

**Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in  
*Ming xin pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind; 1959)**

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The question of the origin of badness is a core problematic in New Confucian philosopher Xiong Shili's 熊十力 (1885-1968) *Ming xin pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind; 1959), a work representative of his thought towards the end of his life.<sup>1</sup> Xiong asserts that the Buddhists never concerned themselves with the problem of the origin of ignorance and delusion, afflictions that in turn lead to suffering and wrongdoing.<sup>2</sup> What he means is that although Buddhists recognized that ignorance is problematic because it is the root cause of suffering, they did not enquire into the ontological origins of afflictions such as ignorance. In *Ming xin pian*, Xiong sets out to redress what he claims the Buddhists had failed to do.

In this essay I examine how Xiong uses the concepts of the nature (*xing* 性) and the mind (*xin* 心) to explain the origin of moral badness in his *Ming xin pian*. I argue that the conceptual structure of both Xiong Shili's and Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) theoretical approaches to this problem are isomorphic.<sup>3</sup> The isomorphism is significant because it suggests that Xiong consciously drew on Zhu Xi and/or the

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<sup>1</sup> Xiong had originally planned to include "Ming xin" as a two-part chapter in his 1958 publication *Ti yong lun* 體用論 (On Reality and Function) but because of illness he was unable to do so and published *Ti yong lun* book without that final chapter. The following year he published "Ming xin" as single volume book, hence the slightly revised title *Ming xin pian*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ming xin pian*, *Xiong Shili quanji* 熊十力全集 (The Complete Writings of Xiong Shili), vol. 7 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), p.182.

<sup>3</sup> I use isomorphism to refer to two or more systems replicating the same structure or structural relations. The way electrons revolve around a nucleus and the way the planets revolve around the sun is an example of an isomorphic structure.

Buddhist models that Zhu in turn drew on.<sup>4</sup> I provide evidence to show that even as late as 1959, and despite his increasingly entrenched criticisms of Buddhism, Xiong continued to draw on key concepts and models drawn from Buddhist philosophy of mind.

### 1. Why do good people do bad things? Condition and Cause

For Xiong Shili, the human condition is defined by the capacity to do good or bad:

The numinous and the vital stuff<sup>5</sup> that people are endowed with at birth serve to become their independent bodies and so, through their own efforts, they are able to do all manner of good actions and bad actions.

人生而含靈秉氣，以成獨立體。便能以自力造作一切善行與不善行。<sup>6</sup>

Given that people are able to choose whether to do good or to do bad, how is that badness is able to arise in the first place? How is it that there is badness at all? Xiong insists that badness is not a part of our inherent nature:

Our inherent nature has never had any roots of badness. (This is to say, inherent nature has never contained the roots of any kind of badness. Bad means various defilements such as ignorance and delusion.)

人的本性元無一切壞根。（言本性中不曾含有一切壞的根也。壞，謂癡惑諸雜染。）<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Xiong's views on the mind and related concepts also drew heavily on ideas developed by Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529) but that is not the focus of this essay, although I do discuss some of his criticisms of Wang.

<sup>5</sup> Mind and matter.

<sup>6</sup> *Ming xin pian*, pp. 148-149.

<sup>7</sup> *Ming xin pian*, 183. Round brackets indicate Xiong's interlinear autocommentary.

Given that human nature is inherently good and innate knowing<sup>8</sup> is inherent nature, then how is it that people can engage in wrongdoing such that they lose their innate knowing and their inherent nature? Argued on this basis, then it cannot be said that human wrongdoing arises from innate knowing or inherent nature. Yet it cannot be denied that people certainly engage in a lot of wrongdoing. So how should the contradiction between good and bad be accounted for?

人性本善，而良知即是本性，如何又作罪惡以致失良知、喪本性？據此而論，則人生罪惡斷不可謂其出於良知惑本性。然人之作惡犯罪者確爾不為少數，此亦無可否認。善惡矛盾之故，將於何處尋求？<sup>9</sup>

Xiong Shili and Zhu Xi provided a consistent response to this concluding question, involving two elements: condition and cause. As I will show, each element evidences a clear isomorphism between components in Xiong's and Zhu's respective metaphysical systems. The first example of isomorphism concerns the nature; the second example concerns the mind.

## 2.1 Embodied *qi* as condition

Even though our moral actions are grounded in our inherent nature—which Xiong identifies as Reality (*shiti* 實體)<sup>10</sup>—when that nature is embodied in humans, it is up to

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<sup>8</sup> Xiong is using this term both in the traditional sense of intuitively knowing what is morally good and also in the sense of inherent mind (*benxin* 本心) discussed below.

<sup>9</sup> *Ming xin pian*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>10</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 230: “It is Reality that is my innate true nature” (實體即是我生真性). See also p. 273. In the vernacular edition of the *Xin wei shi lun* 新唯識論 (New Treatise on Nothing but Consciousness; 1944), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol. 3, p. 20, Xiong writes:

“Fundamental Reality” (*benti* 本體) is but a different term for the true nature (*zhenxing* 真性). As the real principle by which we and the ten thousand things live, it is called true nature. As for this true nature's being the true aspect of myself and the myriad things as they inherently are (*benran* 本然), it

the individual person to accord with that nature if good actions are to be realized:

People's moral actions are rooted in the nature.... As such, since people already bear this nature at birth they become independent bodies of formed *qi*, and so upon becoming independent bodies of formed *qi* they have powers and abilities. They can accord with their nature and do good or they can turn their back on their inherent nature to follow the blind movements of their physical bodies and abandon themselves to wrongdoing.

人之德行根於性...。然人既稟性而生，則成為形氣的獨立體，便有權能。可以率性而為善，亦可以違背本性，而順從軀體的盲動，用縱其惡。<sup>11</sup>

Xiong's more general explanation of why people do bad things is that, even though the mind should control the body, sometimes the body controls the mind.<sup>12</sup> Thus he describes how the body blocks our capacity to discern our true nature (which, as noted above, is none other than Reality itself).

Innately, I possess true nature as a matter of course. After I am alive, however, this true nature is blocked and concealed by this body of formed *qi*, and so being obscure one is quite incapable of recognizing one's inherent nature. 我生自有真性。然而自有生以後，則為形氣的軀體所錮蔽，乃冥然莫能自識其本性。<sup>13</sup>

Here Xiong presents a distinction between inherent nature (*benxing* 本性) or true nature (*zhenxing* 真性) and its embodiment in humans, a state in which this inherent nature or true nature is somehow obscured by our physical constitution.

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is also called Fundamental Reality. Here, "true aspect" is the same as saying "Reality" (*shiti* 實體).

本體乃真性之異語。以其為吾與萬物所以生之實理則曰真性。即此真性，是吾與萬物本然的實相，亦曰本體。此中實相猶言實體。

<sup>11</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 229.

<sup>12</sup> *Ming xin pian*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>13</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 230.

Zhu Xi provides a similar account. As with Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) and Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077) before him, Zhu drew a conceptual distinction between the psychophysical nature (*qizhi zhi xing* 氣質之性) and the “heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature” (*tiandi zhi xing* 天地之性).<sup>14</sup> Whereas Zhang Zai and Cheng Yi used the distinction to demarcate two different kinds of nature, Zhu used the distinction to refer to the same nature in two different modalities. For Zhu, the heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature is pure pattern, and the psychophysical nature is pattern as it is manifest in and through *qi*. This distinction represents the nature (synonymous with Taiji 太極, with *li* 理) in its fundamental aspect and in its manifest, conditioned aspect.

People have this physical body and when pattern (*li* 理) begins to be endowed therein this is called the nature. As soon as one speaks of the nature then this concerns human beings, but because the nature includes the psychophysical it cannot be deemed to be the nature of intrinsic reality. The nature of intrinsic reality is, however, never intermixed [with the psychophysical]. The key thing for people to understand here is that even though the nature as intrinsic reality is never apart from the [psychophysical] nature, it is never intermixed [with the psychophysical].

人有此形氣，則是此理始具於形氣之中，而謂之性。纔是說性，便已涉乎有生，而兼乎氣質不得為性之本體也。然性之本體，亦未嘗雜。<sup>15</sup>

Now, although the “heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature” is nothing but pattern, without *qi* there would be nowhere for pattern to inhere:

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<sup>14</sup> The term *qizhi zhi xing* is derived from Zhang Zai, *Zhangzi quanshu* 張子全書 (Complete Writings of Zhang Zai), *Guoxue jiben congshu* 國學基本叢書 edition (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1964), 42.12a.

<sup>15</sup> *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu), comp. Li Jingde 李靖德 (fl. 1263) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), *juan* 95, p. 2430.

If it were not for the psychophysical then the heavenly endowed nature would have no place to settle. Like a ladleful of water, if there was nothing in which to contain it, there would be nowhere for the water to lodge.

天命之性，若無氣質，卻無安頓處。且如一勺水，非有物盛之，則水無歸著。<sup>16</sup>

Xiong's distinction between inherent nature and its embodiment in humans and Zhu's distinction between the psychophysical nature and the heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature are isomorphic. They each distinguish an inherent nature characterized as an all pervasive ontological structuring (or gestalt)—also variously identified as Reality, Taiji or *li*—and its embodiment in humans as human nature. And it is precisely this human embodiment of the nature that constitutes the necessary condition for the possibility of wrongdoing.

## 2.2 Selfish desires as cause

Xiong and Zhu further agree that the direct cause of badness or wrongdoing is selfish desires. In order to approach that topic, however, we first need to outline Xiong's distinction between inherent mind (*benxin* 本心) and habituated mind (*xixin* 習心).<sup>17</sup> Whereas inherent mind is innate, habituated mind is not:

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<sup>16</sup> *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 4, p. 66.

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that in *Ming xin pian* Xiong also variously identifies *benxin* with, or characterizes it in terms of, *liangzhi* 良知, *liangneng* 良能, *liangxin* 良心, *renxin* 仁心, *zhi* 知, *zhi* 智, *jue* 覺, *mingji* 明幾, *tianming* 天明 and so forth. See, for example, *Ming xin pian*, pp. 152, 227, 239, 240, 259. He already employs the *benxin/xixin* distinction in *Shili yuyao* 十力語要 (Selected Letters and Talks of Xiong Shili; 1947), for example at pp. 420-421, in *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol. 4. That work gathers material dating between 1936 and 1940. Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995) also uses this distinction in a correspondence with Xiong included in *Shili yuyao*, p. 396. An early example of the *benxin/xixin* distinction is Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578-1645), *Renpu* 人譜 (Human Ledger), where it is used to refer to two types of knowing.

Inherent mind does not arise post-natally and so is called inherent.

本心者，非後起故，遂名曰本。<sup>18</sup>

Inherent mind is innate in all people; at birth when they become independent bodies, they also all have habituated mind.

夫人之生也，莫不有本心；生而成為獨立體，亦莫不有習心。<sup>19</sup>

Xiong presents a picture of a constant tension between *benxin* and the bad habituated tendencies of *xixin*:

In the course of living, after we learn language and develop knowledge we become habituated to what is of utility and immersed in the worldly, so the natural clarity of inherent nature cannot avoid various impingements by postnatal habituated defilements.

吾人從有生來，學語、發知而後，習於實用，浸於塵俗，故本心天然之明不能避免後起的習染之雜乘。<sup>20</sup>

Defiled habituation arises by relying on the petty self whereas good habituation depends upon the inherent mind to be generated. After people are born and have formed an independent body, this body itself has powers and abilities. Hence defiled habituation easily lords its might. And yet, since inherent mind cannot, after all, be made to vanish, good habituation also must constantly issue forth. 雜染之習緣小己而起。善習依本心而生。人生既成獨立體，則獨立體自有權能。故雜染易逞其勢。然本心畢竟不可泯滅，則善習亦時發於不容己。

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Xiong also treats the distinction between *benxin* and *xixin* as essential to what he calls “learning concerned with developing fully the qualities of the mind,”

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<sup>18</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 152.

<sup>19</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 149.

<sup>20</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 240.

<sup>21</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 149.

emphasizing not only how tenuous our inherent mind is, but also how important it is to develop it:

The crux of the learning concerned with developing fully the qualities of the mind (For “developing the mind” see *Mencius*. Developing the qualities of the inherent mind is called “developing the mind.”) is to fathom the huge difference between inherent mind and the mind of habituation.

盡心之學（盡心，見孟子。發展本心之德用，曰盡心。）其要旨，在究本心、習心之大別。<sup>22</sup>

Incipient clarity emanating from the numinous nature—this is inherent mind. (“Clarity” means “bright numinous clarity.” “Incipient” means subtleness of movement. The stirring of lustrous, numinous clarity is called incipient clarity. The activation of innate knowing is precisely this incipient clarity. One can reflect within to verify this personally.)

明幾發於靈性，此乃本心。（明者，炤然靈明之謂。幾者，動之微。靈明之動，曰明幾。良知發動，即此明幾，可返己體驗也。）<sup>23</sup>

Inherent mind is merely a jot of innate incipient clarity. (“A jot” is a vernacular term used in my village to describe that something is extremely miniscule. Here I use it to describe the incipient clarity of the inherent mind as extremely subtle. Yet even though it is extremely subtle, if developed then it can be immeasurably huge.) It is essential that we rely on our own effort to utilize this incipient clarity, striving to pursue things, differentiate things, put things in order—only then will we have precise knowledge.

本心祇是天然一點明幾。（一點，是吾鄉俗話，言其微細之極也。今用之以形容本心的明幾隱微至極，然雖隱微而發展則廣大無量。）吾人須以自力利用此明幾，而努力去逐物、辨物，治理物，才有精確的知識。<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 152.

<sup>23</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 148.

<sup>24</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 264.



Innate knowing is the innate clarity of our inherent mind.... However, inherent mind is merely numinous clarity, and first requires learning in order to develop distinctly the functions of our inherent mind's numinous clarity.

良知乃是吾人本心天然之明...。然本心亦祇是靈明而已，卻要學習而後顯發其靈明之用。<sup>25</sup>

In other words, until the potential of inherent mind is properly developed, it will register as nothing more than a barely imperceptible “jot” of numinous clarity, all the while vulnerable to the proclivities of the mind of habituation.

Next I will show that Xiong's *benxin/xixin* distinction and Zhu Xi's *daoxin/renxin* distinction are also isomorphic. For Zhu Xi, the mind is the seat of our cognitive activity and of our capacity for moral decision-making, enabling us to apprehend and to discern the patterns inherent in our nature, as well as those in the world in which we live and in the cosmos more generally. This one mind has two aspects:

The mind is one. If it is held fast and so preserved then the normative patterns/principles will be evident and this is called the mind of the way. If it is abandoned and becomes lost then the desire for things will be unbridled and this is called the mind of humans. If one retrieves it, starting with the mind of humans, then it will be the mind of the way. If one lets go, starting with the mind of the way, then this will be the mind of humans, and in an instant it will transform into a myriad forms.

心一也。操而存，則義理明而謂之道心；舍而亡，則物欲肆而謂之人心。自人心而收回，便是道心；自道心而放出，便是人心。頃刻之間，恍惚萬狀，所謂出入無時，莫知其鄉也。<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 239.

<sup>26</sup> *Zhu Xi ji* 朱熹集 (Collected Works of Zhu Xi), eds. Guo Qi 郭齊 and Yin Bo 尹波 (Chengdu: Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), *juan* 39, p. 1786. The quotation is a passage attributed to Confucius in *Mencius* 6A.8.

Even though the mind of humans is certainly different from the mind of the way, nevertheless [the mind of humans and the mind of the way] cannot be regarded as two things nor sought in two different places.

蓋人心固異道心，又不可做兩物看，不可於兩處求也。<sup>27</sup>

For Zhu Xi, there is only one mind but it has two aspects: discerning pattern or not discerning pattern. The mind of the way is replete with the myriad patterns, which are immediately accessible through their endowment as our human nature. The mind of the way is the source of goodness. The mind of humans, by contrast, is the failure to be aware of this.

These two aspects will also be in tension if the human mind is not properly controlled:

If the two [aspects]<sup>28</sup> become mixed up in one's mind such that it does not know how to put them in proper order, then the precarious will grow ever more precarious and the subtle will grow ever more subtle, until finally the impartiality of heavenly pattern will no longer be able to overpower the selfishness of human desires. By being meticulous in distinguishing them, one will not intermix them; by being focused one will uphold the impartiality of one's inherent mind and not depart from it.

二者雜於方寸之間，而不知所以治之，則危者愈危，微者愈微，而天理之公卒無以勝夫人欲之私矣。精則察夫二者之間而不雜也，一則守其本心之正而不離也。<sup>29</sup>

Here “the subtle” refers to the mind of the way and “the precarious” refers to the human mind. Clearly, Zhu equates the inherent mind with the mind of the way. And

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<sup>27</sup> *Zhu Xi ji*, *juan* 32, p. 1377.

<sup>28</sup> The mind of the way and the mind of humans.

<sup>29</sup> Zhu Xi, “*Zhongyong zhangju xu*” 中庸章句序 (Preface to the Section and Sentence Commentaries on the *Doctrine of the Mean*), p. 14, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Section and Sentence Commentaries and Collected Annotations on the Four Books), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983).

just as Xiong characterizes the inherent mind as tenuous and subtle, so too Zhu Xi characterizes the mind of the way as precarious and subtle:

[The mind] is either unstable due its precariousness or difficult to discern due its subtlety.... The mind's numinous awareness is but one, yet there is a difference between the mind of humans and the mind of the way.  
或危殆而不安，或微妙而難見耳...。心之虛靈知覺，一而已矣，而以為有人心、道心之異者 ...。 <sup>30</sup>

With the foregoing account of inherent mind and habituated mind now in place, we can turn to examine the connection between human wrongdoing and selfish desires. For Xiong, the human condition is such that it leaves us vulnerable to desires. Indulging selfish desires is the cause of wrongdoing.

The very first instant our innate mind (innate mind is precisely the manifestation of the qualities of generative vitality<sup>31</sup> and is also an alternative term for the mind of humaneness.<sup>32</sup> The reason I use innate mind rather than mind of humaneness is that I am following common practice.) suddenly stirs, this expression of the mind of humaneness is pure incipient clarity<sup>33</sup> and is not intermixed with human affairs. At the following instant, however, we ourselves give rise to human intentions and so intermix [this incipient clarity with] human affairs. If at this juncture our intentions still continue [to give expression to] innate mind and not lose it—this is resoluteness—and thereupon lend it expression through good deeds and realize it in moral actions, only then will human affairs continue those of heaven and so not lose incipient clarity. If at this juncture our intentions are the stirring of selfish intentions and selfish

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<sup>30</sup> Zhu Xi, “Zhongyong zhangju xu,” p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> An alternative term for Reality (*shiti* 實體; *benti* 本體).

<sup>32</sup> Synonymous with inherent mind or innate knowing.

<sup>33</sup> At *Ming xin pian*, p. 248, Xiong glosses *tianji* as “a jot of incipient clarity suddenly expressed” (天機是一點明幾驟然開發). It refers to the sudden moment of awareness of the presence of our true nature.

desires, and thus contrary to innate mind, we will be driven by selfish intentions and selfish desires and so do wrong.

吾人良心（良心即是生命之德用顯露，亦是仁心之別稱。不曰仁心而曰良心者，隨俗故。）初一剎那傾乍動，是仁心之發，純是天機，未攙雜人事。後一剎那傾，吾人便自起意思，即攙以人事。此際意思如仍繼續良心而不放失，此即剛決，于時發為善事，成其德行，是乃以人事繼天而不喪天機也。假若此際意思是私意私欲之動，即違背良心，吾人將為私意私欲所驅使，造作罪惡。）<sup>34</sup>

This is why Xiong emphasizes the need for inherent mind (innate mind) to be expanded to be realized:

In human life it is essential to preserve and to give free play to the clear incipience of inherent mind (“Preserve” is to retain and not lose; “give free play to” is to let inherent mind flow freely, and not block or conceal it.), constantly creating new good habituations so as to transform the bad habituations of former defilements. Only then can the good beginnings of inherent mind be maximally expanded, becoming greater day by day. This is the means by which the human path is realized and the ultimate human achievement is established. 人生要在保任本心之明幾，（保者，保持而勿喪失也。任者，任本心流行，勿以惡習障蔽之也。）而常創起新的善習，以轉化舊的雜染惡習。乃得擴充本心之善端而日益弘大。此人道之所由成，人極之所由立也。<sup>35</sup>

People’s moral actions arise from the nature. Once virtue is practiced, the nature comes to rely upon human virtue in order to spread and expand.... For the qualities of generative vitality to begin to become virtuous actions, however, it is necessary that we as individuals reflect on our inner life, personally verify that our innate mind resolutely stirs within of its own accord—neither daring to lose it nor bear to do so—and that we directly express it in our moral actions.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 227; see also pp. 255-256.

<sup>35</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 149.

人的德行出於性，德修矣，而性適賴人之德以弘。.... 然生命之德用，必須吾人返在自家內部生活中，親自體認良心，而不敢且不忍失之，確然自動乎中，直發之為行事，始成吾人之德行。<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 227.

The relationship between Reality (the nature) and mind is a *ti-yong* relationship.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 274, Xiong criticizes both Cheng Yi and Wang Yangming for failing to distinguish *shiti* and its functioning:

With respect to the Song Confucian view of heavenly principle and to Wang Yangming's view of innate knowing, both regarded them as Reality and so definitely failed to distinguish *ti* and *yong*. (Innate knowing and the mind of heavenly principle are both *yong*.) When Master Cheng spoke of heavenly principle, he maintained that this amounted to nothing more than sincerity and reverential attention. (See "*Shi ren pian*" [On knowing humaneness].) When Yangming spoke of innate knowing, he maintained that there is nothing that innate knowing does not know, and so altered the basic meaning of the *Great Learning's* "investigating things."

宋儒之於天理，王陽明之於良知，皆視為實體，固已不辨體用。（良知與天理之心，皆用也。）程子言天理，則以為祇是誠敬存之。（見識仁篇。）陽明言良知，則以為良知無所不知，而改變大學格物之本義。

Xiong's charge is that the mind of heavenly principle (which here is actually referring to humaneness) and innate knowing are *yong* not *ti*. Xiong is critical of Cheng Yi for failing to address practice, function. In the case of Wang Yangming, Xiong is referring to Wang's statement that everything the sage knows is heavenly principle and that therefore there is nothing about heavenly principle that the sage does not know. As for countless details about the physical world, that is not necessary for the sage to know. See Wang Yangming, *Chuan xi lu* 傳習錄 (Record of Practicing What Has Been Transmitted), *Wang Yangming Chuanxi lu xiangzhu jiping* 王陽明傳習錄詳註集評 (Detailed Annotations and Collected Comments on Wang Yangming's *Record of Practicing What Has Been Transmitted*), ed. Chen Rongjie 陳榮捷 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1992), p. 303. Again, Xiong's concern is that these comments might serve to dissuade people of the need to learn and to expand knowledge. His criticisms here of Cheng and Wang contrast sharply with comments made in his correspondence with Mou Zongsan a decade earlier (31 Dec. 1948), in *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol. 8, pp. 522-523.

Further, inherent mind also simultaneously has a *ti* aspect and a *yong* aspect. (Zhu Xi's *li* and Xiong Shili's inherent mind are analogous in this respect.) In its *ti* aspect inherent mind is no different from Reality, from the nature; in its *yong* aspect it is inherent mind as we develop it in our living existence.<sup>38</sup> To experience this inherent mind as the functioning of Reality, to fulfill its *yong* aspect, it cannot remain as a jot or stirring of "clear incipience" but must be "expanded maximally" and "directly expressed in the conduct of our affairs." In the course of doing so, selfish desires are overcome.

Similarly for Zhu Xi, the "mind of the way" / "mind of humans" distinction becomes a moral issue when our cognitive choices are impacted by selfish desires:

The mind is one. Insofar as the endowment of heavenly patterns is manifest in all situations it is called the mind of the way. Insofar as the operation [of the mind] is directed at planning and deliberation it is called the mind of humans. It is not always necessarily bad that the operation [of the mind of humans] is directed at planning and deliberation. As for selfish desires, if even by an iota one does not accord with heavenly patterns as they emanate naturally then this is selfish desire.

蓋心一也，自其天理備具隨處發現而言，則謂之道心；自其有所營為謀慮而言，則謂之人心。夫營為謀慮非皆不善也。便謂之私慾者，蓋只一毫髮不從天理上自然發出，便是私慾。<sup>39</sup>

Elsewhere Zhu remarks that in every word and deed there is a right way and a wrong way to act. The right way conforms to pattern (*li*); the wrong way indulges selfish desires. "Even when drinking a cup of tea one must understand what is heavenly

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. the following passage recorded in *Shili yuyao*, p. 390: "Our inherent mind is the ceaselessly generating Reality; it is the principle/pattern by virtue of which people live; and it is the master of one's person" (本心者，生生不息的實體也，是人之所以生之理也，是人之一身之主也。). For the mutual identity of *xin* and *xing*, see *Ming xin pian*, p. 269.

<sup>39</sup> *Zhu Xi ji*, *juan* 32, p. 1376.

pattern and what is human desire.”<sup>40</sup> If one’s motivation for drinking tea serves to indulge a selfish desire, one will not be drinking tea.

In this section, two pertinent examples of isomorphism between key components of Xiong’s and Zhu’s respective metaphysical systems have been identified. The first example is Xiong’s distinction between inherent nature and its embodiment in humans and Zhu’s distinction between the psychophysical nature and the heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature. The second example of isomorphism is Xiong’s *benxin/xixin* distinction and Zhu Xi’s *daoxin/renxin* distinction. Further, these two examples also show that both Xiong and Zhu provided identical explanations for the problem of the origin of ignorance, involving both condition and cause. In the first example, both identify the human embodiment of the nature as the *necessary condition* for the possibility of badness. In the second example, both identify selfish desire as the *direct cause* of badness.

### 3. Xiong’s theoretical innovation

One of Zhu Xi’s key innovations was to develop a new solution to the problem of the origin of badness—one that avoided the radical proposals entailed in Buddhist attempts to deal with the issue for over half a millennium. Zhu’s solution was to develop a monistic ontology in which the conditions that make badness possible are not associated with pattern (*li* 理) but rather are associated with *qi*, but with the crucial stipulation that there can be no pattern without *qi*. On the one hand, *li* provides the ontological ground for *qi* qua things to be what they are; on the other hand, *qi* provides the phenomenological ground for *li* to be experienced, to be realized. The centerpiece of Zhu’s monist metaphysics is this *li-qi* polarity—an example of what I call polar monism.

Despite being able to provide a new explanation for the origin of badness using this polar monism, Zhu nevertheless failed to explain why the conditions that make badness possible are associated exclusively with *qi* and not with *li*/Taiji. Zhu’s polar monism explains how badness is able to occur in the phenomenal realm, the realm of human existence (*xing er xia* 形而下) due to *qi*, but does not explain why the ontological realm (*xing er shang* 形而上) of *li* or Taiji should have no role to play in

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<sup>40</sup> *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 3, p. 965.



the origin of badness. This presents a theoretical lacuna or deficiency in Zhu's account of the origin of badness.

Xiong's *shiti/benti* plays an analogous role to that of *Taiji/li* in Zhu Xi's metaphysics. Xiong, however, is able to avoid the sort of theoretical deficiency presented in Zhu's account by characterizing *shiti/benti* itself as inherently polar in character.

It is not difficult to find the locus of the contradiction between good and bad. Fundamental Reality (*benti*) cannot possess only a bright character and lack a dark character. (Bright refers to the mental; dark refers to the material).<sup>41</sup>

Thus, Fundamental Reality in and of itself contains an internal contradiction, otherwise it would be incapable of changing into function.

善惡矛盾之所在本不難尋。本體不能祇有陽明的性質，而無陰闇的性質。

(...陽明者，心靈也。陰闇者，物質也。) 故本體法爾有內在的矛盾。

否則無可變動成用。<sup>42</sup>

Although *benti/shiti* is monistic, it has an inherently polar character, which is presented as a contradiction. He refers to in terms of the principles of *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤:

The absolute inherently possess the characteristics of both *qian* and *kun*.

一元本具乾坤二者之性質。<sup>43</sup>

The contrariety of good and bad is grounded in the mutual opposition between the brightness of *qian* and the darkness of *kun*.

善惡互相違，本於乾之陽明與坤之陰暗兩相反也。<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> It is difficult not to draw parallels here with Buddhist distinction between mental dharmas and material-form dharmas.

<sup>42</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 279.

<sup>43</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 266.

<sup>44</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 285.

This contradiction provides the animating condition for good and bad to be realized in the interaction between the nature and physical form (and similarly between mind and phenomena, inherent mind and habituated mind, and so forth). Xiong is thus not only able to avoid Zhu's theoretical deficiency but is also able to bolster the theoretical integrity of his own polar monism by locating the mutual opposition of that polarity directly in Reality itself—the ontological—without in any way impugning the character of Reality with any taint of actual badness.

#### 4. Yogācāra elements

It should also be noted that Xiong's explanation of why the mind's cognitive functioning is compromised—and thus restricting its own capacity to exercise the functions of the inherent mind—draws unambiguously (and somewhat unexpectedly<sup>45</sup>) on Yogācāra seed theory and the concepts of store consciousness (*zangshi* 藏識 or *alaiyeshi* 阿賴耶識 [*ālayavijñāna*]) and the mental consciousness (*yishi* 意識; *mano-vijñāna*):<sup>46</sup>

The independent body makes use of heaven's clarity [=inherent mind] as a tool by which to interact with things and so “defilements accrued through habituation” arise. Defilements accrued through habituation certainly have power and ability. When concealed deeply within us they are called seeds. These seeds acquired by habituation are manifest within the domain of the functions of the mental consciousness.<sup>47</sup> This is what is referred to as the mind of habituation.

獨立體利用天明作為工具以交於事物，則有習染發生。習染並不是無有勢能的東西，其潛伏吾人內部深處便名的種子，習種又得出現於意識界，所謂習心是也。<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> It is unexpected given Xiong's decades-long attacks on Yogācāra.

<sup>46</sup> The store consciousness retains the impressions of past experiences and “perfumes” new experiences on the basis of that previous conditioning.

<sup>47</sup> *Yishi jie* 意識界 (*mano-vijñāna-dhātu*).

<sup>48</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 264.

Concealed, the lingering power of defilements accrued through habituation suddenly leaps forth from within the store of habituation, and proceeds mixed together with the stirring of heaven's clarity [=inherent mind]. Thus it is said that cognitive functioning is not purely heavenly clarity; that it is not purely innate knowing. All previous experiences are defilements accrued through habituation. The lingering power of defilements accrued through habituation is in all cases concealed as seeds in the store of habituation and emerges from the store of habituation to appear as memory [in the mental consciousness].

習染之餘勢潛伏，從習藏中躍起，便與天明之動混雜而行。故曰思維作用不純是本心天然之明，不純是良知也。凡過去的一切經驗都是習染。一切習染之餘勢都潛伏在習藏中為種子，其從習藏中出現則為記憶。<sup>49</sup>

Here Xiong provides an account of how the habituated mind arises. In doing so, he identifies the mind of habituation with the Yogācāra concept of mental consciousness. He further draws on Yogācāra cognitive theory by presenting the store of habituation (*xizang* 習藏 = *ālayavijñāna*) as the repository of seeds formed through “defilements accrued through habituation” (*xiran* 習染), which then appear as memory. In Yogācāra cognitive theory, memory is a function of the mental consciousness.

Xiong elucidates on the role of the mental consciousness in the following passage:

When mind and phenomena connect, habituated seeds seize the opportunity suddenly to leap forth [from the store of habituation (*ālayavijñāna*)] to appear in the domain of the mental consciousness and mix with the stirring of heaven's clarity (=inherent mind), almost completely blocking it [such that the mental consciousness is] purely the activity of seeds of habituation.

心與物接時，習種乘機突躍，出現於意識界，與天明之動混雜，幾乎完全障賽天明，純是習種活動。<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 240.

<sup>50</sup> *Ming xin pian*, p. 245.

The mental consciousness also brings together and differentiates the sensory impressions derived from the five sensory consciousnesses. That is, it can think about what the other five consciousnesses perceive; the five sensory consciousnesses do not have this reflective capacity. It is thus host to most cognitive errors and delusions.

### 5. The *Awakening of Faith* connection

The Buddhist elements in Xiong's concept of mind that inform *Ming xin pian* are not limited to Yogācāra. Here I will cite just one final passage as strong implicit evidence of this:

Long ago, early Chinese sages explained the distinction between the inherent and habituated minds but not in great detail. Their books have mostly disappeared and there a lack of means to examine the matter. There are, however, also correspondences between and [the explanations of] our early sages and Indian Mahāyāna accounts of the mind, in which the *tathāgatagarbha* and the *ālaya[-vijñāna]* are differentiated.

本、習二心之本辨，中夏先哲夙發其義而不甚詳，古籍多亡失，鮮可考。印度大乘之言心，其分別如來藏與賴耶，亦與吾先哲不無可通處。<sup>51</sup>

Although Xiong does not elucidate on the significance of the reference to the *tathāgatagarbha* and the *ālayavijñāna*, what he has in mind is almost certainly the One Mind Two Gateways (*yi xin er men* 一心二門) model we find in the *Treatise on the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論).

*Tathāgatagarbha* (*rulaizang* 如來藏) means the womb of a Buddha, and the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine is the idea that buddha-nature exists within all sentient beings. By the sixth century, the so-called Southern Dilun 地論 school had begun to maintain that suchness (*zhenru* 真如; *tathatā*<sup>52</sup>) or *tathāgatagarbha* exists within or as the store consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) and is the basis of everything, no matter defiled or undefiled. The main import of this relationship is that, on the one hand, the *tathāgatagarbha* (functionally equivalent to suchness) provides the ontological

<sup>51</sup> *Ming xin pian*, pp. 149-150.

<sup>52</sup> Reality as it truly is, without any conceptual overlay.

grounding for the *ālayavijñāna*, and on the other hand, *ālayavijñāna* represents the adventitious defilements that cover over or obscure realization of the *tathāgatagarbha*. The conjoining of the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālayavijñāna* is already evident in a number of pre-5th century Indian texts that were subsequently translated into Chinese. Some scholars maintain that the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*—which subsequently influenced the content of the *Awakening of Faith*—actually identifies the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālayavijñāna*. One such scholar is Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896-1989), Xiong’s erstwhile classmate who later became his ideological nemesis.<sup>53</sup> As Xiong states above, *tathāgatagarbha* and the *ālayavijñāna* are to be differentiated.

The *Awakening of Faith* presents the mind or the so-called One Mind, as the ultimate source of reality. The One Mind has two modalities or aspects, which the text calls gateways. The gateway of the mind as suchness (*xin zhenru men* 心真如門) is the true mind—unchanging, eternal, and pure. The gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing (*xin shengmie men* 心生滅門) is cyclic existence (*samsāra*) in which the mind’s propensity to awaken struggles against the mental and physical behaviors that arise from the mind’s defilement by ignorance. Both the mind as suchness and the arising and ceasing mind are ultimately the One Mind but, because ignorance obscures realization of the One Mind, deluded beings create false perceptions and so become mired in suffering. The arising and ceasing mind then generates misguided perceptual distinctions, which in turn provide new conditions for the ongoing defilement of the mind and for the suffering caused by taking the wrong sorts of actions.

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<sup>53</sup> Lü makes this identification of the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālayavijñāna* in a number of places. See, for example, “*Qixin yu Chan: duiyu Dasheng qixin lun laili de tantao*” 起信與禪 – 對於大乘起信論來歷的探討 (The *Awakening of Faith* and Chan: An Investigation into the Origin of the *Awakening of Faith*), in *Xiandai Fojiao xueshu congkan* 現代佛教學術叢刊, vol 35, edited by Zhang Mantao 張曼濤 (Taipei: Dasheng wenhua chubanshe, 1978), p. 302. For an account of the ideological clash between Xiong and Lü, see Chen-kuo Lin, “The Uncompromising Quest for Genuine Buddhism: Lü Cheng’s Critique of Original Enlightenment,” in John Makeham (ed.), *Transforming Consciousness: The Intellectual Reception of Yogācāra Thought in Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

The mind as suchness is quiescent, unchanging, unconditioned, and it neither arises nor ceases. It is free of conceptualization and distinction making. The arising and ceasing mind is identified with the *ālayavijñāna*. It represents the adaptation of *tathāgatagarbha*, the mind of suchness, to phenomenal conditions. Crucially, *tathāgatagarbha*/suchness—the unconditioned—remains constant, unchanged, undiminished, undefiled by these phenomenal conditions.

As I argue elsewhere, Zhu's metaphysics is fundamentally indebted to the One Mind Two Gateways model.<sup>54</sup> I believe that Xiong was attracted to Zhu Xi's views (although Xiong would hardly acknowledge this) because they resonate so clearly with the *Awakening of Faith*'s One Mind Two Gateways model, but within a Confucian theoretical framework. I further maintain that Xiong drew profound (and again, unacknowledged) inspiration from this key Sinitic Buddhist text over the five-decade course of his philosophical life, but that is properly the subject of a different paper—or indeed monograph.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See my “Monism and the Problem of the Ignorance and Badness in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism,” forthcoming.

<sup>55</sup> Some years ago, Chen-kuo Lin concluded that Xiong's “Confucian identity is constructed through mirrors of language among which Buddhist language plays the most significant role.” See his “Hsing Shih-li's Hermeneutics of Self: Making a Confucian Identity in Buddhist Words,” *NCCU Philosophical Journal*, 8(2002), p. 70. The main qualification I would make to Lin's assessment is that Xiong's Confucian identity is also grounded in problematics deeply informed by the traditions of Sinitic Buddhist philosophy.