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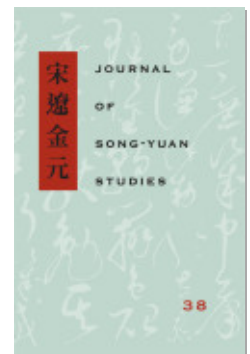
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EMPLOYING THE RIGHT KIND OF MEN:
THE ROLE OF COSMOLOGICAL
ARGUMENTATION IN THE QINGLI REFORMS

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In the year 1027, a low-ranking official named Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052) wrote a letter to the four highest-ranking members of the bureaucracy in an effort to convince them to implement a series of political reforms.¹ These policy recommendations were designed to improve the quality of local officials, enhance the welfare of the people, establish a system of official education, increase military preparedness, prevent popular uprisings, and ensure that quality advice reached the throne. In the letter, Fan conceded that many individuals, including the four officials to whom he addressed the letter, did not necessarily share his view that the current state of affairs was a cause for concern and that reforms were needed. He thus openly acknowledged the difficulties inherent in convincing those in power, whose interests lay in preserving the status quo, to implement policy changes that had the potential to reduce their political authority.

Fan discussed the obstacles hindering the enactment of political reform in the final section of the letter. He maintained that during times of relative order, such as the present, suggestions on how to improve the government were rarely taken seriously.² Fan attributed this to official complacency, and he contended

* This article is based in part on the second chapter of my PhD dissertation, “Cosmos, State and Society: Song Dynasty Arguments concerning the Creation of Political Order” (Harvard University, 2007). I would like to thank Peter Bol, Michael Radich, Chen Wenyi, Ong Chang Woei, and the anonymous readers from the *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this work.

1. *Fan Zhongyan quanji* 范仲淹全集 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue, 2002), 210–29. The letter was addressed to the Prime Ministers Wang Zeng 王曾 (977–1038) and Zhang Zhibai 張知白 (d. 1028) and the Participants in Determining Governmental Matters (*canzhi zhengshi* 參知政事) Lu Zongdao 魯宗道 (966–1029) and Lü Yijian 呂夷簡 (979–1044).

2. Fan wrote: “Moreover, what is the meaning of protecting upright ministers and dismissing

that it made the task of adapting policy to meet current needs extremely difficult. Fan argued that it was in fact this type of official complacency that led to the collapse of previous dynasties: by failing to provide accurate assessments of problems in the government, acquiescent officials accelerated the downfall of the state. For this reason, Fan concluded that the key to preserving the health of the dynasty lay in employing upright officials who had the courage and conviction to offer candid assessments of political affairs.

Although the high-ranking ministers to whom he addressed the letter ignored his suggestions, Fan's ideas appealed to a number of officials within the government. As his reputation spread, Fan began to attract a sizable following of individuals who agreed with his contention that the current political situation needed to be reformed. These men shared an interest in Ancient-style Learning (*guwen* 古文),³ and maintained that an individual's learning and ability should be the main criteria for advancement within the government. By staffing the bureaucracy with the right kind of men, men who possessed personal integrity and had the moral conviction to speak out about problems, these individuals claimed that they could ensure the continued prosperity of the state.

Over the twenty or so years in which they clamored for reform, Fan and his allies employed a variety of arguments to expose problems inherent in the government. One of the rhetorical strategies they utilized with great frequency involved cosmological theory. In the 1027 letter discussed above, Fan pointed to the recent occurrence of natural disasters in the capital region as a sign of impending political decline.

When heaven deeply admonishes [those in power] and they fail to make changes, the calamity [that will arrive] can be held in awe. I have heard that last year the capital experienced a major flood and that this year there was a great pestilence.

obsequious men in order to cause the ruler to possess the *dao*? We can compare it to people rarely taking bitter medicine before they have fallen ill. When the state has yet to experience a crisis, then words that grate on the ear are seldom utilized. Thus obsequious men advance with ease, upright officials are dismissed with no trouble at all, and it is difficult to cause the ruler to possess the *dao*" (*Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 226–27). 又謂保直臣，斥佞人，以致君于有道者，何哉？有若人未之病，則苦口之藥鮮進焉；國未之危，則逆耳之言鮮用焉。故佞人易進，直臣易退，其致君于有道也難哉！

3. In contrast to more traditional renderings such as "Ancient-style Prose" or "Ancient-style Literature," I translate *guwen* as "Ancient-style Learning" because "learning" more effectively captures the movement's construal of *wen* as a multivalent concept denoting not only literature, but also culture, politics and ethics.

Everyone in the four corners of the empire has heard of these disasters and they are without exception greatly worried. These calamities were sent by heaven in order to admonish [those in power]. How could they be meaningless? Moreover, why were the disasters affecting the capital more severe than those in the other areas of the empire? It is because the capital is the place from which moral government issues forth and where the emperor and his prime ministers reside. The calamity has yet to reach its full extent and heaven has not yet severed [the bestowal of the mandate to the Song], thus examine the warnings that have formed there. [Those in power should] not only experience fear and awe in their minds, [the disasters] must also prompt them to rectify their administration. The virtue of the state can still flourish and the *dao* of the world can still be practiced. Yet if [those in power] do not possess fear in their minds and do not rectify the government, there will be a gradual increase in disasters and [the state] will gradually be cut off from heaven. Then what will become of the state and the empire?⁴

天深戒而不變者，禍可畏矣。伏聞京師去歲大水，今歲大疫，四方聞之，莫不大憂，此天之有以戒也，其徒然乎！而京師之災甚于四方，何哉？蓋京師者，政教之所出，君相之所居也。禍未盈而天未絕，故鑑戒形焉。不獨恐懼其心，必使修省其政，國家之德尚可隆，天下之道尚可行也。儻弗懼于心，弗修于政，漸盈于禍，漸絕于天，則國家四海將如何哉？

Linking the occurrence of natural disasters to political affairs had long played an important role in Chinese political remonstrance. From at least as

4. *Ibid.*, 227. Fan continued the passage by critiquing those who attempted to divorce disasters from politics, and then described how their heterodox notions could be exposed by employing upright ministers: "Some people maintain that the state's disasters are due to pre-established patterns and do not arise because of government administration and education. If it is like they say, then is the text of the nine fields (the "Great Plan" *Hongfan* 洪範) written by Yu of Xia actually a heresy? Do they desire to discard and burn it? If one attributes good affairs in the world to oneself, but attributes calamities to heaven, how is this the [proper way] for an enlightened court to exercise caution? I wish for [those in power] to dismiss the words of magicians and observe the regulations of the former kings. Then [the court] will definitely be without absurd ideas and faults. When [the court] protects upright officials and dismisses obsequious men, then the minds of the two sages (i.e. the empress dowager and the emperor) will be like the sun and stars—who could obscure their brilliance? Even if there are those who insist on acting fraudulently and those who use spurious language in debate, once they are tested in actual circumstances, where will they be able to hide?" 或謂國家之災，由歷數之定，非政教之出。若如所論，則夏禹九疇之書果妖言耶？豈欲棄而焚之乎？苟天下有善則歸諸己，天下有禍則歸諸天，豈聖朝之用心？願黜術士之言，奉先王之訓，必不謬矣，必無過矣。于保直臣，斥佞人，則兩宮二聖之心如日星焉，孰可蔽其明乎？縱有行偽而堅，言偽而辯，試于行事，人焉廋哉！

far back as the Zhou dynasty, officials interpreted the occurrence of natural disasters and anomalous events as indications of both misguided political policy and improper conduct on the part of the ruler and high-ranking officials.⁵ Over the course of the Warring States and Han, theories explaining the relationship between the cosmos and human affairs proliferated, and cosmological discourse eventually came to be dominated by a doctrinal framework known as correlative cosmology.⁶ Although the different theories identified under the rubric of correlative cosmology exhibited a substantial degree of diversity, they shared the assumption that the condition of the cosmos reflected political affairs. This assumption provided opportunities for political actors of various ideological stripes to use the occurrence of natural disasters as pretexts to remonstrate with the throne and argue for changes in policy and personnel.

In the above passage, Fan employs the cosmological position first advanced by one of the founders of correlative cosmology, the Western Han Confucian Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179–104 BCE). Fan's decision to invoke Dong's cosmological views is intriguing, for Dong's cosmology supported a style of government that differed in important respects from that advanced by Fan and the other advocates of reform.⁷ Like the majority of correlative theorists from the Han, Dong posited a direct connection between the ruler's comportment

5. Several poems contained in the *Book of Odes* that are thought to date from the late Western Zhou—Xiaomin 小旻, Jienanshan 節南山 and Ban 板—attribute the occurrence of disasters to the actions of high-ranking officials. For an analysis of the use of such rhetoric in the Spring and Autumn period, see David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 96–124.

6. On the political use of correlative cosmology during the Han, see Hans Bielenstein, "Han Portents and Prognostications," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 56 (1984): 97–112; Michael Loewe, *The Men Who Governed China: Companion to a Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 496–521; and Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 129–209.

7. In a series of memorials to Han Wudi, Dong advocated a mode of governance rooted in the personal charisma and moral rectitude of the ruler. He supported this political vision with a cosmological theory that posited heaven as the agent responsible for order and disorder in the cosmos. Dong asserted that heaven constantly observed the conduct of the ruler, and if his rule strayed off course, heaven would admonish him by sending down a minor disaster. If the ruler responded to this divine admonition by increasing his vigilance and by implementing moral government, then heaven would not send down further disasters. However, if he ignored heaven's warnings, then he would be punished with a severe calamity sufficient to cause the dynasty's collapse. Dong maintained that Wudi could ensure heaven's support by cultivating himself and implementing Confucian forms of moral government. See Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Taipei: Dingwen, 1987), 2495–2527.

and the condition of both the cosmos and society. This conception of political order assumed that cosmological and societal harmony stemmed primarily from the personal conduct and charisma of the ruler. Although it was certainly never followed to the letter, this political ideal proved to be extremely influential over the course of Chinese history, and during the early Northern Song, it was used to legitimate imperial authority and political policy.⁸

In contrast to this ruler-centered view, Fan and his allies in the Ancient-style Learning movement espoused an activist theory of government, which held that order resulted from direct governmental intervention in society. The ruler's cultivation and personal conduct, while important for the overall administration of the government, did not directly influence either the moral condition of the people or the state of the cosmos. The early Song adherents of Ancient-style Learning instead maintained that the key to engendering order lay in implementing a system of governance that took the material and moral welfare of the people as its primary task.

In this vision of government, there was no need to justify political rule by appealing to a connection with the cosmos. The government existed to meet the needs of the people and it derived its legitimacy from its ability to do so. Yet, as the above letter by Fan Zhongyan demonstrates, the proponents of reform felt that preserving a connection between the cosmos and human affairs, similar to that found in correlative cosmology, could serve as a useful incentive for encouraging good government, and they frequently employed cosmological arguments in their advocacy for political reform. These men lived in a political environment in which traditional cosmology and conventional modes of governance still held wide currency, and they took advantage of the commonly held linkages between anomalies and political affairs to argue for the need to rectify the government. However, since the customary methods of responding to disasters, which emphasized the personal cultivation of the ruler's virtue and prayers to heaven for relief, did nothing to facilitate the realization of their political ideals, the reformers needed to refashion traditional notions about the meaning of disasters and calamities to provide

8. On the continued relevance of correlative theory in the political arena after the Han, see Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Kojima Tsuyoshi, "Sōdai tenkenron no seiji rinen" 宋代天譴論の政治理念 *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要 107 (1989): 1–87; and Douglas Skonicki, "Cosmos, State and Society: Song Dynasty Arguments concerning the Creation of Political Order" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2007), chs. 1–2.

support for their political policies. In short, they had to convince the ruler, officials and other literati that the disorder heralded by the occurrence of anomalies could not be rectified by traditional means, but rather only through the implementation of their reform agenda.

In this article, I investigate the manner in which intellectuals affiliated with the Ancient-style Learning movement employed cosmological arguments to make the case for political reform in the period from the late 1020s until the repeal of the Qingli reforms in 1045. My investigation proceeds in three parts. In Part One, I examine the political circumstances that more than likely influenced the reformers' decision to employ cosmological doctrines to advocate their political agenda. My analysis focuses on two political developments—the rise of prime ministerial power in the early eleventh century, and the conflict between the political faction led by Prime Minister Lü Yijian 呂夷簡 (979–1044) and the Ancient-style Learning proponents of reform. One of the most pressing and intractable problems facing the reform movement was the entrenched power of Lü Yijian, a representative of the established political elite who firmly opposed the reforms. Many of the arguments advanced by Fan's group in the run-up to the reforms critiqued what they perceived to be the excessive concentration of authority in Lü Yijian's hands. Given that the allocation of authority in the Song political system has been the subject of much debate, I will precede my analysis here with a review of scholarship on this topic, and introduce an alternative approach that I think better explains the distribution of authority in the early Song.

In Part Two, I examine the cosmological arguments advanced by the Ancient-style Learning advocates of reform. I discuss how the reformers conceived of the relationship between the cosmos and human affairs in both their theoretical essays and political memorials. I moreover consider the implications their cosmological writings bring to bear on two important issues in the study of Chinese intellectual history: the relationship between theory and rhetoric in political discourse, and the tenability of the still widely held “worldview” hypothesis, which maintains that Chinese thought was universally informed by certain assumptions about the relationship between humanity and the world.

In Part Three, I investigate the role that cosmological arguments played in the history of the Qingli reforms themselves. The implementation of the reforms did not proceed smoothly, and the advocates of reform in the Remon-

strance Bureau continued to employ cosmological rhetoric to urge Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1023–1063) to throw his full support behind the reform measures well after they were initiated. I focus my analysis here on the difficulties the reformers encountered in explaining the reasons for the occurrence of a serious drought in the summer of 1044. The timing of the drought coincided with the waning of Renzong's support for the reforms, and I show how this led to a situation where the pro-reform remonstrance officials felt obligated to take responsibility for the drought and concede that their political leadership had failed.

*Part One: The Rise of Prime Ministerial Power and
the Origins of Factional Conflict*

SCHOLARSHIP ON POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE SONG

One important factor that influenced the Ancient-style Learning thinkers' decision to employ cosmological arguments to support their reform agenda was the political situation at court. During the early eleventh century, prime ministers managed to expand their political authority by exercising control over the channels of communication to the throne and by forming close personal relationships with the ruler. By restricting the information and advice that reached the emperor's ears, prime ministers increased their ability to implement policy and secure important positions for their supporters. Under these circumstances, the advocates of reform had difficulty finding a platform to present their views to the emperor, and they began to view the control of the government by a powerful prime minister as the primary obstacle to reform.

My contention that prime ministerial power increased during the first several reigns of the Song touches directly on a heated issue in Song scholarship: the division of authority between the ruler and the prime minister in the Song political system. The numerous studies dealing with the question of who held power in the Song political system can be roughly divided into four basic types: those that claim the ruler held more authority; those that maintain the prime minister possessed more authority; those that divide the authority of the ruler and the prime minister into different types and maintain that their political power was complementary; and those that argue the amount of power held by either the emperor or prime minister shifted over the course of the Song, according to historical circumstances and the characters of the different individuals occupying these positions.

The chief representatives of the first argument, which holds that the ruler possessed ultimate authority in the Song political system, are Naitō Konan and Qian Mu. Naitō's claim that the authority of the emperor had increased vis-à-vis the prime minister from the Tang to the Song was based on both a sociological analysis of differences in imperial status during the two dynasties and an investigation of structural and procedural changes in the Song bureaucratic system.⁹ Qian Mu reinforced Naitō's conclusions through a detailed investigation of bureaucratic change, maintaining that the authority of prime ministers declined in the Song because they had to deal with a series of checks and balances that were not present in the Tang system.¹⁰

One of the first individuals to challenge the view that the authority of emperors increased from the Tang to the Song was Wang Ruilai, who contended that Qian Mu's arguments were based upon a faulty mode of analysis. Wang maintained that Qian's exclusive focus on structural changes in the bureaucracy caused him to overlook the manner in which authority was exercised in the actual operation of government.¹¹ He points out that the implementation and enforcement of these changes underwent numerous variations over the course of the dynasty and over time many of them came to be ignored or routinely circumvented. Wang concludes that if we look at the operation of government, the power of the prime ministers in the Song was generally stronger than in any previous dynasty, and the emperor by and large became a symbolic figurehead with no real political power.¹²

9. Naitō makes this argument in the first chapter of the *Shinaron* 支那論 (Tokyo: Sōgen, 1938). My understanding of Naitō's argument has benefited from Joshua Fogel's study, *Politics and Sinology: the Case of Naitō Konan 1866–1934* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

10. Qian Mu 錢穆, "Lun Songdai xiangquan" 論宋代相權, *Songshi yanjiu ji* 宋史研究集 1 (1958): 455–62. Qian listed four bureaucratic changes that resulted in an increase in the emperor's authority at the expense of the prime minister. The creation of the Bureau of Military Affairs (*shumiyuan* 樞密院) and the State Finance Commission (*sansi* 三司) as independent agencies stripped the prime minister of his authority over military and financial affairs; the establishment of the Bureau of Personnel Evaluation (*shenguan yuan* 審官院) reduced the prime minister's power to promote officials; the proscription against *tangtie* 堂帖, or government directives stemming from the prime minister, eliminated the prime minister's ability to issue orders; and the creation of an independent Remonstrance Bureau (*jianyuan* 諫院) that focused its remonstrance on officials, rather than on the emperor, subjected the prime minister to constant criticism and evaluation.

11. Wang Ruilai 王瑞來, "Lun Songdai xiangquan" 論宋代相權, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2 (1985): 106–20.

12. Wang expanded upon his argument in a subsequent article on the political authority of

The representatives of the third position, Zhang Bangwei and Zhang Qifan, critiqued the above views for being too one-sided.¹³ These authors assert that the authority exercised by the emperor and the prime minister was not in fact mutually exclusive, but rather mutually dependent and different in kind. In their typologies of political authority, both authors identified the prime minister's authority as "administrative authority" (*xingzheng quan* 行政權), but they differed in their characterization of the ruler's authority, which Zhang Bangwei termed "ruling authority" (*tongzhi quan* 統治權), and Zhang Qifan labeled "legislative authority" (*lifa quan* 立法權). The possession of these different types of authority allowed for a balance of power between the ruler and the prime minister, and both authors conclude that they worked together to order the state. Both authors moreover maintain that the *shi* class as a collective political group prevented either party in the government from abusing their authority.¹⁴

The fourth position, which takes a historical approach to the problem, has been adopted by Zhuge Yibing, Yu Yingshi and Ji Xiaobin, among others. In a comprehensive monograph devoted to the Song prime ministerial system, Zhuge argues that the amount of power wielded by the emperor and the prime

the emperor. He conceded that changes in the bureaucratic system afforded the ruler unparalleled authority, however, he maintained that Song rulers rarely exercised this authority. He attributed this to the efforts of *shi* 士 to constrain the emperor's conduct through the use of moral arguments. Thus, despite provisions in the political system granting the emperor increased authority, his behavior was held in check by the moral code of the *shi* class. See Wang Ruilai, "Lun Songdai huangquan" 論宋代皇權, *Lishi yanjiu* 1 (1989): 144–60. The argument that *shi* collectively constrained the authority of the emperor through a new-found political idealism is also advanced by Cheng Minsheng 程民生 in "Lun Songdai shidafu zhengzhi dui huangquan de xianzhi" 論宋代士大夫政治對皇權的限制, *Henan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 河南大學學報 (社會科學版) 39.3 (May, 1999): 56–64.

13. Zhang Bangwei 張邦煒, "Lun Songdai de huangquan he xiangquan" 論宋代的皇權和相權, *Sichuan shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue bao)* 四川師範大學學報 (社會科學版) 21.2 (1994): 60–68. Zhang Qifan 張其凡, *Songchu zhengzhi tanyan* 宋初政治探研 (Guangzhou: Jinan daxue, 1995), 62–68.

14. Zhang Bangwei and Zhang Qifan had different conceptions of how the *shi* restrained the conduct of the emperor and prime minister. The former author held that the *shi* were able to band together outside of any political offices they may have held to prevent abuses of power and preserve a balance of authority between the ruler and the prime minister. The latter author argued that the officials in the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau acted as representatives of the lower rungs of the *shi* stratum, forming a third pillar of government that provided a counterweight to the power of the ruler and the prime minister.

ministers did not remain constant throughout the dynasty.¹⁵ He contends that there was no single continuous line of development; the locus of authority was different at different times and thus it is impossible to propose an all-encompassing theory about political power in the Song. While he argues for a steady increase in ministerial authority over the course of the dynasty, he concedes that during certain reigns, especially early in the dynasty, the emperor's power was much greater than that of the prime ministers. He attributes this fluctuation to the differing capabilities and motives of the individuals who filled these roles.

In his study of Zhu Xi's historical world, Yu Yingshi argues that the *shi* class ideal of ruling the world together with the emperor resulted in the unification of imperial and prime ministerial authority during Shenzong's reign.¹⁶ Although Yu concedes that the emperor continued to serve as the ultimate locus of authority in the Song political system, he maintains that, with the implementation of Wang Anshi's New Policies, the political interests of the ruler and prime minister merged. Shenzong's support of Wang's New Policies ushered in a new mode of imperial governance, termed *guoshi* 國是, which united the authority of the ruler and the prime minister in support of a unified state policy. In Yu's vision, authority came to be inextricably tied to policy, and once state policy was established, it constituted the nexus through which authority was consolidated and contested.¹⁷

In his study of Sima Guang's political career, Ji Xiaobin examines the problem of political authority in the Song through a detailed consideration of the personal ties between the emperor and his officials.¹⁸ Ji views the relationship between rulers and prime ministers as having involved a nearly constant struggle to gain and preserve authority. He argues that Song emperors attempted

15. Zhuge Yibing 諸葛憶兵, *Songdai zaifu zhidu yanjiu* 宋代宰輔制度研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2000).

16. Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie: Songdai shidafu zhengzhi wenhua de yanjiu* 朱熹的歷史世界——宋代士大夫政治文化的研究 2 vols. (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004).

17. Despite his claim that this unified policy was a product of unprecedented cooperation between the ruler and the *shi*, Yu acknowledges that not all *shi* agreed with state policy and that this led to intense factional strife both during and after Shenzong's reign. Due to his involvement in determining official policy, the ruler could not remain neutral in these factional disputes, and in order to preserve his authority, he inevitably sided with the supporters of state policy, and helped to suppress their opponents.

18. Ji Xiao-bin, *Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (A.D. 1019–1086)* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005).

to maintain their political power by actively manipulating rivalries among officials, and by preventing any one faction from completely dominating the government. He maintains that this phenomenon is illustrated by Shenzong's relationship with Sima Guang, who, with Shenzong's tacit approval, served as a loyal ally by checking the reformers' power and by steadfastly protecting the ruler's authority.

As should be evident from the above synopsis of secondary scholarship, scholars have used a wide variety of criteria and methodologies in their attempts to determine the locus of authority in the Song political system. In their different studies, they by and large leave the concept of authority only vaguely defined, identifying it as the power to make political decisions and implement policy.¹⁹ Although not without their flaws, the analyses provided by Zhuge Yibing and Ji Xiaobin point the way towards a more nuanced method of interpreting shifts in political authority in the Song government. Zhuge's historical approach demonstrates that authority was not constant over the course of the Song, and that determining the changing dynamics of Song political authority requires a close examination of political affairs over different periods. Ji Xiaobin's consideration of historical events, personal relationships, and ministerial discord provides a more thorough account of how different political actors struggled to attain and preserve influence within the government. Ji's approach in particular manages to avoid the two problems that have plagued most other studies of Song politics—the attribution of undue importance to the *shi* ideal of ordering the world together with the ruler, and the overly facile division of Song political actors into two camps represented by the emperor and the prime minister.²⁰

19. There is a need for a more theoretically grounded investigation of this issue. None of these studies attempts to apply more sophisticated modes of sociological analysis to their examinations of power relations in the Song bureaucracy. In particular, none of the above authors discusses the distinction between different types of authority posited by Weber, how such distinctions have been debated among more contemporary sociologists, or the general relationship between power and authority.

20. Concerning the first problem, Charles Hartman has observed that there is little concrete evidence to back up the oft-cited claim that the majority of Song *shi* viewed government service with the altruism and public spiritedness implied in secondary scholarship (Charles Hartman, "Zhu Xi and His World," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 36 [2006]: 113–115). The *shi* were not a unified group that supported a single position or entity in the government; rather, they represented a diverse array of interests, and their efforts to advance these interests often brought them into conflict with other *shi* and the holders of political power. As for the second problem, which to my mind is the more serious of the two, I think that dividing political authority primarily on the basis

Yet, despite its overall strength, Ji's study suffers from a tendency to over-emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships between the ruler and his high-ranking officials, and thereby neglect the impact of procedural changes in determining relations of authority. In my analysis below, I will attempt to show how the balance of political authority in the early Northern Song can be more accurately assessed through a comprehensive approach, which considers the contemporary analyses made by Song intellectuals, as well as the effects of historical events, procedural changes, and personal relationships on the exercise of authority.

During the reigns of Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–97) and Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 998–1022), changes made to the communication system had the unintended consequence of increasing the prime minister's ability to control the government bureaucracy.²¹ The effects of these procedural changes were magnified by Zhenzong's retreat from an active involvement in political affairs following the reception of the "heavenly text" in 1008.²² Throughout the latter half of his reign, complaints about excessive restrictions on official communications went unanswered, which enabled prime ministers to increase their grip over the operation of the government. This situation continued throughout the regency of Empress Liu, and upon assuming the throne, Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1023–1064) took steps to reassert imperial authority and broaden the channels of communication. However, as I will discuss in detail below, the fallout from the Empress Guo affair led him to temporarily change course and forge a long-standing alliance with Prime Minister Lü Yijian, an act that would have profound implications for the reform movement.

In their political arguments, including those couched in cosmological rhetoric, the advocates of reform railed against the unprecedented authority granted to Lü Yijian.²³ They repeatedly urged Renzong to broaden the

of political position presents a false distinction that neglects the importance of intra-bureaucratic rivalries and factional disputes among officials jockeying for power and influence.

21. In *Civil Service in Early Sung China*, E.J. Kracke describes how the ability to control the channels of communication allowed prime ministers to manipulate the amount and type of information that the emperor received from his officials, and that this had the practical effect of reducing the emperor's ability to dictate policy and manage affairs. See E.J. Kracke, *Civil Service in Early Sung China, 960–1067* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 29–30.

22. See Suzanne Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung Court: The Heavenly Text Affair of 1008," *Bulletin of Sung and Yuan Studies* 16 (1980): 23–44.

23. The prolonged factional conflict between Lü and the reformers illustrates the importance

channels of communication and retake control over employment in order to reduce Lü's dominance over political affairs. Yet, although they clearly sought to reduce the authority of the prime minister, they were not at the same time attempting to expand the authority of the ruler. The reformers' conception of political order afforded the ruler a rather limited role, and thus their arguments are best interpreted as a means to an end: they had to convince the emperor to broaden the channels of communication and retake control over employment so that their ideas could be heard and be implemented by the state. By looking in detail at how contemporary thinkers conceived of the exercise of authority within the government, and contextualizing their views against the impact of procedural changes, historical events, and personal relationships, it is possible to provide a fuller account of political authority during this pivotal period in Song history.

THE NARROWING OF THE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AND THE RISE OF PRIME MINISTERIAL POWER

The prime ministers' ability to exert control over the bureaucracy was made possible by a series of administrative changes dating from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. The most important such change concerned the manner in which the emperor received information and advice from his officials. The reigns of the first two Song monarchs, Taizu 太祖 (r. 960–75) and Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–97), were characterized by close imperial involvement in political affairs.²⁴ The bureaucracy in the early Song was relatively small compared to the size it would eventually attain, and both Taizu and Taizong adopted a hands-on approach to ruling.²⁵ They insisted on personally making decisions about a wide range of government matters, and they sought information from a broad array of individuals in an effort to facilitate their understanding of circumstances in the empire.²⁶ The two primary means via

of personal relationships in determining political authority, and explodes the myth of the *shi* as a univocal group allied with either the ruler or the prime minister.

24. Kracke, 24–6; James Liu, "An Administrative Cycle in Chinese History: the Case of the Northern Sung Emperors," *Journal of Asian Studies* 21.2 (1962): 142; Karl Olsson, "The Structure of Power Under the Third Emperor of Sung China: The Shifting Balance after the Peace of Shan-yüan" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1974), 30–38.

25. Kracke, 55–57.

26. Taizong was particularly insistent that he receive reports about conditions in the empire

which they attained information, audiences with officials and memorials, were subject to far fewer restrictions than in later periods.

However, as Taizong grew older and as the size of the bureaucracy expanded, the onus of reading through the increased number of documents pertinent to the operation of the government became taxing.²⁷ In 995, Taizong attempted to ease this burden by routing memorials submitted by low-ranking officials through the Document Drafting Office (*sheren yuan* 舍人院), ordering the officials there to forward those that contained important information or quality advice. In the edict announcing this new regulation, Taizong stressed his desire to keep the channels of communication as open as possible, but he indicated that the increase in the size of the bureaucracy necessitated the above change.²⁸ A second decision, also made in the mid-990s, restricted the number of officials who could reply to calls for advice on state policy to those of the highest ranks.²⁹ Despite these procedural changes, Taizong still handled a great deal of government business and retained a commitment to hearing from his officials. Yet anecdotal evidence also suggests that he exhibited less patience as he grew older and, towards the end of his reign, he began to adopt a more critical posture, complaining periodically about the quality of the advice he was receiving.³⁰

on a regular basis, and he issued frequent appeals for information from his officials. The importance Taizong placed on communication as well as his close involvement in the administration of the government may have resulted from the unusual manner in which he became emperor. Taizong was Taizu's younger brother and he ascended the throne through somewhat suspicious circumstances, and despite the fact that Taizu had several sons who were old enough to assume the throne. Throughout his reign, Taizong was extremely wary of potential challengers to his authority, and he was insistent that he be informed of all matters taking place in the government. Keeping the channels of communication as open as possible was one way that Taizong could ensure he was receiving accurate and unbiased information.

27. Olsson, 73–4.

28. *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (Taipei: Shijie, 1966), *Dixi* 帝系, 9.3. See also Olsson, 73.

29. Olsson, 74.

30. In 988, he issued a recriminatory edict disparaging the advice he received, calling it “utterly lacking directness and courage; [the memorials] only contain empty phrasings and affectations” 殊無直氣英風，但有虛詞矯飾 (*Song huiyao jigao*, *Dixi* 9.2). In a 997 edict, Taizong appears to have been somewhat worried that he was not being kept informed about problems in the empire: “How can [the policies] we implement be without fault? I have never failed to listen to straightforward criticism; this makes me very afraid. . . . If the words [of officials] are not used, then the fault is mine; if I request [advice] and [officials] do not speak, then who is to blame?” 凡所施張，寧無闕失？未聞讜議，朕甚懼焉…苟言之弗用，則過在朕躬；若求之不言，則咎將誰執？ (*Song huiyao jigao*, *Dixi*, 9.3). Taizong then ordered the officials in the

When Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 998–1022) assumed the throne, he modeled his ruling style on his father's early reign, issuing three calls for "straightforward speaking" during the initial two years of his rule. These edicts, which were prompted by the occurrence of inauspicious anomalies, asked officials of all ranks to submit frank criticism of the government, political policy, and the conduct of the ruler and officials. Mirroring his father's concern with attaining unbiased and accurate information, in the text of these edicts, Zhenzong emphasized the need to keep the avenues of communication as open as possible.³¹

As these edicts indicate, during the initial years of his reign, Zhenzong actively sought to improve the performance of the bureaucracy and inquire into conditions in the empire. However, as with his father, he soon became overwhelmed by the number of memorials that required his attention. In 1001, the review procedures for memorials were greatly expanded, making it much easier for high-ranking officials to learn of their content. Zhenzong charged two officials in the Bureau of Military Affairs (*shumiyuan* 樞密院), Feng Zheng 馮拯 (958–1023) and Chen Yaosou 陳堯叟 (961–1017), with the task of evaluating all memorials, not simply those from low-ranking officials, and forwarding assessments of their proposals and recommendations.³² Previously, memorials were first read by the emperor and then distributed to the appropriate offices for comment and implementation.³³ The decision to allow selected officials to review memorials gave them a significant amount of influence over the information and advice that the emperor received. In addition, the fact that Feng and Chen had close ties to powerful officials in the bureaucracy more than likely dissuaded the submission of highly critical views.³⁴

Censorate to direct all civil and military officials to submit frank reports to the throne about any problems in the empire. He later told his prime ministers that most of the memorials were disappointing. Only Tian Xi 田錫 (940–1003), Kang Jin and Zhang Qixian wrote concisely and provided comprehensive proposals (*Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2004) [hereafter *Changbian*], 41:875).

31. *Song huiyao jigao*, *Dixi*, 9.3–4.

32. *Changbian*, 48:1043.

33. Olsson, 66.

34. See Ho Koon-wan 何冠環, *Songchu pengdang yu Taiping xingguo sannian jinshi* 宋初朋黨與太平興國三年進士 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1994), ch. 6. Chen Yaosou was a close confidant of the head of the Bureau of Military Affairs, Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962–1025), and Feng Zheng had strong ties to the Prime Minister Li Hang. Their replacements, Liang Hao and Xue Ying, were allied with Feng Zheng and Li Hang (*Changbian*, 49:1063; *Song huiyao jigao*, *Lizhi*, 7.19).

However, despite the implementation of this regulation, many officials attempted to circumvent the review process by either requesting that their memorials be read in confidence by the emperor or by submitting memorials anonymously. In 1007, Zhenzong became upset over the denunciatory accusations being made by officials using these methods. He claimed that the majority of these memorials were filled with baseless slander and did not provide any useful advice regarding political affairs. In order to put an end to this practice, Zhenzong prohibited officials from omitting their names from memorials and requesting that their content remain confidential.³⁵ This new regulation meant that all correspondence from officials to the emperor would be public and able to be viewed by the prime ministers. It resulted in a marked decrease in the number of memorials submitted by officials.³⁶

The above procedural reforms demonstrate that, early in his reign, Zhenzong actively sought to formulate solutions to the problems hampering the efficiency of the bureaucracy, even if some of his proposed solutions exacerbated the problems they were intended to correct. However, towards the beginning of the second decade of his rule, his interest in bureaucratic affairs and the day-to-day management of the empire began to wane.³⁷

The event that marks a palpable change in the attitude that Zhenzong brought to his rule was the reception of the “heavenly text” (*tianshu* 天書) in 1008.³⁸ The heavenly text, which extolled the virtues of the Song ruling

35. *Song huiyao jigao*, Dixi, 9.4; *Changbian*, 65:1457–8. In the *Changbian*, Li Tao argues that the attribution of this edict to 1001 in the *Wuchao huiyao* 五朝會要 is mistaken. In a conversation with Wang Dan 王旦 (957–1017) before issuing the edict, Zhenzong said that the privilege of anonymity was being used to attack officials with impunity. If the accusations were grounded in reality, then the officials should have had no reason to hide their identities.

36. Two months after implementing this regulation, Zhenzong informed his top advisors that censors and remonstrating officials had recently stopped commenting on affairs. He expressed concern over the court's ability to receive information about circumstances in the empire. See *Changbian*, 66:1471, 1476.

37. Olsson argues that Zhenzong's style of rule began to change after the Treaty of Shanyuan. He contends that the reforms regarding memorials implemented in 1006, which prohibited the submission of confidential advice to the throne, indicate that Zhenzong was no longer interested in being directly involved in political affairs. However, I would argue that these reforms were responses to the growing size of the bureaucracy and the factional rivalries at court. In the period between the peace treaty and the reception of the “heavenly text,” Zhenzong still played an active role in political affairs and sought information about circumstances in the empire.

38. The circumstances surrounding the decision to fabricate the “heavenly text” and initiate a series of large scale construction projects and ritual ceremonies are somewhat murky. Given

house and predicted continued prosperity for the dynasty, was found hanging from the Chengtian gate 承天門 of the palace by an imperial guard.³⁹ As word began to spread of the text's reception, there ensued a flood of reports of auspicious portents from all corners of the empire.⁴⁰ The reception of such a large number of divine approbations prompted Zhenzong to change the reign title to "The Auspicious Talisman of Great Centrality" 大中祥符, begin construction of an immense temple to house the heavenly text, and conduct a series of major ritual sacrifices, including the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪.⁴¹

As Zhenzong adopted a more ritually focused style of rule, his involvement in the administration of the government and his concern with political affairs declined markedly. He no longer instituted regular audiences with his officials, and he only issued one edict calling for "straightforward speaking" during the remaining fifteen years of his reign.⁴² The decision to discard the institutions and procedures used to obtain information from a wide array of officials resulted in a further constriction of the channels of communication to the emperor. Zhenzong became increasingly dependent on a small group of trusted ministers for information and advice and, as a result, the ability of these men to influence matters of policy and employment increased greatly.⁴³

The primary beneficiary of Zhenzong's retreat from his administrative responsibilities was Wang Dan. Wang's influence at court had increased gradually; in the first decade of the eleventh century, he was only one of several influential advisors at court. However, after the dismissal of Wang Qinruo and Chen Yaosou from the Bureau of Military Affairs in the middle of 1014,⁴⁴ Wang

the extant source material, it is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty the motives behind its implementation. The standard historical account, contained in both the *Changbian* and the *Song jishi benmo* 宋史紀事本末, attributes the scheme to Wang Qinruo, who argued that the performance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices could remove the shame of the peace treaty with the Liao, the Treaty of Shanyuan, and demonstrate to the Song's neighbors that the dynasty had received heaven's favor and protection.

39. *Changbian*, 68:1518–19. *Songshi jishi benmo* 宋史紀事本末 (Taipei: Sanmin, 1963), *Tianshu fengsi* 天書封祀, 128.

40. See *Changbian*, 68:1519; 69:1542, 1543, 1546, 1557; 70:1564, 1568.

41. For a discussion of these events, see Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung Court." Cahill's account is based primarily on that contained in the *Songshi jishi benmo*.

42. Olsson, 77.

43. Olsson, 78.

44. *Changbian*, 82:1882–83. Wang Qinruo was replaced with his rival Kou Zhun 寇準

assumed almost complete control over the entire bureaucracy. During the height of his power in the mid-1010s, Wang Dan dictated official appointments and held sway over the Bureau of Military Affairs and the Finance Commission, which were technically outside of his official jurisdiction.⁴⁵ Zhenzong moreover gave him the authority to personally make decisions regarding memorials that had been submitted to the emperor for comment.⁴⁶

While several individuals critiqued Wang's influence at court, the emperor's faith in him was unshakable and he served as prime minister until illness forced his retirement in 1017. Wang for the most part did not involve himself in factional politics, which facilitated a relatively stable environment within the bureaucracy. However, after the loss of his stabilizing presence, the relations among officials began to deteriorate. The remainder of Zhenzong's reign, as well as the regency of Empress Liu, was plagued by intense factional conflicts as different groups of officials battled one another for influence and political power. For the next decade, the channels of communication remained extremely narrow as official business was decided by a small group of officials to whom the day-to-day management of the bureaucracy was entrusted.⁴⁷

THE ORIGINS OF THE FACTIONAL CONFLICT BETWEEN LÜ YIJIAN AND THE REFORMERS

Upon assuming full control over the government, Zhenzong's successor, Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1023–1064), took steps to reduce the power of the prime ministers and broaden the channels of communication to the throne.⁴⁸ How-

(961–1023). The circumstances leading to their dismissal are discussed in detail in Olsson, 190–97.

45. Olsson, 199–205. See also Sima Guang 司馬光, *Sushui jiwen* 涑水記聞 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989) ch. 6. Olsson notes that Wang Dan rarely commented on affairs outside the purview of his office before the heavenly text affair (Olsson, 153–4). However, by the mid-1010s, he was consulted on all matters.

46. *Changbian*, 88:2012.

47. The restriction of the avenues of communication is exemplified by the numerous memorials from this period requesting an increase in the authority and independence of censors and remonstrating officials. In one of these memorials, Liu Sui 劉隨 asked Renzong, whose rule was still being presided over by the empress dowager, to keep memorials containing remonstrance secret. He argued that officials were not memorializing the throne about political affairs because they were afraid that their criticism would be read by the empress dowager and the prime ministers (*Songchao zhuchen zouyi* 宋朝諸臣奏議 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1999], 51:556–57).

48. Upon assuming the throne, Renzong sought to solidify his authority over the bureaucracy

ever, these early efforts were soon reversed after a dispute with his primary empress resulted in a turnabout in Renzong's ruling style, a return to an all-powerful prime minister, increased factional conflict and a drastic reduction in the power of remonstrating offices. This dispute, known as the Empress Guo affair, began with an altercation between Empress Guo and two imperial concubines, Lady Shang and Lady Yang. Empress Guo was Renzong's wife by an arranged marriage and he spurned her affections in favor of his concubines. Lady Shang purportedly flouted this fact to Empress Guo and spoke disrespectfully to her in front of the emperor. Lady Shang's irreverence enraged the empress, who retaliated by attempting to strike her in the face. Renzong rushed to protect her, causing the empress to miss her mark and scratch him on the neck.

After consulting with several officials on how to deal with this outrage from his empress, Renzong issued an edict announcing that she would leave the palace and become a nun.⁴⁹ This initiated a clash between the officials of the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau, who opposed this decision, and Prime Minister Lü Yijian and his faction, who supported it.⁵⁰ Although Lü was

by dismissing several top officials, including the Prime Ministers Lü Yijian and Zhang Qi 張耆, the Vice-Directors of the Bureau of Military Affairs Xia Song 夏竦 (985–1051) and Fan Yong 范雍 (979–1046), and the Participants in Determining Government Matters Chen Yaozuo 陳堯佐 (963–1044) and Yan Shu 晏殊 (991–1055). He moreover attempted to reduce the power of the prime ministers and broaden the channels of communication by providing the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau, the two bureaucratic bodies devoted to informing the emperor of conditions in the empire, with greater autonomy. He made the Remonstrance Bureau an independent government agency outside of the jurisdiction of the Secretariat-Chancellery in 1032. In that same year, he personally dismissed two officials who had been promoted to the Censorate by Prime Minister Li Di 李迪 (971–1047) without approval from the throne. In order to prevent prime ministers from directly appointing their supporters to the Censorate, he issued an edict which ordered that henceforth, censors could only be recommended by either the Vice-Censor-in-Chief (*yushi zhongcheng* 御史中丞) or the General Purpose Censor (*shi yushi zhi zashi* 侍御史知雜事). For a more detailed discussion of these events, see Skonicki, *Cosmos, State and Society*, ch. 2.

49. *Changbian*, 113:2648.

50. *Changbian*, 113:2648–49. Lü was reinstated as Prime Minister in 1032 after a drinking incident led to the dismissal of Zhang Shixun 張士遜 (964–1049). Lü purportedly harbored a grudge against Empress Guo for her role in bringing about his dismissal after the empress dowager's death. The emperor had supposedly taken a liking to Lü and they together planned to purge the court of the empress dowager's confidants, such as Zhang Qi and Xia Song, in the days immediately following her death. However, after Renzong informed Empress Guo of their discussion, she convinced him that Lü was also close with the empress dowager and moreover

able to quickly silence the protesters, who were led by Kong Daoфу 孔道輔 (986–1039) and the eventual head of the reform movement, Fan Zhongyan, the confrontation over Empress Guo's dismissal inflamed political tensions that had for several years been smoldering beneath the surface. It exposed long standing frictions between the old guard, represented by Lü, and the coterie of officials who advocated reform. These frictions were rooted in the divergent social backgrounds of these two groups, as well as their conflicting conceptions of proper governance.

In many respects, Lü Yijian represented everything that the reformers felt was wrong with the current system of government. As was frequently the case with high-ranking officials in the early Song, Lü Yijian came from a well-connected family with a tradition of government service. Both his great grandfather and his grand uncle had served as officials in the Tang dynasty. In the Song, his father's cousin, Lü Mengzheng 呂蒙正 (946–1011), achieved the rank of prime minister during the reigns of both Taizong and Zhenzong. Lü Yijian clearly owed his rapid advance within the bureaucracy to his family's political pedigree and far-reaching political connections.⁵¹ Wang Zhishuang has documented how Lü took advantage of family relationships and civil service examination connections early in his career to secure recommendations from the highest ranking officials in the bureaucracy.⁵² Wang has moreover demonstrated how Lü cemented his political power by forming factional alliances with officials from similar backgrounds who shared his political beliefs. In the aftermath of the Empress Guo affair, Lü was able to increase his control over the government by stifling political opposition and by placing members of his faction into key posts.

In comparison with the conception of governance held by the advocates of reform, that espoused by Lü and his faction was decidedly non-activist and dedicated to preserving the status quo. Lü's supporters insisted that the bureau-

was wily, obsequious and could not be trusted. When Lü was informed of his dismissal, he was surprised and later learned that it was due to the empress (*Changbian*, 112:2612–13). A similar account of the Empress Guo affair can be found in the *Songshi jishi benmo*, ch. 25.

51. The Lü family's genealogy, marriage patterns and political office holding history have been thoroughly documented by Kinugawa Tsuyoshi 衣川強 in his "Sōdai no meizoku: Kanan Ryoshi no baai" 宋代の名族——河南呂氏の場合 (*Kobe shōka daigaku jimbun ronshū* 神戸商科大学人文論集) 9.1/2 (1973): 134–66.

52. Wang Zhishuang 王志雙, "Beisong Renzongchao Lü Yijian jituan de zucheng ji qi xingzhi" 北宋仁宗朝呂夷簡集團的組成及其性質, *Xingtai xueyuan xuebao* 邢台學院學報 18.3 (2003): 40–44.

cratic system currently in place worked effectively to order the populace, and thus it did not need to be altered. While upholding merit-based promotion in theory, they gave greater weight to family pedigree and social connections in practice. From the perspective of the Qingli reformers, Lü and those like him were simply concerned with the preservation of their personal power, and they subordinated the concrete tasks of government administration to that overriding goal.

In opposition to this view of governance, the adherents of Ancient-style Learning proposed a political system in which the most capable and innovative officials would be selected to lead the government. Most of the men affiliated with the reform movement did not come from families with long traditions of government service, and they lacked the political connections that could facilitate their rise within the bureaucracy.⁵³ They argued that political connections should not be a determining factor in bureaucratic promotion, and instead maintained that political advancement should be based on an individual's learning, character and ability. By staffing the bureaucracy with the right kind of men, the reformers claimed that they could ensure the continued prosperity of the state.

Lü prevented the objections of the censors and remonstrance officials over the dismissal of Empress Guo from reaching the throne. He viewed their protests as a challenge to his, as well as the emperor's, authority, and he promptly demoted the protest leaders, Kong Daofu and Fan Zhongyan, to positions away from the capital. The remaining members of the group were each fined twenty *jin* of bronze. He moreover persuaded Renzong to issue an edict that prohibited censors and remonstrating officials from issuing group requests for audiences with the emperor.⁵⁴

Despite the harshness of this crackdown, Fan and his colleagues from the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau received support from several of their allies in the government bureaucracy.⁵⁵ The voices of their defenders, however, fell on deaf ears. Renzong did not respond to their memorials, and the Censorate and the Remonstrance Bureau fell under the sway of Lü Yijian. For

53. Qi Xia 漆俠, "Fan Zhongyan jitian yu Qingli xinzheng—du Ouyang Xiu 'Pengdang lun' shuhou" 范仲淹集團與慶曆新政——讀歐陽修 [朋黨論] 書後, *Lishi yanjiu* (1992.3): 126–40; Peter Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 169–170.

54. *Changbian*, 113:2649.

55. Duan Shaolian 段少連 (994–1039) and Fu Bi 富弼 (1004–1083) submitted memorials defending the actions of the censors and remonstrance officials. See *Changbian*, 113:2649–2654.

several years following the Empress Guo affair, Lü was able to silence political opposition and gradually increase his control over government affairs.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the leader of the reform movement, Fan Zhongyan, moved, after his demotion, between several provincial posts.

Despite these years in the political wilderness, Fan's career was eventually to take a less ill-starred turn. In 1035, he was called back to the capital, where he wound up serving as the prefect of Kaifeng.⁵⁷ This promotion set the stage for a renewed round of conflict between Fan and Lü Yijian, who by now were rivals of long standing. It was at this stage of the struggle that Fan and his supporters began to urge Renzong to wrest control of rewards and punishments from the prime minister, and to open the channels of communication.

**THE NEXT STAGE IN THE FACTIONAL DISPUTE:
EMPLOYING THE RIGHT KIND OF MEN**

Upon returning to the capital, Fan almost immediately became embroiled in another dispute with Lü Yijian. Fan submitted a memorial arguing against moving the capital to Luoyang, which was being considered for strategic reasons.⁵⁸ Lü immediately critiqued Fan's position, telling the emperor that Fan was "unrealistic, strove after fame, and had no practical ideas."⁵⁹ Fan responded to Lü's attack on his character by presenting four essays to the throne in which he critiqued the current political situation and argued for the need to employ worthy ministers.⁶⁰

Although these essays were motivated by Fan's dispute with Lü, they were devoted to delineating the problems plaguing the government and the ways in which such problems could be rectified. They would have a profound

56. *Changbian*, 116:2723. Li Tao notes that Lü assumed complete control over affairs after hatching a scheme that resulted in the dismissal of his fellow prime minister, Li Di. His attempts to exercise control over censors and remonstrance officials are detailed in *Changbian*, 118:2788 and 132:3128.

57. *Fan Wenzheng gong nianpu* 范文正公年譜, in *Songren nianpu congkan* 宋人年譜叢刊 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue, 2003), 613–16. Fan's *nianpu* states that he was given the assignment of prefect to keep him preoccupied with bureaucratic matters. It further claims that Lü Yijian hoped he would make a mistake that could serve as a justification for his further demotion.

58. *Changbian*, 118:2783–84; *Fan Wenzhenggong nianpu*, 615–16.

59. *Changbian*, 118:2784. "仲淹迂闊, 務名無實."

60. These four essays are also discussed in James T.C. Liu, "An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 105–131.

influence on the overall framework within which the cosmological arguments espoused by the proponents of Ancient-style Learning were articulated over the next decade.

In the first essay, “On the Values of Emperors and Kings” (*Diwang haoshang lun* 帝王好尚論), Fan critiqued the non-activist theory of political order contained in the *Daode jing*, which argued for the ruler to be without desire and withdraw himself from an active involvement in government affairs.⁶¹ He contended that descriptions of the ruler contained in the *Record of Ritual* (*Liji* 禮記) and the *Analects* contradicted this view, and specifically maintained that the ruler created political order by promoting specific values and modes of conduct over others. Thus the ruler must have preferences; the problem was determining which preferences were the ones that would facilitate good governance. Fan suggested that the sage rulers of antiquity were able to adopt the right preferences because of their willingness to employ worthy advisors and listen to their advice. One of the main reasons why later rulers such as Jie 桀, Zhou 紂 and Sui Yangdi 隋煬帝 brought ruin upon their states was because they had an aversion to remonstrance.

In the second essay, “On Selecting and Employing the Worthy and Capable” (*Xuanren xianneng lun* 選任賢能論), Fan elaborated on how employing talented officials ensured the success of the state.⁶² After attributing the fall of the Qin and Sui dynasties to the fact that their rulers failed to employ the most talented men in the empire, Fan delineated the qualities that differentiated worthy ministers from the rank and file. He argued that Confucius’ four fields (*sike* 四科), which consisted of virtuous conduct (*dexing* 德行), political affairs (*zhengshi* 政事), speech (*yanyu* 言語) and writing (*wenxue* 文學), provided the best criteria for judging an individual’s suitability for government service.⁶³ If the ruler chose to ignore these criteria and employ obsequious officials, then courageous individuals would lose faith in the dynasty and change their allegiances, leading to a situation akin to the end of the Qin and Sui.

In the third essay, “On Courting Fame” (*Jinming lun* 近名論), Fan defended himself against Lü’s aspersion that he strove after fame by reinterpreting fame in a positive light.⁶⁴ The title of the essay is an allusion to a passage

61. *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 152.

62. *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 153–4.

63. The “four fields” are derived from Confucius’ classification of his disciples in *Analects* 11.3.

64. *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 154–5.

from the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, which states: “In doing good, do not court fame.”⁶⁵ Fan contended that people who abided by this maxim were not moved by rewards and punishments, and thus were of no use to the state. He argued that the sage rulers used fame as a motivational tool to encourage people to act appropriately of their own accord. He even went so far as to redefine the term *mingjiao* 名教 (teaching of names), which most commonly referred to the ethical teachings of Confucianism, to denote the teaching that reputation could serve as a motive for exemplary conduct. Fan further observed that those who followed the way of worthies and sages in the past all sought to make a name for themselves. Confucius, in fact, wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* as a guide to *mingjiao*: “The good are rewarded, the bad are punished. This caused later generations of rulers and ministers to cherish good reputation and strive for it, to fear a bad reputation and remain vigilant.”⁶⁶

Fan continued the essay by entertaining the objection that doing good for the purpose of enhancing one’s reputation was contrary to conventional views regarding ethics. Invoking a passage from the *Mencius*, which acknowledged differences in the performance of moral conduct, Fan postulated a gradation of ethical behavior.⁶⁷ The highest level consisted of individuals like the sage

65. *Zhuangzi* 莊子, ch. 3. 爲善無近名. Fan discussed his disagreement with Zhuangzi’s position at length in a letter he wrote to Yan Shu in 1029: “If you take my seeking after fame as a fault, then [what of] the sages who began to encourage all under heaven through their reverence of the teaching of fame. Zhuangzi said: ‘In doing good, do not approach fame.’ This is simply a Daoist doctrine aimed at preserving the self—how can it embody the intent of ordering all under heaven! If the teaching of fame is not revered, then those who serve as rulers will say that Yao and Shun are not worthy of their admiration, and Jie and Zhou are not worthy of their fear. Those who serve as ministers will say that Gao Yang’s eight sons are not worthy of being honored, and Huangdi’s four sons are not worth feeling shame over. [If this is the case], how can there ever again be good men in the world! If men do not cherish fame, then the authority of the sages will be discarded” (*Shang zizheng Yan shilang shu* 上資政晏侍郎書, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 232). 若以某邀名爲過，則聖人崇名教而天下始勸。莊叟云爲善無進名，乃道家自全之說，豈治天下者之意乎！名教不崇，則爲人君者謂堯舜不足慕，桀紂不足畏，爲人臣者謂八元不足尚，四凶不足恥，天下豈復有善人乎！人不愛名，則聖人之權去矣。

66. *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 155. “孔子作春秋，即名教之書也。善者褒之，不善者貶之，使後世君臣愛令名而勸，畏惡名而慎矣。” Fan also makes this point in his *Shuo Chunqiu xu* 說春秋序, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 189.

67. The passage from the *Mencius* is 7A.30: 孟子曰：「堯舜，性之也；湯武，身之也；五霸，假之也。久假而不歸，惡知其非有也？」“Mencius said, “Yao and Shun had it as their nature. Tang and King Wu embodied it. The Five Leaders of the feudal lords borrowed it. But if a man borrows a thing and keeps it long enough, how can one be sure that it will not

rulers who had morally good natures; the second level contained individuals who practiced ethical behavior with no ulterior motive; the third was composed of those who performed ethical acts in order to attain fame; and the lowest level was comprised of those who no longer cherished fame and held no regard for moral precepts. Fan discussed these different ethical gradations with reference to the political decline that took place from the perfect societies of high antiquity to the disorder of the Warring States. The implication of his discussion was that people no longer had the capacity to act morally of their own accord, and thus they had to be encouraged to do so through rewards and the veneration of reputation.⁶⁸

Having argued for the need to obtain virtuous officials through rewards and punishments,⁶⁹ Fan devoted the final essay in the series to a discussion of the roles that the ruler and his ministers should play in the government. He began the essay, entitled “On Delegating to Officials” (*Tuiwei chenxia lun* 推委臣下論), by emphasizing that the responsibilities of the ruler and his officials were distinct, and that the ruler must not allow high-ranking ministers to encroach upon his authority.⁷⁰ Fan provided numerous examples of the pitfalls that befell rulers who ignored this advice. The example he discussed in the most detail was that of Tang Xuanzong, focusing on the disparity between his early and later rule. He attributed the difference between his early and later performance to the people he employed in the position of prime minister. During the latter part of his reign, Xuanzong made the mistake of trusting Li Linfu 李林甫 as he had trusted his earlier prime ministers Yao Chong 姚崇 and Song Jing 宋璟. Fan maintained that Li was able to control the bureaucracy because he managed to convince Xuanzong to approve of ninety

become truly his?” Translation from D.C. Lau, trans. *Mencius* (Hammondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1970), 188.

68. Fan concludes the essay by invoking the example of King Wu of the Zhou dynasty. He reversed the immoral practices of the Shang by teaching ritual to the common people, and by rewarding those who had the courage to remonstrate against the tyrannical policies of the last Shang king, Zhou. He then wrote: “This is how the sages earnestly prized the teaching of fame in order to encourage all under heaven. If you adopt the words of the Daoists, and do not cause people to approach fame, then how can you again obtain loyal ministers and outstanding *shi* to serve the state!” 是聖人敦獎名教，以激勸天下。如取道家之言，不使近名，則豈復有忠臣烈士為國家之用哉！ (*Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 155).

69. Fan also discusses the necessity of instituting impartial rewards and punishments in his 1029 letter to Yan Shu (*Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 233–34).

70. *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 156–58.

percent of his recommendations for promotion and demotion. Since officials owed their positions to Li, rather than the emperor, they placed their loyalty to him over their loyalty to the state. Li also intimidated the officials at court who were not allied with his faction, and thus no one was willing to provide honest remonstrance. Since Xuanzong was not receiving information about circumstances in the empire, the An Lushan Rebellion caught him unawares and led to the decline of the dynasty.⁷¹

Fan continued the essay by asserting that the way for the ruler to concentrate authority in his hands was to first select the right kind of officials. He acknowledged that this was a difficult task, but maintained that Confucius' four fields—virtuous conduct, political affairs, speech, and writing—could serve as a standard for distinguishing the worthy from the unworthy. If Renzong were to employ the four fields as the criteria for selecting high-ranking officials, then Fan argued that individuals who aspired to those positions would cultivate their conduct in order to obtain promotion. He warned that many individuals would slander those who embodied these qualities, but expressed confidence that the ruler would be able to distinguish their worth over time.⁷²

As for the officials outside of the highest ranks, their numbers made it impossible for the emperor to personally select them, and thus he had to delegate this responsibility to his prime ministers. In Fan's view, the ruler needed to expend his effort in selecting the right kind of people for important offices; once he did so then he would not have to worry about the day to day administration of the government: "The myriad duties are entrusted to those below and the handles are retained by [the ruler] above; only then can one begin to speak of being without action (*wuwei* 無爲)." ⁷³ He concludes the

71. Fan does not attribute the rebellion to Xuanzong's personal conduct or administration of the empire, but to his decision to delegate the handles of reward and punishment to Li Linfu. The parallel he is drawing to Renzong's employment of Lü Yijian is obvious.

72. Fan's discussion of the need to employ worthy ministers in these essays was later echoed in Ouyang Xiu's famous "On Factions" (*Pengdang lun* 朋黨論) written in 1044. This essay, which was intended to justify the reform group's political bonds, was a response to accusations that their espousal of common ideals and goals amounted to the creation of a political faction. In a manner similar to Fan's reinterpretation of the meaning of fame in "On Courting Fame," Ouyang embraced the derogatory label of "faction" and redefined the term to designate only those individuals who bonded together for the purpose of advancing the *dao*. For a detailed analysis of Ouyang's essay, and the rhetorical use of the term faction in Song political discourse, see Ari Levine, "Faction Theory and the Political Imagination of the Northern Song," *Asia Major* 18.2 (2005):155–200.

73. 庶務委于下,而柄歸于上,始可以言無爲矣. In this way, Fan reinterpreted the tradi-

essay by urging Renzong to appoint more censors, to ensure that the channels of communication remain open and that officials conduct themselves appropriately.

The circumstances surrounding the submission of these four essays to the throne suggest that Fan was trying to convince the emperor to replace Lü Yijian.⁷⁴ This interpretation is further supported by Fan's submission of a chart of promotions that had taken place during Lü's tenure, which delineated the favoritism he showered on those loyal to him.⁷⁵ After reading these essays, Lü reportedly became enraged and disputed their content in front of the emperor. He accused Fan of overstepping the responsibilities of his office, of speaking above his station, of inciting factionalism, and of driving a wedge between the ruler and his ministers.⁷⁶ Fan composed a caustic response to Lü's accusations, which earned him another demotion to a provincial post.⁷⁷ Han Du 韓瀆, a censor allied with Lü, then requested that a list of the members of Fan's faction be posted outside of the *chaotang* 朝堂, or deliberation hall, in order to warn officials against speaking about matters outside of their official responsibilities.⁷⁸

Lü's attempt to blacklist Fan and those allied with him provoked an intense backlash. In contrast to the relatively peaceful manner in which Fan's supporters acquiesced to his demotion after the Empress Guo affair, several of Fan's associates rallied to his side. Yu Jing 余靖 (1000–1064) and Yin Zhu 尹

tional conception of non-activist, or *wuwei*, government to conform to his activist political views. It did not involve keeping one's proclivities secret and turning over responsibilities of employment and administration completely to the prime minister. Rather, it required that the ruler clearly establish standards for promotion and demotion, and keep personal control over employment. By placing quality men in important posts, the ruler could entrust the administration of the government to his ministers and be confident that they would govern effectively.

74. Both the *Changbian* and Fan's *nianpu* state that Fan compared Lü to the Western Han official Zhang Yu 張禹 who betrayed the trust of emperor Chengdi and facilitated the usurpation of the throne by Wang Mang (*Changbian*, 118:2784; *Fan Wenzhenggong nianpu*, 616).

75. *Changbian*, 118:2783–84. The chart, which is no longer extant, is referred to as the *baiguan tu* 百官圖 or the "hundred official chart." The following excerpt from it is contained in the *Changbian*: "In this way some are promoted according to established procedures; in this way some are not promoted according to established procedures. In this way the promotions are impartial; in this way the promotions are partial. It is necessary that they be investigated" (*Changbian*, 118:2784). 如此爲序遷，如此爲不次，如此則公，如此則私，不可不察也。

76. *Changbian*, 118:2784.

77. Fan was demoted to Prefect of Raozhou 饒州.

78. *Changbian*, 118:2784

洙 (1001–1047) wrote memorials of protest, arguing that punishing officials for providing candid remonstrance would have dire consequences for the state. Unlike some officials who were attempting to distance themselves from Fan, they were proud of their relationships with him and requested to be demoted as a sign of solidarity.⁷⁹ Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) wrote a letter accusing the remonstrance official and associate of Lü Yijian, Gao Ruona 高若訥 (997–1055), of neglecting his official duties. Since the court had prohibited officials from speaking above their stations, it was Gao's duty to remonstrate with the emperor about the injustice of Fan's demotion. He also requested to be reprimanded if Gao could honestly conclude that his assessment of Fan Zhongyan was mistaken.⁸⁰ Yu, Yin, and Ouyang were subsequently demoted.

In the mid-1030s, the proponents of Ancient-style Learning were thus confronted with a situation in which Lü and his faction controlled key posts in the bureaucracy and attempted to silence political opposition. In these circumstances, natural disasters afforded unique opportunities to remonstrate with the throne over problems in the empire. In choosing to take advantage of the occurrence of natural disasters to advocate reform, Fan and his allies needed to convince both the court and their fellow literati that traditional methods of responding to disasters were mistaken, and moreover that harmony between the human and natural worlds could best be restored through the implementation of key elements in their reform agenda. In the following section, I investigate how the Ancient-style Learning proponents of reform made their case in two different types of writings—theoretical essays and political memorials.

Part Two: Ancient-style Learning Cosmological Argument

The cosmological arguments advanced by Song Ancient-style Learning intellectuals in their theoretical essays show the influence of three main factors: the humanism of the prominent Tang Ancient-style Learning stylist Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819), the continued popularity of Han era correlative doctrines in political circles, and the perceived implications of these two positions on the operation of the government. The majority of Song Ancient-style Learning thinkers contended that the cosmologies posited by both Liu and

79. *Changbian*, 118:2785–86.

80. *Changbian*, 118:2787; *Fan Wenzheng gong nianpu*, 617.

Han correlative theorists impeded the creation of political order. They thus rejected them, and employed a number of different theories to demonstrate a relationship between cosmological order and political affairs that supported their conception of proper governance. As I will demonstrate below, in their writings on this matter, they were not overwhelmingly concerned with providing a consistent, systematic theory. Rather, they advanced a variety of different conceptions of the cosmos to assert that, contra Liu, there was in fact a connection between the cosmos and human affairs, that this connection differed from that proposed by Han correlative theorists, and that it supported the implementation of their political ideals.

In one of the most famous cosmological essays of the Tang, the “Discourse on Heaven” (*Tianshuo* 天說), Liu Zongyuan contended that heaven was simply a thing, which like other things lacked agency, and thus heaven had no connection with human affairs.⁸¹ On the basis of this claim, Liu critiqued the cosmological views embraced by the Tang court, arguing that the practice of performing rituals and promoting virtues according to a set seasonal schedule corrupted the *dao* of the sages. Liu contended instead that the court should model the sage’s implementation of the “way of centrality” (*zhongdao* 中道), which specified that moral government be practiced continually, whenever appropriate, and without respite.⁸² Liu thus argued that good governance depended on implementing affairs in accordance with conditions, and not on any sort of cosmological foundation.

Although the majority of Song Ancient-style Learning intellectuals could agree with Liu’s critique of Tang political cosmology, and his contention that the government should base policy on an assessment of political circumstances, they could not support his more radical claim denying the existence

81. For a detailed discussion of Liu’s cosmological views, see Chen Jo-shui, *Liu Tsung-yüan and Intellectual Change in T’ang China, 773–819* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 99–126.

82. Liu advanced this argument in two essays: “On the *Shiling* Ritual Calendar” (*Shiling lun* 時令論) and “On Determining Punishments” (*Duanxing lunxia* 斷刑論下). In the former work, Liu critiqued the implementation of the *shiling* ritual calendar, which Emperor Xuanzong had created to replace the *yueling* ritual calendar found in the *Book of Rites*. Liu maintained that the practice of basing political policy on the stipulations found in ritual calendars made it impossible to govern effectively. In the latter essay, Liu contrasted the current practice of modeling government activities on changes in the seasons with the sages’ “way of centrality,” which was not premised in prescribed behaviors, but rather on understanding that order is created by responding appropriately to different situations.

of a connection between the cosmos and human affairs. The primary reason for their disagreement with Liu centered on their perception that Liu's stance would impede the realization of their political ideals. It is important to remember that, unlike Liu, the Song proponents of Ancient-style Learning actively sought to have their political program implemented by the state.⁸³ In addition to removing an important check on the ruler's conduct, the espousal of Liu's cosmological stance would have left reform-minded ministers with one less rhetorical tool to remonstrate with the throne. Thus, even though they could agree with Liu's critique of Tang state cosmology and his advocacy of a more humanist approach to governance, they rejected his attempt to disassociate the cosmos from political affairs.⁸⁴

83. Most of Liu's discussions on the cosmos and its relation to political affairs date from the period of his exile to a distant official post in Yongzhou, Hunan (Shi Ziyu 施子愉, *Liu Zongyuan nianpu* 柳宗元年譜 [Wuhan: Hubei renmin, 1958], 77–88; Chen, 64; 81–84). After this exile, which occurred as a result of the abortive reform of 805, Liu no longer played a prominent role in court politics. Although it is fair to assume that Liu hoped his suggestions would be implemented by the state, there is no evidence that he actively worked to achieve the realization of this goal. Indeed, Liu's association with the failed reform of 805 and his subsequent exile relegated him to the fringes of officialdom, and it is doubtful that his ideas carried any significant weight at court.

84. Liu's claims that the cosmos was unrelated to political affairs and that disasters were not indications of problems in the government were critiqued by the pro-reform Ancient-style Learning intellectuals Li Gou 李覲, Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽, Fu Bi 富弼, and Shi Jie 石介 (1005–1045). Each of these men rejected Liu's position on the grounds that it had a deleterious effect on political affairs. Both Su and Shi singled out Liu by name, and offered a comprehensive critique of his views. A typical example of such criticism can be found in the following passage written by Shi Jie: "Zihou (Liu Zongyuan) only incorporated Yao's floods and Tang's droughts in the creation of his theory. In later generations, when benighted rulers and tyrants abused the people and stole their possessions, indulged their desires and became debauched, heaven issued admonitions in order to instruct them to be vigilant. [These rulers] said: 'Yao and Tang were great sages and there still appeared nine floods and seven droughts (during their reigns). How could heaven be warning me?' They thereupon did not exercise caution, did not cultivate virtue, gave free reign to their desires, and increased their consumption of scarce resources. Was it the case that heaven failed to destroy them? Having fearfully witnessed disasters was the reason why Gaozong presided over a [dynastic] resurgence; Jie and Zhou were destroyed because they did not stand in awe of heaven's mandate. Theories like those of Zihou throw mores into disarray" (*Culai Shi xiansheng wenji* 徂徠石先生文集 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1984], 184). 子厚直取堯水、湯旱而爲之說。後世昏主暴君，虐民賊物，肆情恣惑，天爲譴告，以示警懼。曰：堯與湯，大聖人也，猶且見九潦七旱，天豈警戒我乎？不惕厲，不修德，窮所欲，益耗荒，天其不亡之乎？見災而懼，高宗所以中興；不畏天命，桀、紂所以覆滅。如子厚之說，汨彝倫矣。

The *realpolitik* concerns of the Song adherents of Ancient-style Learning also informed their appraisal of Han correlative cosmology. Several Ancient-style Learning intellectuals were highly critical of the doctrine of stimulus and response, which undergirded the connection advanced in correlative cosmology between the cosmos and human affairs. Put simply, this doctrine held that changes in the natural world were caused, or stimulated, by human activities. On the basis of this doctrinal assumption, correlative theorists proposed complex frameworks that matched different human actions with specific types of anomalies, allowing them to pinpoint the causes of disasters. Song Ancient-style Learning thinkers like Ouyang Xiu and Shi Jie rejected the validity of these frameworks, arguing that it was impossible to determine the causes of disasters with precision, and that attempts to do so distracted the ruler from more urgent political tasks.⁸⁵

Many Ancient-style Learning intellectuals thus sought to negotiate a theoretical view that avoided what they perceived to be the negative political implications of both Liu's radical humanism and the correlative doctrine's notion of stimulus-response. Not all of the adherents of Ancient-style Learning theorized on the cosmos, but those who did employed traditional cosmological concepts such as heaven, *yinyang*, and the five phases, to argue for a notion of "loose" correlativity, which preserved a connection between the cosmos and human affairs while avoiding the negative political implications they associated with Han era correlative cosmology. The theoretical writings in which they advanced their cosmological views reveal that doctrinal consistency was not a fundamental concern for many members of the movement; Ancient-style Learning thinkers such as Tian Xi, Li Gou 李覲 (1009–1059), Ouyang Xiu, and Shi Jie felt comfortable using different cosmological arguments to assert that natural disasters were signs that political affairs needed to be

85. See Ouyang Xiu, *New History of the Tang Dynasty* (*Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Taipei: Dingwen, 1998), 34:872); and Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 183–85. Tian Xi, Li Gou and Hu Yuan 胡瑗 (993–1059) accepted the basic concept of stimulus-response in some of their writings (though not in all); however, they at the same time rejected the frameworks delineating the linkages between the ruler's conduct and different types of natural disasters proposed by Han era correlative theorists. Instead, they argued that the proper way for the ruler to respond to natural disasters involved rectifying political affairs and making sure that worthy ministers occupied important positions in the bureaucracy. See Tian Xi's "On Heaven's Mechanism" (*Tianji lun* 天機論), Li Gou's fifth essay in "Proposals for Stabilizing the People" (*Anmin ce* 安民策), and Hu Yuan's *Lectures on the Great Plan* (*Hongfan kouyi* 洪範口義).

rectified.⁸⁶ In my analysis below, I will investigate two cosmological theories formulated by Ouyang Xiu and Shi Jie, which proposed novel conceptions of the cosmos to justify the appointment of worthy individuals to important political posts.

In writings that predate the reforms, Ouyang Xiu grounded his conception of the relationship between the cosmos and human affairs in passages from the *Book of Change*.⁸⁷ In his “Questions on the *Book of Change*” (*Yi huowen* 易或問), written in 1037, soon after Lü’s efforts to suppress the reformers, Ouyang maintained that Confucius’ views on the cosmos were articulated most clearly in the *tuan* 豳 statement on the *qian* 謙 hexagram.⁸⁸ In Ouyang’s interpretation, the *qian* hexagram *tuan* statement revealed that Confucius found it impossible to determine conclusively whether heaven was an agent that responded to human affairs; however, through an investigation of the phenomenal world, Confucius deduced the existence of a series of parallels

86. For example, in “Heaven’s Commands” (*Tianyu* 天諭), Li Gou attributed the occurrence of natural disasters to heaven, but in his “Proposals for Stabilizing the People” (*Anmin ce* 安民策) he argued that they arose due to an imbalance in *yinyang*. Despite positing different explanations for the occurrence of natural disasters, in both of these pieces Li asserted that the state needed to respond to natural disasters by rectifying political affairs (*Li Gou ji* 李觀集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981), 246; 174–75). Similarly, in his “Preface to a Diagram on Auspicious Signs” (*Furui tuxu* 符瑞圖序) and “On Floods and Droughts” (*Shuihan lun* 水旱論), Tian Xi contended that auspicious portents were not responses to good government, but rather resulted from either fortuitous principle (*ouran zhi li* 偶然之理) or natural alterations in *yinyang*; however, in his “On Heaven’s Mechanism” (*Tianji lun* 天機論), he maintained that heaven issued forth auspicious portents and natural calamities in response to the ruler’s management of political affairs (*Quan Songwen* 全宋文 [Chengdu: Bashu, 1988], 90:143–45; 82:21–23; 91:166). Like Li Gou, Tian employed these different cosmological positions to argue for a unitary conclusion—the ruler must focus his efforts on rectifying the government, particularly by employing worthies and dismissing small men. As I will argue in more detail below, the willingness of Ancient-style Learning intellectuals to employ different cosmological arguments to advance their political interests suggests that their discussions of the cosmos were motivated primarily by political concerns.

87. My understanding of Ouyang Xiu’s views on the cosmos has benefited from Peter Bol, “The Sung Context: From Ouyang Hsiu to Chu Hsi,” in *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 26–55; Teraji Jun, “Ö-yō Shū ni okeru ten-jin sōkansetsu e no kaigi” 歐陽修における天人相関説への懷疑 (Doubts about the connection between heaven and man in Ouyang Xiu). *Hiroshima daigaku, Bungakubu kiyō* 広島大學文學部紀要 28, no. 1 (1968): 161–87; and Kojima Tsuyoshi, “Sōdai tenkenron no seiji ninen.”

88. The *qian* hexagram *tuan* statement states: “The *dao* of heaven decreases the replete and increases the meager; the *dao* of earth changes the replete and promotes the meager; ghosts and spirits harm the replete and bless the meager; the *dao* of man hates the replete and is fond of the meager” 天道虧盈而益謙，地道變盈而流謙，鬼神害盈而福謙，人道惡盈而好謙。

between the realms of heaven, earth, ghosts and spirits, and humanity.⁸⁹ Ouyang claimed that Confucius interpreted these parallels as indicating that the principles according to which heaven, earth, ghosts and spirits operated were the same as those that informed human affairs. Ouyang discussed the implications of this position as follows:

Yet if we combine and connect them, there is no difference between heaven, earth, spirits and man. If they are not involved with man, we rectify human affairs and that is all. If they are involved with man, they are no different from human circumstances and so we also rectify human affairs and that is all. However, if we focus exclusively on human affairs, then the *dao* of heaven, earth, ghosts and spirits will be discarded; if we participate in this *dao*, then human affairs will become confused. The *tuan* statement of the *qian* hexagram clearly discusses how to cultivate human affairs without discarding the *dao* of heaven, earth, ghosts and spirits. The *tuan* statements of the *pi* 否 and *tai* 泰 hexagrams clearly discuss how order and chaos are dependent upon man and heaven is not involved. One infers from this and proceeds, and then the *dao* of the *Book of Change* is complete.⁹⁰

然會而通之，天地神人無以異也。使其不與於人乎，修吾人事而已；使其有與於人乎，與人之情無以異，亦修吾人事而已。夫專人事，

89. Ouyang described these parallels in the following manner: "Now, when the sun reaches its highest point, [heaven] causes it to descend; when the moon wanes, it causes it to wax. As for heaven, I do not know its mind, but I see the increase and decrease it effects in things. When things reach their height, [earth] changes them and causes them to whither and degenerate; when they arrive at their nadir, it accords with them and causes them to flourish. As for earth, I do not know its mind, but I see the changes and flourishing it effects in things. The greedy amongst [men] suffer much loss, while the humble abound in blessings. As for ghosts and spirits, I do not know their minds, but I see their dispersal of calamity and blessings among humanity. Thus, although it is impossible to know the minds of heaven, earth, ghosts and spirits, [Confucius] perceived their traces in things, and on the basis of these traces, he said decrease and increase, change and flourish, and harm and bless. As for human beings, they can be known and thus he directly spoke of their circumstances with the terms fondness and hate" (*Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 878–79). 夫日中則昃，月缺則盈之，天吾不知其心，吾見其虧益於物者矣。物之盛者變而衰落之，下者順而流行之，地吾不知其心，吾見其變流於物者矣。貪滿者多損，謙卑者多福，鬼神吾不知其心，吾見其禍福之被人者矣。若人則可知其情者也。故天地鬼神不可知其心，而見其跡之在物者，則據跡曰虧益，曰變流，曰害福。若人則可知者，故直言其情曰好惡。Ouyang advanced this same argument, almost word for word, in "The Treatise on Astronomy" from his *New History of the Five Dynasties*. Even though it was not published until after his death, the initial draft of this text was composed in the late 1030s. See his *Xin wudai shi* 新五代史 (Taipei: Dingwen, 1998), 59:705–6.

90. *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 879.

則天地鬼神之道廢；參焉，則人事惑。使人事修則不廢天地鬼神之道者，謙之象詳矣。治亂在人而天不與者，否、泰之象詳矣。推是而之焉，易之道盡矣。

In the latter half of the above passage, Ouyang referenced the *tuan* statements of the *pi* and *tai* hexagrams to support his reading of the political significance of Confucius' interpretation of the *qian* hexagram. In the *Book of Change*, the *pi* and *tai* hexagrams represented the preponderance of either gentlemen or small men within society. Ouyang held that, taken together, the *tuan* statements of these three hexagrams demonstrated that employing worthy officials and dismissing small men was the key to realizing political order.⁹¹

The *tuan* statement of the *tai* hexagram states: "The *dao* of the gentleman grows and the *dao* of the small man recedes." The *tuan* statement of the *pi* hexagram states: "The *dao* of the small man grows and the *dao* of the gentleman recedes." Now when the gentleman advances, the small man can do nothing but withdraw; when the small man advances, then the gentleman must likewise withdraw. The force of circumstances makes it so. When the gentleman flourishes then the small man declines and the world is ordered in *tai*; when the small man flourishes the gentleman declines and the world is disordered in *pi*. *Pi* and *tai* simply [concern] the advance and withdrawal of gentlemen and small men. How is heaven involved in this?⁹²

泰之象曰：“君子道長，小人道消。”否之象曰：“小人道長，君子道消。”夫君子進，小人不得不退；小人進，君子不得不退。其勢然也。君子盛而小人衰，天下治於泰矣；小人盛而君子衰，天下亂於否矣。否、泰，君子小人進退之間爾，天何與焉？

Yet, despite his insistence that order was solely dependent on employing worthies and dismissing small men, and that heaven was not involved, Ouyang carefully avoided asserting that the cosmos was irrelevant to human affairs. In the preface to the "Treatise on Astronomy" found in the *New History of the Five Dynasties*, he advanced the claim, similar to that found in the above analysis of the *qian* hexagram *tuan* statement, that Confucius negotiated a careful balance

91. Ouyang also advanced this claim—that political order depended on employing the right kind of men—in several other writings that date from around this time, including "On Fundamentals" (*Benlun* 本論), "On the Difficulty of Being a Ruler" (*Weijun nan lun* 爲君難論), and "On Factions" (*Pengdang lun* 朋黨論).

92. Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 878.

between the cosmos and human affairs which avoided the extreme positions espoused by intellectuals like Liu Zongyuan and Han correlative theorists.⁹³ Ouyang concluded that Confucius advocated this balanced view because of its utility in admonishing vigilant government.

Like Ouyang Xiu, Shi Jie advocated a middle ground between the cosmological positions staked out by Liu Zongyuan and Han correlative theorists, which critiqued the doctrine of stimulus and response while preserving a connection between heaven and human affairs.⁹⁴ Shi moreover followed Ouyang's lead in using this connection to justify the employment of worthy ministers. In an essay entitled "On Obscuring Virtue" (*Yin de lun* 陰德論), Shi maintained that the ruler should model heaven and earth's distribution of

93. Ouyang based his argument on his reading of Confucius' intentions in editing the classics: "From Yao, Shun and the Three Dynasties onwards, there were none who did not cite heaven in implementing affairs. In editing the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents*, Confucius did not expunge [these references]. Hence the sage did not separate heaven from man, but he also did not take heaven to be involved with man. If he separated heaven from man, then the *dao* of heaven would be discarded; if he took heaven as being involved with man, then human affairs would become confused. Thus he always preserved [references to heaven] but did not investigate [them]. Although the *Spring and Autumn Annals* records eclipses and celestial aberrations, Confucius never stated the reasons for their occurrence. Thus his followers had nothing to transmit to later generations (*Xin wudai shi*, 59:705). 自堯、舜、三代以來，莫不稱天以舉事，孔子刪詩、書不去也。蓋聖人不絕天於人，亦不以天參人。絕天於人則天道廢，以天參人則人事惑，故常存而不究也。春秋雖書日食、星變之類，孔子未嘗道其所以然者，故其弟子之徒，莫得有所述於後世也。 Although there is evidence that Ouyang made revisions to the *New History of the Five Dynasties* throughout his life, I think that the extremely close correlation between the interpretations of the *qian*, *pi*, and *tai* hexagram *tuan* statements found in "Questions on the *Book of Change*" and the preface to the "Treatise on Astronomy," where it is repeated with only very minor variations, suggests that Ouyang probably espoused the views in the above passage prior to the reforms. For a discussion of Ouyang's revisions to the text, see Richard L. Davis, trans., *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), xlvii-l.

94. Shi's balanced cosmological position is stated most clearly in a letter he wrote to Fan Siyuan 范思遠, where he critiqued both Liu Zongyuan's disassociation of the cosmos from human affairs and the doctrine of stimulus response. In the concluding paragraph of the letter, Shi argued that despite the existence of a connection between heaven and man, the creation of order depended on the implementation of good government: "Man is also heaven, heaven is also man; the distance between heaven and man is less than a hair's breadth. However, it is better for the state to clearly establish rewards and punishments in plain sight, and instruct people in good and evil, than [to rely on] heaven ordering them through its shadowy workings" (*Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 185). 人亦天，天亦人，天人相去，其間不容髮。但天陰騭下人，不如國家昭昭然設爵賞刑罰以示人善惡。

blessings and disasters in his decisions regarding promotion and demotion.⁹⁵ He began the piece by claiming that heaven, earth and man govern (*zhi* 治) in a parallel fashion:

Now heaven presides above, earth presides below, and the ruler presides in the middle; heaven, earth and man have different positions yet govern in the same way. The governing of heaven and earth is called disasters and blessings; the governing of the ruler is called rewards and punishments. They issue forth for the same reason: they are both distributed according to good and evil. If good is rewarded and evil punished, this is called according with heaven and earth. When heaven and earth are accorded with, then wind and rain are harmonized and the hundred grains are excellent. If evil is rewarded and good punished, this is called rebelling against heaven and earth. When one rebels against heaven and earth, then *yin* and *yang* are obstructed and the four seasons run counter [to their proper course]. The *daos* of heaven, earth and man are not separated from one another and they respond to one another like a shadow or an echo. Surely, disasters, blessings, punishments and rewards cannot be of different providence.⁹⁶

夫天辟乎上，地辟乎下，君辟乎中；天，地，人異位而同治也。天地之治曰禍福，君之治曰刑賞，其出一也，皆隨其善惡而散布之。善斯賞，惡斯刑，是謂順天地。天地順而風雨和，百穀嘉。惡斯賞，善斯刑，是謂逆天地。天地逆而陰陽乖，四時悖，三才之道不相離，其應如影響。禍福刑賞，豈異出乎？

Shi maintained that the ruler should model his rule on the manner in which heaven and earth engender order. He contended that just as heaven and earth created order through the distribution of blessings and disasters, the ruler governed through punishments and rewards.

Shi continued the essay by defining the term “obscuring virtue,” or *yinde* 陰德, as the political situation in which the ruler obstinately refused to demote and punish officials.⁹⁷ He argued that the refusal to implement punishments

95. The argument Shi advances in this essay is similar in its broad outlines to that found in Tian Xi's “On Heaven's Mechanism” (*Tianji lun* 天機論). Although Tian's essay predates Shi's by several decades, it was crafted, I would argue, with a similar intent. Tian spent most of his career in minor posts, and he frequently remonstrated with the throne over the need to employ competent men, such as himself, in important official positions.

96. *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 126. The exact date of this essay is not known, but given that Shi died in 1045, it was certainly written either before, or during, the reforms.

97. Later in the essay, Shi provides a concrete example of obscuring virtue. He argues that if

was based on the mistaken belief that heaven, earth and the spirits would bless a ruler who “does not kill one person or harm one thing.”⁹⁸ He dismissed this attitude as petty benevolence (*xiaoci* 小慈/ *xiaoren* 小仁) and claimed that since heaven and earth were not able to instruct the populace directly, they charged the ruler to use rewards and punishments to guide the people towards good and away from evil. He moreover contended that a ruler who transferred the authority to promote and dismiss officials to his ministers “deceived heaven and was not a [true] ruler” 欺天而無君也.⁹⁹ Thus, although the manner in which he conceived of the relationship between the cosmos and human society differed from that advanced by Ouyang Xiu, Shi too used cosmological arguments to assert that the key to creating order lay in employing worthies and dismissing small men.¹⁰⁰

The above discussion of Ancient-style Learning cosmological theorizing holds significant implications for wider issues in the study of Chinese intellectual history. The first such implication concerns the use of theoretical argument in political discourse. While acknowledging that there is a difference between their roles as private intellectuals and public political figures, and that not all of their compositions had implicit political ends, I believe that Ouyang Xiu’s and Shi Jie’s cosmological essays should be read as attempts to provide justification for their political platform. As Ari Levine has demonstrated in his research on Song factionalism, theoretical essays often functioned simultaneously as contributions to the larger intellectual tradition and as rhetorical arguments with explicit political objectives.¹⁰¹ Both functions are at play in

the ruler fails to punish bad officials out of benevolence, then he emphasizes benevolence towards one official over benevolence towards the thousands of people that the official administers. This contravenes the way of heaven, earth and the ruler, and inevitably leads to calamity. He defines this refusal to punish incompetent or evil officials as “preserving obscured virtue” (*cun yin de* 存陰德). Tian Xi also argues for the need to respond to natural disasters by punishing incompetent officials in an essay entitled “On [The Meaning of] Calamity Cannot Overcome Virtue” *Yao busheng de lun* 妖不勝德論 (*Quan Songwen*, 91:164–65).

98. *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 126. 其大旨謂不殺一人，不傷一物，則天地神明之所佑也。Shi argues that punishments are necessary and that as long as they proceed objectively, they will lead to blessings from heaven.

99. *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 126.

100. An important corollary of their positions was the transfer of responsibility for anomalies away from the emperor and towards his ministers. Portents and calamities were not linked directly to the ruler’s moral character, but rather to the presence or absence of worthies in important political offices.

101. Levine describes the relationship between theoretical and political discourse as follows:

these cosmological essays. When compared with the more traditional justifications provided by Ancient-style Learning thinkers in their memorials, we can assume, I think, that the former function took precedence in the above compositions, and that they were most likely written for an audience of their literati peers.

Given the court's continued embrace of correlative theory, a consideration of intended audience is important in analyzing Ancient-style Learning cosmological writings. As a rhapsody composed by Ouyang Xiu in 1042 illustrates, Ancient-style Learning thinkers could readily adapt to the expectations of different audiences and shift theoretical registers to promote their political objectives. The rhapsody was submitted to Renzong in praise of an examination question that the emperor himself penned — "Responding to heaven with substance, not superficiality" (*yingtian yishi bu yiwen* 應天以實不以文). Ouyang clearly saw Renzong's selection of this topic as a golden opportunity, and even though he did not participate in the exam, he composed a rhapsody that argued for the need to implement key elements in the reform agenda.¹⁰² Eschewing rigid theoretical consistency, he did not justify his position with the arguments described above, but instead employed the traditional correlative notion of *yinyang*-based stimulus-response to make his case.¹⁰³ Renzong cultivated an avid interest in correlative cosmology, and Ouyang's decision to employ correlative doctrines to advocate his position was more than likely influenced by his intended audience.¹⁰⁴ The political ends, for Ouyang, as

"Veiling contemporary political debates beneath abstract political theory, these texts simultaneously functioned on two levels: as immediate political tools and as contributions to the larger historical tradition. . . . Each 'Discourse on Factions' was simultaneously a theoretical discourse on political abstractions and a calculated plea for continued monarchical patronage" ("Faction Theory and the Political Imagination of the Northern Song," 169–70).

102. In a preface appended to the rhapsody, Ouyang describes the circumstances surrounding his decision to compose it. He was worried that the examination candidates' rhapsodies would not meet Renzong's expectations, and so he decided to submit his own views on the topic. See *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 59: 846–48.

103. Ouyang also employed this type of traditional rhetoric in several memorials over the course of Renzong's reign. For example, in 1056, he cited traditional Han correlative doctrines to attribute the occurrence of a flood to Renzong's failure to select an heir. Although he later claimed that he used the flood as a pretext to argue for his position, the memorial demonstrates that Ouyang was willing to contravene his theoretical principles to promote a political cause. See *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 1658–61; 1839.

104. Renzong's interest in correlative theory is evidenced by the fact that he composed, or oversaw the composition of, three separate works on correlative cosmology. One of these works,

well as many of the other reformers, were often more important than the polemical means.

The second important implication the above analysis brings to bear on the study of Chinese intellectual history concerns the problem of how to interpret the role of cosmology in Chinese thought. The overt political concerns permeating Ancient-style Learning cosmological writings, and the very forthright manner in which they outlined their reasons for rejecting previous views, reveals the problematic nature of two key assumptions that have informed Western scholarship on Chinese cosmology over the past several decades.

The first such assumption is the idea that cosmology constituted a foundational worldview that served to delimit the direction and development of intellectual discourse.¹⁰⁵ For the vast majority of Ancient-style Learning intellectuals, cosmology was clearly not foundational; that is, not something they took for granted as a backdrop to their thinking as the characterization of it as a “worldview” would have us believe. Rather, cosmology represented a rhetoric that could be manipulated and reworked to advance specific political objectives. As the above analysis demonstrates, Ancient-style Learning intellectuals were able to step outside of the correlative cosmological “worldview” and dispassionately determine its strengths and weaknesses with regard to their intellectual agenda.

The second assumption that the above discussion calls into question is the claim that correlative cosmology served as the dominant paradigm through which Chinese thinkers viewed their world until the early Qing dynasty.¹⁰⁶ While it is certainly the case that Ancient-style Learning thinkers advocated a “loose” concept of correlativity in claiming that there was a connection

the *Political Mirror of the “Great Plan”* (*Hongfan zhengjian* 洪範政鑑), is still extant. This text, which was completed in 1040, is modeled on Ban Gu’s “Treatise on the Five Phases” from the *History of the Former Han Dynasty*. In the preface, Renzong noted that he had received numerous memorials from astrologers and officials that contained correlative doctrines. However, he complained that there was no comprehensive source to consult in order to distinguish the authenticity of the different positions they advanced. He thus decided to compile a compendium of disaster interpretations from the Spring and Autumn period through the Tang to better understand the causes of disasters.

105. For an excellent review, and cogent critique, of scholarship advocating this view, see Michael Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 5–21; 146–152.

106. See John Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

between natural disasters and the government, they clearly stated that their adoption of this stance was motivated by political concerns. Both Shi Jie and Ouyang Xiu denied the capacity of human beings to determine the precise causes of disasters; however, they concluded that preserving such a connection served to facilitate the creation of political order. In other words, their acceptance of a “loose” correlativity between the cosmos and human affairs was explicitly motivated by practical concerns, and not by any *presumption* that the cosmos actually worked in this way.

THE USE OF COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT
IN RESPONSE TO THE XINZHOU EARTHQUAKE OF 1038

In the twelfth month of 1038, a devastating earthquake struck Xinzhou 忻州 in central China, providing the adherents of Ancient-style Learning with an important opportunity to remonstrate with the throne over political affairs.¹⁰⁷ At this time, the political situation at court was in a state of turmoil. In the fourth month of 1038, Lü Yijian was dismissed following an acrimonious personal dispute with his fellow prime minister, Wang Zeng 王曾 (978–1038).¹⁰⁸ Despite his dismissal, Lü still held the confidence of the emperor and he succeeded in convincing Renzong to promote men loyal to him into the top positions in the bureaucracy.¹⁰⁹ In the few months they were in power,

107. The earthquake killed 19,742 and injured 5,655 in Xinzhou alone. Thousands more were killed in surrounding areas. Five of the officials assigned to the area sustained injuries and aftershocks from the quake continued for several years (*Changbian*, 120:2840–41).

108. *Changbian*, 120:2826–7. Lü and Wang disliked each other from an earlier conflict. Wang, who had recommended Lü to be prime minister several years earlier, felt that Lü had betrayed him in maneuvering his way to the higher ranked position at the expense of Wang, who was given the second ranked slot. During the time they served together, Lü assumed complete control over decision making and would not yield to Wang's suggestions. Wang became fed up with the situation and asked to be demoted from his position several times. The emperor asked why and Wang replied that Lü was corrupt and accepted bribes in return for political favors (夷簡招權市恩). At that time, there were rumors at court that Lü had accepted bribes from the prefect of Qinzhou, Wang Ximing. After Wang Zeng reported this to Renzong, the emperor became extremely upset and dismissed both of them along with the two Participants in Determining Governmental Matters Song Shou 宋綬 and Cai Qi 蔡齊.

109. *Changbian*, 121:2864. The text states that Lü recommended Wang Sui and Chen Yaozuo to serve as prime ministers because he knew they were not up to the task and could be easily manipulated from below. He hoped that the emperor would become frustrated with their performance and reinstate him into his former position.

the new prime ministers, Wang Sui 王隨 and Chen Yaozuo, by all accounts performed horrendously, with Wang attending to government business only once every five days because of illness, and Chen unable to deal with the resulting bureaucratic back up due to his old age.¹¹⁰ Many officials began to comment that the Secretariat had been transformed into a nursing home, and Wang and Chen became the object of widespread derision.¹¹¹

Soon after the earthquake, the pro-reform official Ye Qingchen 葉清臣 (1000–1049) submitted a memorial arguing that the banishment of Fan Zhongyan had been a mistake:

Heaven moves because of *yang*; this is the *dao* of the ruler. Earth is quiescent because of *yin*; this is the *dao* of the minister. When heaven moves and earth is quiescent, the ruler is revered and the minister is subservient. If this changes, then [things] are disordered and the earth quakes. . . . Your Majesty anxiously strives to implement good government. The empire has experienced peace, but over the course of the last year, disasters have repeatedly appeared. This is definitely due to [Your Majesty] losing the regard of the people below and contravening heaven's intent above. Thus heaven sent down warnings in order to give rise to pure resolve. Yet Your Majesty is complacent and does not regard the earthquake as anomalous. . . . Recently Fan Zhongyan and Yu Jing were demoted because of speaking out about affairs. For the past two years, the people of the empire bit their tongues and did not dare deliberate over court policy. I hope that Your Majesty deeply blames himself and employs loyal *shi* who dare to speak out. Then Your Majesty will manifest charismatic authority and good responses will arrive together.¹¹²

天以陽動，君之道也，地以陰靜，臣之道也。天動地靜，主尊臣卑，易此則亂，地爲之震…陛下憂勤庶政，方夏泰寧，而一歲之中，災變仍見，必有下失民望，上戾天意，故垂戒以啓迪清衷。而陛下泰然，不以爲異…頃范仲淹、余靖以言事被黜，天下之人，齟舌不敢議朝政者，行將二年。願陛下深自咎責，詳延忠直敢言之士，庶幾明威降鑒，而善應來集也。

After Ye wrote the above memorial, Renzong ordered that Fan be moved to a location nearer to the capital, making him the prefect of Runzhou 潤州

110. *Changbian*, 121:2864.

111. *Changbian*, 121:2864. For an account of the personal connections between Lü, Wang and Chen, see Wang Zhishuang, 41.

112. *Changbian*, 120:2844.

in Jiangnan 江南. His enemies at court feared that this was a signal that the emperor was contemplating employing Fan in an important capacity and they strenuously objected. Renzong became angry and immediately ordered that Fan be reassigned to Lingnan in the deep south. The Participant in Determining Governmental Matters Cheng Lin 程琳 (988–1056) intervened on Fan's behalf and managed to convince Renzong to implement his original order.¹¹³

The severity of the earthquake eventually prompted Renzong to issue an edict requesting officials to submit candid assessments of problems in the government.¹¹⁴ Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 (1008–1048) had been waiting anxiously for the opportunity to remonstrate with the emperor over the larger meaning of the earthquake. Soon after it occurred, he sent a letter to his father-in-law Du Yan 杜衍 (978–1057) urging him to use the disaster to awaken the emperor to problems in the government.¹¹⁵ Immediately after Renzong issued the edict calling for frank advice, Su submitted a scathing memorial attacking four individuals with important positions in the bureaucracy.¹¹⁶

In the first half of the memorial, Su argued that the earthquake was without question tied to political affairs and that ever since Fan's demotion, the views of upright officials had been kept from the emperor. Since the remonstrance of worthy ministers was not reaching the throne, heaven decided to speak to the ruler by sending down the earthquake. He recommended that the emperor adopt two measures to improve conditions in the government: rectify his mind and select worthy officials.

Under the first measure, Su urged the emperor to reduce unnecessary expenditures and become more involved in political affairs. By cultivating himself and rectifying his mind, the emperor would be able to better handle the problems in the government and distinguish worthy from unworthy officials.¹¹⁷

113. *Changbian*, 120:2844–5.

114. *Changbian*, 121:2851.

115. Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji biannian jiaozhu* 蘇舜欽集編年校注, ed. Fu Pingxiang 傅平驤, Hu Wentao 胡問陶 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1991), 432–5.

116. This was not the first time that Su used a disaster as a pretext for critiquing the current political situation. After a fire destroyed the Yuqing zhaoying Temple 玉清昭應宮, Su submitted a memorial arguing that the disaster was a warning from heaven that the emperor needed to rectify rewards and punishments and cultivate himself (*Songchao zhuchen zouyi*, 37:372–3).

117. He wrote: "Your official hopes that Your Majesty will cultivate himself in order to lead men, cleanse his mind in order to examine affairs, work hard at making decisions, discard

In his discussion of the second measure, Su wrote:

Now, the enlightened ruler works hard to seek out worthies, and so is at ease when he entrusts them with assignments. Yet it is not the case that [the emperor] must select all of the officials at court; he only needs to choose one or two prime ministers and the officials in the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau. In matters of employment, Your Majesty has yet to choose men by himself. Recently, the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Personnel Wang Sui jumped ten ranks, and was moreover promoted to the highest-ranking prime minister position. This represents extraordinary favor and should be reserved for those with extraordinary talent. But Wang Sui is vacuous, stupid, depraved and obsequious; he is not prime minister material. After his promotion to the position of prime minister was announced, it provoked a seethe of public opinion against it. Thereupon illness enveloped his body and disasters affected the state. This also represents heaven's intent to cherish our dynasty; Your Majesty should examine this!¹¹⁸

夫明主勞於求賢，而逸於任使。然盈庭之士，不須盡擇，在擇一二輔臣及御史、諫官而已。陛下用人，尚未遴擇。昨王隨自吏部侍郎平章事，超越十資，復爲上相。此乃非常之恩，必待非常之才，而隨虛庸邪諂，非輔相之器，降麻之後，物論沸騰。故疾纏其身，災仍於國。此亦天意愛惜我朝，陛下鑒之哉！

Su continued the memorial by attacking the character and official performance of the Participant in Determining Governmental Matters Shi Zhongli 石中立 (972–1049), the Censor Zhang Guan 張觀 and the Remonstrating Official Gao Ruona. Su's claim in the above passage—that the emperor has yet to select officials by himself—refers to the widely held assumption that these three men, together with Wang Sui, owed their positions to Lü Yijian. Su maintained that the earthquake was directly attributable to the advancement of unqualified men such as these into the most important positions in the government. He concluded the memorial by stating: “I believe that Your Majesty is diligent and frugal. If the offices of the prime minister, the Censorate, and the Remonstrance Bureau are filled with qualified people, then what fear is there that the world will not be ordered, and what possible

complacency, get rid of the uncultivated and obsequious individuals close to Your Majesty and personally bring in unyielding, intelligent, and upright *shi*. If, because of this disaster, you make far-reaching plans, the empire will be extremely fortunate” (*Changbian*, 121:2853). 臣望陛下修己以御人，洗心以鑒物，勤聽斷，舍燕安，放棄優譖近習之纖人，親近剛明鯁正之良士。因此災變，以思永圖，則天下幸甚。

118. *Changbian*, 121:2853.

cause could there be for disasters and anomalies? I hope that Your Majesty will pay attention to this matter.”¹¹⁹

Su's memorial apparently made either Renzong or those in positions of authority somewhat nervous. On the day after it was submitted, a second imperial edict was issued suggesting the possibility that the earthquake and other recent anomalies were warnings from heaven about corruption among government clerks. It ordered fiscal commissioners and judicial commissioners to investigate the situation in the provinces and report back to the throne.¹²⁰

This second edict, however, failed to stem the flood of memorials attributing the disasters to problems at the highest levels of government.¹²¹ Soon after it was issued, Ye Qingchen submitted a second memorial in which he echoed the arguments made by Su Shunqin. However, rather than singling out individuals for reproach, he attributed the disaster to the emperor's loss of control over the handles (*bing* 柄) of rewards and punishments.

I have heard that the means via which the king controls the six realms and pacifies the myriad peoples is simply by controlling the authority over punishments and rewards, and by not relegating the handles to others. Thus every good act will be rewarded with the appropriate title or emolument, and every crime will be punished with the executioner's axe. This causes people to respect you as they do heaven and become close to you as they do to earth, to look up to your brilliance in the same way as they do to the sun and moon and to fear your authority in the same way as they fear thunder and lightning. At present, it is not like this. When one person is promoted, they say: "He is the prime minister's relative or close friend; they have associated with one another for a long time and are on good terms." When one person is demoted, they say: "He is an enemy of the prime minister; their relationship is not close and the prime minister does not favor him." Ranks, rewards, punishments and penalties are a royal prerogative; if they are given to others, then men will gather in groups to bemoan it loudly. They will not say: "They come from Your Majesty," but rather: "They are obtained from the prime minister." Is this not a case where the preponderance of the minister's *yin* overturns the order of heaven and earth! This situation did not come about in a day; just as ice freezes gradually, it has been developing for a long time. Jing

119. *Changbian*, 121:2854. 臣以謂陛下身既勤儉，輔弼、臺諫又皆得人，則天下何憂不治，災異何由而生。惟陛下少留意焉。

120. *Changbian*, 121:2854.

121. The *Changbian* contains complete or partial transcripts for eleven of these memorials.

Fang said: "Even if the ministers serve correctly, if they assume control [of the government] there will definitely be an earthquake." If they are correct and yet assume control, and this still leads to an earthquake, how much worse is it when they assume control and are not correct? How could they possibly not disturb the *qi* of *yinyang* and bring about anomalies in heaven and earth! This is the reason for the occurrence of the earthquake.¹²²

臣聞王者之所以橫制六合，撫有萬民者，在握刑賞之權，不授人以柄而已。故舉一善，有爵祿之賜；黜一惡，有斧鉞之誅。使人尊如天，親如地，仰其明如日月，畏其威如雷霆。今則不然，有一進拔，則曰宰相某人親也、舊也，嘗遊其門而善者也；被一抑黜，則曰宰相某人之嫌也、隙也，跡疏而不被其遇者也。爵賞刑罰，陛下所有也，比及於人，則天下之人族談囂然，不曰自陛下出，而曰由宰相得，非臣陰之盛而易天地之序者乎！此非一日之事也，堅冰之漸，其來久矣。京房曰：「臣事雖正，專必震。」使正而專，猶且震，況專而不正，安得不瀆陰陽之氣而致天地之變乎！此地震之所由至也。

Like Su Shunqin, Ye placed the burden of responsibility for the earthquake on the emperor's decision to allow the prime minister to control promotions and demotions. While Ye did not name the officials who had been rewarded inappropriately, he advised the emperor to rectify the situation by wresting back control of the handles of reward and punishment and by placing qualified individuals in positions of responsibility.

By far the most vocal critic of the current political situation was the Remonstrating Official Han Qi 韓琦 (1008–1075), who submitted over ten memorials in response to the earthquake.¹²³ In the first several memorials, he attributed the disaster to a series of different problems in the government. However, in the last one, which according to the *Changbian* was accepted by Renzong, he blamed the earthquake on the incompetence and nepotism of the top officials in the bureaucracy. He argued that the numerous disasters that had occurred recently were the result of these officials having too much power, and he castigated them for failing to take responsibility.¹²⁴ Han ended his memorial by urging Renzong to make it public, stating that if Renzong truly felt that these ministers were not causing harm to the state, then Han would gladly endure exile or execution for misspeaking.

122. *Changbian*, 121:2859.

123. *Changbian*, 121:2864.

124. *Changbian*, 121:2861–64.

With official opinion thus allied strongly against these individuals, Renzong finally acquiesced and in the third month of 1039, the four highest ranking officials in the government—the Prime Ministers Wang Sui and Chen Yaozuo, and the Participants in Determining Governmental Matters Shi Zhongli and Han Yi 韓億 (972–1044)—were dismissed. While the individuals affiliated with Fan's group did not receive substantive promotions on this occasion, this event was an important step in their rise to power several years later.¹²⁵

As the above memorials indicate, Su, Ye and Han attributed the earthquake to the very problems Fan outlined in the four essays he presented to the throne in 1036: the obstruction of the channels of communication and Renzong's failure to employ worthy ministers in important posts.¹²⁶ However, owing, in all likelihood, to the cosmological views embraced by the emperor, they did not use novel theoretical positions such as those advanced by Ouyang Xiu and Shi Jie to make their case, but instead invoked more traditional cosmological arguments to assert that the earthquake was a sign that the ruler needed to correct these problems in the government. If Renzong desired to rectify political affairs and appease heaven, he had to personally promote qualified individuals and welcome official remonstrance.

Part Three: Cosmological Argument and the Qingli Reforms

Renzong granted the members of Fan's faction an opportunity to implement several of their political policies in 1043. The Qingli reforms would be the key testing ground for the reformers' various political theories, and pivotal for the fate of their faction and the ideas they expounded. Due to the intense factional strife of the period, the history of the reforms is dominated not so much by a debate over the viability of the reform measures, but by the personal

125. Renzong decided to promote Zhang Dexiang 章得象 (978–1048) and Zhang Shixun 張士遜 to the position of prime minister. Han Qi wrote a memorial recommending Fan Zhongyan, Du Yan, Kong Daofu, Xu Yan, and Song Xiao for the position, but he apparently was not very confident that Renzong would accept his recommendations, for he wrote that if Renzong did not want to use them, he should employ those with experience such as Wang Zeng and Lü Yijian. Apparently, even Lü was superior to Wang Sui and Chen Yaozuo (*Changbian*, 121:2866).

126. Han Qi discusses these two points in one of the ten memorials he wrote after the earthquake. See the *Songchao zhuchen zouyi*, 39:392–3. Several officials who were not associated with the Ancient-style Learning movement also mentioned these problems in their memorials after the earthquake. See the memorials by Su Shen 蘇紳 (*Changbian*, 121:2857–8), Song Qi 宋祁 (*Changbian*, 121:2854–6), and Zhang Fangping 張方平 (*Songchao zhuchen zouyi*, 39:386–91).

attacks of reform supporters and opponents on one another's fitness to serve. Despite a string of early successes, the members of Fan's group were put on the defensive after a severe drought and locust plague struck the empire in the middle of 1044. Having earlier attributed disasters to Renzong's poor choices regarding employment, the pro-reform remonstrating officials had difficulty convincing him that the drought and locusts were due to high-ranking officials obstructing the implementation of the reforms. In the fall of 1044, as Renzong began to withdraw his support, the opponents of the reforms stepped up their attacks, and eventually convinced the emperor to demote the reformers and repeal the reform measures.

In the early 1040s, the Song was in a state of crisis. In addition to a costly conflict with the Tanguts that was exhausting the treasury and taxing the people, a series of natural disasters had led to a refugee problem and caused a string of internal rebellions.¹²⁷ In the midst of these difficulties, in the twelfth month of 1042, Lü Yijian fell seriously ill and requested to be released from his official duties.¹²⁸ Soon after the Xinzhou earthquake, Lü Yijian had managed to once again ingratiate himself with Renzong and he was restored to the position of prime minister in 1040.¹²⁹ By all accounts, Lü continued his imperious style of management and maintained a firm grip over political affairs.¹³⁰ In addition to successfully promoting men loyal to him, he gained

127. The court was experiencing financial difficulties from at least 1039 (*Changbian*, 123:2902–8). For passages related to the other problems, see *Changbian*, 136:3248–49; 141:3374–78, 3381–82, 3388–89, 3397, 3402.

128. *Changbian*, 138:3329–30; 139:3345; 140:3358–59.

129. *Changbian*, 127:3010. Renzong remained skeptical of the cosmological arguments that were being made to justify the promotion of Ancient-style Learning adherents. Towards the end of 1039, he addressed his top advisors, saying: “The success or failure of the court is dependent on employing people. If we employ good men, then the government will be ordered; if we lose good men, then the government will be destroyed. Just as in the ages of Yao and Shun, even though there were disasters they did not result in harm; in the time of Jie and Zhou, although there were auspicious portents, they did not lead to blessings. Now there are many who use this as a pretext to seek advancement. They must be investigated.” 上謂輔臣曰：朝廷得失在任人，得人則政治，失人則政隳。若堯、舜之世，雖有災異不爲害，桀、紂之世，雖有祥瑞不爲福。今之言者多挾此以求進用，不可不察 (*Changbian*, 124:2935). Although Renzong made these comments after discussing blessings and disasters with Lin Xianke, his statement demonstrates that he did not completely accept the link between anomalies and employment being advanced by the adherents of Ancient-style Learning.

130. In 1041, Sun Mian 孫沔 wrote a memorial attacking Lü's management of political affairs and accused him of promoting relatives and allies to important positions. His criticism resulted

control over decisions made by the Bureau of Military Affairs, which were previously outside of the prime minister's purview, for the stated purpose of dealing more effectively with the Tanguts.¹³¹

Following Lü's decision to retire due to ill health, Fan Zhongyan and Han Qi were made vice directors of the Bureau of Military Affairs, a substantial promotion that was due in no small part to their efforts in defending the state against Tangut attacks.¹³² At the same time, Fan's allies Ouyang Xiu, Cai Xiang 蔡襄 (1012–1067), Wang Su 王素 (1007–1073), and Yu Jing 余靖 received appointments to the Remonstrance Bureau.¹³³ Renzong purportedly gave them these influential positions in the hope that they would be able to rectify political affairs and provide solutions to the serious problems facing the court.¹³⁴ Several months later, he promoted Fan to the second highest position in the bureaucracy, and solicited his advice on how to rectify problems in the government.¹³⁵ Fan consulted with Fu Bi 富弼 (1004–1083) and presented the emperor with a series of ten policy proposals that would form the core of the Qingli reforms.¹³⁶

While the reforms contained measures designed to strengthen the military, increase agricultural production, reduce the burden the state placed on the

in his dismissal from the Remonstrance Bureau (*Changbian*, 132:3126–27; *Songshi* 宋史 (Taibei: Dingwen, 1998), 417:9687–88). Lü subsequently managed to get one of his allies promoted into the Remonstrance Bureau (*Changbian*, 132:3128). Soon after Sun's demotion, Lü engineered the dismissal of Song Xiang 宋庠, the only member of the Council of State who had the gall to question some of his policy decisions (*Changbian*, 132:3127–28). Sun Mian would later write an extremely caustic memorial attributing the current state of political decline to Lü's leadership and his refusal to employ upright men (*Changbian*, 139:3345–47).

131. *Changbian*, 137:3283.

132. *Changbian*, 140:3363–64.

133. *Changbian*, 140:3359–60. In the *Changbian*, Li Tao notes that Ouyang was recommended by the newly appointed prime minister, Yan Shu. Cai Xiang was promoted several days later, after writing a poem commemorating the appointments of Ouyang, Yu and Wang. They showed the poem to the emperor and he ordered that Cai also receive a position in the Remonstrance Bureau (*Changbian*, 140:3365).

134. *Changbian*, 140:3359–60.

135. *Changbian*, 142:3417.

136. *Changbian*, 143:3431–44. For a discussion of the reform measures, see James Liu, "An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 105–131. See also Liu's account of the political circumstances surrounding the Qingli reforms in *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 40–51.

common people, improve local administration and enforce imperial edicts, they were primarily aimed at getting the right kind of men into office and ensuring that those with talent advanced into important positions. To this end, Fan and Fu sought to reform the exam system, reduce the use of the *yin* privilege, through which the relatives of officials could enter official service without taking the exam, and systematize the procedures through which officials were evaluated and selected for promotion.¹³⁷ As Fan Zhongyan and Han Qi argued in a 1043 memorial, good government depended more upon the quality of local officials than the specific laws and policies promulgated by the state.¹³⁸

Since the members of Fan's faction claimed that the government's problems stemmed primarily from the presence of incapable and corrupt officials in positions of power, they focused their remonstrance on attacking Lü Yijian and the officials allied with him in an effort to reduce their still considerable influence at court. Soon after assuming their posts in the Remonstrance Bureau, Cai Xiang and Ouyang Xiu unleashed a string of memorials criticizing Lü's continued political clout. They argued that his persistent meddling in official affairs made it impossible for the state to implement reform.¹³⁹

Ouyang Xiu was by far the most vocal of the newly appointed remonstrating officials, submitting numerous denunciations of individuals who did not share his ideals.¹⁴⁰ For example, in a memorial protesting the decision to promote

137. The cornerstone of their program involved improving education and changing the exams to focus less on poetry and more on policy essays. Fan outlined his vision for educational reform in a letter to Lü Yijian written more than a decade prior to the reforms. He argued that the key to governing the state lay in the cultivation of talented individuals through the encouragement of classical study. Fan emphasized the applicability of the classics to political affairs, arguing that those who had mastered the lessons contained in these texts could assist the ruler in realizing the *dao* of antiquity. The problem was that the Song had failed to make education in the classics a priority; the government had neither established a sufficient number of schools to provide instruction in the classics, nor made the lessons of the classics the basis for the official exams. He argued that the current exams were of no benefit to the state, for they did not encourage the type of learning that transformed individuals into competent officials (*Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 237–39).

138. *Changbian*, 141:3386.

139. *Changbian*, 140:3367–69; 143:3444–46.

140. Soon after being promoted, Ouyang accused two officials who had been recommended by Lü, Yan Shu and Xia Song, of various improprieties resulting in their dismissal. Two months later, he attacked Su Shen, who had earlier used correlative arguments to argue that a drought was due to the promotion of Ouyang and others to the Remonstrance Bureau, for his recommendation

Li Shu 李淑 to the position of Hanlin Academician, Ouyang contended that Li's affiliation with Lü Yijian would result in the emperor losing control over the handles of reward and punishment.¹⁴¹ He said that he had heard that Renzong had previously ordered Li's reassignment to the provinces, but that high-ranking officials in the Secretariat were afraid of making enemies with Lü, and thus they were dragging their feet in carrying out his directive. Ouyang urged the emperor to issue a special edict demoting Li, sending a clear message that he would no longer tolerate official malfeasance. Li was reassigned to a provincial position several days later.¹⁴²

As the decision to enforce Li Shu's reassignment illustrates, Renzong was initially very receptive to the suggestions proffered by the pro-reform remonstrance officials, and in the first several months following their promotions, he complied with the majority of their suggestions, allowed them to participate in policy deliberations, and even rewarded them for the quality of their advice.¹⁴³ He agreed to broaden the channels of communication and gradually issued edicts ordering the institution of six of the ten reform measures proposed by Fan and Fu.¹⁴⁴

However, despite the reformers' early success, the combined effects of a severe drought and locust plague, internal rebellion, continued attacks by the Tanguts, a military buildup by the Khitan, and resistance by officials brought an abrupt end to the reforms in the beginning of 1045.¹⁴⁵ Although it

of Ma Duan 馬端 to the Censorate. As a result of Ouyang's critique, Su was demoted and Ma did not receive the appointment. Over the next several weeks, Ouyang helped to engineer the dismissals of Du Zeng 杜曾 and the Participant in Determining Governmental Matters Wang Juzheng 王舉正. See *Changbian*, 141:3373; 142:3395–99.

141. *Changbian*, 143:3448–49.

142. *Changbian*, 143:3459.

143. *Changbian*, 143:3447. After rewarding them, Renzong stated: "You were all personally selected by me. There have been numerous occasions where you have uninhibitedly discoursed upon affairs. Thus you are being given this reward." 卿等皆朕所自擇，數論事無所避，故有是賜。

144. In the seventh month of 1043, he issued an edict allowing officials in the Secretariat and Bureau of Military Affairs to memorialize the throne on matters outside of their official responsibilities (*Changbian*, 142:3397). Two months earlier, he approved a request to add six new positions to the Censorate (*Changbian*, 141:3378). For the implementation of these six reform measures, see *Changbian*, 144:3480, 3485–86; 145:3500–6, 3510; 147:3563–65; 149:3617.

145. For a detailed discussion of the Song's conflict with the Tanguts and the Khitan in the early 1040s, see Tao Jingsheng, *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao Relations* (Tucson:

was only one factor contributing to the failure of the reforms, the role played by the drought and locust plague has received little attention in secondary scholarship.

Even after receiving the support of the emperor, the remonstrating officials affiliated with the Ancient-style Learning movement continued to use the occurrence of anomalies to argue for the need to replace the top officials in the government. Although Fan and Fu had been promoted to the Council of State in the fall of 1043,¹⁴⁶ and despite the fact that several of their reforms and employment recommendations had been approved, they were still unable to enforce the reform measures or exert control over state policy. Many officials in the government did not support the reforms and, as a result, their implementation did not proceed smoothly.¹⁴⁷ In an effort to convince Renzong to promote individuals more sympathetic to the reforms, the members of Fan's faction once again turned to cosmological arguments.

In 1043, Ouyang Xiu took advantage of an astronomical anomaly to impugn high-ranking officials for failing to plan adequately for problems in administering the state.¹⁴⁸ Ouyang maintained that the anomaly, together with the current drought and refugee problem, should be serving as a wake-up call for the top officials in the government to plan for further bandit uprisings. He asserted that if bandits, refugees from drought stricken areas, and heavenly anomalies occurred in close temporal proximity during the Han dynasty, blame would definitely have fallen upon the highest ranking officials in the government (the Three Dukes *sangong* 三公) and they would have been either dismissed or executed.

University of Arizona Press, 1988), ch. 5. Evidence of official resistance to the reforms can be found in *Changbian*, 150:3637. See also James Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu*, 41–42.

146. *Changbian*, 142:3417.

147. One of the prime ministers, Zhang Dexiang, was a close associate of Lü Yijian, and he acted to thwart the implementation of the reforms. See Wang Zhishuang, 42. Wang also identifies Gao Ruona, Wang Gongchen 王拱辰, Zhang Fangping, Cai Ting 蔡挺 and Qian Mingyi 錢明逸 as opponents of the reforms allied with Lü.

148. *Changbian*, 143:3462–64. Ouyang distinguished astronomical signs from other types of portents in a memorial written after a tree was presented to the throne bearing the inscription “way of great peace” (*taiping zhi dao* 太平之道). Ouyang argued that plants and trees have myriad different natural variations and thus they should not be regarded as portents. Astronomical anomalies, however, definitely occur for a reason and so it is appropriate to regard them as warnings and respond to them by cultivating the self (*Changbian*, 145:3516–17).

In the current situation, however, the prime ministers were avoiding responsibility and failing to take the numerous omens indicating calamity seriously. Since they continued to act as if they were presiding over an era of great peace, Ouyang urged the emperor to hold them responsible and punish them. He concluded the memorial by offering four suggestions on how to deal with the bandits: provide troops to the affected areas; catch the bandit leaders; clarify rewards and punishments; and employ talented officials to appease the people and prevent them from joining the revolts.¹⁴⁹

The following year, as the drought became more severe,¹⁵⁰ Yu Jing submitted a memorial imploring the court to take action. Yu contended that since antiquity natural disasters had prompted emperors to rectify their conduct and compelled high-ranking officials to work together to initiate political reform.¹⁵¹ Most officials attributed the current problems with the Tanguts and the Khitan to the poor leadership of Lü Yijian and Zhang Shixun over the previous decade. However, Yu pointed out that the current prime ministers Yan Shu and Zhang Dexiang had also failed to rectify the political system, causing the people to lose hope in the government. Yu argued that the solutions to the problems facing the state involved employing capable officials, reducing unnecessary expenditures, and instituting measures to appease the populace. He concluded the memorial by urging Renzong to assert his authority and implement the above recommendations.

These memorials failed to convince Renzong to increase his support for the reforms and remove anti-reform elements from the court. In fact, by the summer of 1044, it was becoming increasingly evident that Renzong was beginning to lose patience with the reformers. With the drought and bandit problems growing worse, Fan Zhongyan requested to be dismissed from the Council of State and transferred to the border to help prepare against a possible Khitan invasion.¹⁵² While the emperor refused to dismiss him from the Council of State, he did grant his petition to proceed to the border. Fu Bi would later

149. Ouyang followed this memorial with a comprehensive proposal for removing dissolute and superfluous officials from the provinces (*Changbian*, 143:3464–67). Soon thereafter, Fan and Fu composed a joint memorial arguing for the need to improve the quality of officials serving in the countryside in order to prevent future popular revolts (*Changbian*, 144:3481–82).

150. *Changbian*, 147:3554–55.

151. *Changbian*, 147:3568–69.

152. *Changbian*, 149:3624, 3636–37.

write that Fan's request to be reassigned was prompted by their realization that the tide at court was turning against them. Fan and Fu had learned of a plot to frame them for treason, and they decided that a transfer to the border would help to insulate them from being implicated in the scheme.¹⁵³

In the summer of 1044, immediately following Fan's transfer, the emperor spoke to the Council of State about the increasing severity of the drought and locust plague affecting the empire. This conversation typifies the approach towards disasters that was predominant in official circles during the Song. Renzong asked his top advisors what the people had done to deserve this calamity, and he informed his consulting officials that he had been praying for heaven to transfer it to his person. Prime Minister Zhang Dexiang apologized for failing to effectively spread Renzong's virtue throughout the empire and for causing the emperor to worry. He assured Renzong that his sincere concern for the people's fate would surely move heaven's mind and bring an end to the disaster.¹⁵⁴

Soon after this conversation, the pro-reform remonstrating officials submitted a series of five jointly written memorials with alternative proposals for how to deal with the disaster.¹⁵⁵ These memorials reveal the remonstrating officials' realization that their positions, and the reform movement, were on increasingly shaky ground. They moreover demonstrate the problems inherent in using the occurrence of anomalies to argue for changes in government personnel.

In the first memorial, the remonstrating officials attempted to convince Renzong to address the causes and consequences of the disaster, rather than relying on heaven's magnanimity to relieve the people's suffering. They recommended that Renzong adopt several traditional measures to dispel the drought, such as avoiding the inner compartments of the palace, fasting, and

153. *Songchao zhuchen zouyi*, 75:816–19. Details of the plot are also contained in the *Changbian*, 150:3637–38.

154. *Changbian*, 150:3638. This conversation echoes one that took place over a year earlier, in which Renzong told the high-ranking ministers that the drought was due to his inability to extend his virtue. Zhang Dexiang replied that the fault lay with his ministers and their failure to practice good government and attract harmonious *qi* (*Changbian*, 141:3377).

155. The *Changbian* and Yu Jing's *nianpu* list a total of three memorials. However, Cai Xiang's *nianpu* notes that there were five memorials submitted on this occasion, four of which are contained in his collected writings and a fifth in the *Changbian*. It is unclear which remonstrating officials, other than Yu and Cai, contributed to the memorials.

issuing an edict admonishing officials to fulfill their responsibilities. They moreover suggested that he dispatch surveillance officials throughout the empire in order to uncover problems in local administration.

Renzong did not adopt the advice contained in their first memorial, and the pro-reform remonstrating officials followed it with a second, in which they observed that the disaster was growing worse due to this decision. They argued that his prayers to heaven were ineffectual and insisted that he had to do more to stop the disaster:¹⁵⁶

Your Majesty is unstintingly mindful of the cares of the myriad creatures and we ministers consider all things for the welfare of the state. All that is humanly possible must be attempted with diligence to alleviate the disaster. Moreover, avoiding the inner compartments of the palace, fasting, issuing edicts and dispatching envoys are all regularly implemented practices contained in the textual tradition, and they represent the sublime beauty of the ruler's cultivation. We hope that Your Majesty will implement these measures at his earliest convenience.¹⁵⁷

陛下爲蒼生憂念非不勤，臣等爲國思慮無不至。凡人有可爲者，皆勉而爲之，以救災害。況避殿減膳，發詔遣使，此乃典冊常行之故事，帝王修省之盛美，伏望陛下早賜施行。

While acknowledging that it is speculative to do so, I interpret their decision to employ traditional rhetoric and focus their remonstrance on Renzong's conduct, as opposed to the high-ranking officials hindering their reforms, as an attempt to deflect the blame for the drought and locusts away from themselves. In the remaining three memorials composed in response to the drought, the remonstrating officials began to accept an increasing amount of responsibility for the disaster, which is quite startling given the fact that the primary duty of remonstrating officials was to critique the emperor and the conduct of high-ranking officials. By the third memorial, they seem to have realized that their strategy to deflect blame was not working, and in the fourth, they accepted complete responsibility, requesting to be exiled in order to appease heaven and stop the disaster.

The remonstrating officials' retreat from the claims made in the first two memorials, where they attributed the continued severity of the drought to

156. Ouyang Xiu also critiqued the practice of praying to heaven after disasters in his 1042 rhapsody discussed above.

157. *Cai Xiang ji* 蔡襄集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1996), 307.

the emperor's failure to act, can be seen in the third memorial. They began the memorial by repeating their contention that the locusts were definitely a warning from heaven about the current state of political affairs.¹⁵⁸ They outlined the numerous problems confronting the dynasty, and maintained that while the court had responded with reverence and awe, it had failed to reform the government fully. However, instead of urging Renzong to rectify himself, they implored him to address the root cause of the disasters, which they now identified as the failure of the ruler, high-ranking ministers, and remonstrance officials to fulfill their duties:

We venture to list the following problems [in the government]: Your Majesty is not in control of decision-making and does not monopolize authority. This causes people not to trust your edicts and prevents your benevolence from descending below. These are the faults of Your Majesty. In controlling the handles of the empire and presiding over the people's fate, [the high-ranking ministers] have made no beneficial plans or alternative deliberations to reform the age's defects, and they have not exhausted their loyalty and integrity in fulfilling their duties. These are the errors of the high-ranking officials. We are guilty of [the following]: the inability to rectify the court's deficiencies, the inability to express the people's suffering, the inability to reform Your Majesty's leniency and lack of decision making, the inability to end officials' keeping silent and avoiding the issues, the inability to distinguish between the corrupt and upright entering the ranks of officialdom together, and the inability to plan for the barbarians forming an alliance and invading our territory. Possessing a mind intent on avoiding difficulty, we have lacked the integrity to argue forcefully [against the above problems].¹⁵⁹

闕失之事，臣等敢次第言之。陛下不專聽斷，不攬威權，使號令不信於人，恩澤不及於下，此陛下之失也。持天下之柄，司生民之命，無嘉謀異議以救時弊，不盡忠竭節以副任用，此大臣之過也。朝有闕失而不能救，民有疾苦而不能達，陛下寬容少斷而不能規，群臣循默避事而不能斥，百官邪正並進而不能辨，四夷交結內侵而不能謀，有顧避之心，無力諍之節，此臣等之罪也。

The remonstrating officials continued the memorial by arguing that the emperor should use the disasters as a pretext to dismiss the high-ranking ministers if they continued to block the reform efforts. They moreover acknowledged

158. *Changbian*, 150:3655–57.

159. *Changbian*, 150:3655–56.

their own failures and requested to be exiled to distant posts and replaced with upright men more capable than themselves.

The emperor again failed to respond to their memorial and, after seven days, they submitted a fourth in which they took full responsibility for the disaster and the circumstances that led to it:

Today, looking back over the past couple of years, the inability of the people's resources to match the state's needs has grown. If we continue in this way and do not adopt measures to rectify the old problems, then one or two years from now, when we look back on today, we can know that the calamity will not only be as bad as the present, it will worsen. Even if there are those who understand this, they will not be able to plan for it. As remonstrating officials, we have witnessed the condition of the state reach this critical point and have been unable to spread Your Majesty's benevolent grace in order to secure the people's minds. We have also been unable to rectify the high-ranking ministers' faults in order to reform the problems of the age. This has led to the arrival of numerous disasters and caused those within and outside the court to be anxious and fearful. Above we have failed Your Majesty's favor in promoting us, and below we have failed the hopes of the people in distress. Anxiety on this score fills all our days, and with derision and blame filling our bodies, how could we again have the face to come and go from court? Our crime is truly great and we entreat the court to sentence us to exile in order to appease all under heaven.¹⁶⁰

今日視前一二年，國用民力固不如矣。復且因循，無有更改舊弊之術，後一二年，還視今日，又可知矣，非獨不如今日，其患至大，縱有知者，不能爲謀。臣等以諫名官，見天下之勢至危如此，既不能開廣陛下恩信，以固民心，又不能糾正大臣闕失，以救時弊，是致災異頻數，中外恐懼。臣等上負陛下選擢之恩，下負生靈困苦之望，憂慮終日，譏責滿身，尚何顏面出入朝中？臣等罪戾實深，伏乞朝廷必加竄逐，以謝天下。

The court failed to reply to this memorial as well, which gave the remonstrating officials hope that Renzong did not intend to exile them. They wrote a fifth memorial in which they reiterated many of their previous concerns and stated that if Renzong did not want to hold them personally accountable for the disasters, then he should give them assignments outside of the capital and find suitable replacements.¹⁶¹

160. *Changbian*, 150:3657.

161. *Cai Xiang ji*, 309. An abbreviated version can be found in *Changbian*, 150:3657.

A little over a month later, the majority of the remonstrating officials allied with Fan's group were either given concurrent assignments or removed from the Remonstrance Bureau. Yu Jing was made a Khitan envoy; Tian Kuang 田況 (1005–1063) was made prefect of Chengde and military commissioner of Zhending and Dingzhou prefectures; Ouyang Xiu was made the fiscal commissioner of Hebei; and Cai Xiang was transferred from the Remonstrance Bureau to the Imperial Diary Office and given secretarial duties there.¹⁶² Fu Bi also left the capital to join Fan on the border as the pacification commissioner of Hebei. Ouyang's assignment to the provinces provoked opposition, and despite the remonstrating officials' earlier request to be given provincial assignments, Cai Xiang wrote a memorial urging Renzong to reconsider his decision.¹⁶³ The only individual allied with the reform movement still in a position of influence was Du Yan, who had recently been installed as prime minister after Yan Shu was dismissed for a breach of etiquette.¹⁶⁴

With the most prominent members of the pro-reform faction outside the capital, their opponents stepped up their attacks. In the eleventh month of 1044, Su Shunqin was impeached for following the traditional custom of using receipts from the sale of old paper to pay for a banquet.¹⁶⁵ Another ally of the reforms who was recommended by Fan, Wang Yirou 王益柔 (1015–1086), was implicated in the scandal and castigated for a blasphemous poem he wrote several years earlier. Fan's opponents used his relationship to these men to call for his dismissal, and soon thereafter Fan requested to be made the prefect of Binzhou 分州.¹⁶⁶

Although this request was refused, Renzong indicated his dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs by issuing an edict complaining about factions. In the edict, Renzong explicitly refuted arguments made by Fan and Ouyang in earlier essays touting the virtues of factions by stating that good officials did not form factions during ages of perfect order.¹⁶⁷ With this edict, Renzong effectively

162. *Changbian*, 151:3678, 3683–84.

163. *Songchao zhuchen zouyi*, 51:562.

164. Angered by Ouyang's dismissal, Cai Xiang and Sun Fu impeached Yan Shu for a breach of etiquette and he was dismissed (*Changbian*, 152:3699).

165. *Changbian*, 153:3715–16.

166. *Changbian*, 153:3718.

167. 朕聞至治之世，元、凱共朝，不爲朋黨。The terms *yuan* 元 and *kai* 凱 denote two groups of 8 virtuous officials from remote antiquity. Yin Zhu wrote a memorial protesting Renzong's change of heart in which he attempted to convince him that he was making a mistake in withdrawing his support. He complained that Renzong did not give them enough of a chance

announced the termination of his support for the reformers, and over the next several months they were demoted and their reform measures repealed.

When the Ancient-style Learning reformers decided to argue that disasters were indications that the wrong people were serving in government, they in effect sowed the seeds of their own demise. The cosmological arguments they advanced were better suited to remonstrance than to sustaining a political reform movement, for the simple reason that political enemies could always invoke disasters to attack their administration and policies.¹⁶⁸ This inherent weakness in this type of cosmological rhetoric is evident in the five memorials submitted by the pro-reform remonstrating officials discussed above. Their initial claims that the drought and locust plague were due to the emperor's refusal to avoid the inner palace, fast and dispatch surveillance commissioners to local areas must have struck many as hypocritical.¹⁶⁹ On the basis of their own arguments, the continued severity of the natural disaster was an indication that the wrong people were being employed in important political positions. While it is true that the members of the reform group did not occupy the highest offices, Renzong had promoted Fan to the second highest position in the government, approved six of their reform measures and given them a voice in shaping political policy. Their inability to evade responsibility for the drought became apparent after the second memorial, and they eventually realized that they had no recourse but to accept blame and request reassignment.

to implement their reforms and stopped backing them before they could amass significant achievements (*Changbian*, 153:3718–19).

168. The dangers that correlative rhetorical arguments posed for political reform were well recognized by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086). In the early years of the New Policies, several censors used correlative doctrines to argue that an earthquake and astronomical anomaly were indications that the Green Sprouts initiative, one of Wang's reform measures, was disturbing cosmological harmony and subjecting the people to unnecessary toil. They accordingly called on Shenzong to dismiss him. In order to insulate the reforms against such criticism, Wang engaged in a protracted effort to convince Shenzong that natural disasters were not related to political affairs. He moreover removed officials in the Censorate and Remonstrance Bureau who opposed the reforms and replaced them with men loyal to his cause. Finally, he sought to prohibit officials from using disasters to remonstrate with the court. Wang's efforts in this regard were ultimately unsuccessful, and the first of his two dismissals from the position of prime minister occurred as the direct result of a serious drought. For a discussion of these matters, see *Changbian*, chs. 210 and 252, and Skonicki, ch. 5.

169. Su Shen had blamed the pro-reform Remonstrating Officials for the drought as early as the fall of 1043 (*Changbian*, 141:3395–96).

Conclusion

In addition to providing a more complete account of the circumstances surrounding the Qingli reforms, the above analysis of Ancient-style Learning cosmological argumentation sheds light on a number of important issues in Song politics and thought.

The first such issue concerns the manner in which Song intellectuals interpreted the exercise of authority in the Song political system. The frequent criticism directed against Lü's political influence indicates that, in the minds of many Song political actors, the authority of the prime minister had increased vis-à-vis the emperor due to his control over employment and the channels of communication. Lü's grip over political affairs was made possible by both the continued effects of prior procedural reforms, and his special relationship with Renzong, which by all accounts was forged during the Empress Guo affair.

The second important issue concerns the nature and function of theoretical discourse in the Song Ancient-style Learning movement. The adherents of Ancient-style Learning did not adopt a single unified cosmological theory, but rather advanced a number of distinct interpretations of the relationship between the cosmos and human society in their writings. The diversity found in their cosmological positions, as well as the willingness of individual thinkers to use different theories when addressing different audiences, suggests that theoretical consistency was not a primary concern for the adherents of the movement. This has three significant implications.

- (i) It reveals the importance of polemical objectives in their theorizing, and suggests that such objectives often outweighed the desire to promote a consistent theory on a particular issue. Ouyang Xiu, for example, evidently saw no conflict in adapting his cosmological arguments to the expectations of different audiences, so long as they supported his underlying polemical aim. Ouyang's stance was not that uncommon in the first half of the eleventh century. At this time, the majority of intellectuals did not attempt to create, or abide by, a consistent philosophical vocabulary, and it was not unusual for thinkers to use different theoretical terms to argue for the same fundamental position.
- (ii) It indicates that the movement as a whole was not established on the basis of a rigid theoretical orthodoxy. Scholars have long observed that Song Ancient-style Learning adherents held disparate views, particularly with regards to

Buddhism.¹⁷⁰ The foregoing analysis adds to this picture of Ancient-style Learning as a diverse intellectual movement; the different conceptions of the cosmos found in the theoretical writings of Ancient-style Learning adherents suggest that it was in fact their shared commitment to a specific mode of learning and governance that formed the basis of their group identity.

- (iii) Taken together, the above two points indicate that conceptions of cosmos did not play a foundational role in defining the Ancient-style Learning movement, but rather, served primarily as a rhetorical means of advancing their political agenda.

The final important issue illuminated by this study concerns the rhetorical use of cosmological arguments to criticize political opponents. Although the adherents of Ancient-style Learning were certainly not the first Chinese thinkers to tie the occurrence of natural disasters and anomalies to employment, they were largely responsible for popularizing this discourse during the Song dynasty. As factional disputes intensified in the decades following the failure of the Qingli reforms, it became increasingly common for political actors to attack their rivals upon the occurrence of natural disasters.¹⁷¹ Such attacks would play an important role in the factional conflicts that took place over the second half of the eleventh century, and despite the fact that correlative cosmology came to be increasingly marginalized in theoretical discourse, its utility in advancing political interests ensured its continued use throughout the remainder of the dynasty.

170. Shi Jie, Li Gou, and Ouyang Xiu vigorously denounced Buddhism in their writings, while Fan Zhongyan, Fu Bi, and Han Qi had close ties with monks and engaged in Buddhist practices. For a discussion of Fan's personal views of Buddhism, see Huang Qijiang 黃啓江, "Cong Fan Zhongyan de shijiaoguan: kan Beisong Zhen, Ren zhi ji de rushi guanxi" 從范仲淹的釋教觀：看北宋真、仁之際的儒釋關係, in Huang Qijiang, *Beisong fojiaoshi lungao* 北宋佛教史論稿 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1997), 133–52.

171. In the years following the Qingli reforms, the use of correlative disaster rhetoric became a regular feature of political discourse. As factional divisions intensified, and as it became evident that Renzong regarded the occurrence of natural disasters as sufficient cause to make personnel changes, the use of such rhetoric increased. This is evidenced by the record contained in the *Song huiyao jigao*, which lists natural disasters or anomalous events as the reason for the dismissal of five high-ranking officials in the nearly twenty years between the termination of the reforms and Renzong's death (*Song huiyao jigao* 78.18–21). This figure, which does not take into account the much larger number of unsuccessful political attacks employing correlative disaster rhetoric, represents a marked increase over earlier reigns.