

# Liu Chih-chi 劉知幾 and the *Shih-t'ung* 史通

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### 1. Liu Chih-chi 劉知幾 and His Time

Liu Chih-chi's *Shih-t'ung* 史通 (Study of Historiography) shows us the maturing of the Sui and T'ang after the confused periods of the Wei and Chin and the division between North and South; the composition of Ssuma Ch'ien's *Shih-chi* coincided with the maturing of the Ch'in and Han, which followed on the agitated Chou period during which Chinese civilisation was coming of age. This is probably no accident. And it was doubtless because he was aware of a deep sympathy in the positions to which they seemed inevitably to have been born, that the Sung writer, Cheng Ch'iao 鄭樵, put them forward in his *T'ung-chih* 通志 as The Two Great Historians. I propose here to deal with the *Shih-t'ung* as a representative work of both Chinese literature and Chinese history; I hope to establish its place in Chinese historiography and at the same time examine its context, seize its essential quality, and, finally, touch on its influences and line of descent. It is perhaps a fact of some interest in itself that the earliest form of what may be called a general discussion of historiography should have appeared in China at the time when the *Kojiki* was compiled in Japan.

Liu Chih-chi lived after the time of Yen Shih-ku 顏師古 and K'ung Ying-ta 孔穎達, the great scholars of Early T'ang, and before the appearance of Li Po and Tu Fu, the illustrious poets of High T'ang, thus nearly coinciding with the reign of the Empress Wu. There is thus a close correspondence between the completion of the *Shih-t'ung* about a century after

the foundation of the T'ang and the composition of the *Shih-chi* about a century after the foundation of the Han. One may also say that the degree of maturity of the great empires which provided the background to the two books was broadly similar. However, though they both came into being at similar points of time in the development of the two empires, they encountered very different critical receptions. Even the *Shih-chi*, in the time of the Later Han, was spoken of in these terms: "Noble death is rejected, upright conduct denied; there is no mention of the beauty of achieving perfect virtue by killing oneself. There is utter contempt for selfless dutifulness, utter scorn for chaste behaviour." But later it came to be regarded as a classic without the slightest flaw. The *Shih-t'ung*, on the other hand, has been subjected to almost invariable censure, a constant object of disdain, as though labelled 'handle with care' in such terms as these: "He does not hesitate to believe the Chi 汲 Tomb Codices and throw doubt on the works of the ancient sages, to ridicule Yao and Shun, to slander the Duke of Chou and Confucius;" or: "Clever enough at mocking the ancients, no good at doing anything himself." It might perhaps be said that indulgence was extended to history in so far as it aimed at being literature, while it was subject to rigorous scrutiny if it tended towards philosophy. However this may be, few accepted the rationalism of the *Shih-t'ung*, few agreed with the choice of material; many were only pleased with the elegance of the writing and enraptured with the idea of the three essential qualities there displayed, talent, learning and discernment. It is as if Su-ma Ch'ien wrote the *Shih-chi* in a state of anger, which the *Shih-chi* succeeded in placating, whereas Liu Chih-chi wrote his *Shih-t'ung* in a state of depression, and the work failed to dissipate his gloom until later times.

Let us then look at the career of this unfortunate writer, Liu Chih-chi. He himself wrote a *Liu Shih chia-shih* 劉氏家史 (Family History of the Liu Clan) and a *Liu Shih p'u-k'ao* 譜考 (Study of the Genealogy of the Liu Clan), from which we learn that he traced his lineage from the Lu-chung 陸終 clan. He follows the tradition that P'eng-ch'eng 彭城, their place of origin (then Hsü-chou 徐州 in Honan-tao 河南道, now T'ung-shan Prefecture 銅山縣, Kiangsu Province) had been opened up by P'eng Tsu 彭祖, who served Yao. It was characteristic of him to have preferred P'eng Tsu to the common tradition which made the Liu clan descendants of Yao. The Liu clan of P'eng-ch'eng was an important one, said to have occupied Ts'ung-t'ing-li 叢亭里, Sui-yü-li 綏興里 and An-shang-li 安上里, and it was in the first of these that, in 661, Chih-chi was born to Liu Tsang-chi 劉藏器. When he grew up he was called Liu the Fifth, but he was only fifth if his cousins were counted, his true elder brothers being Chih-jou 知柔 and Chih-chang 知章. His style (*tzu*) was Tzu-hsüan 子玄 but when he was fifty he made it his personal name; this was in 710, in the spring of which

year he had been writing the preface to the *Shih-t'ung*, just completed; Chung-tsung was then assassinated and, on the resumption of the throne by Jui-tsung, effective power was in the hands of the Crown Prince, Li Lung-chi 李隆基, later Hsüan-tsung, the phonetic resemblance of whose personal name to Liu's involved taboo.

When he was young he received instruction from his father on the *Ku-wen Shang-shu* 古文尚書 (Book of Documents in Ancient Characters) but it was too difficult to hold his interest. But when he heard his father expounding the *Tso-chuan* to his elder brothers, he said that if all work were like that, he would not be lazy; and so he was taught the *Tso-chuan*, and, by the time he was twelve, he was about capable of reciting it. Both his father and his elder brothers wanted to make him study all the commentaries and specialise in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, but this he declined to do. Instead, he read through, on his own, a great number of historical works, from the *Shih-chi*, *Han-shu* and *San-kuo-chih* up to the *shih-lu* 實錄 ('veritable records') of the T'ang, so that by the time he was seventeen he was well versed in Chinese history up to his own day. But youthful fervour is like early snow, and, in order to obtain an official post, he was obliged to read widely in Confucian and literary studies. So he became familiar with poetry and rhyme-prose (*fu*), and himself admitted in after years, "I am not ashamed of having made a name as a writer"—though this may also be regarded as a sign of the predominance of literature in T'ang culture. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the literary ability that he acquired at this time stood him in good stead throughout his life and provided him with a basis for self-confidence. When he was twenty he passed the *chin-shih* degree and received the appointment of *chu-po* 主簿 (registrar) in Huo-chia 獲嘉 County. As an official he not only seems to have had numerous occasions to visit Ch'angan and Loyang, but, remaining in this post in Huo-chia County for nearly twenty years, he also borrowed and read books from public and private collections, following his own bent in what he studied. During this period his predilection for historical works seems to have deepened, and he says, "I would take a period of history and analyse the different schools, as well as establishing the rival views represented by the miscellaneous or minor works of the period; I would then investigate them all with extreme thoroughness and determine their relative merits."

Two memorials submitted by him while in this post appear in the *T'ang Hui-yao* 唐會要 (Collection of Important Documents of the T'ang): one, of 691, complaining of an incompetent official named Su Ch'ing 肅清, the other, of 695, discussing the merits and shortcomings of the government of the day. Whether or not these were the reason, he was summoned to the capital about 699 and became a *ts'ang-ts'ao* 倉曹 (comptroller of the granary) to Prince Ting 定, participating along with twenty five colleagues, including Hsü Chien 徐堅, Hsü Yen-po 徐彥伯 and Chang Yüeh 張說, in

the compilation of the *San-chiao Chu-ying* 三教珠英 (Gems and Blossoms of the Three Doctrines). At this time he made a number of friends, and wrote, "Our discussions led to mutual trust, our Taoism to friendship. We pondered deeply on any matters of doubt," and, "Virtue is not solitary, there must be neighbours. In all the world there are no more than five or six people who know me." Thus he came to renew his courage. In 702, he was appointed *chu-tso-lang* 著作郎 (chief archivist) and assigned to the compilation of the national history. He next became *tso-shih* (historian of the left 左史) with the duty of editing the court chronicle, and in the following year he became involved in the compilation of the history of the T'ang. He was thus no doubt engaged on the kind of work to which he had most looked forward, but his place of work was far from congenial to him. He wrote in his preface to the *Shih-t'ung*: "Alas, though I was fitted for the work to which I was assigned, my principles were not practised. I was employed betimes but my good intentions were not fulfilled. I was gloomy and discontented, alone in my anger. And I was afraid that, if I was obliged to sleep and not speak, to keep silent and express nothing, no one would know of me after my death. I therefore retired and wrote the *Shih-t'ung* privately in order to make my aims known." Fu Chen-lun 傅振倫, a student of the work of Liu Chih-chi, conjectures that the memorial in the T'ang Hui-yao, section 63, by Liu's friend, Chu Ching-tse 朱敬則, in 703, may have been submitted on Liu's account. This reads in part: "Surely such historians as Tung Hu 董狐 and Nan Shih 南史 were not born in former times only and are lacking in this age alone? It depends on whether one likes them or not. If now one were to search and find such an one, I respectfully submit that were he stimulated by fair treatment and high hopes placed in him, and, in addition, were he to be given a good appointment in which he would be able to put his principles into practice, this would be a very fine thing for our country."

In 704 he became a grand secretary in the imperial secretariat and was absent from historical duties for a time, but it seems to have been about this period that he finished writing his *Liu Shih chia-shih* and *Liu Shih p'u-k'ao*. The Empress Wu died in the following year and Chung-tsung resumed the throne, whereupon Liu became a chief archivist, a vice-president in the secretariat of the Crown Prince and an officer of the watch in the guard of the Crown Prince, with which offices he combined work on the national history and took part in compiling the 'veritable record' of the reign of the Empress Wu. However, there were always matters unsatisfactory to his ideas whenever he took part in historical work, and even when Chung-tsung moved the capital back to Ch'angan in 706, Liu stayed behind. He wrote such remarks as, "I was once a person of low degree and went far off as a registrar; it was worse and worse every day, and I had no pleasure in the work I then did;" or, "Once when I was a vice-

president of the secretariat of the Crown Prince, I was not promoted for four years;" or, "The Court does not understand me; what has the state to do with me?" In 708 he was summoned to Ch'angan and became *pi-shu-shao-chien* (sub-curator of the imperial library) but this was not necessarily the place to quiet his spirit. He was disparaged on the ground that, even when he was at Loyang and an official historian, he had not written about national affairs, but would take his pleasure in retired places and carry on his own literary pursuits in private. It was thus under duress that he was made to take up his pen and write history. In the *T'ang Hui-yao*, section 64, we read, "Ch'ing-lung 2nd year [708], 4th month, 20th day: Wei Chü-yüan 韋巨源 and Chi Ch'u-na 紀處訥, presidents of the imperial chancellery, Yang Tsai-ssu 楊再思, a president in the imperial secretariat, Tsung Ch'u-k'e 宗楚客, president in the ministry of war, and Hsiao Chih-chung 蕭至忠, a vice-president of the imperial secretariat, were jointly in charge of the writing of the national history. Some time later, an official historian, Liu Chih-chi, a vice-president in the secretariat of the Crown Prince, considered that the multiplicity of editors was gravely damaging to the national history, and he wrote to Hsiao Chih-chung asking to resign his post of historian." He describes the situation at the time in the letter which appears in the last section, *wu-shih* 忤時 (Contrariness to the times), of the *Shih-t'ung*, which includes the following: "I feel I might presume to be so bold as to compare myself with my clansman, [Liu Hsüan 劉炫]. How? When a good historiographer was needed, I was summoned from the long distance of a thousand *li*. When my colleagues are making rapid progress along the road of officialdom, I alone have stayed at the same station for a long period of ten years. Might I not say, 'I have been expected to be a better historian than Ssu-ma Ch'ien or Pan Ku, but treated worse than a foot soldier?' . . . the government proceeds to use me hard, but does not care to better my treatment by the slightest degree. I am, of course, reminded of the ancient Kuo Wei 郭隗, upon whom the king bestowed honour and gifts far beyond his deserts—as an example to induce good men into service. Would not my case cast too bad a reflection upon the government? Put in my place a man as high-minded as Yen Chün-p'ing 嚴君平, or as unworldly as Tuan-kan Mu 段干木; he too will make repeated complaints about the poor treatment and feel exceedingly unhappy in seeing the newcomers rapidly promoted ahead of him. As I am not free from ordinary concerns, how can I avoid feeling some pricking pain of frustration?" (tr. by William Hung) Hsiao Chih-chung was loth to lose his abilities, Tsung Ch'u-k'e and the others were jealous of him and so he was released, and twenty five days later became *hsiu-wen-kuan hsüeh-shih* 修文館學士 (fellow at the College of Literature). It is said that Liu was saved from trouble two years later because both Hsiao Chih-chung and Tsung Ch'u-k'e were executed on the occasion of the Empress Wei's coup d'état, when her

family and those connected with it were annihilated.

The year 710 was a turning point for the T'ang dynasty and for Liu Chih-chi personally. It was a decisive time: he was now fifty; he had completed twenty sections of the *Shih-t'ung*, sorting and arranging all the material he had accumulated and drafted; many of the senior officials, who had been the source of his gloom for so long, had been destroyed; he became a tutor to the Crown Prince and a *ch'ung-wen-kuan hsüeh-shih* 崇文館學士 (fellow of the College for the Exaltation of Literature); and, finally, he changed his name to his style, Tzu-hsüan. The time had come when he could realise his ambition to apply in practice the knowledge he had by now accumulated, and his fervent desire to put into operation the theories of the *Shih-t'ung*; in other words, it had become possible for him to act in accordance with his conscience. Numerous activities in this period tell us how, in spite of his official duties, he directed all the vigour of his later years to the practical sphere: in 711, he presented memorials on court dress in carriages (*ch'ao-fu ch'eng-chü i* 朝服乘車議, found in the *T'ang wen-ts'ui* 唐文粹), and on clothes and caps on horseback (*i-kuan ch'eng-ma i* 衣冠乘馬議, found in the *Wen-yüan ying-hua* 文苑英華 and the *Ch'üan T'ang wen* 全唐文); in 713, he was engaged on a catalogue of clan pedigrees (*hsing-tsu hsi-lu* 氏族系錄); in 716, he composed the obituary of the dowager empress Chao-ch'eng, and had a part in the compilation of the 'veritable records' of Jui-tsung, the Empress Wu and Chung-tsung; and in 719, he argued for discarding Cheng's 鄭 commentary on the Classic of Filial Piety (*Hsiao-ching*) and adopting the K'ung 孔 commentary, also for abandoning the Duke Ho's 河 commentary on the *Lao Tzu* in favour of that of Wang Pi 王弼. Even so, these activities failed to win favourable criticism, and indeed attracted the cruel verdict of posterity, "clever enough at mocking the ancients, no good at doing anything himself."

Had he in fact only succeeded in acquiring theoretical knowledge, inadequate for practical use? Was he really only able to exhibit abilities so little brilliant as to incur the scorn of posterity? Of course, Liu was never given a place with scope to wield his historian's pen, and the fashion was such as to allow no compositions which departed from the norm. But even more evident than this is the pedigree of the formation of his ideas, as he describes it in his prefatory section of the *Shih-t'ung*. He mentions there the *Huai-nan-tzu* 淮南子 (The Book of the Prince of Huai-nan), *Fa-yen* (Model Sayings 法言), *Lun-heng* 論衡 (Critical Essays), *Feng-su t'ung* 風俗通 (Popular Traditions and Customs), *Jen Wu Chih* 人物志 (The Study of Human Abilities), *Tien-yü* 典語 (Exemplary Discourse) and the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons). With all these, from the *Fa-yen* to the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, stored in his breast, he aspired, as he said, not to feel frustration, but it seems that there was boiling inside him the seething anger of the outsider. His posture, we

may say, was that of one who would rely on the essential character of mankind, moving far from the standard histories, his spirit that of one who would commit himself to a kind of liberty incompatible with the norm. It was thus natural that he was unacceptable, and it is preferable, probably, to regard him as having been rendered ineffectual by prevalent conditions rather than as having been ineffectual in the use he made of himself. One might perhaps add, however, that the day his desires were to some degree satisfied, his ambition lost something of its edge.

However, we may also consider that his posture was the only possible one to adopt, if one were seeking to strengthen the independence of history, which may be said to have gradually become independent of orthodox Confucian studies during the preceding Epoch of Division between North and South, as opposed to the Confucianist tradition which had become comfortably established within the norms. In these circumstances, he who served two masters, Confucian studies and historical studies, was resolved, when obliged to damage the interests of one or the other, to oppose the greater rather than the lesser of the two, and this is perhaps why he was reputed to be honest and staunch, and also why his critical faculty failed to reach the essence of Confucian ethics. However, what he demanded was not a new historical norm but rather the pursuit of rationality and the firm establishment of humanity, and there consequently arose no tendency towards a confrontation between Confucian and historical studies. Even so, rationalistic thinking in China was indissociable from a certain vein of 'outsidership', and it may thus be said that the ideological pedigree that he described revealed an outcrop of this nature.

In 721, his eldest son, K'uang 颯, was accused of a crime and exiled. When he disputed the justice of this, he incurred Hsüan-tsung's anger and was himself sent into exile as vice-prefect of An-chou 安州. This was in a remote region, 2,051 *li* (about 1,200 km.) south east of the capital. There, in a short time after his arrival, he died, having lived sixty one years. The *Chiu T'ang-shu* tells us, in his biography, that some years after his death, Hsüan-tsung directed the county of Honan to have a copy made of the *Shih-t'ung*, which had been left in Liu's family; that having read it and found it good, he accorded Liu posthumous promotion to the post of Prefect of the commandery of Chi, followed by the further posthumous post of Minister of Public Works. According to the Art and Literature section of the *Yü-hai* 玉海, Liu's second son, Su 餽, copied and presented the *Shih-t'ung* in the 11th month of the 10th year of K'ai-yüan (722), which gives us one year after his death.

## 2. The Composition of the *Shih-t'ung*

Bibliographical studies show that Chinese historical studies were first established as a separate branch of learning in the Seven Catalogues (*ch'i-lu* 七錄) of Yüan Hsiao-hsü 阮孝緒 of the Liang dynasty; and their field and form may be said to have been confirmed in the quadripartite division of the Treatise on Classics and Books in the *Sui-shu*, into Classics, History, Philosophy and Collected Works. Of course, the situation that followed on the collapse of the Han empire called forth fresh accumulations, and this was undoubtedly a reason for the rather long period needed for history to qualify for separate treatment in catalogues. Another reason was perhaps the training in historical thought and grasp provided by the rise and fall of so many kingdoms. There was also, probably, the fruit of reflection on the actual results of the government of kingdoms and imperial rule, based on Confucian principles. But, more important than all this, there was an underlying tendency to revert to the organisation of the Ch'in and Han empires, once experienced, together with the urgent topical importance of reflecting on people who sought to 'turn back the wild waves to where they had once fallen' or on people confronted with a new order. There was thus produced the unprecedentedly fruitful situation in which no less than seven historians wrote, as it were, unofficial *Han-shu* and as many as eighteen, *Chin-shu*. The heart of the matter was the reemergence of the Han empire. And the spirit of the times was reflected in the fact that research and commentary on the *Han-shu* enjoyed equal status with the study of the classics, and in the fact that the *Liang-shu* and the *Sui-shu* both provided biographies of Confucian scholars, in imitation of the *Han-shu* (Kanai Yukitada 金井之忠, *Tōdai no shigaku shisō* 唐代の史學思想). And this is why Liu Chih-chi, while most thoroughly criticising Pan Ku in the *Shih-t'ung*, still maintained that it was the form of the *Han-shu* precisely that should be followed.

Taoist studies and euphuistic propose may be held to be representative of the Wei, Chin and Northern and Southern Dynasties, and so may popular arts, and commentaries on the Water Classic (*Shui-ching*); similarly, it has been pointed out over the centuries what great advances were made in mathematics and technology in the period with which we are here concerned. The constraints of magic and other trivialities were abandoned, and an inevitable, rather than a merely free, demand arose for correction of cultural deformity, bringing about a balanced advance on all fronts. History too was subject to this development. If the main stream was imitation of the *Han-shu*, there were such annalistic works as the *T'ung-shih* 通史 and *K'o-lu* 科錄, which have not survived, as well as very numerous geographical books, clan histories, records of special topics, on offices and officials, on ceremonies, and so forth. We may suppose, then, that the



time was ripe for a broadening of the base, for an increase in the number of varieties and for the content of historical studies to be shaken free from the immediate context of history books. Here too was the reason for the rise of historical criticism, and it was a question of the hour and the man that consideration of individual historical works should mature into general discussion or what might be called historical discussion. Liu Hsieh's 劉勰 *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* is literary criticism, but the discussion of history and biography contained in it was a first seed which led on to Liu Chih-chi's *Shih-t'ung* and his son, Liu Su's *Shih-li* 史例.

However, there were naturally limitations to the standpoint from which these historical criticisms or evaluations were made, arising, first of all, from the contemporary atmosphere, but there can be no doubt that lines continuing from the preceding period also constituted a factor of decisive importance. The national history, that is to say, historical works adjusted in accordance with the power structure, under the orders, or with the approval, of the supreme authority, were considered to be the Standard Histories (*cheng-shih* 正史). It was a presumption inherited from the preceding period that these histories should be the object of scrutiny, that the consciousness of the nobility, centred on the court, should establish the selection of topics or provide the standard of evaluation, and that the Confucian ethical outlook, firmly anchored in the ruling class, should ensure the depiction of order and stability along that line. While it was natural that the *Shih-t'ung* should be subject to this kind of limitation, it cannot be said that in fact Liu Chih-chi, its author, did entirely yield to this pressure. Within this wall he withdrew into surroundings where he did not even notice its existence. He adopted a defiant posture vis à vis the wall and criticised constituted authority with an audacity of which he was unaware. Nor did he necessarily adapt himself to the contemporary climate. In his preface to the *Shih-t'ung* he wrote:

"From my earliest years I read books and enjoyed logical discussions. Whatever I understood, I acquired with my mind, never learning by rote. Thus when in my early youth I read the two accounts of the Han by Pan and Hsieh Ch'eng 謝承, I was astonished that the former had not seen fit to give tables of men of various periods, and that the latter had elected to give the Keng-shih period (A.D. 23-25) a separate chronicle. Those whom I consulted unanimously censured me on the ground that I was a child and what could I know that I should dare to dispute the views of former philosophers? I was dazed with shame and had no answer to offer. I subsequently noticed in the works of Chang Heng 張衡, and Fan Yeh 范曄 that both these histories were after all held to be wrong. Coincidences among ancient authors are too numerous to record. I now understood for the first time the difficulty of talking to the general run of people, and that differences of opinion are in the mind."

Thus he described the youthful self-confidence and splendid isolation, which seem to have taught him to turn a blank gaze on the general run of people and to cut himself off from his surroundings, and which may be supposed to have formed for him, as he describes in his own pedigree, a link with such as Yang Hsiung 楊雄 or Wang Ch'ung 王充.

Since its establishment, the T'ang dynasty had sought to strengthen the centralisation of power, but neither the nobility nor the official class surrounding the court had any regular organisation. Illustrious houses at the centre, bearing noble names, had largely become part of officialdom, and there was therefore a proliferation of incompetent supernumerary functionaries. Officials selected to combat this were plotting early and late, and there were hotbeds of intrigue and machination on every side. To the extent that one refused to dangle at the beck and call of the prevalent authority, it must have been difficult to live in such a society, and even splendid isolation would have been impossible to maintain without resistance. Liu Chih-chi was himself indeed from an illustrious family of P'eng-ch'eng, but once he came to the centre he was an official of the middle rank, never in the course of his career rising higher than the lower grade of the principal third rank, and he may be supposed to have long led a life of inevitable pressure both from above and from below. Had he not been valiant, he would have had to flee; had he not been resolute, he would have had to bow the knee. What seems to have sustained him was probably a combination of his own self-confidence and the achievements of his predecessors. He seems to have had a definite line of march, linking him to no orthodoxy but to Liu An 劉安, Yang Hsiung, Wang Ch'ung, Ying Shao 應劭, Liu Shao 劉劭, Lu Ching 陸景 and Liu Hsieh.

It cannot be said that these predecessors were all on one line, nor can one state definitely whether or not they were all rationalists and progressives, but at least they were all alike in their great capacity for synthesis and in the strength with which they made clear their critical standpoint. Their criticism was not simply negative or contrary. It included a capacity for coordination over a wide field of view and for rectifications deeply based, as well as powerful determination and warm tolerance. It so happened that these qualities involved a stance for which the foundation was rationalistic and the determination progressive, and it was thus possible for the same direction to be followed, however different the degree of maturity of the critical content. However, in order to make such an impression with intensity and in order that an outsider, precisely, should appear to have inherited the fundamentals of wholesome Chinese culture, it was still essential that works of the highest quality should make these critical qualities red hot, forge them, perfect them. It is such a position that is occupied by Liu Chih-chi's *Shih-t'ung*.

When Liu wrote his section on the History Offices and enumerated

the ancient and modern historians, and when he wrote his section on the Standard Histories and exhaustively listed works of history down the ages, he showed how wide was his field of view, how great his capacity to embrace a quantity of material, and how mature was the indispensable basis of his criticism. Basically he only recognised the writing of those who had a formal position as historical officials, and he could not rid himself of the standpoint of the court historian, who could but accept that what he wrote as standard history was bound up with the authority of the state; still less did he fail to show due awe for the authority of the sages of old. Whether he scorned "absurdity as mere absurdity, fantasy as mere fantasy, and the people in darkness, their face to the wall" (unable to see beyond their nose), or whether he felt that "if one were bound to compare antiquity with one's own time, a millennium becomes all one" (a thousand years ago and today are the same), monotony in regard to the collectivity or the age was unavoidable. The outlook of an official historian under the T'ang dynasty must have strengthened in Liu Chih-chi the historical viewpoint for which the state is the focus, and must have made it natural for him to hold that the state was the dynasty, the court, that historians should be the faithful recorders of words and deeds and that selection of this material was bound up with maintenance of the existing order and the diffusion of right principles. Even so, in spite of such limitations, his critical standpoint and many of the questions which he raised have remained alive to call forth a chorus of agreement even today, probably because of the just understanding of the prerequisites, from which he started out.

Perhaps because of such a mode of procedure, the course which led to the maturing of Liu's historical criticism involved a content which stood up to methodical arrangement. He established logical chains of reasoning, not by advocacy or invoking principles based on special pleading, but by exhibiting a healthy body of material and a nicely measured progress. Inspection of the 36 Inner Sections and 13 Outer Sections of the *Shih-t'ung* makes this clear; compared with the arrangements of later works in the category of historical criticism, this one has a far more ordered shape. This may be summarized as follows: first, in the sections on the Six Schools and the Two Types, he classifies the forms of historical works and traces the process whereby they became concentrated in the two types, chronicle and annals-biographies. After the section on Main Chronicles, he proceeds, in subsequent sections, to discuss the merits or otherwise of the items in the annals-biographies type of history: Hereditary Families, Biographies, Tables, Monographs, Discussions and Criticisms. After sections on Recording Words and on Prefaces and Procedures, he goes on to discuss suitability, in form and content, in such sections as Titles and Headings, Setting of Limits, Arrangement and Order, Nomenclature, Selection of Material, Recording of Literary Pieces, Supplements and Commentaries.

As he discusses these matters as the basis for the form of the Standard Histories, the *Shih-t'ung* is sometimes alleged to be no more than a discussion of form; because of the importance attached to histories of individual dynasties, the work is also said to be deficient in a general historical view. It is true that there are these tendencies and this tells us something about Liu's position. On the other hand, there are many passages which touch on the very essence of historical writing in the sections on Words, Verbosity, Narrative, Honest Writing and Distortion, while there are many general historical points included in the sections on Incorporation of Earlier Texts, Classification of People, Imitation, Judgements of Quality, and Searching for the Abstruse. This is no accident. As a result of the enlightened historical knowledge which came to Liu in the course of a life spent among books of history, he had come very close to the essential nature of history.

Let us look at this concretely. He tells us in his preface to the *Shih-t'ung* and in the final section, Contrariness to the Times, how, in spite of becoming an official historian, he was unable to give full scope to his abilities, and how, after constant collisions with his superiors, he tendered his resignation. He then relates how Tsung Ch'u-k'e and the others were executed in connection with the Empress Wei's rebellion and how he himself avoided being implicated along with them. It must have been precisely his experience at this time that added sharpness and depth to his vision. His anger at the corrupt state of things must have strengthened his attitude, and the feeling of isolation that he described by saying that there were only a few people in all the world who knew him, must have disciplined his thinking. He compared himself with Yang Hsiung and found four points of resemblance, but lamented: "In the first place I still have grievances, and that is one respect in which I must be unlike Yang Hsiung. Why? When Yang Hsiung completed his *T'ai-hsüan ching* 太玄經 (Classic of the Great Universe), Huan T'an 桓譚 thought, in spite of the low opinion in which the book was held at the time, that it was certain to survive for several centuries to come. And subsequently in fact, Chang Heng and Lu Chi 陸績, found it excellent, divine. Now, were I to compare my *Shih-t'ung* to the *T'ai-hsüan*, the Huan T'an of today would be several gentlemen like Chu Ching-tse and Hsü Chien. As for the Chang Heng and Lu Chi to come, we simply do not know yet who they will be. Alas, without the emergence of Chang Heng or the birth of Lu Chi, that book would now without doubt have crumbled into dust, gone up in smoke, and no later scholars would have been able to obtain and read it. And this why I am cherishing my volume, my sweat and tears flowing, and striving with my very blood to be the successor." Perhaps there is some exaggeration here, perhaps an attempt to stimulate his self-confidence with these pathetic feelings. But we have to recognise these, not as mere literary figures, but as the passion which pervaded his view of history, the driving force by which

he was continually moved.

Until Liu Chih-chi in the early T'ang period, historical study of the Wei and Chin and the Epoch of Division between North and South had taken on a crystallised form. Within this form, the various tendencies of the various times were all included, just as they stood, and given a certain direction by each writer. But an author too is circumscribed within certain limits, and there are inevitably contradictory or inconsistent interpretations between different periods. But rather than expose such flaws, it is surely more important to identify the direction taken and ascertain the source of the power that resulted from it. For example, there is a different significance in the fact that the whole of the *Shih-t'ung* was written in euphuistic prose and the fact that the *Wen-shih t'ung-i* 文史通義 (General Meaning of Historiography) of the Ch'ing period used, from time to time, the style of the eight-legged essay. While the latter was mere amusement or pedantic self-indulgence, the former was an extremely effective mode of expression which fully demonstrates its power. This being so, content is a more important question than any comment we may make on the taste of a given period, any discussion of comparative stylistic merits. There can be no doubt that Liu Chih-chi valued narrative above recording of words, and was more interested in monographs than in annals and biographies, but in the *Shih-t'ung* he deals with the monographs on the Five Elements, and is scathing in his criticism of the monograph on the Five Elements in the *Han-shu* and the narrative of events in the Spring and Autumn Annals. The attention he paid to the monographs on the Five Elements was perhaps due to the taste of the time, but his handling was extremely rationalistic. In explaining the errors involved, he distinguished four categories: inappropriate citation of other works; perversion of narrative; extravagance in explaining disasters; and incomplete knowledge of ancient scholarship. And though he argued destructively, he brought reasoned argument to bear on the points to be destroyed. It was not by chance that this rationalism was so much emphasised by this writer. As may be observed in this matter of the monographs on the Five Elements, it may almost certainly be said to be a viewpoint that had gained strength over the period of the Wei and Chin and the Epoch of Division between North and South, during which the *Han-shu* and the *Tso-chuan* had been under inspection.

### 3. Liu Chih-chi's Historical Scholarship

From the time of the Division between North and South, the limits of the field of history had been becoming clearer; and the tendency arose for matter which had hitherto been included in works of history to take on a separate existence. The compilation of the *Cheng-tien* 政典 (Govern-

mental Institutes) and the *T'ung-tien* 通典 (Comprehensive Statutes) in the T'ang period marked the beginning of political studies. With other derivative activities coming into being, it was natural that there should be a movement towards self-regulation within the field of historical scholarship itself. But historical criticism was operating in conditions where historical scholarship had not yet been adequately compartmentalised, so that we can see from our present viewpoint what contradictions and inadequacies there were; and even accepting a contemporary viewpoint, one could hardly say that no prejudice was at work. We must now try to establish the historical position occupied by Liu Chih-chi, by returning to the contents of the *Shih-t'ung*.

Liu exhibited his pride when writing the *Shih-t'ung* and claiming, "I acquired with my mind, never learning by rote", but setting aside his originality for a moment, what first of all were the conditions which limited his mind? We have already pointed out how his attitude was determined by the tastes of the T'ang court, but the tastes of the period of the Six Dynasties were not yet extinct, and he was still to a degree dominated by respect for literary concinnity, reverence for prose style. He longed to escape from what he called the grubbing hack-work involved in poems and rhyme prose, yet he was strongly interested in narrative skill and strongly drawn to the masterpieces of the past. In his section on Recording of Literary Pieces in the *Shih-t'ung*, he says: "By the examination of human knowledge the world may be civilised, by the examination of national customs, rise and fall may be discerned. This tells us how vast and great is literature. If it is good government conferring widespread happiness, then it is recorded in the poems of Chou. If it is unprincipled wickedness flooding over the hills, then it is preserved in the elegies of Ch'u. The reader will not regard Chi Fu 吉甫 or Hsi Ssu 奚斯 as flatterers, nor Ch'ü P'ing 屈平 or Sung Yü 宋玉 as slanderers. Why so? Because the first did not give praise where none was to be given, nor did the second conceal evil. Thus literature joins in the same stream as history. Assuredly Nan Shih and Tung Hu may be yoked together and praised for goodness and honesty." Thus he extols the virtues of poetry and rhyme prose. But he goes on to say that since Wei and Chin there has been much falsehood and error, and even when prose is incorporated in historical works, there are five respects in which it has been improperly done. He cites empty conventionality, shamelessness, facility, perverseness and lack of discrimination. He asserts that the citation of beauties from antiquity is mere ornament. "You can carve ice and make a jewel of it, but you could not use it; you can draw a cake on the ground, but you could not eat it." Thus, he maintains, histories become not histories but merely prose centos. Even so, he mentions such outstanding works as Wei Meng's 韋孟 satirical poems, Chao I's 趙壹 rhyme prose against evil, Chia I's 賈誼 *Kuo-Ch'in lun* 過秦論

(Criticism of the Ch'in), Pan P'iao's 班彪 *Wang-ming lun* 王命論 (On Royal Commands), Chang Hua's 張華 *Nü-shih hsien* 女史箴 (Warning on the Court Women), Chang Tsai's 張載 *Chien-ko-ming* 劍閣銘 (On the Chien-ko Pass), Ch'u-ko Liang's 諸葛亮 *Ch'u-shih piao* 出師表 (Campaign Memorial), Wang Ch'ang's 王昶 admonitions, Liu Hsiang's 劉向 and Ku Yung's 谷永 memorials, Chao Tso's 晁錯 and Li Ku's 李固 counterproposals, Hsün Po-tzu's 荀伯子 impeachments, Shan T'ao's 山濤 notices—if any of these, he said, are cited in an historical work, then “the style would be like that of the Three Ancient Dynasties, and the matter comparable with the Five Classics; then what distance would separate antiquity from the present?”

We can point to passages in the section on Elimination of Tedium, the section on Detection of Tedium and that on Narrative, to show the importance that Liu Chih-chi attached to style and the attention he paid to narrative. He was not one who liked brilliant rhetoric or majestic wording, nor was he intoxicated by violent rhythm or ingenious diction. He was an advocate of precise and clear expression and straightforward and uncompromising content. He also explained how useless was the labour of attempting to rhyme or zealously arranging parallel or antithetical phrases. It may then be thought at first sight paradoxical that he himself composed the whole of his work in the euphuistic style. But it would seem that he was confident of his own ability to present his material straightforwardly and clearly in the euphuistic style, and that he held that he had successfully demonstrated this in the *Shih-t'ung*. It may easily be supposed that this euphuistic style, with its emphasis on parallelism and antithesis, tends towards the principle of art for art's sake, but perhaps in so far as, in this style, the inability to go to the heart of the matter or excessive prolixity at the expense of clarity are concerned, there is confusion between the question of ability, on the one hand, and the essential character of the form, on the other.

This does not mean that he had no contact with ancient prose; rather, his choice of the contemporary euphuistic prose style arose simply from his consciousness of his readership. It was probably the case that astringent expression or simple forms were not yet acceptable at this period, just before the emergence of Li Po and Tu Fu, and that, with his upbringing, he felt absolutely no antipathy to the euphuistic style. More, we should probably recognize that he had received direct stimulus from the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* of the previous period; and that he was powerfully inclined to approve the promotion of cultural progress, in which there was strong emphasis on the art of expression, and a cultural maturity linked with technical skill. It is precisely in this that he displayed the movement from Early T'ang to High T'ang, and thus that he aligned himself with the literati who were his readers. Thus his historical scholarship and work developed, with his mastery of this prerequisite and the principles that he

advocated and emphasized. But one may feel that this prerequisite was the first limitation on his historical work and that the increase in its literary density was inevitable. To put it another way, writing that was neither colourless nor pellucid automatically became the colouring of the whole work.

Let us next consider the concepts which came to Liu Chih-chi from his career and from his life centred on the court. He thus describes the pain he felt, in his middle years, at remaining in Loyang when the emperor Chungtsung returned to Changan:

"At the time of our Filial and Agreeable Emperor the Wei and the Wu clans abused power while the empress and a princess participated in government. Those of the educated who were their sycophants could enter officialdom at such high ranks as to enable them to wear red or purple. Because I was in league with none, I suffered exclusion by the times,—once an Assistant Secretary of the Crown Prince's First Secretariat, no promotion for four years." (tr. William Hung)

It seems that what crushed him in his distance from the emperor was less the distance from the seat of power than the desolate feeling of having lost all support. The court occupied a high place, but there was a far stronger feeling of personal proximity on the part of T'ang officials than for those of later times. The result was that even the body in which authority was vested retained some suggestion of the real power being wielded by the aristocracy rather than of a systematised state leadership. Just as the clans compiled their genealogies, there was, it seems, no doubt in the minds of the court historians that the history of the nation was the history of the dynasty, and, as a concomitant, this would have formed the background of the Chinese consciousness. There were still a number of clans who claimed to be of far greater consequence than the house of T'ang, and in a society where this was allowed, both to oneself and to others, the concentration of power towards the court played what might be called a progressive role towards the formation of a state. Liu's praise of the form of the *Han-shu*, even while deeply inveighing against Pan Ku's incompetence, was a concrete manifestation of support for the house of T'ang.

The foregoing temporal limitations, which we find in the *Shih-t'ung*, impart to it, from our present point of view, a character both of partiality and of immaturity, but we can also find in it elements, overriding these, which link it to the present day, the seeds of something that has gradually grown up and flowered in our time. The spirit of scepticism was fundamental. Liu Chih-chi had, from an early age, enough experience to determine, by himself, how shallow were received opinions, or what grounds there were for valuing those on which one could rely. This was the source of his lifelong, unchangeable scepticism in regard to the existing order, and



this was the reason that he spoke out thus in the *Shih-t'ung*: "I hate to hear scorn of Fu Chien 服虔 or Tu Yü 杜預 from people talking about the classics, and I dislike it when people who discuss history speak of the defects of Pan Ku or Ssu-ma Ch'ien. Yet in this book I have often liked to criticise past philosophers and point out bygone errors, and if I have occasionally been guilty, that was really inevitable. I yet hope that someone who understands me may one day read my work."

This scepticism caused him to write the sections on Suspicions about Antiquity and Doubts about the Classics, but it did not stop there. The rationalistic interpretations which appear throughout his work were a natural outcome of his scepticism, and it must have needed considerable courage at a time when rationalism had not grown up along with him. But he was unsparing in the writing of the section on Obscurity and Superstition as well as in pointing out the errors and confusions in the monographs on the Five Elements. His self-confidence was very strong indeed. It was inevitable that his rationalism should also provide the basis for his general grasp of history. When he tried his classification of historical works, placing the sections on the Six Schools and the Two Types at the beginning of the *Shih-t'ung*, this was in a sense a preliminary bird's eye view of the field, and the result of the arrangement is seen in the sections on Historical Offices and the Ancient and Modern Standard Histories. In the light of his insistence that Standard Histories should proceed by separate dynasties, we can see that he had an overall view of each dynasty and a critical evaluation of each. But formally he did not himself step outside general history and this was perhaps a contradiction in his thought. But there is no doubt that the extraction of dynastic histories within this general framework, sowed the seed of the view by periods, the alternations of elegance and simplicity, of order and disorder.

It has been frequently pointed out in the past how many contradictions there are in Liu Chih-chih's arguments. For example, Mr. Chang Mien-chou 張緜周, early in the republican period, cited the following six points. First, in the section on Recording Words, he recommends establishing an independent section to be known as the monograph on ordinances and memorials, in which would be recorded any good ordinances or decrees of sovereigns, and memorials or proclamations of ministers; but in the section on Recording Literary Pieces, he strongly objects that making compilations of this kind is not history but literary anthology. Next, in the section on Tables, he argues strongly that tables are useless. In the first Miscellaneous section, he regards it as ground for pleasure that the tables in the *Shih-chi* are so complete that Yen and Yüeh 燕越 fit like a dog's teeth within an inch, though a myriad miles apart, and Chao 昭 and Mu 穆 can be shown together in a square foot, though nine generations apart. Again, in the first Miscellaneous section, he criticises Ssu-ma Ch'ien for his tendency

to hand over to destiny, and holds that he was wrong to put forward fate as an element in rise or fall, and that he forgets to criticise when he accepts destiny as a cause. And yet, in his section on Judgements, he says that a man's rise or fall is a matter of the time, his success or failure a question of fate. In the section on Searching for the Abstruse, he holds that it was perfectly reasonable that Po-i 伯夷 and Shu-ch'i 叔齊 should have been placed first in the biographies in the *Shih-chi*; in the section on People, he violently criticises this as thoroughly tiresome. In his section of prefatory autobiography, he claims that he gives a true record in spite of concealing his own shortcomings and exalting his strengths, but this can hardly be thought reasonable when compared with his bitter criticism of Confucius for his many concealments. There is a final contradiction: in the section on Nomenclature, his attitude was such that he did not treat those leaders of the Warring States who fought and lost as bandits, nor did he argue their valour according to their success or failure, and yet he vigorously condemns the inclusion of Hsiang-yü 項羽, as being a usurper, in the main chronicle of the *Shih-chi*.

One could probably find a lot more contradictions if one went through the text making such comparisons as these. This is because he still took his stand on the well trodden ground of Confucian morality, in spite of his resistance to the dominant consensus and his disregard of authority; and because, in addition, there were too many points to heed in the apologies of the opponents he might have demolished. One may say that these contradictions are not such as to damage his essential quality. It may rather seem that such disharmonies lend vigour to his style and that this vigour underpins the structure of the whole. The Ming scholar, Hu Ying-lin 胡應麟, in his collected writings (*Shao-shih shan-fang pi-ts'ung* 少室山房筆叢), had the following disparaging remarks to make: "One finds, on consideration, that the style of the *Shih-t'ung* is an imitation of that of Liu Hsieh's *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, but not up to its model in elegance, and that its views resemble those of Wang Ch'ung's *Lun-heng* but are more frivolous. Though many of the points made are on the mark, these were matters known also to earlier scholars. It would be exaggerated to claim that, with its rather crude expression and form, it lays bare the way of royalty, tells all about morality, and summarizes all there is in the world." But this a representative riposte of posterity, overwhelmed by Liu Chih-chi's vigour and vehemence.

Liu wrote the *Shih-t'ung* with, behind him, the products of that flourishing period for historical scholarship, the Epoch of Division between North and South, but conditions in the T'ang period were not conducive to a further maturing of this scholarship. Fundamentally, learning under the T'ang tended to be dissipated in aristocratic amusements; there were probably seldom circumstances in which thought had to be tempered by

reflection on history, in which the goal had to be set up with history as a shield. But it can be argued that, in general, historians were drawn into the historical offices, where they were absorbed into the ranks of the civil service, so that individual writings tended to atrophy. It may also be said that officials who had no independent character were unaccustomed both to the art and the circumstances of giving expression to their own views. Since the *Shih-t'ung* had to come to birth, it came to birth perforce, but it was an orphan child; and it was ultimately impossible for the posture of resistance and criticism, and the related spirit of scepticism and rationalism, necessary for its birth, to be duplicated. But this does not mean that there was no other comparable historical scholarship under the T'ang. For instance, Li Yen-shou 李延壽 took over from his father, Li Chih 李志, and finished the general history of the Northern and Southern courts, but he was younger and of lower rank, and his work was not subjected to criticism.

Though a few sympathisers were won over to the periphery of the new field opened up by Liu Chih-chi, there was nothing strong enough to be called a trend. The sympathisers, being of the same period as Liu, were men in whom remained the scientific spirit and critical power of the previous age, but T'ang culture was moving in a direction which stifled them and made the breeding of any successors impossible. He himself, moreover, did not repose his hopes in the present time, but looked to posterity for kindred spirits. It is therefore to the manner of his acceptance by posterity that we must look to establish his place in the history of historical scholarship.

#### 4. The Transmission and Critical History of the *Shih-t'ung*

More than twelve hundred and fifty years have passed since the publication of the *Shih-t'ung*, but the response to it during that period can really be put in one word. In 1961, on the occasion of the thirteen hundredth anniversary of Liu Chih-chi's birth, Mr. Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, discussing Liu's scholarship and thought (*Li-shih yen-chiu* 歷史研究 no 2), praised his materialist thought and progressive historical views, but such appreciation was not possible until social conditions had changed. The spirit of nonconformity under the T'ang showed itself in frequent opposition to the authority of the time, and since that authority had become established and strengthened in so far as the bureaucratic society continued, the *Shih-t'ung* was for ever a treasonous work, and, as such, became a classic. In every age, therefore, attempts have been made to reconcile its dignity as a classic with the morality of authority. There have been arguments in favour in response to the *Shih-t'ung*, but it has remained typed as containing dangerous material for twelve centuries.

First, Liu Ts'an 柳璨 (Chao-chih 炤之), at the end of the T'ang period, in 897, wrote a work in 10 chapters (*chüan*) containing 50 sections, entitled *Shih-t'ung hsün-wei* 析微 (Analysis of the *Shih-t'ung*). The book is said to have inveighed against the exaggerated view of the *Shih-t'ung* as a work of profound philosophy and attacked it, but it has not itself survived. According to the *Chün-chai tu-shu-chih* 郡齋讀書志, the arguments were 'reasoned and subtle', in the phrase of Hsiao T'ung 蕭統 (Crown Prince Chao-ming 昭明 of the Liang) and the book was thus named with two elements from this phrase. In the *Yü-hai* (an encyclopaedia) we are told that 49 sections consists of criticisms of the faults of the *Shih-t'ung*, with a further section in which shortcomings in Liu Chih-chi's 'veritable records' of four reigns are pointed out. Liu Ts'an was involved in Chu Ch'üan-chung's 朱全忠 rebellion, offered his services in the destruction of the T'ang, and was later killed by Chu ch'üan-chung. Perhaps for this reason he was said to be vulgar and shunned by the Liu clan, and his book, though mentioned in the *T'ung-chih*, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 文獻通考 and *Chih-chai shu-lu chieh-t'i* 直齋書錄解題, was lost from the Sung period on.

It is recorded in the main chronicle of the *Sung-shih* and in the *Yü-hai* that, early in the Sung period, Sun Ho 孫何 (Han-kung 漢公) wrote a *Po* 駁 *Shih-t'ung* (Against the *Shih-t'ung*) in some 10 sections, but this too has not survived to our time. Sun Ho was born of a well known family of Ju-yang 汝陽, and graduated as *chin-shih* in 992. He is said to have written strongly when the Sung had dealings with the Khitan, to have favoured sound morality and to have striven to associate with the best people. It is thus not difficult to imagine how he attacked the *Shih-t'ung*. We come later to Sung Ch'i 宋祁 (Tzu-ching 子京), responsible for the criticism, "Clever enough at mocking the ancients, no good at doing anything himself"; and Su Hsün 蘇洵 (Lao-ch'üan 老泉) who is related to have said, "The *Shih-t'ung* has the reputation of being both detailed and wide; the truth is that the language is thin and vulgar, the style bitter." But there was also the praise of Huang T'ing-chien 黃庭堅 (Shan-ku tao-jen 山谷道人), who said, "When literature is under discussion, there is the *Wen-hsi tiao-lung*, when history is being criticised, there is the *Shih-t'ung*. These two books are valuable indeed." This argument of Huang T'ing-chien's, making the work a classic, and Sung Ch'i's censure about Liu's simultaneous cleverness and incompetence, seem to have established the norms for most subsequent criticism of the *Shih-t'ung*.

It does seem that printed copies circulated in Sung times and that the work acquired readers up to a point, but in view of Chu Hsi's alleged resentment at having been unable to get a sight of the *Shih-t'ung*, it does not seem to have been so very widely disseminated. Under the Southern Sung, we find Yang Wan-li 楊萬里 arguing, "The *Shih-t'ung* sweepingly criticises previous historical works, but a look at the 'veritable records' of

Kao-tsung or the Empress Wu, written by its author, shows them to be somewhat crude and defective;" while Cheng Ch'iao classes Ssu-ma Ch'ien and Liu Chih-chi as the two good historians, in his monograph on families and clans in the *T'ung-chih*, and in his own compositions he followed the suggestions of the *Shih-t'ung*. Subsequently, the *Shih-t'ung* was mentioned in such works as Chao Kung-wu's 晁公武 *Chün-chai tu-shu-chih*, Ch'ên Chen-sun's 陳振孫 *Chih-chai shu-lu chieh-tai*, Wang Ying-lin's 王應麟 *Yü-hai* and Ma Tuan-lin's 馬端臨 *Wen-hsien T'ung-kao*, and its status as a classic was immovably established. When Sung society inherited the legacy of the T'ang dynasty, having passed through the process of selection of the period of the Five Dynasties, it may be said to have accepted and enlarged those elements which served to perpetuate the bureaucratic organisation, while rejecting such elements as were an obstacle thereto. Even the *T'ung-chih*, which may be considered to have been very greatly influenced by the *Shih-t'ung*, was unable to stimulate rationalism and scepticism on the same scale as did the *Shih-t'ung*.

After the collapse of the Sung, the *Shih-t'ung* remained buried for about three centuries. This was not the case of the *Shih-t'ung* alone but that of many ancient Chinese books. With the coming of the Ming, the business of collecting and reprinting old books, which had been on the point of disappearing, occupied a whole generation. The science of collation led on to the rise of critical study (*k'ao-cheng* 考證), and there soon appeared a tendency for this to become the main stream of critical study. When he wrote his prefatory autobiography, Liu Chih-chi had compared himself with Yang Hsiung and lamented the bad critical reception given to Yang Hsiung's *T'ai-hsüan-ching*, at the time he wrote it; he had gone on to remark on the imperishable fame it had acquired when, in a later period, Chang Heng and Lu Chi had enthusiastically praised it, and he had expressed the hope that perhaps sometime in the future there would emerge people like Chang and Lu to discover the true value of his own *Shih-t'ung*, unvalued though it then was. This hope was prophetic: by a strange coincidence, the men who, eight hundred years later, discovered the *Shih-t'ung*, where it lay buried, were two Ming scholars of the same names, Chang and Lu. The Lu was Lu Shen 陸深 (Yen-shan 儼山), and the Chang was Chang Chih-hsiang 張之象 (Pi-shan 碧山), both men of the Chia-ch'ing, Wan-li periods (mid-16th century). Lu had a reprint made of a 'Shu' 蜀 (Szechwan) copy, and Chang of a 'Wu' 吳 (Kiangsu, Chekiang area) copy, that is to say, the one was presumably a copy of the *Shih-t'ung* that had survived in Szechwan, the other, one that had survived in Chekiang. The *Shih-t'ung* was thus restored to human eyes.

The *Shih-t'ung*, thus reintroduced to the world by Lu and Chang, indeed raised a very considerable response, the most conspicuous tendency of which was to regard it as a classic and write critical interpretations of

it. The question was how to reconcile the *Shih-t'ung* with the accepted ideas of the Ming bureaucracy, and its rationalistic and critical power did not excite interest. On the contrary, this was a nuisance, and the ingenuity with which it was dealt led to the work being once more attacked and subjected to near obliteration by posterity. In his preface to his *Shu* edition of the *Shih-t'ung*, Lu Shen wrote:

"When I was at the History Office, I saw a manuscript of the *Shih-t'ung* in the house of Ts'ui Tzu-chung 崔子鍾, a friend of mine, who had graduated at the same time as I had. There were so many errors that it was difficult to read, and I was thenceforth constantly wondering whether there was not a good copy in existence. In Chia-ch'ing 13 (1534), when I was on duty in Kiangsi, Wang Shun-tien 王舜典, a man from the same place as myself, came on his way from a posting from Szechwan, and presented me with a printed copy. I instantly wrote a *Shih-t'ung hui-yao* 會要 (Essentials of the *Shih-t'ung*), but this copy from Szechwan was not necessarily a good one. It so happened that the following year I was myself posted to Szechwan, where I acquired an old printed copy, and with this I proceeded to a collation and revision, filling in gaps and eliminating errors in a number of places, and after further correction of errors and insertion of missing passages, I finally made the work readable and had it printed. Many people in the past had praised the historical talents of Liu Chih-chi; we can now read this and know that they were to be believed. Liu was a man of resolute character and brought a fresh approach to judgement of the merits of his predecessors, but on occasion he yielded to his nature and there are shortcomings in his discussions of the great and good. But he is, I think, generally just in his criticism of style, and in never concealing the good or bad, and this is what readers should notice and appreciate."

Thus Lu Shen wrote his *Shih-t'ung hui-yao* on the basis of the *Shu* copy. Then he acquired two further printed copies from Szechwan, collated the three and had the whole of the *Shih-t'ung* reprinted.

His *Hui-yao*, in three chapters (*chüan*), is included in the 'outer' collection of his collected works, known as *Yen-shan wen-chi* 儼山文集. The first chapter has four sections, on appointments, the schools, grades and book contents; the second has six sections on books, rhetoric, narrative, criminal law, enduring works, and arrangement in sections; the third chapter has seven miscellaneous sections. The book was written hastily and is not a powerful work. After giving a résumé of the *Shih-t'ung*, he provides quotations from Ou-yang Hsiu, Ts'eng Kung 曾鞏, Chen Chün-ch'üan 陳君舉 (Fu-liang 傅良) and mingles with these his own opinions. He seems to have been trying to provide a successor to the *Shih-t'ung* in offering criticism of historical works and historians from T'ang on. Under the stimulus he received from the *Shih-t'ung* he intended to write a '*Shih-*

*t'ung* Continued', but it may be argued that all he did was to list material as in a notebook, and then, rather than attempt to comment on and interpret this classic, he tried to enlarge on this material for the sake of his own nourishment. He was not simply intending to introduce the *Shih-t'ung* that he had discovered. What he tried to do was to fit it into a larger composition for his own time, but he overlooked the scepticism, threw the criticism aside, and emerged undisguisedly holding the bigoted ideas of the Ming Confucianists, who seem to have been less elastic than those of the Sung.

Chang Chih-hsiang published the *Shih-t'ung* 42 years after Lu Shen. He says in his preface:

"The *Shih-t'ung* was written by Liu Chih-chi of the T'ang. The descendants of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, of the Han, were given the title of Shih-t'ung-tzu 史通子 or Perpetual Historians, while there was also the work entitled *Po-hu t'ung* 白虎通 or the White Tiger Commentaries, and it was on these that Liu based the title of his book. He three times became an official historian during the Ch'ang-an to Ching-lung periods (701-710), but he did not fulfil his ambitions. He became angry and gloomy, and repeatedly sought to resign, as is set out in detail in his letter to Hsiao Chih-chung and his colleagues. In his criticism of earlier historical works, his blows were shrewd and his evidence both detailed and wide ranging; rarely has such a phenomenon been seen since the Capture of the Unicorn. At the time his work was highly esteemed by Hsü Chien, who said that those who worked as official historians would do well to have it by them. It is said that Hsüan-tsung commanded Liu's family to present a copy to him and that he read it with interest. As a result it was widely circulated, but later, as the years went by, it was lost, and for the Sung Confucianist, Chü Hsi, it was a matter of regret that he had not been able to see the *Shih-t'ung*. In the Chia-ch'ing period (1522-1566) of the Ming, Mr. Lu Yen-shan, who comes from the same place as myself, acquired a manuscript copy and printed ones, wrote his *Hui-yao* and had the work reprinted; but he regretted the lack of other copies which might serve for a revision of the text, which was still very corrupt. The fact that recently the compiler and printer of the *Shih-chi P'ing-lin* 史記評林 (Criticisms of the *Shih-chi*) regarded Liu Chih-chi as a man of the Sung period, shows how the *Shih-t'ung* is still not generally well known. It so happened that a friend of mine, Ch'in Chu 秦柱 (Ju-li 汝立) saw a Sung edition in my library and said that it was far superior to the *Shu* copy. With great joy, therefore, we set about revision and collation together. Some twenty of the leading intellectuals of the prefecture, including Hsü Ch'iu 徐球 and Feng Chi-k'o 馮繼可, joined in working on a thorough examination and correction of the text, had blocks cut and the work distributed. This was because I wanted the *Shih-t'ung* to be widely appreciated, not kept for me alone.

Years ago, Liu Chih-chi compared his *Shih-t'ung* to the *T'ai-hsüan*, and said that a future Chang and Lu knew nothing of it yet. Mr. Yen-shan [Lu Shen] is a man of great culture and wide learning, and there is no impropriety in comparing the fame he has won through his writing with that of Lu Chi; I would hardly hope to compare my humble self, vulgar and ignorant as I am, with Chang Heng, but is it not even so an astonishing fact that two people called Chang and Lu should have thus coincided with what Liu had said?"

Twenty-five years after Chang Chih-hsiang, Chang Ting-ssu 張鼎思 did not know of the existence of Chang Chih-hsiang's edition, and had simply collated two or three manuscripts, preserved in his own family, with Lu Shen's edition. In his preface he says,

"Liu Chih-chi's *Shih-t'ung* has not been widely printed and circulated. There was a manuscript in my family but it was full of mistakes. Whenever I went on my official career, I looked for the *Shih-t'ung* and acquired two or three manuscripts, each of them corrupt, but, by dint of collation and correction, I arrived at a readable text. However, I happened to meet Mr. Wu [Wu Pin 吳彬?], a provincial governor, by whom I was shown Mr. Lu Yen-shan's *Shih-t'ung*. When I saw that the latter had regretted the lack of another text for comparison and had reposed his hopes in posterity, I set about collating his edition with the manuscripts preserved in my house. I added some 430 characters to the section on Distortion, some 300 to the section on Searching for the Abstruse, erasing here, adding there, and I realised fully as I came to the end of the collation how difficult is the historian's talk. All historians, from the author of the *Tso-chuan* on, have some pretensions, but Liu denounces them all vehemently, and only one, Wang Shao 王劭, is blameless. Liu wrote no history himself, and since he abused many of the great and good, he has not been very much read for a long time. But there has never been anyone like him for taking a comprehensive view of the past, from T'ang and Yü down to the Ch'en and the Sui. When I look at his letter to Hsiao Chih-chung, his hardships seem comparable to those of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, and when I read his saying that there is a time when the hair turns white but of the making of many books there is no end, his ambition seems sincere; and it is on account of my deep sympathy for him that I have made this compilation."

Thus it came about that, with these three editions, the *Shih-t'ung* was widely read in Ming times from the Wan-li period (1573-1620) on. There was therefore a succession of commentaries and interpretations, but no Cheng Ch'iao appeared. Something of Liu Chih-chi's feeling appeared in Lu Shen's *Shih-t'ung hui-yao* but it grew no further. This was not just a matter of the difference in aims between the Sung and Ming Confucianists, it was probably more a question of their later position and the



direction in which that was being moved. Let us now glance at some of the critiques and commentaries of this time. First, perhaps, comes the *Shih-t'ung p'ing* 評 (Critique of the *Shih-t'ung*), written by Yang Shen 楊慎 during the Chia-ch'ing period (1522-1567) in the leisure of exile. He supported the criticisms of Su Hsün and Yang Wan-li, and said that as the fine points of the *Shih-t'ung* coincided with what had been vital points to earlier writers, it should be read with attention. Next, there is Yü Sheng-hsing's 于慎行 *Shih-t'ung chü-cheng-lun* 舉正論 (True Discussion of the *Shih-t'ung*). In this work the author praises the extent of Liu Chih-chi's learning and the depth of his penetration; he says that his feeling and knowledge were finely blended, he was strict and discriminating in his choice of material, that in style he shared the ambition of Nan Shih and Tung Hu, that in composition he wrote like Pan Ku and Ssu-ma Ch'ien. Only he was over-confident in himself and over-curious. He was guilty of two crimes: ridiculing the sages of antiquity and neglecting the Classics. He had three faults: shallowness, obstinacy and obscurity. And he concluded that, in spite of these faults, one could not jettison the entire work.

Then there are one or two items touching on Liu Chih-chi is *Shih-shu chan-pi* 史書佔畢, a section of Hu Ying-lin's *Shao-shih shan-fan ts'ung-shu*. For example,

"In his discussions of history, Liu Chih-chi certainly shows that he is versed in historical scholarship, yet throughout his discussions he also shows that he has not the ability to write history. His style is too near vulgar rusticity, too far from well-bred elegance. His insight is subtle about trifles, goes astray in the larger questions. He is naturally inclined to be rich in accusation, poor in fairness. Sung Ch'i made the famous remark that he was clever enough at mocking the ancients, no good at doing anything himself."

"The vulgarity of T'ang people was surely quite extraordinary. Liu Chih-chi relates in his *Shih-t'ung* that Shun seized Yao, that Yü drove out Shun, that Ch'i 啓 killed I 益, that T'ai-chia 太甲 killed I-yin 伊尹, that King Wen killed Chi Li 季歷, that Ch'eng T'ang 成湯 pretended abdication, and that Confucius pretended wisdom and was sympathetic with stupidity. There had been tales of this kind from the period of the Warring States, but no intelligent person ever believed them; yet did Liu really take them to fact? To make matters worse, he even states that the achievements of Shun, Yü, T'ang and Wen are just like those of Ts'ao Ts'ao, Ssu-ma I 司馬懿, Liu Yü 劉裕 and Hsiao Yen 蕭衍, and that there are more mistakes in the *Shang Shu* and *Ch'un Ch'iu* than in the books compiled by Shen Yüeh 沈約 and Wang Shen 王沈. Such men are truly immoral."

In the Wan-li period (1573-1620), Confucianism and literature were dominated by the Latter Five Masters or the Later Seven Masters, and there arose a tendency for sycophancy to crush originality, for a conspiracy

of esotericism to eat away inventiveness, for the revival of authority and the rule of morality. It is well known that the richness of Ming culture lay in its liberation from morality and in the multifariousness of the thought to which it gave rise, but the *Shih-t'ung* was not associated with this. Li Chih 李贄, in chapter 40 of his *Ts'ang-shu* 藏書 (Book Collection), listed orthodox historians, but when he mentioned Liu Chih-chi, he wrote merely, "Li says, 'The two qualities, learning and talent, were enough for the achievement of some penetration, but the arguments were incomplete.'" For Li Chih, the *Shih-t'ung*, which had already become a classic, seems to have had no charm; a classic work of history has a duty to display an ethical character for the sake of moral propaganda, and it proved troublesome to make the *Shih-t'ung* bear this burden; and Li Chih found himself in the same sort of critical confusion as Hu Ying-lin. This difficulty may be said to have reached an extreme point with the *Shih-t'ung p'ing-shih* 評釋 by Kuo K'ung-yen 郭孔延.

Kuo Kung-yen was a man of T'ai-ho 泰和, his style was Yen-nien 延年, and he was the son of Kuo Tzu-chang 子章, who put down the Szechwan rebellion of a Po chieftain 播酋, Yang Ying-lung 楊應龍. According to the *Ch'ung-hsiu T'ai-ho hsien-chih* 重修泰和縣志 (Revised monograph on T'ai-ho Prefecture), the achievements of Kuo Tzu-chang won appointments to secretaryships at the ministry of war for his father, Yüan-hung 元鴻, and grandfather, Ch'i-shih 奇士, and the family thus became a distinguished one. And Kuo Tzu-chang himself had three sons, K'ung-chien 孔建, K'ung-yen 孔延 and K'ung-ta 孔大; and K'ung-yen inherited the literary talent of his father, and wrote for him such work as *Kuo-kung Ch'ing-lo nien-p'u* 郭公青螺年譜 (Genealogy of Kuo Tzu-chang). He was the first man to write a critical commentary on the whole of the *Shih-t'ung*. In his preface he wrote, "Mr. Chang Ying-fu 張睿父 had new blocks cut of Liu Chih-chi's *Shih-t'ung*, edited by the historian, Lu, and presented a copy to the head of my family at Yü-chang 予章. When my father had read it, he handed it to me and said, 'Though Mr. Chang is an inspector, he is never without a book in his hands, in which respect he is like most gentlemen. You, my sons, are not like most gentlemen in this. Having the good fortune to possess both the *Shu* and the *Wu* editions in our library, you should make a careful collation and revision with this edition.'" He thus shows the stimulus given to the children by their father in a good family. Then, after quoting Chang Ting-ssu's preface, he writes, "I first wrote my critical commentary on the basis of the Yü-chang edition, that is to say, the Chang Ting-ssu text, and had not yet had access to the *Yün-chien* 雲間 edition, that is to say, that of Chang Chih-hsiang. When I had finished my commentary, I asked the historian, Li Pen-ning 李本寧 to look at it. He produced the *Yün-chien* edition, and it was thus possible to obtain the full text of the sections on Supplements and Commentaries and on In-

corporation of Earlier Texts. He also corrected some 230 characters for me. Thus it might be said that the whole of the *Shih-t'ung* had been restored, but I am no doubt guilty of more than a few errors. Collation and correction of the *Shih-t'ung* started with Lu Wen-yü 陸文裕 (Lu Shen), was continued by Chang Shen-wu 張慎吾 (Chang Ting-ssu) and Chang Pi-shan (Chang Chih-hsiang), and was given further corrections by Mr. Li Pen-ning. I have indeed been fortunate to have been able to ride on the shoulders of these gentlemen, but I have never been able to see the three sections, on Structure, Errors and Emphasis, which were early lost. The world is vast and the time may yet come when they will be found where they have been stored away in some ancient repository."

In fact Kuo K'ung-yen's critical commentary was very severely criticised by posterity. Wang Wei-chien 王惟儉, who wrote a *Shih-t'ung hsün-ku* 訓故 (Interpretations of the *Shih-t'ung*), said, "when I read Mr. Kuo's Critical Commentary, there was much which did not concur with my own views." P'u Ch'i-lung 浦起龍, who wrote a *Shih-t'ung t'ung-shih* 通釋 (Continuous Commentary on the *Shih-t'ung*), said, "There is no work so bad as Kuo's for the arrogance of its criticism, concealment of true feelings and total lack of candour." But they do not in any way go into the matter of where the faults lay, just what they did not like. So let us look at one or two of Kuo's comments. In his preface he wrote, "To sum up, one might say that the strengths of the *Shih-t'ung* lie in the minuteness of the research, the strict principles of the arrangement, the simple antiquity of the style, the nobility of the arguments. The weaknesses lie in the contempt for Yao and Yü and the indulgence towards Ts'ao P'i, the suspicion of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* and the belief in the Chi Tomb Codices, the criticism of Ssu-ma Ch'ien and the sinking of his merits, compared with the admiration for Wang Shao and the overlooking his recklessness, the high place the work claims for itself while consigning the good and great of antiquity to oblivion." Thus he in no way differed from criticisms previously expressed. Then he had this to say about the *Shang-shu* school at the beginning of the *Shi-t'ung*: "First of all, Liu Chih-chi attacks the *Shang-shu* for the impurity of its procedure and next rejects the *I-Chou-shu* 逸周書 on similar grounds. It could be said that his unseeing gaze found no men of antiquity a thousand years before. Then is it not as incongruous as putting a dog's tail on a sable suddenly to produce, as he does, the ultra-conservative K'ung Yen 孔衍 and the ultracrepidarian Wang Shao as successors to the above? If what he calls the *Han-wei Shang-shu* 漢魏尚書 and *Sui-shu* are held to follow the *Shang-shu*, then Pan Ku and Fan Yeh are still finer than K'ung Yen and Wang Shao. K'ung and Wang are unworthy to be admitted to the presence of Pan and Fan, how much more powerfully should the exemplarity of Yao and Shun be argued. Liu Chih-chi also says that the *Sui-shu* of Wang Shao is like the *K'ung-tzu*

*chia-yü*. The *chia-yü* is secondary to the *Analects*. Why does Liu so frivolously make concessions to Wang Shao?"

About Liu Chih-chi's preface, he said,

"The minute research and strict principles of the *Shih-t'ung* give it an ineffaceable brilliance. When criticising it, I found four similarities to Yang Hsiung in Liu Chih-chi and three dissimilarities. The first of these differences is that in spite of lack of dogmatism and general agreement with the Five Classics in Yang Hsiung's *T'ai-hsüan*, the *Shih-t'ung* doubts the *Shang-shu* and is suspicious of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. The second is that, though the *Fa-yen* recommends discipline, though it recommends the search for instruction, the *Shih-t'ung* inculcates no lessons. Even so there are also three ways in which Yang Hsiung differed from Liu Chih-chi. Though Yang wrote his *Ch'ü-Ch'in mei-hsin* 劇秦美新 (Down with Ch'in, Up with the New Régime), Liu lived in the time of the Empress Wu and expressed himself frankly, and when, in compiling the 'veritable record' of the Empress Wu, there were revisions to be made, he refused to be *bien pensant*: in this way he was unlike Yang Hsiung. Yang was solitary and remote from the court, but Liu wrote his *Ssu-shen fu* 思慎賦, for which he was praised by Li Ch'iao 李嶠, and, repeatedly seeking to resign his post, he did not incur Hsiao-tsung's criticism; thus too he was unlike Yang Hsiung. T'ung-wu 童烏 (Yang Hsiung's young son) took part in discussing the cosmos but we hear nothing more of him, whereas Liu Chih-chi had six sons and three grandsons, all of whom were distinguished, and their home was known as Kao-yang li 高陽里 (Village of brilliance); thus too he was unlike Yang Hsiung."

Next, what sort of criticism did he make of the questionable section on Suspicions about Antiquity?

"To reject the writings from between the Shu 洙 and Ssu 泗 rivers [i.e. the Confucian canon] and believe the trivialities of the Chi Tomb Codices is tantamount to holding a cicada's wing to be heavy and a thousand taels of gold to be light, and so comparing the depravity of decadence with the dignified abnegation of an emperor. This is to measure the feelings of a prince with the heart of a small man. Was Liu's only fault to put the Six Classics in the background and depravity to the force?"

And on the section on Doubts about the Classics, he wrote, "He [Confucius] said, 'Alas, will it be only for the *Ch'un-ch'iu* that I will be known, will it be only for the *Ch'un-ch'iu* that I will be blamed?' Confucius knew in advance that among his critics there would certainly be the like of Liu Chih-chi.," and his argument is not very different from that of Hu Ying-lin. The sentiment is also echoed by Wang Chih-chien 王志堅 of late Ming, who said, "There are many mistakes in the arguments of the *Shih-t'ung*, but when it comes to pointing out the flaws, it is no child's play. He was undoubtedly a hammer of historians." The reason that, in spite

of all this, Kuo K'ung-yen was singled out for attack must have lain not simply in the content of his criticism, but in the general character of the man himself and in the standpoint of those who assailed him. In point of fact, Kuo K'ung-yen's critical commentary first appeared as a revised commentary on the *Shih-t'ung* by Ch'en Chi-ju 陳繼儒 (Mei-kung 眉公).

In 1608 was published Chang Hsüan's 張萱 *I-yang* 疑耀 (Doubts and Illuminations), attributed to Li Chih. This sort of spurious publication was a fashion in the book trade at the time, but Kuo Kung-yen's taking Ch'en Chi-ju's name was a crude example, since, in the text of his commentary, the words, "Yen notes etc." appear undisguised.

Kuo K'ung-yen next obtained Li Wei-ch'eng's comments, used them to supplement his own, and proceeded to publish. Both Li's preface and comments are commonplace. In the *Ming-shih* we read of him, "His retainers entertained rich men and important merchants and took money from them, and on their behalf asked him to make petitions, in which efforts he was tireless. He bore an important name but it lasted only forty years. However, his literary activities include many pieces in response to others, done as best he could, without being able to achieve a high standard." We thus see clearly the signs of a son of a distinguished family, who, lacking high status in the official world, was over-eager for success in the world of learning. In his *Lü-t'ing chih-chien chuan-pen shu-mu* 呂亭知見傳本書目 (Catalogue of Books in the Lü Pavilion), Mo Yu-chih 莫友芝, of the Ch'ing period, has 'Ko 葛 K'ung-yen', and this is probably an expression of contempt rather than a mistake. Kuo K'ung-yen said of Liu Ts'an of the T'ang, who wrote the *Shih-t'ung hsün-wei*, that he was a man of humble origin, without friends in his clan, that he rose from the people to a place at court in four years, that in response to Chu Ch'üan-chung he menaced Ai-ti, and, being himself executed, appeared in the *T'ang-shu* among the lives of wicked officials; and although there are points in the *Shih-t'ung* which merit refutation, how could they be attacked by the pen of such a treacherous official? Yet he surely invited such an attack himself.

Wang Wei-chien (Sun-chung 損仲), the next to write a commentary, introduces no critical remarks beyond mentioning the sobriety and correctness of the work, the thorough search for sources and the verification of stories. The date of publication of his *Shih-t'ung hsün-ku* is not certain but thought to have been probably the end of the Wan-li period (1573-1620). Liu Pu-hsi 劉不息 says in his postface: "Wang Sun-chung previously wrote a commentary on the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, with which he presented me, and he has now produced another commentary, on the *Shih-t'ung* this time. I suppose that we all read these two books when we were young, but they were difficult for us to understand, for lack of references. Today adequate commentaries have appeared, but we are now too old and decrepit

to read them, and have given them to our grandchildren. Ever since I read the history of the Han a long time ago, I have retained the impression of Cheng Tang-shih 鄭當時, whose associates, even when he was young and junior in rank, were his grandfathers contemporaries and celebrated men. Sun-chung's grandfather is a contemporary of my father, and I am no celebrity, but I have had a considerably longer career than Sun-chung. One can thus perhaps imagine Sun-chung's associations. I am of low rank and I take no direct part in the government of the country; this is perhaps why, in the same way as Sung-chung today, the confinement in which I find myself has given rise to this further outburst of expansiveness, alas." This attitude of Wang Wei-chien's, of keeping loose tongues at bay, and remaining silent, of keeping to the straight line, in fear of deviation, was precisely the way along which Ming officialdom strove, and the one which was inherited, unaltered, by the Ch'ing.

In 1748, Huang Shu-lin 黃叔琳 wrote a *Shih-t'ung hsün-ku pu* 補 (Supplement) by adding comments to Wang Wei-chien's *Shih-t'ung hsün-ku*. He too refrained from inserting any critical comments, keeping faithfully to the standard of the *hsün-ku*. Huang Shu-lin also wrote a commentary on the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, thus also following in the footsteps of Wang Wei-chien and displaying one aspect of Ch'ing culture. He says in the preface to his *Hsün-ku pu* that when the *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* placed the *Shih-t'ung* as the first item in its category for historical criticism, this was to honour it, and he assigns the responsibility to the *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* first of all; then, carried away by his own opinions, he seems to change his mind in speaking of its adherence to fixed forms and lack of flexibility; then he says that it is what any man who loves the past will enjoy, with its assemblage of some tens of thousands of volumes stretching over several thousand years, its minuteness, its clear vision, its eloquence its shrewd pen; and so, like Kuo K'ung-yen, he failed to come to grips honestly, and bundled the work in among the classics, irrespective of its good and bad points.

At about the time Huang Shu-lin was writing his *Hsün-ku pu* in Peking, P'u Ch'i-lung (Erh-t'ien 二田) was writing a commentary on the *Shih-t'ung* at Wu-hsi 無錫. P'u Ch'i-lung read the *Shih-t'ung* in 1739 and was engaged on his commentary on it from 1745. In 1747 he had more or less finished it, when he happened to obtain Huang Shu-lin's *hsün-ku pu*. He accordingly made some additions and corrections to his work and entitled it *T'ung-shih* (Continuous Commentary). He makes such remarks in his preface as the following. There are two roads of research into the past, that of classical studies and that of historical. But whereas there had arisen master commentaries on the classics at an early date, there were no such commentaries on history, until, in T'ang times, Liu Chih-chi wrote criticism of history and produced a masterpiece. But later on prejudices

arose, true feelings were concealed and nothing was honest. Kuo K'ung-yen was a prime example of this tendency. Wang Wei-chien cleared away the criticisms and claimed that it was a fine work but he was still unable to penetrate to the essence of the *Shih-t'ung*. The four qualities of toughness, obstinacy, haste and stupidity had long come to form the received idea of the work. If one seeks it without neglecting a single word or a single matter, one can probably throw off this received idea and grasp the essence.

According to P'u, the *Shih-t'ung* was a magnificent classic, but subsequent criticism of it had not been good. A wrong view had consequently been taken of the work's purport, and its essential character had not emerged. What then did he take to be its purport, what did he consider to be its essential character? We have glimpses of the answers to these questions scattered about in the different sections of the *T'ung-shih*, but P'u's postface gives a straight account. He says that in the *Hsin T'ang-shu*, Liu Chih-chi, Hsü Chien and four others are handled in the same biographical chapter, and it says in the general account of official historians that there were a great many under the T'ang, and that from Liu's time on they had been clever at mocking the ancients. If one reads the passage carefully, the remark about mocking the ancients is not directed against Liu alone. Since he looked at things from a preconceived point of view, Liu was a good target for this criticism. If one really knows Liu's character, one should also truly understand the essential character of the *Shih-t'ung*. When he himself first read the *Shih-t'ung*, he thought it distinctly dubious, and considered that Liu went too far in running down all the historians from Ssu-ma Ch'ien and Pan Ku until there was nothing left of them, and that he had perhaps the faults of censoriousness and obstinacy. He had the impression that Liu was the Shen Pu-hai 申不害 and Han Fei-tzu of history, with little spring and summer feeling and much autumn and winter. But when he read his biography, and regarded the standing of his family, he realised that not only was Liu Chih-chi himself of impeccable conduct but that his six sons too were all of good report, and that his family continued even to the third generation without dying out, so deep and longlasting was the bounty of Heaven to the Liu family. When he considered the character of the author of the *Shih-t'ung*, now that he was writing his commentary, it became clear from the sections on Arrangement and Order and on Recording Literary Pieces, that he was a man who, though he did not talk Taoism, had in fact sprung from its womb. It further became clear from the sections on Suspicions about Antiquity and Doubts about the Classics, that, though on the surface his words seemed to sweep away the classics, he in fact determined his rule of conduct in accordance with their principles. It is unlikely that anyone who only enjoyed mocking others could have enjoyed the bounty of Heaven

in such measure.

Thus P'u Ch'i-lung held that the essential character of the *Shih-t'ung* lay in its dissemination of Taoism and its guardianship of morality. And he held that the particularly notorious sections on Suspicions about Antiquity and Doubts about the Classics were truly pronouncements intended to provoke anger against usurpation. We see here one aspect of Ch'ing scholarship, when, as though arguing that black is white, P'u maintains that these sections did not insult the great and good or the classics, and must be regarded as not having departed from a true intention of veneration. Accordingly, since repetition of his arguments would inevitably lead to failure, interpretations and notes constituted the bones of his Comprehensive Commentary, and with his reliance on interpretations of the meanings of words and his own opinions, he finished up in the tedious prolixity of 'critical study'. In 1784, Ch'en Chan 陣鱸 found the interpretations of meanings in the *T'ung-shih* excessive and laughed at the work as having unpleasantly the air of rustic pedantry (*Pi-sung lou ts'ang-shu chih* 甯宋樓藏書志, Catalogue of books in the Pi-sung library). However, one of P'u Ch'i-lung's followers, Ts'ai Chuo 蔡焯, wrote some parallels or instances for the *Shih-t'ung t'ung-shih*, and he attempted an arrangement in two sections, correction of readings in six sections, and correction of errors in four subsections, arriving at almost useless explanations. The *T'ung-shih* existed for its own sake, and continued on its way without giving any support for argument or advocacy.

Twenty years after the *T'ung-shih*, Chi Yün's 紀昀 (*Hsiao Lan* 曉嵐) *Shih-t'ung hsüeh-fan* 刪繁 (Removal of superfluities from the *Shih-t'ung*) was written. In his preface, he says that while there have always been changes in the form of historical works from the very beginning, Liu Chih-chi brought order into this field and built a Great Pyramid. Commentary on the classics, he says, had never been done according to set rules, but such rules are essential for the writing of history, and Liu's exposition of the rules of historiography is excellent. However, he was too self-confident and extremely outspoken, to the point that his careful selectivity involved him in failure and angered the historians, while his extreme controversiality was such as to make him difficult for posterity to understand, and prevented his careful expressions and refined definitions being properly transmitted. In view of all this, error will be perpetuated unless proper use is made of his work. A number of scholars had already made commentaries, of varying merits, and P'u Ch'i-lung's, the latest to appear, provided a comparatively scrupulous interpretation, but casual alteration of the original text was a serious defect. When he had read this *T'ung-shih*, he says, he gave it to his children, but marked in red the passages to be accepted, in green the erroneous passages, and in purple the prolix passages. He then made a copy from which the green and purple passages were removed and produced the *Shih-t'ung hsüeh-fan*.



In the distant past, Kuo Hsiang 郭象 had also cut out much of the original text when commenting on the *Chuang-tzu*, and he hoped that it would be understood that he was not alone in carrying out such an audacious procedure.

In the *Hsüeh-fan*, the whole text is suppressed in respect of four sections: Recording Words, Tables, Suspicions about Antiquity, and Detection of Tedium. The entire text was retained in the case of ten sections: Recording of Literary Pieces, Supplements and Commentaries, Regions, Classification of Persons, Honest Writing, Distortion, Searching for the Abstruse, Examining Talent, Elimination of Tedium, Miscellaneous. Part was cut out of the other thirty five sections. The fact is that the three sections of the *Shih-t'ung*, on Structure, Errors and Emphasis, seem to have been lost already by the time the *T'ang-shu* was compiled, and it has already been widely thought since the appearance of the *Hsüeh-fan* that they touched on taboo matters and had been suppressed at an early date. Chi Yün betrays himself, and it is self-evident that in spite of his exposition of the 'careful expressions' and 'refined definitions' of the *Shih-t'ung*, he was really engaged in suppression, rather than textual criticism, in the interests of morality. Though it was a matter of fitting a shoe to a severed foot, Lu K'un 廬坤, who wrote the preface to the Tao-kuang (1821-1851) edition of the *Hsüeh-fan*, said, "Luminary as he is of this great age of ours, Chi Wen-ta 紀文達 (Chi Yün) of Hochien took this book and progressively criticised it, revealed its splendour, cut away the overgrowth of weeds and produced the *Shih-t'ung hsüeh-fan* in four chapters. The resultant refined severity and justness suffice to make it a model for historians."

In the Ch'ing period there were those whose knowledge of the *Shih-t'ung* did not go beyond the treatments in the *T'ung-shih* and *Hsüeh-fan*. There was the *Shih-t'ung chiao-cheng* 校正 (Revision of the *Shih-t'ung*) by Lu Wen-ch'ao 盧文弨 (*Pao-ching* 抱經), which is included in the *Pao-ching-t'ang ts'ung-shu* 抱經堂叢書 (Lu's collected works), the *Ch'ün-shu shih-pu* 郡書拾補 (Collations of thirty eight texts by Lu Wen-ch'ao) and the *Shao-hsing hsien-cheng i-shu* 紹興先正遺書, and attempts a collation of the still confused surviving texts of the *Shih-t'ung*; and the *Shih-t'ung* is discussed in Ch'ien Ta-hsin's 錢大昕 *Shih-chia-chai yang-hsin-lu* 十駕齋養新錄 and Wang Ming-shen's 王鳴盛 *Shih-ch'i-shih shang-chüeh* 十七史商榷 (Critical study of the seventeen Standard Histories), but there was nothing that particularly stood out above the Ming level. It was common knowledge that the *Shih-t'ung* criticised many works of history and that its author was subsequently regarded as criminal; and both Ch'ien and Wang supported this view unthinkingly, incapable of inviting calamity upon themselves. But Liu Chih-chi's achievement had profound effects and his pronouncements proved imperishable; from the *Hsin T'ang-shu* on, much had been compiled according to his views, which simply means that Liu was regarded as a

guardian of morals and his criticism regarded as involving 'careful expressions' and 'refined definitions'. But, somewhat later than these, there appeared in Japan in 1803 from the Bun-kin-dō 文錦堂 in Kyoto a book entitled *Ho-shū Shi-tsū ten-pan* 補修史通點煩 (Supplement to the section on Detection of Tedium in the *Shih-t'ung* by Igai Keisho 豬飼敬所, and this should be noticed.

Igai's knowledge of the *Shih-t'ung* was based on an imported copy of the *T'ung-shih*. He was in sympathy with the section on Detection of Tedium and tried to put it into practice. As indeed the *Ssu-k'u t'i-yao* 四庫提要 (Annotations to the *Ssu-k'u* Catalogue) says, Liu Chih-chi gave actual examples to indicate the complexity which he rejected and the simplicity which he respected, and by rewriting in this way, he showed which characters could be omitted. But because he marked the passages for correction in red in his original manuscript, this could not be reproduced when it came to be printed, and this aspect of the work was finally lost. Igai tried to make corrections to the historical works cited in this section in accordance with Liu's enunciation of which characters to omit and which to add. The result was not necessarily in agreement with the number of characters as prescribed by Liu. He then extended this work to Japanese authors, in whom he tried extracting and correcting complexities, and printed and published it as *Zansei meika joji* 竄正名家叙事 (Correction of the writing of celebrated authors) together with his *Shitsū tenpan*. The reactions of Japanese Confucian scholars of the Edo period on reading Igai's work on the *Shih-t'ung* were two: one, that it was the result of an ambition to carry out himself an editorial task which not even a Ch'ing Chinese would dare to attempt; the other, that it was also the result of the generalisation of literary diversions. But Igai is not alone to be criticised in this respect. For several decades after the rise of sinological studies in Japan, it was the fashion among our predecessors to discuss the *Wen-shih t'ung-i* by the Ch'ing writer, Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng 章學誠, as Chinese historical criticism, and not to touch on the *Shih-t'ung*, but few seem to have been conscious that this was a fashion, resulting from an incapacity to throw off the lingering influence of Ch'ing scholarship.

Even with the coming of the Republic in China, the Ch'ing influence lingered. Among textual studies of the *Shih-t'ung*, there were Sun Yü-hsiu's 孫毓修 *Shih-t'ung cha-chi* 札記 (Detailed record of the *Shih-t'ung*) (1922) and Chiang Tien-yang's 姜殿揚 *Cha-chi pu* 補 (Supplement of the *Cha-chi*) (1927). Among commentaries were Liu Hu-ju's 劉虎如 *Shih-t'ung hsüan-chu* 選註 (Selected comments) (1928) and Ch'en Han-chang's 陳漢章 *Pu-shih* 補釋 (Supplementary interpretations) and *Pu-shih pu-cheng* 補正 (Supplementary corrections to supplementary interpretations) (1929-1930). Among articles, there were *Shih-t'ung chih yen-chiu* 史通之研究 (Study of the *Shih-t'ung* by Fu Chen-lun (1931), and *Shih-t'ung* by Fu Chen-lun (1931), and *Shih-*

*t'ung p'ing* by Lü Ssu-mien 呂思勉 (1934). But nothing appeared beyond adjustments to prior work and minor corrections. Taking as representative the *Chung-kuo li-shih yen-chiu-fa* 中國歷史研究法 (Method of study of Chinese history) by Liang Ch'i-chao in 1922, we find Liu Chih-chi, Ch'eng Ch'iao and Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng being compared, with strong emphasis on the intelligence of Liu, but in the *Yen-chiu-fa pu-pien* 研究法補編 (Supplement) of 1933, the high place accorded to Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng almost suggests that a different man is speaking. In Chang Mien-chou's *Shih-t'ung yen-chiu* 研究 (Study of the *Shih-t'ung*) published by Wen-shui-lou 文瑞樓, Shanghai, in 1926, it is strongly argued that the *Shih-t'ung* is not inferior in value to Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng's *Wen-shih t'ung-i*, which tells us something of the tendency of the times. In the supplementary number of the *Hsin-ch'en-pao* 新辰報 of May, 1929, Fu Chen-lun wrote *Liu Chih-chi hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang chih yüan-yüan* 學術思想之淵源 (Sources of Liu Chih-chi's scholarship and thought). In 1931, this became *Shih-t'ung chih yen-chiu*, and no doubt ran parallel with the further extension to the *Liu Chih-chi nien-p'u* 年譜 (Chronology of Liu Chih-chi) in 1934.

The text of the *Shih-t'ung* is said to consist of 83,325 characters. This provocative work had the good fortune to be rediscovered through the freedom of the literati of the Ming period. I think I have given a fairly exhaustive account of the way in which it has been read from that period up to the present day. How it should be used remains a task for the future.

### 5. The Editions of the *Shih-t'ung*

I have already given above a broad outline of the *Shih-t'ung*'s editions. I now propose to list them all together. Just as no Sung editions survive today, not all Ming editions are necessarily still in existence, and I have only been able to include all that are recorded in various catalogues.

#### 1. The *Shu* text

This was probably a Sung print or a Sung MS, which survived in the Szechwan area and of which there was also a Ming print. It was probably the origin of the Lu Shen print but no longer survives.

#### 2. The *Wu* text

Chang Chih-hsiang was a native of Hua-t'ing 華亭 in Sungchiang Prefecture. Together with Ch'in Chu he collated and corrected the Lu text with a Sung print in his own collection. Since Shen I-kuan 沈一貫 was also from the Ningpo area, this may be the same as the collation he is said to have made of the Lu text with a Sung print, but it has not survived.

#### 3. Ancient MS on black-lined paper.

The *Shih-t'ung* in 20 chapters (*chüan*), 8 volumes. The National

Central Library, T'aipei. Not seen.

4. Ming text printed in Szechwan, in the Cheng-te—Chia-ch'ing period (1506–1567). The National Central Library, T'aipei. Not seen.

5. The Lu Shen text

After writing his *Shih-t'ung hui-yao* in three chapters, Lu Shen made a further revision of the whole text by collating the Szechwan text with two or three MSS, and published this text in 1535. The copy in the Peking Library is in six volumes with 10 columns of 20 characters to the page. The *P'i-sung lou ts'ang-shu chih* and the *Shuang-chien lou shan-pen shu-mu* 雙鑑樓善本書目 (Catalogue of fine books in the Shuang-chien lou) both record its possession. Preface and postface in the P'i-sung lou text are taken from the Chang Ting-ssu text. In the *Jao-pu ts'ang-shu t'i-shih* 藁圃藏書題識 (Bibliography of the Jao-pu collection), Huang P'i-lieh 黃丕烈 relates how he acquired a Lu Shen text with MS notes by Ku Chien-pin 顧澗賓, and tells us that a first edition and a new edition appear in Yüan Yüan's 阮元 *T'ien-i ko shu-mu* 天一閣書目 (Catalogue of the T'ien-i ko).

6. The Shen Chien-wu 沈肩吾 text

According to the *T'ien-i ko shu-mu*, the printed edition of the *Shih-t'ung* there had a postface by the Ming writer, His Excellency Ssu-ma (Ssu-ma Hsi 晰?). According to this, the *Shu* edition had many errors, which Lu Shen corrected, after which someone else made further corrections and published a new edition. Shen I-kuan made a further comparison with the Sung text, and, though the new edition was generally adequate, there were still numerous errors and the later revision had not been well done. He said that the Sung print had mistakes from time to time, especially in the Outer sections, and that one would probably do well to make comparisons here and there and steer between the two. The Shen Chien-wu text was a third edition, but even so the edition of the 2nd month of Wan-li 4 (March, 1576) is a revision, based on collation with other text(s) and without the various prefaces, said to be much superior to the Shen text.

7. The Chang Chih-hsiang text

The preface, dated the 5th month of Wan-li 5 (1577), gives an account of Chang Chih-hsiang's collaboration with Ch'in Chu in collating the *Wu* text and the Lu text. In 1961, the Chung-hua Shu-chü issued a photolithographic reprint, 10 columns of 19 characters to the page. The Peking Library has a copy with emendations and a postface by Ho Chuo 何焯, as well as a four-volume version with critical remarks by Feng Shu 馮舒 and postfaces by Teng Pang 鄧邦 and Ku Kuang-ch'i 顧廣圻, and an eight-volume version with a postface by Fu Tseng-hsiang 傅增湘, and MS critical postfaces by T'ang Han 唐翰, Wu Tz'u-p'ei 吳慈培, Ho Chuo and Ku Kuang-ch'i. This text was once in the collections of the T'ien-i ko, the Shan-pen shu-shih 善本書室 and the Shuang-chien lou. Part of the T'ien-i

ko collection has been exported to Japan, but the statement in Ting Ping's 丁丙 *Shan-pen shu-shih ts'ang-shu chih* 藏書志 (Monograph on the books in the collection of fine books) to the effect that Chang Chih-hsiang obtained a Sung print in Ch'in Chu's private collection is incorrect.

8. The Chang Ting-ssu text

Chang Ting-ssu was a native of Anyang. He collated his own MS with the Lu text and published the result in 1602. The photolithographic copy in the *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* has 9 columns of 18 characters to the page. As Kuo K'ung-yen implies, when he asks why Shen-wu (Chang Ting-ssu) did not look at Pi-shan's (Chang Chih-hsiang) text, the tradition of the *Wu* text was not consulted, with the result that there are many errors perpetuated. The Peking Library possesses a four-volume version, with emendations by Ch'ien Lu-ts'an 錢陸燾, a postface by Wu Chuo-hsin 吳卓信 and MS emendations and introduction by Wang Chün 王峻; a four-volume version with postface by Mu Ch'üan-sun 繆荃孫 and MS critical postfaces by Ku Kuang-ch'i and Lu Wen-chao; and an eight-volume version in which Wu Tz'u-p'ei has included critical comments and explanatory remarks by Sun Ch'ien 孫潛, Ku Kuang-ch'i, Wu Chia-t'ai 吳嘉泰 and Ku Yüan 顧沅, formerly in the Shuang-chien lou and Han-fen lou 涵芬樓.

9. *Shih-t'ung chu* 註 in 20 chapters. Revised and annotated by Ch'en Chi-ju

9 columns of 20 characters to the page. In the Naikaku Bunko (Japanese Cabinet Library), the collection of Mr. Kiichirō Kanda and the Tokyo Kyōiku Daigaku Library. This should be a book by Ch'en Chi-ju, containing emendations of the *Shih-t'ung* in his *Shu-wu* 書蕪 (Book Weeds) or *Tu-shu-ching* 讀書鏡 (Mirror for Reading), and the critical content is the same as that of Kuo K'ung-yen: the book is spurious.

10. *Shih-t'ung p'ing-shih*, in 20 chapters, by Kuo K'ung-yen

Published 1604. Edition by Kuo K'ung-ling 陵 in 12 volumes, in the possession of the Peking Library.

11. *Shih-t'ung p'ing-shih*, in 20 chapters.

Criticism by Li Wei-chuo, commentary by Kuo K'ung-yen.

9 columns of 20 characters to the page. The Kiangsu Provincial Library for National Studies lists the *Shih-t'ung-p'ing* by Li Pen-ning in its general catalogue; in the copy in the Peking Library as well as in the catalogue of the Ch'ien-ch'ing t'ang 千頃堂, we find that there is a critical commentary by Kuo K'ung-yen, in view of which there may have been independent publications. Apart from this combined edition in the possession of the Peking Library, which includes a critical postface by Hsü Ch'eng-li 徐承禮, as well as an explanatory introduction by Ch'en Chan, there are many copies in Japan.

12. *Shih-t'ung hsün-ku*, in 20 chapters, by Wang Wei-chien

10 columns of 20 characters to the page. A four-volume edition, in

many collections. Wang Wei-chien was a native of Hsiang-fu 祥符 and graduated in 1595. In his preface to the *hsün-ku*, he said, "When I had finished my commentary on the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, I remembered Huang Shan-ku 黃山谷 saying long ago that the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* and the *Shih-t'ung* were books that one must read, and I thought of writing a commentary on the *Shih-t'ung* as well. At the time, I was shown a copy of Kuo's edition by Chang Lin-tsung 張林宗 (Min-piao 民表) of Chung-mu 中牟. Reading it and finding that it did not accord with my views, I modelled my work on my commentary on the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, and finished writing a commentary on the *Shih-t'ung* in eight months. But Kuo's edition was full of mistakes, so I obtained Chang Chih-hsiang's edition from Wang Ssu-yen 王思延 (Yen-shih 延世) of Hsin-yang 信陽. I had not been able to compare two editions of the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, and as a result of laying my hands on another edition of the *Shih-t'ung*, I think that my commentary on the latter is better than that on the former. However, it is said that Li Shan 李善 made a first and second commentary on the *Wen-hsüan*, and so on up to a forty fifth commentary, while Su Ch'e said in his late years that there were probably numerous revisions needed in his commentary on the *Lao-tzu*. Nor am I supposing that what I have done is enough."

13. *Shih-t'ung hsün-ku pu*, in 20 chapters, by Huang Shu-lin

Huang Shu-lin was a native of Ta-hsing 大興, graduated in the K'anghsi period (1662-1773), and in 1748 wrote his very serious *hsün-ku pu* as a sequel to the *hsün-ku*. In this work he demonstrated how the *Shih-t'ung* should be handled, by contrast with the *I-shih* 釋史 of Hu Ch'eng-no 胡承諾 (Chün-hsin 君信) of the same period, who, in the course of explaining the principles for a compiler working in a history office, discussed the utility of the *Shih-t'ung*.

14. *Shih-t'ung t'ung-shih*, in 20 chapters, by P'u Ch'i-lung

Published in 1752. P'u Ch'i-lung was a native of Wu-hsi. He completed the *T'ung-shih* at the age of 70, and it dominated the field on its publication by the P'u family's Ch'iu-fang-hsin chai 求放心齋. The critical view which it enjoyed at the time is well demonstrated by the following passage in Ch'en Chan's postface of 1754 to the revised Sung edition, quoted in the *P'i-sung lou ts'ang-shu-chih*: "I read the *Shih-t'ung* at an early age and regretted the lack of a good text. However, I obtained P'u Erh-t'ien's *T'ung-shih* and realised that in point of minuteness it was head and shoulders above other editions. But I did not like it because of the excessively numerous comments, as a result of which it seemed not far off rustic pedantry. Meanwhile I borrowed from Lu Wen-ch'ao a copy of the Huang Shu-lin text, which had been corrected by Ho I-men 何義門 by collation with a text in the collection of Chu Wen-yu 朱文游, and I realised that this was quite excellent. I next borrowed a copy of P'u Ch'i-lung's work, which had been revised and corrected by Lu, and I then realised

how astonishingly numerous were the errors to be corrected or cut out. It is indeed difficult to read books, and even more so to edit them. A good half of the works of the T'ang period are now lost, and Lu has done something to repair the obscurities of the *Shih-t'ung*. I propose to do some more research before making my own humble contribution."

15. *Shih-t'ung hsüeh-fan*, in 4 chapters, by Chi Yün

Published in 1772. Chi Yün, one of the front rank of Ch'ing scholars, was a native of Hsien Prefecture. He graduated in the Ch'ien-lung period and won great fame for his editorship of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* (Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature). He could also point with pride to his *hsüeh-fan*. The *t'ung-shih* represents, as it were, the aspirations of a low grade official of Ch'ing times, whereas the *hsüeh-fan* is an outstanding example of the ideals of the highest grade of officials. The only version of the *Shih-t'ung* to have been reissued with new-style punctuation since the advent of the Republic is the *t'ung-shih*, while the *hsüeh-fan* remains available only in *Kuo-hsüeh men-ching ts'ung-shu* 國學門徑叢書 from Ta-t'ung shu-chü, Shanghai. It cannot be for nothing that this work has shared the fate of the Ch'ing dynasty.

## 6. Approach to the *Shih-t'ung* and a General View of Questions Involved

The *Shih-t'ung* is an outcrop of a precious vein in Chinese history. Its author had much unhappiness in the course of his life because of his isolation from his environment, and he had an unusual degree of confidence in himself because of what connected him with men of antiquity. This vein went underground once more and did not reappear until the latter part of the Ming period. The course of its emergence has been outlined above, and I have suggested that its discovery by Liu Chih-chi was no accident but the heritage of the Six Dynasties period. I have further tried to give a general view of how the *Shih-t'ung* became a classic, how it was handled in respect of revision and annotation, of the difficulties of revision, starting in the Ming period from the surviving so-called *Shu* text, of the later emergence of the much superior *Wu* text and its slight diffusion, making the difficulty of establishing a definitive text before the Ch'ing period very great. However, while all this is connected with today's problems, today's problems are different.

Before we return to these questions, two or three warnings are necessary. In 1900, Tanaka Suiichirō 田中萃一郎 wrote *Ryū Chi-ki no Rekishi Kenkyū-hō* 劉知幾の歴史研究法 (Liu Chih-chi's method of historical study). He praised the *Shih-t'ung*'s inclusion of the history of historiography, method of classification, method of compilation and historical philosophy in the light of the tenets of historians since the Enlightenment in Europe. For Meiji historians the objects of comparison were such men as Hegel, Droysen,

Freeman, Schiller and Macaulay. Without, of course, being so rash as to institute a direct comparison, he proposed looking at the *Shih-t'ung* from the viewpoint of western European historical scholarship, and proved that it fully stood up to the test. But there was a tendency among Chinese historians during the second decade of the Republic, and Japanese historians of the Taishō period (1912–1926), to start from a comparison of the *Shih-t'ung* with the *Wen-shih t'ung-i*. The latter work was by the Ch'ing scholar, Chang Hsüeh-shih, and was at one time extolled as the greatest general discussion of the history of China. Western European historical scholarship is not necessarily uniformly excellent, but there is nothing in Ch'ing scholarship to compare with the flexibility and three-dimensionality that have been brought into being by modern society. There were a number of people, moreover, prepared, however heedlessly, to make a direct comparison between Chang Hsüeh-shih and Liu Chih-chi.

The historical scholarship of the Ch'ing period was China's richest in point of both talents and productions, and under the foreign rule it was bred to a brilliant flowering, even though the environment and the situation did not necessarily constitute a good breeding ground for historical studies. First of all, the obstinately held principle of morality above all went beyond a writer's self-defence and became an established conviction; and the almost immovable principle that the bureaucracy could do no wrong went beyond a writer's ideas and became a premise. Within the rigid confines of so inelastic a framework, it was impossible that science as such could exist, however much one might pursue rationality through critical study, or however much of a grasp one might have of scientific method. But this tendency in scholarship not only ran strongly right through the Ch'ing period; historical studies in Japan in the Meiji and post-Meiji periods were also under its influence, with the result that there were a certain number of blind spots in respect of achievements of Ch'ing historical scholarship. Chang Hsüeh-shih was not an exponent of 'critical studies', and his work, the *Wen-shih t'ung-i*, was in fact a collection of critical articles, but the framework in which 'critical studies' were enclosed involved this work too in bigotry, and it was carried out in such an extremely inelastic manner that it can hardly be said to have been a suitable work with which to compare a production of the T'ang period.

What sort of approaches, then, may be considered sound for the *Shih-t'ung*? When Lu Shen, at the beginning of the Chia-ch'ing period (1522–1567) under the Ming, laid hands on a manuscript of the *Shih-t'ung* in the house of his friend, Ts'ui Hsien (Ts'ui Tzu-chung), he rejoiced to be able to confirm that all the praise there had been over the years for Liu Chih-chi's talents as an historian was justified. But the manuscript was very corrupt and hard to read, and he very much wondered whether a better copy did not exist. Then Wang Shun-tien, a native of the same



place as himself, presented him with the Szechwan printed text, and he thereupon wrote his *Shih-t'ung hui-yao*. Then he himself also obtained an old printed text. He filled in a number of lacunae, cut out some corruptions and published a revised edition. This sequence was typical of the Ming approach to the *Shih-t'ung*, and Lu Shen was not alone in that period, when the habit of collating and emending was widespread, the sole consideration being to produce a readable text. Posterity would deplore any characters or phrases being simply left alone, the foolish notion that one's job was simply to list variants having not yet come into being.

For Lu Shen, again, Liu Chih-chi was of a resolute character and judged his predecessors without prejudice, but he had the fault of frequently yielding to his nature and criticising the great and good men of antiquity. Lu Shen does not conceal the variable quality of the style, but he does say that he thinks that Liu's arguments were generally satisfactory. He is not inclined to forgive Liu's treatment of taboo topics, but his reproaches and expressions of detestation are less severe than those of the Ch'ing period. Here too is reflected the free atmosphere of the Ming period. Indeed, since he was proposing to devote himself to writing a continuation of the *Shih-t'ung*, he does not seem to have recognised the necessity of protecting his own position by accusing Liu of immorality. It is a question, in these circumstances, how far Lu Shen was able to be objective, but he does not seem to have been concerned with the background of Liu's thought or the position in which he had been placed. Hu Ying-lin pointed out in the *Shao-shih shan-fang pi-ts'ung* that T'ang historians were of a low standard, lacking in responsibility and great only in their indignation. So this does not mean that Ming scholarship was not prepared to adopt these attitudes, and, in spite of his having such concerns, Hu Ying-lin judged Liu Chih-chi to be a most immoral man.

Lu Shen showed the way to a simple, fresh *Shih-t'ung*, but a safer viewpoint was later adopted by the use of morality as a shield. For example, Ch'ien Ta-hsin, of the Ch'ing period, said in the *Shih-chia chai hsin-lu* that in the *Shih-t'ung* the works of history of the preceding ages had been arbitrarily dismissed without hesitation, and that posterity had therefore raised a loud outcry and dubbed the author guilty of morality. This had become the consensus for many years, but, in general, just as termites shift a tree, the words proceeded not from real sorrow but from an object desire to avoid trouble. Ch'ien goes on to say that Ou-yang Hsiu or Sung Ch'i would certainly have understood Liu's intentions, and that their *Hsin T'ang-shu* shows in numerous ways that, even while they criticised him, they believed in his views. For example, they did not record edicts of accession following on abdications or proclamations of spurious titles; they did not mention checking in regard to the Five Elements and natural disasters; they did not accept antiquated views concerning the

native places of ministers, nor did they compose rhymed eulogies or euphuistic discussions. In his *Shih-ch'i shih shang-chüeh*, Wang Ming-sheng says that the criticism offered in the *Shih-t'ung* is sometimes accurate, at other times tiresome and wrong, but since this point has already been well made by others, he will not reiterate the argument. He goes on to say that, though he does not agree with Liu Chih-chi's views, the direction of his Critical Study owes something to him, and he declares that he wishes to imitate the attitude of Liu's according to which history is not composed but narrated with faithful conformity to the facts. One might say that, though using morality as a shield, he in fact recognised the necessity of approving Liu Chih-chi.

Taking all the above together, we find that the approaches to the *Shih-t'ung* hitherto have proceeded first by way of collation and emendation, and then by comment and annotation. In general, the intention was by these means to read the work properly, while all histories from T'ang times on have been under its influence, historians expressing their feelings and trying to adjust their own posture suitably. The next questions to arise in the wake of these first results involve the examination of the attitudes adopted in studies and their increasing profundity, during the Ming and Ch'ing periods, following on the work of collation; and the further task of finding out, through the commentaries, the background to the formation of Liu Chih-chi's thought. We further need to achieve a balanced view of the character of the different periods in respect of receptivity to the *Shih-t'ung*, as well as investigating the characters of the historians through their expressed feelings, and the tendencies in the various periods. Apart from these, there is, also, of course, the approach to the *Shih-t'ung* considered as a classic. There is also the quest for the place of the *Shih-t'ung* in literary history by analysis of its use of language; and the attempt to establish the form of lost works by assembling the passages where they are mentioned. One might also so dispose the materials that Liu used and the theories that he constructed in order to try to identify his own *modus operandi* in forming theories. But I will refrain from a comprehensive treatment of all these topics, preferring simply to offer one or two explanations and give a few general views.

Let us first proceed with an account of the course of collation and emendation. It may be supposed that, since Lu Shen made a collated edition with them, the Szechwan text that he was given by Wang Shun-tien, and the old printed text that he himself acquired in Szechwan, were different texts; and it is also quite likely that the Sung printed text in his private collection, on which Chang Chih-hsiang based his new printed text, and the *Wu* text, probably seen by Shen I-kuan, were also different texts. It is known that there was a first and second printed text of the Chang Ting-ssu text, reproduced in the *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*, while there are

three Kuo K'ung-yen texts, which means that there was a very high degree of textual discrepancy. It is also clear from the section on Detection of Tedium that the part of the original written with red marks was eliminated in the Sung prints, and so has not survived, while Kuo K'ung-yen sighed that the sections on Structure, Errors and Emphasis, allegedly early lost, might yet be brought to light from where they may be stored in some ancient repository in this wide world. The strenuous work involved in the collapse and reconstruction of a classic is well illustrated by the *Shih-t'ung*, yet almost no effort has been made in this direction since the *t'ung-shih* of P'u Ch'i-lung and the *hsüeh-fan* of Chi Yün. The separation of the science of collation and emendation from the main stream in the Ch'ing period is responsible for the currency of the *t'ung-shih* text as the definitive one, in spite of the passages to be corrected or cut out, for which it was criticised.

Lu Shen, Chang Chih-hsiang, Chang Ting-ssu, Kuo K'ung-yen and Li Wei-chen each corrected the slips and errors of his basic text and brought out a new printed text, and there are later corrections to these texts by the hands of Sun Ch'ien, Feng Shu, Ch'ien Ts'eng 錢曾, Ho Chuo, Lu Wen-Ch'ao and Ku Kuang-chi, which are mostly to be found gathered together in Sun Yü-hsiu's *Shih-t'ung cha-chi* (appended to the *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* text. These are such slips as 劬 (shao) for 郡 in Wang Shao, 巳 (i) for 以 (i), 國 (kuo) for 園 (yüan), or 折 (che) for 析 (hsin), while the biggest mistakes seem to occur in the three sections on Supplements and Commentaries, Incorporation of Earlier Texts, and Regions, and in the two on Distortion and Judgement. These are largely scribal errors in the Szechwan textual group, corrected according to the Kiangsu textual group; the latter part of section 17, Supplements and Commentaries, incorporated text from section 18, Incorporation of Earlier Texts, and this leaves a gap between the two, with much defective text in section 18 in the Szechwan texts. Moreover, section 19 appears as the second half of Incorporation of Earlier Texts in both Szechwan and Kiangsu texts, which have it as Regions, and Regions now commonly appears as section 19. Then the middle of section 25, Distortion, appears in section 18, Incorporation of Earlier Texts, in the Szechwan texts, and is repeated at this point, a mistake early noticed by Lu Shen, but one that he was unable to rectify, only eliminating the passage on its third appearance in section 26, judgement. Kuo K'ung-yen said, "When I first wrote my critical commentary, based on the Yü-chang print, that is to say, the Chang Ting-ssu text, I had not yet been able to see the Yün-chien, that is to say, the Chang Chih-hsiang text, but when I had finished my commentary, I asked the historian, Li Pen-ning (Li Wei-chen) to look over it and check it. This gentleman provided me with the Yün-chien text, and I was now for the first time in possession of the whole of the sections on Supplements and

Commentaries and Incorporation of Earlier Texts. He also emended some 230 characters for me. I may then be said to have restored the *Shih-t'ung* in its entirety." Ho Chuo and others point out that he must also have corrected the mistakes concerning the sections on Distortion and Judgement at this time.

In fact, many dubious points remain, in spite of all the above labour. For example, the Szechwan textual group opens section I, the Six Schools, with, "There is a full account of the documents covering the rulers from ancient times in 'history' (史)," while in the Kiangsu textual group this becomes, "There is a full account of the documents covering the rulers from ancient times in the Outer sections." No one has ever hesitated to regard this as an error in the Szechwan texts, and Chi Yün, in his notes on the Ssu-k'u Catalogue, adopts the position that this means that the Outer sections of the *Shih-t'ung* were written first. Why would the compiler of the Szechwan texts have made a mistake clearly recognizable as such at a glance? The incompleteness of the original text, perhaps, or the carelessness of the compiler. But it remains one of the problems whether such inadequacy as to include in a printed text unaltered something that could not be read, was a local fault of Szechwan, or whether it was the custom in the Sung, Yüan and Ming periods.

The science of textual collation and emendation does not involve breathless pursuit or arguments with clenched fists. It is a task which is achieved with pen in hand and paper laid out before one, and wide reading of all manner of books. As such it assorted well with the hoarding ethic of the Ming period, known as it was as "joy in abundance". While this activity might be said to be like sweeping up dead leaves, it does provide the hope that by accumulation something might be achieved, and it is a job in which it is possible for a man to acquire a sense of superiority through his own discoveries. So the work of restoring and completing a classic proceeded by the emendation not only of errors arising from re-copying but even unsuitable expressions due to the original author's mistakes. In the case of the *Shih-t'ung*, the author frequently quoted historical works freely from memory, and there was thus room for mistakes and misunderstandings, as well as passages in which he had sought to heighten the tone of his euphuistic prose. It was not therefore difficult to conjecture what the final results of revision should be. It is not enough to say that it was unfortunate for the *Shih-t'ung* that collation and emendation of it nearly ceased after the appearance of the *t'ung-shih* text.

Let us next try to obtain a general idea of T'ang historical scholarship through the medium of the *Shih-t'ung*. In the section on Distortion we find: "In the Life of the Second Ruler in the Shu section of Ch'en Shou's *San-kuo-chih*, it says that as a consequence of there having been no historical office in Shu, no records were left of portents. Yet surely, if there had

been no official historian, there would not have been such records as those of the appearance of a yellow vapour in Tzu-kuei 祿歸 reported in the Life of the First Ruler, of a flock of crows falling in the Yangtse and perishing there, recorded in the commentary on the Life of the Second Ruler, of a lucky star which appeared at Ch'eng-tu, in the Life of the Second Ruler, or of the prime minister at I-chou having no breath, in the Life of Fei Wei 費禕. Ch'en Shou 陳壽 probably wrote such libel because he hated Shu on account of his father, on becoming a staff officer to Ma Shu 馬謖, having had his head shaved as a punishment for Ma Shu's execution by Chu-ko Liang. "For Liu Chih-chi it was an absolute presumption that if there were no official historian no records would be left. No doubt there was the pride of the official historian, but this was simply because the recognised field of facts which a contemporary historian should record was closely bound up with the professional consciousness, and the task of collecting and arranging material was conspicuous for the special skill required.

Most of those in Japan who have so far taken an interest in the *Shih-t'ung* have touched on this question, and dealt with the subject of the historical scholarship of the history office. For example, in spite of the fact that the *Shih-t'ung* says, "From ancient times until the present day, form and content have altered, and there is no permanent form in which historians should work," the author mentions his objection to the *Shih-chi* for assigning a 'main chronicle' to Hsiang Yü, and explains it in the following way. The author held that the 'main chronicles' should be used for the annalistic chronicling of the emperors' activities, and that Hsiang Yü was a bandit, and his 'main chronicle' simply in the form of a biography. By this formalistic argument he maintains that the 'main chronicle' for Hsiang Yü negated the *Shih-chi*'s attitude, which consisted in a straightforward exposition of the contemporary situation. Though this followed from his formalistic argument, it also arose from his insistence, as an official historian under the T'ang, on the form that sovereignty should have. Moreover, in his discussion of the Six Schools and Two Types, Liu often offers the judgement that the spontaneously generated form of history, which brought annals and biographies into being and perpetuated them, should simply consist of exposition by biographies and annals, divided into periods corresponding to the dominant power. Liu Chih-chi's words, "What is not in the stream of national history is not recorded," may be taken to represent his view of history.

However, numerous questions still remain at this point too. Once he had matured to the point of reaching his conclusion concerning talent, learning and discernment, the formation and nature of his historical thinking emerge. But how did his critical spirit and rationalistic spirit fit in with his theory of these three excellences, and was this sort of analysis

perhaps an underlying constituent in T'ang thought? Again, whence came the power that enabled him, so firm an adherent of imperial history, to counterattack so sharply with such sections as his Suspicions about Antiquity and Doubts about the Classics? Or, yet again, how did he unite in his own self the double layered structure of his attitude to authority? This involved resistance to incompetent officials of equal or superior rank while displaying absolute confidence in the emperor, and he still adopted a posture of daring resistance to the authority of what were then the classics, which regulated or were in the course of increasing their power to regulate these twin authorities. Or again, in his work he recorded his theories of history in elegant euphuistic prose. This same work, in respect of the environment which gave rise to the descriptions and interests provided by it, lay in the main stream of T'ang culture, running from the Confucian scholarship of Early T'ang to the literature and poetry of High T'ang; and it simultaneously maintained an extremely old fashioned imbalance in the background with a freshness of descriptive power. What would be the reason that something like a Grecian freshness shines out from this work to this day?

The *Shih-t'ung* is a production of the T'ang period which has lived beyond that period. The 'nation' of the 'national history' advocated by Liu Chih-chi advanced rapidly from the Sung period on to a form of state organisation, and it has hitherto been the view that most of the *Shih-t'ung's* proposals have materialised in subsequent historical works. But it cannot be said that what has materialised has necessarily had a bearing on the fundamental principles of historical compilation. It has been at the level of correction of trivial items, and there has been no fresh flowering of a tendency to a more standard critical spirit or rationalism. One could hold that Chinese historical studies have been rather checked and warped in their growth in those respects by the basic theory of the state since the Sung. It would be hard to maintain both that the rationalism of the *Shih-t'ung* has simply been extended in current use up to the present time, and that its critical power was linked, itself included, with its separation from its ancient character, but what we must never lose sight of is the way in which that sprout has spread its roots.

Finally, a glance at the approach by way of commentaries. Even today there remain a number of technical terms and personal names, used in the *Shih-t'ung*, which are still obscure. Commentaries on the *Shih-t'ung* began with Kuo K'ung-yen in the Ming period, followed by Li Wei-chien and Wang Wei-chien, continued under the Ch'ing by Huang Shu-lin and P'u Ch'i-lung, and by Liu Hu-ju and Ch'en Han-chang under the Republic. Classics with such titles as *p'ing-shih* or *hsün-ku* most generally moved along the road of vast bulk. This has been the easy approach road, well trodden, not only in China but in both the east and the west generally, but in

Asia commentary has been closely bound up with authority. There was still room for criticism in Kuo K'ung-yen's *p'ing-shih*, but Wang Wei-chien's *hsün-ku* contains no criticism whatever; he was extremely careful in verifying references, and adopted a posture designed to enhance his own authority by not touching on the question of where lay the authority of the original reference. This development of annotations into running commentary was the same as the vaster road leading rapidly from 'collected explanations' to 'the true meaning.'

This elucidation of sources does not only serve to discover the track of the original author's pilgrimage, it also serves to double the reader's sense of security by broadening the scope of the meaning. But over a number of centuries it does not seem that the main line of scholarly activity necessarily involved nailing scholars to this road. By the time commentaries on the pre-Ch'in classics had been completed and the work of the Han, Wei and Six Dynasties was reached, the bureaucracy was fully installed, and commentary operated within the framework of the life and thought of officialdom. Once a certain character has been made to permeate a bureaucratic society, it is virtually impossible to build a new system on top of it. For example, it ought to have been possible, through a commentary, to find out an author's proclivities or the tastes of the period, and even the tendencies in the formation of thought or an author's blind spots. But the bureaucratic mentality could never yield such a brew.

In the case of the *Shih-t'ung*, it is the *Tso-chuan* that Liu Chih-chi most frequently quotes and mentions. This was probably not confined to Liu, but there is no doubt that the content of the *Tso-chuan*, which exclusively engaged his interest when he was young, lay at the root of his historical outlook. This was not concerned with the vicissitudes of rise and fall; it was a powerful urge to discover the inner secrets of history in meetings with congenial spirits who once lived. The three-cornered contest of the Three Kingdoms or their rise and fall did not command his interest to the extent that they did that of later ages. It was rather that the words of the *Shu-ching* or the *Shih-ching* were still embedded in his fresh consciousness, and one can see that the Five Classics took third place. In his time, the confrontation between North and South was modern history, and its history came to share the field with that of the Ch'un-ch'iu and Warring States periods. It was precisely the agitations of the Wei and the Chin and the North and South that constituted the motive force leading to the composition of the *Shih-t'ung*. He overcame his oppressive pessimism in dealing with this subject, and approached it in a spirit of optimism engendered by the T'ang unification. He blended the two attitudes, and one can probably analyse his technique and, by recovering his raw materials, the course of the composition of his work.

However, previous historical works were not just glanced at and dis-

carded wholesale in the sections on the Standard Histories or Miscellaneous in the *Shih-t'ung*. As the author proudly claimed, "I have looked deeply into the principles of royalty and I have given an account of human morality. All things have been treated, all beings included;" the questions dealt with had many facets, and the criticisms brought to bear on them were of many colours. If today one were to arrange the questions and the criticisms, with a commentary, one could probably divide the work in a way different from that of the author, into such sections as form, rationality, style, the spirit of the times. There exists the harsh criticism that the *Shih-t'ung* is no more than a court historian's essay on form, but the handling proposed above would make it clear that the author did not simply loiter in that field alone. The *Shih-t'ung* is only one seventh of the size of the *Shih-chi* but it still retains a great deal of energy in store.

## 7. A Select Bibliography of Shih-t'ung Studies

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