Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture

VOL. 36
AUGUST 2021

Institute of Confucian Philosophy and Culture
Sungkyunkwan University

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture
Vol. 36, August 2021

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture

Publisher
SHIN Dong Ryeol

Director of the ICPC
Doil KIM

Published on August 31, 2021

The *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture* (ISSN 1598-267X) a peer-reviewed international journal published by the Institute of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Sungkyunkwan University. It is published biannually (in February and August). The Journal is indexed in AtlaSerials, BAS (Bibliography of Asian Studies), MLA Directory of Periodicals, The Philosopher's Index, DOAJ, KOAJ and KCI (Korea Citation Index). Any correspondence, including article submission, should be addressed to:

Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture
Institute of Confucian Philosophy and Culture
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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 5–23
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.5

Scholar's Corner: Confucianism in and for the Modern World

The Impact of Confucianism on the Korean Kinship System – A Reconsideration

Martina Deuchler*

Abstract

After providing a brief description of a few distinct features of Goryeo society (918-1392), this essay outlines the major stages of Korea's Confucianization during the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910): the restructuring of the bilateral Goryeo descent groups, the introduction of Confucian institutions such as ancestor worship, inheritance practices, the changing status of women, and the ensuing development of patrilineal descent groups. It emphasizes that in spite of the fact that a strict Confucian socio-political order eventually emerged, remnants of Goryeo bilaterality survived sufficiently clearly to make it problematic to speak of a full Confucianization of Korean society. It concludes with briefly considering developments in the present-day Republic of Korea.

Keywords: Confucian ritualism, bilaterality, patrilineal transformation, Goryeo, Joseon

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**This contribution is the transcript of a keynote speech prepared for the Conference on Women, Family and Korean Confucianism, held at Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, on October 30, 2020. It is based on the author's major works on Korean social history: *The Confucian Transformation of Korea—A Study on Society and Ideology* (1992), and *Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea* (2015). Both works were translated into Korean.

What I am going to talk about today is not absolutely new, but it is still largely ignored by historians and social anthropologists alike. It is the story of a process of change that turned Korea's indigenous bilateral society into a patrilineal society, starting with the dynastic transition from Goryeo (918-1392) to Joseon dynasty (1392-1910). Transition processes are the most complex and at the same time the most exciting subjects of study. Indeed, it is this subject that has kept me exploring the historical record and doing fieldwork in South Korea for over 40 years. As far as I know, no other example of a social transformation as comprehensive and compelling as Korea's exists anywhere in or outside of East Asia.

I. Goryeo Society

A few words on Goryeo society, that is, Korea's pre-Confucian society, are in order.

From at least the fifth century, Korean society was organized into graded status groups that gained participation in government and society through their social credentials, namely through birth and descent. High social status depended on belonging to an officially recognized ranked descent group, and such ranking determined the extent to which an individual could take part in politics. In short: one's *social standing* conditioned one's chances of taking part in the *political* process. This narrowly-defined descent "ideology" put a small social elite in power and, significantly, formed the foundation of aristocratic rule in Goryeo (and throughout Korean history).

A Goryeo aristocratic descent group included paternal, maternal, and affinal kin. This meant that a man's kin embraced a multilaterally connected and flexible group, and descent was traced through both male and female links. In other words, descent was *not* unilineal, and both descent rules were used to keep as many people as possible within the kin group. The larger the group, the greater its potential to hold property, provide social status, and gain political influence. A minimal formula for identifying a male's social status was to trace his *four* ancestors (*sajo*), namely, the father, paternal grandfather, paternal

great-grandfather, *and* maternal grandfather. This formula clearly shows that lineal thinking was alien to Goryeo descent reckoning. While its origin may go back to Tang law, the inclusion of the maternal grandfather was typically Korean.

A Goryeo kin group was inclusive: all members, male and female, of the same generation enjoyed equal rights and duties. Equality among siblings had important consequences for the succession of office-holding and inheritance of property. Jural equality of brothers meant that succession to aristocratic status and government office was not confined to one son: it extended, in the absence of sons, to agnatic and non-agnatic nephews, to sons-in-law, adopted sons, and to agnatic and non-agnatic descendants. Even though sons were the preferred heirs, collateral agnates and even non-agnatic and affinal kinsmen were potential successors. This demonstrates that succession was flexible and non-lineal.

Inheritance to the aristocracy's *private* property (land and slaves) followed customary rules, making *all* of an owner's offspring—sons and daughters—his (or her) heirs. This molded the Goryeo elite households. Brothers and sisters were co-heirs in a double sense: they each inherited an equal share of the patrimony, and, under certain circumstances, they could expect to inherit from each other. This motivated siblings to stay together as long as possible in the same household, and thus the *brother-sister bond* was especially strong. The larger the household, the more land it could bring under cultivation to enhance its wealth. People were scarcer than land, and therefore, households made every effort to keep as many members as possible.

The Goryeo kin group's special cohesiveness is also reflected in the *custom of close kin marriages*. Consanguineous marriages were not only customary in the royal house but were also widely practiced among the upper class. Unions with patrilateral and matrilateral cousins were frequent, and there were even marriages between half-brothers and half-sisters (siblings with different mothers) during the uncertain times at the beginning of the dynasty. In later times, however, exogamous marriage with other elite members became a more important vehicle for consolidating and advancing high social status. Beginning in the eleventh century, the state, which came

under the influence of the ritual values and legal norms reflected in Tang law, began to regulate the radius of marriageable partners for the office-holding elite. First, in 1058, unions with patrilateral parallel cousins were outlawed; this was followed by successive laws prohibiting hitherto marriageable relatives within the patrilateral kin group. Matrilateral cousins remained largely unaffected until the end of the dynasty.

Another particularity of Goryeo's social life was the marriage institution itself. The wedding ceremony took place in the bride's house, and after the wedding, the bridegroom usually took up residence in the bride's house. Consequently, the children and often even the grandchildren were born and grew up under their mother's roof. The most convincing motivation for *uxorilocal residence* was a Goryeo woman's high economic status. A woman owning her own property was not only a desirable bride, but she was also economically independent from her husband. Uxorilocal marriage did not, however, exclude the possibility that at a certain point, a married woman would move into her husband's house and end her life there.

An interesting additional aspect of the Goryeo marriage arrangement was the fact that a man often had several wives. He may have started out with an uxorilocal living arrangement, but after becoming successful he could have established his own group. This was not detrimental to his wife because she commanded her own wealth. If plural marriage was indeed a plausible arrangement, how did it work? I found a possible answer in the *Kagero nikki*, the tenth-century diary of one of Fujiwara Kaneie's wives. This precious document describes in great detail the "visiting-husband"-solution in which the husband rotated between his different wives. On the Korean side, the documentary base is too small to determine how prevalent the visiting-husband-solution was, but the wife-husband bond in Goryeo was described as a rather loose one. A wife did not fear separation; she even could leave her husband at her own discretion because she and her children were always welcomed back by her natal family.

In short, the core of the Goryeo's kinship system was the cognatic descent group focused on a common ancestor; descent was bilateral

and could thus be traced through a male *or* a female line. These groups lacked a common corporate basis, but ancestral consciousness kept the group together through generations. Proof of descent from a recognized descent group was essential for a man to be recognized as a member of the ruling aristocracy.

These characteristics, I believe, stand out clearly enough to substantiate the fact that Goryeo's society was a *bilaterally/cognatically* structured society. It is from this premise that we have to consider the mechanisms of change that were set in motion by Korea's encounter with Neo-Confucianism that ushered in the patrilineal transformation of Korean society in the first two centuries of Joseon dynasty.

II. Stages of Change

The fact that the Cheng-Zhu version of Song Neo-Confucianism, known as the Learning of the Way (*daoxue* 道學), was introduced to Korea during a period of sociopolitical crisis presents a unique set of circumstances. In late Goryeo, the capital-based civilian aristocracy was first challenged by a line of military dictators and later, during the last decades of the fourteenth century, by a non-elite. Under the tutelage of the Mongols (who had extended their lordship into Korea) non-elite elements began to push into government, amassed landed wealth, and used Buddhism as a spiritual prop. In short, a power struggle between the old ruling elite and the newcomers plunged the country into a deep crisis until 1392, when Yi Seong-gye (1335-1408), a military man, finally ended the chaos by founding a new dynasty, the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910).

During the Mongol period, when the connections between the Mongol court and the Goryeo court were close, some high-placed Korean scholars would go as members of royal retinues to Beijing, take the civil examinations there, and serve for a few years in the Yuan bureaucracy before returning to Korea. During their time in the Yuan capital the Koreans actively engaged in scholarly exchanges with Chinese Neo-Confucians and thus became aware of the civilizing power of the Learning of the Way. Looking at the malaise

in their home country, they strove to use their newly won knowledge to renovate the state and society in Korea. In other words, these new converts availed themselves of Confucian learning to try to end the misrule of the non-elite and win back for the old elite their earlier dominance at the center. Through active partnership with the military, represented by Yi Seong-gye, a group of Confucian-trained scholars grasped the chance to usher in, on Neo-Confucian premises, a socio-religious restoration process of epochal consequence.

For the intellectual architects of Joseon, the kind of Confucianism they adopted blended two strands of thought: "idealistic-moral" and "pragmatic-practical." Both were thought to be equally relevant to the revitalization of state and society. The pragmatists became the legislators who put "ordering the state" above self-cultivation and derived their inspiration and blueprints for action principally from such ancient Chinese works as the *Rituals of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) and the *Records of Rituals* (*Liji* 禮記). They believed that if they enforced the rules and models of China's classical literature, explicated by Neo-Confucian commentaries, they would be able to eliminate the socio-political and economic causes of Goryeo's disintegration and create an ideal Confucian society.

Then, what steps did the early Joseon Confucians think to take to initiate Confucian reform? I shall illustrate their course of action by discussing the restructuring of the Goryeo descent group, ancestor worship, inheritance practices, and the changing status of women.

III. Implantation of the Agnatic Principle

One of the most challenging tasks the reformers had to tackle at the outset was to disentangle the undifferentiated descent lines of the native Goryeo descent group and order them according to a clear lineal descent paradigm laid out in China's classical literature and the *Family Rituals of Zhu Xi* (*Zhuzi jiali* 朱子家禮). Both propagated a strong agnatic ideology that found its practical expression in a tightly organized unilineal descent group. For Zhu Xi, there was a clear inter-dependence between agnation and stability of the state.

The ideal patrilineal descent group was lineally *subdivided* into a superordinate descent line, headed by the eldest son and various *subordinate* lines headed by his younger brothers. The eldest son functioned as the ritual heir of the main line and was responsible for conducting the ancestral rites for at least three generations of patrilineal antecedents, whereas his younger brothers had only minor ritual obligations. In short, what bound the descent group together and provided it with a kind of corporateness was ancestor worship. Ancestor worship is one of the four domestic rites outlined in *Family Rituals of Zhu Xi*, and it was this ritual handbook that gave the Koreans the rules to initiate and conduct the cult.

The early Joseon legislators recognized that ancestor worship was an effective method for implanting agnatic consciousness and demanded that each elite family construct an ancestral shrine as the locus of the common ritual act. This was not, however, a popular policy. The office-holding elite, initially the main target of the reform program, simply did not cooperate. The lineal concept was alien to them because they were used to flexible descent and fraternal equality. It took a whole century of legislative efforts to overcome the elite's resistance and to win their collaboration.

One of the most controversial issues, for instance, was the distribution of ritual rights and obligations among brothers who held different office ranks or were differently wealthy—an issue that was especially contentious in Korea's status-conscious society. The question of which of the brothers was fit to become the ritual heir, that is, the head of the major descent line with its ritual prerogatives was fraught with potential strife since the choice of one brother to that position inevitably meant the demotion of the others to heads of minor lines. Even when, in accordance with the lineal principle, one son, usually the eldest, eventually was established as ritual heir, his standing continued to be challenged by competing brothers. What if a younger brother climbed higher in the official hierarchy? Would he not represent the descent group better than his low-level elder brother? Moreover, the lineal principle was also challenged *across* generations whenever a successor to a deceased lineal heir had to be chosen. Here, the tradition of fraternal succession stood in the way of

primogeniture as postulated by the ritual handbooks.

The allocation of lineal heirship also had economic implications. A legally recognized heir of an agnatic descent group enjoyed special economic benefits. He was to receive the main residence to which the ancestral shrine was attached and was in control of the slaves and fields set aside to finance the ancestral rites. Although these assets were not to become his wealth and had to be handed on to future generations, they did give the ritual heir economic advantages over his brothers.

Solutions to such tricky problems were grappled with throughout the fifteenth century until, finally, the first comprehensive law code, the *Gyeongguk daejeon* (State Code or the National Code 1471-85), formulated a definitive rule. As prescribed by the Confucian agnatic principle, the eldest son was to be the preferred heir. This was milestone legislation that shifted Korean society away from Goryeo tradition of fraternal or collateral succession and introduced primogeniture in succession matters. Laws, however, needed a long time to be fully accepted and implemented, and heirs were arbitrarily chosen far into the sixteenth century.

IV. Inheritance Practices in the Light of Agnation

In Goryeo, equal inheritance among sons and daughters was customary, but in the light of agnatic succession, the group within which the patrimonial property was to be divided up had to be newly defined. The early legislators introduced, on the basis of a potential heir's *socio-ritual* position, a *differential* scheme by which they not only narrowed the outer boundaries of the group of heirs, but also ranked the members within the group hierarchically.

The inheritance law of Joseon was laid down in the *Gyeongguk daejeon*. The lawmakers were sensitive to the fact that if lineal inheritance was to be accepted, a compromise between tradition and innovation had to be found. They, therefore, followed tradition and confirmed equal inheritance of sons and daughters. However, they firmly implanted the lineal principle by revoking horizontal

inheritance by collaterals. The ritual heir was to receive an extra share for fulfilling his ritual duties. Even secondary offspring, though not bona fide members of the descent group, were allotted reduced shares. Clearly, the legislators wanted to make the patrimony—the land and slaves that were to be transmitted from generation to generation—the mainstay of the descent group, and with additional laws and regulations, they sought to prevent it from being scattered through lack of heirs or greedy speculations.

V. Women as Obstacles to Change

The role of women created the greatest obstacle to speedy implantation of the agnatic principle. How could the various wives a Goryeo man may have had be brought into line with the lineal principle? After all, only *one* wife could be the mother of the lineal heir. Therefore, a law promulgated in 1413 sorted the wives into two categories: primary wives and secondary wives and forced husbands to categorize their wives accordingly. Not surprisingly, this bold law was not a popular piece of legislation. Decades of altercations and conflicts in the women's quarters followed because this new law affected wives and their offspring. In the early days of the dynasty, the sharp separation between "primary" and "secondary" was therefore rarely followed, but with the government's persistent enforcement of the lineal principle, the first-born son of a wife, who was declared primary, clearly enjoyed an elevated position over the rest of her offspring. In addition, this meant social degradation for the other wives and their offspring. In later times, secondary wives (also called concubines) no longer came from the elite. As a consequence, their sons (and daughters) were marginalized in crucial respects. They were no longer recognized as full-fledged members of their elite father's descent group and were denied a ritual role. They were also economically deprived as they received smaller amounts of the patrimony than their primary half-siblings. Moreover, they lost out socially and politically because they were barred from taking the civil service examinations.

The legal differentiation between "primary" and "secondary" descent in 1413 thus introduced an incisive dividing line into Korean society that created disillusionment and alienation and gave rise to countless conflicts among primary and secondary sons until the end of the dynasty.

Needless to say, the law of 1413 also had practical implications for women's lives. The primary wife assumed control over the household and enjoyed even some ritual prerogatives early in the dynasty. She demanded absolute obedience from the secondary wives her husband may have brought into the household and their offspring. Elite households were large, and they united people of a variety of social backgrounds under the same roof, usually also including a considerable number of house slaves. It was the primary wife's task to maintain peace and commonality among all household members. After her death, a primary wife was mourned for a specific length of time and, as a mark of her status, her spirit tablet was installed in the ancestral shrine, making her an ancestress. Secondary wives were not given such honors.

The reorganization of the inheritance system affected elite women's traditional economic independence and made women generally more dependent on their husbands' families. This was underscored by the demand for virilocal residence, which separated a woman from her natal family and broke her bond with her brothers. Gradually, married women even lost their inheritance rights as the law allowed husbands to gain greater stakes in their wives' properties. A woman's inheritance, initially only loosely attached to her affines, was eventually turned into a weighty contribution to an inalienable conjugal fund. In short, a woman's social bonds were shifted away from her natal family to her affinal family.

Despite all the emphasis on linearity and Confucian etiquette, the wedding ceremony in Joseon retained traditional features. It was conducted in the bride's residence, *not* in the groom's home. This arrangement preserved an aspect of Korean uxorilocal custom and, more importantly, was a public demonstration of the bride's high social position confirmed by her father's elite status. Only if the bride possessed such a certified pedigree could she later bestow the elite

status upon her offspring. Her father, her future children's maternal grandfather, therefore figured as one of the "four ancestors" who conferred upon them membership in the elite.

This is an eminently important point: even though *descent* came to be reckoned through the father (i.e., was determined patrilineally), social *status* continued to be transmitted bilaterally, giving the wife's side the same social weight as her husband's side. In other words, a part of Goryeo's bilateral tradition was preserved in the way social status continued to be handed down from one generation to the next. For this reason, the wedding ceremony had to take place in the bride's home.

In Joseon, this bilateral tradition was upheld—against the dictates of Confucian agnation. Social legitimacy, that is, affirmation of status, continued to derive from social rather than from *legal* criteria. This juxtaposition of genealogical and cultural values is uniquely Korean and has defined the Korean upper class until recent times.

IV. Developments in Late Joseon: The Emergence of Lineages

How did the "Confucian transformation" proceed in the second half of Joseon? This was linked mainly to the further development of the country's political and economic situation. From roughly the early sixteenth century, the government's fiscal system slowly deteriorated to the point at which the government could no longer guarantee officials' salaries. Landed property in the countryside gained more significance ever. Government officials began to move in large numbers from the capital to the countryside and established new settlements there. At that time, land was plentiful, and the government was still only weakly represented at the local level—ideal conditions for the reclamation of virgin land, especially in the two provinces, Gyeongsang and Jeolla.

Throughout the sixteenth century, newcomers built up landed estates that turned for many elite descent groups into lasting economic strongholds. This development was temporarily disrupted by the Imjin War (Hideyoshi invasions, 1592-98), but after the country

had recovered from the war devastations, new land was again brought under cultivation, and plentiful harvests led to population increase. The seventeenth century was thus the time when pressure on land started to peak, forcing the landed elite to look for new modes of group organization and economic production.

Once they had consolidated their estates, the landed elites turned into avid learners of Confucianism and began to absorb Confucian ritualism into their daily life. Around 1500, the patrilineal consciousness was still weak, but a century later, a number of Confucian-educated elite members began to pioneer the use of the *Jiali* in their ritual life. Recognizing the pivotal ritual role of the eldest son, they began to give him a special allowance to bolster his status as ritual heir. Remarkably, it was economic factors that eventually prepared the ground for far-reaching ritual innovations that eventually climaxed in the creation of patrilineal lineages.

The traditional equal division of the patrimony between sons and daughters, which had been confirmed in the dynasty's first law code, gradually led to a critical fragmentation of land, hampering productivity. Halting economic decline called for stringent countermeasures, the most incisive of which was the curtailment of daughters' inheritance shares. Even though concerned fathers often regretted such drastic measures, they justified them with ritual arguments found in the *Jiali* that gave ritual and economic preference to the eldest son, the ritual heir. Daughters, thus, lost their standing as heirs. Moreover, by that time most women, upon marriage, moved away to become members of their husbands' households, and thus severed their bonds to their brothers and to their patrilineal ancestors—a further important argument for excluding daughters from being heirs of the patrimony. In short, women were gradually deprived of their inheritance rights, and male heirs came to absorb the entirety of ancestral wealth.

The events I have just summarized took place over a period of over 100 years. The direction of change was toward reducing the property-sharing group. By the same token, the ritual group, too, narrowed. Ancestral property was no longer the concern of individuals but came to be transformed into the inalienable asset of a

corporate group. Women fared worst, and it is clear that sisters were in reality disinherited by their own brothers for the sake of serving the ancestors.

By 1600, then, the Confucian principle of agnation had taken root through ritual practice. Indeed, the ancestral cult had profoundly reorganized the structure of the traditional descent group. Bilaterality was replaced by the principle of agnation, with women being ritually and economically excluded from the group. The consolidation of the eldest son as ritual heir climaxed with the full implementation of primogeniture. These were the preconditions for the formation of full-fledged patrilineages.

But was there no opposition to such drastic changes that were forced upon native tradition in the name of Confucian ritualism? Could indigenous tradition so easily be undermined by a foreign value system, especially since the introduction of primogeniture into the Korean descent group went far beyond the extent to which the Chinese were using the *Jiali*?

In fact, in reaction to the adoption of Confucian-style reformed rituals, a uniquely Korean institution was created that was to mitigate the conflicts and frustrations caused by primogeniture. It is the emergence of this institution that throws doubt on whether we can speak of a full Confucianization of Korean society.

VII. Lineage and *Munjung*

The shift to primogeniture that privileged the eldest son over his brothers and elevated the shrine rites to the major ritual event of a descent group did not only undercut traditional *fraternal equality* but also clashed with the widely popular customary *grave rites.*

Worshipping at ancestral graves on the four customary holidays was widespread since early Goryeo and persisted into Joseon. Grave services usually rotated among both male and female, and even non-agnatic, descendants. To support the activities at gravesites of high-standing persons, special memorial halls were built. Although they did not contain spirit tablets, these halls were prestige objects, and

their popularity came to compete with the Confucian-style ancestral shrines.

In contrast, the ancestral cult based on the *Jiali* took place in front of the domestic shrine (*sadang*) in which the spirit tablets of three or four generations of lineal ancestors and their wives were placed. On the four seasonal holidays, their agnatic descendants would gather in front of the shrine and participate in the ceremonies conducted by the ritual heir inside the shrine. I call this gathering of agnates, who were cousins up to the eighth degree, the "ritual" or "domestic-shrine" lineage. The duties of the ritual heir of such a lineage were exacting. He had to lead a ritually pure life because he impersonated the vital link between the patrilineal ancestors and their agnatic descendants; this was a distinction that endowed him with unusual symbolic as well as practical power and authority over his kinsmen. Living in close proximity of his ancestors, he was the chief officiant at the domestic shrine and at ancestral graves; in addition, he had to celebrate the rites on the death anniversary of each lineal ancestor and his spouse. For fulfilling his manifold tasks, the ritual heir received a sizable income from land that was expressly set aside for ritual purposes. Although his duties were heavy, the ritual heir led a privileged life and received the respect of his descent group as well as of the community at large.

The switch from traditional grave rites to Confucian shrine rites was slow. Even reform-conscious elite leaders were often reluctant to press for change. Nevertheless, the shrine rites were gradually given ritual priority and conducted on the customary holidays (most notably on New Year and Chuseok), followed by tending the graves.

While canonical pressure eventually forced the change from grave rites to domestic-shrine rites, the exclusive role of the primogeniture heir at the domestic shrine incited persistent resistance. The principal objection lay in the fact that the domestic rites elevated the ritual heir's status over that of his younger brothers and cousins and demoted them to passive onlookers. Such degradation not only bruised the indigenous sense of fraternal equality, it also had economic consequences. As contemporary inheritance papers show, younger sons stood to lose land and slaves to the ritual heir.

This caused resentment that was expressed by lukewarm interest and reluctant cooperation in Confucian-style rituals. In short, ritual reformers were forced to come up with a solution that would overcome their kinsmen's unreceptive mood and win their collaboration lest the Confucian reformist venture should fail.

Rite-conscious leaders of their descent groups came to realize that only by ritually involving *all* male members of their patrilines would they be able to save their reform project. It seems—and this is my reconstruction—that they found in a vague passage in the *Jiali* the model of a worshipping group that was *broader* than the ritual lineage and included *all* agnatic descendants of an ancestor. Thus, from the late sixteenth century a new type of agnatic organization emerged. Called *munjung* (a term of uncertain origin), this new group included *all* agnatic kinsmen of a focal ancestor beyond the four ancestral generations venerated in the domestic shrine. In contemporary documents, *munjung* appears as a group that held corporately owned property and financed the grave rites for an outstanding ancestor. It also seems to have assisted the main line economically, for instance, if the lineal heir's residence had to be rebuilt after a fire. In short, *munjung* recruited to an equal degree the agnatic descendants of a focal ancestor on a "contractual" basis.

What, then, was the *munjung*'s relationship to the shrine lineage? The two clearly differed in their intention: while the domestic-shrine lineage emphasized *vertical* kin relationships dictated by the Confucian concept of lineal descent, *munjung* satisfied *horizontal* aspects of kinship reminiscent of the native tradition of fraternal equality. Unlike the domestic-shrine lineage, which was financed by patrimonial wealth, *munjung* depended on fund-raising among its members, who were interested in exploiting the prestige of a specific ancestor. By the eighteenth century, many *munjung* had grown into well-endowed corporations whose focus often was the descent group's apical ancestor and thus embraced a membership of dozens if not hundreds who attended the yearly rites at the ancestral grave. Indeed, some *munjung* came to grow into powerful organizations that took charge, besides ritual activities, of semijudicial and economic functions. Because the *munjung* came to represent the lineage to the

outside world, *munjung* is often erroneously viewed as "the" lineage. Although they *reinforced* each other, the "domestic-shrine lineage" and the *munjung* were two *separate* entities; together, they formed the mature lineage system that emerged in late Joseon.

VIII. Conclusions

In sum, the Confucianization of Korea was a unique socio-religious engineering feat that gave Korean society the reputation of being the most ritualized society in East Asia. Its limitations should, however, not be overlooked. Korean society *remained* a descent-based, hierarchical society built upon a long *bilateral* tradition. For this reason, it *did* resist complete conformity to ancient Chinese rites and Zhu Xi's prescriptions. While Chinese canonical patterns were minutely followed in key rituals, in particular in the ancestral cult, the elite's status consciousness prevented the locus of the wedding ceremony from being shifted to the groom's home. The emergence of *munjung*, moreover, was surely the most patent assertion of nativism.

Patrilineality with clear primogeniture was the striking result of Korea's Confucianization, but native bilaterality remained a persistent social feature. Indeed, the combination of adopted patrilineality and native bilaterality typifies the socio-religious distinctiveness that set Joseon dynasty society clearly apart from society in contemporary Ming and Qing China.

At the beginning, I said that there is no other example of an equally comprehensive and compelling social transformation in or outside of East Asia. To substantiate this claim, I want to conclude by briefly putting the Korean case in perspective by comparing it to a few features of dynastic transitions in China. While during the Tang-Song transition around the year 1000 the old Tang aristocracy collapsed and new social elements emerged, supported by social and economic progress, in Korea the transition from Goryeo to Joseon did not result in large-scale demographic or economic changes or a socio-political rupture. On the contrary, it was distinguished by a great deal of continuity in the ruling stratum. Both later transitions

from Song to Yuan and Yuan to Ming, again, were regime changes accompanied by social and economic developments (for instance, by the growing importance of market economy), but neither one was initiated by Confucian trained intellectuals who intended to reform the country's socio-religious matrix with a new rites-based agenda.

Interestingly, the sixteenth century saw the emergence of localized elites in Joseon Korea as well as in Ming China. But there, again, are clear differences. Whereas in Ming China, localized elites began to build lineages in response to the exertion of state authority, in Korea, lineages were formed *because* of the state's overall weakness. In both countries, lineages were intended to safeguard the survival of the elite. Yet, while in Ming and Qing times, the ritual prescriptions of the *Jiali* were generally disregarded because *economic* contributions secured a man a place in the lineage, in Korea, it was a man's *genealogical* standing that made him a lineage member. While the Chinese never attempted to implement primogeniture, the Koreans successfully adopted primogeniture, albeit only because they also bowed to tradition and supplemented the domestic-shrine lineage with the more inclusive *munjung*. Thus, in contrast to the Chinese who revised the ritual code to fit contemporary society, the Koreans endeavored to change their society's structural premises to conform to Zhu Xi's ritual prescriptions and made the "correct" performance of Confucian-style rituals a crucial hallmark of elite culture.

Let me conclude by asking: what is happening to the patrilineal lineage system in present-day South Korea? Interestingly, the vigor with which social and legal changes have recently been introduced by decisions of the Constitutional Law Court is reminiscent of the reform spirit the Confucian legislators exhibited in early Joseon. Today, the source of inspiration is no longer Confucianism, but *Western* legal concepts. Western principles of individual rights, equality, and rights to property, among others, have informed new legislation that is gradually undoing the patrilineal features of the Joseon lineage and re-introducing *bilateral* elements into modern society. Women are the beneficiaries of these changes; they have regained full membership in lineage affairs, are entitled to perform ancestral rites, and once again enjoy equal inheritance rights. Likewise, the household headship

system was abolished, and the earlier prohibition of marriage between lineages with the same surname and ancestral seat (*bongwan*) was declared obsolete. Surely, these are strong signs of a society in motion that in due course will lose its former patrilineal character and come full circle by reinstituting "indigenous" social norms such as bilaterality and sibling equality—norms that in early Joseon the Confucian legislators had tried so hard to eradicate as outdated features of Goryeo tradition.

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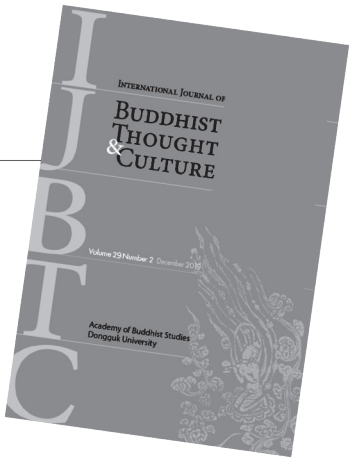

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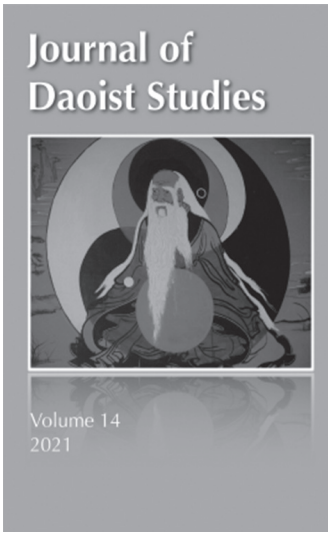

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 25–27
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.25

On This Topic

Texts and Contexts: *Women in Korean Confucianism*

Guest edited by Hwa Yeong Wang*

A growing number of scholars have produced research focused on the distinctive ideas, roles, status, and social activity of women within the Confucian tradition. Most of this work has taken texts of various kinds, some written by women and others by men, as their primary objects of study. In addition to the analysis it provides, such research has the important added value of making original writings on women available to English-speaking audiences and thereby granting scholars and students access to material that many would be unable to read or teach.

This special issue brings new works on Korean Confucian textual sources on women to the English-speaking world. The three invited articles focus on short essays or excerpts written in Classical Chinese on or by women. All contributors translated the texts that serve as the focus of their contributions anew, in most cases offering the first English language translations of these works and wrote a short introductory essay explaining their core ideas and significance.

"Two Korean Women Confucian Philosophers: Im Yunjidang and Gang Jeongildang" by Philip J. Ivanhoe and Hwa Yeong Wang introduces two remarkable Korean Neo-Confucian women philosophers. Both women are known for advocating women's moral equality based on Neo-Confucian philosophical claims in quite distinctive ways. Their lives and thought challenged the gendered structure of late Joseon society. Recently, Im and Gang have received

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more scholarly attention, especially from philosophical perspectives. Yet, only very short excerpts of their works are available for English language readers and often the same short passages are repeated by different authors. This essay provides access to more substantial translations of their works and offers a new perspective of comparative philosophy.

Jungwon Kim's "Negotiating Conventions: Geumwon and Her Nineteenth-Century Travel Record" presents a long-awaited resource for understanding the lives and thought of late Joseon women: a travel record written by a woman. In many ways, Geumwon's *Travelogue* occupies a unique position in Korean history. Her *Travelogue* is one of only a precious few examples of this genre written by women and the only one written in literary Chinese. In the process of composing this remarkable record, Geumwon not only describes her idiosyncratic journey but also interweaves her experience with her own identity, reshaping and recreating her self-perception. Through Kim's essay, readers not only will be able to travel across the Korean peninsula along with Geumwon, but also gain some sense of why and how she presents herself as a noble person 君子 in her imaginary textual context.

The third and last essay, "Contentious Source: Master Song, the Patriarch's Voice," brings a male voice on women and ritual into the broader conversation on Joseon women. The "male" is a well-known and influential figure in Korean philosophy and politics, Song Siyeol 宋時烈 (1607-89). The author focuses on Master Song's writings on women in relation to the four family rituals–capping/hair-pinning, marriage/ wedding, funeral/mourning, and sacrifice. The essay sheds new light on sources that have been hardly read or discussed and analyzes their importance from a feminist philosophical perspective. Song Siyeol's text requires one to keep the complexities of the historical context in mind. Readers will see how a male philosopher addressed issues, in the context of Korean Neo-Confucianism, and some of the tensions and strains that existed in this male scholar's life and thought on women and related philosophical issues. This contribution offers a new way to approach this kind of contentious source.

All three essays in this special issue are distinctive in their content and style, but all will increase the understanding of important texts on and by Joseon women and provide access to accurate and highly readable English translations of these works. They will guide those who are interested in the topic of women and Confucianism in Korea through new material with new perspectives for further research and teaching.

Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 29–53
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.29

Two Korean Women Confucian Philosophers: *Im Yunjidang and Gang Jeongildang*

Philip J. Ivanhoe and Hwa Yeong Wang*

Abstract

This essay introduces two Korean women Confucian philosophers: Im Yunjidang and Gang Jeongildang who lived in the latter period of the Joseon dynasty. Im Yunjidang was the first Confucian woman to explicitly claim women possessed an equal capacity to become sages as men. Gang Jeongildang made it clear that she was inspired by and sought to develop the thought of Im and added her own unique insights and new perspectives. Though they and their writings differ in many ways, these two women philosophers created a lineage of female sages, marking a turning point in the history of Confucian philosophy. This paper aims to provide the historical background that shaped their thought and to introduce some of their writings in the hope of inspiring readers to study further the lives and philosophies of these two remarkable women and to take up and extend the insights they have left behind.

Keywords: Neo-Confucianism, Im Yunjidang, Gang Jeongildang, Women philosophers, Joseon Korea

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**This work was supported by English Translation of 100 Korean Classics program through the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and Korean Studies Promotion Service of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2019-KCL-1230002). A complete translation and study of the life and philosophy of Im Yunjidang and Gang Jeongildang can be found in Philip J. Ivanhoe and Hwa Yeong Wang (forthcoming).

I. Introduction

This essay introduces two Korean women Confucian philosophers from the late Joseon dynasty (18th-19th century)—Im Yunjidang 任允摯堂 (1721-93) and Gang[1] Jeongildang 姜靜一堂 (1772-1832), briefly describes a few of their writings, and sketches some of the ways their work can contribute to contemporary philosophy. Both women are known for arguing, on the basis of distinctively Neo-Confucian philosophical claims about an original, pure moral nature shared by all human beings, that women are as capable as men of attaining the highest forms of intellectual and moral achievement. They contended that if given the chance to educate and cultivate themselves, women could become fully enlightened sages. This does not mean they believed in the political or social equality of women and men or basic human rights. They did not challenge the general gendered structure of late Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) society. What they insisted on is that women be allowed to cultivate themselves and were fully capable of becoming female sages (*yeoseong* 女聖; C. *nusheng*), by which they meant, roughly, that women could attain equally high moral character as male sages, while expressing their virtue in ways consistent with traditional ideals of womanhood.

While they clearly did argue for the intellectual and spiritual liberation of women, we shall not present them as feminists, which would be both anachronistic and, given our purposes, distracting. Instead, we will present them as women philosophers and focus on their ideas, highlight how the fact that they were women presented special challenges to the development of their philosophy, and describe how this informed and enriched their philosophical explorations.

[1] Editor's note: a number of scholars Romanize popular surnames like 김 and 강 as Kim and Kang respectively, but in this essay, we will Romanize them as Gang and Gim, in order to maintain consistency with other publications by the authors of this essay.

II. The Life and Thought of Im Yunjidang[2]

Born in 1721, Yunjidang's intellectual talents were recognized early on by one of her brothers; another brother assumed primary responsibility for her education and became her life-long mentor. When young, she often joined in philosophical debate with all of her brothers (she had five as well as one sister) and they regularly praised her originality and insight. When nineteen years old, she married Sin Gwang-yu 申光裕 (1722-47). They had a daughter together, their only child, but sadly the child died in 1747. In the same year she lost her child, when Yunjidang was 26 years old, she also lost her husband. After being widowed, she remained with her husband's family. Her brothers-in-law loved and respected her and came to regard and treat her as if she were a second mother to them, but she also had frequent contact with her own brothers. When she was more than forty years old, in order to ensure that a male descendent would continue her husband's family sacrifices, Yunjidang adopted the son of her younger brother-in-law. There is good evidence that in 1785, at the age of 65, she organized her various writings into the form they later would take in her posthumously published collection. In 1787, her adopted son died unexpectedly at the age of 28. Only her youngest brother outlived her, and it fell to him to write a remembrance of his sister that appears in *The Extant Writings of Yunjidang* (*Yunjidang yugo* 允摯堂遺稿).[3] She died in 1793, at the age of 73, in the family home in Wonju. Three years later, her only remaining brother and her brother-in-law published her literary works.

Yunjidang led the life of a Joseon noble woman, but the early passing of her parents, husband, and children, along with her close relationship with her brothers afforded her considerably more freedom, opportunity, and leisure time than many. Nevertheless, she had to pursue her scholarly endeavors largely out of public sight. A number

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2 For short introductions to the life and thought of Im and Gang that focus on different aspects of their significance, see Gim (2004, 455-88), Gim (2011, 71-88), Gim (2014, 28-47), and Gim (2017, 177-95).

3 See the Postscript (*bal* 跋; C. *ba*) by Im Jeongju 任靖周 (1727-96) in the Appendix (*burok* 附錄; C. *fulu*), 7b-8a.

of sources describe her as diligently serving her family by day while assiduously pursuing her studies at night. She was good at poetry and her extant writings include a number of poems, scholarly expositions, discourses, and letters, as well as other genres of writing. We only have time to offer a glimpse into her philosophy and begin by discussing one of the eleven Discourses (*non* 論; C. *lun*) she wrote on historical figures. One reason to focus on her Discourses is because this is a genre often found in the writings of orthodox Neo-Confucian philosophers, but almost never in those of women. Unlike Gang Jeongildang, Yunjidang produced a number of works in a variety of such standard genres; this makes her collected works more traditional in approach and likely reflects, among other things, the fact that she had more time and resources to pursue scholarly endeavors. We will also briefly discuss one of three Inscriptions (*myeong* 銘; C. *ming*) that are found among her extant writings to give some sense of the range of her literary style and how she used different genres to explore philosophical themes.

In her "Discourse of On Gyo Tearing the Hem of His Garment" ("Non On Gyo jeolgeo" 論溫嶠絶裾), Yunjidang discusses the well-known case of On Gyo (C. Wen Jiao), a man renowned for the loyalty and dedication he showed to his ruler. When appointed to undertake a dangerous mission as the king's envoy to a distant and hostile state, On Gyo did not hesitate. When his aged mother beseeched him to stay, he did not falter or delay but tore the hem of his garment, which she had grabbed on to while pleading with him, in his haste to depart. Yunjidang shows tremendous intellectual independence and courage by questioning his behavior and character and arguing that he actually behaved rather badly. She begins by asking whether the mission *really* was as pressing and critical as people claim? Next, she asks if it was really the case that he alone was capable of undertaking this duty. She further argues that since On Gyo was not formally a minister of the king whose general approached him to undertake the mission, contrary to what many had claimed, he was not bound by loyalty to accept. After questioning the importance of the mission and the need for him to undertake it, she goes on to analyze the way in which On Gyo responded to this call to duty, offering insightful

criticisms of this as well.

The case of On Gyo resembles Sartre's famous hypothetical scenario of a young man torn between staying to help his mother or leaving her to fight with the Free French forces against the Nazis (1991, 345-68). Sartre seems to argue that there is nothing to choose between these two alternatives; one must recognize this and realize that in making the choice one is determining what is right and who one will be. He makes an important point, though he seems to say, or at least imply, that in making one's choice *one confers* value on the chosen option. Charles Taylor argues that it is critically important to understand this scenario as posing two *equally valuable* courses of action; only under such conditions will one feel the difficulty of the choice one faces (1985, 15-44).[4] It is not that the choice *alone* confers value on the course one follows: the value already is there as part of a preexisting framework of meaningful choices. Yunjidang's analysis presupposes a similarly juxtaposed value-laden choice, but, as described above, she takes much more care in exploring the alternatives to ensure that the apparent equal value of the two alternatives can indeed withstand careful scrutiny. Setting aside these various issues for the sake of argument, she then asks why On Gyo did not take the time to explain the true nature of the situation to his mother but instead brusquely tore himself from her arms without deigning to address her concerns? Had he really needed to go and had he explained the situation to his mother, Yunjidang contends, she would likely have seen the need and urged On Gyo to fulfill his mission. One could fault the young man in Sartre's example for similar failings—no matter which alternative he chose. The choice is not just between staying or leaving; the moral obligations are more nuanced and subtler. For example, in Sartre's case, there is an asymmetry between choosing one's mother or the Free French forces. If one chooses the latter, one owes the former an explanation; if one chooses one's mother, one need not explain oneself to the Free French Forces.[5] Yunjidang shows that often there is much complexity in such

4 See especially pages 29-31.

5 The case of On Gyo appears to be different in this respect.

basic "existential" choices, and her analysis makes clear that one can approach such moral conflicts in ways that do not avoid hard choices but recognize and honor all the demands involved. Her concerns and approach are things that women and particularly mothers would be more likely to think of and highlight issues that often fall outside the standard ambit of Confucian discourse. Her writings open up and develop new and profound aspects involved in such decisions, with implications that extend far beyond the Confucian tradition.

Yunjidang's "Inscription on [the Theme of] a Mirror" offers a marvelous example of her employing poetic composition to present and explore a core set of Neo-Confucian beliefs about the heart-mind, self-cultivation, and the perfected spiritual state. The idea that the enlightened heart-mind is a mirror that accurately reflects and properly responds to each and every situation it encounters has a long history in East Asian philosophy;[6] among Neo-Confucians it was developed and deployed to illustrate the belief that each and every person has within a flawless and fully-formed moral heart-mind that can effortlessly grasp, assess, weigh, and respond to any situation it encounters. The only thing preventing our internal mind-as-mirror from operating (*yong* 用; C. *yong*) in this way, which is its essential nature (*che* 體; C. *ti*) to do, is if its natural functioning is impeded by adventitious defilements. In the metaphor, these appear as dust on the surface of the mirror and represent self-centered human desires, which defile and interfere with the natural functioning of our inherent, moral heart-mind. Given this picture, the central task of self-cultivation is to work to remove the impurities that have accumulated on our original and pure heart-mind and allow its inherently bright nature to illuminate, discern, and respond appropriately to every moral challenge.

6 For a revealing discussion of many of the philosophical aspects of such conceptions, see Cline (2008, 337-57).

III. The Life and Thought of Gang Jeongildang

Jeongildang was a member of a clan whose fortunes had declined in her age; as a girl, she learned needlework from her mother, a skill that she and her future husband would come to rely upon for support. She married Yun Gwang-yeon 尹光演 (1778-1838) when she was 20 years old but was unable to move in with her new husband for three years because his family was too poor to support them. After moving in together, she began to learn the classics alongside her husband, at first, ostensibly, to help him study for the first level of the civil service examinations.

Despite his best efforts, Yun Gwang-yeon repeatedly failed to pass the examination; this was not unusual in his time, because an increasing number of candidates were vying for a shrinking number of official positions. Throughout his successive attempts to pass, Jeongildang supported him, materially, psychologically, and intellectually. As we shall see in some of the writings we discuss below, she offered her husband regular advice about his studies and his own moral self-cultivation, chiding him for and correcting his shortcomings while guiding and encouraging him in the development of virtue.

In addition to supporting and offering advice to her husband about the classics and the examinations, at times studying alongside him, Jeongildang also studied on her own, often reporting her progress to him, and at times expressing her frustration with not being able, like him, to devote herself completely to moral and intellectual development. She had far fewer opportunities for study than did Yunjidang; her life and economic condition were much more difficult, less conducive to study, reflection, and writing. Her practical moral advice and theoretical reflections always arose from and were expressed in terms of the challenges she was forced to deal with in the course of her everyday life. In the face of their grinding poverty, she was scrupulous about not compromising herself or her husband morally when inappropriate material gain was offered to them, and she remained optimistic that through frugality, temperance, diligence, and study they would succeed, if not in the examinations and the competition

for official position then in the higher calling of moral cultivation. Eventually, on the advice of his wife, her husband followed the example of many other unsuccessful candidates; he abandoned his aspiration to pass the examinations and opened a local academy (*seodang* 書堂; C. *shutang*) to teach the Chinese classics to children in the area.

Jeongildang gave birth to five sons and four daughters; all of them, unfortunately, died before they learned to speak. She herself died in 1832 at the age of 61. In 1836, her husband arranged for the publication of a collection of her writings under the name *The Extant Writings of Jeongildang* (*Jeongildang yugo* 靜一堂遺稿). Like Yunjidang, Gang Jeongildang pursued her education and self-cultivation as a kind of guerrilla activity, carried out behind the scenes and in the face of superior challenges and resistance. In her case, economic hardship added an additional, profound difficulty and shaped both the form her writings took and the themes that dominated her reflections. Unlike Yunjidang, she did not produce works in more traditional genres; we will examine examples of her poems, some short missives to her husband, and an exposition she wrote on the theme of an inkstone.

The first poem, "Beginning to Study" (*sigwa* 始課), succinctly and elegantly conveys several critical aspects of her intellectual life. It makes clear that she began her studies rather late in life, around the age of 30. Moreover, it notes that, unlike Yunjidang, she had no teacher, mentor, or formal guidance. Nevertheless, the poem expresses her lifelong, unwavering commitment to becoming a sage. The second selection, "Human Nature is Good," begins by proclaiming what is perhaps the core belief of Neo-Confucianism: that human nature is originally and wholly good. It goes on to affirm that the ultimate goal of Confucian learning is to become a sage. Quoting the *Analects*, it expresses optimism and faith in the value of commitment and resolve and concludes by linking the deep nature of the world to the true and ideal nature of the self. The third selection opens with humble words about Jeongildang's early life and reveals when and where she learned the craft of needlework: the skill that supported and sustained them both. She urges her husband to put his heart and mind into his studies, focus on "authentic work," and not to worry about supporting

the family. Of course, her "authentic work"—her needlework—is what enables his "work" and her own study to continue. Our last poem offers encouragement to the young but also can be read as expressing her regret for her own late start in learning. It goes on to issue a commonly expressed warning against sterile forms of learning and upholds the true aim of learning, which is developing the self and ultimately becoming a sage.

In the first Personal Missive (*cheokdok* 尺牘; C. *chidu*) we will discuss, Jeongildang explains to her husband how an old woman had come to their door and offered him provisions to support a journey he was about to set off on as thanks for him saving her when she was accosted by several vagabonds on the road outside their town. After some deliberation, Jeongildang decides that she cannot accept the gift without risking the appearance of moral compromise. This missive presents an excellent example of a Joseon dynasty woman wrestling with the application of Confucian values in the course everyday life. Like many of the other personal missives, it shows her sharing and discussing such everyday challenges with her husband, thereby revealing a hidden but highly significant dimension to the practice of Confucian self-cultivation. More generally, these missives offer new and vital insights about the psychology of trust and its importance in attempts to move others toward the good. In a number of them, she offers direct, focused, and quite pointed criticisms of her husband's behavior, as in the next short missive, in which she mildly but firmly criticizes him for being overly harsh in his reprimand of another. The content of the advice itself is not surprising, one finds examples of teachers offering their disciples such advice throughout the Confucian tradition, but many will find it both surprising and revealing that it is from a Joseon dynasty Confucian wife to her husband. The collegial tone of the advice may also surprise many and open up a new perspective on the moral roles and lives of Confucian women.

The third missive offers another dramatic example of Jeongildang correcting her husband's behavior. She begins by quoting a line about moderation in regard to food and drink from the *Book of Changes,* but it soon becomes clear that she is most concerned with drink and

its deleterious effect on virtue. She then moves on to again warn her husband about his apparent inclination to overly harsh reprimand. In contrast to his excessive behavior, she describes a person of ideal temperament, following this description with a supporting quotation from the *Book of Poetry.* She concludes by encouraging him to emulate these classical ideals and maintain "a very mild and harmonious temperament" when reprimanding others.

In our final example of this genre, we find Jeongildang gently counseling her husband not to be distressed over his lack of renown and urging him to remember that true virtue is all that matters. Likening virtue to jade and alluding to a well-known story from early China, she reminds him that the value of a piece of jade does not depend on the unreliable opinions of others; similarly, popular opinion does not add to or detract from the value of true virtue.

She concludes with the inspiring lines, "I want you, my husband, to work at real virtue. Do not be ashamed beneath heaven; do not be mortified upon the earth; do not be distressed whether people know or do not know."

These missives reveal how she and her husband not only thought of one another as partners in pursuit of the Way but also regularly served as ethical and spiritual critics and coaches to one another. One of the most intriguing aspects of such exchanges is the mutual recognition that these and other spouses share; they know each other in ways few people do or can, both because of the challenges they have faced together and the intimacy they shared. The bond between spouses not only provides them with remarkable epistemological privilege, it also offers them the opportunity to hone their ability to give advice and ensures that the recipient of such advice will be inclined to trust that it is given with loving intent, often with a desire to facilitate a shared goal, in this case the quest for moral improvement. While it is commonly accepted that the Confucian tradition sees the family as central to the work of developing moral character and fulfilling the relationship between husband and wife is a critical part of the Way to become a noble person,[7] research on Confucian

[7] Cf. Chapter 12 of the *Doctrine of the Mean.*

self-cultivation rarely focuses on the ways in which husbands and wives work together to promote their mutual moral improvement. Exploring the moral dimensions of this fundamental human relationship has the potential to contribute in profound ways to ethical philosophy more generally.

Jeongildang's "Exposition on an Inkstone," is a bit like Yunjidang's "Inscription on [the Theme of a] Mirror," which we discussed above, in that it takes an everyday object—an inkstone—as the embodiment of virtue, in this case the three distinct virtues of firmness, stillness, and weightiness. Unlike the inscription, though, this work is addressed to a particular individual: a young man whose wellbeing Jeongildang has been entrusted with while his father is away on business. Moreover, this particular object is a basic tool of scholars; it belonged to the young man's grandfather, who bequeathed it to him, and who had earlier received it as a special reward from the king himself. And so, in addition to the virtues that Jeongildang ascribes to it, the inkstone is saturated with a range of profound additional values and meaning. Her exposition clarified and amplified the worth and significance of this family treasure and ensured that it would remain the focus of this young man's meditations on his grandfather's legacy and his own moral development, throughout the years that followed.

IV. Conclusion

We have briefly introduced two remarkable women Korean Confucian philosophers, trying to convey some understanding and appreciation of the lives they led, the philosophies they developed, and some of the ways in which the former informed and shaped the latter. In our discussion of Yunjidang's "Discourse of On Gyo Tearing the Hem of His Garment," we compared her essay with a famous example from the works of Sartre, seeking to show both similarities and differences in the approaches and insights of each. In our description of Jeongildang's personal missives, we noted how these writings offer a unique opportunity to explore the philosophical implications of close relationships for the challenges associated with successfully offering

moral advice. In both cases, our brief comments suggest important ways in which the work of these two late Joseon dynasty women can contribute to and enhance philosophical inquiry today. Finally, we sketched some of the influences behind and implications of the different genres they employed: e.g. Discourses, Inscriptions, Poems, Personal Missives, and Expositions.

We hope to have succeeded not only of alerting readers to the existence of these two late Joseon dynasty social and intellectual pioneers but also given them some sense of the exceptional lives they led and the original and revealing philosophical insights they developed.

We have not had time to discuss the literary quality of their writings or address the historical value of their works as windows into the lives of gentry (*yangban* 兩班) women in the latter part of the Joseon dynasty but hope those who have read this short essay will be inspired to study further the lives and philosophies of these two remarkable women and to take up and extend the insights they have left behind.

V. Selected Translations from the Works of Im Yunjidang and Gang Jeongildang

Im Yunjidang

Discourse on On Gyo Tearing the Hem of His Garment

The *Analects* says, "Master Yu[8] said, 'Filial piety and brotherly respect—are they not the roots of humaneness!'"[9] An ancient text also proclaims, "If you seek for loyal ministers, look at the gate of filial sons."[10] There has never been anyone who proved loyal as a minister who was not filial as a son. On Gyo of the Jin dynasty 晉 (C. Jin) (266–420 CE)

8 Yu Yak 有若 (C. You Ruo) was a disciple of Gongja 孔子 (C. Kongzi). He was a native of No (C. Lu). His courtesy name was Jayak 子若 (C. Ziruo).

9 *Analects* 1.2.

10 This line appears in the sixteenth biography "Yeoljeon je sibyuk" 列傳第十六 (C. *Liezhuan di shiliu*) of the *History of the Later Han* (*Hu Han Seo* 後漢書; C. *Hou Han Shu*), chapter 26 (*gwon* 26 卷二十六; C. *juan ershi liu*).

originally had a reputation for being earnestly filial throughout his county and village. When the Western Jin dynasty collapsed (317 CE), the world was thrown into chaos and confusion, barbarians gathered like clouds on the horizon, and people like Yu Gon 劉琨 (C. Liu Kun),[11] Dan Pil-je 段匹磾 (C. Duan Pidi),[12] and others swore blood oaths with one another and dispatched representatives and submitted petitions in an attempt to influence the Prince of Nang Ya 琅琊 (C. Lang Ya) [to assume the throne].[13] Yu Gon said to Taejin (i.e. On Gyo), 'I am accomplishing great things in the area north of the Yellow River; you should spread word of this south of the Yellow River and urge him [Sama Ye] [to claim the throne].'[14] Taejin accepted this mission and made preparations to depart. As he was about to leave, his mother, Madame Choe 崔 (C. Cui), took hold of his lapel, but Taejin pulled away abruptly, tearing the hem of his garment, and departed. His mother's taking hold of his lapel was the highest expression of a mother's love for her child. Not considering the moral imperative to save the world in her time, she thought only that he might fall into danger and perish. Her son tore the hem of his garment because he worried that his mother would not let go and he would be unable to successfully complete his work and gain renown throughout the

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11 Yu Gon (271-318 CE) was a Jin general who for years fought but ultimately lost Byeong (C. Bing) Province 并州 (what is now modern central and northern Shanxi Province) to the Han Jo 漢趙 (C. Han Zhao) (304-29), a Southern Hyungno 匈奴 (C. Xiongnu) state and adversary of the Jin.

12 Dan Pil-je (?-321 CE) was the governor of Yu (C. You) Province 幽州 (what is now modern Beijing, Tianjin, and northern Hebei).

13 When Sama Eop 司馬鄴 (C. Sima Ye), who became Emperor Min of Jin 晉愍帝 (300-18 CE), the last Western Jin monarch, was captured by the Han Jo former officials like Yu Gon, Dan Pilje and others plotted together to re-establish the Jin dynasty to their own advantage. Dan killed Yu in 318 when he came to believe Yu posed a threat to his own designs on power. The Prince of Nang Ya is Sama Ye 司馬睿 (C. Sima Rui) (276-322 CE; r. 317-22 CE) who became Emperor Won (C. Yuan) of Jin 晉元帝. When the Hyungno 匈奴 (C. Xiongnu) captured Jang An 長安 (C. Chang An) (in 316 CE), the capital of Jin, the Emperor, Sama Ye was forced to abdicate the throne. Sama Ye, had escaped from Jang An to Geongang 建康 (C. Jiankang) (present day Nanjing) and declared himself the new Emperor of Jin.

14 In other words, Yu Gon commissioned On Gyo to make his way to Geongang to present Sama Ye, the Prince of Nang Ya, with his petition to assume the imperial title, which subsequently he did.

world. Alas! The relationship between parent and child is the first of the Five Relationships, and mutual love between them is Heavenly pattern-principle. Completing one's work is the basis for gaining fame and benefit, but the desire for success is self-centered.[15] To allow the self-centered [desire] to complete one's work to harm the greatest affection to be found among the Five Relationships, even someone lacking in humaneness would be unlikely to do such a thing—how much less someone like Taejin, who enjoyed the reputation of being filial? How could he bear to do this?

Oh! For those who serve as ministers, on occasions when they must carry out their lord's commands in circumstances of danger and chaos, it is right that they are not swayed by personal affection. Nevertheless, they should keep in mind their parents' anxiousness and distress, remember that they are in their parents' thoughts, and should find it difficult whenever they must bow and take leave of them. [Moreover] what Taejin did was not a case of carrying out his lord's commands; rather, this was the command of Yu Gon. So why didn't Taejin accede to his mother's request and arrange for someone else to carry out [this mission]?"

Someone said, "Yu Gon had to send Taejin; isn't this clearly the case? If he had sent someone else and that person had miscarried the affair, then the revival of the Jin could not be assured. This is also the reason Taejin could not refuse the mission."

Yunjidang replied, "That is not so. There has never been an age with as much overflowing talent as was available in their time. How could there be no one other than Taejin to take up this assignment? Moreover, at the time, Taejin and Emperor Won were not yet established in the relationship of ruler and minister, and so had he acceded to his mother's request and not gone, what harm would that have

15 "Self-centeredness" is our translation of *sa* 私 (C. *si*). It refers to the tendency to give preference to oneself and one's needs and desires in ways that violate what is morally "correct," which is how one would act if one were perfectly in accord with one's nature and the mandate of heaven. Those who are able to overcome self-centeredness realize their nature and the mandate and become "one" (*ilche* 一體; C. *yiti*) with heaven, earth, and all things.

done to his loyalty? Oh! When he tore the hem of his garment and left, what did this do to his mother's heart? The *Book of Poetry* says, 'Oh father!—you gave me life; Oh mother!—you nourished me. . . . The kindness I wish to repay is as limitless as the heavens.'[16] If Taejin was as earnestly filial as was said of him in his time, how could he have endured behaving as he did? This is why I say, when we consider this affair, we know that he was not really sincerely filial; we also know that he was not really loyal to his lord."

Someone said, "Originally Taejin had the reputation of being fervently loyal and magnanimous because when his state had been destroyed and his lord disgraced and he was overcome with sincere sadness and indignation, he worked together with Yu Gon and others of like mind to establish Emperor Won and plan for the revival of the state. The survival or destruction of the Jin depended on their actions. Though you say that, at the time, Taejin and Emperor Won were not yet established in the relationship of ruler and minister, how, on that day, could any minister of Jin bear to sit idly by and watch as the temples and ancestral altars [of the Jin] were cut off and the territory of the Central Kingdom lost [to barbarians] without thinking of some way to revive the state? It is true that Taejin was unable to realize both perfect loyalty and filial piety; why though do you criticize him so severely?"

Yunjidang replied, "That too is not so. Had his mother been fortunate enough to enjoy a thorough understanding of the situation, as Jin Yeong's mother[17] was, she would have urged him to be careful but still sent him on his mission. Then, from the very start, he would have been able to realize both loyalty and filial piety. Now, since this was not the case, as a son, he should have assumed a pleasing coun-

16 *Book of Poetry, Mao* #202.

17 Jin Yeong 陳嬰 (C. Chen Ying) (?-183 BCE) lived at the very end of the Jin 秦 (C. Qin) dynasty (221-206 BCE) and the beginning of the Han 漢 dynasty (202 BCE-9 CE; 25-220 CE). As the Jin collapsed, a group of people who were leading the revolt came to him and urged him to declare himself king. His mother though advised him against this arguing that since the overthrow of the Jin was not complete, to accept such a sudden rise in status would pose great peril. He followed his mother's advice and refused to accept the title of king.

tenance and pleasant expression, explained [to his mother] in detail the extreme situation the state was in and what duty demanded of him as a minister. He should have waited until he was able to resolve any remaining doubts she might have and ensure that she was at ease; then, he should have calmly bowed and taken his leave. In this way, within (i.e. toward his family) he would have realized filial piety to his parents and without (i.e. to his lord) he would have fulfilled his duty to be loyal to the state. What, in the end, are his renowned achievement and outstanding reputation worth, given that he earned them by tearing the hem of his garment, stabbing [the heart of his mother's] affection, and being able to endure forsaking his obligation to be a filial son? Maengja 孟子 (C. Mengzi) said, 'If the blind man (i.e. Emperor Sun's 舜 [C. Shun] father) had killed someone, Sun would have fled secretly carrying his father on his back and settled by the shore of the sea, delighting in his life and forgetting all about the empire.'[18] If even the empire can be regarded [so lightly] how much easier should this be when it is merely self-centered achievement and advantage? Abandoning his parents and stabbing [the heart of his mother's] affection with an eye toward realizing mundane ends—is this really the way a filial son behaves? Can one who behaves this way avoid offending against the great [Emperor] Sun? If, as someone said, there was no one else who could have been sent on this mission, Taejin was the one person needed to ensure the revival of the Jin dynasty, he had no prospect of resolving his mother's doubts, he felt the difficulty of fulfilling both the duties of loyalty and filial piety, and [under these circumstances] he acted as he did, then Taejin's behavior might be forgiven. Now, since this was not the case, and still he behaved as he did, we must wonder how a son could bear to do such a thing and how it could be motivated by anything other than a self-centered desire for gain.

Oh! The supreme tender feelings of a loving mother will always focus on her son's safety in times of chaos; it is only fitting that such feelings will go to any extreme. If her son, after tearing the hem of his garment and departing, should die amidst the chaos and she is unable

[18] *Mencius* 7A.35.

to see him again, what pain shall this loving mother feel to the end of her days! Even if he does not die while abroad, if when he returns his aged mother, ill with anxiety and worry, has already passed away, even if Taejin then were to weep till he is old and toothless, what good would it do? Though he mourns until he is withered and wasted, how could this be enough to atone for his behavior? One who is filial is accommodating and compliant. Can one really call Taejin's tearing the hem of his garment and departing accommodating and compliant? Alas! Someone like Taejin is indeed lucky that the learned have not condemned him. I cannot believe he really had the reputation for being earnestly filial in his time. Alas! Filial piety is the source of the hundred good types of behavior. Since he lost the original source, even if he fully developed all the worthy capabilities under heaven, he still would not be worth talking about. Even if one completely exhausts oneself in working ardently for the imperial family, still, if one is not filial to one's parents, one cannot really be loyal to one's lord. What would such efforts amount to? If, when his mother took hold of his lapel, Taejin had immediately acceded to her will, politely declined Yu Gon's request, and to the end of his life taken care of her in a simple thatched hut, thereby being the perfection of a filial son, then, though he might not have been famous in his own time, how could he not have enjoyed glory for ten thousand generations thereafter?[19] In the past, Jegal Gongmyeong (C. Zhuge Kongming)[20] lived at the end of the Han dynasty. He ploughed his own fields and did not seek to become famous. Later on, in response to three personal visits by Emperor Soyeol (C. Zhaolie),[21] he subsequently served him

19 The idea being both that the only reputation worth having is to be a moral person and that good people do in fact often attain a kind of immortality for their good deeds.

20 Better known as Jegal Ryang 諸葛亮 (C. Zhuge Liang) (181-234 CE), his courtesy name was Gongmyeong 孔明 (C. Kongming). He was a politician, military strategist, writer, engineer and inventor who lived during the Three Kingdoms 三國時代 (220-280 CE) period in China. Recognized as the most accomplished strategist of his era, his reputation as an intelligent and learned scholar grew even while he lived in relative seclusion.

21 Emperor Soyeol 昭烈皇帝 (C. Zhaolie) is the posthumous name of Yu Bi 劉備 (C. Liu Bei) (161-223 CE), whose courtesy name was Hyundeok 玄德 (C. Xuande). He founded the state of Chok Han 蜀漢 (C. Shu Han) (221-263 CE) during the Three Kingdoms Period.

and succeeded in implementing his 'three-legged tripod' strategy,[22] which led to his immortal reputation. And so, if one cultivates virtue in oneself, then one's reputation naturally will become outstanding. If one lacks virtue and first thinks about establishing a name for oneself, though one might achieve some renown in a given age, one will not avoid being held up as the subject of critical discussions for ten thousand generations. Dong Jungseo (C. Dong Zhongshu)[23] said, 'Humane people correct their principles and do not plot to achieve gain; they make clear the Way and do not calculate their personal achievement.'[24] We can say that people like Taejin turn their backs on the proper standard of the Way and put working for gain as their highest priority. They themselves ruin the source of the hundred good types of behavior; is this not why they cannot avoid the censure of noble people?"

Inscription on [the Theme of] a Mirror

You are the full face of the moon,
The brilliant crystal of a sunny day.
The [icy] breath of a frosty morning,
The essence of autumn waters.[25]
Your heart-mind is unburdened by self-centeredness,
There is nothing your brightness does not discern.
The good is [revealed as] good; the bad as bad.
Even an *Imae* (C. *Jimei*)[26] cannot hide from you.

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22 In which he pitted different states against one another in ways that all contributed to the victory of the lord he served.

23 Dong Jungseo 董仲舒 (C. Dong Zhongshu) (179-104 BCE) was a Han dynasty Chinese scholar. He is traditionally associated with the promotion of Confucianism as the official ideology of the Chinese imperial state.

24 These lines appear in Dong Jungseo's *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunchu beollo* 春秋繁露; C. *Chunqiu fanlu*) 17.14a.

25 Autumn waters are thought to be especially pure and clear.

26 The *Imae* 魑魅 (C. *Jimei*) is a demon that is said to dwell in the mountain forests. It has the face of a human beings, the body of a beast, and four legs. It has the ability to enchant and charm people, but a mirror will reveal its true form. (A folk belief about mirrors East and West is that they can be used to reveal demons.)

You understand like a spirit,[27]
You are as straight as an arrow.
Polished, you become ever brighter,
Never allowing even a hair's breadth of distortion.
Oh! That human beings,
Are not the equal of a thing!
Human beings are not your equal,
When they become defiled by things.
How, then, can they remove the defilement?
By cleaning their heart-minds and overcoming themselves.
If for one day [they can] overcome themselves,[28]
Their bright virtue naturally appears.[29]
The purpose of this inscription,
Is to use a mirror to issue a warning.

Gang Jeongildang

Poetry

1. Beginning to Study (1798)

At thirty,[30] I begin my studies,
Not knowing which direction to turn.
From this day on, I must be diligent,
Aspiring to be like the ancients.

2. Human Nature is Good

Human nature originally is wholly good,

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[27] Section 10 of the Great Appendix Book I (繫辭上) of the *Book of Changes* says that only the most spiritual thing in the world has the ability "when stimulated it comprehends the principles of all things under Heaven."

[28] *Analects* 12.1 describes the task of attaining humaneness as "overcoming the self and returning to the rites" and says that if one day one overcomes the self and returns to the rites, all under Heaven will turn to benevolence."

[29] The opening chapter of the *Great Learning* begins, "the Way of the *Great Learning* is to make bright one's bright virtue."

[30] Since she was born in 1772, we should understand this as a poetic way of saying that she began her studies as she was approaching thirty years of age.

Developing it fully,[31] one becomes a sage.
To desire humaneness, humaneness lies therein,[32]
Make pattern-principle clear to make oneself sincere.

3. For my Husband [1]

To my shame, I lack talent and virtue,
But I learned needlework, as a child.
Authentic work requires exerting oneself,
Do not be concerned about clothes and food.[33]

4. Encouraging the Youth

You must be diligent when reading books,
Do not squander the vitality of youth.
How can you be satisfied with just memorization and recitation?[34]
You should aspire to be a sage or worthy!

Personal Missives

1. This morning, an old woman arrived offering a peck of rice and a catty of meat. I asked her the reason and she replied, "When I was travelling outside the town, I was accosted by vagabonds. Your husband happened to be passing by and in tears I appealed[35] for his help [standing] at the foot of his horse. He harshly upbraided the vagabonds and, subsequently, I was able to avoid them. I was profoundly moved by his kindness, and so, I offer this to show my sincerity."

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31 Cf. *Mencius* 7A.1 which discusses fully developing one's heart-mind and knowing one's nature.

32 Cf. *Analects* 7.30: The Master said, "Is humaneness far off? I desire humaneness, and lo and behold, humaneness arrives."

33 In this poem Jeongildang is urging her husband to focus on his studies and not worry about supporting the family, which she does through her needlework. This is a theme we also see in some of her personal missives. Nevertheless, it is her "authentic work" that enables his.

34 "Learning by memorization and recitation" (*gisong ji hak* 記誦之學; C. *jisong zhi xue*) was a common target of Neo-Confucian criticism. It referred to a sterile type of learning and was opposed to "learning for oneself" (*wigi ji hak* 爲己之學; C. *weiji zhi xue*), which meant learning to improve oneself morally.

35 Reading 訴 as 訴 in the original.

When [the old woman came to our house,] I heard you entertaining visitors in the men's quarters and so did not dare to disturb you; on my own, I decided to return what she had offered. The old woman firmly and resolutely would not accept this, and so I told her, "Once, even after my husband had not eaten for seven days, he still declined a gift of one thousand gold coins. How can I possibly accept what you bring?" The old woman then sighed, picked up her rice and meat, and left.

Though she offered her gift with the sincere intention [of expressing her gratitude], had I accepted it, I would have been suspected of selling your favor, and so I handled it in this way. I don't know what you think about this.

2. Suddenly, I heard you reprimand someone; your tone was overly harsh. This is not the middle way. If you seek to correct this person in this way—without first being correct yourself—how can this be regarded as acceptable? I hope that you will think about this further.

3. The *Book of Changes* says, "Be moderate in eating and drinking."[36] Wine is an important[37] aspect of eating and drinking. I hope you will be moderate in your drinking and careful in regard to your virtue.

4. Suddenly, for some reason, you reprimanded someone harshly; might you have come close to overstepping the mean in your reprimand? Noble people must take special care to apply themselves in regard to their voice, expression, and speech. The *Book of Poetry* says, "The mild and respectful person. Such a one possesses the foundation of Virtue."[38] I dare respectfully to counsel you that you were a bit lacking in mild and harmonious temperament when you reprimanded that person.

5. If I have real virtue, even if people do not know this, how does it harm [my virtue]? If I lack real virtue, even if people offer empty

[36] See the Sang 象 (C. *Xiang*) commentary on the hexagram *I* 頤 (C. *Yi*) in the *Book of Changes*.

[37] Reading 犬 as 大.

[38] These lines are from the "Greater Odes" chapter of the *Book of Poetry*, *Mao* #256.

> praise, how does this add to [my virtue]? If I have a piece of jade and people say it is just an ordinary stone, this does no harm to the jade. If I have a stone and people say it is a piece of jade, this does not add to the stone. I want you, my husband, to work at real virtue. Do not be ashamed beneath heaven; do not be mortified upon the earth; do not be distressed whether people know or do not know.[39]

Exposition

1. Exposition on an Inkstone, Shown to the Child Yi Bul-eok 李弗億 (childhood name of Gyeonghyeon 敬鉉)

Inkstones have three virtues: the first is firmness, the second is stillness, and the third is weightiness. Because they are firm, they long endure. Because they are still, they are concentrated. Because they are weighty, they are unyielding. This is why noble people value them. How much more should we value the overflowing kindness of the former king, which is preserved in the remaining kindly influences of our ancestors. I have heard that your grandfather, the Honorable Willow Garden (Giwon 杞園), when he served as a Counselor (Gyori 校理),[40] was presented with an inkstone as a special reward by King Jeongjo[41] who said to him, "You are the grandson of Upright Abstention (Jikjae 直齋), a family of honest poverty. Make vigorous use of it! Make vigorous use of it!" The Honorable Willow Garden always treasured and made use of this ink stone. When he grew old, he handed it to you. Can you fail to reverence it? It has been years since you began to study with the master. The master recently went on a trip to Hoecheon 懷川 and will also tour the Gwanseo 關西 region.[42] [While away,] he entrusted your education to me.

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39 The idea that a person of genuine virtue is not concerned whether or not he is recognized is found in *Analects* 1.1. The metaphor of stone and jade recalls the well-known story of Mr. He's jade (*Hwassi byeok* 和氏璧; C. *Heshibi*) in chapter thirteen of the *Hanbija* 韓非子 (C. *Hanfeizi*).

40 More precisely, a counselor of the fifth grade.

41 Jeongmyo 正廟 is a temple name (Myoho 廟號) of King Jeongjo.

42 Now Pyeongan 平安 Province in North Korea.

You are young and your family is very poor. If you do not firmly establish a commitment [to learn and cultivate yourself], you will succumb and do violence to yourself or throw yourself away.[43] If that happens, not only will you disobey the intentions of your ancestors, but also you will turn your back on the command of the former king [to make vigorous use of it]. Always be fearful and apprehensive about this! Be diligent, both morning and evening! You must take the three virtues [of inkstones] as the model for your axe-handle.[44] Resolutely be constant [in your practice] as an inkstone is firm. Be exactly as disciplined as an inkstone is still. Be immovably self-restrained as an inkstone is weighty. Henceforth, be like this and advance without stopping. Then, you will be close to working the field of the inkstone[45] and each day will harvest [good results].

■ Submitted: 14 Jan. 2021
Reviewed/revised: 21 May 2021
Accepted: 30 May 2021

43 For making a commitment to learning, see *Analects* 2.4 For doing violence to oneself or throwing oneself away, see *Mencius* 4A.10.

44 This refers to a well-known line from the *Book of Poetry*, *Mao* #158 that is quoted in Chapter 13 of the *Doctrine of the Mean*. In part, it goes, "In hewing an ax handle, in hewing an ax handle, the model is not far off. One grasps one ax handle to hew the other."

45 The thought is that writing is like plowing a "field" with a brush.

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 55–81
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.55

Negotiating Conventions: *Geumwon and Her Nineteenth-Century Travel Record*

Jungwon Kim*

Abstract

This paper examines the *Hodongseorak gi* (Travel Record of Hodongseorak 湖東西洛記), a rare nineteenth-century travelogue recorded by a Joseon woman, Geumwon (1817-?). Written in classical Chinese, she tells of visiting scenic places on the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, including the famous Mount Geumgang 金剛山 ("Diamond Mountain"), that were travel destinations for many of her male literary predecessors and contemporaries. Laced with autobiographical descriptions of her early and later years, Geumwon's record is neither a mere list of places she visited nor a text dominated by women's sentiments. In taking on the role of a traveler, Geumwon weaves together the self and the world of a resourceful young nineteenth-century Joseon woman, not only writing about her trips but also reflecting on her wishes and inner thoughts. Considering Geumwon both as a traveler and thinker, this paper illuminates how she presents herself as "a noble person" (*gunja* 君子; C. *junzi*) through writing about her journey, and how her travel record serves as a textual space where she succeeds in creating a multidimensional literary intersection of culture, history, and space, rediscovering her identity in a larger world.

Keywords: travelogue, travel record, women's writing, nineteenth-century Korea, noble person

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**I would like to thank two anonymous readers for their insightful comments. I am also grateful to Philip J. Ivanhoe and Hwa Yeong Wang for their close reading of the paper, invaluable feedback, and generous encouragement throughout the revision process. Special thanks to Guo Jue, who read the earlier draft and made important suggestions concerning early Chinese texts. Finally, I am grateful to Managing Editor Euna Kim for taking care of editorial and Romanization matters.

In a society that expected women to be invisible in the public sphere, traveling was a gendered undertaking during the long Joseon 朝鮮 dynasty (1392-1910). The mere handful of existing travel records authored by women testifies to this, whereas many travelogues brushed by male literati are available to modern readers. It is thus quite rare to encounter an account such as the *Hodongseorak gi* 湖東西洛記 (Travel Record of Hodongseorak, hereafter the *Travelogue*)[1] examined in this paper, the only known extant travel record written in literary Chinese by a Joseon woman. The author, Geumwon 錦園 (1817-?),[2] tells of visiting scenic places on the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, including the famous Mount Geumgang 金剛山 ("Diamond Mountain"), as also recounted by many of her male literati predecessors.[3] Yet her *Travelogue* is more than a typical record of travel experiences, in that it contains descriptions of Geumwon's early and later years as she recollects past travels and her life path. In taking on the role of a traveler, Geumwon weaves together the self and the world of a resourceful young nineteenth-century Joseon woman, not only writing about her trips but also reflecting on her wishes and inner thoughts.

Although several scholars have examined Geumwon's writings, scholarly attention to Geumwon's record has been limited to its unique position as a female's text in relation to male travelogues.[4] Such a focus may be fair, given that only a few women's travelogues—all in *Hangeul* 한글 (Korean script)—have become available to date,[5] and that

1 A full literal translation of the *Hodongseorak gi* is "A record of [visiting] the four prefectures of the *Ho* region, Gwan*dong* (Eastern Gate), Gwan*seo* (Western Gate), and the capital, *Nag*yang." The italicized syllables in these place names indicate those used in the title. Because of its lengthiness, I refer to the *Hodongseorak gi* herein simply as "the *Travelogue*." Please see the last part of the translation section for Geumwon's explanation of titling her work.

2 Although some scholars assume that Geumwon's family name was Kim, there is no way to confirm this because she appears only as "Geumwon" in existing accounts and sources.

3 I used a photo-print copy of *Hodongseorak gi* included in Heo (1988).

4 Some representative studies on the *Travelogue* include: Choe (2013), Kim (2020), Bak (2004), Son (2004), and Yi (2007, 281-360).

5 Works well known to modern readers are: *Buyeo nojeong gi* 부여노정기 (Travel Record of Buyeo) by Madam Yi of Yeonan 연안이씨 (1737-1815); *Geumhaeng ilgi* 금행일기 (Travel

Geumwon chose literary Chinese, the linguistic tool dominated by male literati in Joseon Korea, with which to inscribe her experiences. It may be also true that Geumwon's work is a record of an idiosyncratic journey by one brave young woman of the late Joseon, although we have no way of knowing how many other Joseon women crossed borders, slept on the road, and recorded their travels. Geumwon's account thus emerges as a unique literary space in which she reshapes or re-creates her perception of herself through the medium of travel writing. While it is impossible to discuss in a limited space all the revelations about the world that Geumwon discovers in the *Travelogue*, this paper delves into how she constructs her identity as a Joseon woman, traveler, and thinker, and especially how she presents herself as "a noble person" (*gunja* 君子; C. *junzi*) by making this textual context an unlimited site of her own imagination.

I. Inscribing Journey: The *Travelogue*

Geumwon covers three different periods of travel in her *Travelogue.* The first and longest part describes her childhood, upbringing, and her exciting trip, as a fourteen-year-old dressed as a boy, to the renowned Mount Geumgang and other scenic spots along the way. Before reaching Mount Geumgang, she traveled to other famous places, such as Uirim Lake 義林池 (Righteous Forest Lake) in Jecheon 堤川 and Danyang 丹陽. Recounting her first trip in amazing detail, Geumwon explains that the reason for entitling her account "Travel Record of Hodongseorak" is that "this excursion began from the four prefectures of the Ho 湖 (Lake) region.[6] Through Gwandong's 關東

Diary of the Gongju Magistrate's Office) by Madam Song of Eunjin 은진송씨 (1803-60); *Gwanbuk yuram ilgi* 관북유람일기 (Travel Diary of the Northeastern Region) by Kim Uiyudang 김의유당 (n.d.); and *Seoyurok* 서유록 (Travelogue of Seoul) by Madam Kim of Gangneung 강릉김씨 (1862-1941). All of these works were recorded in Korean script, and the first two were written in the literary form of the *gasa* genre. For general introductions and translations of *Gwanbuk yuram ilgi* and *Seoyurok*, see Kim (2019).

6 The Ho region is another name of Chungcheong-do Province; The four prefectures refer to Jecheon, Cheongpung, Danyang, and Yeongchun.

(Eastern Gate)[7] Mount Geumgang and eight sightseeing visits, I arrived in Nagyang 洛陽[8] and finally reached Gwanseo 關西 (Western Gate)[9] bay district. Then I returned to Nagyang" (Geumwon 1988, 484). Arriving at Mount Geumgang, she took both the inner and outer mountain courses, which had been a popular sightseeing route in the past.[10] Her journey continued to the eight scenic places of the Gangwon region and Mount Seorak (雪嶽山). Only after exploring Hanyang and its suburbs was Geumwon's desire to see the world fulfilled and her extensive trip brought to an end.

The second part of the *Travelogue* focuses on Geumwon's travel to the northwestern provinces after her marriage. Using the metaphor of the "marriage destiny of a small star" (小星), borrowed from the *Book of Songs* (*Sigyeong* 詩經; C. *Shijing*), Geumwon notes her marital union with the scholar-official Kim Deok-hui 金德喜 (1800-53) as his concubine.[11] The exact venue and date of the marriage are not stated, though the tone of the *Travelogue* implies that it took place in 1830, the same year she completed her first trip.[12] In 1845, when she was 29, Geumwon seized the opportunity to travel by sedan chair ahead of Kim Deok-hui when he took her with him to his newly appointed post in Uiju (義州), Pyeongan-do Province. Within a year, however, in 1846, a royal secret inspector (*amhaeng eosa* 暗行御史), Bak Yeong-bo 朴永輔 (1808-?), had accused Kim Deok-hui of misconduct and forced him

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7 Gwandong is another name of Gangwon-do Province.

8 Nagyang is another name of Hanyang, the capital of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910); Located within present-day Seoul.

9 Gwanseo is another name of Pyeongan-do Province.

10 The most famous courses for sightseeing Mount Geumgang are two outer mountain courses (*oegeumgang* 外金剛), the inner mountain course (*naegeumgang* 內金剛), and the sea mountain course (*haegeumgang* 海金剛). The inner mountain course cannot be taken today due to the division between South and North Korea.

11 The original song reads: "Twinkle those small stars, /Three or five in the east./Shrinking, through the dark we walk / While it is still night in the palace. / Truly, the fates are not equal." Waley (1996, 53). Kim Deok-hui, whose family originated in Gyeongju, passed the civil examination in 1835.

12 Relying on the *Travelogue* as an accurate source, Yi Neung-hwa notes that Geumwon's marriage took place the same year (1830) that she returned from her trip (1990, 299-300). Other existing studies do likewise, taking what is written in the *Travelogue* as fact.

to relinquish his post (*Heonjong sillok*, 13:13A [1846/8/21]). Though details of this incident are vague, Kim Deok-hui and Geumwon seem to have left Uiju shortly after the accusation. Despite her relatively short residence in Uiju, Geumwon writes vividly about her observations and experiences in this new locale of the northwestern region, offering rich historical and cultural details of the area, such as customs in trading with Chinese on the border, a splendid welcoming ceremony for a new official, and local female entertainers' unique performances.

After the departure from Uiju, Geumwon settled in Hanyang (Seoul), and the third part of the *Travelogue* sketches the vibrant life in that capital city. It focuses on Geumwon's poetry meetings at the Samhojeong Pavilion (三湖亭) in the Yongsan (龍山) area,[13] and on the unrivaled pleasure she derived from them.[14] There she became more prolific than ever, exchanging poems with fellow writers, all of whom, she writes, were concubines of *yangban* just as she herself was.[15] Along with their male literati husbands, these women writers all contributed postscripts to Geumwon's *Travelogue*, offering a rare glimpse of their insights into the work of another woman.

Geumwon concludes her *Travelogue* by explaining why she took up her ink brush to combine memories of her travels and literary activities in a single written text. Although she admits that her account contains "only ten of a thousand and one of a hundred" of the things she saw and experienced, she writes that she still wished to record them as her literary property—and especially wanted the verses she composed during her travels not to be scattered or disappear (Geumwon 1988, 483). She completed her manuscript in late spring

13 The exact location of the pavilion is not clear, but there is a monument erected by the City of Seoul in Yongsan-gu, Seoul, marking the presumed site of Samho Pavilion. It seems that the Chinese characters of Samho Pavilion on the marker were misspelled as 三好亭.

14 Kim (1977) has named this gathering the "Samhojeong sidan" (Samhojeong Poetry Association), viewing it as the very first women's poetry association in Korean literary history.

15 These women poets were Uncho, Gyeongsan, Jukseo, and Geumwon's sister Gyeongchun. See the translation section for further information about them.

of the *gyeongsul* year (1850), about 20 years after her first venture into outer world in 1830. It is not known whether the *Travelogue* was written over the course of several years or all at one time, though Geumwon does note that she wanted to appreciate writing the *Travelogue* at her leisure.

How, then, was the *Travelogue* passed on and able to become available to modern readers? The fact that Geumwon's poetry circle all read her account and provided their thoughts on her writings confirms her wish to have people know about her work. Moreover, by choosing to write in literary Chinese, Geumwon clearly sought an audience not limited to her friends but also including educated literary men. At the end of the *Travelogue*, she expresses her wish for posterity to know her works and name, writing that "all the past affairs I have experienced are but a dream. If I had not recorded them to pass on [to people in the future], who would know that today's Geumwon ever lived?" (Geumwon 1988, 483).[16]

Posthumous publications of the writings of male literati were undertaken by their descendants (often in collaboration with disciples and fellow scholars of the deceased) in Joseon society, and we know that some families admired their female members' literary skills and treasured their works, compiling and publishing them posthumously, as Philip J. Ivanhoe and Hwa Yeong Wang illustrate in the cases of Im Yunjidang (1721-91) and Gang Jeongildang (1772-1832).[17] Because Geumwon was a concubine who outlived her husband, Kim Deok-hui, it is questionable whether Kim's family took on this role. In fact, Geumwon's trace after Kim's death remains obscure, and nothing is known as to how the *Travelogue* was compiled and eventually saw the light. It is possible that the *Travelogue* was hand-copied by members of Geumwon's poetry circle, happened to be read beyond the circle, and became widely known.

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16 Geumwon's concern is also echoed in her sister's postscript, titled "Jeong" (訂). The scholar Yi Hye-sun glosses *jeong* as "to fairly discuss or correct" and views it as a nascent form of women's literary criticism in the field of premodern Korean literature, where literary treatises and analyses by women scarcely exist. See Yi (2000).

17 A complete translation and study of the life and philosophy of Im Yunjidang and Gang Jeongildang can be found in Ivanhoe and Wang (forthcoming).

As early as 1917 and 1918, the Canadian Presbyterian missionary James Scarth Gale (1863-1937) introduced Geumwon's *Travelogue* in English in the magazine *Cheongchun* (Youth), in three installments (Rutt 1974, 44).[18] The scholar Yi Neung-hwa (1869-1943) included a considerable portion of Geumwon's *Travelogue* in his *Joseon yeosok go* 朝鮮女俗考 (Accounts of Joseon Women's Customs), first published in 1927 (Yi 1990, 150-52).[19] Also in 1927, the German priest Norbert Weber, who had visited the Mount Geumgang for ten days in 1926, published his travel record, which mentions Geumwon's travels (Weber 1999). Today, two copies of the *Travelogue* exist and are preserved in different locations—Yonsei University Library and Ewha Womans University Library. These copies feature notable distinctions, starting with the titles and some of the contents. While the Ewha version of the travel record carries the title *Horakhongjo* 湖洛鴻爪 (Footprints of the Wildgoose) in *Geumwon jip* 錦園集 (Collected Works of Geumwon), the Yonsei version is entitled *Hodongseorak gi*, the title given by Geumwon herself at the end of the *Travelogue*.[20] Moreover, the opening part of the Ewha version is much shorter than the Yonsei version, and this copy ends without postscripts by members of her poetry circle. Given the English title and content of Gale's English translation, the manuscript he possessed must have been the Ewha version. Though ambiguity remains about the original manuscript Geumwon wrote, the existence of these different versions suggests that her *Travelogue* was known to and read by people much as she hoped it would be, thereby ensuring her being remembered by later generations as a woman literatus.

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18 Rutt notes that Gale's translation has many imperfections and some omissions, so he substantially revised and rewrote Gale's translation. See also Rutt (1993).

19 Yi notes that Geumwon's manuscript was owned by Kim Won-geun, a teacher of Chinese at Jeongsin Girls' High School in Seoul.

20 As indicated in footnote 5 above, I used a photo-print copy of the Yonsei version of *Hodongseorak gi* included in Heo (1988).

II. Geumwon, a Female Noble Person

Geumwon's *Travelogue* has a certain autobiographical aspect, in that it includes descriptions of her early and later years, even though it does not provide details apart from basic information about her hometown, upbringing, and marital status as the concubine of a *yangban* scholar. In the opening the *Travelogue*, Geumwon presents herself as a girl who, unusually, received a rigorous literary education rather than a conventional domestic one—thanks to her parents, who took pity on her because of her ill health when young. Teaching women the Classics and literary Chinese, even in an elite *yangban* family, was not common during the Joseon dynasty, so it is reasonable to assume that her family was sufficiently wealthy to educate a daughter. Her level of erudition and this brief remark about her childhood education have confused scholars about her social status,[21] but it is generally accepted that Geumwon was a well-known *gisaeng* 妓生 (female entertainer), at least before she married. Her fame as a *gisaeng* poet is evidenced by Yi Neung-hwa, who introduced selections of Geumwon's poems in his *Joseon hae-eohwasa* 조선해어화사 (History of Joseon Female Entertainers) (Yi 1992).[22]

Nowhere in her own writing, however, does Geumwon mention that she was ever a *gisaeng*. No voice or trace of being a *gisaeng* is found in the *Travelogue*. Throughout her account, she appears to consciously avoid any remarks about her experience as a *gisaeng*, although she does lament at the beginning of the *Travelogue* that she "was born into a humble family [without noble status]" (Geumwon 1988, 428-29). In describing a group of *gisaeng* performing a splendid

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21 For example, Son (2004) argues that Geumwon was either an illegitimate daughter (*seonyeo* 庶女) of a *yangban* family or the daughter of a wealthy *jungin* 中人 family (the hereditary social status usually composed of professional technicians and local clerks). Such an assumption, however, seems to stem from the fact that Geumwon later became a *yangban*'s concubine.

22 Yi also recognizes Geumwon in the section on "Concubines of *Yangban* Who Wrote Poetry and Prose" in his *Joseon yeosokgo* ([1927]1990, 146). The works of several male literati, such as Yi Hwi-jeong 李輝正 (1760-1850), Hong Han-chu 洪翰周 (1789-1868), Seo Yu-yeong 徐有英 (1801-14), and Yi Yu-won 李裕元 (1814-88), hint that Geumwon was a female entertainer known by the name Geumaeng 錦鶯. See Kim (2020, 22-24).

military dance in Uiju, for example, Geumwon remains objective and does not expose emotional attachment or reflect on the performance as a former *gisaeng* (477). She also does not include her poems written as a *gisaeng* before her marriage in the *Travelogue*, even though she was eager to preserve her literary works in one place. Geumwon may have never considered herself a mere *gisaeng* until she returned, still only fourteen years old, from her first journey, which had suddenly enabled her to realize that "it is not an ordinary thing for a girl to travel disguised as a boy" (468-69).

While choosing to remain silent about her years as a female entertainer in her *Travelogue*, Geumwon endeavors to present herself instead as "a noble person." Unlike the petty person, the noble person "knows where to stop," she writes; accordingly, she ends her initial journey by reconciling her marginalized position with her own self-fulfillment. Refusing to compromise her identity as a *gisaeng* with the spirit of a noble person, she continues to treat herself a noble person of fine feelings and remains inquisitive about everything. Just as male literati considered travel to be an essential part of fulfilling the ideological project of cultural refinement, so Geumwon strove to participate in elite literary culture by inscribing her travel experiences in a language that would coincide with the cultural and historical mapping of Korean space. Her choice to record her journeys in literary Chinese rather than in Korean vernacular, the customary linguistic medium for women of that time, shows that Geumwon did not hesitate to set herself apart by displaying her intellectual fervor and literary skills.

Like travelogues by male literati, therefore, Geumwon's account reflects a sophisticated level of familiarity with history, literature, and philosophy. How she trained herself in these fields and with whom she studied are unknown, though she states that she was "versed in most of the Classics and historical literature" and that her "thoughts were devoted to the writings of the past and present" (429). Geumwon's knowledge of the Confucian Classics is impressive, and she effortlessly refers to Chinese figures, people, tales, and places when describing and comparing spaces of her country. Linking them to Chinese models, Geumwon often concludes that "ours are superior to

the Chinese," or sighs that "I wish they [those Chinese who acclaimed their stupendous scenic places in their writings] could come and see this place!" In passing Bulji Rock 佛指巖 on Mount Geumgang, for instance, she is confident that if Li Bai 李白 (701-62) had seen it, he would never have dared say that Mount Lu 廬山 has better scenery than that (444). Looking around Mount Geumgang, Geumwon also claims, "I have never seen the mountains and rivers in China. But [I have heard that] there are even Chinese who wish to be born in Goryeo [Korea] and visit Mount Geumgang. [I believe] there is nothing [to compare] to this grand spectacle [of Mount Geumgang], though having visited all over the world" (449). Geumwon's pride in her country's landscape is echoed in the opening of the *Travelogue*, in which she writes that "it is fortunate that I was born as a human being and not as a beast; I was lucky to be born in my civilized state in the East (Joseon) and not in a barbarian territory" (428-29). This illustrates not only her admiration for the country's scenery, but her recognition of Joseon as the last bastion of Confucian civilization, the idea that became pervasive among Joseon people after the defeat of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) by the Manchus in 1644 (Haboush 2003, 416-17).

In addition to remarkably vivid portrayals of what she saw and experienced on the road, Geumwon's *Travelogue* includes twenty-six poems composed whenever her sentiments about a scene ran high. Although she casually notes that she "sometimes composed and recited [poetry] about flowers and the moon," it appears that Geumwon was keenly attuned to the Way of poetry composition. For Geumwon, poetry cannot be artificial but is created only when "Heaven secretly inspires the writer" (天機). Without elaboration, therefore, poetry should come from one's heart as a result of "disciplining one's own nature" (陶寫性情) (Geumwon 1988, 482). The question of how to compose verse had occupied scholarly debates from ancient times. Geumwon seems to follow the theory of natural, spontaneous inspiration encapsulated by the Joseon Neo-Confucian scholar Yi I 李珥 (1537-84), who articulated "poetry as reflection of human nature, [which] thus cannot be composed dexterously or artificially" (詩本性情 非矯僞而成) (Yi, n.d., 44: 271a).

Clearly, Geumwon was aware of her readers and critics, and sensitive to her relationship with them. Her motivation for writing the *Travelogue* went beyond the simple wish to jot down her thoughts, emotions, and encounters during her travels, encompassing her deeper desire to be heard and remembered not as an ordinary traveler but as a woman literatus and a noble person. Textualizing her private experiences into a form of literature, Geumwon's travel account is neither a mere list of the places she visited nor a text dominated by "women's sentiments." Instead, she gives mundane spaces historical and cultural authority through her extensive knowledge of the Classics, literature, and philosophy, becoming a cultural participant in the nineteenth-century Joseon literary production and intellectual sphere (Fong 2001, 135).

III. *Hodongseorak gi* (Travelogue of Hodongseorak) by Geumwon

How great the rivers and mountains of this world![23] How long the sun and moon have endured through past and present! How widely diverse are human affairs in their comings and goings! How extensively varied are living things in their colors and figures! Mountains were once one, but became scattered into hundreds and thousands of dissimilar shapes and forms in the end; water was initially extensively dispersed, but gathered at a single point with myriad different waves and currents. As for similitude and dissimilitude in the outlandish forms and eccentric conditions of birds, fish, animals, and plants, this is none other than the force of nature.

Human nature has obtained the essence of *yin-yang* and the Five Phases from the ten thousand things.[24] Yet men and women are not the same; there are those who are superior and inferior in their

23 The section headings below do not exist in the original text but have been added by the translator.

24 The original text reads "稟得二五之精靈." The character "二" refers to yin and yang; "五" refers to the Five Phases. In the Neo-Confucian view, the universe is circumscribed by the dual principle of *yin-yang* and the Five Phases—metal, wood, water, fire, and earth.

capacity; the depth of knowledge has greatness and smallness; everything has distinctions, whether it is about longevity or untimely death, nobility or baseness, poverty or wealth. The loftiness of [Emperors] Yao 堯 and Shun 舜,[25] and Confucius and Mencius lacking peace [in their hearts],[26] were not appreciated during their time. Yan Yuan's 顏淵[27] early death and Dao Zhi's 盜跖[28] longevity had a difference in their allotted life spans. The hands of fortune and misfortune were not the same for Ji 稷 and Qi 契[29] becoming ministers, Yi 伊 and Lü 呂[30] remaining lowly assistants, Ningzi 甯子[31] being ignorant, and Jizi 箕子[32] being insane.

Thus, those who grasped their opportunities in time became devoted lords, benefitting the people and having their names inscribed in bamboo books for prosperity. [Yet there were] those who

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25 Yao and Shun are two ancient emperors during the golden age of Chinese history who are praised in the *Analects* and *Mencius*. For example, see *Mencius* 3A.1, "Mencius spoke about human nature being good, constantly commending Yao and Shun." See Mencius (2009, 49). Their names appear as metaphors for sagacious and bright rulers in the classical literature and history of China and Korea.

26 The original text here suggests the hasty state of Confucius and Mencius, indicating they bustled around the world to teach the Way. This expression is found in a writing by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-72), a scholar in Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279) China.

27 Yan Yuan (521-490 BCE) is known as one of the ten prominent disciples of Confucius during the end of Spring and Autumn period (776-476 BCE). A beloved disciple of Confucius, he died young.

28 Dao Zhi 盜跖 was the most notorious robber during the Spring and Autumn period. His name became a metaphor for an evil person.

29 Ji 稷 and Qi 契 (n.d.) refer to two illustrious subjects of Emperor Sun—Houji 后稷 and Qi 契—who were later worshipped as gods of agriculture. See Waley (1996). Ji and Qi were also considered progenitors/high ancestors of the Zhou and Shang kings, respectively (Ssu-ma 1994, 41).

30 Yi 伊 and Lü 呂 refer to Yi Yin 伊尹 and Lü Shang 呂尙, two eminent ministers of the Yin 殷 and Zhou 周 states.

31 Ningzi meaning Ning Yu 甯兪, also known as Ning Wuzi 甯武子, was a lord of the Wei 衛 state during the Spring and Autumn period. According to the *Analects*, Confucius commented on his service to the state as follows: "The Master said, 'In the case of Ning Wuzi, when the Way prevailed in the state, he was wise. When the Way did not prevail in the state, he was stupid. His wisdom can be equaled, but not his stupidity'" (*Analects* 5.21 in Confucius 2007, 39).

32 The uncle of the Yin state's brutal ruler, Zhou 紂, made Jizi 箕子 a servant due to Jizi's severe criticism of Zhou's cruel policies. By pretending to be crazy, Jizi survived. After the Yin state perished, Chinese history records that Jizi went to Korea and founded the Jizi (K. Gija) Joseon state (Ssu-ma 2006, 269).

cherished gems in their bosoms and groped for valuables, who rotted away together with the plants and trees, for they failed to recognize their fate. Some were known for their writings; some were renowned for their righteous and heroic actions. Some of those who were lofty in their will favored being among the mountains and rivers; some who withdrew themselves from worldly affairs took pleasure in composing poems and being drunk; and many who did not realize their will [in the world] suffered from sunken spirits and anxiety, feeling an urge to reveal their inner selves through words.

Even so, eyes that have not seen the greatness of mountains and rivers, and hearts that have not experienced the multitude of affairs, would not be able to perceive changes and reach their principles due to their narrow outlook and limited knowledge. Therefore, those who are benevolent [naturally] favor the mountains, and those who are wise, the water.[33] [Then] men are valued because of their ability to travel in any direction according to their whim, whereas women's feet never venture outside the inner gate and can only linger on discussions of proper drink and food. In the olden days, the mothers of Emperors Wen 文 and Wu 武[34] and of Confucius and Mencius all were virtuous and also gave birth to sagacious sons, so their names became known in the world. Since then, the glory of these praiseworthy women has not ceased, but they are few in number. Is it possible that there was absolutely no one who shone among women? Staying in the recesses of the inner chambers without sharpening their skills or knowledge, they are only to be utterly forgotten. How can one not grieve at this?!

Geumwon Introduces Herself

I am from Bongnae Mountain 蓬萊山 in the Gwandong 關東 region and call myself Geumwon. Because I was often ill when young, my parents took pity on me and did not force me to learn women's work

[33] "The Master said, "The wise delight in water; the humane delight in mountains" (Confucius 2007, 45, 6.23).

[34] Wen and Wu were the sagacious rulers of the Zhou state in ancient China.

but taught me to write. Day by day, I made new discoveries; in a few years, I was versed in most of the Classics and historical literature, and my thoughts were devoted to the writings of the past and present. With inspiration, I sometimes composed and recited [poetry] about flowers and the moon. Deliberating deeply about my life, it is fortunate that I was born as a human being and not as a beast; I was lucky to be born in my civilized state in the East (Joseon) and not in a barbarian territory. [Yet] it is unfortunate that I was not born a man but as a woman; it was unlucky that I was not born in a wealthy and noble family but in a humble one.

However, Heaven has already endowed me with a benevolent and wise nature, and the ability to hear and see, so how can I not enjoy the mountains and rivers and observe and listen broadly? Heaven has already bestowed brightness upon me, so how can I not achieve [something worthwhile] in a civilized state? Is it [only] right that I, being a mere woman, stay within the closed gates and abide by the old rules?[35] Is it right that, having already been born into a humble family, I dwell in my destiny, die, and vanish without a trace? There is no tortoise of Zhanyin 詹尹, so it is hard to imitate Qu 屈's fortune-telling.[36] Then Zhanyin says, "A plan ends, but wisdom is everlasting"; let one's will be performed oneself. Then I decided. [Though] I was not yet of marriageable age, traveling widely to scenic resorts of mountains and rivers, if I pretended I was Zeng Dian 曾點 bathing in the Yi 沂 River and enjoyed the breeze among the rain-altars,[37] I would then return after writing some verse that captured the moment, and the sages should [thereby] also partake in this.

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35 The original text reads this as "經法," the immutable rules outlined in the Classics.

36 Zhanyin refers to Zheng Zhanyin 鄭詹尹, the minister in charge of prophesy who used the lines on a tortoise shell for divination in the Chinese Chu state during the Warring States period (403-221 BCE). Qu is the Chu state scholar-official Qu Yuan 屈原 (340-278 BCE), who visited Zhanyin to ask about the direction of his political path and life. See *Chuci jizhu* 楚辭集註 (2001, 111-13). For an English translation, see Hawkes (1985, 203-06).

37 Zeng Dian was one of the disciples of Confucius. Yi is the name of a river southeast of Shandong in China. The original text has "舞雩," referring to an ancient sacrifice for rain in time of drought. This refers to a passage in the *Analects* in which Zeng Dian expresses his desire to lead a group of young men to bathe in the Yi River and return chanting together (*Analects* 11.26 in Confucius 2007, 77).

Geumwon Sets Out on Her Travels

My mind was already made up, but I was delayed several times due to my parents. After what seemed like an eternity, they agreed. Then, I lifted up my soul to its natural greatness, like a hawk coming out of its cage and shooting straight up into the sky, or like a good horse taking off its bridle and saddle and setting off to run a thousand *ri*.[38] That very day, I changed into male attire, packed my baggage, and set out in the direction of the Four Prefectures.[39] It was spring of the third month in *gyeongin* year (1830), and I was just fourteen years old.[40] I plaited my hair like a boy and sat inside a sedan chair that was draped with blue silk with its front open. [Then] I made my way to the Uirim Lake 義林池 in Jecheon 堤川 [region].[41] Charming flowers were about to bloom, and fragrant plants were opening like mist, with green leaves beginning to wake. Blue mountains enclosed [me] in all four directions like embroidered curtains. I already felt refreshed, as if all the dust in my inner organs was washed off.

Visit to Uirim Lake

I indeed arrived at Uirim Lake, which looked to be about 10 *ri* in width. The green water was pure and clear, like spreading delicate silk of the Chinese Shu 蜀 state. Watershields lived on the water—some sank and some floated—; myriad catkins hung from the willow trees—some swam in water and some dragged themselves in soil. A pair of orioles were flying between branches, flittering their plumage like silk dresses and chirping their clever tongues. A kingfisher startled me as it shot to the sky. Turning back with a smile, I laughed and said,

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38 A *ri* is a measure of length reckoned between 430.08 and 453.60 meters.

39 These are the four prefectures in Chungcheong-do Province, referring to Jecheon, Cheongpung, Danyang, and Yeongchun.

40 The year of *gyeongin* was 1830, the 30th reign year of King Sunjo (r. 1800-34).

41 Uirim Lake is a historic reservoir that, legend has it, was built by a musician, Ureuk, in the sixth century of Silla (57 BCE-935 CE). The original name was Rim 林 (Forest) Lake, but it has been called Uirim 義林 (Righteous Forest) Lake since 992.

"According to a proverb, 'You, kingfisher! Do not fly and leave me. Am I not your friend?' Now, I also want to say that!"

Suddenly, I heard the dim singing of a fisher's song between willow trees. In the distance, I saw an old man on mossy steps, wearing a blue straw hat and a green rain cape, sitting with a fishing rod in his hands. He was catching a golden-scaled fish, flashing from the midst of vast waves. I rented a boat and went to look for where the singing came from. The breeze was still and the water was peaceful, like sitting in a gaily decorated pleasure boat. Limpid waves formed what looked like a square pond or a precious mirror, dotted with caltrops, lotuses, and other aquatic plants. Water birds emerged from the place between heavenly light and shadowy clouds—surely it was a scene from a painting!

I proceeded and disembarked at a fishing jetty, then threw a copper coin[42] for a white fish. Cutting and tasting it, I am afraid that even the four-gilled fish in the Pine River[43] cannot be superior to this. Once again, I searched the borders of the pond to collect watershield plants. An old woman from a grass hut welcomed me and taught me how to prepare them, by poaching them in hot water for a moment, then serving them with *omija* soup.[44] The taste was extremely fresh and subtle. I did not know whether the memory that Zhang Jiying 張季鷹 longed for was in fact like this taste or not, but I had a refreshing feeling in my throat.[45]

The lake is known for its incomparable scenic beauty. In the spring, a sea of peach blossoms looks like sailing in a boat in Heaven; in sum-

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42 The original text reads "青蚨," which means a legendary blue insect, but here refers to coins. This term comes from the *Hoenamja* 淮南子 (C. *Huainanzi*, Master of Huainan), a work from the early Han dynasty by the imperial kinsman Liu An 劉安 (179-22 BCE). For a complete translation of this work, see An (2010).

43 Four-gilled fish (松江四鱸) is another name for perch, which were known to abound in Chinese rivers during the Song dynasty.

44 *Omija* 五味子 is a kind of wild fruit traditionally used for making a Korean beverage with five different flavors—sourness, sweetness, bitterness, spiciness, and saltiness.

45 Zhang Jiying (aka Zhang Han 張翰) was a scholar-official of the Western Jin 晉 (266-420 CE) state. An anecdote tells that longing for the watershield plants (蓴菜) of his hometown, Zhang resigned his office and headed home (*Jinshu* 晉書 [History of the Jin] 1980, 2384).

mer, pure lotus flowers seem to float over the gate of coldness;[46] in autumn, it is like scooping the moon out of an icy pond; in winter, it is like spreading out snow on a jade mirror. If a hermit-scholar were to see [this], [he would view it] as the Hao 濠 River where Zhuangzi 莊子 [once] strolled along; if beautiful people were to arrive here, they would compare it to the famous lake named after Xizi 西子.[47] For the scenery of this (Uirim) lake, a whole year's stay could not exhaust appreciation of it all. I lingered around [the lake], yet could not leave. . . .

Two Caves

Heading toward Yongchun 永春, I looked for two caves, Geumhwa 金華 and Namhwa 南華. Morning fog had not yet cleared off. Upon arriving at a river, I beckoned a boat and glided on, leaving the boat ashore at the entrance of a stone cave. Entering the cave with a torch, I saw a large stone lying horizontally with a large ring inside it [holding] some water, which was as deep and clean as a pond. Stones of various shapes were standing like iron drumsticks. They are called "bell rocks" because, when struck, they generate a magnificent sound like a bell.

[In fact,] there was a stone bell by the mouth of Lake Pengli. Li Daoyuan 酈道元 conjectured that when water and the stone smacked against each other, the sound resembled that of a huge bell.[48] Li Bo 李渤 found two stones by a pool's side, then struck them together and listened.[49] The sound of the one at the southern side was muffled and deep, while the tone of the one at the northern side was clear and

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46 A gate of coldness (寒門) refers to a legendary cold area in Northern China. Geumwon must have taken this term from "逴絶埏乎寒門" (Till, at the world's other end, we came to the Gate of Coldness), in the "Yuan you" 遠遊 (Far-Off Journey) section of the *Chuci* (Songs of Chu 楚辭). See Hawkes (1985, 202).

47 The Hao River refers to the well-known conversation between Zhuangzi 莊子 and Huizi 惠子 about the joys of fishing, which took place along the banks of the Hao River. See Zhuangzi (2003, 111). Xizi refers to Xi Shi 西施 (?-?) of the Yue 越 state, who was known for her exceptional beauty.

48 Li Daoyuan (470?-527) was a geographer who compiled the Shuijingzhu 水經注 (Commentaries on the Water Classic) during the Northern Wei 北魏 dynasty (386-534).

49 Li Bo (772-831), a scholar-official of the Tang dynasty (618-907), wrote "Bian Shi zhong shan ji" 辨石鐘山記 (On the Record of Stone-Bell Mountain).

carried far. Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 recorded this phenomenon to discuss [both opinions], and thought Li Yuan 酈元 to be right, yet laughed at Li Bo's foolishness.[50] In the past, I was initially skeptical about these stories. Having witnessed this stone today, it indeed sounded like a bell! I realized, for the first time, that the judgment on Li Bo did not deceive. It is regretful that Su Dongpo would not be able to see this stone here. On the stone cliff, there were many stalactites hanging down. Reaching out and grabbing one, it melted like spring snow exposed to the sun and immediately disappeared. Both caves exhibited the same spectacle, which was enough to make the scene strange. . . .

Geumgang Mountain (Diamond Mountain)

Having exhaustively looked around the famous places in four districts, I headed toward the Geumgang Mountain 金剛山. When I went on and climbed the Danbal Ridge 斷髮嶺, I saw twelve thousand peaks of the Geumgang Mountain, which were like jade pieces erected on a heap of snow. The piles of snowdrifts on the Western Mountain 西山 could not exceed this scene. As for the Western Mountain, it is the most famous mountain in Yanjing 燕京. Gazing on layers of cliffs and waves of mountain peaks behind the Wanshou Mountain 萬壽山, they look like a mysterious scene. The snow waves on the mountain peaks are even more remarkable, thus the piles of snowdrifts on the Western Mountain became one of the Yanjing's eight scenes.

The strata of cliffs and unending peaks of the Geumgang Mountain pierced the clouds, and the snow color on every peak was stunning throughout the four seasons. Those who rave about famous and beautiful places usually call them fairylands or painting-like scenery. I do not know what such a fairyland would be like, but if this is taken as a painting-like scene, even the most talented painter cannot do it

[50] Li Yuan indicates to Li Daoyuan. Geumwon here refers to "Shi zhong shan ji" 石鐘山記 (Record of Stone-Bell Mountain), written by Su Dongpo (1037-1101, or Su Shi 蘇軾), a poet and writer of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). For an English translation of this piece, see Strassberg (1994, 188-91).

justice! Spring was deep in the mountain roads, covered with thriving green leaves and wiry red flowers. Singing cuckoos cried frequently, as if saying "forgotten to return home,"[51] only burdening the lonely heart of a traveller.

Marriage Journey

After having travelled around the capital and countryside, I looked at myself wearing a boy's hat and dress and felt pathetic all of sudden. I said to my heart that "a girl disguising herself as a boy is not an ordinary thing; how much more so for the endlessness of human emotion. A noble person knows where to stop;[52] thus, he controls himself and does not cross [the lines of] basic propriety. A petty person, on the other hand, passes over the human emotion and immediately proceeds; thus, once he drifts off, he forgets to return. Now the great scenes [I have seen] have almost rewarded my old wishes, therefore, I can stop here. Isn't it also possible to return to my old duty and follow the affairs of women?" Taking off the boy's clothes and wearing the previous ones, I was not yet a married woman.

Zijin 子晉's panpipes could summon a mysterious crane,[53] and Chang Qing 長卿's harp could invite an auspicious phoenix.[54] With a Gyudang scholar, Kim 奎堂金學士,[55] I finally made the small star's

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51 The original text writes "不如歸." This expression comes from the story that King Du Yu 杜宇 of the Chu 蜀 was reincarnated as a cuckoo whose cry sounded like the words "forgotten to return home."

52 The original texts reads "君子知足而能止," which is a classical allusion of "知止 (knows where to stop)" used in several Chinese Classics. See Lao Zi (2008, 93) and Confucius (1971, 356).

53 The original text writes "子眞," but Geumwon would have meant 子晉, the name of a prince of Chu during the reign of King Ling 靈王 of Chu (r. 540-529 BCE). According to the *Lie xian zhuan* (*Biographies of Immortals* 列仙傳), he was expelled for his direct admonition of the king and became a Taoist hermit (Penny 2008, 653-54).

54 Chang Qing was another name of Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179-17 BCE), a poet, writer, and musician of the Western Han dynasty. It seems that Geumwon is alluding to Sima Xiangru's famous marriage story in which he fell in love with a young widow, Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君.

55 The exact meaning of "Gyudang" 奎堂 is not clear here, but it seems to refer to Kim's scholarly vocation.

karma,[56] then several years and months passed while I stayed as his wife. One day, he was blessed by the king and was assigned to be a county magistrate of Yongman 龍灣.[57] It was the early spring of the *eulmi* year (1845). Heading toward his post, I went alone before him by a sedan chair decorated with four jade curtains hanging down in front. We crossed over Mohwa Hill 慕華峴. Arriving at Songgyeong 松京, the glow of Mount Songak 松岳山 in the setting sun and the dusk clouds across Wol Terrace 月臺 looked sorrowful and melancholy.[58] As for the trace of Seonjuk Bridge 善竹橋, there had always been an obvious blood spot, [visible] enough to make later loyal subjects shed tears through the ages.[59]

Passing Cheongseok Gate 靑石關, the valley continued for 10 *li*. The mountain configuration was very steep, truly a spiky place endowed by Heaven. When the Qing general arrived here in the *byeongja* year (1636), he was really reluctant to force his front-line army to advance. If we had had several hundreds of soldiers to resist them at that time, the Qing army would not have dared to cross here. It is natural that our (Joseon) people are regretful when reaching this place! Going by Chongsu Rock 葱秀巖, I heard that there was a great [carved] character left there by Zhu Zifan 朱之蕃,[60] yet, sitting inside the sedan chair, I could not look around extensively. Riding by Hwangju 黃州, I distantly saw the Wolpa Pavilion 月波樓 standing in the mist at a boundless stream. It was almost like passing through a painting.

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56 The text reads "小星之緣." "Small star" indicates a "secondary wife," which originally comes from the *Shijing*. See note 14 above.

57 Yongman was another name of Uiju.

58 Songgyeong, another name of Gaeseong, was the capital of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392). Wol Terrace refers to Full Moon Terrace (滿月臺), the site of the Goryeo dynasty's main palace.

59 Seonjuk Bridge is known as the spot where Jeong Mong-ju (1338-92), a loyal subject of the Goryeo, was killed by four assassins wielding iron clubs sent by Yi Bang-won, who later became the third king of the Joseon dynasty. It is said that a trace of Jeong's blood still remains on the bridge.

60 Zhu Zifan (?-1624) was a Ming Chinese scholar-official who came to Korea in 1606 as an envoy (*Seonjo sillok* 196:13B [1606/1/23]).

Poetry Gatherings at the Samho Pavilion

With the end of the magistrate's tenure, we packed and returned to Seoul. [My husband's] relatives and clansmen welcomed us with joy, and we gave [them] gifts of Chinese silk as an expression of our familial affection. My husband turned down an illustrious position and retired to a pavilion at the riverside, where I eventually followed him by taking a small wagon. That was indeed the Samho Pavilion 三湖亭 at Yongsan 龍山.

. . . Sometimes when I composed and sang poetry, four people joined and exchanged poems. One was Uncho 雲楚 (?-?) from Seongcheon 成川, a concubine of the Secretarial officer Kim Yeoncheon 淵泉.[61] She was extraordinarily talented and renowned for her poetic ability. Some even travelled a distance to visit her and sometimes stayed for several days. Then, there was Gyeongsan 瓊山 (?-?) from Munhwa 文化, who was a concubine of the Secretarial officer Yi Hwasa 花史[62] and who was erudite, well informed, and skillful in composing poetry. Because she lived nearby, we frequently met [for the singing of poetry]. Third was Jukseo 竹西 (?-1851) from my hometown, a concubine of the Governor Seo Songho 松湖.[63] She was wise, quick to learn: hearing one [thing], she would know the next ten things.[64] Her writing style emulated that of Han and Su,[65] unusual and classical.[66] The last was my sister, Gyeongchun 鏡春 (?-?), a concubine of Governor Hong Jucheon

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61 Yeoncheon is a pen name of Kim I-yang 金履陽 (1755-1845).

62 Hwasa is a pen name of Yi Jeong-sin 李鼎臣 (1792-1858).

63 Songho is a pen name of Seo Gi-bo 徐箕輔 (?-?). For details about these men, see Bak (2007).

64 This alludes to a reference to Yan Hui 顏回 in the *Analects*. See the *Analects* 5.9 in Confucius (2007, 37).

65 "Han and Su" refer to the two famous Chinese poets Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), also known as Su Dong-po 蘇東坡.

66 Since Jukseo was from Wonju, the same hometown as Geumwon, many of the poems in her poetry collection are addressed to Geumwon. Uncho was a female entertainer famous for her poetry even before she became a concubine of the *yangban* scholar Kim I-yang (or Kim Yeoncheon in this text), though Geumwon does not mention this at all. Not much is known about Gyeongsan and Gyeongchun, but Uncho and Jukseo's poetry collections have been translated into Korean. For a detailed study on this group, see Kim (2004).

酒泉.[67] She was bright and decorous, and widely read in the Classics and history. She was second to none in composing poetry and prose. Following each other and enjoying [composing and singing] together, rolls of silk-like papers covered the wooden table, and entire shelves were filled with pearl-like poetry scrolls. . . .

So, the five of us became congenial friends, enjoying this beautiful place with blooming flowers, singing birds, clouds and mists, winds and rains, snow and shine: there was not a single day that was not delightful. We played the lute together, taking genuine pleasure in listening to music. In the midst of laughing and talking to one another, when Heaven secretly inspired us, we composed verses; some clear, some dignified, some strong, some old-fashioned, some vigorous and some righteous. Even though I have no idea which is superior or inferior, one thing [I do know] is that we each disciplined our own nature and [yet also] lived in leisure.

. . . Now, as I recollect half of my life, [I realize that] I travelled extensively to beautiful places to see rare and scenic views, leaving my footprints on the mountains and rivers—something hard [even] for men to achieve. My heart is satisfied, and my wishes are fulfilled. Alas, the world is [still] wide! [Traveling] a little country can hardly match [seeing] the entire world. Time has passed through long years, and a drifting life of a hundred years is not sufficient to fully enjoy [the world]. Nevertheless, seeing a corner of the world could be like seeing all mountains and rivers; viewing a hundred years could be like viewing what all time is like. Then, as for the questions of how big or small the world is and how long and short the time is, who can adequately discuss [such matters]? However, all the past affairs I have experienced are but a dream. If I do not record them to pass on [to people in the future], who would know that today's Geumwon ever lived?

. . . Alas, reckoning time by a day, one day is a dream; reckoning time by a year, one year is a dream; reckoning a hundred years, a

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[67] It is unclear who Hong Jucheon was, but a recent study suggests the possibility of Hong Chae-bong 洪在鳳 (?-?) who served as a county magistrate of Yongchun 永春 in Chungcheong-do Province between 1848 and 1851. See Yi (2017, 107-8).

thousand years from the past to present, all are a dream. I am also one in a dream, recording the affairs I had in my dream. Isn't it all a dream within a dream?! Laughing it off finally, I take up a brush and write down [the joys of] travel. Those recorded are only ten of a thousand and one of a hundred. As for the poems I composed, I am afraid they will all be scattered or disappear, so I record them [here] as [my literary] property and appreciate them at my leisure. This excursion began from the four prefectures of the Ho. Through Gwandong's Mount Geumgang and eight sightseeing visits, I arrived in Nagyang (Hanyang, the capital) and finally reached the Gwanseo bay district. Then I returned to Nagyang. Thus, I entitle [this account] a record of Hodongseorak.

■ Submitted: 30 April 2021
Reviewed/revised: 14 June 2021
Accepted: 29 June 2021

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 83–116
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.83

Contentious Source: *Master Song, the Patriarch's Voice*

Hwa Yeong Wang*

Abstract

This paper introduces Song Siyeol, known as Master Song (Songja 宋子), who had a great influence on Korean philosophy and politics in late Joseon (18-19th century). Among his *Great Compendium*, there are substantial body of writings and comments related to women. As his views directly and indirectly contributed to shaping orthodox Korean Neo-Confucian views regarding women, his writings are an invaluable resource for understanding women and gender in the late Joseon period. This paper presents his views on women, focusing on issues related to rituals. By highlighting and analyzing the issues discussed regarding the role of women in four traditional family rituals, I delineate ways in which Song Siyeol positioned women in his ritualist metaphysics and use this analysis to examine his philosophical approach, which reflects his views on, and understanding of, women, gender, and associated philosophical concepts, while making meaningful and practical discoveries that can be embraced and implemented by women and people today.

Keywords: Song Siyeol, family rituals, women, Joseon, Korean Neo-Confucianism

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** This essay is developed from my previous research on Song Siyeol and rituals on women. I would like to express my gratitude to anonymous reviewers for the *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture* for their constructive comments and suggestions. Special thanks to Philip J. Ivanhoe for thorough and careful reading and comments.

I. Introduction

This paper introduces Song Siyeol 宋時烈 (1607-89), a seminal figure in late Joseon 朝鮮 (1392-1910) Korean philosophy and politics, known as Master Song (Songja 宋子), who left behind a substantial body of writings and comments related to women. His views directly and indirectly contributed to shaping orthodox Korean Neo-Confucian views regarding women, making Song Siyeol's writings an invaluable resource for understanding women and gender in the late Joseon period. This paper presents his views on women, focusing on issues related to rituals. By highlighting and analyzing the issues discussed regarding the role of women in four traditional family rituals, I delineate ways in which Song Siyeol positioned women in his ritualist metaphysics and use this analysis to examine his philosophical approach, which reflects his views on, and understanding of, women, gender, and associated philosophical concepts. This study presents two distinctive challenges: (1) how to contextualize patriarchal voices in ways that avoid demonizing his view as simplistically patriarchal and (2) finding ways to articulate the complex nature of the issues and ideas in play while making meaningful and practical discoveries that can be embraced and implemented by women and people today.

II. The Life and Thought of Song Siyeol

Song Siyeol, pen name Uam 尤庵, is a representative and authoritative figure in the Korean Confucian tradition. He is known as "the Juja 朱子 (C. Zhuzi) (1130-1200) of Korea" and played an important role in determining the spirit of the age in Confucian theories of righteousness (*ui* 義; C. *yi*) and ritual propriety (*ye* 禮; C. *li*).[1] King Jeongjo 正祖 (r. 1776-1800) honored him as Master Song and ordered the publication of the collected works of his writings under the title of the *Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon* 宋子大全). Later, in a record of his death (卒記), Korean Confucians praised him as the

[1] *RoutledgeCurzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, s.v. "Song Si-yŏl."

legitimate successor of the Way that began from Confucius (孔子, 551-479 BCE) and was transmitted through Ju Hui 朱熹 (C. Zhu Xi), Yi I 李珥 (1536-84; pen name Yulgok 栗谷), and Gim[2] Jangsaeng 金長生 (1548-1631; pen name Sagye 沙溪) (*Great Compendium of Master Song* 151.39b-40a).[3]

Song, at the same time, is one of the most problematic figures in Korean philosophy and politics. He served four kings as a royal mentor and advisor and was the head of the Westerners (*Seoin* 西人), a philosophical and political faction of his age. At the same time, his views and practices were considered orthodox, conservative, and strict. His stringent and unyielding attitude brought him both immense respect as a great teacher of the time as well as harsh criticism from opponents. Late Joseon politics was deeply intertwined with philosophical and scholarly views, and factional differences regularly caused purges of members of whichever side was out of favor, who were accused of deviating from the correct way of Confucianism. The seventeenth-century ritual controversy (*yesong* 禮訟) over the proper mourning ritual for King Hyojong 孝宗 (r. 1649-59) exemplifies how such controversies intertwined philosophical debates and political struggles. In this case, the disagreement resulted in his own death; the king ordered that he be sent poison to take his own life, which he did.

Song Siyeol is also an important person in the history of Korean women.[4] He played a significant role in the extension and strengthening of the agnatic principle (*jongbeop* 宗法; C. *zongfa*) that embodies patrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal ideology and practices. He produced a considerable number of writings on women in a variety of genres, such as letters to his female relatives, tomb inscriptions and condolences, and sacrificial writings. The women in his writings range from royal and gentry family women to slaves. His writings on upper-class women present his public views on women, while

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2 Editor's note: a number of scholars Romanize popular surnames like 김 and 권 as Kim and Kwon respectively, but in this essay, I will Romanize them as Gim and Gwon, in order to maintain consistency with other publications by the authors of this essay.

3 For his detailed effort to redefine the lineage of transmission, see Yi (2002, 13-21).

4 For example, Hong (1993) identifies Song Siyeol as an iconic person who was instrumental in turning the later Joseon period into a dark age for women.

those concerning his family members and slaves offer his personal or private views on women, and this complicates an interpretation of his philosophy.

The influence of Song's views and writings extended far beyond his lifetime. His answers on ritual matters related to women were received as an authoritative source for later Confucians and included in the collection of commentaries on *the Family Rituals in the Extended Interpretations to the* Family Rituals (*Garye jeunghae* 家禮增解).[5] His letter to his eldest daughter became a new and influential source concerning women that later Korean Confucians followed as a tradition to teach their female relatives.[6] Later generations of his school produced two remarkable women Confucian philosophers, Im Yunjidang 任允摯堂 (1721-93) and Gang Jeongildang 姜靜一堂 (1772-1832), who not only were born into families aligned with his faction, but also, as scholars, inherited and continued his teachings, including those on rituals.

Song and his writings are a rich source for understanding the perspectives and attitudes of male Confucians about women and for understanding the influence his teachings had on later women. We should neither neglect nor accept what he said blindly. A sympathetic reading of such traditional sources, which were shared by both women as well as men of the time, combined with an understanding of the complicated contexts in which they were produced and an awareness of one's standpoint will clarify his philosophical views and prepare the way for new research and contemporary insights regarding women and Confucianism.

As a feminist re-reading, this essay is informed by feminist philosophers' criticisms and alternative reading strategies for reading male philosophers. In order to avoid falling into the pitfall of being overly deferential to tradition, feminist philosophers suggest rethinking the questions through which history is structured, focusing and drawing

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5 *The Extended Interpretations to the Family Rituals* was compiled by Yi Uijo 李宜朝 (1727-1805) and known as the Westerners' ritual text; it contains numerous comments of Song Siyeol about altered rites that were not discussed in previous ritual texts. Imbued with the authority of Song Siyeol, his comments on such altered rites often led to them being treated as de facto orthodox rites.

6 See Sohn (1981, 35-43) and Yang (1998, 70-71).

out the "unthought" assumptions and attitudes informing a text, including its omissions and paradoxes with the clear goal of achieving "an active philosophical engagement with a text rather than the backward-looking activity of trying to determine the exact meaning of a historical text" (Witt and Shapiro 2020). Feminist scholars of Asian philosophy caution against succumbing to a new imperialism represented by Western feminism and the importance of embracing Confucianism as a shared heritage for members of the East Asian diaspora should be kept in mind as well.[7]

III. Explanation and Analysis

To examine the relationship between ritual and women in Confucian –ism, four family rituals—capping/hair-pinning, marriage/wedding, funeral/mourning, and sacrifice—are the best place to begin because these rituals concern life within the family, the site where women led their lives.[8] Women performed and participated in family rituals as prescribed in the Confucian texts, embodying the ideological and social expectations laid down by Confucianism. Though the Confucian ritual canons unavoidably reflect a male-centered perspective, in a number of significant ways, these four family rituals also express the Neo-Confucian ideal of universalism based upon their newly developed metaphysics of pattern-principle (*i* 理; C. *li*). These rituals mark turning points in human life—becoming an adult, forming a family, and death—and these apply regardless of social status or gender. This important universalist dimension of Neo-Confucianism, unfortunately and ironically, also gives rise to forms of gender disparity within Confucianism.

In order to understand the apparently contradictory Confucian views on women in relation to ritual, these topics and the process of philosophizing should be clearly demonstrated and analyzed in

7 See, for example, Rosenlee (2010) and Herr (2014).

8 In unusual and exceptional cases, some women participated in public affairs, such as politics and school matters, but this type of participation was extremely rare and was possible only for women as wives of men.

connection to other related issues and ideas. Until now, only a few contemporary scholars have brought these issues together.[9] The lack of this kind of more comprehensive and synthetic scholarship is partly due to the difficulty of understanding the ritual discussions of the times from a philosophical perspective. They are like puzzles manifested in scattered passages and discussions and represented by theorization that was only partially developed in an organized or systematic way and focused specifically on women. In these puzzles, gender is only one determinant that is intermingled with other determinants, such as age and social class. Moreover, each family ritual was connected with several others within the larger Confucian worldview. They cannot be understood in isolation from one another or from the expression they receive on a single occasion. In the following section, I offer a brief introduction to each of the four rituals I have chosen to explore and its meaning, interweaving these introductions with Song Siyeol's writings, which are introduced in Section V.

In Confucianism, one's maturation is marked more with ritual than the unfolding of physical development, and the initiation or coming-of-age ceremony is the very first ritual in one's life. The *Book of Rites* says that "Capping is the beginning of ritual propriety" (Zheng and Kong 1999, 1883).[10] The stages described in the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies* mark one's transition from childhood to adulthood by prescribing changes in caps and clothes.[11] Through the ritual, one transforms oneself as "the human body *cum* vessel" (Zito 1997, 47) and becomes a participant in a bigger and wider society. Women's initiation, the hair-pinning ritual (*gyerye* 笄禮; C. *jili*), was made an independent ceremony by Ju Hui and regarded as a complement to men's capping. Before him, women's hair-pinning (*gye* 笄; C. *ji*) was mentioned only as a part of wedding ritual, saying that when "a woman is promised in marriage, she has a pinning ceremony and also

9 See, for example, Heo (2014) and Zito (1997).

10 冠者, 禮之始也.

11 Three scholars agree that the ritual theory of Arnold van Gennep can be applied to help described and understand the Confucian capping ritual. See Do (2003), Yi (2002), and Yi (2006).

obtains a pen name."[12] In Ju Hui's *Family Rituals,* for the first time, we learned the details of hair-pinning.

Song Siyeol continued Joseon Neo-Confucian efforts to transform what they regarded as barbaric local customs into the refined and elegant culture of China by implementing and practicing family rituals, including initiation. The initiation ritual was *de facto* in disuse because it required highly abstract ideological understanding and commitment rather than simple physical behavior. Confucian initiation calls on one to commit one's life as a Confucian in consciousness, self-cultivation, and the actualization of Confucian ideals in everyday life. Even elite members dedicated to Confucianism in eighteenth-century Joseon Korea did not perform the capping ceremony.[13] When Song Siyeol performed it, it presented an extraordinary scene and dramatic precedent for contemporary Neo-Confucians.[14]

Not surprisingly, women's hair-pinning received much less attention. Song's writings mentioned hair-pinning only thirteen times, while the character for capping appears forty-four times. Yet, what must be noted is that Song Siyeol carried out a hair-pinning ritual for his female relatives as a way to promote Confucianism. His practice of hair-pinning was and remained influential to his students and later followers. For example, Yun Bonggu 尹鳳九 (1683-1767) notes that Song Siyeol, in his later years, had his female relatives perform a pinning ritual (Yi 2011, vol. 2, 218-19).[15] Gwon Sangha 權尙夏 (1641-1721), the foremost pupil of Song Siyeol, states that "Master Uam's family already practiced this ritual. [The example of the Master] can be a [good] example" (Yi 2011, vol. 2, 218-19).[16] Though there is only limited source material on the subject, an analysis of Song's writings on hair-

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12 *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies*, "Marriage of Ordinary Officers" (*Sahonrye* 士昏禮; C. *Shihunli*) and in SSJZS vol. 10, 109: (男子二十, 冠而字…) 女子許嫁, 笄而字.

13 See the *Veritable Records of King Yeongjo* 70.25b. (25[1749]/09/21#01) 上曰, "今士大夫婚日納幣, 又不親迎, 冠禮亦多廢而不行, 何也?"

14 In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, only a small number of Korean Neo-Confucians could practice this ritual and they did so in different ways (the size of the ritual, such as numbers of guests, and preparation of clothing, etc.) because of their dissimilar circumstances. See Bae (1996, 347).

15 髻者, 華制也. 卽今婦人之辮髮, 胡俗也. 尤翁, 晩年, 使一門婦人, 行笄禮.

16 問, 笄禮鮮行? 遂菴曰: "尤庵先生宅, 曾行此禮, 可以取則矣.

pining can allow us to draw meaningful observations that can be used for future and more thorough philosophical interpretation.

The first translation below introduces Song Siyeol's answer to Yi Gunhoe 李君晦. Yi seems to have been reading the hair-pinning section in Ju Hui's *Family Rituals.* The basic principle Ju Hui taught was that "the procedure [of hair-pinning] is the same as in the capping ritual (*yeo gwallye* 如冠禮; C. *ruo guanli*)." But the procedures were not entirely identical. He omits several rites for women, such as the provision of an assistant for a sponsor and the presentation of the initiate to the elders. Yi's questions concern these omissions. For capping, Ju Hui prescribed a helper for both a sponsor and a presider. But, for hair-pinning Ju Hui said not to use an assistant for the sponsor, without mentioning an usher—whose role was to serve as a helper for the presider. Song Siyeol urged Yi to strictly follow what Ju Hui "wrote." The logic behind this is to do the "same" with the capping, making the changes stated by Ju Hui.

The second omission is "presentation of the initiate to the elders" right after the ceremony. The *Letters and Etiquette* (*Seoui* 書儀; C. *Shuyi*) by Sama Gwang 司馬光 (C. Sima Guang) (1019–86) retained this rite, saying "Once [she] had hair-pinning, [she] visits and bows to only her father and all mothers, aunts, and siblings. The remaining [procedures] are the same as in a man's capping ritual" (Sima, n.d., 2.8a)[17] But Ju Hui eliminated the presentation to the elders without providing any reason for doing so. Song Siyeol accepted Ju Hui's omission but felt the need to explain it. And so, he cites Mr. Wang's comment, "Young women are very shy" as justification for omitting the presentation of young women to the elders. Mr. Wang's comment was intended to explain the reason why a female initiate must have an assistant (Yi 2011, vol. 2, 225),[18] but neither Song Siyeol nor his disciples speculated any further. A later Korean Neo-Confucian, Gwak Jongseok 郭鍾錫 (1846-1919), discussed this issue further, arguing that the presentation should not be skipped because it was a ritual responsibility for all adults. He suggested that presentation to the elders was not repeated

17 既笄所拜見者惟父及諸母諸姑兄姊而已, 餘皆如男子冠禮.

18 王氏曰, 家禮 "笄不用贊. 幼女多羞." 不用贊, 決不能行.

in the description of the hair-pinning ritual because in the *Family Rituals* the rite was already demonstrated in the case of man's capping (Gwak, n.d., 49.10a).[19]

It is easy to trace the connections among several related concepts and ideas: presentation to the elders, women's shyness, and responsibility of adults. The presentation of an initiate symbolizes the realms that are appropriate for her or him in life as an adult. A young woman who has come of age is presented to her father and all mothers, aunts, and siblings because her proper realm is within the family. A young man is presented to a wider range of relatives as well as non-relatives as he is to take his place in the public realm. It is thought that a young woman might feel "shy" and would be emotionally immature to be presented to this larger range of people. But male initiates were encouraged to overcome their self-centered and emotional reaction in accordance with ritual propriety, to take their place and to become full members of social communities. Song Siyeol essentialized women as shy and immature in both moral and ritual senses embedded this essentialized belief and attitude in the hair-pinning ritual.

The second translation deals with the issue of adulthood. The questions of Min Saang's 閔士昂 (1640-92) make clear that one's adulthood is fully ritualized in Confucianism. Maturity is not determined by one's biological age and development. Rather marriage, forming one's own family, which includes having children and thereby continuing the succession of life and lineage, is more important; it even determines the ways in which one's death is treated. Another significant point is that marriage is also highly gendered. In the case of women, it is not marriage itself, but engagement that is of paramount importance. Song Siyeol points out that, unlike the ancients, later generations regarded a woman who has completed the hair-pinning ritual but dies before reaching twenty-years old as suffering a "premature death" (*sang* 殤; C. *shang*). Such is not the case for men. Moreover, for women who have yet to reach the age of twenty,

19 尤菴以爲幼女多羞, 故省此見尊長之禮. 然成人者, 將以責爲人子爲人少者之行於人也. 豈可以小羞而廢重禮耶. 家禮之不言者, 只是省文, 而爲已具於冠禮故也. 書儀曰旣笄所拜見者, 惟父及諸母諸姑兄姊而已.

"being promised" is a pre-condition for hair-pinning. In a man's case, engagement did not have the same weight. A man's capping occurs at the age of twenty, regardless of whether he was engaged or not. These differences and pre-conditions manifest the gendered nature of these rituals.

An analysis of Song Siyeol's writings on the hair-pinning ritual offers us a way to glimpse ritualized adulthood and its gendered aspects. In Confucianism, physical maturity is not the sole or at times even the primary factor determining a person's adulthood. The requirements and details of the ritual procedures of men's capping and women's hair-pinning were differentiated. The gendered differentiation reflects beliefs about their different realms of life as adults and their emotional and ethical maturity. The omissions and differences deserve further theoretical development in contemporary Confucian philosophy for a more gendered-equal future.

In regard to marriage, we introduce two writings concerning the sixtieth wedding anniversary and clan exogamy. Song Siyeol's reply to Gwon Chido is a rare textual record about the 60th wedding anniversary. We learn that this ceremony began to be celebrated among literati family around Song's time. He acknowledges the ceremony as a joyful occasion for children to have both parents enjoy longevity. But he questions whether it is appropriate to perform this ritual. He bases his concern on two principles: textual evidence and his conception of gender. Song first argues that there is no textual reference that shows ancient sages taught that people should hold a ritual for a sixtieth wedding anniversary, though they did celebrate long life. This at least implies that the rite is not in accordance with the heavenly Way nor "matches the pattern-principle of human beings."

In relation to gender, he brings up the wine pouring rite (*chorye* 醮禮; C. *jiaoli*) and stresses that it should be performed only once in woman's life, "given the meaning of its very name." The name, *cho* 醮, first appeared as a part of the capping and wedding ritual in the *Etiquette and Ceremonies*. According to Jeong Hyun's 鄭玄 (C. Zheng Xuan) (127-200 CE) commentary, a superior—sponsor and parents-pours a cup of wine for inferiors, an initiate or bride and groom. The act of wine pouring is a one-way commemoration that is not to be

repeated or returned, thereby departing from reciprocity, the standard principle of ritual propriety.

The character *cho* also meant "even and equal" (*je* 齊; C. *qi*). To the passage about marriage in the *Book of Rites*, Jeong Hyun added a comment, "*Je* 齊 means that [a bride and groom] eat together of the same sacrificial animal, thereby becoming equal. *Je* sometimes is written as *cho* 醮" (Zheng and Kong [n.d.]1999, 949).[20] Yu Hyang 劉向 (C. Liu Xiang) (77-6 BCE)'s the *Biography of Exemplary Women* replaced 齊 with 醮, when it cited the line from the *Book of Rites*. Later Song Neo-Confucians adopted this line into the *Elementary Learning*. The Ming Confucian scholar Jin Ho's 陳澔 (C. Chen Hao) (1260-1341)'s *Collected Commentaries of Elementary Learning* (*Sohak jipju* 小學集注; C. *Xiaoxue jizhu*) supports this line of interpretation, saying that an assistant for the wedding ritual pours wine for the bride and groom three times, but does not exchange (Zhu and Chen, n.d., 4.13a).[21] The very meaning of *cho* is either a marriage, which bans women's re-marriage, or a one-way, non-reciprocal ritual.

The fourth selection discussed below concerns marriage between people with the same surname. From the beginning of Joseon dynasty, Korean Confucians put great effort into transforming certain native Korean customs. One of their exemplary projects in this regard was to ban marriages between people with the same surname and uphold a policy of clan exogamy, because sharing the same surname meant sharing the same *gi* 氣 (C. *qi*) material passed down through a patriline. Song Siyeol took this effort a step further and strongly argued for a ban on marriages between people with the same surname, even in cases when the people involved had different ancestral seats. His main argument was that the different ancestral seats still originated from the same ancestor, and therefore these people would be sharing the same *gi*-material.

Song's reply to Wonseok raises two interesting and meaningful points for contemporary readers: the relationship between marriage

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20 *Book of Rite*, "The Meaning of the Marriage Ceremony" (*Honui* 昏義; C. *Hunyi*): 齊, 謂共牢而食, 同尊卑也. 齊或爲醮.

21 酌而無酬酢曰醮, 盖婚禮, 贊者三酌婿婦而不酬酢也.

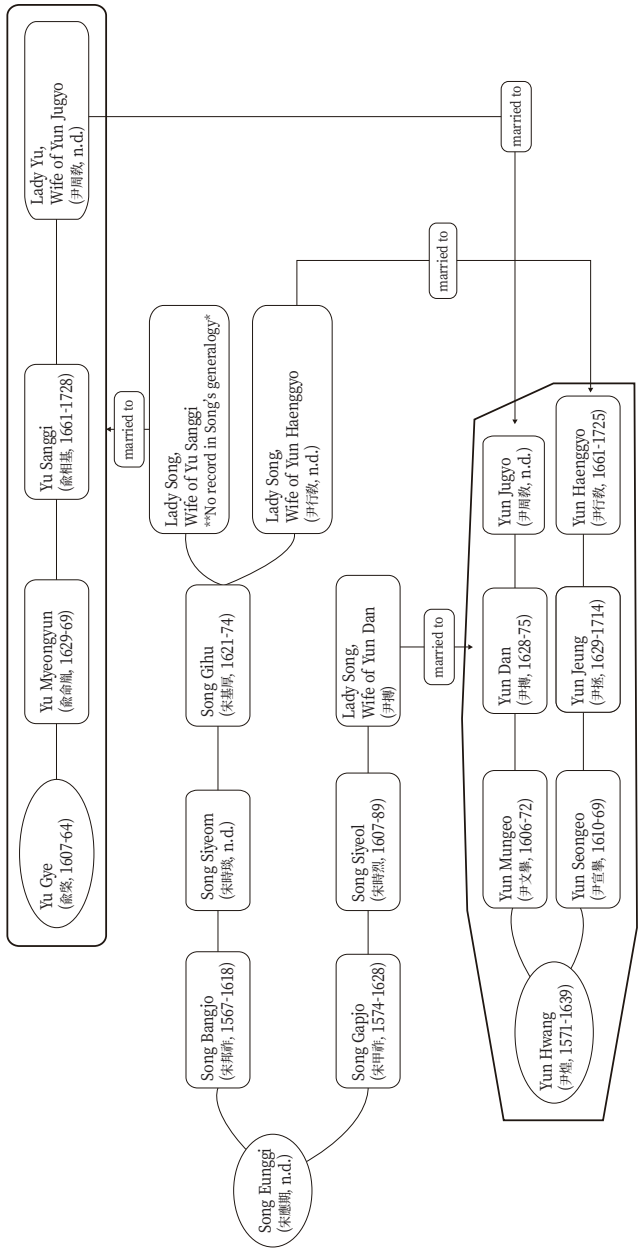
and factional struggle and a woman's perspective on marriage. In Korea, as elsewhere, marriage has been a way to create or maintain societal status and relationships. Sometimes marriage between members of different political factions was expected to soften or, at least, prevent the tension between them from intensifying. During the Joseon dynasty, as factions subdivided, tensions between them grew, because the ways to sagehood that each prescribed were perceived to be different and opposing factions regarded one another as diverging farther and farther from the correct way. Song Siyeol and Yun Jeung 尹拯 (1629-1714) used to be teacher and disciple, but, later, their relationship broke up over several issues. In the end, the split between them led to the subdivision into the Patriarch (Noron 老論) and the Youth (Soron 少論) factions. Song Siyeol's letter concerns the complex marriage connections between people with three surnames: Song, Yun, and Yu (兪). In order to understand the marriage ties, we need to see from the perspective of women in these three surnames as in the following Diagram.

The two people in the arranged couple are Yun Jugyo 尹周敎 (n.d.) and Lady Yu (Daughter of Yu Sanggi 兪相基, 1651-1728). As shown in Diagram 1, which is aligned patrilineally, the couple bears two different surnames, and their relationship sounds quite distant; therefore, the marriage, which was arranged by Song Siyeol, does not seem to pose any problem. But the problem occurs when we look at this relationship from their mothers' perspectives. The groom's mother is the daughter of Song Siyeol and the bride's mother is the daughter of Song Gihu 宋基厚 (1621-74). These two mothers have a common ancestor, Song Eunggi 宋應期 (n.d.). This makes the couple stand in the relationship of maternal uncle and niece in the clan of Song.

The letter shows that the marriage was considered inappropriate. The inappropriateness was not because of factional differences, at least ostensibly, but the relationship between two of the women involved was regarded as problematic, which Song Siyeol criticized the practice as an Eastern[22] [native] custom. "People [still] get startled and consider strange [marriages] with the relatives who are more

[22] "East" indicates the Korean Peninsula which is located to the east of China.

DIAGRAM 1


Yu Gye
(兪棨, 1607-64)
Yu Myeongyun
(兪命胤, 1629-69)
Yu Sanggi
(兪相基, 1661-1728)
Lady Yu,
Wife of Yun Jugyo
(尹周教, n.d.)
married to
Lady Song,
Wife of Yu Sanggi
**No record in Song's generalogy*
Lady Song,
Wife of Yun Haenggyo
(尹行教, n.d.)
married to
married to
Song Bangjo
(宋邦祚, 1567-1618)
Song Siyeom
(宋時艶, n.d.)
Song Gihu
(宋基厚, 1621-74)
Song Gapjo
(宋甲祚, 1574-1628)
Song Siyeol
(宋時烈, 1607-89)
Lady Song,
Wife of Yun Dan
(尹堪)
married to
Song Eunggi
(宋應期, n.d.)
Yun Hwang
(尹煌, 1571-1639)
Yun Mungeo
(尹文擧, 1606-72)
Yun Dan
(尹堪, 1628-75)
Yun Jugyo
(尹周教, n.d.)
Yun Seongeo
(尹宣擧, 1610-69)
Yun Jeung
(尹拯, 1629-1714)
Yun Haenggyo
(尹行教, 1661-1725)

distant than the eight- or nine-*chon* (寸)"[23] (*Great Compendium of Master Song*, n.d., 51.28a).[24] He mentioned cases of marriage between maternal uncles and sororal nieces, and cross-cousin in the Ju Hui family as a precedent for his proposed marriage. He noted that all of these are fully in accordance with the practices of Confucian sages and worthies and so such marriages cannot be contrary to righteousness. Further complicating the situation, Yun Jeung's father, Yun Seongeo 尹宣擧 (1610-69), a close friend of Yun Hyu's 尹鑴 (1617-80), had criticized Ju Hui and claimed he was unacceptable as an authority to decide whether the marriage is appropriate or not.

The letter sheds light on women's perspectives in several ways. First, the marriage tie was questioned based on the consanguine relationship between two women. This is an important issue because it challenges patrilineality and emphasizes the shared *gi*-material between the two women. Second, Song Siyeol's daughter sent him a letter, expressing her doubts about his position. A woman and a daughter questioning her father, who was a highly authoritative figure, using vernacular Korean, offers a rare chance to glimpse how active and expressive women could be on matters of ritual.

The fifth and sixth writings presented below concern Song Siyeol's views on mourning rituals, throughout which sacrifices are offered for the deceased. Deciding who would serve as a presider at such rituals was an extremely sensitive issue and gender mattered in the decision. The fifth writing discusses who could serve as an appropriate presider over such sacrifices when a man died without a son. The presider's name is inscribed on the spirit tablet of the deceased, and detailed rites and forms are decided depending on who serves as the presider. The decision is also related to the deceased's place in the ancestral hall, which reflects one's spiritual position in his lineage. Therefore, the topic had great symbolic value.

Song Siyeol raises questions concerning how to proceed in cases involving adoption. If a son is to be adopted to be an heir for the deceased man, his wife can preside over the sacrifices "for the time

23 *Chon* (寸) is a marker that shows the remoteness and closeness of relatives to oneself.
24 東俗則雖八九寸之外, 猶且驚怪.

being." Still, the temporality of this arrangement is stressed. The temporal nature of the arrangement is connected with establishing the next heir through patrilineal adoption. Though Song Siyeol acknowledged the wife's eligibility to preside, the purpose was to fill the gap between the dead husband and his future son, who was selected from his descendant group. In other words, allowing the wife to be a presider of her husband's mourning was to maintain and protect her deceased husband's right to succession, and her act of establishing an heir may even have been interpreted as a symbolic act of procreation.

Procreation is the main purpose of the marriage ritual, the union of man and woman. Confucianism regarded the procreative function and the ritually appropriate process of taking a woman as a mother of the future heir as important (Zheng and Kong [n.d.] 1999, 1888).[25] For these reasons, the wife's ritual status was considered important and not to be violated. If a woman was the primary wife of the eldest son of the family, a presiding man, she served at the sacrificial ritual along with him as his ritual partner. Earlier, Korean custom had allowed the wife to preside over sacrifices, but Korean Neo-Confucians questioned whether this was appropriate[26] and the debate had continued until the time of Song Siyeol.

Song Siyeol acknowledged the wife's eligibility to preside over the sacrifices, but, at the same time, he stressed the temporal nature of this arrangement. Song changed the point of the discussion, focusing on the necessity to accelerate the process of establishing an heir to resolve the issues Gim Gan raised. Song supported his arguments with the authority of a former worthy's opinion, citing the opinion of his teacher, Gim Jangsaeng 金長生 (1548-1631), whose pen name is Sagye 沙溪 and who was known as a master of ritual in Korea. In addition to ritual canons, Ju Hui's *Family Rituals*, Gim Jangsaeng's *Uirye munhae* 疑禮問解 (Questions and Answers on Doubtful Passages of the Rites) were used as second level canons to support his argument. Yet, when

25 *Book of Rite*, "The Meaning of the marriage ceremony" chapter: 昏禮者, 將合二姓之好, 上以事宗廟, 而下以繼後世也.

26 This topic is closely related to the seventh writing and will be discussed later.

Gim Gan asked further questions about the case of a wife, Song Siyeol did not pursue the issue and closed the topic by saying, "This is not something that others [outsiders] can decide." His response can be read as an indirect way of dismissing further inquiry on the issue.

According to Song, even though fraternal succession is decided and, as a result, the wife of the deceased has lost her ritual status as the partner of her deceased husband, she is still obligated to observe a three-year mourning period for her husband. In general, in the course of the three-year mourning period, the two good fortune sacrifices are held at the thirteen and twenty-fifth month, and the peace sacrifice at the twenty-seventh month, respectively. When a brother becomes the presider, the duration of the mourning is one year. Therefore, in such cases, the wife seems to lose the opportunity to offer her good fortune and peace sacrifices. Regarding this matter, Song Siyeol replied simply "although we say that his younger brother presides over the sacrifice, since his wife wears the three-year mourning attire, how can there be no good fortune or peace sacrifice?" What did he mean by this statement? Did he mean that the wife should keep wearing her mourning attire even after the official mourning period which was decided and conducted by the presider, who was supposed to be the closest person, thereby owing the heaviest mourning duty to the deceased, the brother? If so, that might violate another ritual principle. Yet, neither Song Siyeol nor Gim Gan expressed any further opinions on this topic.

The sixth translation offered below is a response to Hong Uju, another student of Song Siyeol. This letter discusses women in relation to mourning in more detailed ways. Song Siyeol confirms that a wife should be buried at her husband's family cemetery, referring to this as an "unchanging ritual (常禮)." He denies the wife's connection to her daughter's family for burial. A daughter and a daughter's son can preside over the wife's mourning ritual as presiders, but Song makes it clear that this is not a "correct ritual." The daughter and daughter's son's presiding are compared with that of a neighbor serving in the same role. If a wife dies without an heir, *anyone* can preside over her funeral, so why not her daughter or her daughter's son? But, if there is any *male* relative from her husband's clan, her daughter or her

daughter's son *dare* not preside. The daughter was allowed to preside temporarily as a part of custom. Still, Song Siyeol strongly argues that she cannot alter or create a rite based on "one's imagination when there is no rite [regarding it]." His arguments directly imply the necessity to establish an heir.

Examination and analysis of Song Siyeol's two writings on mourning ritual reveal several new and important aspects related to women. Searching for supporting references in ritual classics and canons is an ongoing principle to decide and evaluate ritual propriety. When a question arose, Song Siyeol and his students tried hard to find answers by drawing upon such texts. Song Siyeol provided his expertise on ritual issues, not only by appealing to pertinent passages and views from canonical texts but also by evaluating and deciding which issues are worth discussing further or not. We also find him advancing a transitional view on women's eligibility to preside over sacrifices as a part of mourning ritual. A wife was in the process of losing her ritual eligibility to preside over her husband's funeral even though her eligibility was connected to the symbolic procreation she offered to her husband's family. The gradual loss of her ritual status in her husband's family was confirmed when Song Siyeol found a textual reference supporting such an interpretation in the writings of a former worthy.

The seventh and eighth selections from Song Siyeol offered below discuss issues related to sacrificial ritual. The seventh writing was a response to Yi Junggeo's 李仲擧 (fl. 1699) questions regarding the case of the Vice Academic Counselor's family. It seems that the Counselor's son had died, and his grandson was about to succeed the lineage heirship. But the eldest grandson died without a son. In this case, who should offer sacrificial rites to him, his wife or younger brother? The younger brother expresses his great concern about offering such sacrifices, saying "If I preside over the sacrificial rite [for my brother] hastily, people might suspect me of trying to dispossess the legitimacy [of his heir]." This line clearly shows that the legitimacy of the succeeding line was a tremendous concern for Neo-Confucians. Toward the end of Joseon period, the orthodox way of succession became more difficult to establish because not every

male heir succeeded in bearing a son from his primary wife. Korean Neo-Confucians tried to resolve this issue through adoption. As the second grandson said, the family would wait until one of the dead man's younger brothers gives birth to a son and establish that boy as the deceased's heir. As this practice became accepted and settled, the wife of the deceased began to lose her power over adoption. Earlier, the wife would have more say in decisions concerning adoption, but the situation changed around mid-Joseon. Because her ritual status was connected with other rights, such as over property, the tension between the wife and the younger brother of the deceased heightened around the time of Song Siyeol.[27]

Song Siyeol's writing presents two main arguments to support the legitimacy of the younger brother. "There is no mention of a woman presiding over sacrificial rites in the ritual [classics]" and a passage about "substituting for the presider" (*seopju* 攝主) in the *Toegyjip* 退溪集 (Collected Works of Toegye). The character 攝 means to substitute. In *Mencius* 5A4, this character is used to describe the relationship between the two sage-kings, Yo 堯 (C. Yao) and Sun 舜 (C. Shun). "When Yo was old, Sun substituted for him." The following line says, "Confucius said, 'There are not two suns in the sky, nor two sovereigns over the people.'" This line provides an ideal for succession for the later Confucians. Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501-70), whose pen name is Toegye, also states that the younger brother can *temporarily* serve as substitute for the deceased older brother as a *seopju* 攝主. Toegye's statement became a canonical reference for Song Siyeol and Song's students further developed this idea by searching for more textual references supporting it.

The eighth and last writing of Song Siyeol presented below offers a slightly different perspective on women's ability to perform a sacrificial ritual. The passage translated is part of his letter to his eldest daughter, who married into a prestigious family. As a father, he seems to be greatly concerned about her. His concern was not about her actual ability; it arose out of his emotional reaction as a father. This letter was written in vernacular Korean, which is quite rare as it is

[27] See Deuchler (1992).

written by a male Confucian. The content includes his admonition concerning the way to serve at a sacrificial rite. The list of issues it discusses is quite detailed, such as self-care and how to take care of the people involved. His letter shows how important the role of a wife was in offering a sacrificial ritual. Not only the virtue of her heart-mind but also the good fortune of the whole family was in the hands of a wife.

There are several noteworthy issues in this last writing for modern readers to note and draw upon. A woman was expected to serve not only her husband's family but other people, such as friends of her husband or father-in-law, as well. This expectation probably originally was based on an ideal of male friendship, according to which each was to take care of the other. In order to actualize trustworthiness (*sin* 信; C. *xin*) between men, women's labor and sincerity were expected. If a woman's offering was insincere or impure, the harm would reach her whole family. This emphasis on a wife's obligation to a broad range of others connected with her husband looks ironic when compared with the offerings she was to make for her natal parents. Highlighting a woman's virtue and its serious effects on her husband's family, yet underlining the incomplete filial piety based on the temporality and informality of her officiation contradicts the core teaching of Confucianism, filial piety.

These two writings reveal subtle changes in women's eligibility to officiate at a sacrificial ritual. Women as daughters lost their rights to officiate at sacrificial rites for their natal parents during the first half of Joseon dynasty. By the time of Song Siyeol, a daughter's and her son's officiation were regarded as unacceptable. Women as wives began to lose their right to officiate at their husband's sacrificial rites before they establish an heir for their husbands that was customarily accepted. Song Siyeol searched for canonical references that would deny women's ability to officiate and to legitimize a younger brother's substitution. Yet, he advocated for the patriarchal expectation of women to serve friends of her husband and father-in-law as if they were her own. As a result, he deprived women's filial piety for her natal parents but added an additional duty of "sincerity" only for her husband's descendant group. The changes shown in Song Siyeol's views are significant because his comments were accepted

as standard by later Joseon Neo-Confucians. In the *Extended Interpretations to the Family Rituals*, for example, his comments were treated as establishing de facto unchanging rites.

IV. Conclusion

This essay analyzes eight pieces of writing of Song Siyeol, a monumental figure in the history of Korean Confucianism. His views and comments on four family rituals related to women also had a long-lasting impact on the later period of the Joseon. The eight examples confirm key characteristics of and provide new insights in relation to ritual and women in Korean Neo-Confucianism.

When he was asked about ritual matters, Song always looked back to textual canons for support. The texts to which he appealed include ancient Confucian classics, such as the *Book of Rites* and the *Etiquettes and Ceremonies*, and the works of later worthies, such as Ju Hui's *Family Rituals.* This serves to reconfirm the influence of Ju Hui and his *Family Rituals.* Song Siyeol also looked to the writings of Korean worthies, including Toegye and Sagye to help support his view in which patrilineal and patriarchal formation and the arrangement of families based on agnatic principle clearly are highlighted. Song Siyeol developed his view to deprive women of their ritual eligibility. His stance exerted significant influence on later Confucian scholars who further developed and canonized this view, which was stated clearly in his discussions on mourning and sacrificial rituals.

These passages offer new findings, both negative and positive. For example, his discussion of the sixtieth wedding anniversary is extremely rare and valuable. Among other things, from it we learn the origin and details of the customary ritual. Song Siyeol's theorizing process shows his gendered approach, which re-affirms the ban on women's remarriage. His view that repeating the wedding rite, even with the same man, constitutes a case of re-marriage is original and interesting. For women, the number "one" had a literal meaning, and its impact is life transformative. Regardless of the partner, woman must marry only "once" throughout her lifetime.

Song's writings also lend new insights on women's voices and perspectives. His letter on remarriage was written in vernacular Korean, *Hangeul.* This work is most significant for modern researchers studying Confucianism and women. More importantly, through his writings we learn that women sometimes expressed their opinions on ritual issues directly to powerful men. Female relatives of the Song clan declared their discomfort about the marriage he had proposed from the perspective of women who shared the same *gi*-material. Song Siyeol's daughter did not hesitate to send a letter to express her own opinion to contend to her father, who was the authoritative master of Confucian ritual.

In this essay, I have presented only parts of Song Siyeol's writings focusing on the four family rituals in relation to women. Among the hundreds of volumes of his writings, many are yet to be translated into modern Korean much less English. This essay showcases some of the kinds of issues the great master Song discussed and how he theorized his arguments and views. At the same time, the analysis reveals that his writings should be read from multiple perspectives. Some of his views simply reconfirm traditional male-centered ideals but others manifest new insights into the detailed process of philosophizing and women's own voices.

The writings of Song Siyeol, an authoritative figure in Korean Confucianism and especially in regard to women, are patriarchal. Some scholars might find them contentious to include into resources for contemporary society. However, it would be too simplistic and dismissive to judge all and every aspect of his writings as bearing a voice of a patriarch. While some of his work strengthened a patriarchy both theoretically and ritually, Song Siyeol also created a space where women could participate in discussion and practice with more agency, though limited. Therefore, his writings can and should be used as a valuable resource to understand the gendered philosophizing process and to draw out the hidden voices of and for women.

The new findings can contribute to the re-imagining of a future of Confucian family rituals in contemporary life from the perspective of women. Some of family rituals, such as sacrificial rites and wedding ceremony, remain practiced widely in many East Asian societies. East

Asian diaspora communities have brought Confucian rituals as a part of their heritage and show a great interest in reviving or keeping practicing them in non-Confucian societies such as the U.S. and Europe. Song Siyeol's writings will provide us a way to distinguish the patriarchal side from the positive aspects, and thereby allowing us to implement or imagine Confucian rituals more creatively for a better future of all people regardless of one's gender.

V. Selected Translations from the Works of Song Siyeol

1) *Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon* 宋子大全), 99:8b.

Reply to Yi Gunhoe 李君晦 (n.d.)[28]

Ju Hui's commentary on the line "the sponsor arrives," says "an assistant is not used" (不用贊者).[29]

> [Gunhoe asked] "Is an usher[30] also not used?"
>
> [The Master answered] The "Pinning Rite" [section in the *Family Rituals*] only says not to use an assistant. And so, an usher should be used.

In regard to the choice of words [in the prayer,] the commentary suggests using "female literatus" (*yeosa* 女士; C. *nüshi*).[31]

> [Gunhoe asked] "What does it mean to call a woman a 'literatus' (*sa* 士; C. *shi*)? For a woman, is there a rite to present her to the elders after her pinning [ceremony]?"

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[28] A pen name of Yi Uhwi 李遇輝, whose pen name was Cheonggyedang 聽溪堂. He studied with Song Siyeol.

[29] See the *Family Rituals* 2.3a and Zhu and Ebrey (1991, 39). An assistant is a helper whom the sponsor selects. The helper is "a young relative versed in ritual [who acts] as his assistant in the capping."

[30] An usher is another type of helper, selected by the presiding man from among his younger relatives. See *Family Rituals* 2.3a and Zhu and Ebrey (1991, 39).

[31] The original passage reads, "乃字如冠禮, 但改祝辭, 髦士爲女士." As for the words, in the capping ceremony one only changes the prayer: the term "elegant literatus" is changed to "female literatus."

[The Master answered] "'female literatus' is an [honorific] title used to refer to a woman who performs [the role of] a literatus. As for why there isn't a rite to present [a woman] to the elders [after her pinning ceremony], according to Mr. Wang [the reason is that], 'Young women are very shy.' Is this perhaps also the reason that the *Family Rituals* omits this rite?"

2) *Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon* 宋子大全), 86.38b-39a.

[Min Saang 閔士昂[32] asked] "Those who die before they complete their nineteenth year are said to suffer a 'premature death' (*sang* 殤; C. *shang*). If a man who already has had his hair capped or a woman her hair pinned [dies before they complete their nineteenth year], even though [they] are not yet married, should [their relatives] wear the mourning attire prescribed for an adult (成人) for them?"

[The Master answered] "The *Family Rituals* says that, 'A man who has married or a woman who has been engaged [who dies before they complete their nineteenth year] is not regarded as having suffered a premature death.'[33] The reason why [the passage] focuses on 'having married' instead of saying 'having a capping rite' as the main criterion is because at that time [when Master Ju lived] men who bore and supported children and then completed the capping rite were still not considered adults. Therefore, in the case of a man, [the *Family Rituals*] made this determination based on whether he had married. In the case of a woman, [the *Family Rituals*] made this determination based on whether she had been promised in marriage. According to ritual propriety, once a woman is promised in marriage, she has a pinning ceremony. And so, pinning and capping were regarded in the same way in the ancient rituals. But it is different for later generations. Even though a woman has completed the hair-pinning rite, if she [dies before she is] twenty years old, she is not

[32] A pen name of Min Taejung 閔泰重 (1640-92), whose pen name was Pyeongsa 平沙.
[33] A close paraphrase of *Master Ju's Family Rituals* 4.14b.

> regarded as having suffered a premature death. In the case of a man, he must be married; only then is he referred to as an adult."

3) *Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon* 宋子大全), 88.35b-36a.

Reply to Gwon Chido[34]

On the 28th day of the 11th month in the *Byeongin* year (1686)

The rite for the 60th wedding anniversary that you asked about started among literati families recently. It is certainly a rare and happy occasion for a family to have both parents reach such an advanced age. Every time I hear about a family performing this rite, my orphaned and lonely heart[35] is sorely grieved and wounded. But, thinking about the time when the three dynasties flourished, people enjoyed great longevity and there were many centenarians. This was why there was a ritual in which [the Son of Heaven] "inquired about those who were 100 years old."[36] Since it is said that a man "at 30 has a wife,"[37] when he reaches 90 years old, that will be the exact year of his 60th wedding anniversary. Now, if what custom prescribes accords with the heavenly Way and matches the pattern-principle of human beings, then the sages necessarily would have made regulations and forms [about this] and taught them to the people.

Moreover, speaking from the perspective of a wife, to perform the wine pouring rite (*chorye* 醮禮; C. *jiaoli*)[38] more than once does not seem appropriate, given the meaning of its very name. I fear we

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34 Indicates Gwon Sangha 權尙夏 (1641-1721), the best pupil of Song Siyeol. Chido (致道) is his pen name.

35 A common expression that indicates someone who has lost both parents.

36 See the "Royal Regulations" (Wangje 王制; C. *Wang Zhi*) chapter in the *Book of Rites*.

37 See the "Pattern of the Family" (Naechick 內則; C. *Nei Ze*) chapter in the *Book of Rites*.

38 This is one rite that happens during capping and wedding rituals. In this rite, the bride and groom-to-be are given wine with pledges from their fathers. It includes offering the received wine in sacrifice. Especially in a wedding, this rite happened right before the groom left his home to go to welcome his bride and before the bride met her husband-to-be. Later, the character 醮 came to mean "to marry." For example, in a letter written later Joseon, "醮子" meant "marrying a son." See Ha et al. (n.d.).

should not let people get used to using this name. Nevertheless, given the feelings that people's children have, they cannot pass this day indifferently; it would be fine to raise a glass and celebrate it, regarding it as roughly similar to the celebration of a birthday; there will be no harm in doing so.

Generally speaking, in regard to this kind of matter, one must first decide whether it should be performed or not. Afterward, one can ask whether to wear [ritual] attire or not. If one says that it can be performed and must be done, then one should refer to the passage, "Oneself and the presiding man of the wedding do not have any mourning duty beyond a year" [before getting married], that is found in the *Family Rituals*,[39] and arrange things accordingly.

4) *Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon* 宋子大全), 129.11a-12a

Reply to Wonseok 元錫 (n.d.)[40] in the tenth month of *Jeongmyo* year (1687)

The wedding day of my grandson [Jugyo 周敎], [the scion of the lineage] Yun 尹, is not far away. The day before yesterday, Garim 嘉林[41] sent his maternal uncle, who brought his mother's[42] letter, written in vernacular Korean. It seems that things [in regard to the wedding] will not work out [smoothly]. At first, when Mr. Yu 兪[43] met [Yun] Jeung [尹]拯 (1629-1714) in person and asked [about the wedding], [Jeung] replied, that there was not any problem. Later, though, he tried to entice and threaten him in a hundred different ways, seeking to change his mind. When [Yu] did not listen, [Jeung] devised a scheme to break the marriage. He counterfeited a letter, written in vernacular Korean,

39 *Family Rituals* 3.1b.

40 Song Wonseok is a grandson of the second cousin, Song Siyeong 宋時榮 (1588-1637).

41 Garim is an old name of Imcheon 林川 in which Yu Gye 兪棨 (1607-64) lived. The bride-to-be of Yun Jugyo was a great granddaughter of Yu Gye. Currently it is Imcheon-myeon 林川面, Buyeo-gun 扶餘郡, Chungcheongnam-do 忠淸南道.

42 Indicates Song Siyeol's daughter.

43 Probably Yu Sanggi 兪相基 (1651-1728), the father of the bride-to-be. Yu Sanggi studied under Yun Jeung.

in order to upset the Yu family. It is just like him to do such a thing.[44] I only lament that my uncle's offspring participated in the deceit.

I have also heard, as you said in the letter, that slanders [against me] are getting more malicious. However, [your news that someone accused me of] "calling in a foreign enemy and choosing a date to attack the palace"[45] arrives too late.[46] What difference does that make now? Moreover, at the time, I knew there would be such slander. Nevertheless, Master Ju married his daughter's son, Hwang Ro 黃輅 (C. Huang Lu) (n.d.), to his son's daughter. Moreover, he said, "[Those with] the same surname originally are close, but they grow distant as the generations pass. [Those with] different surnames originally are distant, but later, through marriage, they become close."[47] Generations of people from No 魯 (C. Lu) married people from Song 宋 (C. Song) and Je 齊 (C. Qi). Among their marriages, some were between maternal uncles and sororal nieces[48] [due to repeated marriage relationships]. How could Master Ju mention it, if it was contrary to righteousness? Moreover, is there anything to discuss between the Yuns and the Yus regarding "maternal uncles and sororal nieces?" This is all only the Yuns, repeating and mimicking the wicked Yeo 驪兇,[49] who says that, "Master Ju does not offer an adequate model to follow." That is why [they] slander me like this. When I was not moved by their slander, they came up with a vicious plot. This is the same kind of clever scheme that Na Yangjwa 羅良佐 (1638-1710) employed when he forged a letter in my name in order to frame Mungok 文谷.[50] I do not

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44 Song and Yun Jeung used to be teacher and student, but their relationship broke and became extremely hostile. This change became political and later led to a split into two factions: the Patriarch Doctrine (Noron 老論), consisting of those who followed Song, and the Young Doctrine (Soron 小論), comprised of those who supported Yun.

45 See the *Veritable Records of King Sukjong* (*Sukjong sillok* 肅宗實錄) 14.26b.

46 The official record of this accusation appeared in 1683, four years before this letter. See the note above.

47 See the *Classified Sayings of Master Ju* (*Juja eoryu* 朱子語類; C. *Zhuzi yulei*) 138.7a.

48 See the *Classified Sayings of Master Ju* 89.7a.

49 The wicked Yeo 驪兇 refers to Yun Hyu 尹鑴 (1617-80), who lived near River Yeo 驪江. He was critical of teachings of Ju Hui 朱熹 (C. Zhu Xi) (1130-1200) and opposed to Song's view in regard to the ritual debate.

50 Na Yangjwa is a disciple of Yun Seongeo 尹宣擧 (1610-69). Mungok is a pen name of Gim Suhang 金壽恒 (1629-89). Na Yangjwa was Mungok's brother-in-law and he was

know what kind of troubles there will be later on. How dreadful! How dreadful!

5) *Additions to Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon burok* 宋子大全附錄), 15.499a-b

Records of Gim Gan 金榦 (1646-1732)[51]

[Gim] Gan asked, "if [someone] dies without a son, and is only survived by his wife and brother, who should preside over the sacrifices [for him]?"

The Master said, "if there is the intention to establish an heir for him, his wife should preside, for the time being. If [there is] not, the rite of fraternal succession should be followed. After the younger brother has performed the sacrifice, the spirit tablet of the deceased should be installed[52] in the appropriate place [in the sacrificial hall]. Then [it is] complete."

Gan asked, "now if his younger brother presides over the sacrifice, that means there will be no] good fortune (*sangje*; C. *xiangji* 祥祭) or peace sacrifice (*damje*; C. *xuanji* 禫祭).[53] What about this?"

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accused of falsifying a letter in order to break the good relationship between Gim Suhang, his brother-in-law, and Song Siyeol to help his master, Yun Seongeo 尹宣擧 (1610-69). Song Siyeol mentions Na's falsification in the Great Compendium of Master Song, 92:12a. For other accounts on this matter by Song's later disciples, see the Veritable Records of King Gyeongjong (*Gyeongjong sillok* 景宗實錄), 11:26a. However, there is no textual evidence. See Choe (2007, 78n4).

51 Gim Gan, whose pen name is Hujae 厚齋, was a student of Song Siyeol. This record has been adopted from the "Records of Words of Master Uam" (*Uam seonsaeng eorok* 尤齋先生語錄) in his *Collected Works of Hujae* (*Hujaejip* 厚齋集) Appendix (*byeoljip* 別集; C. *bieji*), vol. 3. It is also called the "Records of Words in Seogyo" (*Seogyo eorok* 西郊語錄) because Gim Gan records were made when the Master was staying in the Western Suburbs (Seogyo 西郊) [outside the Great West Gate (Seodaemun 西大門)] during the year of *Gyechuk* (1673).

52 Patricia Ebrey's translation of the term (*bu*; C. *fu* 祔) is "associate," which brings out that the spirit tablet is placed in the proper relationship to other ancestors. See Zhu and Ebrey (1991, 215).

53 Two sacrifices for good fortune are offered; the first one performed the 13th month (*Sosang* 小祥; C. *Xiaoshang*) and the second one 25th month (*daesang*; C. *daxiang* 大祥) after a death, respectively. The peace sacrifice is to be performed in the 27th month after the death.

The Master said, "although we say that his younger brother presides over the sacrifice, since his wife wears the three-year mourning attire, how can there be no good fortune or peace sacrifice?"

Gan asked, "regarding the section concerning inscribing the tablet (*jeju* 題主; C. *tizhu*), the Ritual classic has terms such as Illustrious Ruler (*hyeonbyeok* 顯辟; C. *xianpi*) and Illustrious Brother (*hyeonhyeong* 顯兄; C. *xianxiong*), etc.[54] How should we decide what is the proper way to refer to the one presiding [at his rite]?"

The Master said, "Those [issues] are discussed in the *Questions and Answers on Doubtful Passages of the Rites* (*Uirye munhae* 疑禮問解).[55] The so-called Illustrious Ruler is not an orthodox rite (正禮)."

Gan asked, "Since this is not an orthodox rite, it will be difficult to inscribe the designation[56] of the deceased and the presider before establishing an heir."

The Master said, "It seems best to establish an heir as soon as possible and then inscribe the name of the presider [on the spirit tablet]."

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54 On a spirit tablet, the deceased is referred to from the presider's perspective. The "Summary of the Rules of Propriety" (*Gongnye* 曲禮; C. *Quli*) II chapter of the *Book of Rites* says, a husband is called *hwangbyeok* 皇辟 (C. *huangpi*), to which can be translated as "the sovereign ruler," following Jeong Hyeon's commentary to this passage. See the *Commentaries on the Book of Rites* (*Yegi juso* 禮記注疏; C. *Liji zhushu*), 5.31a. *The Essentials of Funerary Rites* (*Sangnye biyo* 喪禮備要) compiled by Sin Uigyeong 申義慶 (n.d.) and supplemented and revised by Gim Jangsaeng 金長生 (1548-1631), whose pen name is Sagye 沙溪, suggests replacing "sovereign" (*hwang* 皇; C. *huang*) with "illustrious" (*hyeon* 顯; C. *xian*) following the example of *Ju Wonyang's Records on Sacrifices* (*Juwonyang Jerok* 周元陽祭錄; C. *Zhou Yuanyang Jielu*). See *the Complete Works of Master Sagye* (*Sagye seonsaeng jeonseo* 沙溪先生全書) 33.12a.

55 See *the Complete Works of Master Sagye* 34.39b-40a.

56 *Jeju* 題主 (C. *tizhu*) literally means "inscribing [the master of] the spirit tablet" and *bangje* 旁題 (C. *pangti*) "inscribing [at] the side." According to the *Family Rituals* (*Garye* 家禮; C. *Jiali*), a calligrapher inscribes the deceased's personal and adult names and offices held (i.e. the honorable A, named B, adult name C of such office) on one side; on the other side, a painted part, a relative designation (i.e. our deceased father) and title and posthumous names are inscribed. A presider's name and relative designation (i.e. the filial son D) is inscribed on the lower left side of the painted part. Later Neo-Confucian discussions, including those by Korean scholars, focus on the relative terms that describe the relationship between the presider and the deceased.

Gan asked, "In cases where an heir has not currently been established, and we must wait for the time being to do so later on, once an heir has been established, how should we handle the spirit tablet that was inscribed earlier?"

The Master said, "This is not something that others [outsiders] can decide."

In the year of 1673, *Records of Words in Seogyo* (*Seogyo eorok* 西郊語錄)

6) *Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon* 宋子大全), 117.31b-32a

[Excerpts from] Reply to Hong Uju 洪友周 (n.d.)[57]

It is an unchanging ritual (常禮) to bury a wife at her husband's family [cemetery]. How could we bury her at her son-in-law's family [cemetery]! It is possible to not have an heir (後) at one's funeral, but there must be a presider. Even neighbors and the headman of the neighborhood can preside at [one's] funeral,[58] so why not a son of her daughter? Nevertheless, if there is any relative from the same clan,[59] [the daughter's son] dare not preside. Master Ju (Juja 朱子; C. Zhuzi) clearly taught that a son of a daughter cannot offer [sacrificial] offerings and confirmation can be found in [ritual] regulations and forms.

Still, if the deceased family has not yet established an heir, a married daughter may offer food temporally. That is a customary rite that sometimes happens. However, it is not a correct ritual. [The case in which] she did not pull back the stool and the mat when the daughter's mourning period had come to an end is far more difficult to feel at ease with. Who dares to create [a rite based on] one's imagination when there is no rite [regarding it]! It would be better to establish an heir as soon as possible.

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57 Hong Uju was a disciple of Song Siyeol and lived in Yeonsan (連山). See the *Records of the Origin of the School of Hwayang* 2:26b.

58 See the "Miscellaneous records" (*Japgi* 雜記; C. *Zaji)* II chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Yegi* 禮記; C. *Liji*).

59 Her husband's clan.

7) *Great Compendium of Master Song* (*Songja daejeon* 宋子大全), 119.5a-b. [Master Song] Reply to Yi Junggeo 李仲擧 (fl. 1699)[60]

The eldest grandson of the Vice Academic Counselor (*bujehak* 副提學) Gim Gyeong-yeo 金慶餘 (1596-1653) died without an heir. His second grandson should offer sacrificial rites [to him]. But, as the wife of the eldest son is still surviving, the second grandson dared not to offer a sacrificial rite [for his brother], saying "my sister-in-law will adopt an heir sooner or later. If I preside over the sacrificial rite [for my brother] hastily, people might suspect me of trying to dispossess the legitimacy [of his heir]. I must wait until one of my brothers gives birth to a son and he is established as my [deceased] brother's heir." Since it is unavoidable, the mother [of the future adoptee] can preside temporarily. This way [we can] abide by the principle of strictly securing the legitimacy [of his future heir]. Yet, there is no mention of a woman presiding over sacrificial rites in the ritual [classics]. I had always harbored doubts about this and wished to ask someone who knows ritual propriety about it. Now the letter you sent perfectly tallies with [my question] concerning this issue. It is as if someone had asked about what is correct and was able to attain a definitive account. It was fortunate that your letter reached me! I had come across the *Collected Works of Toegye*, which has a passage about "substituting for the presider (*seopju* 攝主)."[61] Since it mentions the [character] *seop* 攝, it means that the [younger] brother temporarily can serve as a presider at sacrificial rites. There is no harm [in him doing so].

8) The way to serve at a sacrificial rite[62]

Purity and cautiousness are the most important [concerns] when

60 Junggeo is another name of Bongseo 鳳瑞, whose pen name is Seongui 聖儀, and pen name Huijae 希齋. Cf. *Complete Works of Master Song* 116.61a.

61 See the *Collected Works of Toegye* 39.1a-3a.

62 My own translation from Song Siyeol's *Master Uam's Admonishments for My Daughter* (*Uam seonsaeng gyenyeoseo* 尤庵先生誡女書), referred the original, the version held at the National Library of Korea. See Song (1986, 21-22).

performing sacrificial rites. When preparing offerings, do not worry about anything [other than following].

> Do not scold slaves.
>
> Do not laugh loudly or show concern on your face.
>
> Do not employ illicit means to obtain what you lack.
>
> Do not let even a speck of dust fall onto the offerings.
>
> Do not eat [the offerings] first nor give them to a whining child.
>
> Prepare only as much as you need because too much food naturally will become unclean.
>
> If you think you will not have enough food, plan ahead for the year's sacrificial rites, so no rite will be missed. [In this way, you will] not make an obvious display of abundance or shortage.
>
> Comb your hair and take a bath with sincerity even in winter.
>
> Do not wear colorful clothes for the rite on the day of a death anniversary (*gijesa* 忌祭祀).
>
> Cut your fingernails and toenails and keep them clean.

[If you take care of the sacrificial rites in this way] the spirits [of the ancestors] will accept the offerings and bring good fortune to their descendants. If [you] do not do so, there will be misfortune.

Even when you prepare sacrificial rites for other people [not your own family] or prepare offerings for friends of your husband [or father-in-law], do so as if they were for [the ancestors of] your own family. If you make offerings in an impure manner, please take care, for it will harm the virtue of your heart-mind and damage the good fortune [of you and your family].

■ Submitted: 1 Mar. 2021
Reviewed/revised: 26 May 2021
Accepted: 30 May 2021

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 117–145
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.117

The Nature and Scope of Mohist Morality

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Abstract

A survey of the *Mozi* reveals that the Mohist Way can be thought of as a "way of *yi*" (*yidao* 義道) that can be contrasted with Confucius' "way of *ren*" (*rendao* 仁道). The study aims to spell out Mozi's ethical concern more fully. It argues that the Mohists were mainly concerned with appropriate norms that individuals and communities ought to live by so that they are able to peacefully coexist and enjoy mutual benefit. These norms are not only meant to guide people's deliberations and regulate their behavior they also govern the distribution of praise and blame, approval and disapproval, and reward and punishment in the human collective. The Mohists also assumed a larger cosmic setting in which Heaven and its supernatural agents are upholders of and stakeholders in the prevalence of *yi* in the human collective. With these points in mind, the Mohists' ethical concern can thus be thought of as a concern with "social morality", rather than the wider region of morality. In understanding the nature and scope of their concerns in this way, the path is also open to a deeper understanding of the difference between the Mohists and their Confucian rivals.

Keywords: Mozi, Mohism, Confucianism, Morality

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** Earlier versions of this paper were presented at various occasions. Though I have since lost count, one particularly memorable instance was the conference, "New Directions in Chinese Philosophy" (8-21 May 2009) held in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Philosophy Department and the centenary of Mr. Tang Junyi, where various participants—including Kwong-loi Shun, Alan Chan, Roger Ames, Steve Angle, Joseph Chan, Paul Goldin, Brook Ziporyn, and Philip J. Ivanhoe—offered valuable comments and criticisms. The current version greatly benefitted from the scrutiny of the anonymous reviewers at the *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture*, and suggestions from several of my students (past and present), including Jeremy Huang, Daryl Ooi, Ng Qian Qian and Teoh Tai Ker. A big thanks to everyone.

I. Introduction

As with other thinkers from their time—Confucian thinkers being the prime example—the Mohists of Ancient China were not merely concerned to establish a body of bloodless truths but to address certain practical concerns. They sought to advocate and defend a Way (*dao* 道) that, if put into practice by individuals and communities, would restore good order (*zhi* 治) to the world, this, being their proposed solution to the perceived chaos (*luan* 亂) of the times (Graham 1989). We can thus think of the Mohists' Way as a specific (and potentially controversial) answer to the question: "What is the best, most desirable way for individuals and communities to conduct their affairs, a way that is best and desirable not only for 'us Mohists,' but in some sense for everyone?" The subject of this study, however, deals with an earlier stage of the inquiry. For before we get to the Mohists' *answer* to the previous question, it would be worthwhile to find a way to more sharply delineate the nature and scope of their concern.

Now, a survey of the *Mozi* reveals that their Way is largely spelled out in terms of the desire that *yi* (義; roughly, "rightness, righteousness" for now) prevails in the world. Tang Junyi (1986, 156-9) speaks of "Mozi's way of *yi*" (*Mozi zhi yi dao* 墨子之義道) and contrasts it to "Confucius' way of *ren*" (*Kongzi zhi rendao* 孔子之仁道; *ren* is roughly "benevolence" or "humaneness"). He reminds us that the "Guiyi" 貴義 (Honoring *yi*) chapter of *Mozi* opens with the claim that "of the myriad things there is nothing more honorable (or valuable) than *yi*" (*wanshi mo gui yu yi* 萬事莫貴于義), and that the major proposals of the *Mozi* are all argued for on the basis that they are what *yi* requires. But the fact that the Mohists' Way is primarily laid out in terms of *yi* instead of, say, *ren*, suggests the possibility that they might be answering a *different* (even if related) question when compared to Confucius and his followers. At the very least, there is the possibility that they were dealing with a related but slightly different version of the question "What is the best, most desirable way for individuals and communities to conduct their affairs, a way that is best and desirable not only for 'us Mohists,' but in some sense for everyone?"

To anticipate, this study will argue that the Mohists—given the ideas expressed in the core chapters of the *Mozi*[1]—were primarily concerned with the appropriate norms that individuals and communities ought to live by so that they are able to peacefully coexist and enjoy mutual benefit (Section III). These norms are intended to play a significant role in people's practical deliberations and regulate their behavior rather than the quality of their character (Section IV). Beyond that, these norms govern the distribution of praise and blame, approval and disapproval, and reward and punishment in the human collective society (Section V). There is a *religious* dimension to these norms: even though they are mainly for the regulation of *human* conduct, the Mohists assumed a larger cosmic setting in which Heaven and its supernatural agents, the ghosts and spirits, are upholders of and stakeholders in the prevalence of *yi* in the human collective (Section VI).

In the concluding section, I suggest that the Mohist concern with *yi* is functionally equivalent to a concern with *social morality* and recognizable as what we would call a concern with *social justice* (Section VII). To borrow a distinction articulated by Gerald Gaus (drawing on previous work by Peter Strawson and Kurt Baier), we can say that the Mohists' main concern was with the rules that "structure social interaction in ways that are beneficial to all and make social existence possible . . . requirements (including prohibitions) that are to direct people's social interactions" rather than a larger domain that includes "visions of what makes life worth living and what con-

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1 The core chapters of the *Mozi* refer to the ten triadic sets of chapters (seven are marked "missing") numbered 8 to 37 in the received corpus of the *Mozi*. Each triad of chapters expounds on a key Mohist ethical-political doctrine. The ten doctrines, also the traditional titles of the ten triads, are: "Shangxian" 尚賢 (Elevating the Worthy), "Shangtong" 尚同 (Exalting Unity), "Jian'ai" 兼愛 (Impartial Caring), "Feigong" 非攻 (Against Military Aggression), "Jieyong" 節用 (Frugality in Expenditures), "Jiezang" 節葬 (Frugality in Funerals), "Tianzhi" 天志 (Heaven's Will), "Minggui" 明鬼 (Elucidating the Spirits), "Feiyue" 非樂 (Against Music), and "Feiming" 非命 (Against Fatalism). References to the text of the *Mozi* will use the edition of the text in *Mozi yinde* 墨子引得, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement no. 21 (1948), cited by chapter and line number. All translations from the Chinese are my own unless otherwise noted. For more information on *Mozi*, the Mohists, and their text, see the introductions to Knoblock and Riegel (2013) and Johnston (2010). See also Ivanhoe (1998, 451-55).

stitutes a noble or virtuous life (2010, 3). Now, previous scholars have already noticed that the Mohists were primarily concerned with social justice—I do not pretend that *this* is a new insight (the seminal work of A. C. Graham, Benjamin Schwartz, and Philip J. Ivanhoe come to mind). But the main burden of the paper *isn't* to argue that the Mohists' concern was with social morality or social justice—these are summary ways for us to *recognize* their concerns *as ethical concerns*. The intended modest contribution of the study is to spell out the contours of this ethical concern more fully from the textual evidence.

II. Some Key Terms (*Ren*, *Yi* and Their Combinations)

As briefly mentioned previously, "Mozi's way of *yi*" has been contrasted with "Confucius' way of *ren*." To get a better sense of what this might mean, we should first briefly discuss the terms *ren* and *yi* and lay out some basic observations about the way they are used in the core chapters of the *Mozi*. The point is not to demonstrate that *yi* is a more important term than *ren* for the *Mozi*—this is the conventional wisdom—but to draw some broad observations which indicate just how central *yi* is to Mohist thought. It is so central that even *ren* is assimilated to it.

To set a baseline context, let me first briefly spell out a basic contrast between *ren* and *yi*, especially as they appear in the ancient —especially Confucian—literature. The term *ren* (as it is used in texts such as the *Analects* and *Mencius*, for instance) takes both a broad and a narrow sense. In the broad sense, it refers to "an all-encompassing ideal for human beings" that can include such desirable qualities as "wisdom, courage, filial piety, conscientiousness, trustworthiness, a reverential or serious attitude, or even caution in speech and the ability to endure adverse circumstances" (Shun 1997, 23). The narrow sense of *ren* highlights "the specific aspect of the ideal having to do with affective concern for other people" (Shun 1997, 23, 49). The term *yi*, on the other hand, is cognate to the homophone 宜 (also *yi*)—"fitting"—suggesting the notion of "the fitting thing to do in relation to parents, rulers, and also to self" (Graham 1989, 11, 45) or more

generally, "proper" or "right" conduct, including the "proper" or "right" way to pursue what is in one's interest (Shun 1997, 25).[2] There is also a striking connection between *yi* and the absence of *ru* (辱 "disgrace"): the thing that is fitting with respect to self is to have a proper regard for oneself or having a sense of honor, something manifested, for instance, in not brooking an insult (Shun 1997, 25). Between the two, *ren* is more naturally taken as an attribute of agents rather than a quality of actions, conduct, or social practices, while the converse is often the case for *yi*.[3]

With the above background in mind, let us consider the data in the *Mozi*. The gross numbers already suggest the relative importance of the two terms to the *Mozi: yi* appears 192 times, and *ren*, 62 times in the core chapters of the *Mozi* (The numbers for the *Analects* are: *ren*, 111 times, and *yi*, 24 times; and for *Mencius: ren*, 158 times, *yi*, 108 times.) More importantly, there is a preponderance of passages making claims about what is required by or consistent with *yi* compared to passages citing other considerations. Second, only in the case of *yi* do the Mohists raise issues of foundation, i.e., the question: "From what does *yi* issue?" and sought to provide an answer to it in the "Tianzhi" chapters. No analogous question is ever raised with regards to any other ethical attribute in the core chapters of the *Mozi*. From these considerations alone, the general idea that the Mohist

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2 The idea that *yi* relates to the proper way to pursue what is in one's interest also explains the usual opposition between *yi* and *li* 利 (e.g., *Analects* 4.16, 14.12)—in this context usually "profit" rather than "benefit." It is not that *yi* is simply incompatible with *li*, but that *yi* conduct is partly understood as such conduct that does not pursue profit at the expense of a commitment to ethical standards.

3 "More than any other early Chinese ethical category, *yi* is concerned with action. Attributes such as *de* (charismatic or supernaturally supplied strength and virtue), *ren* (psychological second sight), or *zhi* (predictive wisdom) can be said to exist in individuals before they do anything to manifest those qualities. *De* and *ren* and *zhi* are in other words not dependent on prior action. But *yi* cannot exist until somebody does something. Once the action is done, and *yi* appears, however, it will go on indefinitely in the reciprocal actions and attitudes of those affected by the original action and the original doer; and thus *yi* can come to mean obligation or fealty as well as swashbucklingly righteous action" (Henry 2004, 8).

D. C. Lau also notes that while *ren* "is basically a character of moral agents and its application to acts is only derivative," *yi* "is basically a character of acts and its application to agents is derivative" (1992, xxvi).

Way is a "Way of *yi*" rather than a "Way of *ren*" is already evident.

But it turns out that the sheer centrality of *yi* to the Mohists shows through even when we focus on the passages in the *Mozi* where *ren* appears. Within the core chapters of the *Mozi ren* seldom appears as an independent attribute. More commonly, it occurs as part of a combination, e.g., *renren* 仁人, *renzhe* 仁者 or *renyi* 仁義, or the conjunction "*ren* and *yi*." In what follows, I will draw three observations from the way *ren* and combinations involving *ren* are used in the text. The first is that the Mohists tend to use *renyi* and the conjunction "*ren* and *yi*" as surrogates for *yi*. The second is that even in the few places where *ren* appears as an independent attribute, it is assimilated to *yi*. And the third is that both the *renren* and *renzhe* are basically defined in terms of the demands of *yi* or its surrogates.

First, *renyi* and "*ren* and *yi*." Grammatically, conjunction in early Chinese can be (and is often) expressed through coordination, which means that "*renyi*" could just be "*ren* and *yi*." But the combination is often better taken as a compound formed by parataxis of two related but contrasting terms, and with the whole having the abstract sense of "morality" (i.e., the wider domain which includes such things as *ren* and *yi*).[4] What is interesting is that within the core chapters of the *Mozi*," the combination often occurs in contexts suggesting that it is meant to be interchangeable with *yi*.

Consider the argument against military aggression in "Feigong A." The conclusion is that aggressive war is *bu-yi* (i.e., not *yi*). While the second half of the chapter refers only to *yi* (and *bu-yi*), *ren* and *renyi* also appear in the first part of the chapter (17/1-7). Here, in three iterations of what seems to be one basic type of argument—all used to show that some action (or type of action) is morally worse than another—the Mohists first appeal to a premise:

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4 D. C. Lau translates many of the combinations' occurrence in the *Mencius* using "morality" or one of its cognates; see *Mencius* (1984); see e.g., 3B.4, 3B.9, 4B.19, 6A.1 and 6B.4. The combination also appears in texts such as the *Zhuangzi* and *Xunzi* in contexts in which it is parallel to the abstract *shifei* 是非, "right and wrong"; see e.g., *Zhuangzi* 2/6/15, 6/19/8 (Lau and Chen 2000) and *Xunzi* 8/42, 8/103 (*Xunzi yinde* 荀子引得, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement no. 22, 1950).

> (1) Take two actions X, Y: If X causes more injury to another party than Y, then it is more *bu-ren* (i.e., not *ren*) and is a more serious crime than Y, in which case X is more *bu-yi* than Y (see 17/2);

Then switch to a nearly identical premise in the second iteration:

> (2) Take two actions X, Y: If X causes more injury to another party than Y, then it is more *bu-ren* and is a more serious crime than Y, in which case X is more *bu-renyi* (i.e., not *renyi*) than Y (see 17/3);

Before switching back to premise (1) again in the third iteration (17/5)—as if (1) and (2) are meant to be interchangeable. In fact, except for (2), the conclusion (and intermediate conclusions) of the argument is spelt out exclusively in terms of *yi* and *bu-yi*—suggesting that for the Mohists, *bu-renyi* is interchangeable with *bu-yi*. Similar observations can be made in every case where the terms *renyi* and *yi* occur in proximity (25/75-81, 27/1-2, 72-73 and 28/71-73).[5] Incidentally, the above also exemplify the Mohists' emphasis on behavior (and outcomes) rather than the agent's character when talking about *yi*—and by implication, *renyi*.

The same interchangeability (with *yi*) also applies to the conjunction "*ren* and *yi*" indicated by such locutions as *renye, yiye* 仁也, 義也 ("is *ren*, is *yi*"; 25/8, 12-13, 68, 27/50; cf. 16/46) and their negations *fei-ren, fei-yi* 非仁, 非義 ("is not *ren*, is not *yi*"; 25/14-15, 70, 27/58) and *bu-ren, bu-yi* 不仁, 不義 ("not being *ren*, not being *yi*"; 28/42-43, 51, 54-55). In "Jiezang," the Mohists say that ever since the passing of the ancient sage kings, the world has lost its grip on *yi* (25/7-8) and because of that, people disagree over whether elaborate funerals and lengthy mourning "are *ren* and *yi*" or are "*fei-renyi*" (25/8). Similar moves back and forth between "*bu-renyi*" and "*bu-ren bu-yi*" can also be found in "Tianzhi" C (28/50-55; also 34-43). In other words, not only is *yi* sometimes interchanged with *renyi* in the core chapters, "*ren* and *yi*" can likewise stand in for either of them as well. The Mohists were

5 This phenomenon continues in the *Mozi* outside the core chapters (see 48/81-83). This relation between *yi* and *renyi* in the *Mozi* seems analogous to that between *li* 禮 and *liyi* 禮義 in *Xunzi*, "Lilun" (see 19/1-5); see also Shun (2000, 24).

probably using *renyi*—with "*ren* and *yi*" being the variant—to refer to the larger genus that encompasses such representative concerns as *ren* and *yi*. Nonetheless, given their specific interest in that aspect of morality denoted by *yi*, they sometimes use the more general expression as a synecdoche for the more specific notion.

Second, *ren*, as an independent attribute in the core chapters, occurs basically only in two places: Chapter 17 "Feigong A" (17/3, 4, 6), and Chapter 27 "Tianzhi B" (27/72). While all the cases are compatible with the term meaning "affective concern for other people," none of them *demand* such a reading.[6] More importantly, they suggest that the Mohists assimilate *ren* to *yi*. The passage in "Tianzhi B" talks about applying Heaven's intent as a standard for determining whether the rulers have or have not been *ren* (see 27/69-72). But the argument of the chapter is exactly that something is *yi* if and only if it accords with the intent of Heaven, which meant that the standard for determining if something is *yi* turns out to be a standard for *ren* as well. The passage in "Feigong A" is the previously mentioned argument against military aggression. Recall that in both Premise (1) and Premise (2), the Mohists talk about how, if some action X causes more injury to another party than Y, then it is more *bu-ren* and is a more serious crime than Y, in which case X is more *bu-yi* (17/2, 5) or *bu-renyi* (17/3) than Y. So, the fact that something is *bu-ren* plays no independent role in the argument besides being an indication that it is *bu-yi* (or *bu-renyi*). The upshot is that Mohists seem interested in *ren* mainly so far as it relates to *yi* or *renyi*—their more fundamental concern. In other words, even in the few places where *ren* appears as an independent attribute, it is assimilated to *yi*.

Third, the *renren* ("benevolent man") and the *renzhe* ("benevolent one"). These tend to appear in contexts suggesting that they denote ideal sage rulers (e.g., compare 14/1 with 15/1, 16/1). As a result, "what the *renren* or *renzhe* would do" is metonymic for "what the ruler ought to do" (25/1, 12-16).[7] But they are primarily presented as agents who

6 In the *Mohist Canons* (A7), *ren* is defined in terms of *ai* 愛 (for now roughly "love" or "concern") (Graham 1978, 270).

7 Note that this way of using *renren* or *renzhe* is not unique to the Mohists; Similar uses of such terms as standing in for an ideal ruler can also be found in the *Xunzi* where

conduct their affairs according to the dictates of *yi* or its surrogates. For example, it is argued in "Jiezang" that if elaborate funerals and lengthy mourning lead to good results, then they are "*ren* and *yi*" and the *renzhe* would adopt them and have the people praise and follow them; if they lead to undesirable consequences, then they are "neither *ren* nor *yi*" and the *renzhe* would seek to eliminate them and have the people condemn them (25/12-16). In other words, the *renren* and *renzhe* are basically defined in terms of the demands of *yi* or its surrogates.

In sum, it is not just that the Mohists talk mainly about *yi* rather than *ren*—their doctrine assimilates considerations of *ren* to considerations of *yi* (or its surrogates *renyi*, and "*ren* and *yi*"). This outcome adds a specific twist to the observation that the Mohists Way is a Way of *yi*. But can more be said to explicate what all this *means*, so that the Mohists' concern *makes sense to us as an ethical concern*? To answer this question, we need to clarify the salient features and ramifications of the ethical considerations denoted by the term *yi* within the economy of human life, as such are presented in the text. This will be the burden of the next few sections (III-VI).

III. The Nature of *Yi* as an Ethical Concern

Now, to say that a thing is *yi* is to commend that it is in some way "proper," and conversely, to say that something is *bu-yi* is to mount a criticism. But what sorts of items are liable to be qualified as either *yi* (or *bu-yi*)? In some passages of the core chapters of the *Mozi*, *yi* (or *bu-yi*) appears as an attribute of *acts* (or more likely, *types of action*). In the earlier cited passage from "Feigong A," for instance, "entering an orchard and stealing the peaches and plums of another," "carrying off dogs, swine, chickens, and piglings of another," "breaking into another man's stable and seizing his horses and cows," and "murdering an innocent man, stripping him of his clothing, and appropriating his

they are parallel with "enlightened lord" (*mingzhu* 明主; 11/4, 25-26 and 30) and with "sage king" (*shengwang* 聖王; 6/20-21).

spear and sword" are all presented as instances of *bu-yi* or types of actions that are *bu-yi* (17/1-6). In other passages, *yi* and its surrogates appear as a quality of practices or ways of doing things. In "Jiezang," for instance, the Mohists argue that the aristocratic practices of elaborate funerals and lengthy mourning are *bu-yi.* Relatedly, *yi* also features as an attribute of *ways of conduct or patterns of behavior.* For instance, the contrast between the "rule of might" and the "rule of *yi*" in "Tianzhi A" (26/36-41) and "Tianzhi C" (28/35-43; cf. 27/46-50, 55-58) is one between two opposing ways of conduct or patterns of behavior. The former is characterized in terms of powerful individuals and groups oppressing the weak, while the latter, the powerful *not* oppressing the weak. Notice also that the *subject* of the behavior could be either an individual or a group agent.

Another sort of item is also qualified as either *yi* or *bu-yi* in the core chapters of the *Mozi*: *doctrine* (*yan* 言; 26/42-43; cf. 27/68). Keep in mind that for the Mohists, *yan* is something that one can "take as a model" (verbal *fa* 法; 25/18) or "apply" (*yong* 用; 35/18). It also corresponds to the "model" (nominal *fa*; see 21/3, 5, 8, 14, 25/83), "scheme" (*mou* 謀), or "way" (*dao* 道) that one can "apply" (*yong*) or "practice" (*xing* 行; 10/27, 25/8-15). The way to understand these connections is to see *yan* as a verbal counterpart to a practice or a way of conduct, a pattern of words meant to guide conduct. In this regard, an instance of *yan* would be *yi* if the conduct that it enjoins is *yi*, and *bu-yi* if the conduct that it commends is *bu-yi*. In other words, an agent who holds to (*zhi* 執; 25/18) a *yan* that is *yi* and conducts himself accordingly would be behaving in a manner as required by *yi*, but not if the *yan* enjoins the opposite. These considerations go hand in hand with the observation that when the Mohists evaluate a practice, they sometimes speak in terms of evaluating the *yan* that corresponds to that practice (25/7-17).[8]

So, the sorts of entities that might be qualified as *yi* or *bu-yi* include actions, practices, ways of conduct, patterns of behavior, and derivatively, even *yan.* But in what sense are they "proper" when qualified as *yi*? One part of the answer is suggested by various passages

[8] See also Loy (2011, 652-54).

in the "Tianzhi" triad of chapters that link "when *yi* prevails in the world" with the situation of the world being well governed, in a good order, and its welfare promoted (26/12-13, 27/3-4, 28/9-10). But as pointed out earlier, this is not an indifferent understanding of order. Recall the earlier mention d contrast between "rule of might" and the "rule of *yi*" (from "Tianzhi" 26/36-41, 28/35-43; also 27/46-50, 55-58). Presumably *yi* is said to "rule" in the world when the conduct of individuals and groups measure up to *yi*. In contrast, "might rules" when agents pursue courses of actions without regard to *yi*—they do things just because they have the strength to do so despite the contrary desires of others. As a result, *force of strength* determines the outcomes (as we say, "might is right"). Now, according to the text, "might rules" when the great states attack small ones, great families overthrow small ones, the strong oppress the weak, the many harry the few, the cunning deceive the stupid, the eminent lord it over the humble, and so on. Conversely, "*yi* rules" when the great states do not attack small ones, the strong do *not* oppress the weak, and so on. These descriptions suggest that for the Mohists, *yi* is to be understood in terms of certain *ethical norms* that are meant to *constrain and govern* how individuals and groups treat other individuals and groups as they pursue their own goals.

Importantly for the Mohists, considerations of *yi* are conceptually distinct from the merely traditional, customary or habitual, even if, as a matter of fact, they might happily coincide. This issue comes up explicitly in "Jiezang." The Mohists' case against the aristocratic practices of elaborate funerals and lengthy mourning largely rests on the argument that (akin to their position in "Jieyong" and "Feiyue") such practices are wasteful and place undue burdens upon the common people. At one point in the same chapter, an objector asks how is it that if elaborate funerals and prolonged mourning are contrary to the way of the ancient sage kings (whose conduct is acknowledged to be exemplary of *yi*; 19/4), these practices are nonetheless customary among "the gentlemen of the central states" (*zhongguo zhi junzi* 中國之君子; 25/74-75)? The Mohists' answer is that one who practices such things is really the sort who, "having found convenience in the habitual, (mis)took the customary for what is required by *yi*"

(25/75). The text then goes on describe the burial practices of three tribal peoples on the periphery of the Chinese world, all of which are vastly different from the current among "the gentlemen of the central states."

In order for the point of the reply to be carried across, I take it that the objector is expected to agree that the practices of the tribes are barbaric (and they are so presented; cf. 49/27-30) and not truly *yi*. The objector is also counted on to grant that what the tribes do are indeed the customary practices in their communities, and, just like the gentlemen of the central states, they too considered their practices consistent with *yi*. So, while customary practices differ from place to place, "we" denizens of the civilized center consider some of these customary practices "hardly the way of *renyi*" (25/79-81). The implied conclusion is that just because elaborate funerals and lengthy mourning are customary among the gentlemen of the central states, this, by itself, does not mean that they are *yi*.

One important assumption underlying the reply is that the gentlemen of the central states are not expected to simply retort: This is what we customarily do and isn't that the end of the matter? In other words, the Mohists count upon the gentlemen of the central states to agree that whether a practice is customary is one thing, but whether a custom is proper (while some other customs practiced by other tribes are improper) is something else. Mohists do not prove as much as they presuppose a distinction between what is customary and what is *yi*, a presupposition they take to be implied by the widely held judgment that the burial practices of the tribes are not *yi*; they are not just things "we"—the civilized denizens of the central states—happen to not practice.[9]

A second assumption underlying the reply to the objector is that the gentlemen of the central states are also not expected to simply

9 See Ross (1940, 12): "... we can now see clearly that 'right' does not mean 'ordained by any given society'. And it may be doubted whether even primitive men thought it did. Their thoughts about what in particular was right were to a large extent limited by the customs and sanctions of their race and age. But this is not the same as to say that they thought that 'right' just meant 'what my race and age ordains'... 'It is the custom' has been accompanied by 'the custom is right,' or 'the custom is ordained by someone who has the right to command.'"

retort: What does it matter to us if what we do is *yi* or *bu-yi*? That is, the objector is counted upon to agree that the consistency of their practices with the requirements of *yi* is a serious matter (25/8), that *yi* is a consideration that ought to weigh in their practical deliberations, that if their conduct had indeed been *bu-yi*, they would be open to criticism and have a positive consideration to change their ways. This second assumption raises important issues about how considerations of *yi* connect with individual motivation.

IV. The Connection between *Yi* and Individual Motivation

Suppose someone comes to acknowledge that a course of action he is contemplating whether to undertake is what *yi* requires, or that his current manner of conduct is *bu-yi.* Then something seems amiss if he merely says: "How interesting!" as if pondering the statement that white horses are not horses in the small talk that follows a dinner party. If such a circumstance should arise, we might wonder if the person has failed to grasp the significance of the point he has just conceded. It seems intrinsic to what it means for something to be required by *yi* that it is *supposed* to play a role in our practical deliberations. The fact that something is required by *yi* is supposed to be a consideration in favor of it, or, in more modern parlance, a *reason* (broadly construed) for undertaking that action. In fact, it is even supposed to be a serious consideration capable of overriding other considerations: considerations of *yi* present us with duties and obligations. The person who says, "How interesting!"—despite acknowledging that the proposed course of action is required by *yi*—might elicit puzzlement. Were he to further reject the course of action or worse still, to signal his intention to undertake an action that, on the face of it, is *bu-yi*, he would very likely invite a challenge for a defense of his ways. In fact, such a person might feel compelled to give an *apologia* even before we ask for one.

Take an example from "Jian'ai C." At one point, the objector concedes that the Mohist proposal of "impartial caring" (*jian'ai* 兼愛)—roughly, that people *ought* to be concerned about the welfare of

self, associates and strangers without distinction—" is *ren* and *yi*" (16/46; elsewhere, the critic concedes that *jian'ai* is "good," see 15/16, 30, 16/22). In other words, the critic is presented as (verbally) acknowledging that, in some sense, they *ought* to conduct themselves according to *jian'ai*. The problem, he claims, is that *jian'ai* is simply impracticable. It is no more possible for people to practice *jian'ai* than for someone to pick up a mountain and leap over a river with it (16/46).[10] But the critic's protestation presupposes that if *jian'ai* were not impracticable, then it being "*ren* and *yi*" counts seriously in its favor. On the other hand, if *jian'ai* is indeed impracticable, the point can be put forward as an excuse for his not being required to act in accordance with it—even while granting that (in some sense) it is what "*ren* and *yi*" demand.[11]

Or consider another passage from "Feigong C." The Mohists argue in the chapter that aggressive war is *bu-yi*. The "war-loving" rulers attempt to rebut the claim by arguing that the ancient sage kings—widely acknowledged models of *yi* conduct (19/4)—engaged in warfare too (19/31-32). They thus insinuate that war is not quite so *bu-yi.* A cynical argument, no doubt, but it presupposes the tacit acknowledgement that if their warlike activities are indeed *bu-yi*, it would count seriously against them. Conversely, if the war-loving rulers can make the case that their actions are *yi* (at least not *bu-yi*), they would have dealt a blow to the Mohists' arguments.

Not only would the rejection of a consideration of *yi* require a defense, the same applies if one "only" failed to attend sufficiently to them. This seems to be the presupposition underlying the Mohists' charge against the gentlemen of the world that they "fail to distinguish between *yi* and *bu-yi*" (e.g., 17/13-14). The substance of the charge is not

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10 In "Gengzhu," the critic Wumazi says that unlike Mozi, he is unable to bring himself to practice *jian'ai* (46/52-55), implying that *jian'ai* isn't so much as impossible, but too demanding for all but the very few.

11 A similar move is recorded in a passage of the *Mozi*, in which the critic Wumazi 巫馬子 told *Mozi*: "I am different from you. I am unable (*bu-neng*) to be concerned about the welfare of everyone without distinction (*jian'ai*)." I take it that his point is not merely that he is unable to do something, but that this inability, being grounded in putatively unalterable facts about his psychology, somehow counts as a rejoinder to Mozi's urging that people ought to practice *jian'ai* (46/52-55).

that they do not understand the concept *yi* and its negation, but that while willing and able to acknowledge the criminality of lesser instances of *bu-yi*, they fail to deem as *bu-yi* the worst instance of all—military aggression. This failure is shown by the fact that they not only fail to condemn military aggression, they even praise and record the warlike deeds of the rulers for posterity (17/9-11). In a similar vein, the Mohists complain that the war-loving rulers "do not know" that their actions are *bu-renyi*, or *bu-ren bu-yi* (28/50-55). Again, this is not a bloodless note that someone failed to know that such and such is the case, but an indictment against a failure to understand something that one *should* understand and in accordance with which one *should* act. As the text puts it, the war-loving rulers are "perverse" (*bei* 悖; 19/28; see 28-30).[12]

With the above in mind, we are in a better position to make sense of a recurring motif in the core chapters of the *Mozi*. The text repeatedly ascribes certain high-minded desires to the social and political elite. I am referring to claims to the effect that "if the gentlemen of the world, or rulers and ministers truly desire. . ., they ought to pay close attention to the proposals that we (the Mohists) have been making." A catalogue of what goes into the ". . ." reveals a rather high-minded portrayal of this group of people: "to practice *renyi*, to be superior men of service, to be in accord with the way of the sage kings above, and with what is beneficial to the ruling houses and the masses below" (10/47, 13/58-59, 19/63-64, 25/86-87, 28/71-72; cf. 27/1, 37/45); "to follow the Way and benefit the common people (27/72-73; cf. 16/86); "to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful to the world" (19/62-63, 31/107, 32/49, 37/44; cf. 15/1, 16/1 and 25/12-16); and "to enrich the world and abhor its poverty, and desire that the world be orderly" (15/41-42, 35/46-47).

At the risk of some oversimplification, let us say that the Mohists present themselves as addressing members of the elite who *ostensibly* care that *yi* prevails in the world and who desire to conduct themselves in a manner required by *yi*. Now, just to be clear, I am not assuming that the Mohist texts were themselves presented to such an audience. The more probable hypothesis is that the chapters served primarily

12 See also 46/46, 47/29-30 and Xunzi 11/116-117.

for the internal use of the Mohist community, e.g., for the teaching of its members and as a record of the community's doctrines. But presumably, part of the point of the writings is that members of the community can, in suitable contexts, address the *arguments* therein to the rulers, ministers, and gentlemen of the world (see also 49/61-64).

In other words, the Mohists' present members of that indirect audience—an important and intended *recipient group* for their ideas, let us say—as at least implicitly acknowledging that they *ought* to have a desire to conduct themselves as required by *yi*, and that they would be in a bad way if they were not to have such a desire. The Mohists probably thought that many members of this group would at least *verbally* agree that a course of action being *yi* is a weighty consideration in its favor, and the same being *bu-yi* is a very serious consideration against it. Incidentally, this does not imply that the Mohists believed people possess some sort of ethical predisposition to act in accordance with the dictates of *yi*. They only need people to be willing to concede that *yi* is *supposed to* link up with motivation and practical deliberation in a certain way, regardless of whether they are truly motivated to act in accordance with *yi*.

But having said all that, it seems rather doubtful that the Mohists were only interested in *verbal* agreement. Presumably, they expected some substantial "payoff" for making the case for their practical proposals explicitly in terms of *yi* or *renyi* or "*ren* and *yi*" or "what the *renren* or *renzhe* would do." The Mohists probably did assume that at least some intended recipients of their arguments really do have a desire to conduct themselves according to the dictates of *yi*. For such people, what is needed is that they be convinced that the Mohists' Way is truly the Way of *yi*. But what about those whose commitment to *yi* is less deep? One part of the answer is suggested by the role that *yi* plays within the matrix of social and political life (Section V). A second part brings into focus certain features of Mohist religion and the role that Heaven and its supernatural agents play in upholding the sway of *yi* in the world (Section VI).

V. The Functional Role of *Yi* in Social and Political Life

Even if someone does not care for *yi* in such a way that he is ready to act for the sake of *yi*, he would very likely still desire the *reputation* that he conducts himself according to *yi*. This is because there are rewards that come with such a reputation. Conversely, it can be *imprudent* for him to openly declare his disdain for *yi* or to behave in a brazen fashion since such a course of action invites the untoward attention of other people. To unpack these observations, we need to take a closer look at the social and political dimensions of *yi*.

On this issue, the "Shangtong" triad of chapters is especially revealing.[13] The chapters posit that there was a complete absence of rulers and leaders (i.e., social-political authority and its apparatus of control) in a pre-historic state of nature. Consequently, people had different and conflicting views about *yi* on account of which they fight.[14] The conclusion is that a unified view of *yi* that is consistently enforced by a hierarchy of rulers and leaders is a necessary condition for social and political order (11/22, 12/30-31 and 13/41-42) since people having different views of *yi* leads to conflict and fighting. But why would people be in conflict or fight if they hold different views of *yi*?

At first approximation, let us say that the sort of "different people having different views about *yi*" at issue here requires that the agents involved make conflicting judgments over some range of issues. That is, there are at least some x such that, while A judges x to be *yi* (based on his view of *yi*), B judges it to be *bu-yi* (based on her view of *yi*).[15] Now consider what "Shangtong" C says will happen when the

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13 For a more detailed analysis of the passages in "Shangtong," see Loy (2005, 141-58).

14 Note that "Shangtong" speaks simply of people's *yi*—though the context clearly implies that it is their views about *yi* that is at stake. Relatedly, an agent's view of *yi*, if verbalized, would be a *yan* that he holds to. In "Gengzhu," *Mozi* refers to Wumazi's statements delineating and justifying his mode of conduct as the latter's *yi* (see 46/55, 56, 58-60).

15 While this proposal is faithful to the text, it does reveal that the Mohists probably overstated the point. As one anonymous reviewer pointed out, given the way things are set up, "it will be almost impossible for two people to share the same [view] of *yi* since it's almost practically impossible for two people to agree on the moral evaluation of every single action. Not even two strongly committed Roman

social-political superiors and those subordinated to them do not share the same view of *yi* (13/18-22; see also 12/54-61). To summarize, the passage basically says that when that happens, the same person may be thought good and praised or rewarded by the rulers while condemned by the common people. Conversely, the same person may be thought evil and punished by the authorities, while receiving the approval of the common people. When all this happens, the text goes on to say, the rulers are unable to govern the people, and order will not be achieved.

So, as far as the Mohists are concerned, part of what it means for A and B to have the same view of *yi* is for them to consider the same sorts of words and actions (and, by extension, the people who say or do these things) to be good (*shan* 善), fit for approval (*shi* 是), worthy of praise (*yu* 譽) or reward (*shang* 賞); or not good, i.e., bad (*bu-shan* 不善), fit for disapproval (or condemnation; *fei* 非), worthy of blame (*hui* 毀) or punishment (*fa* 罰). And to the extent that they do not agree, they do not share the same view of *yi*. What this means is that, for the Mohists, people's judgments about what things are *yi* or *bu-yi* are bound up with the reactive attitudes and the outwardly or social expressions of these attitudes, and beyond that, judgments about retributive sanctions and, in suitable contexts, even the disposition to inflict such sanctions. This adds an additional dimension to the character of *yi* than so far mentioned: *yi* connects with the distribution of praise, blame, approval, disapproval, punishment, reward—some of the most significant burdens and benefits of human favor, so to speak. These connections also explain why people fight with each other in the Mohist state of nature—they are not presented as fighting over the use of limited resources. Conversely, the argument of the "Shangtong" chapters is exactly that a collective is well governed and in a good order when it gets its act together on such matters and offers a consistent response from all sections of society.

Catholics, Tibetan Buddhists, or Orthodox Jews will share [the same view] of *yi*, on this construal." This is a fair criticism of what the Mohists are saying. But it need not be a fatal objection if the Mohists' account can be reformulated in terms of *degrees* of similarity and differences between views of *yi*.

Given the above, it is now clearer as to why it would be desirable for someone to have the reputation that he conducts himself according to the dictates of *yi*, or why it might be imprudent for someone to openly declare his disdain for *yi* or to act in a fashion brazenly contrary to *yi*. On the one hand, someone who brazenly conducts himself in a *bu-yi* manner (as judged by people around him) can expect the untoward attention of other people—attention that ranges from the disapproval of peers to punishment at the hands of the public powers. On the other hand, someone seen as conducting himself according to the dictates of *yi* avoids such negative attention and treatment, secures his position as a member of the community in good standing, and even stands to reap the approval, praises, or more substantial rewards from those around him.

The "Shangtong" account thus tells us quite a bit about the intended functional role of *yi* in social and political life. In the ideal situation, the requirements of *yi* would be backed by the full weight of social approval and sanctions of the public powers. This is a connection that is also brought out in the Mohists' equation of the prevalence of *yi* with good governance (*shanzheng* 善政; 27/3). In fact, for the Mohists, the prevalence of *yi* is constitutive of healthy social and political life not just within the local community, but in the world as a whole. In the "Tianzhi" chapters (26.3-4, 27.1-2, 28.3-4), the Mohists present the world as forming an ecumenical hierarchy with Heaven (*tian* 天) at the apex, followed by the Son of Heaven, the various princes and officials, and then the common people at large.[16] The earlier mentioned equivalence between *yi* prevailing in the world and the world being well governed is presented by the Mohists within such a context, thus suggesting that for them, the norms associated with *yi* are meant to have ecumenical scope and ideally govern the conduct of the human collective as a whole.

From the discussion of this section, it might be tempting to conclude that for the Mohists, people are generally moved to con-

[16] The picture is likely an idealized vision of the early Zhou that became prevalent in Chinese history: "... The Zhou had given China ... a vision: a vision of a world, 'all under heaven,' united in peace and harmony and cooperation, under 'the son of Heaven.'" See Creel (1970, 1:441).

duct themselves in accordance with *yi* due to external rewards or punishments rather than by their recognition that an action is *yi* or *bu-yi*. If this is right, then it *might* seem as if there is a significant difference between the Mohists and Confucians: the Confucians would assert that one should act for the sake of *yi*, while in contrast, the Mohists say or imply that the motive does not really matter so long as the behavior is right.[17] Now, the Mohists certainly give this impression in their writings sometimes.[18] But strictly speaking, the evidence presented does not necessitate such a conclusion. What it does imply is that the Mohists are keen to ensure even those who are not already committed to act in accordance with *yi* for the sake of *yi* are accounted for in their doctrines. After all, one can *both* assert that one ought to do the morally right thing for its own sake *and* notice that moral practices serve an important functional role in regulating social life, partly through the way they regulate the distribution of praise and blame, punishment, and reward.

VI. *Yi* and Mohist Religion

As mentioned previously, getting clear on the role that *yi* plays within the matrix of social and political life gives us *part* of an answer to the earlier posed problem regarding how considerations of *yi* could motivate people who are not already inclined to act for the sake of *yi* to conduct themselves in accordance with what is right. The Mohists' ideal that *yi* governs the conduct of the human collective highlights a further issue they face with respect to the most egregious case of all: Why should mere social disapproval move a powerful war-loving ruler bent on military aggression? Furthermore, the fear of punishment at the hands of the public powers doesn't apply, since, in this case, the ruler is the public power. The demands of *yi* extends beyond what is under the criminal justice system of a local community to the arena between princes and principalities, an arena

17 Credit to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing this out.
18 See Loy (2013, 234-35).

unchecked by human powers capable of enforcing the dictates of *yi* (ever since the passing of the ancient sage rulers). But we hardly have to go that far. Even within the local community, it is entirely possible for the public powers to fail to enforce the dictates of *yi* or to do worse. The Mohists are fairly explicit that the behavior of the rulers and gentlemen of the world often falls short of *yi* (26/42-43, 28/45-46). But what compels these rulers and gentlemen to change their ways, to conform their conduct to the dictates of *yi*? Once again, mere "social disapproval" or "fear of punishment" are not always compelling reasons in their case. More generally, given a manifest imbalance of power between individuals and groups, some—the stronger, more numerous, more crafty—can and regularly will get away with murder (see 15/9, 16/1-3).

It must be pointed out that it is not a deep criticism of the Mohists' doctrine that some people—sociopathic war-loving rulers (19/28-30), for instance—are unmoved by considerations of *yi*. All that at best implies is that there exist unreasonable people in the world, and sometimes, they are even very powerful people.[19] Put another way, considerations of *yi* are *supposed to* play an important role in people's deliberation and govern social and political interactions of people—but to say that is to highlight *yi* as a *regulative ideal*, not to claim that *yi* already prevails in the world. Nonetheless, there is at least one more arrow in the Mohists' quiver that bears attention.

As mentioned early on (Section I), there is a religious dimension to Mohism. The argument of the "Tianzhi" chapters is that the will of Heaven forms the ultimate foundation to *yi* and functions as an epistemic guide to figuring out what is and what is not *yi*. More relevant to the current issue, however, is the insistence by the text that the sway of *yi* is upheld by the supernatural agents of Heaven—the ghosts and spirits. "Tianzhi A" opens with the charge that the gentlemen of the world understand only trifles but not things of

[19] Here, I can do no better than quote this anecdote from Toulmin (1953, 165n2): "I recall a conversation with Bertrand Russell in which he remarked, as an objection to [my] account of ethics, that it would not have convinced Hitler. But whoever supposed that it should? We do not prescribe logic as a treatment for lunacy, or expect philosophers to produce panaceas for psychopaths."

importance. On the one hand, they know full well to refrain from wrongful behavior for fear that they will attract the untoward attention of various human peers and superiors, and thus sought to dissuade one another from bad behavior by reminding them of the same. (In other words, it is as if the gentlemen of the world endorsed the reasoning considered in Section V above.) And yet, on the other hand, they fail to mention the most important superior capable of meting out punishment for infractions and from which there is no place to hide: Heaven (see 26/1-9; see also 27/45-46 and 28/1-7).

Elsewhere, in "Minggui," the Mohists took pains to present arguments for the existence of providential ghosts and spirits capable of and concerned to reward the good and punish the wicked, despite the open skepticism of the elite. The chapter goes so far as to say that the world has lost its grip on *yi* since the demise of the ancient sage kings, and the princes now take might as right, because people have become skeptical regarding the ghosts and spirits (31/1-6). The chapter also includes accounts regarding how ghosts and spirits visited various people in history, from ministers, to princes, and to sage kings, to punish the wicked, lend aid to the good, and legitimize the overthrow of despots. And in "Feigong C," having offered some arguments against the morality and profitability of military aggression, the text considers the retort that the ancient sage kings, those models of *yi* conduct, also conducted offensive military campaigns. The Mohists reply is that there is a crucial moral distinction between their military campaigns and military aggression. But, curiously, the main criterion of difference explicitly discussed in the passage is that supernatural signs and omens were given to the sage kings, legitimizing their military activities.[20] In short, it is part of the Mohists' picture of the world that the sway of *yi* is grounded in the authority of an impartial Heaven and supported by the supernatural agency of ghosts and spirits.

The point here is not that the modern audience should be convinced by the Mohists' arguments regarding the existence and providential character of the ghosts and spirits, only that the Mohists do

[20] For a more detailed discussion of the relevant passages in "Feigong C" and "Minggui," see Wong and Loy (2004, 345-57), Van Els (2013), and Sterckx (2013).

seem to take this line of reasoning extremely seriously. Nonetheless, a couple of caveats are in order. First, if the impression is given that the Mohists put forward their notions regarding Heaven and spirits cynically, i.e., not because they believe any of it but only because it is a possible solution to the problem of motivating people towards conduct becoming of *yi*, it is unintended. As far as I can tell, the Mohists seem to be sincere believers in the existence and character of the ghosts and spirits, and beyond that, their picture of Heaven. All this is compatible with their *also* affirming that people who believe in the existence and character of the ghosts and spirits have an incentive to be careful about their behavior, and consequently, that there is every reason to propagate those beliefs *even if* only to encourage more people to conform their behavior to the demands of *yi*. Second, we should also keep in mind that the Mohists were operating within a context in which the social and political elites who were part of the intended recipients of their arguments were avowedly skeptical regarding Heaven and the spirits (31/4-7).[21] This means that in appealing to Heaven and the ghosts and spirits to motivate behavior becoming of *yi*, the Mohists did not see themselves as tapping into existing religious sentiments. If anything, it is rather more likely that theirs was a project of *rehabilitating* what they considered to be religious notions inherited from the early Zhou, notions which have of late lost ground among the social and political elite of the day.

The influence of the Mohists' religious notions on their conception of *yi* goes beyond the above. Recall that the state of the world in which *yi* prevails—which is also one in which good order and good governance obtains, and the world's welfare is promoted—is described as one in which Heaven rules at the apex of the world hierarchy. Furthermore, the text would sometimes talk about its proposed way of conduct as one that is meant to "benefit Heaven above, the spirits in the middle, and human beings below" (10/27, 19/1-4, 26/37-38, 40, 28/37-38, 41-42, 36/45). Now, we need not see this as conflicting with the earlier point that, for the Mohists, *yi* is to be understood in terms of certain norms that are meant to constrain and govern how

21 For more background, see also Pines (2002, 55).

individuals and groups ought to treat other individuals and groups, such that when they comply, the world will be well ordered, and its welfare promoted (Section III). When the Mohists expand on how a course of action benefits or harms Heaven and the spirits, they tend to spell things out in terms of it benefiting or harming human beings. For instance, military aggression harms Heaven and the spirits because it leads to the killing of people who could otherwise be offering sacrifices to Heaven and the spirits (19/16-18). There is no suggestion that the Mohists conceived of benefiting Heaven and the spirits without any reference whatsoever to the consequences for human welfare. Nonetheless, the main conclusion is that, at the very least, more than human stake holders are involved in the world's being in good order, well governed, and its welfare promoted.

VII. Concluding Remarks

The study began with the thought that the Mohists sought to offer a solution to the perceived chaos of the world by articulating, advocating, and defending a Way that, if adopted and put into practice by individuals and communities, is meant to restore good order to the world. If the account presented in this study is on the mark, we can now add to the above picture the observation that the Mohists' ethical concern—as it is articulated via their account of *yi*—is much more *restricted* when compared with something that (in principle) answers the more general question: What is the best or most desirable way for individuals and communities to conduct their affairs, a way that is best and desirable not only for "us Mohists," but in some sense for everyone? Rather, the question that the Mohists have in mind seems to be more like: What are the appropriate norms that individuals and communities ought to live by, that ideally are enforced by the weight of social sanctions and the public powers, that are meant to constrain how individuals and groups treat other individuals and groups as they pursue their own goals, and that govern the distribution of the benefits and burdens of human favor (exemplified in such things as praise and blame, approval and disapproval, reward and punish-

ment)? When people comply with such norms, they would be able to at least peacefully coexist if not enjoy mutual benefit, and beyond that, the world would be in good order, well governed, and its welfare promoted. Furthermore, these norms are to be distinguished from rules of mere custom and are supposed to present motivations for action. They are norms in light of which the people's behavior (often such behavior involves the potentially harmful treatment of others) may be measured or criticized, against which one's own treatment of others is to be justified or defended.

The province of *yi* as it is presented in my discussion above is close to what Gerald Gaus called "social morality," citing a distinction proposed by Peter Strawson and Kurt Baier. As Gaus explains, "the rules of social morality structure social interaction in ways that are beneficial to all and make social existence possible; social morality lays down requirements (including prohibitions) that are to direct people's social interactions." So construed, "social morality" is distinguished from the larger region of morality "which includes visions of what makes life worth living and what constitutes a noble or virtuous life." (2010, 3) Purely as a heuristic, I suggest that the Mohists' concern is functionally equivalent to what we would call a concern with *justice* understood as an aspect of social morality.

I must also stress that by that, I am *not* saying that the term "*yi*" should be translated as "justice," "that which is just," and so on. What I am suggesting is that the *subject matter* of the Mohists' ethical concern, or the sorts of issues about which their doctrine is meant to address and which motivates their social activism are akin to issues that non-philosophers raise when talking about "justice"—"social justice," when applied within a local community; "justice between states," when applied between states; "global justice" when applied to the world as a whole. But my use of the term "justice" is purely a heuristic; Nothing substantive in the study turned on it. It is but a way to make vivid to us—moderns living in a milieu remote from the world of the Warring States—the issues and concerns that motivated the Mohists' thinking and acting.

The contrast between "social morality" and the larger wider region of morality does offer a potential way for us to deepen our under-

standing of the difference between the Mohists and their Confucian rivals. The point cannot be defended at length here (since it will require a closer examination of the Confucian sources), but the impression is that the contrast between them is not just a matter of their having *different answers to the same questions.* Rather, at some level, they *were answering distinct* (*even if related*) *questions.* Indeed, the ancient Confucians were interested in "the rules of social morality that structure social interaction in ways that are beneficial to all and make social existence possible." But unlike the Mohists, the Confucians' interest in social morality is either more readily subsumed within a larger vision about "what makes life worth living and what constitutes a noble or virtuous life," or at the very least, it is at best one concern among other irreducible concerns. Even regarding the domain of social morality, the Mohists are also more ready to ascend to an *objective* rather than an *inter-subjective* perspective. For them, *yi* is not just about what you or I ought to do (possibly to or with each other), but often about what *overall agent-neutral outcomes* social and political arrangements ought to aim at—related to the Consequentialism of their doctrine so often noticed. But as I said, I will not be able to defend these points at length here.

Note that while the Mohists' *conception* of *yi* as it is spelt out in the core chapters of the *Mozi* (i.e., their account of what is required by *yi*) may well be distinctive and controversial, the underlying *concept* of *yi* is not wholly unique to them. The ramifications of *yi* in the economy of human life as the Mohists assumed them are probably implicit in widely shared notions from the common world of discourse in their intellectual-historical milieu.[22] After all, identifying the *subject matter* of the Mohists' ethical concern or the *sorts* of issues about which their doctrine is meant to address does not imply that other thinkers are not concerned about the same subject matter, even if they have drastically different responses. In fact, the sorts of issues about which the Mohists are concerned, in all probability, overlap with those

[22] In distinguishing between the *concept* of *yi*, and the Mohists' *conception* of *yi*—which is one specific and potentially controversial conception among many—I am drawing upon Rawls' (1999, 5) point about "the concept of justice as distinct from the various conceptions of justice."

about which their rivals are concerned. This is a precondition of any meaningful disagreement between the various disputers of the Way.

What would be controversial and open to criticism, however, is the Mohists' nearly exclusive emphasis on *yi* in articulating what makes for good order in the world. By this, I do not mean the mere fact that the Mohists appear mainly interested in the issue of *yi* rather than other things. After all, the mere fact that A is concerned about topic X does not, by itself, imply that she is thereby open to criticism from B who is concerned about another topic Y, or from C who is concerned about both X and Y. But it is another thing altogether for the Mohist to slide from their near exclusive attention on *yi*, to taking the position that *yi* constitutes the sum of what makes for good order in the world, that considerations of *yi* trump all other ethical considerations, or that other ethical considerations are all ultimately derivative of *yi*. This is tantamount to thinking that an answer to the more restricted question exhausts the answer to the more expansive question regarding how individuals and communities might best conduct their affairs. Yet this is the very impression sometimes given by the Mohists' writings in general, and by their explicitly claiming that "of the myriad things there is nothing more honorable (or valuable) than *yi*" (47/1).

■ Submitted: 14 Jan. 2021
Reviewed/revised: 8 June 2021
Accepted: 15 June 2021

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 147–162
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.147

The Political and Social Thought of Mou Zongsan

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Abstract

The political and social thought of Mou Zongsan (1909-95), one of the most important representatives of contemporary Chinese philosophy and Confucianism, was a lifelong endeavor for him and constitutes an indispensable part of his thought. It has been overlooked for much too long a time. This article aims to serve as an introduction to this dimension of his thought and so sketches out and discusses the core aspects of Mou's political and social thought. Specifically, it focuses attention on the following six themes: (1) his critique of Marxism and, in particular, its materialistic dialectics and historical materialism dating from the early 1930s; (2) his response to various prevailing views that were informed and imbued with Marxism concerning Chinese history and society and the situation in rural China, along with his own understanding of Chinese history and society and his proposal for resolving the problems of rural China in the 1930s; (3) his comprehensive, systematic, and lifelong criticism of Communism in China; (4) his endorsement of freedom based on his contrasting analyses of the Western and Chinese liberal traditions; (5) his advocacy of a revised form of democracy in light of his penetrating observations on traditional Chinese politics combined with his reflections on Western democracy; and (6) his views on the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan and Taiwan's identity. The presentation of these six themes not only embeds them in their historical context but also explores their contemporary significance.

Keywords: Mou Zongsan, Political and Social Thought, Contemporary Chinese Philosophy, Marxism, and Confucianism

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I. Why This Topic?

The ideal life of a whole-heartedly devoted Confucian is typically described in terms of being "a sage within and a king without" (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王). They seek to perfect themselves morally through self-cultivation but then go on to apply their moral character by helping to implement a benevolent form of government. Neo-Confucian luminaries such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) are not exceptions to this ideal, as professor Yu Ying-shih 余英時 meticulously has revealed in his masterpiece on Zhu Xi and the political culture of the Song dynasty (Yu 2003, 2004). Modern and contemporary Confucians also do not confine themselves exclusively to the side of being a "sage within"; they, too, have practical political agendas and seek to implement their moral teachings by participating in formulating or at least guiding governmental policies. As one of the most seminal thinkers in the modern Confucian tradition, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-95) has received a great deal of attention in contemporary scholarship. Nevertheless, thusfar, the attention of most academics has been focused almost exclusively on his moral philosophy, especially his moral metaphysics. The philosophical edifice that Mou constructed, including his interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophy, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism, and Confucianism, and his own constructive philosophical system, which incorporates important ideas and approaches from Western philosophy, especially Kant, into Chinese philosophy, is both impressive and important. On the other hand, the political and social concerns that were strongly and continuously expressed throughout his entire life and that clearly played a major role in motivating his philosophical reflections are an essential dimension of his larger intellectual world. His political and social concerns are critical for fully understanding Mou as not only a philosopher but as an intellectual responding to the political and social issues of his time.This article will focus on Mou's political and social thought. The structure and selected themes presented here are based on his own writings and not imposed as part of some theoretical perspective imported from outside. The topics discussed comprehensively cover the major aspects of his political and social

thought. There are, of course, other fascinating aspects of his philosophy; however, they are parts of different stories and will not be discussed in this article.

There are sporadic studies of various aspects of Mou's political philosophy—in particular in regard to his views concerning democracy[1]—to be found in the contemporary literature; almost all of these studies approach his writings from the distinct perspective of "political philosophy" and unavoidably are imbued with their *Vorurteil*, mostly various discourses of western political philosophy. But the richness of the political and social thought of Mou extends far beyond the boundary of political philosophy. To fully grasp the range and depth of Mou's political and social thought, we need to tease out the full spectrum of his views from his voluminous and varied writings and scrutinize these within their historical and intellectual setting, combining a close reading of evidential materials with careful philosophical arguments.

II. Responses to and Critiques of Marxism

In the beginning of the 1930s, when Mou was still a student at Peking University, Marxism enjoyed immense popularity in China. Mou obviously could not fail to be moved by the spirit of this time, but he did not simply follow the general trend. Unlike most Chinese intellectuals who were trying to look at Chinese history from a Marxist perspective and to diagnose the structure and challenges of Chinese

[1] This does not mean that the publications on the political dimension of Mou Zongsan, at least in the Chinese-speaking world, are poor in terms of quantity. But almost all the publications in Chinese and English as well, that were made before Peng (2016) are mostly limited to his political philosophy and are rather narrowly construed. Other aspects of his political thought, let alone his social thought, have been left largely untouched. Furthermore, almost all publications on Mou's political philosophy simply focus on his concept of "self-negation of the innate knowing of the Good" (*liangzhi kanxian* 良知坎陷) and his discussion of democracy. Other aspects of Mou's political and social thought have been overlooked. For example, the only book on Mou's political philosophy published before 2016, Tang (2008) focuses exclusively on Mou's political philosophy, narrowly conceived. The few publications on Mou's political philosophy in English exclusively wrestle with the issue of democracy in Mou's thought.

society of the day by applying Marxism in a mechanical and uncritical manner, Mou criticized Marxism from the very beginning of his academic career. For example, the first article he published in 1931, when he was only 22 years old, was a defense of the kind of traditional logic initiated by Aristotle and a response to the materialistic dialectics advocated by many Chinese believers in Marxism as a "new logic" that could replace the traditional one (Mou 2003, vol. 25, 3-12).[2] The central argument of this article was that the three basic laws of formal logic, i.e. the law of identity, the law of contradiction, and the law of excluded middle, as irreducible forms of human thought, could not be overthrown by Marxist materialistic dialectics through its so-called "dialectical logic." Mou was immersed in modern logic for a long time and his achievements in this area were arguably unparalleled in the twentieth century China (Wang 2007, chaps. 1-8). It is no doubt true that his mastery of modern logic is a primary reason why his arguments not only concerning the reconstruction of Chinese philosophy but also concerning his political and social thought are so precise and forceful.[3]

Once Marxism prevailed in China in the early twentieth century, not only was materialistic dialectics worshiped as a new form of logic, but historical materialism was also applauded as a universally applicable methodology. Most Chinese intellectuals in the 1930s tried to reinterpret Chinese history by using the Marxist theory of historical materialism, dividing China's history into dedicated stages, defining the nature of each of these, and seeing the course of history as the unfolding of a predetermined trajectory with a clear and inevitable *telos*. Many of the most influential intellectuals of the time published their competing articles in the *Journal of Reading* (*Dushu zazhi* 讀書雜誌), including Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978), Hu Qiuyuan 胡秋原

2 See the article "Is Materialistic Dialectics the Truth?" (Bianzheng fa shi zhenli ma 辯證法是真理嗎).

3 Mou's great achievements in modern logic have also been largely overlooked. Only Wang Xingguo noticed this aspect of his philosophy and went to some length to examine and analyze it. See Wang (2007). But Wang did not realize or at least make clear that the motivation of Mou's devotion to modern logic, at least initially, was to criticize Marxism in general and material dialectics in particular.

(1910-2004), Li Ji 李季 (1892-1967), Tao Xisheng 陶希聖 (1899-1988), Wang Lixi 王禮錫 (1901-39), Zhu Qihua 朱其華 (1907-45), and so on. They divided up and explained China's history in various and irreconcilable ways, but the basic theoretical framework or methodology they employed was one: historical materialism, especially the five-stage schema of historical development, which was reputedly initiated by Lenin and Stalin, not Marx or even Engels. Mou examined almost every representative point of view of this kind and refuted them one by one. His arguments were specific and detailed. But the central point of his critique was that historical materialism, as a theory based simply upon Marx's European experience and limited knowledge of ancient Indian society, could not serve as a universally valid methodology for observing and interpreting Chinese history and society. As he said, "When we study Chinese society, we must take it as a living organism, which has its own development. We cannot take the history of Western society as our standard nor can we analyze Chinese society with meanings taken from the terms of the form of Western society" (Mou 2003, 735).[4] Obviously, in Mou's view, it was invalid to divide the stages of Chinese history and define the nature of Chinese society by drawing a forced analogy to the history and nature of Western society (Peng 2016, 117-78).

Given that China remained a rural society throughout the 1930s, the issue of rural China became a laboratory to employ and test the newly imported Marxism. Aside from a few Chinese intellectuals, such as Yan Yangchu 晏陽初 and Liang Shuming 梁漱溟, who tried to practically improve the situation in rural China through education at the very beginning of this period (Zheng 2000), most Chinese scholars tried to analyze the problems of rural China and formulate prescriptions for addressing its various maladies by employing Marxism. As part of this general movement, Mou also addressed the issues facing rural China; not only did he comment upon the various Marxist schemes that were being offered in his day as solutions, but he also offered his own observations about rural China and proposed

4 The original words are:「我們研究中國社會必須把中國社會看成是一個活的有機體, 它有它自己的發展, 不能以西洋社會史為標準, 也不能以西洋的社會形態之名目的意義來解析中國社會.」

a constructive program aimed at modernizing it.

Although most contemporary intellectuals followed one another in using Marxism as their interpretive framework and methodology, their diagnoses of the nature of rural China split along two contrasting lines: regarding it either as capitalist or feudal. In Mou's view, however, rural China was neither capitalist nor feudal. Not bound by the constraints of Marxist dogma, Mou was able to present his own assessment and judgment about the nature of rural China and develop his own original approach to resolving its problems. One point that needs to be added here is that Mou's stress on the crucial role played by the economy in defining the nature and challenges of rural China, intriguingly, seems unconsciously influenced by Marxism in some sense.

Of particular note, Mou was the first to argue that the construction of rural China should give priority to economic improvement rather than intellectual education. In a set of articles published in 1935 (Mou 2003, vol. 26, 777-84; 801-10; 811-24),[5] Mou drew upon his rural background and experience to analyze the situation in rural China, pointing out that the most urgent and pressing issue for the vast majority of peasants living in the hinterlands of China was not education but survival. The well-known leaders of "the movement of constructing rural China" (*xiangcun jianshe yundong* 鄉村建設運動), such as Yan Yangchu and Liang Shuming, did not realize this point until 1935, when the effort no longer was able to be implemented (Peng 2016, chap. 3). In addition to these specific writings in the 1930s, which were offered as responses to and critiques of the application of Marxism to the particular problem of rural China, Mou's critical reflections on Marxism and Communism were featured in a small book called "The Critiques of the Communist International and the Chinese Communist Party 共產國際與中共批判," published in 1952.

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5 There are three articles on this topic: "The Distributive Principle of Land and Population in China" (Zhongguo tudi fenpei yu renkou fenpei zhi yuanze 中國土地分配與人口分配之原則), March 15, 1935; "A Model for Chinese Agricultural Production" (Zhonguo nongcun shengchan fangshi 中國農村生產方式), May 15, 1935; and "Economic Situation and Social Structure in Rural China" (Zhongguo nongcun jingji jumian y ushehui xingtai 中國農村經濟局面與社會形態), July 15, 1935.

In this book, Mou severely criticized the Communist understanding of "family, "country," and "great unity" by contrasting these with the corresponding Confucian conceptions (Peng 2016, chap. 4). For him, the incompatibility between the understanding of Confucianism as a form of "humanistic idealism" and Marxism underpinned by materialism in regard to these ideas was due to their fundamentally different and incompatible understandings of human nature. While a typical Confucian believes in a common human nature described by Mengzi in his vivid depiction of the "four sprouts of the heart-mind" (*siduanzhixin* 四端之心), namely, the "feeling of commiseration" (*ceyin zhixin* 惻隱之心), the "feeling of shame and dislike" (*xiuwu zhixin* 羞惡之心), the "feeling of deference and compliance" (*cirang zhixin* 辭讓之心), and the "feeling of right and wrong" (*shifei zhixin* 是非之心), a Marxist does not believe in the existence of a common human nature at all. Given the fact that the regime was taken over by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, it is understandable that the systematic articulation of his critique of Marxism and Communism represented by this book appeared in 1952. Intriguingly, this book was unknown to readers of Mou's work, including his students and followers and therefore was not included in Mou's *Complete Works* published in 2003 in Taipei. It was discovered in 2004 by this article's author while conducting archival research at the Harvard-Yenching Institute.

III. Advocacy of Democracy and Freedom Based upon Critical Reflection

Since the early twentieth century, democracy and freedom, in addition to science, have been two targets that almost all Chinese intellectuals have pursued, even though opinions on various matters among them often diverged. In this regard, Mou was not exceptional. As a matter of fact, his critique of Marxism and Communism and his embrace of democracy and freedom should be regarded as two sides of the same coin. Also, both sides for Mou proved to be lifetime endeavors.

Until the publication by Peng (2016) on Mou's political and social thought, almost all publications on Mou's political thought, in Chinese

and in Western languages as well, have been limited to his discussion of democracy.[6] Which of Mou's observations on traditional Chinese politics served as the basis for his endorsement of democracy? Did he embrace democracy as an institution from the West without any reservations? How did he understand the relationship between democracy and Confucian core values? There are explicit articulations in Mou's own works concerning each of these questions, which, unfortunately, have largely remained untouched for too long a time.

Mou's endorsement of democracy was not a conclusion based on purely theoretical speculation. Rather, it was founded upon his observations on and analysis of traditional Chinese political institutions and governance. In his view, traditional Chinese politics, at least from the Qin dynasty until the Qing dynasty, could be understood as a triatic structure constituted by the "emperor" (*jun* 君), "scholar-officials" (*shi* 士), and the "common people" (*min* 民). Within this political structure, these three constituents remained unstable and volatile. The transition from one emperor to the next was always realized by either rebellion or hereditary system, neither of which offered a sustainably secure and smooth transfer of power. While the status of scholar-officials was open to the common people with the institutionalization of civil service examination system, righteous and disobedient scholar-officials were often exiled, lost their privileges and were degraded to the status of common people, or lost their very lives. The vast majority of the oppressed common people could do nothing more than covet the emperorship from a position of despair and desperation. Mou believed that democracy offered the only and indispensable path for a politically modern China that could avoid and untie the three forces that remained deadlocked in traditional forms of governance and doomed the monarchy that dominated Chinese politics for more than two thousand years; namely, the unlimited power of the emperor, the unwarranted politi-

6 Representative works in English include Fröhlich (2010, vol. 49, 167-200) and Elstein (2012). Angle (2012) also touched upon Mou's treatment of democracy, although the purpose and main arguments of the book are not aimed at revealing what Mou himself thought but take Mou's basic idea of democracy as a starting point for the author's own philosophical construction.

cal engagement of scholar-officials, and the impossibility of political participation by the common people. His often-quoted yet also often misunderstood judgment, "*you zhidao wu zhengdao* 有治道無政道," which literally means "having a way to rule but lacking a way to govern," actually means that educated and able people can be widely recruited to work for the government while the regime itself is under the exclusive control of one family, represented by the emperor, and offers a precise summary of his observations on the structure and deadlocks that plagued traditional Chinese monarchy (Mou 2003, vol. 10).

On the other hand, Mou was clear that democracy is not perfect or ideal but is the least bad political system in human history. He argued that democracy alone is not enough to construct a humane and civilized society of caring human beings. In addition to democratic political institutions, he argued, values such as "humaneness" (*ren* 仁), "rightness" or "justice" (*yi* 義), "ritual" or "civility" (*li* 禮), "wisdom" (*zhi* 智), and "trust" (*xin* 信) that Confucianism particularly advocated could and should play an important role. This means that Mou did not embrace Western democracy without any reservations. It is not fair to criticize modern new Confucians such as Mou or others such as Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-78) or Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1904-82) for uncritically and completely accepting and simply seeking to reproduce Western democracy in China.

> Mou's concern for democracy is not only theoretical but also practical. For example, he paid a great deal of attention to the democratic movement in the mainland after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. At every significant historical moment, for example, the student movement fighting for democracy in 1989, he offered comments and gave his advice to support such efforts and pointed out their shortcomings and challenges as well. (Peng 2016, 430-42)

In addition to democracy, the ideas of "freedom" and "liberalism" received equal attention from Mou as well. For him, freedom is also a value and institution that Chinese people should and must pursue

in their quest for modernization, and he offered a careful analysis of what this freedom entailed. Mou first made a distinction between moral freedom and political freedom. He called these two types of freedom "subjective freedom" (*zhuguan ziyou* 主觀自由) and "objective freedom" (*keguan ziyou* 客觀自由), respectively. This terminology was obviously borrowed from Hegel, but Mou's definitions of these two types of freedom are different. Indeed, his distinction and definitions are reminiscent of and, in certain respects, similar to Isaiah Berlin's concepts of "positive liberty" and "negative liberty," though it seems that Mou had no familiarity with Berlin or his analysis of freedom. Mou further argued that the spirit of freedom developed in Chinese tradition is more moral rather than political. As he said,

> Kongzi, Mengzi, and neo-Confucian scholars surely often talked about enlightenment and self-determination, which, of course, entails individuality and freedom. Butthis is primarily in the sense of morality. It is subjective freedom; therefore, it results in character building and the pursuit of sagehood. It is, however, not objective freedom; therefore, it could not establish political freedom in its modern sense.[7] (Mou 2003, vol. 28, 165)

At the same time, Mou also added that political freedom is not completely alien to the Chinese people, especially to Confucian intellectuals epitomized by Mengzi.[8] Based upon these points, Mou argued that political freedom was urgently needed for Chinese modernization.

On the one hand, Mou stressed that political freedom, which was well-developed in the West, should be introduced and integrated into Chinese political thought and practice. On the other, he further discussed his understanding of the relationship between moral freedom and political freedom. In his view, the cleavage between these

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7 The original words are:「孔, 孟與理學家固亦常講覺悟, 講自我做主. 此當然有個性有自由. 然此乃道德意義, 是主觀自由, 故能成人格成聖賢, 而不是客觀自由, 故未能開出近代化的政治意義.」

8 In this regard, Mou and Hu Shih 胡適 (1891-1962), who was usually taken as a leading pioneer of anti-traditionalism and often criticized by Mou, are intriguingly on the same page. See Hu (1941, 136-38; 213-15). As for the liberal tradition in Chinese culture, see Bary (1983).

two types of freedom is not altogether pertinent, though the relatively independent spheres of the two should be acknowledged. For Mou, without moral freedom as a backup, political freedom alone cannot ensure a civilized society. This point resonates with the views of some modern Western philosophers such as Judith N. Shklar (1928-92).[9] It is exactly in this sense that Mou, who could be regarded as a Confucian liberal, was differentiated from the other Chinese liberalists such as Zhang Foquan 張佛泉 (1908-94), Yin Haiguang 殷海光 (1919-69), and others on the intellectual landscape of twentieth-century China.[10] Mou even raised the criticism that political freedom in the modern West deviated from its classical spirit, which was, according to his understanding, precisely rooted in the spirit of moral freedom. In this sense, similar to his attitude toward democracy, Mou did not completely or uncritically embrace political liberalism imported from the West. He was always based in the Chinese, especially Confucian, tradition and absorbed and adapted Western sources only after critical reflection. For example, he even presented his own translation and interpretation of the English word, "liberalism." In his view, more pertinent and accurate Chinese translations of liberalism would be "*kuanrong zhuyi* 寬容主義," "*kuaunren zhuyi* 寬任主義," or "*kuanren zhuyi* 寬忍主義" rather than "*ziyou zhuyi* 自由主義" (Mou 2003, vols. 23, 39-40).

Mou's understanding of freedom and liberalism from a Confucian perspective contributes not only a resource to revise political liberalism but an alternative to going beyond the simple dichotomy and demarcation between liberalism and communitarianism. If we use liberalism and communitarianism as twin perspectives from which to look at Confucianism as a form of political thought, Confucianism is somewhere in between (Peng 2009, 327-32). Mou has the same standpoint.

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9 In Shklar's discussions of liberalism, she places particular emphasis on moral tradition and personal character and her priority is to curb vices rather than advocate rights. See Shklar (1984).

10 Some scholars have noticed and pointed out that both Zhang and Yin, influenced by new Confucian scholars represented by Mou and Xu Fuguan 徐复观, revised their understanding of freedom and, to a certain degree, accepted the differentiation between political freedom and political freedom. See Xiao (2014, 387-425).

IV. On the Relationship between Mainland China and Taiwan

Mou left the mainland for Taiwan and Hong Kong in 1949 and spent the rest, i.e. more than half, of his life outside the mainland. Except for a couple of short visits to Shenzhen to take his two granddaughters from Shandong province (Mou's hometown) to Taiwan and Hong Kong, Mou never went back to mainland China. Even though he was invited quite a few times by various institutions from mainland China for conferences dedicated to exploring his thought, Mou turned them down without any hesitation. He explicitly claimed that he would go back to the mainland right away as soon as the Chinese government gave up Marxism as a national ideology. Meanwhile, he witnessed the strivings of the Taiwanese people for independence. So, understandably, the issue of the relation across the Taiwan Strait, including how to understand the identity of the Taiwanese and the democratic movement in mainland China, also constitute integral parts of the political and social thought of Mou, especially in his later years.

As for the relationship between the mainland and Taiwan, Mou insisted that Taiwan should be understood as the reservoir of Chinese tradition and that the Republic of China rather than the People's Republic China should be taken as the legitimate representative of the Chinese people. In this sense, Mou supported Taiwan's political independence as the continuation of the Republic of China and the representative and reservoir of traditional Chinese culture. For example, in a lecture delivered at New Asia Institute in Hong Kong in 1981, Mou explicitly pointed out that "abandoning the four basic principles to which the Chinese Communist Party adheres should be the precondition for peace talks between mainland China and Taiwan" (Mou 2003, vol. 23, 122-23).[11]

By the same token, Mou expressed his worry about and dissent concerning the increasing local striving for the independence of Taiwan, which, in his view, is an inadvisable and harmful attempt that leads Taiwan to deviate from its proper cultural matrix. In Mou's view, without its Chinese heritage, Taiwan, existing simply as a small and

11 The original text is:「現在大陸要和臺灣和談, 要真能達到和平, 那也得先放棄那四個原則.」

independent island nation, is far from being the center with which members of the Chinese diaspora can identify and could not play an important role in the world. As he pointedly said,

> If Taiwan is not able to realize this cultural direction (inheriting the tradition of Chinese culture), is not able to, politically, move toward democracy, and is not able to assume responsibility for the mainland, for example, if it wants to be independent and self-established, it would be alright if its independence eventually leads to self-establishment, but if it becomes independent without establishing itself that would be tragic. How can it establish itself? On one level, Taiwan should connect itself with Chinese culture and history and the orthodox regime of Republic of China in order to hold on to its position; on another, Taiwan should be aware that the billion people living in the mainland are an integral part of the Chinese nation, they all long for the unification of China as a nation-state. If Taiwan is unable to connect itself with history or with the great mass of people on the mainland, its independence would be "isolation." It would only amount to a lonely type of independence in which [as Chen Zi'ang[12] said] "Unable to look back to the ancients, unable to look forward to those to come; Reflecting on the distance between heaven and earth, isolated and lonely, tears fall." This is not self-establishment but unrooted floating about. If one cannot establish oneself, hoping that another country will come and carry one along is something that cannot be relied upon.[13] (Mou 2003, vol. 24, 366-67)

Simply put, for Mou, Taiwan should politically adhere to its independence as the continuation of the Republic of China. This provides the foundation for claiming that the People's Republic of China must truly abandon Marxism and Maoism as its national ideology as the precondition for the unity of the mainland and Taiwan. On the other

12 Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (656/661–702) was a poet of the Tang dynasty.

13 The original Chinese text is:「假定臺灣不能認清這個文化方向, 政治不走向民主憲政, 對中國大陸不肯有所承擔, 譬如說, 想要獨立、自決,『獨立』如果真能『獨』而『立得住』, 倒還可說; 但到『獨』而不能『立得住』的時候, 則很悲慘. 怎樣才能『立得住』呢？縱貫地說, 要和文化掛鉤, 要和歷史掛鉤, 要繼承中華民國的正朔, 以穩住自己的立場. 橫的方面, 要知道全中國十億人口都屬於中華民族, 都要求統一. 若既不和歷史掛鉤, 又不和中國大陸廣大群眾掛鉤, 則『獨』是『獨』了, 但只能一『前不見古人, 後不見來者, 念天地之悠悠, 獨悵然而涕下』的孤獨的『獨』, 這就不是『立』, 而是飄零. 自己立不住, 寄望他國來保駕, 都是靠不住的.」

hand, Mou also stressed that Taiwan should culturally identify with its Chinese legacy and that only by sticking to Chinese culture and an improved form of democracy could Taiwan play a central role for the Chinese community in the world.

V. Concluding Remarks

In sum, philosophically, Mou's lifelong endeavor was to develop Chinese philosophy by pursuing a continuous dialogue with the Western philosophical tradition, especially Kant. Politically, the central idea to which Mou also was devoted throughout his entire life is, on the one hand, to fight Marxism and Communism in order to uphold the core values of the Chinese tradition in general and of Confucianism in particular and, on the other, to integrate Confucianism and political liberalism. For Mou, Confucian ideals, which are compatible with values such as democracy and freedom, are alien to what Communism and Marxism fundamentally advocate; the pursuit of modern China should accordingly be carried out through the integration of Confucian and Western core values, i. e. humaneness, justice, civility, wisdom, trust, and democracy, freedom, and human rights. Of course, these two sides, the philosophical and political, are mutually integrated and reinforce one another. In this sense, although a modern philosopher, Mou is still a traditional Confucian intellectual whose action and life were identical with his knowledge and faith. Also, the way to integrate Confucianism and political liberalism—once called "the third force" in the 1940s-1950s (Zhang 1952)—suggested by Mou and a few of his like-minded contemporaries, such as Tang Junyi 唐君毅, Xu Fuguang 徐復觀, and, especially, Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (Carsun Chang, 1887-1969), is still relevant and instructive to today's China.

■ Submitted: 19 Feb. 2021
Reviewed/revised: 12 May 2021
Accepted: 25 May 2021

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 163–184
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2021..36.163

Revisiting Xunzi's Philosophy of Language

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Abstract

In a recent essay, Chris Fraser claims that Xunzi has a "purely extensional" theory of terms. This paper challenges that interpretation by pointing to places in the *Xunzi* that suggest the presence of an implicit notion of intension. Fraser's evidence is drawn mostly from chapter 22 of the text, while the competing evidence comes from outside that chapter. The presence of such competing evidence raises the question of whether there is a genuine inconsistency in the *Xunzi*, or whether chapter 22 might be re-interpreted as also incorporating a notion of intension. While I favor the latter view, offering a fully developed interpretation along those lines is beyond the scope of the present essay. Therefore, in the absence of an argument for such a reading, I offer what I call a "compromise" position. Namely, I suggest that the material in chapter 22 is perhaps best understood as not representing the *whole* of Xunzi's view of terms, but should instead be regarded as a particular response to *abuses* of language, and hence that if there is a discrepancy between the views presented in chapter 22 and the rest of the text, that discrepancy need not amount to a contradiction in the text.

Keywords: Xunzi, language, naming, extension, intension, meaning, *zheng-ming* 正名, *xing* 性

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** For their comments and questions on an earlier version of this essay, I thank Eirik L. Harris, Philip J. Ivanhoe, Al Martinich, Justin Tiwald, and Bryan Van Norden, and two anonymous referees for this journal. I also want to thank Lin Hongxing 林宏星 of Fudan University and Xie Xiaodong 谢晓东 of Xiamen University for inviting me to present earlier versions of this paper at their institutions, where I received helpful feedback from them and the audiences they assembled, and from Wang Kai 王楷 of Beijing Normal University, who served as commentator for my presentation for Fudan. In the present version I have not, regrettably, been able to fully address all the suggestions I was given.

Chris Fraser's essay "Language and Logic in the *Xunzi*," which was published in the *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Xunzi* (2016) that I edited, gives an excellent introduction and overview of the views about language that appear in the *Xunzi*, with a focus on chapter 22 of the text, "Zhengming" (正名, "Correct Naming").[1] Even so, I disagree with some of the claims that Fraser makes, and so on this occasion I want to defend a different interpretation of the *Xunzi*. At the end, I will suggest that we should understand the views presented in the "Zhengming" chapter in a more restricted way than they are commonly understood.

In particular, one of Fraser's more striking claims about Xunzi's view is that "His theory of names [i.e., words or terms] is purely extensional" (Fraser 2016, 315).[2] Likewise, in a footnote, Fraser states that Xunzi "shows no awareness of a theoretical notion akin to the meaning or intension of a word" (Fraser 2016, 302n21). It is these claims that I would like to challenge here, and then use that challenge to reorient how we see the "Zhengming" chapter. After first presenting some background information and discussing some methodological considerations, I will review what I take to be Fraser's reasons for his position, and then proceed to my argument against him.[3]

For readers who may not be familiar with the technical notions of "extension" and "intension" as used in recent philosophy of language, it will perhaps be helpful to begin with a brief explanation of the distinction between the two, so that they may better appreciate

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1 All translations from the *Xunzi* in this essay are taken or modified from Hutton (2014), unless noted otherwise. All references to the Chinese text of the *Xunzi* are given according to the numbering system in Lau and Chen (1996), here labeled as "HKCS."

2 For those not familiar with early Chinese thought, the word *ming* 名, which most literally means "name," is used by early Chinese thinkers to refer to words or terms in general, and that is how it is employed in chapter 22 of the *Xunzi*. Fraser therefore switches freely between talking about Xunzi's view of "names" and his view of "words" or "terms," and I will follow this practice of his in my discussion here.

3 A number of the claims in Fraser (2016) are repeated in Fraser (2021). Since most of the present essay was written before the publication of the latter piece, and as far as I can see there are no major differences between the two that are relevant to the present topic, I have kept my discussion here focused on just the earlier publication, though my arguments will, if successful, also call into question the corresponding parts of Fraser (2021).

what is at stake in Fraser's thesis, and why his claim is potentially controversial. To put it simply (a little too simply), the "extension" of a term is that set of objects to which that term may be correctly applied, and the "intension" of a term is that set of attributes that all and only those objects possess and that serves as the criterion that is used explicitly or implicitly by speakers of the language for applying the term to them, and that is conveyed in such usage.[4] So, for example, the extension of the term "bridge" will include the Golden Gate Bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Tower Bridge, the Ponte Vecchio, the Jade Belt Bridge, the Gwangandaegyo, and so on. The intension of "bridge"—or more precisely, *one* intension of the term—would be a "structure forming or carrying a road, path, or (in later use) a railway, and others, which spans a body of water, a roadway, a valley, or some other obstacle or gap, and allows a person or vehicle to pass unimpeded over or across it" (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*).[5] Each of those bridges I just listed is such a structure, and because of that feature, each may be called a "bridge." In turn, when I say of some X that "It is a bridge," its being such a structure is the information conveyed about X. It is common for the intension of a term to be called its "meaning," and for the extension of a term to be called its "referent(s)," and Fraser himself follows this practice as well.

Two further points about intension and extension are worth noting, because they will be relevant for the discussion to follow. First, a term's intension is standardly taken to determine its extension, rather than extension determining intension, because (among other reasons) for any given set of objects, there are potentially many attributes that they might share in common (e.g., is visible at time *t*, is located on the planet Earth, is younger than the Sun, and so forth). So, from the mere fact that a term is applied to some set of objects, one

4 My explanation here is a highly condensed version (with some modifications) of the account given in Copi and Burgess-Jackson (1996, 144-48), which is a useful and accessible introduction to the notions I discuss here, and covers nuances that I omit here for the sake of brevity. The rest of my discussion in this and the next paragraph are likewise heavily indebted to their way of presenting the material.

5 *OED Online*, 3rd ed., s.v. "bridge, n.1," accessed 7/30/2021, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/23233.

cannot automatically infer which shared attributes, if any, are the basis for applying it to them, and hence derive the term's intension. On the other hand, given a criterion provided via an intension for applying a term or withholding it, one can, at least in principle, identify what falls within the term's extension.

Second, while many terms, especially what are called "general terms" or "class terms" (such as "bridge"), will have both an intension and extension, not all terms will have both. On the one hand, a term such as "unicorn" may have the intension "a magical animal with the body of horse and single horn growing on its head" but lack an extension, since there is nothing in the world that actually fits that description.[6] On the other hand, one could simply make up a term and use it to refer to a set of objects without thereby committing to the identification of some attribute(s) shared among them that is conveyed in the use of the term and governs its application by those who use it, in which case the term would have an extension without an intension. For example, I might decide to call a group of files on a computer server that I share with others the "2az7q43bbv" files, and I may have grouped them together because they are similar in some way, but the term "2az7q43bbv" itself need not presuppose any particular identification of those similarities, such that it conveys mere membership in that group (and not any shared features that may form the basis for membership in the group), and similarly its use is governed only by grasping the members of that group (and not necessarily the basis for membership in the group). In such a case, we can say that "2az7q43bbv" is meaningless (it has no intension) but still has a set of referents.[7] For the sake of convenience, let us call cases of terms with extensions but no intensions "mere labels."

With these points in mind, the controversial character of Fraser's view may now become clearer. In particular, his claim that Xunzi's understanding of terms is "purely extensional" is tantamount to saying that Xunzi thinks of all or nearly all terms as being mere labels or at least

6 This example is modified from Copi and Burgess-Jackson (1996, 147).

7 For a less hypothetical example, consider how band names like "the Beatles" or brand names like "Twinkies" function.

highly akin to mere labels, which is a rather odd view on the face of it. Moreover, many of the terms that Xunzi seems to want to cover with his discussions in chapter 22 *are* the sorts of "general" or "class" terms that would typically be analyzed as having *both* an intension and extension. Therefore, Fraser's interpretation would present Xunzi as strangely blind to an aspect of such terms that many thinkers have considered to be extremely important, a strangeness that can be brought out by saying that on Fraser's reading (as he himself says more or less) Xunzi is highly concerned with terms—but pays no attention to their meanings. Furthermore, many or perhaps even most philosophers would hold that a purely extensional understanding of terms simply cannot provide an adequate account of language, and from that perspective Xunzi's view will then seem not just to be wrong, but to be wildly wrong in a way that seems rather out of character with the keenly observant mind that one sees in so much else of the *Xunzi*. For such reasons, many scholars are likely to want to resist Fraser's interpretation.

If one is going to dispute his reading, though, there are certain methodological considerations that should be noted. As a preliminary point, I readily grant that we find in the *Xunzi* no *explicit* discussion that distinguishes intensions from extensions of words. However, just because Xunzi himself does not explicitly draw such a distinction does not, by itself, preclude him from having a notion of intension *implicitly*. This point is a variation on a problem that has been raised in many other (Western) discussions of Chinese thought (and cross-cultural studies more broadly): someone will object to a given analysis of some Chinese text or thinker on the basis that the analysis relies on some notion for which there is no equivalent word in Chinese. It is a fallacy, though, to think that lacking a word for something amounts to lacking the concept of that thing, as Bryan Van Norden has argued succinctly (Van Norden 2007, 21-23).[8]

8 For a similar defense of attributing implicit concepts to thinkers who do not have explicit terms to express them, see Prudovsky (1997). That study's focus on the interpretation of Galileo's writings helpfully illustrates that the problem under discussion here is not limited to just cross-cultural studies, but can potentially occur in any analysis of a past thinker, regardless of whether the thinker is Chinese or not, and regardless of whether the interpreter is operating in the same cultural tradition or not.

Of course, the absence of any explicit discussion of intension in the *Xunzi* does pose an interpretive hurdle for anyone who wants to maintain that Xunzi does have a notion of intension. Namely, one still has to provide positive evidence that such a notion is at work in Xunzi's thought, even if only implicitly, and that one *needs* to appeal to such a notion in order to adequately explain what one sees in the text. Otherwise, even if attributing a notion of intension to Xunzi were compatible with the textual evidence, there would be no strong reason to do so—such an attribution would be interpretively superfluous and might even generate unnecessary problems for understanding Xunzi's thought. This last point is, I think, the most charitable way to understand Fraser's objection to attributing a notion of intension to Xunzi: such an attribution is unsupported by the text, and even if it can be made to fit, it is neither necessary nor helpful for understanding Xunzi's views of language.

Before reviewing the evidence Fraser offers for his "purely extensional" understanding of Xunzi's view, let me note one further methodological complication. Fraser's claims are about Xunzi's *theory* of language, and not about Xunzi's own *use* of language.[9] For this reason, even if it turns out that Xunzi at times seems to speak in ways that presume a notion of intension, that may show no more than that Xunzi's own linguistic practice is simply inconsistent with his theory of language (if Fraser is right that Xunzi has a purely extensional theory of terms). Indeed, if—as mentioned earlier—a purely extensional theory of terms simply cannot in fact be an adequate theory of language, then actually we should *expect* Xunzi's own practice to be

[9] In his essay, Fraser repeatedly speaks of Xunzi as having a "theory" of naming or language (see, e.g., the first quotation from Fraser given in the second paragraph of this essay). Exactly what counts as having a "theory" of some topic is potentially controversial, and Fraser does not particularly spell out what counts as a "theory" on his view. Mostly, he seems to use it to refer to just the sort of reflective remarks on naming that one sees in chapter 22 of the *Xunzi* (and likewise for other topics discussed in the text). Here, I basically follow his usage for the sake of convenience, since I do not think that the question of whether Xunzi's remarks amount to a "theory" in some more restricted sense is an issue that much affects the arguments that Fraser and I offer. Accordingly, my own use of "theory" here should not be taken to imply any particularly strong endorsement of labeling Xunzi's views as a "theory."

inconsistent with his theory, because his theory would be flawed to begin with. Of course, it would be nice if Xunzi's own linguistic practice turned out to be completely compatible with his theory of language, but there is no antecedent reason to suppose that such *must* be the case, and the principle of charity (at least as I would construe it) does not, in general, require us to favor those interpretations that render his theory of language consistent with his own linguistic practices.[10] Hence, in order to challenge Fraser's claims, one needs to be careful and focus on evidence from the text that relates to Xunzi's *theory* of language in particular, as opposed to evidence that pertains just to Xunzi's use of language.

Turning now to Fraser's reasons for adopting the interpretation he does, I discern in his essay two main arguments for a "purely extensional" construal of Xunzi's understanding of terms: one explicit and one implicit. The explicit argument is based on Xunzi's remarks about the role of perception in naming. After quoting and expounding a section of chapter 22 that discusses perception, Fraser writes:

> A signal facet of this compact theory of perception . . . is that it depicts the sense organs as directly differentiating their objects, rather than producing mental representations of them that the heart or mind distinguishes. . . . Xunzi's account of perception—like that of the Mohist "Dialectics"—ascribes no role at all to mental contents such as sense data, mental images, or ideas. The absence of such semantic or epistemic intermediaries is one likely reason that the distinctions between appearance and reality or between phenomena and noumena play no role in classical Chinese thought and why classical Chinese thinkers were not troubled by sense skepticism. Also significant is that in tying the right use of names directly to sense discrimination, Xunzi makes no appeal to intensional concepts. The use of words is explained completely by appeal to speakers' ability to distinguish their extensions according to shared

[10] I would allow that there are potentially some cases where the principle of charity would favor such interpretations, such as instances where an author is *highly* self-reflective and clearly intends their theory of language to be understood in light of their own linguistic practices, but I do not think the *Xunzi* fits such a model.

> norms.[11] Indeed, nothing in Xunzi's theory corresponds to the notion of the meaning or intension of a word, although, as we will see, his treatment of *ci* 辭 ("expressions," "phrasings") introduces a notion similar to speaker's meaning. (Fraser 2016, 301-302)

I have reservations about Fraser's claims concerning Xunzi's views of perception here but pursuing them at length would require a detailed analysis of the passages on perception in the *Xunzi* that would take us far afield from the questions about language that I wish to pursue. So for now, it will suffice merely to note the basic structure of Fraser's argument: if words are generated by naming objects that are differentiated through perception, and if that differentiation of objects occurs without the need for "sense data, mental images, or ideas," then intension plays no role here (presumably because a notion of intension requires "semantic or epistemic intermediaries" of such a sort), and instead the only function of words is to designate the set of things that constitutes their extensions.[12]

Fraser's other main argument for his position, which is mostly implicit, seems to rest on how he construes some of Xunzi's terminology in chapter 22. To see this implicit argument, we should look first at the following remarks from Fraser:

> [On Xunzi's view] The main threat to . . . orderly regulation of language is miscreants who engage in the "great depravity" of "splitting phrases and recklessly inventing names in order to disrupt right names" (HKCS 22/108/4-5, 144). Xunzi here refers to those who,

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11 Given Fraser's claim that Xunzi lacks a notion of intension, it is important to see that the "shared norms" that Fraser mentions as guiding the use of words must, by Fraser's own lights, *not* be intensions (though intensions could otherwise fill that role). As I understand his view, the "shared norms" here operate in roughly the same way that applications of mere labels can be shared, namely by adopting shared conventions for grouping things together without turning those conventions into criteria that are themselves conveyed in and govern the use of terms, as intensions do.

12 The passage I have quoted in the main text also hints at another line of reasoning that Fraser might muster in support of his view, namely that his extensional account better situates Xunzi's thought relative to the broader context of early Chinese philosophy of language. Addressing that facet of Fraser's interpretation would require much more discussion than is feasible here, so I will not attempt it in this essay.

> like Hui Shi 惠施, Deng Xi 鄧析, and Gongsun Long 公孫龍, are known for confusing, paradoxical sayings, but also those who advocate ethical or psychological theses he rejects, such as Song Xing 宋鈃. He is in effect claiming that a major factor explaining the mistaken doctrines of his philosophical opponents—whether frivolous, such as Gongsun Long's logic-chopping claim that a white horse is not a horse, or sincere, such as Song Xing's pacifist doctrine that a person can be insulted without thereby being disgraced—is that they muddle the proper referents of words. (Notice that Xunzi does not say they garble the *meanings* of words. Like the Mohists', his theory does not explicitly treat the meaning or intension of terms, but their reference or extension.) (Fraser 2016, 293-94)

Here, with his list of those Xunzi is criticizing, Fraser is alluding to the refutation of unacceptable sayings that occupies a substantial portion of chapter 22. What is significant, though, is that there Xunzi's complaint about those sayings and the people who make them is that it is framed in terms of the ways that those sayings confuse people about *ming* 名 (names, words) and their *shi* 實 (objects, things, substances). On Fraser's description, this complaint is equated to the idea that such sayings "muddle the proper referents of words," which indicates that Fraser is taking the *shi* to designate only referents and construing the relationship between *ming* and *shi* in a purely extensional fashion.

Why does Fraser understand Xunzi this way? Again, though he does not provide an explicit defense of that approach, a hint can be gleaned from his paraphrase of another passage from that section of chapter 22, where he reviews Xunzi's account of "the purpose of having names." Fraser says:

> [Xunzi] holds that the wise regulate the names used to refer to things, so as "to clarify noble and lowly" and "to distinguish similar from different," such that intentions can be conveyed smoothly and tasks accomplished effectively (HKCS 22/108/12-14, W 145-46). (Fraser 2016, 295)

The first clause of Fraser's sentence here corresponds to a clause in the original that reads "知者為之分別制名以指實," and which in my translation of the *Xunzi* is rendered as "the wise person draws differences and establishes names in order to point out their corresponding objects" (Hutton 2014, 237). Fraser's wording "the names used to refer to things" strongly suggests that he takes the word *zhi* 指 (lit. "point out," "point to") to designate the act of referring. Since in the relevant passage Xunzi is explaining the purpose and process of naming, we can thus reconstruct Fraser's thinking as follows: Xunzi says that the purpose of words is to *zhi* 指 some *shi* 實, but if the linguistic action *zhi* is the act of referring, then the *shi* that are "pointed out" by the words must be the referents of those words, and so Xunzi's account of words can be understood in an entirely extensional manner.

Based on my reconstruction so far, readers may have already identified various places in Fraser's account that could be targeted to undermine his claims. I will not attempt a thorough attack on them here, as that would require more space than is available on this occasion, but I do want to point out briefly that the textual evidence on which he bases his claims may not provide conclusive support for his view after all. In particular, recall his claim that "in tying the right use of names directly to sense discrimination, Xunzi makes no appeal to intensional concepts" (Fraser 2016, 302). Fraser derives this claim from the following piece of chapter 22:

> So then on what grounds do we deem things similar or different? I say: On the grounds of the sense organs. As to any creatures of the same kind, with the same affects, how their sense organs detect things is similar. So they converge in how they model things as resembling each other. This is the means of reaching consensus on conventional names by which to indicate things to each other. (HKCS 22/108/14-16, Fraser's own translation from Fraser 2016, 300)[13]

The passage talks about sense discrimination in the first four sentences, and then offers the remark that "This is the means" (*shi suo yi*

13 然則何緣而以同異？曰: 緣天官. 凡同類同情者, 其天官之意物也同, 故比方之疑似而通, 是所以共其約名以相期也.

是所以) to name things appropriately. In that respect, the passage does transition directly from sense discrimination to naming, but that may not quite amount to "tying the right use of names directly to sense discrimination." The reason is that the expression "this is the means" need not always function as an *exhaustive* account of how something is or should be done, but can rather serve to point out the *primary* means by which something is or should be done, while omitting subsidiary means. For comparison, consider the following passage from chapter 4 of the *Xunzi*:

> Being a good son and younger brother, conscientious and honest, restrained and hardworking, carrying out one's tasks without daring to be lazy or arrogant—these are the means by which the common people (*shi shu ren zhi suoyi* 是庶人之所以) obtain warm clothing, plentiful food, and long life, avoiding punishment and execution. (HKCS 4/14/12-13; Hutton 2014, 26)[14]

Note that "the means" here are said to provide "warm clothing" and "plentiful food," but the list of behaviors that are identified as "the means" to achieve these benefits do not actually include farming, textile production, and sewing. Nor should we assume that such activities *just are* the "tasks" (*shiye* 事業) mentioned here, since otherwise the claim made in the passage would not apply to craftsmen who do not grow food or make clothes, but who *are* most likely meant to be covered by this claim as well. In that case, the passage moves directly from being a good person and a hard worker (in general) to having warm clothing and plentiful food, but—on pain of saddling Xunzi with an absurd view otherwise—that does not entail that warm clothing and plentiful food are *obtained* directly from being a good person and a hard worker without need for farming, textile production, and sewing (or making money from other work and using it to buy those items). By the same token, even if the passage from chapter 22 moves directly from sense discrimination to naming, without mention of intensional concepts, that need not entail that Xunzi thinks one can dispense

14 孝弟原慤, 軥錄疾力, 以敦比其事業而不敢怠傲, 是庶人之所以取煖衣飽食長生久視以免於刑戮也.

with intensions altogether—they might be part of the process that is simply elided in that passage, just as farming, textile production, and sewing are elided in the chapter 4 passage.[15] In a similar vein, even if one were to grant (as my reconstruction above of Fraser's second argument has it) that the *purpose* of terms is identified by Xunzi solely in terms of referring to things, that would not preclude the possibility that intensions are nonetheless still part of the *mechanism* by which terms accomplish that goal.

If the argument I have just given is right, then Fraser's interpretation of Xunzi as having a purely extensional theory of terms may not be necessitated by the textual evidence we have, but it might still be the best available interpretation, and Fraser's objection could still stand: attributing to Xunzi an implicit notion of intension is unsupported by the text, and even if it can be made to fit, it is neither necessary nor helpful for understanding Xunzi's views of language. So at this point, let me now review some other textual evidence in order to provide grounds for being dissatisfied with Fraser's interpretation and seeking an alternative. In particular, consider the following passage from chapter 3 of the *Xunzi*, which plays on different senses of the word *zhi* 治 ("put in good order," "orderly"):

> The gentleman puts in good order what is orderly. He does not put in good order what is chaotic. What does this mean? I say: Ritual and *yi* are called orderly. What is not ritual and *yi* is called chaotic.

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15 Fraser's argument here might be construed in a different (or additional) way. Sometimes, his remarks in various places make it sound like he thinks that (1) intensions *must* depend upon a very particular sort of psychological state and (2) Xunzi does not posit *any* psychological state that could serve the relevant purpose. That argument would not be undermined by what I say here, but a similar worry would remain about whether the textual evidence really precludes Xunzi from (implicitly) believing in the relevant sort of psychological state. More substantively, such an argument would potentially involve quite contentious claims about what psychological states really *are* necessary for intensions, which would take the discussion deep into issues in the philosophy of mind. Since Fraser does not fully specify what he takes the necessary psychological conditions for intensions to be, I have chosen not to focus on that line of thought here. Suffice it to say that if Fraser wants to ground his argument on something like premise (1) above, then he at least owes his audience a substantive defense of it, which will itself be a demanding task.

> So, the gentleman is one who puts in good order the practice of ritual and *yi*. He does not put in good order what is not ritual and *yi*. That being so, if the state is in chaos will the gentleman not put it in good order? I say: Putting a chaotic state in good order does not mean making use of the chaos to put it in order. One gets rid of the chaos and replaces it with order. Bringing cultivation to a corrupt person does not mean making use of his corruption in order to cultivate him. One gets rid of the corruption and supplants it with cultivation. So, the gentleman gets rid of chaos and does not put chaos in good order. He gets rid of corruption and does not cultivate corruption. The way that "put in good order" functions as a term is like when one says that the gentleman "does what is orderly and does not do what is chaotic, does what is cultivated and does not do what is corrupt." (HKCS 3/10/12-16; translation modified from Hutton 2014, 19)[16]

For present purposes, the last line of this passage is the most important. The sentence begins with the rather unusual phrase *zhizhi-weiming* 治之為名 (more literally, "the way 治 is a name"). This phrasing serves to mark out that *zhi* 治 is being discussed as a word, rather than as a phenomenon. (Or in other words, this is a "mention" rather than a "use" of *zhi* 治, and the addition of *zhiweiming* 之為名 after *zhi* 治 is needed to make this clear, because ancient Chinese did not have quotation marks that serve this purpose in modern languages, as in my translation above.) By the same token, though, the phrase implies that what follows it is said from a reflective standpoint about language, the kind of standpoint that also serves as the basis for the discussion of naming in chapter 22. It is significant, then, that the remainder of the sentence clarifies "the way 治 is a name" by pointing to its use in *another* sentence. Such an approach does not fit with a purely extensional theory of names, because on a purely extensional theory, the only salient fact about names is the objects to which they can be applied, and so appealing to the way a name is used in a

16 君子治治, 非治亂也. 曷謂邪? 曰: 禮義之謂治, 非禮義之謂亂也. 故君子者、治禮義者也, 非治非禮義者也. 然則國亂將弗治與? 曰: 國亂而治之者, 非案亂而治之之謂也, 去亂而被之以治; 人汙而脩之者, 非案汙而脩之之謂也, 去汙而易之以脩. 故去亂而非治亂也, 去汙而非脩汙也. 治之為名, 猶曰君子為治而不為亂, 為脩而不為汙也.

sentence, which is a matter of its relation to other words, is to focus on an irrelevant feature.[17] Rather, if the way *zhi* 治 is used in a sentence provides significant information for understanding that word, that must be because the word has some other aspect—an intension—that is revealed by that use.[18] To put the point another way, the *Xunzi* passage is giving roughly what Richard Robinson (1950, 106-108) has labeled an "implicative" or "contextual" definition, where a term's meaning is gleaned from how it appears in another sentence, but such a process both presupposes and specifies intensions of words. This instance in the *Xunzi* is also stipulative in nature, in that here the text is not merely reporting how the word *zhi* 治 is commonly understood, but also demanding that it be understood (and then used) in a particular way. To that extent, the passage is, additionally, an exercise in "correct naming" or "the rectification of names" (*zhengming* 正名) that is the focus of chapter 22, and thus provides a data point that may be relevantly compared with the discussion there.

In sum, if the argument I have just offered is correct, then the chapter 3 passage presents a relatively clear instance where Xunzi, when thinking reflectively about language, relies on the intensional aspect of a word, though he has no explicit label for it. That suggests, contrary to Fraser's view, that Xunzi's theory of terms is not purely extensional.

Further motivation for dissatisfaction with Fraser's interpretation can be found when we examine a passage from chapter 23, the "Xing'e" chapter, but it will take some effort to make it clear. In particular, there we find the following criticism of Mengzi:

> Mengzi says: "People's learning is [an instance of] their nature being good." I say: This is not so. This is a case of not attaining knowledge of people's nature and of not inspecting clearly the division between

[17] Strictly speaking, there can be exceptions to this, namely those cases where the extension of a term just is other terms, e.g., one might try to clarify the extension of "words" by referring to the claim "There are seven words in this sentence." However, *zhi* 治 is clearly not that type of term.

[18] Of course, pointing to how a term is used in a sentence could be used to clarify other aspects of a term instead of its intension, such as what part of speech it is, but clearly that is not what is going on in the passage from the *Xunzi* I am discussing here.

> people's nature and their deliberate efforts. In every case, the nature of a thing is the accomplishment of Heaven; it cannot be learned, it cannot be worked at. Ritual and *yi* are what the sage produces. They are things that people become capable of through learning, things that are achieved through working at them. Those things in people which cannot be learned and cannot be worked at are called their "nature." Those things in people which they become capable of through learning and which they achieve through working at them are called their "deliberate efforts." This is the division between nature and deliberate effort. (HKCS 23/113/16-19; translation modified from Hutton 2014, 249)[19]

The basic point Xunzi is making is clear enough: namely, Mengzi's claim is incorrect, because it treats as an instance of human nature something that is not, and hence it not only misconstrues the category of human nature, but also misuses the word "nature," as the last part of the passage implies.

However, this argument also has some rather curious features that, as far as I am aware, have not received attention from scholars. First, the criticism begins with the remark that Mengzi's claim "is a case of not attaining knowledge of people's nature and of not inspecting clearly the division between people's nature and their deliberate efforts." The latter problem is clearly addressed at the end of the passage, where Xunzi distinguishes the different sets of things that are labeled as "nature" or "deliberate efforts," and the final statement "This is the division between nature and deliberate effort" is simultaneously about the difference between those sets and the terms that refer to them. Yet, insofar as the start of Xunzi's criticism mentions "not attaining knowledge of people's nature" and ostensibly treats that as a distinct point from "not inspecting clearly the division between people's nature and their deliberate efforts," then it implies that there is an additional element to the argument here that is not simply identical to what occurs at the very end of the passage.

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19 孟子曰:「人之學者, 其性善.」曰: 是不然. 是不及知人之性, 而不察乎人之性偽之分者也. 凡性者、天之就也, 不可學, 不可事.禮義者、聖人之所生也, 人之所學而能, 所事而成者也. 不可學、不可事 不可學. 不可事而在人者謂之性, 之在人者謂之性, 可學而能、可事而成之在人者謂之偽. 是性、偽之分也.

Indeed, it is not too hard to see that something else is going on in the argument here, which makes for a second curious feature of the passage. Namely, near the start of the passage, Xunzi says, "In every case, the nature of a thing is the accomplishment of Heaven; it cannot be learned, it cannot be worked at," and then near the end he says, "Those things in people which cannot be learned and cannot be worked at are called their 'nature.'" The closeness in wording of these two sentences makes them look like they might be simply reiterating the same point, but in a slightly different order, and if the former is supposed to be support for the latter, then it may even seem as if Xunzi is arguing in a circle. So, how are we supposed to understand what is going on here?

As a solution to this puzzle, I want to suggest that Xunzi is not simply saying the same thing twice and is not arguing in a circle. Rather, we should see the former statement as elucidating the complaint that Mengzi does not understand people's nature. In particular, Xunzi is starting from a commonplace in early Chinese thought, and which even Mengzi would have accepted, namely that a thing's nature (*xing* 性) is a product of Heaven. Xunzi then articulates what he takes to be a clear implication of the idea that the *xing* is produced by Heaven, which is that it does not come about through any human efforts, and hence "it cannot be learned, it cannot be worked at." It is that implication, I gather, that Xunzi thinks Mengzi fails to grasp. When the passage then goes on to say that "Those things in people which cannot be learned and cannot be worked at are called their 'nature,'" it is noting that *in light of this implication*, the word "nature" is to be used as a label for only those things in people that cannot be learned and cannot be worked at.

As an argument against Mengzi, this line of attack may not be very persuasive, but that is not the important point here. Rather, my reason for focusing on this passage has to do with the transition that occurs in it. By the end, in the discussion of the different items to which the labels "nature" and "deliberate effort" are to be applied, the topic is clearly about (at least) the extensions of those terms, but then the contrast with the beginning part of the passage and how Xunzi describes it suggests that the starting point of the argument is not

(simply) about extension. If I am right about the way Xunzi is using an inference from a commonly held belief about *xing* to articulate the extension of the word "*xing*," then the process mirrors that by which an intension determines an extension. Or in other words, the idea that *xing* is a product of Heaven is a *conceptual* point about *xing* that limits the use of the word "*xing*," and hence even in the absence of an explicit term for an intension, that idea seems to be playing intension-like role. (It is hard to see how the argument could be explained on a purely extensional view of terms, since on such a view, terms have no meaning that could support inferences about their extensions. For example, if "gaahhk" is a simply a label for the extension constituted by some set of things X, then in the absence of any intensional content for "gaahhk," we cannot make any inferences based on the notion of "gaahhk." We could still make inferences based on the extension of "gaahhk," such as if all members of set X have some characteristic Y, and characteristic Y is incompatible with some other characteristic Z, then would could infer that "Nothing that is gaahhk has characteristic Z." However, that presupposes that the extension of "gaahhk" as a term has already been fixed at the outset, and the characteristic Y plays no role in determining its extension, but such is not the way the argument about *xing* unfolds here.)

Apart from the way that this passage seems to involve a notion of intension, my reason for focusing on it is that it presents a highly relevant example for comparison with the discussion of chapter 22. For, like the passage from chapter 3 that we considered earlier, Xunzi here, too, seems to be engaged in an exercise of rectifying or correcting names. Moreover, unlike the example from chapter 3—but like chapter 22—Xunzi's discussion of language in this passage from chapter 23 is in the service of repudiating a rival philosophical position.

Now insofar as these passages from outside chapter 22 seem to show that at least some of Xunzi's discussions of language implicitly invoke a notion of intension, then comparing them with the views presented in chapter 22 raises at least two possibilities. One is that we should perhaps revise our view of the chapter 22 material and allow that even there, Xunzi may implicitly incorporate a notion of intension. Another possibility is that Fraser is correct to understand

the view in chapter 22 in purely extensional terms, but Xunzi is simply inconsistent in his views of language, and hence we see a different view in other chapters—and note that here the inconsistency would not be the sort of inconsistency whose evidential relevance I warned about at the beginning of this paper, namely an inconsistency between Xunzi's *use* of language and his *theory* of it. Rather, the inconsistency would be in his understanding of language itself, as revealed by those moments when he is explicitly addressing the proper usage of terms. If that were the right way to view the situation, then the inconsistency might be explained in any of the usual ways that others have attempted to explain inconsistencies in the *Xunzi*, such as suggesting the Xunzi was simply careless about these matters, or that he changed his mind over time, or perhaps even that the inconsistent passages were written by different people.

Of the two possibilities just mentioned, I am inclined toward the former, since I think that out of charity, we ought to avoid accusing Xunzi of inconsistency unless there is overwhelming evidence in favor of such an accusation. However, to make the case for re-reading chapter 22 as incorporating a notion of intension (at least implicitly) would take more time and space than I have available here. So instead of doing that, I want to spend the remainder of this paper discussing a third sort of possibility, a kind of compromise position that is suggested by the passage from chapter 23 that we were considering. The compromise can allow that even in the absence of a worked-out re-reading of chapter 22, the apparent differences between the views of language that we see in that chapter and what we see in other chapters need not be regarded as a simple inconsistency.

In order to see this third possibility, we can start by noticing that in the middle part of chapter 22, where Xunzi diagnoses and rebuts three different sets of sayings that involve corruption of naming practices, the sayings he discusses are those of Song Xing, Yin Wen, Hui Shi, Deng Xi, Gongsun Long, and the Mohists.[20] Mengzi's view

[20] See Fraser (2016, 309-12) for discussion of these points. In addition to those sayings whose originators can be identified, there are some sayings that Xunzi discusses there that are so textually corrupt as to be undecipherable, and some whose origin is unknown.

about the goodness of human nature is strikingly absent from that collection, despite the fact that Xunzi criticizes Mengzi explicitly and implicitly in multiple places in the text. This raises a question: are the analyses of those problematic sayings and the rebuttals to them meant to apply to Mengzi's claim about human nature as well, even though it is not explicitly mentioned there?

One feature of this section might suggest that the analyses and rebuttals are indeed meant to apply to Mengzi, as well as almost anyone else with a philosophical position that Xunzi opposes, for at one point, Xunzi remarks, "In every case of deviant sayings and perverse teachings that depart from the correct Way and recklessly innovate, they will belong to one of these three classes of confusion" (HKCS 22/109/20-21; Hutton 2014, 240).[21] Furthermore, a little later in the chapter, he says that when one grasps the true Way, then "One will use the true Way to discriminate what is vile just like drawing out the carpenter's line in order to grasp what is curved and what is straight. Thus, deviant sayings will not be able to cause disorder, and the hundred schools will have nowhere to hide" (HKCS 22/110/9-10; Hutton 2014, 241).[22] Especially the reference to the "hundred schools" makes it sound like Xunzi would include Mengzi among those covered by his remarks in this section, as one of those who falls prey to one of the "three confusions." If that is right, and if Xunzi's understanding of names in chapter 22 is taken to be purely extensional, then there does seem to be a problem with squaring Xunzi's analysis there with the example from chapter 23 that I have provided.

However, other evidence suggests that despite the remarks in chapter 22 that make it sound as though all rival philosophers could be classed as succumbing to one of the "three confusions," Xunzi recognizes that in fact not all philosophical errors stem from corruption of language. For example, Xunzi criticizes the Mohist practice of frugality in chapter 10 of the text (HKCS 10/44/20-10/46/4), and there it is clear that he takes Mozi's error to consist both in misdiagnosing the greatest source of trouble in the world—namely, as

21 邪說辟言之離正道而擅作者, 無不類於三惑者矣.

22 正道而辨姦, 猶引繩以持曲直, 是故邪說不能亂, 百家無所窳.

insufficiency—and in thinking that a radical frugality would have the consequence of resolving the problem. In that case, it is clear that on Xunzi's account, what has gone wrong in Mozi's view has nothing to do with language but is rather primarily a matter of misunderstanding causes and effects.

Insofar as Xunzi does not treat all philosophical errors as involving corruption of language, perhaps one way to understand the discussion of the "three confusions" in chapter 22 is that the discussion there is limited to a particular class of philosophical errors, namely those that involve not simply mistaken claims, but moreover an *abuse* of language.[23] If so, then it would not be surprising that outside chapter 22, Xunzi sometimes speaks in ways that imply a different understanding of language. That, then, is the third possibility for understanding the relation between, on the one hand, the examples from chapters 3 and 23 that I have discussed, and on the other hand, the discussion of naming in chapter 22. In that case, one could conceivably still take the treatment of names in chapter 22 to be purely extensional, but that discussion would be formulated around and limited to responding to abuses of language, with the response drawing on just part of Xunzi's view of naming, rather than representing Xunzi's complete account of the subject. Such an interpretation is why I have called this third possibility a kind of "compromise" position that one still might adopt in the absence of an argument for seeing chapter 22 as incorporating a notion of intension.

Since I cannot work out that argument on this occasion, I want at least to recommend the idea that chapter 22 does not necessarily

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[23] In support of this idea, it is worth noting that at the beginning of chapter 6, Xunzi starts his criticism of the "twelve masters" with the remark "In the current era, there are people who ornament perverse doctrines and embellish vile teachings, such that they disturb and disorder the whole world" (Hutton 2014, 40; HKCS 6/21/10: 假今之世, 飾邪說, 文姦言, 以亂天下). However, the twelve masters are divided into six groups, each of which is criticized on different grounds, and in the case of Hui Shi and Deng Xi, the problem is that they like "to master strange arguments and to play with unusual expressions" (Hutton 2014, 41; HKCS 6/22/4: 治怪說, 玩琦辭). To the extent that this latter criticism is supposed to be a sub-variety of the former, that suggests that Xunzi distinguishes a particular form of philosophical error that involves corruption of language in a distinct way.

represent Xunzi's full conception of naming. However, note that that could be true, even if an argument were provided to show that one can find a notion of intension in chapter 22's account of language, so that there is no inconsistency between that chapter and the examples from chapters 3 and 23 that we have examined. Moreover, it would still remain the case that chapter 22's analysis and rebuttal of the "three confusions" does not capture Xunzi's overall understanding of philosophical error. So, we must be careful about the lessons we want to draw from chapter 22 in these regards, and that is the final suggestion with which I conclude.

■ Submitted: 12 May 2021
Reviewed/revised: 1 July 2021
Accepted: 7 July 2021

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Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture, Vol. 36 (August 2021): 185–192
DOI: 10.22916/jcpc.2020..36.185

Book Review: *Just Hierarchy: Why Social Hierarchies Matter in China and the Rest of the World*

Just Hierarchy: Why Social Hierarchies Matter in China and the Rest of the World by Daniel A. Bell and Pei Wang. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020, 288 pages. $29.95. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780691200897.

Nalei Chen*

This book's title may make the authors sound like time-travelers from the dark ages when hierarchy was widely accepted. Readers who form that impression severely misunderstand them. The authors do not consider all forms of hierarchy justified. In their view, most traditional hierarchies should be rejected in modern societies, despite being commonly endorsed in the past. For instance, we can no longer defend hierarchies based on racism, sexism, and the caste system. As they clarify, "we are all egalitarians who endorse the principle of equality of basic moral and legal status for citizens" (p. 12). If so, what do they intend to argue? Let us start with their negative argument. The authors target the view that "all social relations should be equal" (p. 14). They claim the target view is not feasible, because according to empirical science and history, some forms of hierarchy are inevitable for organizing large-scale communities. Neither is it desirable because eliminating all social hierarchies is utopian and will lead to moral disasters, as history proves (e.g., China's Cultural Revolution).

After rejecting the target view, the authors argue that some hierarchies can be morally justified. Put simply, their overall position can be labeled "progressive conservatism." In acknowledging the value of equality in our modern societies, they are progressive. In regarding some traditional hierarchies as still valuable, they are conservative.

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Thus, they aim mainly to identify which hierarchies are justified and why. When searching for moral justification, the authors do not hope to justify these hierarchies universally. Instead, they argue that if hierarchical relations are justified, they are justified by different hierarchical principles varying by time and place. Therefore, they claim that we should analyze and evaluate different hierarchical relations concerning different contexts. Accordingly, the five chapters of the book each study a different type of hierarchical relation. Hereafter, I will briefly summarize what these relations are and why the authors consider them morally justified.

Chapter 1 discusses hierarchy between intimates. According to the authors, relations among friends operate on the basis that friends have roughly equal status. While friendship is an exception, it is intuitive to think that many other relations with intimates should not follow such a model, and need to include some degree of hierarchy. The authors offer three such cases: relations with lovers, relations with family members, and relations with housekeepers. A degree of hierarchy in these relations can bring many good effects, respectively. Based on the ancient Indian classic, *Kamasutra*, the authors argue that "shifting hierarchies" in sexual activities can help maintain passionate relationships between lovers. Adapting a Confucian perspective, they argue that age-based hierarchy between family members is also justified for various benefits it generates. Likewise, hierarchical relations between employers and housekeepers can be good because they provide householders a positive obligation to treat their housekeepers like family members, which eventually promotes the housekeepers' well-being. Despite these salutary effects, these relations would be morally unpalatable if the hierarchies involved are permanently fixed and lead to ossification of power. The authors realize this problem and argue that these three hierarchies should be shifting. While the shifting can happen more frequently and easily in sexual activities, it takes time or is maybe less likely in the other cases, although the authors believe it can also happen. If so, the problem of ossification can be avoided.

Chapter 2 considers hierarchical political rule. The authors argue that hierarchy between rulers and ruled needs to be justified. In par-

ticular, the authors ask whether political hierarchy can be morally justified without democratic elections in a large community like China. They answer this question affirmatively. Inspired by the ideal of political meritocracy that has influenced Chinese politics for over two thousand years, they argue that "hierarchies between rulers and ruled in such communities are justified if the political system selects and promotes public officials with above-average ability and a willingness to serve the public community over and above their own private and family interests" (p. 18). Nevertheless, they do not think this ideal can be universal, and argue that it might work only in China, which has a strong tradition of elitism. Nor do they argue that political meritocracy is perfect. Political meritocracy may spur many problems, including corruption and ossification. In the rest of the chapter, the authors offer ideas for addressing these problems.

Chapter 3 discusses relations between states. Since the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648, the principle of sovereign equality has become the cornerstone of international order and peace. Although this principle is enshrined internationally, the authors argue that it hardly captures the unequal realities of state relations. Moreover, this principle has its limits when applied. The authors agree that we certainly should still pay lip service to sovereign equality. However, they argue that this is inadequate and we should adopt the ideal of hierarchical global order. In their view, global hierarchy is morally justifiable if it benefits both strong and weak states. However, the authors do not advocate establishing a single world-wide hierarchy to maintain global order, as the traditional Chinese *tianxia* model suggests. They deem this form of cosmopolitanism deeply unrealistic. Instead, they advocate "one world, two hierarchical systems," an ideal where the world is ruled by two main coalitions, "with the United States and China as heads of two regional hierarchies of states" (p. 140). If implemented, they argue, this ideal can promote greater stability globally.

Chapter 4 examines relations between humans and animals. Many contemporary animal ethicists argue that animals are humans' equals and should enjoy equal rights with humans. The authors reject this view and endorse the opposite view—"humans are on top of a moral hierarchy, with the power to dominate animals." Although

they reject treating animals and humans as equals, they claim that humans owe "different levels of moral concern for different kinds of animals, depending on their capacity to suffer and their relations with human beings" (p. 175).

Chapter 5 concerns hierarchy between humans and machines. The authors worry that rapidly developing AI could one day enslave humans to super-intelligent machines. In their view, machines are created to serve our interests and should remain our slaves.

Given the preceding summary, I now offer some evaluation. First, this book excellently reminds us of the role of hierarchical relations in our society. The authors target the view that all social relations should be equal. However, before commenting on their negative program, it is fair to ask: does any contemporary moral/political philosopher defend this view explicitly? Perhaps not. As the authors note, the ideal of equality has become one main theme of Western political theory at least since John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* was published in 1971. While Rawls focuses on equality in distribution narrowly, social egalitarians later broadened their focus and applied the egalitarian ideal to social relations. Charitably understood, they mainly argue that since equality is morally desirable and essential, we should strive to establish a society realizing this ideal as much as possible. However, this does not commit them to saying that all social relations should be equal or no hierarchies should exist.[1] While advocating equality, these philosophers may also realize that how much the ideal of equality can be realized is an empirical question. In the end, perhaps a feasible social program maximizing equality must still include some hierarchies. I do not think a sophisticated social egalitarian would absolutely oppose including some hierarchies in her program.

Whether the authors intend to attribute the target view to any contemporary philosophers is unclear. To be charitable, I will not presume an answer. Although hardly any contemporary philosophers defend

[1] For example, a pacifist advocates world peace and wants to better the world by achieving this ideal as much as possible. However, this does not commit her to the idea that a world without conflicts and wars would be desirable if bringing about such a world involves greater disasters, e.g., eradication of all humans.

the target view, this does not render the authors' project meaningless.[2] Social equality has become a default moral position among many Western societies. Our commitment to the ideal of equality at times risks generating "delusions" that our world can be organized in a completely equal way or without hierarchy, which may engender excessive concern for equality in our actual decision-making. Thus, one of the book's merits is in warning us, or Western readers, of the dangers in this utopian view.[3] As they observe, a large modern society cannot sustain itself without some kinds of hierarchies. If so, radical application of the ideal of equality, unmitigated by other considerations such as the function of hierarchy, can be disastrous.

In striving to identify which hierarchical relations can be morally justified and how so, the authors' methodology has many good points. First, students of East-West comparative philosophy should find this book rather exciting. While the authors mainly derive their ideas from Chinese history and philosophical traditions, they compare them with Western views. They thereby demonstrate vast knowledge of the classical texts of different traditions and put them into conservation coherently. Moreover, the authors display impressive mastery of empirical knowledge about various subjects. Their project is ambitious, since they intend to discuss hierarchical relations in different contexts. However, it is quite noteworthy that they support their arguments with copious empirical evidence from different disciplines, including psychology, sociology, political science, organizational theory, and international relations. Beyond citing extensive empirical evidence, the authors also appeal to personal experiences. For example, when discussing why we should treat our pets with care, they invoke

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[2] Perhaps some radical activists strive to establish a community based on the target view. In this regard, the book is helpful for telling us why such radical movements are dangerous.

[3] Interestingly, they are not alone in criticizing this utopianism. For example, in "The Idea of Equality," Bernard Williams, who is considered a main proponent of resurgent political realism, has a similar position. He cautions that radically applying the ideal of equality (whether as equality of opportunity or equality of respect), without considering how to reconcile it with other factors (e.g., human desires for social prestige), can lead to "a quite inhuman society" or "a futile Utopianism" (Williams 2005, 114).

one author's (Bell's) story about a cat named Didi. Undoubtedly, such stories will make the authors' arguments more accessible to readers unfamiliar with the subjects discussed.

While the book has many other merits that I lack space to discuss, it is also not without problems. I will briefly note a few here. The first problem concerns hierarchy between lovers. In chapter 1, the authors agree that "nighttime hierarchies are problematic from a feminist point of view when lovers habituate themselves to unchanging habits of dominance and subordination, even if the woman is the dominant partner" (p. 38). Their proposed solution is that intimate lovers should engage in role reversals and take turns being dominant. Certainly, as the authors note, someone who was previously oppressed in an unchanging nighttime hierarchy can benefit from this reversal. However, this does not justify nighttime hierarchy if the hierarchy itself is already problematic. Note that I take no personal stance about this nighttime hierarchy involving dominance and subordination.[4] The authors could be right that practice of this hierarchy can help maintain lovers' relationships by bolstering passion or generating empathy. However, this does not entail that the hierarchy is just. To prove it just, the authors need to address some concerns surrounding this hierarchy. My objection derives from the authors' own concern about the negative effects of dominance and subordination. They say, "If 'private' sexual relations between lovers . . . are characterized by male dominance—with the male on top and playing the more active role—it's hard to believe that the psychological effects of male dominance won't be transferred to other realms of social interaction, including daytime interaction between lovers" (p. 37). If the authors worry about negative effects of male dominance, they may also need to worry about negative effects of dominance in general. Thus, although role reversal can shift the power relation between lovers, it does not change the nature of such relations based on dominance. In other words, if habituation in dominance and subor-

[4] As the authors say, even when this hierarchy is voluntary, "its moral and legal implications are not straightforward" (215n36).

dination is bad, then role reversal may merely help both lovers cultivate a disposition toward dominance together, and ultimately foster a bad habit. If so, we need to worry that practicing dominance would negatively impact other interactions. Likewise, this worry also applies to the authors' general appeal to role reversal in their attempt to justify hierarchical relations.

Another problem concerns their views about hierarchies in international relations. In chapter 3, the authors mainly argue how hierarchy among states can be justified. Given their criticism of Zhao Tingyang's ideal *tianxia* system, they are clearly very concerned about feasibility. While they do not offer detailed plans for realizing their proposed hierarchical systems, they do address some thorny issues surrounding their proposal. Here I will not argue that their proposal is infeasible,[5] but raise a different issue they have not explicitly addressed. In their ideal, China should occupy the leading position in East Asia, while neighboring states should defer to its dominant power. The authors argue that such a hierarchy is justifiable if it benefits China and its weaker neighbors mutually. One may worry whether this is merely a moral pretense that China would adopt and whether weaker states' well-being should depend on China's goodwill. Such concern is not unfounded, but assume for a moment that China does have good intentions and wants to benefit the region. My main concern is how China will do it.

To maintain the relationship, China should provide neighboring states with benefits and cultivate a sense of community with them (p. 137). While these "soft" means may win China some "buddies," it is not quite clear whether it can make all its neighbors submissive. Given the complexity of international relations, we may realistically expect that some states would still refuse to accept China's superior status, regardless of China's good efforts. Such resistance may have numerous possible causes. For instance, neighboring states may refuse to defer to China because of national pride, which, one might

[5] Given China's rise and current China-United States relations, something like what they propose may come about in the future, although how and to what degree that can be morally justified remains unclear.

argue, is not very prudential.[6] Then what should China do? China could ignore these defiant states. However, tolerating defiance may bring consequences: if a precedent is set and no punishment inflicted for defiance, other weak countries may disobey China when they see fit in the future. If so, one may worry how long this hierarchy can last. Or, China could take action. However, since these states are unmoved by "moral" means, what else can China do? Since the authors desire a moral justification, their justification cannot be "Might makes right." Neither can it be considered moral if China uses its economic policies to coerce these states into submission. A hierarchy of authority within the region may foster peace and order, but if maintained through realpolitik and oppression, we may worry whether the end justifies the means.

Overall, this book is empirically informative, interesting, and thought-provoking. However, as I think the authors would agree, it is only the beginning of an ambitious project, and many relevant topics are not covered thoroughly. That said, we should look forward to their future explorations.

REFERENCES

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[6] Other reasons can include historical conflicts, divergence of essential national interests, etc. Here I lack space to discuss whether it is immoral for weaker states to refuse to accept China's power, if the hierarchy is indeed morally justified.