

QING MING



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ON SHAO YONG'S REDEFINITION  
OF THE SUPREME ULTIMATE

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I thank all those who have supported this research from bottom of  
my heart, for without their support this work would  
never have been possible.

To Changji Wu and Yunying Yang,  
my parents also my first teacher

献给

我父母——也是我的启蒙老师

## Preface

During the Song dynasty (960-1126), Chan Buddhism was recreated as an integral part of the indigenous Song culture of China. It exerted direct or indirect influence upon Chinese culture and the mentality of most Chinese people. The Song literati studied Buddhism and practiced Chan which almost single-handedly influenced the Chinese way of thinking. The spirit of Chan was shown itself in the literati's cultural activity, such as poetry, the tea-ceremony, calligraphy, Chan paintings, *The Book of Changes* and neo-Confucianism. The Chan ideas of simplicity, purity and harmony are deeply rooted in the cultural backbone of the Song literati.

The Shao Yong redefinition of the Supreme Ultimate, "mind is the Supreme Ultimate," was a result due to the development of the Song dynasty's politics, society and culture. It has a complicated history involving political, social and cultural aspects, including extraordinary economic and geographical environment along with a profound Chan Buddhist ideological foundation. Thus, it clearly contains Chan Buddhism's elements and is different from the classical *Book of Changes* and classical Confucianism.

This book used hermeneutics to study the influence of Chan Buddhism on Shao Yong's redefinition of the Supreme Ultimate. I have attempted, through research and investigation, to analyze the source, content, characteristics, and history of the relationship between Chan Buddhism and the Shao Yong redefinition of the Supreme Ultimate. The intent of this book is to clarify the fundamental relationship

between Chan Buddhism and the Shao Yong redefinition of the Supreme Ultimate. This will include their ideological development, along with their essential features mainly from the following aspects: 1) the historical and cultural background; 2) the life of Shao Yong; 3) Huineng's concept of "realizing the mind and seeing self-nature," Zongmi's pictorial Chan schemes, Linji's concept of "four discernments of person and object," and the Caodong concept of "jeweled mirror *samādhi*;" and 4) the Lineage of the Supreme Ultimate.

After comprehensive research and interpretation; I will attempt to explain the basic characteristics of the Shao Yong redefinition of the vi Supreme Ultimate with the injection of Chan Buddhism's vitality and wisdom. They are summarized in the following ways: 1) by considering Buddha nature to be self-nature in the human mind and considering the mind to be the Supreme Ultimate; 2) by self cultivation pointing directly at the mind; 3) by "orienting toward humanism" and laying a great deal of stress upon the attainment of enlightenment through one's own efforts; and 4) by "merging worldly dharmas with transmundane dharma" with the goal of cultivating mundane morality while also practicing renunciation.

I am grateful for advice or assistance from the following Professors:

The first is Professor Huaiyu Chen. This book was written based on my PhD. dissertation. I began my study of the relationship between Chan Buddhism and the Book of Changes in Professor Huaiyu Chen's East Asian Buddhism course, in which I received encouragement and help for selecting the topic of the relationship between Chan Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism along with the philosophy of Changes as my PhD. dissertation research subject. Thus, I started to collect reference sources and collected more than three hundred reference books regarding this topic by the end of the first semester when I been in the United States. All those sources laid an important foundation for my dissertation as well as this book.

The second is my dissertation supervisor and committee chair, Professor William Chu, who kindly read my dissertation and offered invaluable detailed advice on Buddhism, organization, and focus of the dissertation. The product of the research dissertation would not be possible without his serious and rapid work.

The third is my dissertation academic committee member Professor Joshua Capitanio, who carefully read throughout my dissertation and kind enough offered so many suggestions which made my dissertation



more rigorous, objective and equitable.

The fourth is Professor Bruce Long who has taught me about Buddhist hermeneutics over the past two years of my pursuit of the PhD. degree.

Qing Ming

## Abbreviations

- T: *The Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo* (Taisho Edition of the Chinese Tripitaka 大正新修大藏经). Ed. Takakusu Junjiro and Watanabe Kaikyoku. 100 vols. Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan Company, 1924-1934.
- X: *Continuing Editions of the Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo* (*Xu zangjing* 续藏经). Hong Kong: the Hong Kong Committee on the Photographic Publication of a Continuation to the Buddhist Tripitaka, 1967.
- SKQS: *The Complete Collection in Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu* 四库全书), Taibei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 1973.
- XXSKQSTY: Wang Yunwu ed., *Summary of Continuation Edited of Complete Collection in Four Treasuries* (*Xuxiu siku quanshu tiyao* 续修四库全书提要), Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1971.
- Daoist Canon: Daoist Canon 道藏, Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chuban she, 1988.
- S. Indicates the number in the Stein collection of Dunhuang 敦煌 texts in the British Library, London.

- D. Indicates the number in the collection of Dunhuang 敦煌 texts in the Dunhuang Library, China.
- BD. Indicates the number in the collection of Dunhuang 敦煌 texts in the National Library of China. Beijing, China.
- Koryō Canon: Koryō taejanggyōng [Koryōcanon], (Photolithographic reprint, 48 vols.), Seoul: Tongguk University Press, 1976.
- YLNC: *Yongle Northern Canon* (*Yongle beizang* 永乐北藏), Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2004.
- SZYZ: *Songzang yizhen* 宋藏遗珍 [Rarities from the Song Canon]. 45 vols. Shanghai: Yingyin songban zangjinhui, 1935.
- FGDZJ: *Foguang dazang jing* 佛光大藏经 [Buddha's Light Canon]. (Chan Buddhist Canon 禅藏), Taiwan: Buddha's Light Publishing, 1994.

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# Chapter One:

## Introduction: The Existing Scholarship and Dissertation Prospectus

Shao Yong (1012-1077), a renowned philosopher of the northern Song dynasty (960-1126), was known for his scholarship on the philosophy of Changes (*yixue zhexue*)<sup>1</sup> and Neo-Confucianism.<sup>2</sup> His major philosophical work was the *Supreme Principles that Rule the World* (*Huangji jingshi shu*),<sup>3</sup> which incorporates, in some form and to some degree, all his major philosophical ideas. According to this work, the foundation of Shao Yong's philosophy is the Supreme Ultimate (*taiji*). In *The Great Commentary* (*xici*)<sup>4</sup> of *The Book of*

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1 The "Philosophy of Changes" is known as *yixue zhexue* in Chinese, which refers to the philosophical theories of *The Book of Changes*. It includes *The River Diagram* (*hetu*), *Luo Writing* (*luoshu*), *Lianshan*, *Guicang*, *Zhouyi* and all commentary literature such as *Ten Wings*, Wang Bi's *Commentaries on Zhouyi* (*Zhouyi zhu*), Zhu Xi's *The Original Meaning of the Primary Zhouyi Text* (*Yuanben zhouyi benyi*) and Shao Yong's *Supreme Principles That Rule the World* (*Huangji jingshi shu*).

2 According to Zhu Xi, Shao Yong was one of the five founders of Neo-Confucianism.

3 According to *A History of the Song Dynasty*, His other writings consisted of *The Yi River Beats the Earth Collection* (*Yichuan jirang ji*) and *A Fish Shoal Asks the Right Questions* (*Yujiao wendui*). See Tuo Tuo, *A History of the Song Dynasty*, vol. 36, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 12726-12728. Also see Shao Yong, *Supreme Principles that Rule the World* (*Huangji jingshi shu*), (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 2008), 533.

4 *The Great Commentary* (*xici*) is a commentary of the *Ten Wings* of *The Book of Changes*.