
BY

HANS VAN ESS
University of Munich

Since A.C. Graham published his book on the Ch’eng brothers, Western sinology knows that the family of Hu An-kuo 胡安國 (1074-1138), author of what became the most successful commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* among at least thirty rival works written under the Sung dynasty, played a crucial role in the textual transmission of...
the thought of the Ch'eng brothers who later came to be identified as the founding fathers of the “Learning of the Way” (t'ao-hsiēh 道學) movement. The Hus were the dominating group among an initially only small faction of followers of the Ch’engs at the beginning of the Sung restoration in Hang-chou. This aspect is most relevant because members of the Hu family became the direct transmitters of important parts of the Ch’eng heritage down to Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), and they may have influenced its present shape. However, despite their mention by Graham, they are, at least in publications in Western languages, still overlooked in most discussions of the early stages of the movement. This article will discuss the Hu school’s contribution to our knowledge of the thought of the Ch’eng brothers, and show how actually the Hus’ own ideas may be found in the works of the Ch’engs.

One important reason for the neglect in which the Hus’ contribution to tao-hsiēh is held should certainly be looked for in Chu Hsi’s theory of the correct transmission of the Tao. As is well known, Chu Hsi declared himself to be a student’s student of Yang Shih 楊時 (1053-1135), one of the three great disciples of the Ch’engs, while on the other hand Chu Hsi’s students and intellectual followers placed the Hu family in another branch of scholarship, which, according to them, went back to another of these three disciples, Hsieh Liang-tso 謝良佐 (1050-ca.1120). Whereas much space was devoted to the words and deeds of the Hus in early anthologies describing the fate of the Learning of the Way movement, the family was considered to be of only secondary interest by the compilers of later collections. For example, a whole chapter is devoted to Hu An-kuo in Chu Hsi’s Account of the Deep Source [of the Ch’eng School] from I-Luo (I-Luo yüan-yüan lu 伊洛源淵錄), completed around 1173. Leaving aside chapter 14 of this collection, which looks more like an appendix containing only short notes on lesser known persons, chapter 13 on Hu An-kuo is in effect the last of the book, which makes him even more important since the chapters follow a chronological order: at that time Chu Hsi

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4 This affiliation might be based on a claim made by Chu Hsi according to the Chu-tzu yü-lei 朱子語類 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1986, henceforth quoted as CTYL), chüan 101, p. 2587. On this line of transmission see for example Thomas Wilson, Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, Appendix B, p. 261ff.