

Chapter 4

Qing Dynasty Thought Studies

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of an analysis and review of the research outcomes of Qing Dynasty Confucian studies published in South Korea in 2021 including master's and doctoral theses and research papers. Eligible research papers were those published in the journals registered (including those under review for registration) in the Korean Citation Index (KCI). A literature search was performed using the Research Information Sharing Service (RISS) of the Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS) and the Korean Studies Information Service System (KISS) of the Korean Studies Information (KSI).

Qing Dynasty Confucianism has a limited scope of period due to its special historical background. The first problem posed in this context is which period should be applied to the scholars who were active in the transition period of late-Ming/early-Qing. This problem is complicated by the fact that the Opium War of 1840 is generally considered to be the turning point ushering in the modern era in China. Therefore, the scope of Confucianism in the Qing Dynasty was considered from the founding of the Qing Dynasty (1616) to the Opium War, and the late-Ming/early-Qing Confucian scholars were categorized as Qing Confucian scholars.

Only 10 papers were published on Qing Confucianism in 2021; they are all research papers with no master's or doctoral degree theses produced in 2021, although this represents an increase compared to the three papers in 2020 (two on Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 and one on Yan Yuan 顏元). Five out of ten papers cover philosophical topics, and most of the scholars covered in these papers are late-Ming/early-Qing Confucianists (five papers on Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, one on Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, and two on Gu Yanwu 顧炎武).

The ten papers are listed below.

1. Kim, Jin Kun, A study of Wang Fuzhi's commentary on Mumanggoe 无妄卦 and criticisms of Taoist and Buddhist thought in Juyeokoejeon, *The Journal of Asian Philosophy in Korea*, No. 56
2. Bae, Da-bin, A critical approach to the thought relationship between Confucians of the Qing dynasty and Xunzi - Focusing on Qian Daxian's understanding of Xunzi and the intrinsic consistency of Xunzi and Dai zhen's human nature theory, *Studies in*

Philosophy East-West, No. 101

3. Seo, Sung, A study on the relationship between “Pratyaksa” and “Poetic Imagination” in Wang Fuzhi’s poetic theory, *Chinese Culture Studies*, No. 54
4. An, Gwang Ho, An analysis of Dibiao in the writings of Gu Yanwu, *The Chung Kuk Hak Po*, Vol. 96
5. Lee, SangEun, Hwang Jong-hee, Writing is also responsible for the rise and fall of the world, *Korean Industrial Chemistry News*, Vol. 24 No. 1
6. Lee, SangEun, Goyeommu, a new wind of Silhak, *Korean Industrial Chemistry News*, Vol. 24 No. 2
7. Lee, SangEun, Wang Buji dreams of a new world with the philosophy of qi, *Korean Industrial Chemistry News*, Vol. 24 No. 3
8. Lee, JunKyung, The moral educational meaning of *Zhongyong* (中庸) “sindok (慎獨)” - Focusing on Wang Fu-ji’s understanding of *Zhongyong* (中庸) -, *Journal of Moral & Ethics*, No. 73
9. Lee, Cheol Seung, The issue of the theory of human nature between Wang Fuzhi’s and Jeong Yak-yong’s Philosophies, *Journal of Eastern Philosophy*, Vol. 108
10. Jeong, Bin-Na, A study on the interaction between “Flesh and Blood (血氣)” and “The Faculty of the Understanding (心知)” in Dai Zhen’s (戴震) Thoughts, *The Study of Confucianism*, Vol. 85

As shown in the list above, five papers cover the category of philosophy, two of literature and history, and the remaining three papers introduce philosophers in a column style. Therefore, classification by topic is omitted in this study, and the papers are classified under each philosopher. Reviews will be made on papers pertaining to philosophy.

2. Classification by scholar

When classified by scholar, the 10 papers on Qing Confucianism are categorized under the following scholars: Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (five papers), Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (one), Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (two), and Dai Zhen 戴震 (two).

1) Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (five papers)

As mentioned above, research outcomes regarding Qing Confucianism are quantitatively inferior to other periods, and they are overly concentrated on three late-Ming/early-Qing scholars: Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武. Wang Fuzhi, in particular, still attracts the majority of research on Qing Confucianism. Philosophy-related studies on Wang Fuzhi have constantly maintained a high proportion: four papers in 2018, five in 2019, two in 2020. In 2021 as well, out of five papers on Wang Fuzhi, three cover philosophical topics, one literature, and one

miscellaneous topics.

What deserves particular attention is Professor Lee Sangeun's article, "Wang Buji dreams of a new world with the philosophy of qi." Although this is not a research paper in the strict sense of the term, it is all the more significant as it was published in the *Korean Industrial Chemistry News* hosted by the Korean Society of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry. It appears that the paper was designed to introduce philosophical imagination to people in the field of science and technology (S&T). This kind of project is important with regard to the converging humanities and S&T, and more efforts will have to be put into promoting such projects.

One of the three philosophy-related papers, authored by Lee Junkyung, a high school teacher, explores the meaning of sindok 慎獨 as used by Wang Fuzhi in his commentary to Zhongyong 中庸 (Doctrine of the Mean) from the perspective of ethics education. The remaining two papers were authored by Prof. Kim Jinkun and Prof. Lee Cheolseung. Prof. Kim's main research area is Wang Fuzhi's commentary on Zhouyi 周易 (Book of Changes). He is a prolific researcher, and his papers on Wang Fuzhi include two papers in 2020. Prof. Lee Cheolseung earned his PhD with a thesis on Wang Fuzhi and has published many additional papers on this philosopher.

Prof. Seo Sung's paper examines Wang Fuzhi's poems with special reference to the Buddhist epistemological concept of "pratyaksa" and its association with "poetic imagination" and thus fall into the category of literature.

2) Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (one paper)

Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695) has attracted considerable attention as a late-Ming/early-Qing scholar well-known as the disciple of Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578–1645), who is credited with producing a compendium of Ming Confucianism. He is particularly famous for Mingru-xue-an 明儒學案, a history of Ming-period Confucian philosophy, and Mingyidaifanglu 明夷待訪錄, a political treatise proclaiming his revolutionary stance and political philosophy. From his scholarly caliber and politico-philosophical position, it can be easily assumed that Huang Zongxi would attract much research attention. However, astonishingly little research has been dedicated to Huang Zongxi in Korea. A literature search in RISS yielded only one paper each in 2017, 2018, and 2021. The article published in 2021 is not a research paper but a column presented in a chemistry journal hosted by the Korean Society of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry for the purpose of briefly introducing Huang Zongxi to the community engaged in S&T. Mingyidaifanglu 明夷待訪錄, for example, has attributes that should attract the interest of researchers in the fields of political science or history, if not philosophy, but this work has yet to be discovered by Korean academics. It is incumbent on our generation of Confucian researchers to bring this work to the fore.

3) Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (two papers)

Research outcomes regarding Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 are also quite meager: two papers in 2017, one in 2018, no papers in 2019 or 2020. The three papers published do not cover philosophical topics but instead cover Gu Yanwu poems in their association with Korean scholars; for example, “Yeoncheon Hong Seokju’s literary view and Gu Yanwu’s influence.” No papers have yet been published on Gu Yanwu’s philosophy, including the two papers published on Gu Yanwu in 2021. This lack of research interest in Korea is also astonishing and disappointing. As is widely known, Gu Yanwu is a spearhead figure of Practical Learning (實學) who paved the way for statecraft for people’s well-being (經世致用) and the founder of Qing’s bibliographical study (考證學). In view of this, this lack of interest in Gu Yanwu is all the more regrettable, as dozens of papers are published on Silhak in Korean Confucian studies.

Two papers were published on Gu Yanwu in 2020, but one covers a historical topic and the other is the aforementioned journal column series by Prof. Lee Sangeun.

4) Dai Zhen 戴震 (two papers)

Except for the top three late-Ming/early-Qing scholars (Wang Fuzhi, Huang Zongxi, and Gu Yanwu), names associated with Qing philosophy are Yan Yuan 顏元, Li Gong 李塨, and Dai Zhen 戴震 of the Yan-Li School (顏李學派), which is famous for pragmatism. Despite their prestige in the history of Qing Confucianism, little research has been dedicated to Dai Zhen and still less to Yan Yuan and Li Gong in Korea. The two papers on Dai Zhen in 2021 are rather an exception that confirms the rule, considering that the recent years (2017 to 2020) have witnessed no papers on Qing Confucianism except for the aforementioned top three scholars. This is a serious problem facing the research field of Eastern philosophy in Korea that is yet to be addressed.

I find some consolation in the fact that the two papers on Dai Zhen are pure philosophical studies: a comparative study (Bae Dabin) and a study focusing on Dai Zhen (Jeong Binna).

3. Analysis and Review of Major Papers

(1) Papers on Wang Fuzhi 王夫之

1) Kim, Jin Kun, A study of Wang Fuzhi’s commentary on Mumanggoe 無妄卦 and criticisms of Taoist and Buddhist thoughts in Juyeokoejeon

Kim Jinkun earned his PhD with a thesis on Wang Fuzhi’s commentary on Zhouyi 周易 (Book of Changes). As one of a few Wang Fuzhi researchers in Korea, he has continuously published papers on this philosopher – for example, “A study of Wang Fu-Zhi’s Bi Goe 否卦 commentary” in 2020. In 2021 as well, he published a paper on

mumanggoe 无妄卦 of Juyeokoejeon 周易外傳, doing justice to his reputation as an experienced researcher of Wang Fuzhi's Zhouyi (Book of Changes).

In this paper, the author analyzes the implications of the interpretation of mumanggoe 无妄卦 in Juyeokoejeon 周易外傳 and discusses 氣一元論 (Qi-Monism), which provides the rationale for this commentary.

The gist of this paper can be boiled down to Wang Fuzhi's critique of Daoism and Buddhism based on 氣一元論.

2) Lee, JunKyung, The moral educational meaning of *Zhongyong* (中庸) “sindok (慎獨)”
- Focusing on Wang Fu-ji's understanding of *Zhongyong* (中庸)

The author is a high school teacher, presumably a researcher of Eastern philosophy. He chose Wang Fuzhi's commentary to *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Doctrine of the Mean) as a source text to reflect on its educational significance. This paper is significant for its undertaking to explore *Zhongyong*'s educational value. At its core, this paper explores the practical significance of *Zhongyong* based on Wang Fuzhi's understanding of *Zhongyong* to derive its educational significance by clarifying the meaning of sindok/shendu 慎獨 (prudence) from the viewpoint of an ethics educator, drawing on the insight that 慎獨 is an endeavor to realize seong/cheng 誠 (sincerity), the core and practical concept of *Zhongyong*. The outcomes of the study are summarized below.

First, Wang Fuzhi, a vehement opponent of Song Neo-Confucianism, brought *Zhongyong*'s educational significance to the fore through his practical interpretation of it. Wang Fuzhi explored the meaning of 慎獨 from the perspective of an educator who teaches the internal contemplation of 慎獨 in its relevance to *Zhongyong*'s 誠 (sincerity) based on Dao's dynamic nature of alternating yin and yang (一陰一陽). Alongside this, he also demonstrated that the endeavor of gunja/junzi 君子 (noble man) striving to practice goodness (善) in everyday life is the core prerequisite for the act of fostering by teaching (教育) through the practical meaning of 慎獨. Additionally, he clarified that *Zhongyong*'s 慎獨 is the exercise of 誠 that should be done ceaselessly in existential circumstances facing the moral entity by checking for the qi of good and evil in consideration of the emotions aroused in response to things and events encountered in everyday life.

Second, *Zhongyong* reaffirms the idea that the quintessence of education is to help the learner realize the innate goodness of human nature through moral cultivation (存養), pursuing its ultimate goal of autonomous performance of self-discipline of 誠 through moral cultivation and self-reflection (存養省察). In this context, 慎獨 is an attribute of 君子 that can be gained through contemplation and reached through ceaseless practice of 存養. In view of this, the author differentiates between 慎獨 of Daxue 大學 (Great Learning) and 慎獨 of *Zhongyong* by defining the former as the

absence of self-deception in the attitude of self-cultivation and learning and the latter as something practiced in real situations. That is, Daxue's 慎獨 is an attitude of being honest and candid toward oneself in the process of learning and self-cultivation as a routine practice of 存養, and the paper demonstrates that only this honest endeavor can lead to the state of *Zhongyong*'s 慎獨, which enables the exercise of *Zhongyong* with the qi of good and evil.

Third, *Zhongyong* teaches that only an educator that has realized truth and can practice it can help learners realize truth and practice 慎獨. In the same vein, Wang Fuzhi emphasized 慎獨 of people with social influence, that is, the use of 慎獨 as the basis for practicing the Dao of *Zhongyong* can enable even ordinary people to practice it. This line of reasoning highlights the practical importance of the educator's role. That is, an educator's *Zhongyong* can edify the learners, helping them make their mind wholesome. Daxue's jagyeon/ziqian 自謙 (self-abasement) is a state of 誠 that an educator experiences through 慎獨 and moral satisfaction and joy. In a nutshell, an educator's ideal is teaching a state of the mind's happiness. In this respect, this paper is a highly noteworthy work in that it derives the educational significance of 慎獨 based on first-hand experience gained in real educational settings.

3) Lee, Cheol Seung, The issue of the theory of human nature in between Wang Fuzhi's and Jeong Yakyong's Philosophies

This paper compares the theory of human nature between Wang Fuzhi and Jeong Yakyong. The author describes the motive of the paper as follows: "While many studies have investigated the theory of human nature by Wang Fuzhi and that by Jeong Yakyong separately and through comparison with Neo-Confucianism, little or no research has been dedicated to systematically comparing and analyzing the theory of human nature expounded by the two philosophers. The former has played an important role in the research history of human nature, and the latter is also significant, considering that, unlike the discussions of human nature conducted from the a priori or empirical perspectives in the studies comparing Neo-Confucianism and qi philosophy or Neo-Confucianism and the theory of human nature as moral inclination (性嗜好說), the Wang Fuzhi's and Jeong Yakyong's theories of human nature vary in the relationship between the human mind (人心) and moral mind (道心) while both respect experience." The author first points out that Wang Fuzhi's theory of goodness of qi and goodness of li (氣善·理善) and Jeong Yakyong's theory of human nature as moral inclination (性嗜好說) coming from liking goodness and disliking evil (好善惡惡) are different from conventional wisdom and the theory of the innate goodness of human nature (性善說) based on the Neo-Confucian theory of qi's good and evil attributes (有善有惡) and the goodness of li (理善). He then continues to list the similarities and differences between Wang Fuzhi and Jeong Yakyong.

(2) Papers on Dai Zhen 戴震

- 1) Jeong, Bin-Na, A study on the interaction between “Flesh and Blood (血氣)” and “The Faculty of the Understanding (心知)” in Dai Zhen’s (戴震) Thoughts

This paper analyzes the relationship between “flesh and blood” (血氣) and the faculty of understanding (心知) as expounded by Dai Zhen based on the Art of Divination (易學) from the perspective of Qi-Monism (氣一元論). The author points out that while Dai Zhen clarifies that 血氣 and 心知 are innate human nature characteristics emergent from one source, that is, qi 氣 of yin and yang, he does not mention how 心知 is influenced by 血氣 or how the function of linking them is activated. This paper then explains the relationship between 血氣 and 心知 based on the interaction of yin and yang as presented in 易學 as follows: 血氣 and 心知 are fused into one structure, whereby gaining knowledge in the sensory and cognitive realms occurs through yin–yang interactions. Dai Zhen’s thought regarding the relationship between 血氣 and 心知 is characterized by attaching importance to concrete and phenomenal perceptions of the world and matters and denying the separation of the body and the mind. The author points out that this is the result of self-reconstruction of traditional lines of reasoning in the face of external challenges.

- 2) Bae, Da-bin, A critical approach to the thought relationship between Confucians of the Qing dynasty and Xunzi - Focusing on Qian Daxian’s understanding of Xunzi and the intrinsic consistency of Xunzi and Dai Zhen’s human nature theory

This paper investigates the influence of Xunzi’s philosophy on the Qing Dynasty based on the understanding of Xunzi’s philosophy from the viewpoints of Qian Daxian 錢大昕 (1728–1804) and Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724–1777); that is, it depicts the history of Xunzi study in the Qing period. The paper is organized in the order of (i) Enhancement of Xunzi’s reputation after the Ming-Qing transition period, (ii) Qian Daxian’s positive viewpoint and conceptual fallacy vis-à-vis Xunzi’s philosophy, and (iii) A description of the intrinsic relationship between the theories of human nature by Dai Zhen and Xunzi and a fragmentary understanding. The main focus of this paper being on the history of Xunzi study in the Qing period, the philosophical significance of the paper is rather difficult to assess.

4. Evaluation and Outlook

Qing Confucianism or philosophy has a short spectrum due to the special historical circumstances. For this reason, I did not expect to find many research outcomes on Qing Confucianism, and there was no pleasant surprise awaiting me. This scarcity of

Qin Confucian studies in Korea may be primarily due to the thin layer of researchers of Eastern philosophy, but it may also be due to the limited diversity of topics.

To provide a brief overview of the research trend of Eastern philosophy in Korea from the 1970s up to now, pre-Qin research was predominant in the 1970s and 80s, and a growing number of researchers of Song/Ming philosophy emerged in the 1990s. The 2000s saw a sudden surge of research into Yangmingism to the extent of holding an annual international conference of Yangming study with a growing number of researchers dedicated to the topic. For about a decade, driven by the sudden popularity of modern-day New Confucianism in China, there has been an increasing number of researchers of modern and contemporary Chinese philosophy. However, the Qing Dynasty does not seem to attract much attention, probably due to its position squeezed between the Song/Ming and modern/contemporary periods. Fortunately, the three famous late-Ming/early-Qing scholars – Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 – have been constantly studied, though there are few published papers.

While admitting that Qing philosophy does offer less theoretical features that may attract attention compared to other historical periods, the fact cannot be ignored that there were new and revolutionary ideas oriented toward a new era. The philosophies of the Qianjia 乾嘉 School and Anli 安李 School have important academic significance as the schools of thought that spearheaded the scholarly tendencies of bibliographical study (考證學) and the fact-based pursuit of the truth (實事求是). Additionally important is Western learning (西學), such as *De Deo Verax Disputatio* (天主實義) and *Discussing Matters Pertaining to the Soul* (靈言蠡勺), authored by Mateo Ricci and Francesco Sambiassi, respectively, which can be viewed as a fusion of Eastern and Western learning. As presented above, there are certainly various trends worthy of in-depth study in the Qing period, which justifies my belief that more attention should be given to Qing philosophy in Korea. It should be borne in mind that, as far as there is no disruption in history or philosophy, multifarious investigations of bygone years are prerequisites for investigating modern and contemporary life or thought.