew the classical text, I have arranged it in order, as follows:—

COMMENTARY OF THE PHILOSOPHER TSÄNG.

CHAPTER I. 1. In the Announcement to K'ang, it is said, 'He was able to make his virtue illustrious.'

CONCLUDING NOTE. It has been shown in the prolegomena that there is no ground for the distinction made here between so much *ching* attributed to Confucius, and so much 傳, or commentary, ascribed to his disciple Tsäng. The invention of paper is ascribed to Ts'ai Lun (蔡倫), an officer of the Han dynasty, in the time of the emperor Hwo (和), A. D. 89-105. Before that time, and long after also, slips of wood and of bamboo (簡) were used to write and engrave upon. We can easily conceive how a collection of them might get disarranged, but whether those containing the Great Learning did so is a question vehemently disputed. 右經一章, 'the chapter of classic on the right; 如左, 'on the left;—these are expressions = our 'preceding,' and 'as follows,' indicating the Chinese method of writing and printing from the right side of a manuscript or book on to the left.

COMMENTARY OF THE PHILOSOPHER TSÄNG.

1. THE ILLUSTRATION OF ILLUSTRIOUS VIRTUE. The student will do well to refer here to the text of 'The Great Learning,' as it appears in the Li Chi. He will then see how a considerable portion of it has been broken up, and transposed to form this and the five succeeding

chapters. It was, no doubt, the occurrence of 明, in the four paragraphs here, and of the phrase 明德, which determined Chü Hsi to form them into one chapter, and refer them to the first head in the classical text. The old commentators connect them with the great business of making the thoughts sincere. 1. See the Shü-ching, V. ix. 3. The words are part of the address of king Wü to his brother Fäng (封), called also K'ang-shü (康叔; 康, the honorary epithet) on appointing him to the marquisate of 衛. The subject of 克 is king Wän, to whose example K'ang-shü is referred.—We cannot determine, from this paragraph, between the old interpretation of 德, as = 'virtues,' and the new which understands by it, — 'the heart or nature, all-virtuous.' 2. See the Shü-ching, IV. v. Sect. I. 2. Chü Hsi takes 謫 as = 此, 'this,' or 審, 'to judge,' 'to examine.' The old interpreters explain it by 正, 'to correct.' The sentence is part of the address of the premier, I Yin, to T'ai-chia, the second emperor of the Shang dynasty, B. C. 1753-1719. The subject of 顧 is T'ai-chia's father, the great T'ang. Chü Hsi

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of things. Therefore he rejected both Chu Hsi's rearrangement of the text and his doctrine of the investigation of things,³ and based his whole philosophy on the *Great Learning*, with sincerity of the will as its first principle.⁴ For centuries Neo-Confucianists of the two schools represented by Chu and Wang debated the issue.

However, they all agreed on another doctrine of the *Great Learning*, that is, that the internal and the external, the fundamental and the secondary, and the first and the last, must be clearly distinguished. No other Confucian Classic has presented this idea so clearly and so forcefully. It is also important because the matter is not just one of procedure but involves the basic question of comparative values. In addition, the concept of being watchful over oneself when alone made a deep impression on the Neo-Confucianists, so much so that none has neglected it and some even built their philosophical systems around it. Since the Classic is important for both practical and theoretical reasons, it is no wonder that, from the early fourteenth century to the twentieth, it was a required text in Chinese education. It is here translated in full, with Chu Hsi's own remarks.

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Chu Hsi's Remark. Master Ch'eng I said,⁶ "The *Great Learning* is a surviving work of the Confucian school and is the gate through

³ *Ch'uan-hsi lu* (Instructions for Practical Living), sec. 129, 135-137, 172-175, and 201. See Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living*.

⁴ His philosophy is summed up in his "Inquiry on the *Great Learning*." See below, ch. 35.

⁵ The *Great Learning* is originally ch. 42 of the *Li chi* (*Book of Rites*). Not much attention was paid to it until the time of Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086), who wrote a commentary on it, treating it as a separate work for the first time. This commentary is now lost. Ch'eng Hao (Ch'eng Ming-tao, 1032-1085) and his younger brother Ch'eng I (Ch'eng I-ch'uan, 1033-1107) each rearranged the text. Chu Hsi did the same and, moreover, added a "supplement." He further divided the work into one "text" and ten "chapters of commentary," and contended that the former was Confucius' own words handed down by his pupil Tseng Tzu (505-c.436 B.C.) and that the latter were the views of Tseng Tzu recorded by his pupils. There is no evidence for this contention. Recent scholars, equally without evidence, have dated the work as late as around 200 B.C. Regardless of its date and authorship, which has also been attributed to Confucius' grandson Tzu-ssu (492-431 B.C.), it was Chu Hsi who made it important in the last 800 years. He grouped it with the *Analects*, the *Book of Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* as the "Four Books" and wrote commentaries on them. Since then they were honored as Classics, and from 1313 till 1905 they were the basis of civil service examinations. Thus they replaced the other Classics in importance and influence.

The Chinese title, *Ta-hsüeh*, literally means education for the adult. In contrast to the education for the young, which consisted of good manners, daily behavior, etc., education for the adult involves moral cultivation and social order. It means, therefore, education for the good man or the gentleman, or using the word in the sense "great," education for the great man.

Among Western translations, that by Hughes in his *The Great Learning and the*

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which the beginning student enters into virtue. It is only due to the preservation of this work that the order in which the ancients pursued their learning may be seen at this time. The *Analects* and the *Book of Mencius* are next to it. The student should by all means follow this work in his effort to learn, and then he will probably be free from mistakes."⁷

The Text

The Way of learning to be great (or adult education) consists in manifesting the clear character, loving⁸ the people, and abiding (*chih*)⁹ in the highest good.

Only after knowing what to abide in can one be calm. Only after having been calm can one be tranquil. Only after having achieved tranquillity can one have peaceful repose. Only after having peaceful repose can one begin to deliberate. Only after deliberation can the end be attained. Things have their roots and branches. Affairs have their beginnings and their ends. To know what is first and what is last will lead one near the Way.

The ancients who wished to manifest their clear character to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things. When things are investigated, knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere; when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is culti-

Mean-in-Action follows the ancient text, the one used by Cheng Hsüan (127-200) in his annotation, which is the one in the Thirteen Classics Series and not rearranged by Chu Hsi. Those by Legge, "The Great Learning," and by Lin Yutang, "The Great Learning," follow Chu Hsi's text. This text is called *Ta-hsüah chang-chü*, literally "Punctuation and redivision of the *Great Learning* into Chapters." It contains Chu Hsi's own "Remarks." In the following translation, Chu Hsi's text is used.

⁶ What follows is a paraphrase of Ch'eng's words. See his *I-shu* (Surviving Works), 2A:4a, 22A:1a and *Ts'ui-yen* (Pure Words), 1:25a, both in ECCS.

⁷ This and the rest of the "Remarks" on the *Great Learning* are by Chu Hsi.

⁸ According to Ch'eng I, the character *ch'in* (to love) should be read *hsin* (to renovate). See his revision of the text of the *Great Learning* in *Ching-shuo* (Explanation of the Classics), 5:3a, in ECCS.

⁹ The word *chih* is used in this work in its various meanings of abiding, staying, and resting.

vated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order; and when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world. From the Son of Heaven down to the common people, all must regard cultivation of the personal life as the root or foundation. There is never a case when the root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order. There has never been a case when what is treated with great importance becomes a matter of slight importance or what is treated with slight importance becomes a matter of great importance.

Chu Hsi's Remark. The above is the text in one chapter. It is the words of Confucius, handed down by Tseng Tzu. The ten chapters of commentary which follow are the views of Tseng Tzu and were recorded by his pupils. In the traditional version there have been some mistakes in its arrangement. Now follows the new version fixed by Master Ch'eng I,¹⁰ and in addition, having examined the contents of the text, I (Chu Hsi) have rearranged it as follows:

Chapters of Commentary

1. In the "Announcement of K'ang" it is said, "He was able to manifest his clear character."¹¹ In the "T'ai-chia" it is said, "He contemplated the clear Mandates of Heaven."¹² In the "Canon of Yao" it is said, "He was able to manifest his lofty character."¹³ These all show that the ancient kings manifested their own character.

Chu Hsi's Remark. The above first chapter of commentary explains manifesting the clear character.

2. The inscription on the bath-tub of King T'ang¹⁴ read, "If you can renovate yourself one day, then you can do so every day, and keep doing so day after day." In the "Announcement of K'ang," it is said, "Arouse people to become new."¹⁵ The *Book of Odes* says, "Although Chou is an ancient state, the mandate it has received from Heaven is new."¹⁶ Therefore, the superior man tries at all times to do his utmost [in renovating himself and others].

¹⁰ Ch'eng I's rearrangement of the work is found in *Ching-shuo*, 5:3a-5b. His elder brother Hao's rearrangement, which is different from his, is found in 5:1a-3a. Actually, Chu Hsi's rearrangement is different from both.

¹¹ *History*, "Announcement of K'ang." Cf. translation by Legge, *Shoo King*, p. 383.

¹² *ibid.*, "T'ai-chia." Cf. Legge, p. 199.

¹³ *ibid.*, "Canon of Yao." Cf. Legge, p. 17.

¹⁴ Founder of the Shang dynasty (r. 1751-1739 B.C.?)

¹⁵ *History*, "Announcement of K'ang." Cf. Legge, p. 388.

¹⁶ Ode no. 235.

THE FOUR BOOKS

by DANIEL K. GARDNER

This kind of *The Great Learning* is translated by Daniel K. Gardner. There are rich humanistic thoughts in it. Because Daniel K. Gardner use some humanistic terminology, it makes *The Great Learning* emphasis on the interpretation of moral principles. For example: 「安而后能慮，慮而后能得。」 “inner serenity makes reflection possible; only with reflection is one able to reach the resting place.” In the sentence, Daniel K. Gardner use “reflection” to interpret 「慮」. Daniel K. Gardner adopts a literal translation approach to translate *The Great Learning* and a very detailed translation of Zhu Xi’s each paragraph. It is convenient for people to understand the concept from Zhu Xi, but the disadvantage side is that the original text is a bit broken up and a weakening of coherence, so it’s harder for people to follow the main ideas in *The Great Learning*. According to Zhu Xi’s commentary. The book applies metaphysical concepts to interpret the article. For example: the terms “qi” “psychophysical stuff” and “stuff” are used interchangeably throughout this book.

THE CHINESE CLASSICS

by JAMES LEGGE

James Legge is a Pioneer in the field of translating Chinese classics in scholars from non-Chinese speaking countries. In the aspect of writing methods, not only James Legge translates the content of classics and the interpretation of Zhu Xi, but he also has his own thinking. The author openly admits in the book that he doesn't fully understand some parts. It is not just following Zhu Xi's translation. For example: "I confess that I do not well understand this paragraph, in the relation of its parts in itself nor in relation to the rest of the chapter." James Legge mentions his confusion about 「知止而後有定」. James Legge's word-by-word Chinese to English translation, from this opinion, it looks like he pays attention to philology . Not only did he translate the book and offer a general interpretation, but he was also careful to mark the meaning of characters and sentences.

A SOURCE BOOK IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

by WING-TSIT CHAN

Referring to Zhu Xi's translation, Wing-Tsit Chan explains *The Great Learning* in a clear and concise way, focusing on the moral principles. It is important to pay attention here that *The Great Learning* is interpreted as 'adult education'. In the preface, Zhu Xi mentions "*The Great Learning* is the gate through which the beginning student enters into virtue." It can be understood that adult education is a basic compulsory subject in learning Confucianism and is the principle that people should study and do it. On the other hand, in Wing-Tsit Chan's translation, he translates 「在親民」 as "loving the people" but 「親」 interprets another meaning 「新」 (to renovate) in the footnotes. Although English is an alphabetic (phonetic) language, the book was written close from our own era so we can understand the meaning well by Wing-Tsit Chan's translation.