

# KUEI-SHEN IN TERMS OF *CHI*: CHU HSI'S DISCUSSION OF *KUEI-SHEN*\*

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## ABSTRACT

Chu Hsi explained all the phenomena of the world—whether physical, physiological, or psychical—in terms of the qualities and activities of *ch'i*. They included the phenomena that were called *kuei-shen*, the ones that appeared so mysterious and inexplicable that many people tended to hold superstitious beliefs about them. To Chu Hsi the *kuei-shen* phenomena also were manifestations of the qualities and activities of *ch'i* and thus could be explained in terms of the latter. This paper examines and analyzes such explanations of Chu Hsi. For example, it distinguishes the three different senses of *kuei-shen* and compares them to one another. The paper argues that, while his explanations of the *kuei-shen* phenomena reflected his rationalistic opposition to superstition, such opposition led Chu Hsi to reject only the superstitious beliefs about the phenomena, but not the occurrence of the phenomena themselves. The paper ends with a brief suggestion of the way the ideas of *kuei-shen*, including the three senses, developed historically.

## I

The concept of *kuei-shen* (鬼神) finds a place in the all-encompassing philosophical system of Chu Hsi (朱熹, 1130-1200). The third *chüan* (卷) of the *Chu-tzu Yü-lei* (朱子語類, compiled in 1270 in total 140 *chüan*) is devoted to *kuei-shen*, and the *Chu-tzu Ch'üan-shu* (朱子全書, compiled in 1713 in 66 *chüan*) also has a *chüan* allotted to that category.<sup>(1)</sup>

In Chu Hsi's own words, the things and events of *kuei-shen* "have no physical

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(1) The two basic sources for Chu Hsi's sayings and writings are *Chu-tzu Yü-lei* 朱子語類 (compiled in 1270) and *Chu-wen kung Wen-chi* 朱文公文集 (compiled in 1534). But this paper also contains references to a later, and more selective, compilation, *Chu-tzu Ch'üan-shu* 朱子全書 (compiled in 1713). The following abbreviations are used for citing the sources: WC 57.20b refers to *Hui-an-hsien-sheng Chu-wen-kung Wen-chi* 晦庵先生朱文公文集 (SPPY edition), the 57th *chüan* 卷, p. 20b; YL 94.26a2 refers to *Chu-tzu Yü-lei* (1270 edition, reprinted in 1475), the 94th *chüan*, the second passage that begins on p. 26a; CS 49.30b0 refers to *Chu-tzu Ch'üan-shu*, the 49th *chüan*, the passage that has begun on the previous page (p. 30a) and is continued on p. 30b.

form (*hsing*, 形) or image (*ying*, 影) and are difficult to understand,"<sup>(2)</sup> or "are what cannot be inferred in terms of *li* (理)."<sup>(3)</sup> The character *shen* (神) by itself also has similar meanings: "[*Shen*] is unfathomable, it comes suddenly and goes suddenly, it is suddenly here and suddenly there;"<sup>(4)</sup> "the manifestation [of *shen*] is subtle and cannot be seen, it fills everywhere and cannot be exhausted."<sup>(5)</sup> The *kuei-shen* and *shen*, then, refer to the things and events that are so subtle, strange and mysterious that they are difficult to understand or accept.<sup>(6)</sup>

Yet, Chu Hsi also had the concept of *ch'i* (氣) that constitutes every object and underlies every phenomenon of the world.<sup>(7)</sup> And since it covers every object and phenomenon, even those that belong to the category of *kuei-shen* could be no exception. Chu Hsi made it clear that the *kuei-shen* are the manifestations of the qualities and activities of *ch'i*. He even went as far as saying flatly that "*kuei-shen* is merely *ch'i*."<sup>(8)</sup> But more typically, *kuei-shen*, for Chu Hsi, is "the contraction and expansion, coming and going of the two (i.e. the *yang* 陽 and the *yin* 陰) *ch'i*,"<sup>(9)</sup> "the disappearing and growing of the *yin-yang*,"<sup>(10)</sup> or "the innate ability (*liang-neng*, 良能) of the two *ch'i*."<sup>(11)</sup> Similarly, *shen* is "the essence (*ching-ying*, 精英) of *ch'i*,"<sup>(12)</sup> "the clear and bright (*ch'ing-ming*, 清明) *ch'i*,"<sup>(13)</sup> or "like something mysterious and spiritual (*shen-ling*, 神靈) inside *ch'i*."<sup>(14)</sup>

Chu Hsi thus provided, for many *kuei-shen* and *shen* phenomena, explanations in terms of various qualities and activities of *ch'i*. My discussion in this paper, which tries to throw light on Chu Hsi's ideas about *kuei-shen*, is based on the examination of such explanations. In the following section I begin with the topics most frequently discussed in the category of *kuei-shen*—man's death and the

(2) YL3.1a1

(3) YL3.2b0

(4) CS51.7b2

(5) YL94.26a2

(6) Very brief discussions of these terms can be found in W.-t. Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*: (Princeton, 1963), pp. 789-790; A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers: Ch'eng Ming-tao and Ch'eng Yi-ch'üan* (London, 1958), pp. 111-118; Willard J. Peterson, "Making Connections: 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Book of Change*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 (1982), 67-116, on pp. 102-110.

(7) For a discussion of Chu Hsi's ideas of *ch'i*, see my "Some Aspects of the Concept of *Ch'i* in Chu Hsi," *Philosophy East and West* 34 (1984), 25-36.

(8) YL3.1b4

(9) YL34.30a2

(10) YL3.1b3

(11) CS51.10a1. For a discussion of the *yin-yang* see M. Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence* (MIT Pr., 1974), chap. 1, which gives an analytic account of the terms in the technical medical contexts. My own discussion in my unpublished Ph. D. dissertation is less technical and more general: "The World-View of Chu Hsi (1130-1200): Knowledge about the Natural World in *Chu tzu Ch'üan-shu*," Princeton University, 1980, pp. 63-80.

(12) YL1.7b2

(13) YL3.12b2

(14) YL3.2a1

sacrificial service (*chi-ssu*, 祭祀) for dead men. The next section examines the concept of *kuei-shen* in a broader context. In particular, it deals with Chu Hsi's three meanings of *kuei-shen*, and finds that *kuei-shen* in all the three senses are manifestations of the qualities and activities of *ch'i*. Pervading Chu Hsi's discussions of *kuei-shen*, also, is his strong opposition to superstition. Section IV shows how this opposition led Chu Hsi only to reject the superstitious beliefs about the strange phenomena, but seldom to reject the phenomena themselves. Section V concludes with tentative suggestions of the sources, and of the possible line of development, for various meanings of *kuei-shen*.

## II

The topics most frequently discussed by Chu Hsi in the category of *kuei-shen* were man's death and the sacrificial service for dead men. At the basis of these discussions was his acceptance of the common belief that man's *ch'i* is dispersed (*san*, 散) upon death.<sup>(15)</sup>

Dispersion of *ch'i*, however, occurs only at normal death—for those who have died peacefully.<sup>(16)</sup> The *ch'i* of those who have died abnormally is not dispersed. Chu Hsi mentioned many examples of such cases. For one, the *ch'i* of those who killed themselves is not dispersed. The *ch'i* of those who died suddenly or of the criminals who were executed also is not dispersed and remains aggregate for a long time.<sup>(18)</sup> The *ch'i* of those unfortunate deaths in battlefields sometimes stays undispersed.<sup>(19)</sup> The Buddhist and Taoist monks, who were engaged in cultivating their mental spirits (*ching-shen*, 精神), frequently keep their *ch'i* undispersed after death<sup>(20)</sup>

Such undispersed *ch'i* of dead persons, according to Chu Hsi, "becomes pent-up and produces strange and monstrous effects."<sup>(21)</sup> For example, the undispersed *ch'i* of the dead at the old battle fields can form "ghost fires (*kuei-huo*, 鬼火)" or even ghosts in the shape of human beings.<sup>(22)</sup> Some men die violently without exhausting their *ch'i*, and their undispersed *ch'i* can become evil spirits (*li*, 厲) possessing evil power destroyable only through dispersing the *ch'i* by such means as firecrackers.<sup>(23)</sup> An example is the case of Po Yu (伯有), of whom Chu Hsi discussed in several occasions.<sup>(24)</sup> Chu Hsi also mentioned a certain Chang Hung

(15) E. g., YL3.3b3; 126.5b2. This idea can be traced at least as far back to the T'ang times: see, e. g., *Kuan-yin-tzu* (關尹子, AD 742), ch. 7, p. 2b.

(16) E. g., YL3.9b2.

(17) E. g., YL3.9b2.

(18) E. g., YL3.10a2.

(19) E. g., YL3.5a0.

(20) E. g., YL3.6a0.

(21) E. g., YL3.10b1.

(22) E. g., YL3.5a0; CS51.28a0.

(23) E. g., YL3.5b0.

(24) E. g., YL3.4b0, 9b3-10b0. The story of Po Yu, whose formal name was Liang Hsiao 良霄, is recorded, for example, in *Ch'un-ch'iu* 春秋, *ching* 經, Yang-kung 襄公, 11th, 26th, 27th and 30th years.

(莫弘) who turned into emerald after death as his extreme loyalty kept his *ch'i* from being dispersed.<sup>(25)</sup> Sometimes even the dispersion of *ch'i* upon death can produce strange effects. For example, when a man with very flourishing *ch'i* died, his *ch'i* became warm, smoky and steamy and filled a room for several days.<sup>(26)</sup> When another man died, wind and thunder blasted and it became very dark with cloud and fog, because, according to Chu Hsi, the man had cultivated his *ch'i* and made it so strong that it produced such violent effects upon dispersion.<sup>(27)</sup>

Chu Hsi's explanation of the sacrificial services for dead men was also in terms of *ch'i*. It was based on the fact that the ancestors and their descendants have the same *ch'i*, which is passed from father to son, to grandson, and so on.<sup>(28)</sup> Since same *ch'i* respond to each other, the *ch'i* of the ancestors can respond to the *ch'i* of their descendants and come back to aggregation.<sup>(29)</sup> But the idea of dispersion of *ch'i* upon normal death poses a problem for such explanations. For, if the ancestors' *ch'i* is already dispersed, there can be no way for the descendants to reach them through the sacrificial service. Therefore, this became the key question in Chu Hsi's discussion of the topic—"How does the sacrificial service reach the dead ancestors whose *ch'i* is already dispersed?"

Chu Hsi did not provide a single definite answer to this question. But his most frequent answer can be seen in the following typical discussion of the sacrificial services.<sup>(30)</sup>

When a man dies, though [his *ch'i*] goes eventually dispersed, there also is some part that is not dispersed to extinction. Therefore, the sacrificial service has the *li* of reaching and moving [the ancestor]. It is not possible to know whether the *ch'i* of the ancestor of the generation far removed [still] exists or not. But since the person who offers the sacrificial service is his descendant, [their *ch'i*] must be the same *ch'i*, and therefore there is the *li* of reaching and affecting [the ancestor].

Thus Chu Hsi's answer was that the *ch'i* dispersed upon death does not vanish completely but lingers in dispersed form for some time. He did not reject an analogy offered by a disciple that it is like the *ch'i* of the lantern smoke which goes up and gradually disappears but still remains dispersed inside the room.<sup>(31)</sup>

Yet, this answer could not be fully satisfactory to Chu Hsi. For the sacrificial

(25) YL3.11a1, Chang Hung's story is recorded, for example, in *Tso-shih* 左氏, Ai-kung 哀公, 3rd year.

(26) YL3.6a0

(27) YL3.6a0

(28) E. g., YL17.11b3; 25.14a3; WC57.20b.

(29) E. g., YL3.12b1, 13a1.

(30) YL3.4a0

(31) YL3.9b1

services to reach the dead ancestors, something more than the mere presence of the *ch'i* of the ancestors and of the descendants is needed. The mind of the descendants offering the services must be "sincere (*ch'eng*, 誠)" and "serious (*ching*, 敬)" in order for their *ch'i* to reach the dispersed *ch'i* of their ancestors and call them back to aggregation so that they can respond to the services.<sup>(32)</sup> Chu Hsi asked, for example, "If sincere mind reaches and moves, how can his (i.e. the ancestor's) *ch'i*, which is not dispersed to extinction, not come back [to respond]?"<sup>(33)</sup> He said also that in the services "one should seek [the response] not with the physical form but with this sincere intention (*ch'eng-i*, 誠意)."<sup>(34)</sup> He even said, "although that *ch'i* is dispersed, its root exists here. If [the descendant] accomplishes his sincerity and seriousness to the utmost he can still call back that *ch'i* to aggregation here."<sup>(35)</sup>

As "sincerity" and "seriousness" are mental qualities, it is to be expected that Chu Hsi would take the "mental spirit (*ching-shen*)" as the agent that operates during the sacrificial services. According to Chu Hsi "the ancestors come and reach [us]" during the services, because "[we] move their mental spirit with our mental spirit."<sup>(36)</sup> But this does not mean that Chu Hsi went beyond the realm of *ch'i* to account for what takes place during the sacrificial services. As I have shown elsewhere,<sup>(37)</sup> *ch'i* has qualities and activities that cover all the things and events—whether physical, physiological, or psychical—in the world, and the human mental qualities are nothing but the manifestations of the movements of the pure *ch'i* that constitutes mind. It follows readily from this, then, that the sincerity and seriousness of the mind of the descendants can move the *ch'i* of their ancestors. That is what Chu Hsi meant when he said, "the sacrificial service is merely concentrating your mental spirit in order to move them (i.e. the ancestors). [The *ch'i* of] the ancestors is the *ch'i* that you have inherited, and therefore can be moved."<sup>(38)</sup> For the same reason he could say that "when the mind is set, even *kuei-shen* yields,"<sup>(39)</sup> and even believe that when the minds of many people converge at a sacrificial service they become heated and have a great effect.<sup>(40)</sup>

While discussing the sacrificial services in this manner, Chu Hsi said frequently that the topic was difficult to discuss.<sup>(41)</sup> But at the same time, it was very important for him: indeed, there could be hardly anything more important than

(32) E. g., YL3.11b3, 15a5-15b0.

(33) YL3.5a0

(34) CS51.47a1

(35) YL3.13a1

(36) YL3.12b2

(37) See my "Some Aspects of *Ch'i*", *op. cit.*

(38) YL3.15a1

(39) CS51.53a0

(40) CS51.22b2

(41) E. g., YL3.11b3, 13a1, 13b0.

the sacrificial service for a Confucian gentleman. That Chu Hsi took the subject to be so important can be seen from the way he and his disciples followed up some of the problems further. For example, Chu Hsi dealt with the problem of the number of generations that people should go back in offering sacrificial service, the answer to which was the fact that the *ch'i* of the ancestors who are near can be reached whereas the *ch'i* of those who are far removed cannot.<sup>(42)</sup> Similarly, a disciple brought in the question of how one can reach one's maternal ancestors and the ancestors of one's wife, who did not have the same *ch'i* as oneself. Chu Hsi responded to this by pointing out that all the mental spirits and *ch'i* in the world originated from a single source.<sup>(43)</sup> Another question led to the discussion of whether the dispersed *ch'i* of the ancestors can be called back to aggregation only during the sacrificial services.<sup>(44)</sup> They even discussed the effects of the money, foods and drinks offered in the service—"Are they just to express the sincerity of my mind, or does *ch'i* really come [from these object] to reach [the ancestors]?"<sup>(45)</sup> Chu Hsi accepted neither of these choices. But for the case of the sacrificial objects that are alive, he explained that it was to borrow their "life-*ch'i* (*sheng-ch'i*, 生氣)."<sup>(46)</sup> Obviously, these are the questions that could come up in discussions of the sacrificial services; but they would not have been taken up for discussion by them if the sacrificial service had not been a topic of great importance for them.

### III

*Kuei-shen* has a meaning much broader than what has been discussed in the last section. Chu Hsi illustrated the breadth of the concept in the following words:<sup>(47)</sup>

Rain, wind, dew and thunder, the sun, the moon, day and night. These are the traces of *kuei-shen*. These are "the fair, even, proper and upright *kuei-shen* of the bright day (*pai-je kung-p'ing-cheng-chih chih kuei-shen*, 白日公平正直之鬼神)." If one is to talk about some "ghosts, shouting on the beams of the houses and touching the chests" (*hsiao-yü-liang ch'u-yü-hsiung*, 嘯于梁觸于胸), these are what are called "the improper, deviant and dark (*pu-cheng-hsieh-an*, 不正邪暗)", "sometimes existing and sometimes not," "sometimes going and sometimes coming," and "sometimes aggregating and sometimes dispersing." There also are those [*kuei-shen*] that are said to respond to prayers to them and to be grasped by prayers to them.

(42) E. g., YL25.12a2-12b0; WC57.8a.

(43) YL3.17a1

(44) YL3.15a5-15b0

(45) YL3.16a1

(46) YL3.18b1

(47) YL3.2a4

These are also what are called *kuei-shen*. And they are [all] the same *li* (理). The ten thousand things and events in the world are all this *li* except for the differences in refinement and in magnitude.

Chu Hsi thus distinguished three different kinds of *kuei-shen*: first, "the fair even, proper and upright" *kuei-shen*: second, "the improper, deviant and dark" *kuei-sheu*; third, the *kuei-hsen* that respond to the prayers.<sup>(48)</sup>

Therefore, *kei-shen* in its broadest sense refers to all the objects and phenomena of the world. For each of them can be regarded subtle and mysterious in that none can be known completely. In particular, all the natural phenomena—including what appear to be normal and regular—can be seen as manifesting the subtle and mysterious workings of the wonder of Nature. So, according to Chu Hsi, the movements and changes surrounding the rain, wind, dew, thunder, grasses and trees are all *kuei-shen*.<sup>(49)</sup> The sun, the moon and the stars, the manifestations of the clear and bright portions of *ch'i*, are also *shen*.<sup>(50)</sup> This is so because they "all are mutual stimulation (*hsiang-kan*, 相感)" or "merely are disappearing and growing (*hsiao-ch'ang*, 消長)" of the *yin-yang*, which is *kuei-shen*.<sup>(51)</sup> When it comes to the examples in the human realms, the ability to speak, laugh, and to have intelligence and knowledge is all *kuei-shen*.<sup>(52)</sup> Chu Hsi even thought that "in happiness and goodness, misfortune and licence also, one can see the principle of *kuei-shen*."<sup>(53)</sup>

It is in this broadest sense that Chu Hsi said, "To look at the way of *shen* of the heaven, it is nothing but the principle of the spontaneous operations,"<sup>(54)</sup> or "The *shen* of the earth merely is the creation of the ten thousand things. Coming of the clouds from the mountains and rivers is of such a kind."<sup>(55)</sup> In this sense, then, the meaning of *kuei-shen* is very similar to that of another word, "*tsao-hua*" (造化), which may be translated as "creative transformation" and which usually refers to the processes of the natural world that manifest the mysterious and creative workings of nature.<sup>(56)</sup> In fact Chu Hsi often talked about *tsao-hua*

(48) In his brief discussion of *kuei-shen*, Wing-tsit Chan refers to Ch'en Ch'un's (陳淳, 1153-1217) classification of *kuei-shen* into four kinds: "that in the Confucian classics, that in ancient religious sacrifices, that in latter-day religious sacrifices, and that referring to demons and gods": *Source Book*, pp. 789-790.

(49) YL73.15a1

(50) E. g., YL3.12b2.

(51) E. g., YL3.1b3, 6b1.

(52) E. g., YL3.6b1.

(53) YL34.30a2

(54) YL70.29b1

(55) YL3.16a4

(56) Professor D. C. Lau reminded me of the fact that sometimes, especially in the pre-T'ang texts, the word *tsao-hua* has a more concrete meaning, something very close to that of "Creator," which may indeed have been the original meaning. But in most neo-Confucian writings, including those of Chu Hsi, such meaning occurs much less frequently. I have chosen, and stick to, a rather literal translation, "creative transformation."

in the same words that he used in characterizing *kuei-shen*: "In the world, what can be taken for *tsao-hua* is nothing but the ending and the beginning, flourishing and declining of the *yin* and the *yang ch'i*."<sup>(55)</sup> The things and phenomena of *kuei-shen*, then, are "the traces of creative transformations (*tsao-hua chih chi*, 造化之迹)" as well as "the innate ability of the two *ch'i*."<sup>(58)</sup>

More often, however, Chu Hsi used the word *kuei-shen*, and *shen* as well, in a more restricted sense, in which the subtle and mysterious nature is more marked, and it is much more difficult to understand. This is the second sense quoted above and is what Chu Hsi meant when he said, "the *kuei-shen* phenomena are considered to be strange... they are not proper creative transformations, and these are what received the *ch'i* of improper *yin-yang*."<sup>(59)</sup> Chu Hsi illustrated the difference of this second sense of *kuei-shen* from the first in the following manner:<sup>(60)</sup>

To discuss the proper *li* [*of kuei-shen*], sudden blooming of flowers and leaves on trees,... and sudden occurrence of thunder, wind or rain in the sky, these, for example, are all [*kuei-shen* phenomena]. But people see them very often and thus do not feel strange about them. [On the other hand], as for sudden hearing of ghost whistles and ghost fires, etc., people regard them as strange, for they do not know that such phenomena are also the traces of creative transformations. These latter phenomena are not proper *li* [*of kuei-shen*].

As the *kuei-shen* phenomena in this sense are also the traces of the creative transformations and thus the workings of the *yin* and *yang ch'i*, albeit improper ones, they can also be explained in terms of the qualities and activities of *ch'i*. Those strange phenomena taking place upon man's death that have been discussed in Section II are examples of this kind. But more can be found. An example is the so-called "thunder axe (*lei-fu*, 雷斧)", an axe-shaped object commonly believed to fall down from the sky with thunder and lightning thereby striking men and things on earth. It is, according to Chu Hsi, formed by the condensation of *ch'i*.<sup>(61)</sup> Chu Hsi's explanation of the popular belief that dragons carry rain is another example: it can rain when a dragon appears because dragon is an animal associated with the phase (*hsing*, 行) of Water and can thus produce wet *ch'i* when it encounters the *yang-ch'i*.<sup>(62)</sup> Dragons can also ride clouds and rise up the sky by combining themselves with the *yang-ch'i*, for they are the most flourishing of what are *yang*. Not only dragons, but men can fly in the sky. Chu Hsi talked

(57) WC76.1a

(58) CS51.10a1

(59) YL3.5b0

(60) YL3.4b0

(61) E. g., YL2.10a3.

(62) E. g., YL2.10a2; 3.3a0.



about such people who could fly: they had refined their *ch'i* so much that their bones and flesh melted to become *ch'i*, which then became extremely light and clear. When such *ch'i* was exhausted, they could not fly any more.<sup>(63)</sup> Chu Hsi also mentioned some men who received the *ch'i* of the pig and had the hair of the pig on the chest and made the noise of the pig while sleeping.<sup>(64)</sup>

Chu Hsi's third meaning of *kuei-shen*, namely the *kuei-shen* that respond to prayers, represents the narrowest sense of the three. The spirits of dead ancestors that are reached through the sacrificial services are the most frequent examples of this category, and have been discussed in Section II. But there are other spirits that also are the objects of sacrificial service and worship. Great natural objects and phenomena, for example the heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, lands, valleys, mountains and rivers, cold and hot weathers, flood and draught, the crops, are believed to have spirits associated with them<sup>(65)</sup> so that they have to be offered sacrifices. The world (*t'ien-hsia*, 天下), countries and households also have spirits for each of them.<sup>(66)</sup> In Chu Hsi's discussions these spirits often sounded very much like personified deities with occult powers. Chu Hsi did not deny that these spirits can respond to the deeds of the people who are supposed to be under their control. The spirits of the world (*t'ien-hsia kuei-shen*, 天下鬼神) for example, would cause some abnormal effects to the stars in the sky and to the mountains and rivers on earth, if the emperor indulges in pleasure without restraint.<sup>(67)</sup> Chu Hsi even suggested that *kuei-shen* may have feelings like anger, which are expressed through natural events.<sup>(68)</sup> Sometimes natural events may also affect the working of *kuei-shen*: For example, "when the *yin* and *yang* are harmonious and bring wind and rain, hundred *shen* receive them joyously."<sup>(69)</sup>

Yet, for Chu Hsi, these spirits were not "occult" because they also are the manifestations of the qualities and activities of *ch'i*, just as the *kuei-shen* in his first two senses are. This is what Chu Hsi meant when he said, as quoted in the beginning of this section, "those that are said to respond to prayers ... are also what are called *kuei-shen*. And they are the same *li*." And he could see the same *kuei-shen* both in "the wind, thunder, mountains and waters" and in "the sacrificial services in the shrines."<sup>(70)</sup> I have already given in Section II many examples of explaining the effect of the sacrificial services as the interactions between the *ch'i* of the ancestors and of the descendants. But Chu Hsi's explanation of the sacrificial services to the non-ancestral spirits was also in terms of

(63) CS51.27b0

(64) YL3. 11b1

(65) E. g., YL24. 28a2-28b0; 25.15a1; 78.16b5-17a0, 35a2; CS51.10b1; 58.4a2.

(66) E. g., YL38.6b0.

(67) YL38.6b0

(68) WC13.7a

(69) YL58.3a3

(70) CS25.15a1

*ch'i* and was of the same nature. For example, the *ch'i* of those who offer the sacrifices to the non-ancestral spirits can reach them—the spirits of great mountains and rivers, for example—because both the men and the spirits share the same *ch'i* of heaven and earth, the source of every thing in the world.<sup>(71)</sup>

Not only the prayers and sacrificial services, but the practice of divination also involves the *kuei-shen* in the third sense. That is why Chu Hsi used the term *kuei-shen* in his discussion of divination.<sup>(72)</sup> He even stated that the divination practices are “in accord with the *li* of *kuei-shen*.”<sup>(73)</sup> In a sense divination is an activity parallel to the offering of sacrificial services. The difference is only that in the latter man attempts to be heard and responded by the *kuei-shen*, while in the former he attempts to seek to “listen to” the *kuei-shen*. Thus Chu Hsi’s explanation in terms of *ch'i* was much the same for divination as for sacrificial services:<sup>(74)</sup>

Once man’s mind moves, it must reach the *ch'i* [of the world]. And with the contraction and expansion, coming and going of this [*ch'i*], it interacts and moves.

And it is no wonder that the seriousness required for sacrificial services is required for divination as well.<sup>(75)</sup>

#### IV

A theme can be discerned that pervades all of Chu Hsi’s discussions of *kuei-shen*: his rationalistic opposition to superstition. Dedicated to construct a philosophical basis of reality that would stand up against the empty and speculative tenets of Buddhists and Taoists, Chu Hsi was firm in his rejection of the beliefs and practices that he considered to be superstitious. In particular, he was staunchly opposed to admitting “supernatural” beings and “occult” powers beyond the qualities and activities of *ch'i*, which he believed underlies every object and phenomenon of the world.

Thus Chu Hsi gave explanations in terms of *ch'i* for many strange phenomena that could have been attributed to some occult beings and powers. I have already shown many examples in which Chu Hsi explained strange things and events—flying man, thunder axes, ghost fires and other strange events surrounding dead persons—as manifestations of the qualities and activities of *ch'i*. But in all these cases, Chu Hsi accepted the things and events themselves: whether they were possible at all was seldom a problem for him. In other words, Chu Hsi’s opposition to superstition led him to reject the superstitious beliefs about the

(71) E. g., YL3.17a1, 17b0.

(72) E. g., YL70.21a6; CS14.28b0.

(73) YL64.28a2

(74) YL3.2a0

(75) E. g., WC45.7a

strange things and events but rarely to reject the things and events themselves. On the contrary, by attributing them to the qualities and activities of *ch'i*, rather than to some occult powers, Chu Hsi in fact accepted and rationalized the existence and occurrence of such things and events.

This was possible because of the very ambiguous and flexible nature of the concept *ch'i*, which is endowed with qualities and activities that are not only physical but physiological and psychical as well. It would have been always possible to come up with explanations for any phenomena, however strange they may appear, using the concept with such a wide purview. Thus what Chu Hsi did was to include many strange things and events in the "rationalized" realm of the qualities and activities of *ch'i* while leaving very little in the "occult" and "supernatural" realm. All the things and events that exist and occur do so, according to Chu Hsi, as manifestations of the qualities and activities of *ch'i*.

Therefore, Chu Hsi was never dogmatic concerning the problem of the existence of such beings as "spirits" and "ghosts." To a disciple who asked whether ghosts exist, he responded: "how can this be discussed so simply?"<sup>(76)</sup> On a report of seeing a ghost and its strange powers, he commented: "about this, I do not know how it is so."<sup>(77)</sup> The problem for him was summarized in his own words in the following manner:<sup>(78)</sup>

Among people, those who believe in the ghosts all say they actually exist between the heaven and earth. Those who do not believe in them think positively that there are no ghosts. Yet, there also are those who saw the real ghosts.

Since many people saw the ghosts, Chu Hsi concluded, "How can one say that there are no ghosts? It is merely that they are not proper *li*"<sup>(79)</sup> or "One cannot say there are none."<sup>(80)</sup>

Chu Hsi had the same attitude toward other strange things and events. He was generally of the view that if one has seen an event one cannot reject its existence. In a long discussion about various strange events,<sup>(81)</sup> Chu Hsi refused to commit himself definitely on the question of whether such things and events as the footmarks of giant monsters, the monstrous ghosts that live in the thick mountain forests and deep waters, the creature half of whose body is man and half horse, lizards making hails, prior and posterior lives, or persons coming back to life after death, can actually exist or occur. He even confronted a disciple who was skeptical about the existence of such strange things with the remark:

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(76) YL3.1a3

(77) YL3.19a1

(78) YL3.3b1

(79) YL3.5a0

(80) YL3.5b0

(81) YL3.2b2-3b0

"it is merely that you have never seen them." Similarly, concerning "thunder spirits and dragon ghosts that move around producing rain,"<sup>(82)</sup> Chu Hsi would say that one has to see them oneself to decide. He even narrated, without either accepting or rejecting, a second-hand report about "a single-legged ghost that visits houses killing people but is visible only to certain persons."<sup>(83)</sup> Even with these phenomena the question was whether they were actually seen. If they were, they could be accepted, and *ch'i* is endowed with qualities and activities so flexible that these phenomena could be explained in terms of it. Thus Chu Hsi suggested that what people actually see when they see ghosts may be the visible effects of *ch'i* like rainbow and its reflection.<sup>(84)</sup> Also, the mountain monsters that are seen by people, according to Chu Hsi, are produced by the transformation of the essences of Wood or the *ch'i* of the phase Wood.<sup>(85)</sup>

## V

Historically, two sets of assertions, both attributed to Confucius, were important in forming the Confucian attitudes toward *kuei-shen*. One is constituted of two remarks from the *Analects* (*Lun-yü*, 論語) of Confucius: "Respect the spirits and keep them at a distance," and "Till one has learned to serve men, how can one serve ghosts?"<sup>(86)</sup> The other sets of assertions center around the famous phrase in "the Great Treatise (*Hsi-tz'u chuan*, 繫辭傳)" of the *Book of Change* (*I-ching*, 易經): "That which is unfathomable in the *yin* and *yang* is called *shen*."<sup>(87)</sup>

The remarks from the *Analects* were mainly responsible for the basically skeptical and even agnostic attitudes toward the spirits and ghosts held by many Confucians till Chu Hsi's time: that one should not devote too much effort trying to understand and master the spirits and ghosts, for what is more important and urgent are the human affairs, which are difficult enough. Chu Hsi himself quoted those remarks frequently,<sup>(88)</sup> and clearly showed such an attitude. For example, he said that one has to attend to the human affairs to the utmost before one can understand the affairs of the spirits and ghosts.<sup>(89)</sup> But Chu Hsi could not remain always so aloof from the discussions of spirits and ghosts as could Confucius and other earlier Confucian thinkers. With the rival systems of the Buddhists and Taoists to compete against, the Neo-Confucian thinkers including Chu Hsi could no longer avoid dealing with the concept of spirits and ghosts.

(82) CS50.49a2

(83) YL3.11a2

(84) E. g., YL3.3b0; CS51.50b0.

(85) E. g., YL3.3b2

(86) The remarks are from *Lun-yü* 論語, VI, 20, and XI, 11, respectively.

(87) *I-ching*, "Hsi-tz'u chuan", 易經繫辭傳, A5. For a detailed discussion of this and related passages, see Peterson, "Making Connections." *op. cit.* (note 6).

(88) E. g., YL3.1a1, 1a2, 14b0; 39.4a1; CS14.28a2; 17.3b2.

(89) E. g., YL3.3a0.

They had either to reject the spirits and ghosts or to show that these could find place in their philosophical system of the world. In his all-encompassing Neo-Confucian synthesis Chu Hsi chose to include them.

To do so, however, Chu Hsi needed to explain the spirits and ghosts by means of *ch'i*—and its qualities and activities—without positing extra beings and powers beyond *ch'i*. The concept of *kuei-shen* thus had to be broadened to embrace the first two meanings discussed above. The idea of spirits and ghosts was still included in the concept of *kuei-shen*, but the two broader senses of the concept could now provide it with a basis in terms of *ch'i*. The different senses of the concept of *kuei-shen* were connected to each other in this manner.<sup>(90)</sup>

The ideas derived from the above-quoted passage of the *Book of Change* began to play an important role in this development. Both Chang Tsai (張載, 1020-1077) and Ch'eng I (程頤, 1033-1107), two of the most important "predecessors" of Chu Hsi, discussed the idea, and their ideas formed the basis of Chu Hsi's broad interpretation of *kuei-shen* as "the innate ability of the two *ch'i*" or as the traces of "the creative transformations."<sup>(91)</sup>

With this, however, the evolution of the concept of *kuei-shen* took a new direction. The individual characters *kuei* and *shen* began to be separated from each other and were given separate meanings. They were then associated with the *yin-yang* dichotomy that underlies all the dualistic aspects of the world: This is what Chu Hsi meant when he said, "*Kuei* is what is spiritual (*ling*, 靈) of the *yin* and *shen* is what is spiritual of the *yang*."<sup>(92)</sup> The *kuei* and *shen* were thus associated with various *yin* and *yang* characteristics. The most basic *yin-yang* characteristics thus associated were contraction (*ch'ü*, 屈) for *kuei* and expansion (*shen*, 伸) for *shen*.<sup>(93)</sup> Other *yin-yang* characteristics frequently associated with *kuei* and *shen* were the hidden (*yu*, 幽), the night and death for *kuei* and the manifest (*hsien*, 顯), the day and life for *shen*.<sup>(94)</sup> And associated with *hun* (魂) and *p'o* (魄), *kuei* and *shen* could even encompass all the physical, physiological and psychical abilities and processes of human beings.<sup>(95)</sup> In this manner, the word *kuei-shen*, which had originally meant the spirits and ghosts

(90) Wing-tsit Chan maintains, however, that the "naturalistic and philosophical meaning should always be kept entirely distinct from the other meaning, namely *kuei-shen* as spiritual beings.": *Source Book*, p. 790.

(91) Chang Tsai, *Cheng meng* 正蒙, ch. 1; Ch'eng I, *I-chuan* 易傳, ch. 1.

(92) CS51.5b1. It is in this sense that Wing-tsit Chan translates *kuei* and *shen* as "negative and positive spiritual forces": *op. cit.*

(93) E. g., YL3.1b2. It is to be noted that the character for "expanding" (伸) has the same pronunciation (*shen*). To make the pun even more complete, "returning" (*kuei*, 歸), instead of "contracting" (*ch'ü*, 屈), is sometimes associated with *kuei*: e. g., CS51.5b1.

(94) E. g., YL3.1b2, 1b3, 2a2, 2a3, 7a1; WC62.42b,

(95) E. g., WC44.30b. My Ph. D. dissertation also contains a brief discussion of the concepts *hun* and *p'o*: *op. cit.* (note 11), pp. 325-328.

in the sense of the passages of the *Analects*, became a pair of fundamental concepts that could be employed in discussing all the things and events of the world.

# 朱 熹 的 鬼 神 觀

金 永 植

朱熹對世界萬事萬物，一切現象，不論其為物理現象，生理現象或人間精神現象，統稱之為“氣”，或“氣”的本質和動態。這包括人所稱為“鬼神”的這種現象。那就是，那些神秘難解，令人不得不從一些迷信的觀念去解釋的現象。在朱熹看來，這種現象也不過是“氣”的本質或動態的表現，統統可以用“氣”這名詞來解釋。

本文目的，在研究和分析朱熹在這一方面的解釋。例如，朱氏釋鬼神有三種意義，並將三者比較說明。本文着眼，在朱熹所論，只標明朱氏之反對以迷信釋鬼神現象但；此僅標出朱氏之宗理智以反對迷信，而並沒有說他否定這種現象的本身。本文結論，言鬼神現象及其三義，在歷史上是如何形成的。