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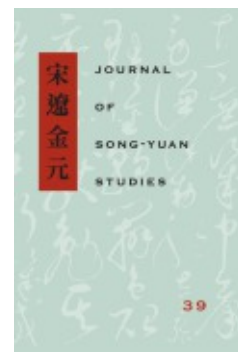
## **Making Moral Decisions: Zhu Xi's 'Outline and Details of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government'**

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MAKING MORAL DECISIONS:  
ZHU XI'S 'OUTLINE AND DETAILS  
OF THE COMPREHENSIVE MIRROR  
FOR AID IN GOVERNMENT'

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After its first publication in 1219, the *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 資治通鑑綱目 [Outline and Details of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government; henceforth *Outline and Details*], a collaborative historical compilation by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) and his students, became one of the most popular and influential works in Chinese history. Its influence extended beyond China to both Japan and Korea.<sup>1</sup> Even in Europe, thanks to J. A. M. de Moyriac de Maille's translation of the work under the title *Histoire Generale de la Chine, ou Annales de cet Empire*, the *Outline and Details* was also enormously influential in shaping European understanding of Chinese history, until Otto Franke demonstrated its shortcomings in his "Das Tsě tshi t'ung kien und das T'ung kien kang mu ihr Wesen, ihr Verhältnis zueinander und ihr Quellenwert" in 1930.<sup>2</sup>

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\* I wish to thank the two anonymous readers for JSYS, Peter Bol, Charles Hartman, and Michael Puett. I also thank Martin Kroher for kindly helping me read Otto Franke's article.

1. For the *Outline and Details*' influence in Japan, see Kobayashi Kenzō 小林健三 and Terunuma Yoshibumi 照沼好文, *Mitō shigaku no dentō* 水戸史学の伝統 (Mitō-shi: Mitō Shigakkai, 1983), especially 175–176. For its influence in Korea, see Yang Yulei 楊雨蕾, "Zizhi tongjian gangmu zai Chaoxian bandao de chuanbo," 資治通鑑綱目在朝鮮半島的傳播 *Shijie lishi* 3 (2002), 113–115.

2. See Etienne Balazs and Yves Hervouet, *A Sung Bibliography* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978), 70; Conrad Schirokauer, "Zhu Xi," in *Great Historians from Antiquity to 1800: An International Dictionary*, ed. Lucian Boia (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 81–83. Otto Franke, "Das Tsě tshi t'ung kien und das T'ung kien kang mu ihr Wesen, ihr Verhältnis zueinander und ihr Quellenwert," *Siytzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* (1930), 103–144.

Although not without some earlier critics, the book's reputation suffered a drastic reversal in the twentieth century, as its many factual errors and strong Daoxue ideology caused modern historians generally to under-rate and neglect it. For example, in twentieth-century English language scholarship, the work is generally characterized as "a third-rate history book or even a book of morality but not history," and its "arguments are like 'the application of a rubber stamp'."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, modern scholars have yet to account for the work's enormous popularity and influence from the fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup>

This article argues that the *Outline and Details* was significant for two reasons. First, it redirected historical knowledge and represented a turning point in Chinese historiography. Second, it held important implications that contributed to literati rethinking of the relationship between the state and local society. To be more precise, the *Outline and Details* transformed historical knowledge from that used to maintain a proper hierarchical political power structure within the government (represented by Sima Guang's *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 [Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government]) to one for training literati to make moral decisions in historical contexts. This implied that only morally cultivated literati had the ability to make proper decisions and the authority to establish a proper world order. It also implied that literati, responding to the rise of local society in the Southern Song, should rethink their own relationship to the state. As Zhu Xi's student Li Fangzi 李方子 recognized:

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3. See Ming K. Chan, "The Historiography of the *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*: A Survey," *Monumenta Serica* 31 (1974–75), 37; Conrad Schirokauer, "Zhu Xi," in *Great Historians from Antiquity to 1800: An International Dictionary*, 82.

4. There are few in-depth 20th-century studies of the work. Most helpful is Qian Mu's 錢穆 "Zhuzi *Tongjian gangmu* yu *Bachao mingchen yanxing lu*" 朱子《通鑑綱目》與《八朝名臣言行錄》 in Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue'an* 朱子新學案 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban she, 1994), 5:131–165, which examines meticulously the compilation process of the work. Zhang Yuan 張元, "Songdai lixue jia de lishi guan: yi *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* weilü" 宋代理學家的歷史觀: 以《資治通鑑綱目》為例 (Ph.D. diss., National Taiwan University, 1975), despite its title, focuses on Daoxue ideas of history. See also Ye Jianhua 葉建華, "Zizhi *tongjian gangmu jianlun*" 資治通鑑綱目簡論, *Zhuzi xuekan* 2:1 (1990), 100–114; Tang Qinfu 湯勤福, *Zhu Xi de shixue sixiang* 朱熹的史學思想 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2000), 451; Guo Qi 郭齊, "Guanyu Zhu Xi bianxiu *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* de ruogan wenti" 關於朱熹編修資治通鑑綱目的若干問題, *Sichuan daxue xuebao: shehui kexue ban* 117:6 (2001), 84–90.

... In his late years, [Zhu Xi] probably wanted to revise it [i.e., the *Outline and Details*] slightly to make it be more thorough and elaborate, but did not have the energy to do so. However, as for the grand principles and rules it has preserved, was there any scholar who wrote and studied after the Qin and Han who could have passed through its courtyard and ascended the steps [i.e., to grasp its subtlety and profundity]?<sup>5</sup>

This new model for historical study, whether we might agree with it or not, profoundly influenced the development of subsequent Chinese historiography and history. Moreover, it goes without saying that the popularity and influence of the *Outline and Details* over such a long time span was also subject to interactions among different historical forces in different historical contexts. This article will only discuss this work in the historical context of the Southern Song, the formative stage of its long-lasting popularity.

This article will first analyze the *Outline and Details* by conducting an in-depth study of its narrative structure and then discuss how it responded to the needs of the Southern Song literati. I will argue that the three components of the *Outline and Details* (the “Outline,” the “Details,” and the “Comments.”) are interrelated and guide the reader to understand history in a specific way: to train the reader to make decisions morally by situating him in historical contexts. The “Outline” was intentionally constructed as a set of individual statements that were not linked to each other to form a grand narrative; the “Outline” directed the reader’s attention to the relations between historical figures and their deeds in order to evaluate the latter based on moral principles. The “Details” provided a static and sophisticated picture of the historical situation, and invited the reader to combine a historical figure’s actions with related issues in order to think about what should have been done in that specific moment according to moral principles; at the same time, the dynamics of historical development were relegated to secondary importance. Lastly, the “Comments” instruct the reader how to make decisions morally. As a result, the *Outline and Details* transformed historical knowledge from knowledge for officials to knowledge for every literatus, at the same time implying a transfer of leadership authority from the government to each cultivated literatus.

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5. Zhu Xi, *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 資治通鑑綱目 (*Zhuzi quanshu* edition, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 3502. 蓋欲晚歲稍加更定以趨詳密，而力有未暇焉者。然其大經大法之所存，是豈秦漢以後操瓢執簡之士所能歷其庭而涉其級哉？ Henceforth *Gangmu* refers to the *Zhuzi quanshu* edition unless otherwise noted.

In the following discussion, I will first explain the methodological considerations that underlie this study. Next, I will briefly introduce the basic format of the *Outline and Details* and review the history of its compilation. Third, I will explain why the approach most often used to study the *Outline and Details*—focusing on the wording system outlined in the *fanli* 凡例 [General Rules]—is fundamentally misleading, and I will propose a new approach that analyzes the work’s narrative structure. Fourth, I will take as an example the narrative of the period between Qin and Han to demonstrate how this historical model actually worked in practice. Lastly, I will discuss the issue of dynastic legitimacy, the issue that originally motivated Zhu Xi to compile the *Outline and Details*. In the end, we will see how Zhu Xi redefined historical knowledge in response to the needs of his own time.

### *Methodological Considerations*

As the history of its compilation will demonstrate, the present *Outline and Details* does not conform completely to Zhu Xi’s other writings on the study of history. Therefore, in order to avoid too much conjecture concerning Zhu Xi’s ideas about history, I will treat it primarily as an independent work, not simply a product of Zhu Xi, quoting his words from other sources only when necessary. Its terminology is a central issue for the study of the *Outline and Details*. Since the Yuan, scholars have understood the choice of diction in this work as praise and blame the authors intended to convey. However, I propose to demonstrate why this approach is misleading by adopting a new strategy to study the *Outline and Details*. My research analyzes the work from the perspective of its overall structure by examining its three major components (the “Outline”, the “Details”, and the “Comments”) in order to understand how they interact with each other to articulate a coherent view of history.<sup>6</sup>

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6. Hoyt Tillman also adopts a method analyzing historical narratives to study Sima Guang’s construction of his own image of Zhuge Liang in the *Comprehensive Mirror*. See Hoyt Tillman, “Shixue yu wenhua sixiang: Sima Guang dui Zhuge Liang gushi de chongjian,” 史學與文化思想: 司馬光對諸葛亮故事的重建 in *Lishi yuyan yanjiu suo jikan* 73:1 (2002), 166–198. The same volume also includes Zhang Yuan’s critique of Tillman’s article. Note that Zhang Yuan still acknowledges the value of Tillman’s approach to Chinese historiography. An English version of Tillman’s article under the title “Textual Liberties and Restraints in Rewriting China’s Histories: The Case of Ssu-ma Kuang’s Re-construction of Chu-ko Liang’s Story” can be found in *The New*

In order to focus discussion and avoid quoting out of context, I will use the narrative for the period between Qin and Han (209 to 202 BC) as a case study, and examine how the *Outline and Details* analyzes and explains the history of this period. There are two reasons for choosing this particular period. First, this period was also covered by Lü Zuqian's 呂祖謙 (1137–1181) *Dashiji* 大事記 [Record of Great Events], a historical work that adopted an approach very different from the *Outline and Details*. By comparing the narratives of the two works on the same event, we should be able to see more clearly the most significant characteristics of the *Outline and Details*. This comparison is legitimate because both works were largely based on the *Comprehensive Mirror*, and it would be revealing to see how they used the same material to construct different narratives. Second, and more importantly, this period witnessed a transition of political power. To use Zhu Xi's words, this period experienced a transition from a political power with dynastic legitimacy (Qin, 209–206 BC) to competing powers with no dynastic legitimacy (206–202 BC), and finally back to a political power with dynastic legitimacy (Han, after 202 BC). The issue of dynastic legitimacy was the original major motivation that prompted Zhu Xi to compile this work. Therefore, by examining how the *Outline and Details* analyzes transitions of political power in this period, we should be able to better understand the work's view on this issue and why this issue was so important.

### *The Format of the Outline and Details*

The *Outline and Details* contains three distinct but inter-related components: the "Outline," the "Details," and the "Comments." The "Outline" provides succinct descriptions of selected historical events; the "Details," mostly copied from the *Comprehensive Mirror*, provides concrete historical details of these events; and the "Comments," printed together with the "Details," provides discussions about these same events. The entry illustrated in Figure 1 (overleaf) may serve to demonstrate the three components.

In this entry, text in larger type is the "Outline," which describes in succinct form the historical event of the truce between Chu and Han. The first

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*and the Multiple: Sung Senses of the Past*, ed. Thomas H.C. Lee (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004), 61–106.

Chu and Han made a truce, and divided the world evenly. In the ninth month, [Chu] returned Taigong and Empress Lü to Han, dismissed its troops, and returned to the east. *Xiang Yu knew that he had few allies and that provisions were running out; furthermore, Han Xin also sent troops to attack him. [At the time,] the Han sent Hou Gong to persuade [Xiang] Yu to return Taigong. Therefore, [Xiang] Yu made a truce with Han to divide the world evenly: from the west of Honggou belonged to Han; from the east belonged to Chu. In the ninth month, [Xiang Yu] returned Taigong and Empress Lü, dismissed his troops, and returned to the east. The King of Han wanted to return to the west. Zhang Liang and Chen Ping said: “Han occupies more than half of the world, and the soldiers of Chu are hungry and exhausted. If we let them go and do not attack, this is to raise a tiger to invite calamity.” The King [of Han] followed their advice. Master Cheng said: “Zhang Liang was endowed with extraordinary talents and great foresight. He had the demeanor of a Confucian. However, he also gave this advice to the King of Han—he was not at all righteous!*

擊之。漢遣侯公說羽請太公，羽乃與漢約中分天下，鴻溝以西為漢，以東為楚。九月，歸太公、呂后，解而東歸。漢王欲西歸，張良、陳平曰：「漢有天下大半，楚兵饑疲，今釋弗擊，此養虎自宜患也。」王從之。程子曰：「張良才識高遠，有儒者氣象，而亦以此說漢王，則其不義甚矣！」

太公、呂后於漢，解而東歸。項羽自知少助，食盡，韓信又進兵。

楚與漢約中分天下。九月，歸

FIGURE 1 Model entry showing the “Outline” (larger type), the “Details” (beginning of smaller type), and the “Comments” (beginning ‘Master Cheng said’ 程子曰); in the translation, the “Details” and “Comments” are also italicized.

part of the text in smaller type, from “Xiang Yu” 項羽 to “The King [of Han] followed their advice” 王從之 is the “Details,” providing concrete details of the event. The latter part of the text in smaller type, from “Master Cheng said” 程子曰 to the end, is “Comments,” which critique Zhang Liang’s suggestion. Throughout the *Outline and Details*, the “Outline” divides the narrative of Sima Guang’s *Comprehensive Mirror* into many sections (that is, the “Details”), and comments are inserted to interpret moral implications of these historical events. The three components are thus interrelated and guide the reader toward a specific understanding of history.

### *The Compilation*

The *Outline and Details* was a product of the golden years of Southern Song. After the Longxing Peace Treaty in 1164, with no immediate threat to the Southern Song, the dynasty enjoyed decades of peace and prosperity. At the same time, the Southern Song experienced a significant social and cultural transformation. The number of the people claiming to be “literati” increased significantly, and the definition of the literati changed from those who served in the government to those who participated in the civil service examinations. As a result, ties between the government and the literati were loosened.<sup>7</sup> The *Outline and Details* sought to respond to this new environment.

Although Zhu Xi played an important role in the compilation of the *Outline and Details*, the full story of its compilation is complex. Since its first publication in 1219, scholars have been debating the role Zhu Xi played in its compilation and offered various suggestions and interpretations. For many decades after its first publication, scholars did not know the role of Zhu Xi’s disciple Zhao Shiyuan 趙師淵 in the work’s compilation, and thought Zhu Xi personally wrote the whole work. Even after Wang Bo 王柏 (1197–1274) published the “General Rules” and Zhu Xi’s letters to Zhao Shiyuan in 1265, for a long time scholars still did not know Zhao Shiyuan because the “General Rules” and the letters were published separately from the *Outline and Details*, and its circulation seems to have been limited. The “General Rules” attracted scholars’ attention in the late Yuan, and the question of authorship emerged. Since then, scholars offered different explanations, which can be categorized into five groups:

- A. Quan Zuwang, Zhang Xu, Li Zongtong  
Zhu Xi wrote only the “General Rules,” and Zhao Shiyuan actually wrote the whole work.<sup>8</sup>

7. See Peter K. Bol, “The Sung Examination System and the *Shih*,” *Asia Major* 3:2 (1990), 149–171. For Song local elites see Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-Chou, Chiang-Hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

8. See Quan Zuwang 全祖望, *Quan Zuwang Jieqi ting ji jiaozhu* 全祖望鮚埼亭記校注 (Taipei: Guoli bianyi guan, 2003), 34.1435; Zhang Xu 張須, *Tongjian xue* 通鑑學 (Taipei: Juzhen shuwu chuban she, 1984); Li Zongtong 李宗侗, *Zhongguo shixue shi* 中國史學史 (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chuban gongs, 1984), 129.



- B. Zhang Zixun, *Siku* scholars Rui Changxu, Jin Yufu  
Zhu Xi wrote only the “General Rules” and part of the “Outline,” and all the rest were written by Zhao Shiyuan and other disciples.<sup>9</sup>
- C. Qian Mu, Zhang Yuan, Wu Zhanliang  
Zhu Xi finished the first draft, revised one third of it, and entrusted the project to Zhao Shiyuan in his late years. They also argued that the “General Rules” was a forgery.<sup>10</sup>
- D. Guo Qi, Ye Jianhua  
This group generally agreed with group C, but argued that the “General Rules” was written by Zhu Xi.<sup>11</sup>
- E. Tang Qinfu  
Zhu Xi finished the first draft and made some revisions; but Zhao Shiyuan had nothing to do with this work.<sup>12</sup>

Given the extant evidence, Qian Mu 錢穆 and Guo Qi 郭齊 have offered the most convincing scenario, and I will briefly summarize their arguments below.<sup>13</sup>

The idea to compile a new historical work originated from Zhu Xi’s dissatisfaction with the way Sima Guang had treated the issue of dynastic legitimacy [*zhengtong* 正統] in his *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*. In addition, Zhu, believing that the *Comprehensive Mirror* was too voluminous for ordinary people, wanted to compile a more readable historical work for the general public.<sup>14</sup> Although Zhu Xi probably began the project as early as 1167, the first substantial draft was completed between 1172 and 1178, most probably during the first four years, from 1172 to 1175.<sup>15</sup> During these four years, Zhu

9. See Zhang Zixun 張自勳, *Gangmu xulin* 綱目續麟 (*Siku quanshu* ed. [hereafter SKQS]); Zhu Xi and Kangxi 康熙, *Yupi Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 御批資治通鑑綱目 (SKQS ed.); Rui Changxu 芮長恤, *Gangmu fen zhu buyi* 綱目分註補遺 (SKQS ed.); Jin Yufu 金毓黼, *Zhongguo shixue shi* 中國史學史 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989), 193.

10. See Qian Mu, *Zhu Xi xin xue’an*, 162–64; Zhang Yuan, *Songdai lixue jia de lishi guan: yi Zizhi tongjian gangmu weili*, 96–103; Wu Zhanliang 吳展良, “Zhu Xi lixue yu shixue yanjiu” 朱子理學與史學研究 (M.A. thesis, National Taiwan University, 1985), 249–51.

11. See Guo Qi, “Guanyu Zhu Xi bianxiu *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* de ruogan wenti,” Ye Jianhua, “*Zizhi tongjian gangmu* jianlun.”

12. See Tang Qinfu, *Zhu Xi de shixue sixiang* 朱熹的史學思想, 175–193.

13. However, note that Guo Qi thought the “General Rules” was actually written by Zhu Xi.

14. *Gangmu*, 21; also see Zhu Xi’s memorial note (*tiehuang* 貼黃) to Xiaozong, in Zhu Xi, *Zhu Xi wenji* 朱子文集 (Taipei: Defu wenjiao jijin hui, 2000), 22.812–13.

15. Qian Mu, *Zhu Xi xin xue’an*, 133 and 137.

Table 1: Compilers of the “Principles and Rules” and Periods Covered

COMPILER	DYNASTIES
Zhu Xi (?)	Zhou to Qin 周秦
Cai Jitong 蔡季通	Han 漢
Li Bojian 李伯諫	Three Kingdoms and Two Jin 三國兩晉
Zhang Yuanshan 張元善	Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝
(unknown)	Sui 隋
Zhu Xi (?)	Tang 唐
(unknown)	Five Dynasties 五代

Xi probably first drafted a working version of the *yili* 義例 [Principles and Rules], then began to compile the work together with some of his disciples. Each was assigned a different period and compiled a working draft based upon the “Principles and Rules.” The division of labor was probably as shown in Table 1.<sup>16</sup>

All drafts were then sent to Zhu Xi for further editing, and in 1175 he had finished a complete first draft. Although his original motivation for the project had been simple, during the compilation process the project became more sophisticated than he had expected. In essence, Zhu Xi had originally intended to write an abridged historical work, but, during the compilation process, he realized the work would have to be as lengthy as the *Comprehensive Mirror*.<sup>17</sup>

Zhu Xi probably began to revise the *Outline and Details* shortly after completion of the first draft. By 1177, he had revised the draft through the period of Eastern Han and Jin Dynasties and had reworked the “Principles and Rules.”<sup>18</sup> It is not clear, however, how extensive these revisions were. Certainly, by 1179, when he assumed the office of prefect of Nankang Military Prefecture [Nankang *jun* 南康軍, in modern northern Jiangxi Province], he had ceased to work on the project. In the following years, although he frequently expressed his desire to continue the revision, no actual work was done.

16. Guo Qi, “Guanyu Zhu Xi bianxiu *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* de ruogan wenti,” 86.

17. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 105.2637. This entry was recorded by Yu Daya 余大雅 around 1180–90.

18. Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue'an*, 138.

In his later years, Zhu Xi entrusted the project to Zhao Shiyuan. Again, it is unclear when Zhao Shiyuan began the revision, and to what degree he revised the draft. However, we do know that he revised the whole draft, not simply the latter two thirds, which Zhu Xi had left unrevised in 1179. We also know that Zhao's revisions included both "Outline" and "Details" portions of the work.<sup>19</sup> Although Zhu Xi continued to exchange letters with Zhao Shiyuan about these revisions, and Zhao also kept on sending his drafts to him, Zhu only discussed some general principles about the revision, but did not go into details. He probably did not even read Zhao's drafts carefully. It seems that Zhao also revised the working "Principles and Rules" at this time.<sup>20</sup>

I want to add one more point to Qian Mu and Guo Qi's studies: it is not clear that Zhao Shiyuan actually finished his revisions, since the present text of the *Outline and Details* contains many inconsistencies which should have been corrected if Zhao had completed a thorough revision. For example, the first third of the present text, which Zhu Xi himself supposedly edited, maintains a meticulous consistency between the "Outline" and the "Details" concerning how historical figures are addressed. However, inconsistencies between the two occur repeatedly in the last two-thirds of the text. For example, the "Outline" addresses Liu Ziyè 劉子業, the former abdicated emperor of Liu Song [Song *qian feidi* 宋前廢帝] as the "Lord of Song [Song *zhu* 宋主]," the common way to address emperors with no dynastic legitimacy [*wutong* 無統]; the "Details," however, addresses him as "Ziyè." The "Details" text was apparently directly copied from the *Comprehensive Mirror*, but the latter addressed Liu Ziyè as the "Lord of Song." Changing the term of address to "Ziyè" in the "Details" was systematic and clearly intentional, but it created inconsistencies between the "Outline" and the "Details." It seems that one of the editors of the *Outline and Details* intended to revise the text according to certain principles, but for some reason stopped right after Liu Ziyè. Regardless of who initiated the plan, Zhao Shiyuan neither carried the plan through to completion nor changed it back. Either Zhao Shiyuan was too careless, or he simply did not finish the revision. I suspect the latter was the case.

One other possibility is that the current version of the *Outline and Details* was actually based on Zhu Xi's unfinished draft, not Zhao Shiyuan's revised

19. In the sixth letter, Zhu Xi discussed one issue about Eastern Han. See *Gangmu*, 3498.

20. For example, in the sixth letter, Zhu Xi suggested that Zhao Shiyuan include one rule in the "Principles and Rules." See *Gangmu*, 3498.

version, even if he had finished it. The current version was based on the manuscript acquired by Li Fangzi from Zhu Xi's son Zhu Zai 朱在 in 1210. Li Fangzi brought it with him to Quanzhou and published it there with the support of Zhen Dexiu 真德秀 in 1219. In his postscript to the *Outline and Details*, Li Fangzi only mentioned that Zhu Xi did not finish the revision, but did not mention Zhao Shiyuan at all.<sup>21</sup> We do not know whether Zhao Shiyuan had sent his complete revision to Zhu Xi or his son, either before or after Zhu's death. In other words, we do not know which version of the manuscript was kept in Zhu Xi's home and acquired by Li Fangzi: was it Zhu Xi's unfinished draft, Zhao Shiyuan's final revision, or something between the two? We simply do not know. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: Li Fangzi did not think Zhao Shiyuan had finished the revision of the version he published; otherwise he would have mentioned Zhao in the preface.

Zhu Xi was not satisfied with the work, and several times in his later years he expressed the desire to revise it, although he never carried out this intention. In short, the compilation of the *Outline and Details* entailed three stages. Probably, the edition we see today was revised by Zhao Shiyuan, although it remains uncertain whether he had completed his revisions or not. As a result, there are probably at least three layers in today's edition (Zhu Xi's first draft, Zhu Xi's unfinished revision, and Zhao Shiyuan's last revision). It is impossible to distinguish one layer from the others with any certainty. As such, the present text represents an early and abandoned work of Zhu Xi, and does not really represent the full depth of his scholarship on the study of history. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he still devoted considerable effort to the project and set up a comprehensive structure for the work. As I will argue in the following sections, the *Outline and Details* clearly demonstrates a unique approach to the organization of historical knowledge, an approach that differed significantly from the paradigm established by Sima Guang.<sup>22</sup>

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21. See *Gangmu*, 3501–03.

22. For Sima Guang's *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*, see Xiao-bin Ji, "Mirror for Government: Ssu-ma Kuang's Thought on Politics and Government in *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*," in *The New and the Multiple: Sung Senses of the Past*, 1–31. See also Peter Bol, "Government, Society, and State: On the Political Visions of Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–1086) and Wang An-shih (1021–1086)," in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung China*, ed. Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 128–192.

*The “General Rules” and the Outline and Details*

In 1265, 46 years after the first publication of the *Outline and Details* and 65 years after Zhu Xi's death, Wang Bo, a follower of the Cheng-Zhu school, claimed that he had obtained the “General Rules” of the work, written by Zhu Xi, from a relative of Zhao Shiyuan. The text explained how the *Outline and Details* used specific words to express praise and blame. During the following two hundred years, although this piece gradually gained popularity among literati, it was published separately from the *Outline and Details*. The first edition of the *Outline and Details* to include the “General Rules” was published by the Ming government in 1473, 254 years after Li Fangzi first published the work.<sup>23</sup> For the following several hundred years, most scholars believed in the authenticity of the “General Rules,” and used it to study the *Outline and Details*. Until recently, many scholars still regarded the “General Rules” as written by Zhu Xi and as essential in reading the *Outline and Details*.<sup>24</sup>

This is, however, a highly questionable belief. Qian Mu and Zhang Yuan point out that several Yuan scholars had already noticed a significant number of discrepancies between the *Outline and Details* and the “General Rules,” although none of them doubted the authenticity of the “General Rules.”<sup>25</sup> For example, both Ni Shiyi 倪士毅 (14th century) and Wang Kekuan 汪克寬 (1304–1372) pointed out some discrepancies, and attributed them to the process of circulation and transcription.<sup>26</sup> In the late Ming, some scholars began to realize that the discrepancies might originate from the fact that the “General Rules” might actually be a forgery. For example, in his *Gangmu shizheng* 綱目是正 [Corrections to the Outline and Details], Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536–1618) listed 776 discrepancies between the *Outline and Details* and the

23. *Gangmu*, 5.

24. For example, see Jin Yufu, *Zhongguo shixue shi*, 193; Li Zongtong, *Zhongguo shixue shi*, 129; Yin Da 尹達, *Zhongguo shixue fazhan shi* 中國史學發展史 (Taipei: Tianshan chubanshe, 1988), vol. 1, 249–250; Ye Jianhua, “Zizhi tongjian gangmu jianlun,” 100–114; Franke, “Das Tsè tschi t'ung kien und das T'ung kien kang mu ihr Wesen, ihr Verhältnis zueinander und ihr Quellenwert,” 127–129; Etienne Balazs and Yves Hervouet, *A Sung Bibliography*, 70; Han Yushan, *Elements of Chinese Historiography* (Hollywood, CA.: W.M. Hawley, 1955), 53–54.

25. Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue'an*, 162–64; Zhang Yuan, “Songdai lixue jia de lishi guan: yi Zizhi tongjian gangmu weili,” 96–103.

26. *Gangmu*, Ni Shiyi 倪士毅, “fanli xu” 凡例序, 3505–06; *Gangmu* (Gusu Juwen tang edition), Wang Kekuan 汪克寬, “kaoyi fanli 考異凡例,” 73a.

“General Rules,” and concluded that neither work was written by Zhu Xi.<sup>27</sup>

Some modern scholars have added more arguments to support the idea that the “General Rules” was not Zhu Xi’s work.<sup>28</sup> First, judging from the fact that the “General Rules” was published 65 years after Zhu Xi’s death, and was published separately from the *Outline and Details* for 254 years, its authenticity is indeed questionable. Second, since Zhu Xi set up the format of the “Outline” according to his understanding of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which did not, as Zhu Xi understood it, use diction to express praise and blame, he could hardly have composed the “General Rules” for the *Outline and Details*.<sup>29</sup> Third, no source indicates that Zhu Xi discussed the “General Rules” with other scholars. Although Zhu Xi did mention that he had set up certain “meanings and rules” for the *Outline and Details*, they more likely refer to the general structure of the *Outline and Details*, rather than to guidelines for diction. Fourth, because the discrepancies between the “Outline” and the “General Rules” are so significant, the latter could not have actually been used as the guideline for composing the former. These arguments are persuasive. It would be fundamentally misleading to use the extant “General Rules” to study the *Outline and Details*.

### *The “Guidelines” of the Outline and Details*

Although Zhu Xi did not compose the present “General Rules,” he did mention on several occasions that he had written and revised certain guidelines for composing the *Outline and Details*. He used four different names to refer to these guidelines, suggesting that they did not have a formal title, and probably were simply for editorial purposes rather than for publication.<sup>30</sup> For convenience, I will call them the “Guidelines.” If extant, they would certainly

27. Lü Kun 呂坤, *Lü Xinwu xianzheng quwei zhai wenji* 呂新吾先生去僞齋文集 (Siku quanshu cunmu congshu; Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), 5.57b–59b (157–158).

28. Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue’an*, 5:161–62; Qian Mu, *Zhongguo shixue mingzhu* 中國史學名著 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban she, 1994), 291; Zhang Yuan, “Songdai lixue jia de lishi guan: yi Zizhi tongjian gangmu weili,” 96–111.

29. For Zhu Xi’s studies on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, see Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue’an*, 4:107–126.

30. For example, Zhu Xi called these “itemized rules [*tiaoli* 條例]” (Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi wenji*, 32.1241; 34.1338; *xuji*, 2.4949), “principles and rules [*yili* 義例]” (Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi wenji*, 35.1409), “rules [*li* 例]” (Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi wenji*, 44.1914), “general rules [*fanli* 凡例]” (Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi wenji*, *xuji*, 2.4934).

help in understanding the *Outline and Details*. Unfortunately, they seem to have been lost. Based on the available material, however, we can reconstruct a small portion, which can still shed some light on their nature.

Although extremely fragmented and brief, the following principles can be reconstructed with certainty:

- A. Jupiter year [*sui* 歲] comes before the reign year [*nian* 年]. If the reign year belonged to a political power with dynastic legitimacy, it is recorded in large font; if not, then in small font.<sup>31</sup>
- B. Activities of an emperor should not be recorded with the terms that his subordinates were supposed to use.<sup>32</sup>
- C. If an official dictated the political power and conferred on himself certain titles, it is recorded as “someone installed himself as Duke of \_\_\_\_.”<sup>33</sup>
- D. If a traitorous official died, it is recorded as “someone died [*si* 死].”<sup>34</sup>

Item A concerns *dynastic legitimacy*, an important issue for the *Outline and Details*, and involves the overall structure of the work, not simply the diction of the “Outline.” Item B concerns general language usage and apparently was designed for neutrality, not for praise and blame. On the other hand, both items C and D clearly concern rules of diction for praise and blame, and Zhu Xi defined with clarity the specific contexts when these terms are used for praise and blame. Although this seems to support the argument that there are systematic diction rules in the *Outline and Details*, a closer examination on how these two phrases are used in the *Outline and Details* reveals that their connotations are fixed only in the specific conditions as described above. Their connotations can be very different when used in other contexts.

As for the phrase “to install oneself,” in Cao Cao’s case, there is no doubt that the phrase is used in the above meaning to blame the powerful minister Cao Cao:

Cao Cao installed himself as the Duke of Wei.<sup>35</sup>

曹操自立爲魏公。

On one occasion, Zhu Xi told a disciple: “I also consulted and adopted a good historical writing method. For example, as for powerful ministers who

31. *Gangmu*, 21.

32. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105.2636.

33. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105.2637.

34. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105.2638.

35. *Gangmu*, 14.883.

usurped political power, . . . Fan Ye recorded it as ‘Cao Cao installed himself as the Duke of Wei.’ The *Outline and Details* also adopted this rule.<sup>36</sup> It is impossible to argue that the phrase means otherwise in this case.

The *Outline and Details*, however, also uses this phrase on many other occasions, and to argue that the phrase always conveys the same connotation in each case is impossible. The following two examples should be sufficient to illustrate this point:

Liu Bang of Chu assembled troops in an uprising in Pei, and installed himself as the Duke of Pei.<sup>37</sup>

楚人劉邦起兵於沛，自立爲沛公。

Tian Dan of Qi installed himself as the King of Qi.<sup>38</sup>

齊人田儻自立爲齊王。

In the “Details,” the *Outline and Details* provides some background information about Liu Bang and Tian Dan and their uprisings. Liu Bang was from Pei 沛, and had once served as neighborhood head [*tingzhang* 亭長] of Sishang 泗上 before he was forced to flee because more than half of the convicts he was conveying escaped on their way to work at Lishan 驪山. After Chen Sheng’s 陳勝 uprising, the elders of Pei decided to join the uprising and called Liu Bang back as their leader. Tian Dan was a member of the former Qi imperial family. His lineage was still powerful in the locality. After Chen Sheng’s uprising, he killed the magistrate of Di 狄 and joined the uprising in order to restore Qi. In the narrative of the *Outline and Details*, since the Qin was extremely malevolent and cruel, it was legitimate to rebel against it.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, neither Liu Bang nor Tian Dan could be described as a “powerful minister” of the Qin. Therefore, in the above two cases, the word “to install oneself” cannot have been used to criticize Liu Bang and Tian Dan, as was the case with Cao Cao. It is more reasonable to understand the phrase in these two cases as a neutral description, with no embedded praise or blame.

36. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105.2637. 某又參取史法之善者，如權臣擅命，多書以某人爲某王某公。范曄書「曹操自立爲魏公」，《綱目》亦用此例。

37. *Gangmu*, 2.134.

38. *Gangmu*, 2.134.

39. For example, the comments inserted in the *Outline and Details* reviewing the fall of the Qin argued that it was natural for the Qin to fall because it could not apply benevolence and righteousness to its people. See *Gangmu*, 2.145.



The same is true for the phrase “so-and-so died.” In the case of Di Renjie 狄仁傑 of the Tang, the phrase was no doubt used in a pejorative sense as described in item D, because Zhu Xi explicitly explained his reasoning on other occasions. In this case, Zhu Xi told his disciples:

According to “Rules for the *Outline of the Comprehensive Mirror*”: “All the deaths of traitorous officials are recorded as ‘so-and-so died.’ However, in the case of Di Renjie, I was very doubtful. The restoration of the Lis was initiated by Renjie, but after all, he died as a high official of the Zhou. I have no other choice but to apply to his case the rule of “\_\_died,” and to record [his death] as “on a certain day of a certain month of a certain year, Di Renjie died.”<sup>40</sup>

《通鑑提綱》例：「凡逆臣之死，皆書曰『死』。」至狄仁傑則甚疑之。李氏之復，雖出仁傑，然畢竟是死於周之大臣。不奈何，也教相隨入死例，書云：「某年月日狄仁傑死」也。

Zhu Xi clearly recognized the difficulty of applying a system of fixed diction to record historical events taking place in complex historical situations, as he admitted in Di Renjie’s case. Since he could not find a better way to record Di’s death, however, Zhu Xi could only treat him as a traitorous official, although he admitted that this was not completely fair to Di. On the other hand, an examination of the usage of the phrase “so-and-so died” in the *Outline and Details* will demonstrate that its connotation varies with context, as the cases of Fan Zeng 范增 and Zhou Yafu 周亞夫 will show:

Secondary Father Fan Zeng died.<sup>41</sup>

亞父范增死。

Marquis of Tiao, Zhou Yafu, was put in prison. Yafu refused to eat and died.<sup>42</sup>

下條侯周亞夫獄。亞夫不食死。

Fan Zeng was Xiang Yu’s most important advisor. He was loyal to Xiang Yu, but lost the latter’s trust because of Liu Bang’s tricks. He was so upset at Xiang Yu that he left him and died on his way home. Zhou Yafu was loyal and made great contributions to the Han. But Emperor Jing, who did not trust Zhou to assist his young son when he ascended to the throne, put Zhou in jail,

40. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105.2637.

41. *Gangmu*, 2.159.

42. *Gangmu*, 4.250.

charging him with a crime committed by Zhou's son. Zhou refused to eat and died five days later. Neither Fan Zeng nor Zhou Yafu was a traitorous official. Moreover, the narrative of the "Outline" does not use any expression, such as "so-and-so was guilty [□有罪]," to indicate their crimes, implying that they were innocent. Lastly, based on the comments inserted elsewhere, the *Outline and Details* actually criticizes Xiang Yu and Emperor Jing in these two cases.<sup>43</sup> The word "died" simply describes the facts, with no praise or blame intended.

All the words listed in the "General Rules" can be examined in a similar way. Depending on the context, one word can convey different connotations in the *Outline and Details*. Even though, as in the cases of "to install oneself" and "so-and-so died," there are specific contexts in which terms do convey value judgments, it would be fundamentally misleading if we were to read the *Outline and Details* based on its diction. This issue will be explored in more detail in the following section. Rather than analyzing the work on this basis, it is more fruitful to examine its structure.

### *The Structure of the Outline and Details*

This section examines how the three portions of the work (the "Outline," the "Details," and the "Comments") interacted in order to articulate a coherent view of history.

#### THE "OUTLINE:" ITS NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Zhu Xi intentionally developed the "Outline" as a set of individual statements that are not causally related to form a grand narrative. In this respect, the *Outline and Details* contrasts markedly with Lü Zuqian's *Record of Great Events*. Consider, for example, the account of the uprising of Chen Sheng. The "Outline" narrates the event as follows:

In the seventh month of autumn, Chen Sheng and Wu Guang of Chu incited troops in an uprising in Qi. [Chen Sheng] installed himself as King of Chu. [He] appointed Guang as an acting king, and [sent him] to attack Xingyang.<sup>44</sup>

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43. For Fan Zeng, see the comment of Yang Shi in *Gangmu*, 3.169; for Zhou Yafu, see the comment of Hu Yin in *Gangmu*, 4.252–53.

44. *Gangmu*, 2.133.

秋，七月，楚人陳勝、吳廣起兵於蕲。自立爲楚王。以廣爲假王，擊滎陽。

The three statements are related only as a series of actions carried out by the same historical figure, Chen Sheng, not because they have any causal relationship. The entry gives no explanation for the cause of Chen Sheng and Wu Guang's uprising, and no description of its immediate effect. In the "Outline," because history is depicted as a series of independent actions carried out by individual figures, the macroscopic view of historical development disappears. Although the "Details" preserves the causal factors, these factors are relegated to secondary importance in the overall structure. By adopting this narrative strategy, the reader's attention is directed to historical figures and their actions.

One might argue that the lack of causal explanation in the "Outline" results from the limitation of the "Outline's" succinct style on its expressive capability, not from Zhu Xi's intentional design. Such, however, is not the case: the format is capable of accommodating causal explanation. The *Record of Great Events* by Lü Zuqian is a good example. It adopts a very different approach to narrate the same event:

In the seventh month of autumn, [Qin] conscripted men from the poor side of the town as garrison soldiers. Chen Sheng and Wu Guang instigated troops in an uprising in Qi. [Chen] occupied Chen and installed himself as King of Chu. [People from] all the commanderies killed their senior officials to ally with the Chu.

Chu appointed Wu Guang as an acting king to attack Xingyang. Governor of Shanchuan Commandery Li You guarded Xingyang to resist them.<sup>45</sup>

秋，七月，發閭左戍卒。陳勝起兵於蕲，據陳，自立爲楚王。諸郡縣皆殺其長吏以應楚。

楚使吳廣爲假王，擊滎陽。三川守李由守滎陽拒之。

Here, there is a cause (the conscription of the men from the poor side of the town), the reaction (Chen Sheng's rebellion), and the effect (the rebellion in numerous commanderies). Wu Guang's attack on Xingyang also caused a response (Li You's defense). The *Record of Great Events* depicts the overall historical development by constructing causal relations between individual

45. Lü Zuqian, *Dashi ji* (SKQS ed.), "Dashi ji," 8.1b–2a.

statements, and therefore directs the reader to consider the forces that shaped these developments.

Comparison between the narratives of the following events in the two works reveals their differences even more clearly. First the “Outline”:

Chu sent generals to pacify the Zhao and Wei areas. [Chu] appointed Zhou Wen as a general to lead troops to invade Qin. [Zhou Wen] reached Xi. Qin sent Chamberlain for Palace Revenues Zhang Han to resist him. The Chu army was defeated and retreated.<sup>46</sup>

楚遣諸將循趙、魏：以周文爲將軍，將兵伐秦。至戲，秦遣少府章邯拒之。楚軍敗走。

At first glance, the last three statements seem to be causally connected. This is not actually so: they tell the reader who did what, but do not explain why and how. Such information is simply omitted from the “Outline.” Apparently, it is not the major concern of the *Outline and Details*. These individual statements direct the reader’s attention to the relations between historical figures and their actions, but ignore the general historical development from a macroscopic perspective.

The *Record of Great Events*, on the other hand, narrates the same events with a very different approach:

Chu sent Wu Chen, Zhang Er, and Chen Yu to seize the Zhao area. Zhou Wen of Chu led a troop of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and entered Hangu Pass. [They] camped in Xi. Qin proclaimed a general amnesty, and sent Chamberlain for Palace Revenues Zhang Han to lead the criminals in Lishan to attack them. Zhou Wen was defeated and retreated out of the pass, and camped in Caoyang.<sup>47</sup>

楚使武臣、張耳、陳餘徇趙地。  
楚周文將兵數十萬入函谷關，軍於戲。秦大赦，使少府章邯將鄴山徒擊之。周文敗走，出關，軍曹陽。

The most obvious difference between the two narratives is the detailed description of the sizes of the troops in the *Record of Great Events*, which enables the reader to visualize the forces that shaped the development of the event in order to observe the historical development from a macroscopic perspective.

46. *Gangmu*, 2.133.

47. Lü Zuqian, *Dashi ji*, “Dashi ji,” 8.2a, 54.

Another difference is subtler but equally significant: the narrative of the *Record of Great Events* emphasizes the role of the criminals in Lishan in this battle. According to the *Comprehensive Mirror*, learning that Zhou Wen had entered Hangu Pass and had camped in Xi, the Second Emperor of Qin was deeply shocked and frightened. Zhang Han suggested to the emperor that he pardon the criminals in Lishan and use them to fight the rebels, because it was already too late to conscript men from nearby districts. The Second Emperor agreed, and in the end, Zhang Han successfully defeated Zhou Wen with the pardoned criminals. The plan indeed played a decisive role in the battle. By including this entry in the narrative of the *Record of Great Events*, Lü Zuqian guides the reader to understand that pardoning the criminals in Lishan was a cause that helped to empower the Qin army and contributed to Zhou's defeat. The focus of the narrative is the causal relations between events, not individual actions. Lü Zuqian also recorded that Zhou Wen camped in Caoyang after the defeat in order to guide the reader to visualize the vicissitudes of the different forces and the following historical development. All these pieces of information are simply left out in the "Outline."

Through the above rough comparison, the difference between the two historical works is very clear. Lü Zuqian intended to analyze the forces that shaped the development of history, and, as I argue elsewhere, to learn the methods to handle human affairs.<sup>48</sup> Zhu Xi, on the other hand, did not take this approach in the *Outline and Details*. He was very aware of Lü Zuqian's approach, only to strongly disagree with it, arguing that it would lead to utilitarianism.<sup>49</sup> The lack of such mechanisms to integrate all the individual statements together in the narrative of the *Outline and Details*, then, was the result of a choice, not incapability.

Why did Zhu Xi adopt the aforementioned narrative strategy for the "Outline?" By dividing history into a series of individual events constituted of historical figures and their actions, the "Outline" guides the reader to focus

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48. Tsong-han Lee, "Different Mirrors of the Past: Southern Song Historiography," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2008.

49. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi wenji*, 27.1035. For more in-depth discussions on Southern Song utilitarian Confucian scholars, see Hoyt Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch'en Liang's Challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Hoyt Tillman, *Confucian Discourse: Chu Hsi's Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), especially the chapters on Chen Liang and Lü Zuqian; Winston Lo, *The Life and Thought of Ye Shih* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1974).

on these independent events in order to evaluate historical figures' actions based on moral principles of the Cheng-Zhu school, as will be discussed later in the section on the comments inserted in the *Outline and Details*.

Take the narrative of Chen Sheng's uprising as an example again:

Chen Sheng and Wu Guang of Chu incited troops in uprisings in Qi. [Chen Sheng] established himself as King of Chu.

The two seemingly interrelated statements are in fact separate, because no causal relation integrates them together. This narrative does not explain what caused Chen Sheng's rebellion and the subsequent influence, thus excluding information about historical development. The narrative, on the other hand, directs the reader's attention to Chen Sheng's individual actions: the uprising and the installation. The authors' criticism of the two actions has to be inferred from the historical context in the "Outline" and the "Details." First, because Chen Sheng was forced to rebel against the Qin for its extremely cruel and malevolent rule, it is reasonable to infer that the authors regarded Chen Sheng's uprising as legitimate. Second, Chen Sheng's justification for rebellion does not further legitimate him to install himself as King of Chu immediately after the uprising, because the latter action demonstrated Chen Sheng's narrow-mindedness and selfishness, as Chen Yu pointed out when he tried to dissuade Chen Sheng from declaring himself a king. In this context, the second statement implies a negative criticism. The two statements should be read individually. Compared with the *Record of Great Events*, the narrative strategy of the "Outline" is more suitable for guiding the reader to evaluate the actions of historical figures.

Two more examples should suffice to prove this view. The first concerns the narrative of Xiang Yu's burying the surrendered Qin soldiers in 206 BC, which is narrated as follows in the "Outline:"

Xiang Ji [Yu] deceitfully buried alive more than two hundred thousand surrendered soldiers of the Qin in Xin'an.<sup>50</sup>

項籍詐阬秦降卒二十餘萬於新安。

The central issue in this entry is the fact that Xiang Yu unrighteously murdered the surrendered Qin soldiers. The authors purposefully used the self-explanatory word "deceitfully" to describe Xiang Yu's action. In the *Record*

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50. *Gangmu*, 2.146.

of *Great Events*, on the other hand, Lü Zuqian tells the reader that this event took place when Xiang Yu was on his way to the Qin capital Xianyang. Fearing that the Qin soldiers might rebel when they arrive at Guanzhong, Xiang Yu decided to kill all of them. This explanatory information is simply left out in the narrative of the “Outline,” or relegated to the “Details.”

The second example is Liu Bang’s sending an obituary for Emperor Yi in 205 BC. According to the “Outline:”

King of Han arrived at Luoyang. [He] sent an obituary for Emperor Yi to call the other kings to punish Xiang Ji [Yu] by force of arms.<sup>51</sup>

漢王至洛陽。爲義帝發喪，告諸侯討項籍。

In 205 BC, in order to strengthen his own power, Xiang Yu murdered Emperor Yi, the nominal ruler among the warlords after the fall of the Qin. Liu Bang sent out an obituary for Emperor Yi soon after he decided to fight against Xiang Yu. The authors of the *Outline and Details* inserted a comment by Hu Yin 胡寅 directly after this entry. According to Hu Yin, this action was crucial to Liu Bang’s final success because Liu Bang’s army only became righteous after he took this righteous action, which enabled him to call for the support of all the people. Although the authors did not use any special word in this entry, clearly it is praise for Liu Bang.

The “Outline’s” unique narrative strategy can also be observed from another angle: its authors intentionally left out information about institutions. A comparison with the *Record of Great Events* can demonstrate this. In the *Record of Great Events*, Lü Zuqian carefully recorded important institutional changes such as: the Qin reformed its laws in the fourth month of 209 BC; the Han established the position of Three Local Elders [*xiang sanlao* 鄉三老] in the spring of 205 BC; the Han established the Hezhong, Weinan, Zhongdi, Longxi, Beidi, and Shang Commanderies in 205 BC; the Han delegated to the feudal states the power to appoint their own censors-in-chief and other lower-ranked officials, including chamberlains, in the winter of 201 BC; the Han ordered Xiao He to constitute the civil laws, Han Xin, the military laws, and Zhang Cang, the calendar, in the winter of 200 BC; the Han abolished the Weinan, Heshang, and Zhongdi Commanderies in 198 BC. None of the above events are recorded in the “Outline.” Clearly, institutional changes are not the primary concern in the *Outline and Details*. By leaving out the

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51. *Gangmu*, 2.153.

information about institutional changes, the narrative of the “Outline” focuses solely on historical figures’ actions.

The above discussion demonstrates that, rather than explaining historical development, the authors of the *Outline and Details* intended to cultivate the reader’s ability to respond to historical situations morally through evaluating historical figures’ actions based on moral principles. It would be unfair to claim that the authors of the *Outline and Details* ignored the explanation of historical development—they indeed had a very specific view on this issue: moral principles not only are what one should follow, but also have profound influence on historical development. This idea is not articulated clearly in the “Outline,” but many comments in the *Outline and Details*, which will be discussed in detail later, explain history from this perspective.<sup>52</sup> By using moral principles to explain historical changes, the authors of the *Outline and Details* were, I think, asking their readers (supposedly the literati) to take up their responsibilities to improve the world by making their every action moral.

#### THE “DETAILS:” HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Because the *Outline and Details* does not have a universal diction system, its readers have to rely on historical context both in the “Outline” and the “Details” to evaluate historical figures’ actions: the “Outline” provides the basic information about the most relevant historical events, and the “Details” provides substantial details for each event.

Understanding the “Outline” through an analysis of its diction will lead the reader nowhere, as the case “to install oneself” has shown. The same phrase can denote different events, but provide very different connotations:

[Chen Sheng] installed himself as King of Chu.

[Liu Bang] installed himself as Duke of Pei.

Cao Cao installed himself as Duke of Wei.

With the same verb “to install oneself,” the three statements are identical in their grammatical structure. Their significantly different connotations, however, will be revealed when the reader takes historical contexts into consideration. First, Chen Yu’s suggestion in the “Details” informs the reader that the first statement blames Chen Sheng for his selfishness. Second, uprisings

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52. See the section “Applying Moral Principles to History.”



against the Qin are justified by the Qin's cruel rule, which was described in the "Outline" and the "Details," and therefore the second statement was a neutral description of Liu Bang's action, without any praise or blame intended. The third statement, however, blames Cao Cao for his usurpation of the Han, which is described in both the "Outline" and the "Details." In short, without putting historical events in their proper historical contexts, there is no way to determine the connotations that the authors intended to convey in the "Outline."

The vagueness of the "Outline's" diction can also be demonstrated by the case of Xun Yu's death, narrated as follows in the "Outline:"

Palace Attendant, Grand Master for Splendid Happiness, and Military Administrator Xun Yu committed suicide.<sup>53</sup>

侍中、光祿大夫、參軍事荀彧自殺。

The first two official titles were granted by the Han, and the third by Cao Cao.<sup>54</sup> Why did the authors record all the three official titles in the "Outline?" Did they praise Xun Yu for his loyalty to the Han, or blame him for supporting Cao Cao? The statement can be interpreted either way when read alone. Fortunately, Zhu Xi left a detailed account on his reasoning for this entry:

... However, Xun Yu was Palace Attendant and Grand Master for Splendid Happiness of the Han and served as Military Administrator of the Prime Minister. He died by committing suicide. Therefore, I simply recorded it according to the fact [in the format of]: "a certain person serving in a certain post committed suicide," and put it under [the entry] "Cao Cao attacked Sun Quan and arrived at Ruxu." I did so not because I regard [Xun] Yu as a Han official. Rather, I recorded all his official titles in order to show his crime: even though he was actually an intimate subordinate of the Son of the Heaven of the Han, he was disloyal [to the Han] and attached himself to the traitor [Cao Cao]. I am not admiring him as an official of the Han. During the time [of compiling the work], I spent considerable effort on such places. I am not sure if I can avoid [criticism from] the public opinion of later generations.<sup>55</sup>

53. *Gangmu*, 14.881.

54. See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 517.

55. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi wenji*, 37.1508.

荀彧卻是漢侍中光祿大夫而參丞相軍事，其死乃是自殺，故但據實書之曰「某官某人自殺」，而系於「曹操擊孫權，至濡須」之下，非故以彧為漢臣也。然悉書其官，亦見其實漢天子近臣，而附賊不忠之罪，非與其為漢臣也。此等處當時極費區處，不審竟得免於後世之公論否。

This record is important because it shows how Zhu Xi expected his readers to read the *Outline and Details*. In the above entry of the “Outline”, Zhu Xi did not use any specific word to convey praise or blame. Rather, he consciously included in the entry all the three official titles Xun Yu held at the time. These official titles remind the reader of Xun Yu’s past deeds, recorded in the “Details:” he helped Cao Cao consolidate his political power at the Han’s expense.<sup>56</sup> Besides this entry, Xun Yu is only mentioned once in the “Outline,” from which the reader learns almost nothing about him.<sup>57</sup> Clearly, Zhu Xi expected the reader to integrate Xun Yu’s deeds recorded in the “Details” with the information provided in the “Outline,” so that the moral message of the work can be properly understood.

In the *Outline and Details*, historical context takes the form of static, but sophisticated, pictures of selected historical moments. The reader is expected to combine historical figures’ actions with their related historical contexts to contemplate what should have been done in those specific moments according to moral principles. The dynamics of the development of history and its causes are relegated to matters of secondary importance.

#### THE “COMMENTS”:

##### APPLYING MORAL PRINCIPLES TO HISTORY

Although the “Outline,” when read carefully with the “Details,” can suggest how the reader should evaluate historical events, its succinct nature constrains its capability to articulate in-depth arguments on behalf of its moral judgments. The comments by other scholars inserted into the *Outline and Details* supplement this limitation. Moreover, in these comments, moral principles are also used to explain historical developments based on the following assumption: a political leader, if he acts according to moral principles rooted in the mind of every human being, will succeed by gaining the support

56. *Gangmu*, 13.830, 13.833–34, 13.842–43, 13.843, 13.848, 13.848–49, 13.858, 13.861; 14.881.

57. *Gangmu*, 13.830.

of the people. If he does not follow moral principles, on the other hand, he will lose the support of the people and fail.

Such appended comments in the *Outline and Details* can be divided into two groups: first, those already inserted into the *Comprehensive Mirror*; second, those inserted by the authors of the *Outline and Details*. All comments in the latter group were written by Song Daoxue scholars of the Cheng school, including Cheng Yi 程頤, Yang Shi 楊時, Chen Yuan 陳淵, and Hu Yin. (Among them, Hu Yin's comments appear most frequently in the *Outline and Details*.) The *Outline and Details* thus presents history from the perspective of the Cheng-Zhu school.

The distribution and quality of the inserted comments, as Zhang Yuan points out, vary considerably throughout the work. In the first eleven chapters, the authors of the work carefully selected many Daoxue scholars' (mostly Hu Yin's) comments. In contrast, they only inserted two such comments in chapter 12, and none in chapters 13 to 30. From chapter 31 to the end of the work, Hu Yin's comments reappear in great quantity.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the comments on the Tang (chapters 38–54) are exclusively Hu Yin's and Fan Zuyu's 范祖禹, and they are not carefully selected. Zhang Yuan concludes that these differences must result from the fact that Zhu Xi only revised the first eleven chapters.<sup>59</sup> In any case, the Daoxue scholars' comments in the first eleven chapters clearly have been treated more elaborately and carefully. This section will examine Daoxue scholars' comments in chapters 2 and 3, which cover the period between Qin and Han, to see how these comments guide the reader to understand history in a specific way.

There are a total of ten comments in the *Outline and Details* for the period between Qin and Han. Of these ten, the first group of three had already been

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58. Hu Yin's comments, which are based on the scholarship tradition of the Hu family (including Hu Anguo 胡安國, Hu Hong, 胡宏, and Hu Yin himself), play an important role in the *Outline and Details*. For studies on the Hu family's scholarship, see Hans van Ess, "The Compilation of the Works of the Ch'eng Brothers and Its Significance for the Learning of the Right Way of the Southern Sung Period," *T'oung Pao* 90 (2004), 264–298; Conrad Schirokauer, "Hu Yin's 'Recounting the Past in a Thousand Words,'" in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Chu Hsi Studies* (Taipei: Academia Sinica Zhongguo wenxue zhexue yanjiusuo, 1993), 1049–1081; Conrad Schirokauer, "Hu Hong As A Historian," in *The New and the Multiple: Sung Senses of the Past*, 121–161. See also Zhang Yuan, "Ma Duanlin dui Hu Yin shilun de kanfa 馬端臨對胡寅史論的看法," in *Di san jie shixueshi guoji yantaohui lunwenji* (Taichung: Zhongxing daxue lishi xi, 1991), 333–360.

59. Zhang Yuan, "Songdai lixue jia de lishi guan: yi Zizhi tongjian gangmu wei li," 109.

inserted into the *Comprehensive Mirror* by Sima Guang: comments by Xun Yue 荀悅 (p. 158), Sima Qian 司馬遷 (p. 167), and Yang Xiong 揚雄 (p. 167). The second group, the seven comments written by three Song Daoxue scholars and inserted by the authors of the *Outline and Details*, are the focus of the following discussion. Listed in page order, they are:

1. Hu Yin (p. 145)
2. Hu Yin (p. 149)
3. Hu Yin (p. 153)
4. Hu Yin (p. 154)
5. Yang Shi (p. 160)
6. Cheng Yi (p. 164)
7. Yang Shi (p. 169)

Except for comment 5, in which Yang Shi simply criticizes Han Xin for the loose guard of his army, all the other six comments use moral principles to explain and evaluate historical events. In comment 1, Hu Yin reviews Qin's fall in 206 BC and, in response to Jia Yi's comment that the Qin could not have lasted long because it did not rule the country based on benevolence and righteousness, argues that Qin could never have applied benevolence and righteousness to its people because it unified China through deceit and violence, implying that the Qin was doomed to be short-lived because it had long lost the support of the people. In this comment, Hu Yin uses moral principles both to criticize Qin's deeds and to explain its fall.

In comment 2, Hu Yin elaborates on Xiao He's advice to Liu Bang to attract worthies by taking care of the people. After the fall of the Qin, despite the fact that Emperor Yi was the nominal leader among the warlords, Xiang Yu became the actual leader because of his military power. In 206 BC, contrary to Emperor Yi's initial order, Xiang Yu enfeoffed Liu Bang in Hanzhong 漢中. Xiao He dissuaded the enraged Liu Bang from attacking Xiang Yu immediately and advised him to take care of the people in order to attract worthies to strengthen his kingdom; by doing so, Xiao He argued, Liu Bang would be able to conquer Xiang Yu in the future. Liu Bang accepted Xiao's advice. In the comment, Hu Yin admired both Xiao He and Liu Bang. According to Hu Yin, only a ruler who sincerely cares about his people can attract true worthies to work for him; if a ruler fails to attract true worthies, on the other hand, only

evil ones will come, which will further damage the people's support and bring disaster to his kingdom, just like the Qin. It is not surprising that the Han won the final victory because Liu Bang understood this immediately. Again, in this comment, moral principles are used to serve two purposes at the same time: to praise Xiao He's and Liu Bang's actions, and to explain Han's rise to power.

In comment 3, Hu Yin admires Liu Bang for sending a eulogy for Emperor Yi during his battle against Xiang Yu. After the fall of the Qin, Xiang Yu enfeoffed the warlords according to his personal preference, causing discontent among the warlords. Only three months after the enfeoffment, the rebellion against Xiang Yu broke out. Liu Bang seized the opportunity and annexed neighboring Guanzhong. In 205 BC, in order to strengthen his own power, Xiang Yu murdered the nominal ruler Emperor Yi. Five months later, when Liu Bang arrived at Luoyang, a certain Elder Dong advised him to send out a eulogy for Emperor Yi and make public Xiang Yu's crime. By doing so, Elder Dong argued, Liu Bang would be able to attract the support of the people. Liu Bang accepted his advice. In the comment, Hu Yin admires Elder Dong's advice, for only after Liu Bang sent out this eulogy was he able to transform his army from a personal force to a righteous one, and thus gain the general public's support and win the final victory. According to Hu Yin, this was the most crucial event in the war between Liu Bang and Xiang Yu.

In comment 4, Hu Yin criticizes Liu Bang for his defeat by Xiang Yu at Pengcheng 彭城 in the fourth month of 205 BC. After he rebelled against Xiang Yu, Liu Bang attacked Chu and occupied Xiang Yu's capital Pengcheng with little resistance, because Xiang Yu was fighting with Qi in the east at the time. Overwhelmed by the easy victory, Liu Bang indulged himself with Chu's treasures and women and held banquets everyday. Upon hearing the news of Liu Bang's invasion, Xiang Yu hurried back with his best troops, and defeated Liu Bang decisively. Hu Yin criticized Liu Bang for being satisfied with a trivial victory and for his desiring an easy life. If Liu Bang could have controlled himself as he did in Hongmen 鴻門, Hu Yin argues, he would not have been defeated. In this comment, the cultivation of the mind, a central theme of the Daoxue learning, serves as both a criticism of Liu Bang's action and an explanation for his defeat.

In comment 6, Cheng Yi criticizes Zhang Liang for advising Liu Bang to strike Xiang Yu by surprise right after Han made a truce with Chu in 203 BC:

Zhang Liang was endowed with extraordinary talents and great foresight. He had the demeanor of a Confucian. However, he also gave this advice to the King of Han—he was too unrighteous!<sup>60</sup>

張良才識高遠，有儒者氣象，而亦以此說漢王，則其不義甚矣！

Even though this advice did help Liu Bang defeat Xiang Yu, it was wrong and should not have been accepted. Cheng Yi's major concern is neither how to achieve goals nor how to explain historical events, but how to respond to the historical situation morally. As Zhu Xi once explained:

If you only calculate gains and losses, then nothing else can be said. . . . If he [Zhang Liang] wanted to do this [i.e., to strike Xiang Yu by surprise], then he should not have reconciled with Xiang Yu in the first place. Once they had made a truce, this should not have been done.<sup>61</sup>

若只計利害，即無事可言者。…若要作此事，先來便莫與項羽講解。既已約和，即不可爲矣。

Clearly, for Zhu Xi, when reading the account of this historical event, the reader should consider how to respond to the situation morally under the specific historical situation, and not consider simply how to win the war or why this event took place.

In comment 7, Yang Shi criticizes Fan Zeng, the major advisor of Xiang Yu, for failing to correct Xiang Yu's major shortcoming: malevolence. In the second lunar month of 202 BC, after defeating Xiang Yu and unifying China proper, Liu Bang summarized to his subordinates the reason for his victory over Xiang Yu: Liu Bang had been able to recruit and use many talented people; Xiang Yu, on the other hand, had only Fan Zeng, but still was unable to use him. Yang Shi disagrees with Liu Bang. According to Yang Shi, Fan Zeng only advised Xiang Yu to kill Liu Bang, but said nothing about Xiang Yu's malevolence. Even if Xiang Yu had killed Liu Bang, he would still have been overthrown by other people because of his malevolence. In any case, Fan Zeng could not have saved Xiang Yu from defeat. In this comment, Yang Shi both criticizes Fan Zeng's action and explains Xiang Yu's fall based on moral principles.

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60. *Gangmu*, 2.164.

61. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 135.3220.

These six comments demonstrate important characteristics of the *Outline and Details*. First, by focusing on evaluating historical figures' actions based on moral principles, all six comments invite the reader to consider how to respond to historical situations morally. Second, five of the six comments (1, 2, 3, 4 and 7) use moral principles both to define what one should do, and to explain historical development. Third, based on the Daoxue assumption that one can gain other people's support and thus change history by acting in accordance with moral principles rooted in the mind of every human being, four comments (1, 2, 3, and 7) use the human mind to bridge the gap between moral principles and the explanation of historical development. None of these comments, however, discusses other forces that influenced historical development; neither do they discuss how to control these forces. To be fair, the *Outline and Details* does not really ignore these aspects, since the "Details" is partly designed to incorporate these aspects into the work, but undoubtedly they are relegated to secondary importance. As a result, these comments guide the reader toward an understanding of history from Daoxue's unique moral perspective. In this perspective, history is constituted from a series of independent moments. At each moment, each individual can decide and is responsible for his own actions. If he acts according to moral principles, he can win people's support and influence historical development. Thus, each moment is a new start, with the potential to improve the world.

It should be noted that Zhu Xi's scholarship on history was strongly influenced by the Hu family's scholarship tradition on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, first established by Hu Anguo (1074–1138) and further developed by his sons, Hu Hong (1105–1161) and Hu Yin (1098–1156). Hu Anguo elucidated principles supposedly used by Confucius to evaluate historical events in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and Hu Yin applied those principles to later historical events recorded in the *Comprehensive Mirror*. In his early years, Zhu Xi agreed with the Hus' approach to history, and greatly admired both Hu Anguo and Hu Yin.<sup>62</sup> The fact that the *Outline and Details* includes a significant number of Hu Yin's comments demonstrates his considerable influence on Zhu Xi, at least in Zhu's early years. The *Outline and Details* trained its readers to organize historical facts and think about them morally:

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62. See Conrad Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi and Hu Hung," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wing-tsit Chan (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), 480–502.

it presents history in such a way that the reader is directed to think about historical events based on moral principles and to make moral judgments on his own. In this sense, the *Outline and Details* “completed” the historical scholarship of the Hu family.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the fact that the praise/blame comments inserted in the work strengthen the “Outline’s” approach to historical events, there is, nevertheless, a subtle difference between the “Outline” and the comments. The “Outline” narrative encourages the reader to evaluate an event within its historical context, but the comments often judge one event without paying enough attention to its historical context. This does not mean that these comments always ignore historical contexts, but they do have this tendency.<sup>64</sup> For example, none of the above six comments connects moral judgments with historical contexts. In other words, in the *Outline and Details*, Zhu Xi adopted an approach that is more sensitive to historical situations than those of other earlier *Daoxue* scholars. This difference and its implications seem to have been not yet apparent to Zhu Xi when he compiled the *Outline and Details*, but he seems to have become more aware of the issue in his later years. In some conversations recorded in the *Zhu Zi yulei* 朱子語類 [Classified Conversations of Master Zhu], Zhu Xi disagreed with the comments in the *Outline and Details* on various issues, such as the appraisal of the feudal system and Empress Wu of the Tang.<sup>65</sup> What concerns us are not his specific views, but his way of thinking about history.<sup>66</sup>

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63. I thank one of the anonymous readers for suggesting this idea.

64. As Schirokauer has pointed out, Hu Hong did not think one could apply moral principles dogmatically to historical events. Rather, to respond to situations properly requires one to assess, or “weigh,” the situation carefully, as Hu Hong once said: “Morality (*i*) is the operation of weighing; *jen* discerns the appropriate!” (quoted from Conrad Schirokauer, “Hu Hong as a Historian,” 149.)

65. The *Outline and Details* inserted many of Hu Yin’s comments supporting a feudal system. However, in his later years, Zhu Xi clearly sensed that a feudal system was not practical, and no longer supported it. See *Gangmu*, 4.81; 86.2205, 86.2219–21; 97.2495; 108.2679–82; 139.3303–4.

66. The issue of Zhu Xi as a historian is a large topic that cannot be handled in this article. For brief introductions on this topic, see Conrad Schirokauer, “Zhu Xi,” in *Great Historians from Antiquity to 1800: An International Dictionary*, 81–83; On-cho Ng and Q. Edward Wang, *Mirroring the Past: The Writing and Use of History in Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 159–164. See also Conrad Schirokauer, “Chu Hsi’s Sense of History,” in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung China*, ed. Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, 193–220.



For example, Empress Wu usurped the throne of the Tang and changed the dynastic name to Zhou by forcing her son Zhongzong 中宗 to abdicate in 690 AD, but she was forced to return power to Zhongzong when she was severely ill in 705 AD. Granted the title “Great Sage Empress Who Takes Her Measure from Heaven [Zetian dasheng huangdi 則天大聖皇帝],” she was moved to Shangyang Palace 上陽宮 for the rest of her life. Either Zhu Xi or Zhao Shiyuan inserted Hu Yin’s comment on this event in the *Outline and Details*. In the comment, Hu Yin lists nine crimes Empress Wu had committed and criticized the Tang for not executing her.<sup>67</sup> In a conversation recorded in the *Classified Conversations of Master Zhu*, Zhu Xi discussed this issue with his students:

[Someone] asked: “Hu concluded in his *Narrow Views from Reading History* [*Dushi guanjian* 讀史管見] that Empress Wu did not follow the way of a wife to Gaozong. [In this view] one should have counted her nine crimes against Gaozu and Taizong, forced her to abdicate and attain commoner status, and ordered her to commit suicide. I am afraid that it would not have been appropriate to install her son as an emperor and then kill his mother, would it?” [Zhu Xi] said: “Such cases are difficult to handle. From the position of the Tang, Empress Wu should have been executed; from the position of Zhongzong, he was her son. If the prime ministers and the high officials killed his mother, how could they face each other the next day?”

[One] asked: “Nanxuan [Zhang Shi] wanted to install another member of the imperial family. How about that?” [Zhu Xi] said: “From the perspective of what happened later, Zhongzong was not qualified [to be an emperor]; from the perspective of that moment, Zhongzong did not do anything that legitimated his abdication. With all their hearts the people supported Zhongzong. Moreover, Gaozong did not have any other son. If Zhongzong had not been installed, the people might have been disappointed. This is most difficult to handle. I wonder how Mencius would have handled it if he encountered such an event. Today, living several hundred years after the event, and simply based on what has been recorded in historical works, we cannot see the contemporary situation, and therefore cannot make such a judgment. We need to live in that moment, and observe personally the historical context and the event. If people supported Zhongzong, we could only install Zhongzong. Only if people did not support Zhongzong, could we install another member of the imperial family. Moreover, Chengqian [the eldest son of Taizong] had a son who was still alive.

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67. *Gangmu*, 42.2403–4.

If one had acted carelessly, one would have lost people's support, and could not have succeeded.<sup>68</sup>

問：「胡氏《管見》斷武后於高宗非有婦道，合稱高祖、太宗之命，數其九罪，廢為庶人而賜之死。竊恐立其子而殺其母，未為穩否？」曰：「這般處便是難理會處。在唐室言之，則武后當殺；在中宗言之，乃其子也。宰相大臣今日殺其母，明日何以相見？」

問：「南軒欲別立宗室，如何？」曰：「以後來言之，則中宗不了；以當時言之，中宗亦未有可廢之事。天下之心皆矚望中宗，高宗又別無子，不立中宗，又恐失天下之望，此最是難處。不知孟子當此時作如何處？今生在數百年之後，只據史傳所載，不見得當時事情，亦難如此斷定。須身在當時，親看那時節及事情如何。若人心在中宗，只得立中宗；若人心不在中宗，方別立宗室。是時承乾亦有子在。若率然妄舉，失人心，做不行。」

Hu Yin was clear: Empress Wu should have been executed for her crimes against the Tang. The case, however, was more complicated for Zhu Xi: if one considers this event only from the perspective of the Tang, Empress Wu no doubt should have been executed; on the other hand, if one also takes into consideration the relations between Empress Wu, Zhongzong, and the high officials, one will find the latter two were in a moral dilemma. Any judgment then becomes difficult, and Zhu Xi himself could not offer a definite answer. A proper action should satisfy the moral responsibilities of all the involved parties, but it is not always easy.

The ensuing discussion demonstrates more clearly how Zhu Xi thought about history. In order to avoid the moral dilemma, Zhang Shi suggested another solution: execute Empress Wu and install another member of the imperial family. In Zhu Xi's view, this solution is equally improper. Since one has to make decisions in specific historical moments without the knowledge of the subsequent consequences, it was not possible to give up Zhongzong and install another person given what one could have known at that moment. Zhu Xi admitted that this is a difficult situation, and, in order to handle it properly, one has to take into full consideration the historical context, knowledge of which is not always available to later generations. Clearly, Zhu Xi had a more situational way of thinking about history, which is not fully reflected in the *Outline and Details*.<sup>69</sup>

68. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 136.3247.

69. Conrad Schirokauer also points out the importance of "quan," which is translated by

*The Narrative of the Period Between Qin and Han in the Outline and Details*

Another example of a period that presented a challenge to the authors of the *Outline and Details* was the transition from Qin to Han (209 to 202 BC). This can serve to demonstrate how the *Outline and Details*'s model works in practice to construct a coherent narrative of the past. The following is a summary of the *Outline and Details*' account of this period.

According to the *Outline and Details*, the Qin had been malevolent in its quest to annex the other six states. Even after the First Emperor of the Qin unified China in 221 BC, he still showed little care for his people. During his twelve year reign (221 to 210 BC), the First Emperor took six imperial tours through the empire; he sent three hundred thousand troops to attack the Xiongnu 匈奴 in the north; he attacked Nanyue 南越 in the south and forcibly moved five hundred thousand commoners to settle the area; he burned the *Book of Poetry*, the *Book of Documents*, the works of the different schools, and the histories of other states; he mobilized more than seven hundred thousand criminals to construct Afang Palace 阿房宮 and Lishan Tomb 驪山陵; he buried hundreds of scholars alive.

After the First Emperor died in 210 BC, his son Second Emperor Hu Hai 胡亥 ascended the throne through the deceit of Zhao Gao 趙高 and Li Si 李斯. The Second Emperor did not have his father's talent, but was no less malevolent. For example, he executed most of Qin's princes and princesses and restarted the laborious construction of Afang Palace. In the seventh month of the same year, the great rebellion against the Qin, initiated by Chen Sheng and Wu Guang, broke out. Three years later, Liu Bang captured Qin's capital Xianyang 咸陽 and ended the Qin rule. Two comments, both discussed earlier, are inserted in the *Outline and Details* to discuss the Qin's fall: Jia Yi's comment argued that the Qin fell because it did not apply benevolence and righteousness to its people; Hu Yin's comment further argued that the Qin was incapable of doing so in the first place. In short, the Qin lost its people's support and fell because of its malevolence and unrighteousness.

During the rebellion against the Qin, Xiang Yu and Liu Bang emerged as the two most powerful warlords. Xiang Yu, already known for his mercilessness

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Charles Fu as "situational weighing," in Zhu Xi's historical thinking. See Conrad Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi's Sense of History," 193–220. In this article, Schirokauer also discussed Empress Wu's case (207–208).

and cruelty, single-handedly defeated the seemingly matchless Qin army led by Zhang Han in 207 BC, and established his leadership authority among the warlords because of his awe-inspiring military power. Several months later, Zhang Han surrendered to him. On his way to Guanzhong, however, Xiang Yu buried alive two hundred thousand surrendered Qin soldiers. After he entered Xianyang in 206 BC, he killed Ziyang, the former Qin emperor who had surrendered to Liu Bang; slaughtered Xianyang's inhabitants; burned the Qin palaces; and took Qin's treasures and women with him to the east. In the same year, he installed the nominal leader of the warlords, King Huai of Chu, as Emperor Yi, but murdered him in the following year (205 BC). He managed the enfeoffment of the warlords according to his personal preferences, and provoked a wave of rebellions against him. During the following three years, he was engaged in a series of campaigns to subdue those who rebelled against him. But he did not even trust his only advisor Fan Zeng. Despite his awe-inspiring fighting ability, he could not stop the world from turning against him, and in the end was defeated by Liu Bang.

In contrast to Xiang Yu, Liu Bang demonstrated his generous personality from the beginning. Moreover, he was able to recognize and use talented people, such as Xiao He, Zhang Liang, Han Xin, and Chen Ping, each of whom had unmatched ability in different fields. In 208 BC, King Huai of Chu sent Liu Bang to take over Guanzhong because of his generosity. After occupying Xianyang in 206 BC, Liu Bang gained the support of the Qin population because of his army's strict discipline and his abolition of Qin's harsh laws. But, contrary to Emperor Yi's order, Xiang Yu enfeoffed him in Hanzhong instead of Guanzhong out of selfishness and jealousy. Later, Liu Bang joined other warlords to rebel against Xiang Yu, and occupied Guanzhong with little resistance. In 205 BC, he sent a eulogy for Emperor Yi to call for people's support. One comment by Hu Yin, as discussed earlier, praised this as Liu Bang's most important action to gain people's support. In the following four years, Liu Bang successfully defeated Xiang Yu and unified China. Although he had many shortcomings, in general, Liu Bang was benevolent and righteous.

### *Dynastic Legitimacy*

Moral principles constitute the central theme of the narrative: they not only define what one should do, but also profoundly influence historical development; all other historical factors are relegated to secondary importance. As Zhu Xi himself stated many times, his original motivation for compiling the *Outline and Details* was his disagreement with the *Comprehensive Mirror* on the issue of dynastic legitimacy.<sup>70</sup> Why should this issue matter to the study of history?

In Sima Guang's view, the issue of dynastic legitimacy originated from scholars' attempts to distinguish between the concepts of "the kingly" and "the hegemonic" [*wang ba* 王霸], and apply them to evaluate political power. This was, however, a false issue and should be dismissed from the study of history, Sima Guang argued, because there was no fundamental difference between the kingly and the hegemonic states. Both governed the country through operations of political power, and only differed in their leaders' positions in the hierarchical political power structure. The only related issue that concerned Sima Guang was how to record years in periods of multiple states, such as the three kingdoms period (220–265 AD). His solution was simple: use the reign periods of the state that directly preceded the state that later unified China proper to record years, Wei 魏 in the case of the Three Kingdoms period.

Zhu Xi was dissatisfied with Sima Guang's view. He once said: "Wengong 溫公 [Sima Guang] regarded Wei as legitimate. If he were living during the three kingdoms period, he would have served the Wei."<sup>71</sup> For Zhu, dynastic legitimacy was a serious issue because it involved how a literatus should respond to political power. Somewhat distorting Sima Guang's intent, he criticized him for treating Wei as legitimate.

Zhu Xi regarded dynastic legitimacy as a separate concept from the kingly and the hegemonic. For him, only the three dynasties (Xia, Shang, Zhou) and the other earlier ones were kingly; from the Qin onwards, all the states could at best be called hegemonic, because none of them understood and

70. See Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105.2637; Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi wenji*, 22.812–13. For an introduction to the debate on the issue of dynastic legitimacy in Song, see Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, *Guoshi shang zhi zhengtong lun* 國史上之正統論 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban she, 2003), 57–72; 117–166. See also Naitō Torajirō, *Shina shigakushi* (Tokyo: Shimizu Kōbundō Shobō, 1967), 277–286. Note that Zhu Xi's view on this issue is similar to Ouyang Xiu's. For Ouyang Xiu's view on this issue, see also James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Xiu: An Eleventh-century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), especially 111–112.

71. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 134.3207. 溫公謂魏爲正統。使當三國時，便去仕魏矣。

practiced moral principles. However, according to Zhu Xi, they could still be dynastically legitimate, because Zhu defined dynastic legitimacy differently:

As long as [a political power] unifies the world, and brings together all feudal lords, tributes, and courts, it acquires dynastic legitimacy. Whether it is upright or not depends on what it does.<sup>72</sup>

只天下爲一，諸侯朝覲獄訟皆歸，便是得正統。其有正不正，又是隨他做。

Zhu Xi made a distinction between dynastic legitimacy and uprightness. For him dynastic legitimacy primarily refers to political unification, and is not necessarily accompanied by uprightness. The Qin was an extreme example: regardless of its extreme malevolence and cruelty, it should still be regarded as legitimate because it unified China; therefore, it was acceptable to serve it because by definition it was the only political power of the time: Liu Bang, Xiao He, and Cao Sen all once served the Qin, and none of them was criticized for this. On the other hand, the Qin's extreme malevolence and cruelty also justified its people's rebellion.

Zhu Xi treated the period between the Qin and Han as without a legitimate dynasty because it was a period of political disintegration, implying that people could join any political group. For example, it was fine for Fan Zeng to serve Xiang Yu—his main fault was failing to correct Xiang Yu's malevolence. Nevertheless, one can tell which leader was more upright by examining the leaders' actions. In this case, the most upright one was Liu Bang—but he acquired legitimacy only after he defeated Xiang Yu and unified China.<sup>73</sup> Clearly, moral and dynastic legitimacy are two separate concepts.

The Han is an excellent illustration of the principle of dynastic legitimacy: it was the only political power of the time, and in general was benevolent to its people, although not without shortcomings. Therefore, it was acceptable for people to serve the Han, and it would be illegitimate to rebel against it. But this could change with time. If its emperors became too malevolent, just as the Qin's emperors, it would become legitimate for its people to rise against it.

72. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105:2636.

73. *Gangmu*, 3:166. Among the seven comments by Daoxue scholars inserted in this period, two of them (2 and 3) praised Liu Bang's different action. But no comment praised any other leader's action during this period. The "Outline" also treated Liu Bang as a generally benevolent leader on various occasions. Please refer to the previous section.

As for the Three Kingdoms period, the *Outline and Details* treats Shu Han as legitimate because it was the continuation of the Han, as its leader Liu Bei was from the Han imperial family.<sup>74</sup> According to Zhu Xi, Sima Guang was completely wrong to treat Wei as legitimate (which misses Sima's point); Zhu believed Sima's view would confuse literati about how to respond to political power.

For Zhu Xi, dynastic legitimacy is the minimum qualification needed for political power to ask for people's support. Morality is no doubt a more legitimate qualification, but, since in reality few political powers achieved this ideal, in most cases dynastic legitimacy becomes the only criterion for evaluating a political power's legitimacy.<sup>75</sup> Dynastic legitimacy became such an important principle for Zhu Xi because it was a concept that could be applied to historical reality.<sup>76</sup>

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74. See Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 136.3235. Zhu Xi praised Liu Bei as the one with the upright name [*mingfen zheng* 名份正]. This comment was in accordance with Hu Yin's comment in *Narrow View*. See Hu Yin, *Zhitang dushi guanjian* 致堂讀史管見 (Wanwei biechang edition, Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1981), 5.30b–31a (322–23). I suspect this comment would have been inserted in the *Outline and Details* if it were finished. Note that, as many scholars have pointed out, in his later years, Zhu Xi changed his view on the dynastic legitimacy of the period of the Three Kingdoms, and regarded this period as without dynastic legitimacy, although he still thought Shu Han was the most upright among the existing political powers. This is another example of how Zhu treated the two concepts “dynastic legitimacy” and “uprightness” separately. See Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 105.2636. This was recorded by both Chen Chun 陳淳 and Huang Yigang 黃義剛 after either 1093 or 1097, when Zhu Xi was either 63 or 67. Hoyt Tillman regards this as Zhu's “shift from moral criteria to historical success as the basis for judging the proper succession of legitimate dynasties” in his late years, which “represents a significant crack in Chu Hsi's quite monolithic opposition to utilitarian judgments of end results” (Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, 171–172). This does not seem to be the case. Zhu Xi had already made a clear distinction between “dynastic legitimacy” and “uprightness” in the *Outline and Details*. For example, in the *Outline and Details* the extremely malevolent Qin is still regarded as legitimate after (and only after) it unified China. The chief criterion is clearly not morality but historical success. Zhu's changed view on Shu Han's legitimacy, therefore, does not represent a change in criteria, but a more mature application of his original approach.

75. In his late years, although he thought Shu Han was not dynastically legitimate, Zhu Xi still thought people should support Shu Han. See Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 136.3235. This record was recorded by Pan Shiju 潘時舉 after 1093.

76. Mou Zongsan criticized Zhu Xi for making moral judgments based on abstract rationality, and therefore not integrated with historical reality. See Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道與治道 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban she, 2003), 278–280. His criticism is based on Zhu Xi's discussions with Chen Liang, but ignores both the issue of dynastic legitimacy in the *Outline and Details* and Zhu's other discussions on history. His criticism is inaccurate as a reflection of

### *Redefining Historical Knowledge*

The difference in dynastic legitimacy between the *Outline and Details* and the *Comprehensive Mirror* does not simply represent their different views on one specific issue; it reflects a more fundamental difference between the two works: their assumptions about the nature of historical knowledge. For Sima Guang, the purpose of historical knowledge is to elucidate the principles necessary for a political system: a hierarchical political power structure, or, to use his word, ritual [*li* 禮]. There was no fundamental difference between the kingly and the hegemonic because both relied on a hierarchical political power structure, and therefore there was no necessity to argue which political power had dynastic legitimacy and which did not.

For the *Outline and Details*, however, dynastic legitimacy involves how an individual should respond to political power. In other words, historical knowledge teaches an individual how to respond to historical situations morally, whether one is an emperor, a government official, or simply a commoner. It is no longer knowledge exclusively concerned with the process of government, useful only to government officials, but knowledge about making moral decisions in any situation, useful to every individual in society (although its primary intended audience was literati).

Moreover, moral principles also influence historical development. According to the *Outline and Details*, if one acts in accordance with moral principles that are rooted in every human being's mind, one will win people's support and thus influence historical development. This view had an important implication: everyone could apply what was learned from history to everyday life, and, even without joining the government, help improve the world in a fundamental way by making one's every action moral. More subtly, this view transferred authority to lead society from the government to morally cultivated literati, because only the latter could make proper judgments based on moral principles, which the government above all should therefore follow. Zhu Xi's criticism of Sima Guang's view on dynastic legitimacy thus had profound implications.

The *Outline and Details* represents a moral approach to organizing historical knowledge in the second half of the twelfth century. This approach was first developed by earlier Daoxue scholars, especially Hu Anguo and Hu

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Zhu Xi's thought. For Zhu Xi's idea of dynastic legitimacy, also see Wu Zhanliang, "Zhu Xi's lixue yu shixue yanjiu," 262–73.



Yin, and completed by Zhu Xi. Its purpose was to cultivate in the reader the ability to evaluate and respond morally to historical events in any situation. Explaining historical development was not its main concern. Zhu Xi once told his students: “When reading books and histories, we should only care about what is right and what is wrong. Observe what is right, and inquire how it could be wrong; observe what is wrong, and inquire how it could be right. Then we can understand moral principles.”<sup>77</sup> A student asked him how to read history, and he replied: “Simply make judgments based on your own moral principles.”<sup>78</sup> In other words, the point of studying history is not to explain its development, but to think about how to respond to historical situations. It is not surprising that Zhu Xi maintained one should read history only after he has understood moral principles.<sup>79</sup> This view is fully presented in the *Outline and Details*. The work also uses moral principles to explain historical development, implying that every individual has the responsibility and ability to influence historical development and make the world better. The *Outline and Details* transformed historical knowledge from a knowledge for officials to one for every individual—presumably literati—and also transferred leadership authority from the government to each morally cultivated literatus. Compared with the *Comprehensive Mirror*, the *Outline and Details* established a drastically different but equally powerful model for historical studies. In the course of the thirteenth century, the *Outline and Details* gradually replaced the *Comprehensive Mirror* as the dominant paradigm in the study of history for several hundred years. Of course, this paradigm change was not accomplished overnight, but the appearance of the *Outline and Details* indeed marked a significant turning point in Chinese historiography. Although the prototype of this approach had existed since the Northern Song, it was the *Outline and Details* that successfully established a historical model that other people could follow.

The appearance of the *Outline and Details* was part of the Cheng-Zhu school’s great effort to create new knowledge for the literati of the time. As Zhu Xi himself said, one of his motivations in compiling the book was to produce a historical work for the general reading public, that is, the literati, a group

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77. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 15.196. 凡觀書史，只有箇是與不是。觀其是，求其不是；觀其不是，求其是，便見得義理。

78. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 15.197. 問讀史。曰：「只是以自家義理斷之。」

79. Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, 15.195–97.

broader than officials in Zhu Xi's mind.<sup>80</sup> Beginning in the late Northern Song, more and more literati were relegated to life as local leaders in their communities, outside the government, because most of them had no chance to join the government due to the drastically increased number of candidates for the civil service examinations coupled with the relatively fixed size of the government. For example, in the early eleventh century, candidates attempting the prefectural qualifying examinations numbered approximately twenty to thirty thousand. However, by the middle of the thirteenth century, candidates from southern China alone probably numbered four hundred thousand or more. The government had to decrease the legislated ratio of provincial graduates from 1/2 to 1/200. The drastically increased competition demonstrated vividly the increase of the literati group and their diminishing hope of becoming officials.<sup>81</sup> As a result, the definition of literati changed from those who served in the government to those who participated in the civil service examinations, and the major purpose of participating in the examination also changed from becoming an official to acquiring/maintaining social recognition as a literatus.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, a literatus no longer needed to have direct ties with the government. In this new historical context, existing knowledge, primarily concerned with the operations of the government, became less meaningful to most of the literati, and this fact may at least partly explain the sudden rise of Daoxue on the intellectual scene during the Southern Song.<sup>83</sup>

By the same token, the existing paradigm of historical knowledge, represented by Sima Guang's *Comprehensive Mirror*, which focused on the operations of political power, also became less meaningful to most literati. The *Outline and Details*, on the other hand, offered another historical model that was equally meaningful to officials and non-officials. For an official, this knowledge could help him transform the operation of political power to establish an ideal world order. Even if one could not join the government, which was the fate of most Southern Song literati, this knowledge could still guide one to act locally and think in terms of the state at the same time: individual

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80. *Gangmu*, 21.

81. John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 35–37.

82. Peter K. Bol, "The Sung Examination System and the Shih," 149–171.

83. Peter K. Bol, "*This Culture of Ours*": *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 327–42. See also Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), especially 153–183; 218–256.

moral actions in daily life could directly contribute to improving society and shaping history. By shifting the focus of analysis from the operations of the government to individuals' actions, this historical model implicitly argued that acting morally in local society was as important and meaningful as joining the government. Local elites were not only participating in an empire-wide culture by studying the same education and participating in the same examinations, they were also actually contributing to the great cause of historical continuity, even if they had to remain local literati for their entire lives. In short, it was historical knowledge useful to all educated people, effectively addressing a major intellectual need, and simultaneously representing the rise of local society in the Southern Song. Its reception, however, should not be taken for granted. Before becoming firmly established as the dominant paradigm for historical studies, the *Outline and Details* still had to compete with many other historical models. The history of its reception is a topic that will have to be studied separately.