

Chapter 4

Modern and Contemporary Chinese Confucian Studies

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1. Introduction

This report presents research articles—along with a comprehensive analysis of the research outcomes—on studies of modern and contemporary Chinese Confucianism, published in 2020 in South Korea. The search criteria included articles published in journals registered in the Korean Citation Index(KCI) of the National Research Foundation(NRF) and doctoral theses at individual universities.

The search period was set from January to December 2020. Articles were selected from registered as well as registration candidate journals. These were: 25 philosophy journals, four Confucian studies journals, one humanities journal, and one Chinese language and literature journal.

In 2020, a total of 16 research articles and theses covering topics related to “modern and contemporary Chinese Confucianism studies” were published. For a clear overview, they are categorized according to scholar and topic, as enlisted in the following section.

2. List of Articles (Scholars and Topics)

- 1 Kim, Woo-hyung: National Learning of Liang Qi-chao and Formation of “Chinese Philosophy” (*Philosophical Studies* (61), 2020)
- 2 Seung Woo An: Comparison of Kang Yu-wei and Lee Byung-hun’s Analysis of the Zhongyong – Focusing on the Equivalence of the Theory of Confucianism as a Religion – (*THE STUDY OF CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE* (82), 2020)
- 3 Chun, Byung-don; Roh, Byung-ryul: Comparative Study of Yiching by Ma Yifu and Xiong Shili (*Journal of Korean Philosophical Society* (155), 2020)
- 4 Chun, Byung-don: A Study on Xiong Shili’s Theory of Substance and

- Function in I Ching (*Studies in Confucianism* (51), 2020)
- 5) Chun, Byung-don: He-Lin's Neo Confucianism Study – Focusing on Zhuxi Studies – (*YANG-MING STUDIES* (58), 2020)
 - 6) Chun, Byung-don: A Study of He-Lin's Lu-Wang Mind Theory (*YANG-MING STUDIES* (59), 2020)
 - 7) Yun Ji Won: Universe, Human, and Life – A study on Fang Dongmei's Philosophy Thought –(*THE STUDY OF CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE* (81), 2020)
 - 8) Lee, Cheol Seung: The Signification and Problems of Moral Idealism in Mou Zongsan's Philosophy (*THE STUDY OF CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE* (81), 2020)
 - 9) Hwang Jong-won: Contemplation on the Ideals for Rural Reconstruction and Principle on Political Ideology of Liang Shu-ming – Focusing on Issues Related to Traditional Confucianism and Modernization – (*THE STUDY OF CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE* (80), 2020)
 - 10) Lee, Younseung: Hu-Shi's Understanding of Confucius (*CHUNG KUK HAK PO* (93), 2020)
 - 11) Jung, Byung-seok: Lizehou's Doctrine of Historical Ontology and Philosophy of Human Being (*Journal of Eastern Philosophy* (103), 2020)
 - 12) Han, Sung gu: The Formation of Modern “Li(理)” Ideas – From “Heavenly Principle (天理)” to “Axiom(公理)” (*Journal of Eastern Philosophy* (104), 2020)
 - 13) Han, Sung gu: The Substance of Debate between Old and New in Modern China (*Journal of Eastern Philosophy* (101), 2020)
 - 14) Doil Kim: How Can Confucian Study Explain and Criticize Reality in Contemporary Korean Society? (*THE STUDY OF CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE* (101), 2020)
 - 15) Keong-ran Cho: The Political Perception of the Chinese Neo-

Confucianist and the “Legitimacy of History” of the Xi Jinping Regime – The Déjà vu of the Chinese Empire and Problems of Otherness (*THE STUDY OF CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE* (81), 2020)

16 Yim, Choonsung: Criticism of Sun Ge’s East Asian Cognition (*CHUNG KUK HAK PO* (93), 2020)

The modern age, in China, spans the period from the late Qing to the early Republican eras. In Chinese academic history, the Spring and Autumn Period (Chunqiu 春秋, Warring States Period) and the Republican era are recognized as the two most prominent periods that produced famous masters and masterpieces. As the saying goes, heroes emerge in times of tribulation; it was amid immense pain and fear pertaining to major social transformations in China that great literary works depicting the troubled times were produced. Among the prominent figures active during the modern age in China, those who have attracted considerable academic attention—in terms of the number of research articles published—in Korea include: Kang Youwei (康有為), Liang Qi-chao (梁啟超), Yan Fu (嚴復), Zhang Taiyan (章太炎), Liang Shuming (梁漱溟), Ma Yifu (馬一浮), and He Lin (賀麟). In 2020, a wider spectrum of scholars was covered, including Hu Shi (胡適), an outstanding philosopher of the New Cultural Movement, and Li Zehou (李澤厚), acclaimed as the ideological driver of the Chinese Democracy Movement.

Liang Qi-chao (梁啟超) is a significant name, frequently mentioned in discussions about the Republican era. Kim Woo-hyung’s article “National Learning of Liang Qi-chao and Formation of Chinese Philosophy” investigates how Liang Qi-chao engineered “Chinese philosophy”: “Liang Qi-chao strived to form ‘Chinese philosophy’ that contrasts with Western philosophy. He presented a methodology that revealed the characteristics of ‘Chinese philosophy’ by comparing it with Western philosophy, and

ultimately aimed to fuse it with Western philosophy. (...) While being critical of Han learning (hanxue 漢學, philological research of Qing Dynasty), he held on to the position favoring Song Neo-Confucianism (songxue 宋學) and embodied his project of ‘Chinese philosophy’ by interpreting the philosophy of Immanuel Kant in his own way. (...) In conclusion, Liang Qi-chao’s project of ‘Chinese philosophy’ can be evaluated as an original and pioneering endeavor to launch modern Chinese philosophy including New Confucianism, and has great implications not only for Chinese *Philosophy Researchers* but also for East Asian *Philosophy Researchers*.”

As is well-known, Kang Youwei (康有為) was Liang Qi-chao’s teacher. An Seung-woo turns the spotlight on Kang Youwei’s Theory of Confucianism as a Religion in his article “Comparison of Kang Yu-wei and Lee Byung-hun’s Analysis of the Zhongyong – Focusing on the Similarities and Differences in the Theory of Confucianism as a Religion.” He uses Zhongyong (中庸) to compare Kang Youwei’s (康有為, 1858–1927) religionization of Confucianism with its Korean counterpart pursued by Joseon Confucianist Lee Byung-hun (李炳憲, 1870–1940): “Lee Byung-hun was a Korean Confucian scholar during the Japanese occupation period and was influenced by Kang Yu-wei in steering the Confucian religionization movement as part of his goal of Confucian reform and practice. Consequently, similarities between their views of Confucian classics and restoration, underlying their Confucian religionization movement, are apparent. For example, both attached importance to Geummungyeong (Jinwenjing 今文經 Modern Texts) and restoring Confucius as a religious leader, as key tasks of Confucian restoration. However, despite these keynote similarities, the two thinkers differ in terms of perspective and focus. In particular, the similarities and differences in their interpretation of Zhongyong reflect those in the theory of Confucian religionization.”

Chun Byung-don has actively published articles on modern and contemporary Chinese philosophers, alongside papers examining Joseon Yangmyeonghak (Hagokhak), over the past years. This year, he published four articles (one of them co-authored with Roh Byung-ryul): “Comparative Study of Yiching by Ma Yifu and Xiong Shili,” “A Study on Xiong Shili's Theory of Substance and Function in I Ching,” “He-Lin's Neo Confucianism Study – Focusing on Zhuxi Studies,” and “A Study of He-Lin's Lu-Wang Mind Theory.” The scholars covered in these articles include Ma Yifu (賀麟). Chun Byung-don has published on these three philosophers earlier as well.

Chun Byung-don appraises Ma Yifu's Yiching interpretation as follows: “Ma Yifu (馬一浮) attached importance to both images and numbers (象數易) as well as meaning and principle (義理易) in his overall approach to Yijing. In 義理易, he highly valued Yichuan (易傳) by Cheng Yichuan (程伊川), and in 象數易, Zhu Xi's Study of the Changes (Yixue qimeng 易學啟蒙).” Regarding Xiong Shili (熊十力), he notes: “The fundamental question in Xiong Shili's philosophy is how to define the relationship between ‘substance’ and ‘function.’ Substance generally transcends phenomena and is determined as an objective and immutable entity. In contrast, Xiong Shili's substance is a permanent flow (生生不已) of dynamic substance. In Zhuzixue (朱子學), function is in the realm of physics and controlled by li (理) and ephemeral (Buddhistic perspective). For Xiong Shili, however, function is the function of substance itself. In other words, function is not independent of substance, but function itself is substance. This characterizes Xiong Shili's Theory of Substance and Function, differentiating it from conventional substance-function theories. Xiong Shili has established his own theory of substance and proved its theoretical validity in the light of Yijing.”

He Lin (賀麟) is acclaimed as an important scholar of New Confucianism in Mainland China. As is well-known, he studied in

Germany and is a Hegel expert and translator. If Feng Youlan (馮友蘭) asserted Xinlixue (新理學) and advocated Zhuzixue (朱子學), He Lin asserted Xinxinixue (新心學) and advocated Luwangxue (陸王學). Chun Byung-don evaluates He Lin's Zhuzixue as follows: "In He Lin's philosophy, 朱子學 and 象山學 occupy a substantial part of the content of his philosophical system. According to He Lin, Zhu Xi's Taiji has two meanings. First, it refers to the li of heaven and earth. Second, Taiji refers to the whole of the combination of xin (心 mind) and li (理 principle), or the state of sophistication. Regarding the Intuition Theory of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty (宋儒), He Lin divided intuition into two components: careful observance with intellectual sympathy (同情) and perfection (完美) with intellectual love. Further, he subdivided the former into 'external observation' and 'internal observation,' defining the former as 'perspective intuition,' and the latter as 'reflective intuition.' Zhu Xi's intuition is 'perspective intuition.' I borrowed the methodology of perspective intuition and called it gewu qiongli (格物窮理) style intuition (investigation of the principles of phenomena to obtain the full comprehension of the ultimate principle). What He Lin sought to claim with these two discussions was xinli-heyi (心理合一, xin 心 is not different from li 理). However, his insufficient understanding of xin, a core concept of Zhu Xi's philosophy, 心理合一 the He Lin attributed to Zhu Xi and the state of 心理合一 of taiji do not match the philosophy of Zhuzixue. From this, it may be assumed that He Lin did not achieve his purpose of establishing his own philosophy through Neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty (宋儒)."

Chun Byung-don's evaluation of He Lin's Luwangxue (陸王學) is as follows: "(1) Mind 心: He Lin limited the meaning of xin (心 mind) in xinjili (心即理 mind is principle) to the logical mind, and pursued the integration of theoretical reason, practical reason, the subjective perception of Kantian epistemology, and the subject of moral judgment

and execution of Luwangxin (陸王心學) as one single concept of xin. (2) Intuition (zhijue 直覺): He Lin divided Xiangshan's intuition into two types: passive intuition (not reading 不讀書) and active intuition (benxin-huifu 本心回復 recovery of pristine mind). However, Xiangshan's reading (讀書) is an auxiliary means of recovering the pristine mind. Therefore, Xiangshan's Intuition should not be divided into passive and active components. However, it is reasonable to define the active intuitive mode as benxin-huifu (本心回復). (3) Unity of Knowledge and Action (zhixingheyi 知行合一): He-Lin identified Wang Yangming's zhixingheyi as 'a natural unity of knowledge and action.' Yangmingistic intuitive knowledge is moral realization, which is manifested as moral practice. However, moral realization does not always lead to moral practice. This is where zhiliangzhi (致良知 supreme conscience) comes in. He Lin's line of thought is as follows: learning 致 begins with reflection and realization; reflection and realization are not physiological actions; pristine moral mind referred to in Confucian philosophy is 'a moral free will of absolute goodness;' herein lies the fundamental difference between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy. In this respect, He Lin's interpretation of Songming Confucianism from the perspective of Western philosophy is called Geyi Confucianism (格義儒學)."

Fang Dongmei (方東美) is a prominent scholar who prepared the groundwork for the Department of Philosophy at the National University of Taiwan. Yun Ji-won presents his life and philosophy in her article "Universe, Human and Life – A Study on Fang Dongmei's Philosophy Thought."

After China became Communist, many free-thinking Confucian scholars escaped from Mainland China. For example, Fang Dongmei took a position at the National University of Taiwan where he taught the next-generation of Taiwanese Confucian scholars. However, Mou Zongsan (牟宗三) failed to find a firm foothold and lived a nomadic kind of life.

Nevertheless, his philosophy is now the most influential force in the Taiwanese academia.

In the article “The Signification and Problems of Moral Idealism in Mou Zongsan’s Philosophy,” Lee Cheol-seung summarizes the shortcomings of Mou Zongsan’s philosophy as follows: “Mou Zongsan needs to come up with a thorough argument about how an objective world of facts unrelated to value can emerge in a world of *a priori* appropriateness, considering that the issue of fact and value and logical consistency of the relationship between ‘is’ (Sein) and ‘ought’ (Sollen) is an important area of measuring academic rigor. In addition, Mou Zongsan must demonstrate with rigor how an imperfect and not-good presence can emerge in a mind filled with goodness and perfect liangzhi (良知 knowledge of goodness). Although he uses the logic of ‘self-abnegation’ in this context, it has yet to be supplemented because the liangzhi of the perfectly good self is already a flawless entity and not-good cannot arise from it. If it does, liangzhi can no longer be an absolute goodness.”

Liang Shuming (梁漱溟) is another prominent figure related to Mainland China’s New Confucianism. He championed cultural fusion of Eastern and Western philosophy in the 1920s, and turned his ideal into practice in the 1930s through the Village Community Movement. He is also famous for staying in Communist China and courageously admonishing the Communist Party. Hwang Jong-won discusses Liang Shuming’s Village Community Movement in his article “Contemplation on the Ideals for Rural Reconstruction and Principle on Political Ideology of Liang Shu-ming – Focusing on Issues Related to Traditional Confucianism and Modernization.” He pinpointed abstraction (sanman 散漫) as the most conspicuous property of the Chinese rural society and attributed it to China being an ethics-centered society in contrast to Western collectivistic society. He defined Chinese ethics as ethics of righteousness (情誼), which is based on altruism and duties, and

regarded the ethics of righteousness as the most valuable spiritual asset of Confucianism. However, he attempted to pioneer a China-style modernization by organizing the rural community that suffered from moral laxity because of adopting Western collectivism.

Hu Shi (胡適) spearheaded the May Fourth New Cultural Movement, remaining deeply involved with its cultural aspects during the Republican era. Although a genuine cultural giant, Hu Shi is also criticized for being a fake Junzi (君子 noble man) for his opposition to the coexistence with Kuomintang of Jiang Jieshi (蔣介石). In the article “Hu-Shi’s Understanding of Confucius,” Lee Youn-seung traces how Confucius was understood by Hu Shi, a self-professed adamant proponent of “Total Westernization” who intended to abolish the traditional Chinese culture: “In his late 20s, Hu Shi described Confucius as a philosopher with a methodology based on the historical viewpoint of Chinese philosophy. In his mid-40s, however, he transformed the image of Confucius from the perspective of cultural and religious history to a leader of the revival movement of Confucian tradition and a cultural eclecticist. From his 50s onward, he made Confucius an educator with a conviction in equality and democracy from a political viewpoint with a comparative scrutiny of Eastern and Western cultures.”

In the late 1980s, when the Mainland’s Democracy Movement was at its peak, Li Zehou was among its chief ideologues. Jung Byung-seok, in his article “Li Zehou’s Doctrine of Historical Ontology and Philosophy of Human Being,” discusses “a doctrine of historical ontology,” which is a key concept of Li Zehou’s late-phase philosophy: “The ‘philosophy of human beings’ as mentioned by Li Zehou is a philosophy that puts human being in the center of philosophy. What it means is the ‘subjectivity of mankind’ toward objective Nature. Here, Li Zehou brings forth his unique philosophical system, ‘adoctrineofhistoricalontology’ (歷史本體論) by which humans are connected to historical ontology. From this position,

the center of his philosophy can only be humans and human history. Therefore, philosophy should first establish the order for humans to return to their fated life and then return to the fundamental proposition that ‘humans are alive.’”

Han Sung-gu, a prolific researcher of modern and contemporary Chinese philosophy, is presently working on a Dankook University project on modern and contemporary Chinese philosophers. In 2020, he published two articles: “The Formation of Modern ‘Li (理)’ Ideas – From ‘Heavenly Principle’ (天理) to ‘Axiom’ (公理)” and “The Substance of Debate between Old and New in Modern China.” The change of the meaning of li (理) is presented as follows: “One aspect of the modern transformation of the category and concept was traced, focusing on the interpretation of the category of the ‘Li’ by Meiji (明治) Japanese enlightenment scholar Nishi Amane (西周) who contributed greatly to the translation and creation of Western literature during the modern era and on the content of ‘Interpretation of Li’ (釋理) written by modern Chinese scholar Wang Guowei (王國維). Nishi and Wang realized bitterly the damage done to the traditional ideal of li and tried to remove the ethical and metaphysical connotations, influenced by the positivist trend that was rising at the time, the introduction of Western logic, specialization in the academic disciplines, and the approaches to understanding humans. This position contributed considerably to the transition from ‘Heavenly Principle’ (天理) to ‘Axiom’ (公理) and to the modern transformation of traditional notions of East Asian traditional ideas and the formation of modern ideas.”

Kim Do-il and Cho Kyeong-ran proposed a realistic approach to today’s China. In the article “How can Confucian Study Explain and Criticize Reality in Contemporary Korean Society: Comparison of the Trends of the Recent Confucian Studies in Mainland China and Korea,” Kim Do-il analyzed the characteristics and methodologies of studying Confucianism

in Korea through interpreting and reflecting upon contemporary research trends of Chinese philosophy in Chinese-speaking countries.

Cho Kyeong-ran's article "The Political Perception of the Chinese Neo-Confucianist and the 'Legitimacy of History' of the Xi Jinping Regime – The déjà vu of the Chinese Empire and Problems of Otherness," seeks to capture contemporary China's rapid change. Cho is an eastern philosopher who analyzes and explains the situation, focusing on the reality of China through a philosophical lens. Her 2020 article shows, "as is," the exposed limit of Chinese Confucianism.

On the historicity of Confucianism, Cho notes: "The Modern or New Confucianism in China is not much apart from the traditional existence of noblemen. The State and intellectuals are constantly trying to take advantage of each other. Chinese intellectuals seek to win the support of the State to reach a position to lead the future of China, as they did in the past. They play the role of both supporters and critics of the government." On Confucianism in contemporary China, she argues: "Nevertheless, the excess of the awareness of misfortunes toward the State expressed by the New Confucianism in China has resulted in their departure from universality of Confucianism. This is also closely associated with the conclusion of the discourse on the 20th century as perceived by New Confucianists, which allowed the appearance of 'Confucianism trapped by the State.' This is attributable to their 'seizor attitude' toward Confucianism. This attitude, since then, has frustrated the objectification of and distancing from Confucian culture and Chinese Confucianism. This unintended result led to the dwarfing of Confucianism as well as de-universalization and nationalization of Confucianism." In relation to the problem engendered by this phenomenon, Cho points out: "What the New Confucianists such as Jiang Qing (江青) did not recognize, however, is that the legitimacy of rule of the Communist Party officially originates from Marxism as long as the Communist Party exists. To get out of this

ideological frame would mean the collapse of the ruling ideology, which is part of the iron triangle of Party officials, Marxism, and the People's Liberation Army established by Mao Zedong." Cho's appraisal of China's current situation is as follows: "The Xi Jinping administration believes that Communist rule should be sustained under the ideology of Marxism. In 2017, the Communist Party of China declared that it would compete with the West with 'Sinicization of Marxism' raising the claim of 'socialist idea of Chinese characteristics in the new era of Xi Jinping.'" As for the constructive direction to be taken by the Chinese Confucianism, Cho advises: "Tianxia (天下 world or worldview) should be reconsidered on the premise that the spirit of the May Fourth New Cultural Movement 100 years ago resurges, which would ensure China's otherness and ethics. The absence of otherness and ethics could set off a more purposeful and totalitarian direction in the course of the ongoing reconstruction of the system of the New-Chinese Empire."

Sun Ge (孙歌), an East Asian affairs expert, is a renowned intellectual critical of China. It is particularly impressive that he was ideologically baptized by the so-called Japanese critical intellectuals through Confucianism. In the article "Criticism of Sun Ge's East Asian Cognition," Yim Choon-sung presents the situation: "Through her studies in Japan, Sun Ge contributed to the Sino-Japanese academic exchanges by presenting the achievements of Japan's critical intellectuals, including Takeuchi Yoshimi (竹内好), Maruyama Masao (丸山眞男), and Mizoguchi Yujo (溝口雄三). Particularly influenced by Takeuchi Yoshimi's 'Asia as a Method,' she presented the proposition, 'East Asia's View of the Cold War Structure,' raising issues such as 'entering history' and 'the attitude of critical intellectuals' in the 'East Asian' arena of knowledge."

3. Analysis and Review of Major Articles

Xiong Shili (熊十力) is regarded as the teacher of Mou Zongsan (牟宗三), Xu Fuguan (徐復觀), and Tang Junyi (唐君毅): the three leading contemporary Neo-Confucianists, who were favorable for Yangmingism. In particular, Mou Zongsan dealt with Zhuzixue as a collateral line, claiming the orthodoxy of Yangmingism. Among the various reasons for their positive position toward Yangmingism, the influence of their teacher—a proponent of Yangmingism—was paramount. His Theory of Substance and Function, which contains the argumentative frame for his criticism of Zhu Xi's xinjili (心即理 mind is principle), is a masterpiece.

Chun Byung-don provided an orderly overview of this argument in his article “A Study on Xiong-shili’s Theory of Substance and Function in I Ching”: “In Zhuzixue (朱子學), function is in the realm of physics and controlled by li (里), and ephemeral (Buddhistic perspective). For Xiong Shili, however, function is the function of substance itself. In other words, it is not a function independent of substance, but the function itself is also the substance. This characterizes Xiong Shili’s Theory of Substance and Function (體用論), differentiating itself from the conventional substance-function theories.” This is also the content ferociously debated over by Wang Ji (王畿) and Nie-Bao (聶豹) during the Liangzhilun (良知論) Debate in Yangmingxue (Yangming School of Thought). Wang Ji advocated the idea of substance and function being identical (即體即用), and Nie-Bao supported the idea of first substance then function (先體後用). Wang Ji’s 即體即用 coincides with Xiong Shili’s 體用論. Likewise, Chun Byung-don used Zhongyong to explain Xiong Shili’s 體用論: “Xiong Shili has established his own theory of substance and proved its theoretical validity in the light of Yijing (易學). Therefore, Xiong Shili’s Yijing belongs to the realm of the Moral Principle Theory of Yijing, Taiji as substance is mysterious, dynamic, and formless, and is the origin of everything

existing and happening in the world characterized by a permanent flow. As such, Xiong Shili accepted only one source in terms of substance. This Substance moves because it is neither immutable nor immovable. The pattern of this movement is mysterious and unpredictable. However, it is manifested unexpectedly as one of two constant aspects, that is, becoming all of a sudden Yin and Yang (一陰一陽), open and closed (一翕一闔), benevolent and righteous (一仁一義), and strong and suddenly soft (一剛一柔). The Substance reveals itself according to the law of reciprocal rejection and completion (相反相成).” Thus, Chun has successfully characterized Xiong Shili’s 體用論.

Kim Do-il’s article “How Can Confucian Study Explain and Criticize Reality in Contemporary Korean Society: Comparison of the Trends of the Recent Confucian Studies in Mainland China and Korea” covers a challenging and problematic topic. Criticizing or advocating past mistakes or achievements requires insight; connecting a given situation and Confucianism requires both insight and determination.

In this respect, Kim Do-il states: “My ultimate focus throughout this paper is the question of how Confucian studies can be critical of the given situation. At least in terms of political ideology, Confucian studies have secured a new space in the recent research trends in Korea. As mentioned previously, future research on Confucianism will have to provide various ways of understanding the multifarious concepts of the Confucian tradition, both negative and positive, from the perspective of ‘Confucianism as a spirit’ and based on a rigorous interpretation of the related Confucian texts. In doing so, the ultimate goal should not be the theoretical coherence within the Confucian tradition or the possibility of sufficient concordance with Western theories, but rather the maintenance of a clear awareness of the reality object it is trying to explain and criticize in modern-day Korea. Only after sufficient research outcomes gained at the proximity of reality are accumulated, it will

be possible to rethink the fundamental values that our society should pursue.” Going a step further, he specifies his position: “I doubt whether orientalism can be overcome by declaratively presenting Chinese or Asian values, which are characteristically distinct from Western values, and by fighting over theoretical scrutiny and hegemony. Even if that is possible, it should be preceded by a fundamental search for universal values that can be interpreted in light of our reality. It cannot be claimed that this fundamental search has been conducted in earnest in the recently published studies in Korea mentioned above. These studies are still at the level of discussing the values established in the 1980s and 1990s in the discourse of Confucian capitalism and Confucian democracy right after accepting the Western values such as human rights, democracy, or equality. Having said that, these studies still belong to the opposite side of the struggle for universality championed by the Mainland’s New Confucianists. Instead, Korean-style studies need to aim for a fundamental reconsideration of universal values that can dispense with the structure of the struggle.” Then, what to do? Let us listen to what Kim Do-il has to say: “For example, we have to guard against falling into the trap of choice between human rights and harmony mentioned in Section 3 for convenience’s sake, and contrive ways and means to make it possible that these opposing values leverage each other to create new fundamental values in our given situation taking into account the multi-layered nature of Korean modernity. To reach this level of interpretation, it is necessary to accumulate more research outcomes on Confucian studies explored in close proximity to the reality of Korea.” Although Kim Do-il’s claims and visions are progressive, they are still searching in the dark. This is similar to my confusion upon reading those scholars who tend to provide a positive evaluation of Confucian studies to make it practicable in the present context.

4. Evaluation and Outlook

In 2020, 16 research articles and theses on “Modern and Contemporary Chinese Confucianism Studies” were published, compared to 10 in 2019, and four in 2018. Moreover, the range of topics covered has expanded over the years. In line with the recent research trend—that is, scholar-based classification of articles—famous scholars such as Kang Youwei (康有為), Liang Qi-chao (梁啟超), Yan Fu (嚴復), Zhang Taiyan (章太炎), Liang Shuming (梁漱溟), Ma Yifu (馬一浮), and He Lin (賀麟) were covered in 2020. Additionally, a wider spectrum of scholars was covered, including Hu Shi (胡適), an outstanding philosopher of the New Cultural Movement, and Li Zehou (李澤厚), the ideological driver of the Chinese Democracy Movement. In 2020, a significantly larger number of articles were published compared to previous years. Acknowledging that this quantitative increase reflects the number of articles produced annually by appointed researchers, as part of a project, establishes that more and more articles on modern and contemporary Chinese philosophy are being published. I sincerely hope for more research on modern and contemporary Korean scholars along with their Chinese counterparts.