

## Chapter 7

### Yangming Studies in Korea

#### 1. Introduction

This report is the result of a comprehensive analysis of the research outcomes of Yangming studies in Korea published in Korea in 2021. The search criteria were papers published in journals listed in the Korean Citation Index (KCI) hosted by the National Research Foundation (NRF) and doctoral theses from January to December 2021. The targeted articles eligible for analysis are classified into four categories based on the classification scheme of the NRF: philosophy (n = 26), Confucian studies (n = 4), humanities (n = 4), and Chinese language and literature (n = 1).

The search outcomes were screened, resulting in the selection of 14 eligible papers covering the research topics in the field of Yangmingism (Yangming School or Yangmyeonghak in Korean and Yangmingxue in Chinese) in Korea. For a clear overview, the selected articles have been presented and analyzed in three categories based on scholar/topic: Jeong Je-du (Ganghwa School), (ii) Park Eun-sik, and (iii) Yangmingism and Neo-Confucianism

#### 2. Classification by Scholar/Topic

##### 1) Jeong Je-du (Ganghwa School) (6 papers)

1. Myeongwol Kim: Explorations into Jeong Je Do's and Zou Shou Yi's View of Virtue & Happiness, *Toegye-Hak-Lon-Jib*
2. Chun, Byung-don: A Study on Yi Kwangryeo's Academic Thoughts and Spirit of Practical Theories in The First Book of "YiKwangRyeoJip," *Yang-Ming Studies*
3. Park Tae-ok: A Matter of the Identity Recognition and Social Implementation of the Modern Confucian Intellectuals - Focusing on Cheong In-bo's Theory of "Emotional Interaction," *Studies in Philosophy East-West*
4. Chin Sung Su: Portrayal of Damwon Jung Inbo in His Family Narrative, *Yang-Ming Studies*
5. Yi Nam-ok: A Study on the Historical Significance about Hagok School's Regional Spread, *Yang-Ming Studies*
6. Kim, Yunkyeong: The Historical Understanding and Social Criticism Theory in Won-Ron of Hagok School, *Gong Ja Hak*

Among the 14 papers on Yangming studies in Korea published in 2021, six are about the Jeong Je-du (Ganghwa School). With a similar proportion to that of 2020 (6 out of 13 papers), the majority of the research is on Jeong Je-du, the founder of the Ganghwa School, confirming again the predominance of the Ganghwa School in Yangming studies in Korea.

Kim Myeong-wol's paper "Explorations into Jeong Je Do's and Zou Shou Yi's View of Virtue & Happiness" explores the identity and religiosity of Korean and Chinese Yangmingism through the lens of Hagok Jeong Je-du 霞谷 鄭齊斗 (1649-1739) and Dongkuo Zou Shouyi 東廓 鄒守益 (1491-1562) featured by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 as frontline Yangming scholars in the Records of Ming Scholars (Ming-ruxue-an 明儒學案).

The author summarizes her paper as follows: "Both Zou Shouyi and Jeong Je-du opposed the renqing-zongyu 任情縱欲 of leftists and advocated gongfulun 工夫論 (theory of practice) pursuing abstinence from worldly pleasures, as demonstrated by their views of Zhouyi 周易 and dreams, which also reveal their mysticism and religiosity."

The author's view of the religiosity of the two scholars is as follows: "Both scholars' view of virtue and happiness (defuguan 德福觀) embodies the ineluctability of the laws of heaven (tianze 天則), destiny (tianming 天命), and natural laws, which facilitates the practice of the mind-heart learning (xinxue 心學) by emphasizing the absoluteness and subjectivity of liangzhi 良知. Both scholars agreed that liangzhi 良知 is given by God and argued within the scope of the view of God in the Book of Documents (Shujing 書經). Both believed in the manifestation of God-given liangzhi in everyday life, leaning toward transcendental existence. Their defuguan 德福觀 (view of virtue and happiness) is defu-yizhi 德福一致 (virtue = happiness), with an emphasis on the activity of liangzhi 良知 striving toward its ultimate goal of reaching the utmost state of mind, which is to attain God's abode."

Chun Byung-don has been publishing one or two papers on the Hagok School each year. Over the last few years, he has also been committed to shedding light on the lineage of the Hagok School based on recently discovered contemporary documents. His paper "A Study on Yi Kwangryeo's Academic Thoughts and Spirit of Practical Theories in the First Book of Yi Kwangryeo Jip 李參奉集" is one of his research achievements along these lines. The author summarizes the academic thought of Worum Yi Kwang-ryeo (月巖 李匡呂, 1720-1783), in particular his gongfulun 工夫論 (theory of practice), with a focus on its relevance to Silhak 實學 (Practical Learning), as follows: "Human beings have shixin 實心 (sincere mind) and are therefore moral beings. Shixin 實心 is the manifestation of metaphysical reality, but it is blurred by worldly desires because it is encased in xingqi 形氣 (shape and temperament, that is, physical

body). In order for the original mind covered by desires to be manifested, guayu 寡欲 (eradication of desires) should be practiced. Guayu 寡欲 is not so much removing desires as controlling desires. Therefore, the focus of its gongfu 工夫 should be on changing our disposition. Woram sought to change the disposition toward desires through learning. Specifically, he proposed the following learning methods: control of desires, belief in sages, siyousuo 四有所, wupi 五辟, jindu 謹獨, and wuziqi 無自欺. Siyou 四有 refers to four negative states of mind: rage (fenzhi 忿懣), fear (kongju 恐懼), indulgence (haole 好樂), and anxiety (youhuan 憂患). Wupi 五辟 is five biases: favoritism bias (親愛而辟), depreciation bias (賤惡而辟), reverence bias (畏敬而辟), compassion bias (哀矜而辟), and arrogance and negligence bias (敖惰而辟). Jindu 謹獨 means shendu 慎獨, and Woram found the essence of jindu 謹獨 in guarding against self-deception (無自欺). As the best learning method, Woram proposed emulating sages' willpower, quiet sitting, self-restraint, sobriety, politeness, self-discipline, and reverence. Sages' willpower refers to practicing the control of desires, righteousness, and shixin 實心. Quiet sitting is the stabilization of the mind, which is easily shaken by things and qi, so that it does not get swayed. Woram's gongfulun 工夫論 (theory of practice) as described above is the exercise of the sincere mind as simply as eating when hungry."

Two researchers, Park tae-ok and Chin Sung-su, wrote about Widang Jeong In-bo (爲堂 鄭寅普, 1893-1950). As is well-known, Jeong In-bo is a giant in the history of Korean culture who strongly appealed the existence and significance of the Gangwha Yangming School to Korean society.

In her paper "A Matter of the Identity Recognition and Social Implementation of the Modern Confucian Intellectuals - Focusing on Jeong In-bo's Theory of 'Emotional Interaction,'" Park tae-ok delves into Jeong In-bo's theory of emotional interaction (gantonglung 感通論): "Jeong In-bo developed a practical philosophy, arguing that in order to realize liangzhi 良知 (innate moral consciousness), that is, benxin 本心 (original mind), in everyday life, it is important to have emotional interaction, which is the basis for building individual identity, and national identity by extension, and overcoming the reality under the Colonial rule. Drawing on this statement, I assumed the core element of Jeong In-bo's philosophy to be gantonglung 感通論. In the process of developing arguments to support this assumption, I first sought to define the concept of 'subjective agent' as emphasized by Jeong In-bo amid its rising importance in rapidly changing society since modern times to better understood his gantonglung 感通論. The gist of Jeong In-bo's gantonglung 感通論 can be found in his argument that individuals, as the agents of emotional interaction, can practice liangzhi 良知 based on sincere mind and 'eol' (soul) in order to rise as a community of moral agents exercising emotional interaction. That is,

Jeong In-bo built his philosophical system on the simple and intuitive Yangming methodology, but going beyond its theoretical limit, developed it as a practical Confucianism conducive to realizing ren 仁 of all beings (universal humanitarianism). Liangzhi 良知 cannot be practiced without the subjective agent's deep awareness and sincerity, which is the basis for the compassion toward and solidarity with others in society to the extent of realizing the Yangming ideal of the oneness of humans and all beings."

In his paper "Portrayal of Damwon Jeong In-bo in His Family Narrative," Chin Sung-su examined how Jeong In-bo is remembered by his family regarding his emphasis on emotional interaction and its exercise, word-deed concordance and sincerity, national soul and patriotism, and confidence in and love of fellow humans. The author explores this topic with regard to six characteristics of Jeong-in bo: "First, Jeong In-bo, who inherited the family legacy of Confucian intelligentsia, valued a just and great cause. He learned under the guidance of Nangok Song Min-gil, Gyeongok Park Eun-sil, Gyeongok, and Danjae Shin Chae-ho through the mediation of his grandfather. Second, Jeong In-bo was a son with deep filial piety and cared for his parents with all sincerity even in financial penury. Cimusi 慈母思, a 40-strophe poem expressing his acute longings for his late mother and the letters and foods he sent to his parents during long business trips expressing his concerns about their health are vivid evidence of his filial devotion. Third, Jeong in-bo was a caring husband, as shown in his poems expressing his deep grief for his late first wife, his letters of gratitude to his wife for struggling to make both ends meet, his letters to his second daughter, Kyung-wan, asking her to care for her mother, and the memory of her parents by his third daughter, Yang-wan. Fourth, Jeong in-bo was a great scholar, but a very affectionate simple father at home. His fourth son, Yang-mo, remembered his father's jokes such as when he would rub his unshaved face against the soft cheeks of his young teens at that time, asking "Is it prickly?" or trying to give them piggybacks. He would also exchange jokes with his youngest son Yang-wan, and never missed the birthday of his married daughter Kyung-wan, who had left home. Fifth, Jeong in-bo was an educator who emphasized the importance of providing education that can be easily accessed by children, such as by making the original versions of poetry available and teaching them to read with their own eyes, teaching children the right attitudes toward books, and teaching them not to shun their own efforts, while paying close attention to every word of children. Sixth, Jeong In-bo was a Yangming scholar who highly valued Korean Studies. His lifelong dedication to the cause of independence is demonstrated by many episodes and activities such as Leaving Yeonhee College after the ordinance to teach only in Japanese, promoting the enlightenment of people with the argument that true independence is possible by establishing the nation's soul, writing the lyrics of

the fourth National Liberation Day theme song, and episodes related to the foundation of Kookak University (國學大學) in 1947 and Yukdang Choe Nam-seon's treachery."

As a researcher with a background in history, Yi Nam-ok gives detailed explanations of the regional spread of the Hagok School based on authentic primary data in her paper "A Study on the Historical Significance about Hagok School's Regional Spread": "The Hagok School refers to a group of scholars who succeeded Hagok Jeong Je-du's scholarship and thought. A comprehensive analysis of the genealogies, family records, tomb inscriptions (mudao-wenzi 墓道文字), and biographies of the major clans that succeeded and disseminated Jeong Je-du's scholarship and thought, namely Jeong Je-du's family and relatives (clan Jeong originating from Youngil), and the families of Yi Gwang-myung, Yi Gwang-sa, and Yi Gwang-sin (clan Yi Kyung-gik originating from Jeonju), and clan Shin Dae-woo (originating from Pyeongsan), resulted in the finding that the Hagok School spread from Ganghwa to Gyeonggi and Chungcheong provinces in the 18th and 19th centuries. Specifically, the Hagok School spread from the Jeong clan from Ganghwa and Tongjin to Cheonan and other surrounding areas and expanded to Chungcheong province (Chungju, Eunjin, Noseong) by the Yi Gwang-sin family, while the Yi Gwang-myeong family gathered around Ganghwa and the Shin Dae-woo family moved to Gwangju and spread there. In this process of regional spread, Ganghwa, Gwangju, and Jincheon were used as major bases for the Hagok School. While the Hagok School could be handed down to the following generations in Ganghwa due to the presence of related historic sites including Jeong Je-du's grave and homestead, in the Hagok School in Gwangju, academic exchanges were conducted between Shin Jak and Jeong Yak-yong, resulting in the encounter between Hagok and Dasan schools. Later on, scholars in the Soron (小論) faction actively engaged in academic exchanges in Jincheon, resulting in the re-emergence of the Hagok School. For this reason, Jeong In-bo pointed out the Hagok School as an important turning point of the history of Korean Studies."

Kim Yun-kyeong is a prolific and experienced researcher who obtained her PhD with a thesis on Hagok Jeong Je-du and has continuously published papers on the Ganghwa Yangming school, such as Jeong Je-du, Joseon Neo-Confucianism, the Hagok School, and its ramification process. Her paper, "The Historical understanding and Social Criticism Theory in Won-Ron of Hagok School," falls within these research activities. The author analyzes the theories of historical understanding and social criticism brought forth by three Hagok School scholars, Yi Chung-ik, Yi Geon-chang, and Yi Geon-bank, based on their respective theories, 假說 and 君子之過說, 原論, and 原論 and 屬原論: "All three

scholars took issue with the direct association between the political principles based on public consensus and the escalating factional conflicts and identified major determinants of political and social integrity as the truthfulness of dao(xue) (道學) and moral principles endowing solidarity and justification. Therefore, unlike factional arguments seeking to discern right or wrong by describing specific events, their general theories (原論) focused on raising questions about the public consensus contrived by a deceptive dao(xue) (道學) and its evil effects and finding out their causes based on objective description. Mention of deceptive dao(xue) (道學) is criticism of Song Si-yeol and Noron, though that is not specified here. These three scholars believed that true values could be recognized based on general feelings of ordinary people and attempted to set it as the standard for evaluating and criticizing scholarship, politics, and society in general.”

## 2) Park Eun-sik (3 papers)

1. Park Jeoung Sim: A Study on the Ideological Characteristics of Park Eun-sik's "Mr. WONG Yeung-ming, Christopher," *The Journal of the Korean Philosophical History*
2. Woohyung Kim: The Philosophical Project of Park Eun-sik Implied in the Theory of Renovation of Confucianism: Focusing on the Transformation of Old Learning into New Learning, *Studies in Philosophy East-West*
3. Woohyung Kim: The Originality and Characteristics of Park Eun-sik's view on Yangming Learning: Focusing on Self-Cultivation and the Matter of the Mind, *Gong Ja Hak*

Of the 14 papers published in 2021 on Yangming Studies in Korea, three were written about Park Eun-sik. Park Jeoung-sim earned her PhD with a thesis on Park Eun-sik; this is her main research area. Kim Woo-hyung earned his PhD with a thesis on Zhuzi's epistemology, and his two papers are presumably the research results of the research team to which Kim belongs.

Park Jeong-sim considers it inadequate to define Park Eun-sik as a Yangming scholar. The author argues that Park Eun-sik only agreed to the goal of Yangmingism while exploring Confucian reform, unlike most Korean researchers, who take it for granted that Park Eun-sik is a Yangming scholar. In fact, conceptual discordance regarding Yangmingism seems to exist between these two conflicting approaches.

In her paper, "A Study on the Ideological Characteristics of Park Eun-sik's Authentic Records on Wang Yangming," Park Jeong-sim summarizes Park Eun-sik's view of Yangmingism as follows: "Park Eun-sik's ideological

transformation is a critical reflection on the role of Confucianism in the face of turbulent modern times. Modern intellectuals with liangzhi 良知 (innate moral consciousness) encountered the reasoning of the Enlightenment of Western Europe and took a different view of modernity based on our historical and cultural experience of contemplating the 'self' present 'here.' Park Eun-sik comprehended the ideological characteristics of Yangmingism in the context of modernity and pursued a life as a subjective agent away from the Eurocentric worldview. This was expressed by terms such as xia-deng-zhe 下等者 (low-grade person), wu-wen-zhe 無文者 (unlettered person), or just inspector, by which Park Eun-sik referred to zhenwo 真我 (true self) as a subjective agent who has reached the state of zhiliangzhi 致良知 (attainment of innate moral consciousness). With the concept of "True self," Park Eun-sik explored a humane life for all as well as addressed the problems facing the Korean people in the face of modern turbulence and risk of state collapse. Park Eun-sik recognized the utility of Western learning and the convenience of science and technology while expressing criticism that science and technology had been reduced to a means of imperial rule and exploitation as a tool for strengthening superpower prowess. A state can win the competition for survival by exploring and utilizing nature scientifically in a manner to make the nation rich and strong and develop capitalism. However, if science and technology have ultimately been reduced to tools for imperialistic aggression, what science and technology mean for human life should be questioned. The most salient feature of Park Eun-sik's Yangmingism-related thought is his request for moral reflection on 見聞知 (experienced knowledge) and his request for 拔本塞源 (eradication of the root cause of evil) to scientists."

Kim Woo-hyung produced two papers: "The Philosophical Project of Park Eun-sik Implied in the Theory of the Confucian Reformation: Focusing on the Transformation of Old Learning to New Learning" and "The Originality and Characteristics of Park Eun-sik's View on Yangming Learning: Focusing on Self-Cultivation and the Matter of Mind." Both papers cover Park Eun-sik's thoughts but with different emphases. The former examines his theory of Confucian reform (儒教求新), and the latter, Yangmingism-related thoughts.

In the first paper, Kim Woo-hyung states: "Starting from around 1905, while adopting the position of all-out Westernization, Park Eun-sik began to consider a transformation of the traditional jixue 舊學 (Confucianism) into a xinxue 新學 (new learning system) of philosophy and science. More specifically, while embracing science from the West and developing it, he considered it possible to transform lixue 理學 (study of principles) into philosophy by introducing Yangming's benling-gonfu 本領工夫 (fundamental study), which is clear and ease of access in the moral context. (...) Park Eun-sik's philosophy project implied in his theory of Confucian reformation was designed to take up a portion of world

philosophy by transforming lixue 理學 into philosophy as benling-gonfu 本領工夫 and developing the philosophical elements of Joseon Neo-Confucianism. This project design has nationalistic characteristics on the one hand and a strong orientation toward universality of science and philosophy on the other. In this regard, the philosophical project implied in Park Eun-sik's Confucian reformation theory is worth being evaluated as a pioneering work in the formation and orientation of Korean philosophy today."

In the second paper, Kim Woo-hyung states: "In his later years, Park Eun-sik interprets zhenwo 真我 (true self) as a true subjective agent in the sense of the mind consisting of 意 and 知. 知 is divided into jianwenzhi 見聞知 and benranzhi 本然知, scientific knowledge based on the principles of things, and internal and moral realization, that is, liangzhi 良知, which also has the functions of managing 見聞知 and illuminating the root cause of all beings and things. Therefore, liangzhi 良知 is not so much benti 本體 (original substance) as fundamental ability (instinct) encompassing cognition and morality. Conclusively, Park Eun-sik's notion of subjective agent (真我) takes on a moral cognitive nature, in contrast to Liang Qichao 梁啟超, who failed to explain how liangzhi 良知, which is a moral benti 本體, can obtain scientific knowledge. Park Eun-sik's Yangmingism in his later years shows a unique merge of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming and can be evaluated as a transformation of Yangmingism into a unique form of philosophy based on Joseon's lixue 理學 tradition."

### 3) Yangmingism and Neo-Confucianism (5 papers)

1. Kim Hee Young, Kim Min-Jae, Kim Yong-Jae: A Review of Critical Perceptions of Yangming Studies by Neo-Confucian Scholars of the Joseon Dynasty (5) - Focusing on the Thoughts of Lee Man-Boo -, *Pan-Korean Philosophy*
2. Jeon Su-Yeon 1, Kim Min-Jae 2, Kim Yong-Jae: A Review of Critical Perceptions of Yangming Studies by Neo-Confucian Scholars of the Joseon Dynasty (6), *Yang-Ming Studies*
3. Lee Myong-shim: A comparative study of Nok-mun's (鹿門) and Yang-myeong's (陽明) Mind-Nature Theory (心性論), *Yang-Ming Studies*
4. Bae Je-Seong: A Study on Han Wonjin's Criticism of the Wang Yangming 王陽明 School of Neo-Confucianism, *Yang-Ming Studies*
5. Chae, Hee Doh: "The Mind is Li Argument" and the Correspondence to "The Mind is Qi Argument (心是氣論)" in Yulgok, *Journal of Yulgok Studies*

The papers "A Review of Critical Perceptions of Yangming Studies by Neo-Confucian scholars of the Joseon Dynasty (5), Focusing on the Thoughts of Lee Man-boo," co-authored by Kim Hee-young, Kim Min-jae, and Kim Yong-jae,



and “A Review of Critical Perceptions of Yangming Studies by Neo-Confucian Scholars of the Joseon Dynasty (6), Focusing on the Thoughts of Seongho Yi Ik and Sunam Ahn Jeong-bok,” coauthored by Jeon Su-yeon, Kim Min-jae, and Kim Yong-jae, are research results from a research team funded by the National Research Foundation of Korea and part of an annual series on the topic of “review of critical perceptions of Yangming Studies by Neo-Confucian scholars of the Joseon Dynasty.”

The first paper, which covers Siksan Lee Man-boo, describes its significance in the preface: “Despite a considerable body of literature, no research has yet been dedicated to Lee Man-boo’s criticism of Yangming Studies. The authors have uncovered related materials and present them briefly in this article. Prior to discussing Yangmingism-related critical perceptions of Lee Man-boo, who was active in the 17th/early 18th century, his academic orientation will be explored by examining his notion of daotong 道統. Based on the findings, we will analyze the writings containing the negative and critical views that Lee Man-boo had on Wang Yangming and Yangmingism and define the aspects of his criticism of Yangmingism.”

The authors examined Lee Man-boo’s criticism of Yangmingism in three categories (xinjili 心即理, zhiliangzhi 致良知, and qinminsuo 親民說) and derived the following findings: “From the foregoing, it can be confirmed that Lee Man-boo strictly adhered to the position of Zhuzixue 朱子學 (Neo-Confucianism) as a scholar of the Joseon Dynasty. Thus, his criticism of Yangmingism does not differ significantly from mainstream views of earlier and contemporary Neo-Confucian scholars. This study alone cannot fully define the trends of Joseon Confucian scholars’ criticism of Yangmingism in the 17th and 18th centuries. However, this study is significant in that it could confirm Lee Man-boo’s criticism of Yangmingism in his unknown writings.”

In the second paper, this research team extends the first study by examining the academic factional tendency in Lee Man-boo’s criticism of Yangmingism through the lens of Seongho Yi Ik and Sunam Ahn Jeong-bok in greater detail: “Yi Ik’s and Ahn Jeong-bok’s perceptions of Yangmingism as a Confucian school are the same as the traditional views of the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian scholars who rejected it for being heretic. In the economic dimension, however, they positively evaluated Wang Yangming’s arguments, showing a different aspect compared to other Joseon Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian scholars. This allowed the assumption to be made that there was a shift in the perception of Yangmingism among scholars who pioneered Silhak 實學 (Practical Learning) in the late Joseon Dynasty, which is the significance of this study.”

After earning her PhD with a thesis on Nokmun Lim Sung-joo, Lee Myong-shim has continuously published the results of a series of follow-up studies. She summarizes her paper “A Comparative Study on Nokmun’s (鹿門) and

Yangming's (陽明) Mind-Nature Theory (心性論)" as follows: "Yangming and Nokmun have the same problem of awareness. Both scholars achieved the argumentative development in which a moral agent goes beyond the innate nature (benxing 本性) to reach the innate mind (benxin 本心) by paying attention to pure goodness without evil (chun-shan-wu-e 純善無惡). For this reason, the Yangming School is evaluated to be an intensification of the Cheng-Zhu School, and in the same vein, Nokmun's philosophy can be considered a natural consequence of an intensification process of the late Joseon Confucian ideas. However, Yangming is criticized for neglecting the organic connection between the li-qi 理氣 and xin-xing 心性 theories by dismissing the li-qi-based theory of benti (本體, original substance). This led to increasingly arbitrary interpretation (changkuang-zizi 猖狂自恣) of the benti 本體 of heart-mind after Yangming's death. In contrast, Nokmun could guarantee the metaphysical absoluteness and universality for morality by presenting zhanyi-qingxuzhiqi 湛一清虛之氣 (deep and seemingly empty qi as the origin of existence) and moral haoranzhiqi 浩然之氣 (qi that is accumulated by practicing innate righteousness) as evidence of the existence of benxin 本心 and benxing 本性. However, the deep-rooted awareness of Cheng-Zhu Confucianists that 'qi has an evil potential as xing-er-xia-zhe 形而下者 (physical entity as opposed to metaphysical entity) may have acted as an obstacle to the succession of Nokmun's philosophy." Lee Myong-shim's paper will be reviewed more in depth in section 3.

After obtaining a PhD with a thesis on Namdang Han Won-jin, Bae Je-seong has continuously published papers on the Horak debate (湖洛論爭) including Han Won-jin. Bae Je-seong summarizes his paper "A Study on Han Wonjin's Criticism of the Wang Yangming 王陽明 School of Neo-Confucianism" as follows: "The starting point of this study is the theoretical differences between Neo-Confucian and Yangming studies in the approach to understanding the relationship between xin 心 and xing 性, which is extended to the discussion about the relationship between moral self-cultivation and Confucian tradition. This led to the finding that the main difference in the viewpoint between Neo-Confucian and Yangming studies lies in the way of understanding the meaning and importance of the knowledge of the Confucian tradition handed down across generations of scholars in moral cultivation. Although this does not deviate significantly from the existing understanding of the difference between Neo-Confucian and Yangming studies, it is significant in that it discovered and revealed Joseon Neo-Confucianists' criticism of Yangmingism from a different angle compared to existing studies. In conclusion, Han Won-jin believed that the universal value standard of community should be defended based on the Confucian tradition and emphasized the importance of undertaking explorations from the perspective of pursuing common good. It was also found that the belief that such essential values and knowledge are intrinsically

consistent with human morality is reflected in the theories of xinxing心性 gewu 格物 of Neo-Confucianism.”

Chae Hee-doh's paper, “The Correspondence between the ‘Mind-Is-Li argument’ (心即理說) and Yulgok's ‘Mind-Is-Qi Argument’ (心是氣論), Focusing on the Theories of Zhijue知覺 and Gewu 格物” brings up a highly interesting topic: the hypothesis that Yulgok's xinxiqilun 心即氣 (mind = qi) matches Yangming's xinjilishuo 心即理說 (mind = li). “There are views regarding the investigation of the reasons why Yangmingism could not gain a foothold in Joseon. One is the view that there was no room for Yangmingism to fit in with Joseon's preoccupation to develop its own philosophy independent of the academic landscape of East Asia and to address its own problems. The other view is associated with Yangming's criticism of Zhuzixue's limitations, which motivated Joseon's 16th-century Joseon intellectuals to commit themselves to addressing the misinterpreted parts of Neo-Confucian arguments to handpick the core ideas and ultimate interests of Neo-Confucianism, which also intensified Neo-Confucianism by complementing and deepening it. This endeavor is closely related to defining the identity of Yulgok studies. Can Yulgok studies edge away from the mainstream Neo-Confucianism and open a new school differentiated from other Neo-Confucian schools by completing its own new philosophical system and play a role as an important axis of Joseon's philosophy? Or should it be evaluated as a counterattack waged by Joseon intellectuals against the challenge posed by Lu-Wang xue 陸王學 with the force stored throughout the trajectories of Neo-Confucian scholars? (···) First, what are the similarities and differences between Zhu Xi's and Yi I's zhijue 知覺? Second, how is Zhu Xi's prioritization of gewu 格物 challenged by Yangmingism? Third, what kind of relationship is there between zhijue 知覺 and zhusai 主宰 in Yulgok Studies? Fourth, what are the problems of the ‘mind is li’ argument (心即理說) of Yangmingism and how can we address them? Fifth, in what context and for what reason did Yulgok advance the ‘mind is qi’ argument (心是氣論)? Chae Hee-doh's paper will be reviewed more in depth in section 3.

### **3. Analysis and Review of Major Papers**

Song-Ming Confucianism, that is, Confucianism in the Song and Ming dynasties, was thus named due to the similarities between the Song and Ming dynasties as xinxue 心學 and in differentiation from the Confucianism of the Qing Dynasty. Representative Song-Ming Confucian positions from the perspectives of the history of philosophy are those of Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, Lao Siguang 勞思光, and Mou Zongsan 牟宗三. As is well known, Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 sees the divide of Song-Ming Confucian in the brothers Cheng (程明道 and 程伊川)... The lineage

goes from Cheng Yichuan 程伊川 to Zhu Xi and from Cheng Mingdao 程明道 to Wang Yangming. Lao Siguang 勞思光 sees Song-Ming Confucianism as a developmental process from cosmology to the benti 本體 (original substance) theory and further to the xinxing 心性 theory. Representative scholars are Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤, Shao Yong 邵雍, and Zhang Zai 張載 for the cosmology theory, Cheng Mingdao 程明道, Cheng Yichuan 程伊川, and Zhu Xi 朱熹 for the benti 本體 theory, and Wang Yangming for the xinxinglun 心性論 theory. Based on thought experiments, Lao Siguang 勞思光 notes that bentilun 本體論 is a superior theoretical system to cosmology and xinxinglun 心性論 is superior to bentilun 本體論.

Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 divides the developmental history of Song-Ming Confucianism into three lineages: from Cheng Yichuan 程伊川 to Zhu Xi with a focus on Daxue 大學, from Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 to Wang Yangming with a focus on Mencius, and from Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤, Zhang Zai 張載, Hu Hong 胡宏, and Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周, with a focus on Zhouyi 周易, Zhongyong 中庸, Analects, and Mencius.

In her paper, “A Comparative Study on Nokmun’s (鹿門) and Yangming’s (陽明) Mind-Nature Theory (心性論),” Lee Myong-shim divides Song-Ming Confucianism into two lineages: “The ultimate goal of Eastern philosophy that encompasses Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism is to realize the unity of God and man or the unity of all things. However, the history of Confucian ideas can be summarized as follows: ‘The methodology by which the idea of humans and all creatures in heaven and earth becoming one is realized unfolds in two stems: the philosophy of destiny determined by human nature (xingming 性命) and the philosophy of destiny determined by life (shengming 生命).’ In other words, the Cheng-Zhu School belongs to the xingming 性命 philosophy and the Yangming School to the shengming 生命 philosophy (…). In this study, unity is divided into two aspects: the Cheng-Zhu theory of the unity of heaven and man (tian-ren-he-yi 天人合一), pursued by li 理, and the Mingdao-Yangming theory of the unity of all creatures (wan-wu-yi-ti 萬物一體), pursued by qi 氣.” Mingdao explains ren 仁 (compassion) as an attribute of life by comparing the paralysis of bodily organs to buren 不仁 (devoid of compassion). He also notes that “Tian 天 takes sheng 生 as dao 道,” defining life as tiandao 天道 or tianli 天理. This reasoning is considered to have greatly impacted Yangming’s thought experiments of uniting nature and life through xingzhi-shengli 性之生理. Needless to say, Mingdao also influenced Nokmun, who attached great importance to the shengyi 生意 (will to life) of qi 氣. That is, both Yangming and Nokmun define human nature as life. Accordingly, the Yangming School’s emphasis on this shengyi 生意 is what differentiates it from the Cheng-Zhu School which defines human nature as morality.

The Cheng-Zhu and Yangming schools are attributed to the 性命 and 生命

strands of philosophy, respectively, in conformity with the schema produced by Feng Youlan 馮友蘭. The schematic depiction of 性命 philosophy and 生命 philosophy appears plausible at first glance. A closer look, however, reveals its theoretical limitations. A question arises: “If this is true, is 性命 philosophy not 生命 philosophy?”

As revealed by the subtitle of Lee Myong-shim’s paper, “focusing on the viewpoint of liqi-yiwu 理氣一物 (unified manifestation of li and qi),” the author approaches the xinxinglun 心性論 of Nokmun and Yangming along the lines of liqi-yiwu 理氣一物. Although Yangming originally built his theory without using the frame of the li-qi theory, judging from some theoretical materials regarding the li-qi theory he left behind as clues, more attention is given to li 理 as the tiaoli 條理 of qi 氣, that is, the principality of li manifested through qi, rather than to emphasize li’s independence as an entity that exists independently of qi. This has something in common with the li-qi theory of Nokmun, who is evaluated as a scholar of the qi-ism camp, as Lee Myong-shim revealed in this paper.

However, to perform an elaborate and refined investigation, it is also necessary to examine the respective backgrounds of Nokmun’s and Yangming’s liqi-yiwu-lun 理氣一物論. Lee Myong-shim’s paper did not discuss this factor.

The proposition, which well depicts Wang Yangmin’s liqilun 理氣論, “Li is qi’s tiaoli 條理 of qi, and qi is li’s operation,” can be explained in the context of Yangmingism. Wang Yangming’s liqilun 理氣論 needs to be analyzed based on his xinxinglun 心性論 because he was never concerned with a cosmological explanation. He refuted Zhu Xi’s gewu-zhizhi 格物致知 via jiwu-qiongli 即物窮理 and insists on 心外無理 and 心生理 based on 心即理. An explanation based on liqilun 理氣論 is “Li is qi’s tiaoli 條理 of qi, and qi is li’s operation.’

In this context, if Nokmun’s view of xin 心 were discussed and its coincidence explored, in addition to discussing the common features of Nokmun’s and Yangming’s xinxinglun 心性論 in the light of 生意, this paper would have been even more successful.

As mentioned in this paper, Nokmun presents “理氣同實, 心性一致” as an important proposition. This proposition was used originally by Yi Gan, who demonstrated 未發心體純善論, explaining it as 理氣同實 and 心性一致 because 未發 is 未發 of 大本. He also emphasized 理氣同實 and 心性一致 obtained in consequence of efforts. This is similar to Zhu Xi’s 心與理一 proposition that xin 心 can reach the state of li 理 through effort and distinct from Yangming’s 心即理 proposition. In contrast, Nokmun presents “理氣同實, 心性一致” while insisting on qiyiyuanlun 氣一元論. This shows affinity with Wang Yangming’s claim of 心即理 from the position that there cannot exist four virtues without four sprouts while claiming 天理明覺說.

Debates and confrontations between Neo-Confucian and Yangming studies are

the most popular and timely topic of Song Myung Confucianism. Put differently, examining the similarities and differences between Neo-Confucian and Yangming studies is a topic that penetrates through the core of Song-Ming Confucianism. Thus, a better understanding of such similarities and differences contributes to a higher understanding of the essence of Song-Ming Confucianism.

Bae Je-seong's paper "A Study on Han Won-jin's Criticism of the Wang Yangming 王陽明 School of Neo-Confucianism" examined the similarities and differences between Neo-Confucian and Yangming studies by criticizing Han Won-jin, a giant figure of Joseon Confucianism. His important evaluation is as follows: "It is the common mission of Confucianism, established since Confucius, to discover and share the common values of society by inheriting the existing cultural tradition and creatively interpreting it and to develop as a moral agent. In this Confucian endeavor, a conservative tendency to adhere to cultural traditions and a progressive tendency to create new values to lead and improve culture are merged. In this context, Neo-Confucian and Yangming studies seem to match well with the conservative and progressive tendencies, respectively." This understanding by Bae Je-seong seems to be based on the background frame of understanding Yangming Studies. That is the schema of Yangmingism and the modern spirit."

Yangmingism predominated the academic circle in the middle and late Ming Dynasty of the time, and the court of the Ming Dynasty acknowledged it as an official religion; Wang Yangming was an official responsible for a temple of Confucius. However, Joseon, which rapidly responded to trends and goods from China, rejected Yangmingism as heresy. Why Yang Myeong-hak was rejected as a heresy in Joseon is a very interesting topic. This is all the more interesting as it can also be used as an authentic precedent when considering any Korean sentiment or cultural type.

In his paper "The Correspondence between the 'Mind-Is-Li argument' (心即理說) and Yulgok's 'Mind-Is-Qi Argument' (心是氣論), Focusing on the Theories of Zhijue 知覺 and Gewu 格物," Chae Hee-doh makes a highly plausible argument, though one that is not publicly discussed in academia. The author notes that "Yulgok effectively defended Yangming's risk related to 心即理 while presenting the 心是氣 proposition."

It is well known that Ganjae Geon Woo criticized Hanju Yi Jinsang's 心即理論 and Ilgun's 心即理論 in the late Joseon using the propositions of 性師心弟, 性尊心卑, and 心學性. The starting point of Geon Woo's argument were the propositions of 性即理 and 心是氣, which sounds highly plausible.

However, the assertion that Yulgok used the proposition of 心是氣 as a counterargument against the proposition of 心即理 is less likely. The fact that the proposition of 心是氣 appears only once in Yulgok's Complete Works also weakens the argument. Nevertheless, this argument is well worth considering

given that Yulgok himself clarified his firm position against Yangmingism and that it is effective in critically reviewing previous research that tried to find the common denominator between the Yulgok and Yangmyung schools using Silhak as a liaison.

In the Confucian academic circles, it is believed that the proposition of 心是氣 was established as an orthodox theory of the Yulgok School through Song Si-yeol. If that is true, a following-up study needs to be conducted to expand Chae Hee-doh's inquiry and examine the reasons behind Song Si-yeol's selection of the 心是氣 proposition, which will contribute to comprehensively examining the reasons for the emergence of the 心是氣 proposition.

#### **4. Evaluation and Outlook**

In 2021, 14 papers were published on Yangming studies in Korea, maintaining the average level. After a stable upward trend in the number of papers from 2014 to 2018 (8 in 2014, 12 in 2015, 15 in 2016, 16 in 2017, 19 in 2018, and 18 in 2019), this number fell to 13 in 2020 and slightly increased to 14 in 2021. This trend is also shared by the Ming-Qing Confucian studies.

Fourteen papers published on Korean Yangming Studies is not insignificant given the proportion occupied by the Yangming School (Hagok School) throughout the history of Joseon Confucianism. Although the number of published papers did not decrease, no particularly salient paper was harvested in 2021. If I were to select one, however, I would recommend Lee Myong-shim's "A comparative study of Nok-mun's (鹿門) and Yang-myeong's (陽明) Mind-Nature Theory (心性論), Focusing on the Viewpoint of Liqi-yiwu 理氣一物."

As has been consistently pointed out, in order to revitalize the studies on Joseon Yangmyeonghak in the future, it will be necessary to expand the arena of discussion by discovering new Yangming scholars and exploring new topics. The biggest obstacle to reaching this goal is the limitations in the literature. Researchers will have to maintain their efforts to move forward in this respect.