

Chapter 4

**Analysis and Prospects of Research
Achievements on Qing Dynasty Thought**

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1. Introduction

This report examines and evaluates the academic contributions related to Chinese studies during the Qing Dynasty period, as found in doctoral dissertations and academic papers published in Korea in 2022. The papers indexed for this review were primarily sourced from the journals listed or pending listing by the National Research Foundation of Korea (KCI), and the papers available on the Research Information Sharing Service (RISS) and the Korean Studies Information Service System (KISS).

Studying Confucianism in the Qing Dynasty presents unique historical limitations. One of the primary challenges is deciding which scholars from the transitional period between the late Ming Dynasty and the early Qing Dynasty should be included. Generally, the year 1840, marked by the Opium War, is considered the beginning of modern China. Therefore, the scope of this study on the Qing Dynasty Confucianism spans from the founding of the Qing Dynasty in 1616 up to the Opium War, and it also includes scholars from the late Ming and early Qing periods.

Research on Confucianism in the Qing Dynasty is somewhat limited, perhaps due to the temporal constraints. There were no doctoral dissertations in 2022, and only 13 research papers, which is, however, more than the 10 papers in 2021 and the 3 papers in 2020. Out of these 13 papers, 12 are primarily in the realm of philosophy, a significant increase from only 5 in 2021. There are also new studies on figures such as Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 and Chen Que 陳確.

The list of the 13 papers is as follows:

1

Kim jinkun

A Study on Wang Fuzhi's interpretation of 'Daesangjeon(大象傳)' of gon-gwae(困卦)

and his view of gunja(君子)
PHILOSOPHY·THOUGHT·CULTURE, No.40
Research Institute for East-West Thought

2

Jin Hong-mei
The Academic Trend of Kim, Jeong-hee's Silsaguisheol(實事求是說) through the
Comparison with Weng, Fang-gang
Journal of Korean Literature, No.46
The Society Of Korean Literature

3

Kim Hee Young
A Study on the Aspect of the Interpretation of 'Junzi' through Various Annotations
in the The Analects of Confucius – Focusing on Cheng Shu-de's Lunyu Ji Shi
Journal of Confucianism studies, No.61
Confucianism Research Institute

4

Dan yunjin
A Comparative Study of Wang Fu-ji and Jeong Yak-yong's Commentary on
<Moderation(中庸)> Chapter 1, 'What Heaven has commanded is nature'
The study of the Eastern Classic, No.88
The Society of the Eastern Classic

5

Park Yong-tae
A Documental Archaeology as the Practical Schools of Confucianism in Late Ming
and Early Qing Dynasty and the Formation of Joseon Silhak in the 18th Century
– With The Seongho-school of Kiho-Namin and the Bukhak-school of Noron
Journal of the Daedong Philosophical Association, Vol.99
大同哲學會

6

Seo Gang-hwie
Comparative Study on the Interpretation of Chapter 20 of Juongyongjangu –
Focusing on Ju-hee and Wang-buji
THE JOURNAL OF ASIAN PHILOSOPHY IN KOREA, No.58
The Society for Asian Philosophy in Korea

7

Seo Geun-Sik
The comparison Study of the "Guisin-jang" chapter 16 of JungYong(『中庸』) –
focus on the Zhu-xi, Wang Fu-zhi, Ito-Jinsai
UGYEHAGBO, Vol.43
Ugye Culture Foundation

8

Yang Chungyeol
A Study on Wang Fuzi's Poetic Hermeneutics
The Journal of Chinese Studies, No.99
The Society of Chinese Studies

9

Wu Jie
Reconstruction of the Monism of Human Nature : The Ideological Content and
Exemplary Significance of Chen Que's Theory of Human Nature
The Journal of Toegye Studies, Vol.152
Toegye Studies Institute

10

Jeong Bin-na
A study on the origins and ideological trends of academic studies of Qing Dynasty
in the 18th century: Focusing on the internal changes of Confucianism and the
challenges of Western studies
Philosophy and Culture, Vol.46
Institute of Philosophy and Culture

11

Jeong Bin-na
An Study on the Connection between Dai Zhen's concept of 'Emotions' and the
Experientialism
Humanities and Art, No.13
Humanities and Art Society

12

Jeong Bin-na
A Study on the Ideological Transformation of Confucian Knowledge Theory in the
17th and 18th Centuries
TAE-DONG YEARLY REVIEW OF CLASSICS, Vol.49
Tae Dong Institute of Classic Research

13

JIN BO SUNG
A Study on the Gunja(君子: An Ideal Confucian Gentleman) who is the Subject of
the Public Action in Confucianism
Journal of the New Korean Philosophical Association, Vol.108
The New Korean Philosophical Association

As can be observed from the list of papers provided above, given the diversity of the research figures and subjects, this report aims to categorize the studies based on individual figures, rather than by topic.

2. Classification by Individual

When classifying the papers on Qing Dynasty Confucianism published in 2022 by the individual, we find the following distribution: 5 papers on Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, 1 on Weng Fanggang 翁方綱, 1 on Dai Zhen 戴震, 1 on Chen Que 陳確, and 5 papers on other figures.

1) Wang Fuzhi 王夫之

1

Kim jinkun

A Study on Wang Fuzhi's interpretation of 'Daesangeon(大象傳)' of gon-gwae(困卦) and his view of gunja(君子)

PHILOSOPHY·THOUGHT·CULTURE, No.40

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2

Dan yunjin

A Comparative Study of Wang Fu-ji and Jeong Yak-yong's Commentary on <Moderation(中庸)> Chapter 1, 'What Heaven has commanded is nature'

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UGYEHAGBO, Vol.43

Ugye Culture Foundation

5

Yang Chungyeol

A Study on Wang Fuzi's Poetic Hermeneutics

The Journal of Chinese Studies, No.99

The research outcomes for Qing Dynasty Confucianism, which are fewer in number compared to other periods, seem to be primarily concentrated on the three scholars of the late Ming and early Qing periods: Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武. Among them, Wang Fuzhi has been the subject of a notably larger number of studies. Research papers related to Wang Fuzhi have consistently been produced over the years: 4 in 2018, 5 in 2019, 2 in 2020, and 5 in 2022. A review of the research on Wang Fuzhi in 2022 indicates that 4 papers pertain to philosophy, while 1 focuses on literature. It is particularly notable that two of the papers delve into Wang Fuzhi's interpretation of the Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong 中庸). Kim Jinkun, a researcher specializing in the Book of Changes (Zhouyi 周易) and particularly on Wang Fuzhi, has been continuously publishing papers related to Wang Fuzhi's take on the Book of Changes. Attention should also be given to a comparative study by Dan Yunjin on the interpretation of the Doctrine of the Mean.

2) Weng Fanggang 翁方綱

1

Jin Hong-mei

The Academic Trend of Kim, Jeong-hee's Silsaguisheol(實事求是說) through the Comparison with Weng, Fang-gang

Journal of Korean Literature, No.46

The Society Of Korean Literature

Weng Fanggang (翁方綱, 1733–1818) was a renowned scholar of Jinshi studies (Jisshixue 金石學) during the Qing Dynasty, deeply versed in calligraphy and literature. He is better known to us as the teacher of Kim

Jeonghui 金正喜. Weng Fanggang was arguably the foremost Jinshi scholar of his time, possessing exceptional aesthetic judgment. Upon recognizing Kim Jeonghui's profound erudition, Weng Fanggang showed him his personal library and introduced him to his son. Weng Fanggang gifted valuable manuscripts and books to Kim Jeonghui and even personally wrote Kim Jeonghui's father Kim Nokyoung's 金魯敬 pen name, Yudang 酉堂, in calligraphy. Subsequently, Weng Fanggang and Kim Jeonghui established a teacher–student relationship and continued their association. In this context, the paper by Jin Hong–mei is viewed as particularly intriguing and significant.

3) Dai Zhen 戴震

1

Jeong Bin-na

An Study on the Connection between Dai Zhen's concept of 'Emotions' and the Experientialism

Humanities and Art, No.13

Humanities and Art Society

Regarding the so-called "Qing Dynasty Philosophy," excluding the three iconic figures of the late Ming and early Qing periods – Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 – the scholars that first come to mind would be Yan Yuan 顏元 and Li Gong 李塨 from the pragmatic Yan–Li School 顏李學派 and Dai Zhen 戴震. Nevertheless, not only are there limited studies on Yan Yuan and Li Gong, but research on Dai Zhen is also scarce. There were no papers on Dai Zhen between 2017 and 2020, with only two published in 2021. This calls for introspection within our East Asian philosophy community. It is comforting to note, however, that Jeong Bin-na has continued to publish papers solely on Dai Zhen in 2021.

4) Chen Que 陳確

1

Wu Jie

Reconstruction of the Monism of Human Nature : The Ideological Content and Exemplary Significance of Chen Que's Theory of Human Nature
The Journal of Toegye Studies, Vol.152
Toegye Studies Institute

Chen Que (陳確, 1604–1677), a philosopher from the late Ming to early Qing period, once studied under the eminent Ming scholar Liu Zongzhou (劉宗周). He was a progressive thinker who challenged the Great Learning and doubted the Doctrine of the Mean, holding a negative stance towards the Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties. Such views are evident in his theories on human nature (renxinglun 人性論). Chen Que's progressive philosophy can be seen as laying the groundwork for the Practical Learning (Shixue 實學) that developed during the Qing Dynasty. Consequently, his work is held in high esteem and continues to be the subject of ongoing research in Chinese academia. In contrast, he remains relatively unknown domestically, but understanding Practical Learning necessitates a thorough examination of Chen Que's philosophy. In this light, such research holds significant merit.

4) Others

1

Kim Hee Young

A Study on the Aspect of the Interpretation of 'Junzi' through Various Annotations in the The Analects of Confucius – Focusing on Cheng Shu-de's Lunyu Ji Shi
Journal of Confucianism studies, No.61
Confucianism Research Institute

2

Park Yong-tae

A Documental Archaeology as the Practical Schools of Confucianism in Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasty and the Formation of Joseon Silhak in the 18th Century
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A study on the origins and ideological trends of academic studies of Qing Dynasty in the 18th century: Focusing on the internal changes of Confucianism and the challenges of Western studies

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4

Jeong Bin-na

A Study on the Ideological Transformation of Confucian Knowledge Theory in the 17th and 18th Centuries

TAE-DONG YEARLY REVIEW OF CLASSICS, Vol.49
Tae Dong Institute of Classic Research

5

JIN BO SUNG

A Study on the Gunja(君子: An Ideal Confucian Gentleman) who is the Subject of the Public Action in Confucianism

Journal of the New Korean Philosophical Association, Vol.108
The New Korean Philosophical Association

Research papers categorized under "Others" are not focused on specific individuals but revolve around specific issues. The aforementioned five papers are all considered meaningful in their own right. Kim Hee Young's research examined the concept of the 'junzi 君子' as it appears in various commentaries on the Analects. Park Yong-tae's paper, elucidating the relationship between the textual research of late Ming and early Qing periods and Joseon's Practical Learning, is not an unfamiliar area of study.

Notably, Jeong Bin-na, following her 2021 publications, released three papers related to the Qing Dynasty in 2022, one of which concerns Dai Zhen 戴震. Particularly, two of these papers, falling under the "Others" category, relate to the academic atmosphere and history of Qing Dynasty studies.

Conducting such research is by no means easy. We look forward to Jeong Bin-na's continued contributions.

3. Analysis and Critique of Key Papers

As observed above, there were a total of 13 domestic research papers related to Confucian studies of the Qing Dynasty in 2022, of which 12 belong to the realm of philosophical research. Consequently, this section aims to select papers with significant philosophical implications for further analysis and critique.

(1) Kim Jinkun: "A Study on Wang Fuzhi's interpretation of 'Daesangjeon(大象傳)' of gon-gwae(困卦) and his view of gunja(君子)"

The primary objective of this paper, as stated by the author, is to investigate the unique and original facets revealed in Wang Fuzhi's interpretation of the Commentary on the Great Images (Daxiang Zhuan 大象傳) of Kun gua 困卦, and to explore the contemporary relevance of the junzi 君子 perspective that emerges therein. Wang Fuzhi presents an interpretation of the Commentary on the Great Images of Kun gua 困卦 that markedly diverges from traditional interpretations by various scholars throughout history. Given this context, this paper seeks to discern the underlying meaning of his interpretation, the historical backdrop that gave rise to such an interpretation, and the significance of the junzi perspective revealed therein for our modern times.

The author first examines the interpretations of the Commentary on the Great Images by various historical scholars in order to contextualize Wang

Fuzhi's interpretation. Following this, the author reviews the interpretations from the Inner Commentary on the Zhouyi (Zhouyi Neizhuan 周易內傳) and the Explanation of the Great Images of the Zhouyi (Zhouyi Daxiang Jie 周易大象解), subsequently highlighting the following points: Firstly, the phrase "lake without water" (zewushui 澤无水) should be interpreted as "the pond has run out of water." When applied to the junzi 君子, this suggests that the challenging situation symbolized by the Kun gua 困卦 arises due to the proactive and autonomous decisions made by the junzi. Secondly, the junzi should persevere through this challenging situation, viewing it as a precondition for fulfilling their purpose. Thus, in a world where the Yin 陰 forces overshadow and dominate the junzi symbolized by Yang 陽, the junzi must resist serving in such an environment and refuse to collaborate with these dominating entities.

In this manner, the paper delves into the reasons behind Wang Fuzhi's particular interpretation of the Commentary on the Great Images (Daxiang Zhuan 大象傳) of Kun gua 困卦, and emphasizes the contemporary implications of the junzi perspective emanating from this interpretation for today's society.

(2) Jin Hong-mei: “The Academic Trend of Kim, Jeong-hee’s Silsagusisheol(實事求是說) through the Comparison with Weng, Fang-gang”

The author elucidates the motivation behind this research as follows: "During the 19th century in which Kim Jeonghui lived, the Qing Dynasty was experiencing the heyday of Evidential Studies (Kaozhengxue 考證學). Kim Jeonghui, upon visiting the Qing Dynasty, formed a mentoring relationship

with renowned scholars of the time, Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 and Ruan Yuan 阮元, and actively embraced the scholarly achievements of the Qing period. The theory of searching for truth based on facts (Silsagusiseol 實事求是說) stands as a pivotal work that reveals Kim Jeonghui's academic inclination. Although many studies have been conducted on it, there remains a regrettable lack of comprehensive exploration into its influence from Qing scholarship."

Given this context, this paper, bearing the aforementioned concerns, primarily focuses on The theory of searching for truth based on facts, a work exemplifying Kim Jeonghui's tendencies of Evidential Studies, to examine his perspective on Evidential Studies in relation to Qing scholarship and in comparison with Weng Fanggang. Weng Fanggang, living during the zenith of Qing's Evidential Studies, was deeply influenced by Evidential Studies. However, within Qing scholarship, he is not recognized as an Evidential Studies scholar, but rather as a Neo-Confucian scholar. He perceived Evidential Studies as a means to elucidate Neo-Confucian principles, often criticizing and distancing himself from representative Evidential Studies scholars. While Kim Jeonghui displayed an attitude of actively embracing the outcomes of Evidential Studies research, his stance on exegetics (xungu 訓詁) and Neo-Confucian moral principles (yili 義理) fundamentally did not differ from Weng Fanggang's. His The theory of searching for truth based on facts emphasizes exegetics but reveals a perspective that considers it merely a means to clarify Neo-Confucian principles. Moreover, his emphasis on mentor-disciple relationships and the teachings of his scholarly lineage, combined with his defense of the canonical status of classics and annotations by the Han Dynasty scholar Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, can hardly be viewed as embodying a genuine approach of 'searching for truth based on facts' (silsagusi 實事求是). It rather

demonstrates a tilt towards Neo-Confucian studies over Evidential Studies.

(3) Kim Hee Young: “A Study on the Aspect of the Interpretation of 'Junzi' through Various Annotations in the The Analects of Confucius - Focusing on Cheng Shu-de's Lunyu Ji Shi -”

This study examines the concept of the junzi 君子 - the ideal person in Confucianism - based on Cheng Shude's 程樹德 Collected Commentaries on the Analects (Lunyu Jishi 論語集釋) from the late Qing and early Republic of China periods. Firstly, the author extracted sentences from the Analects where the term junzi appears. The author introduced distinctive content from the annotations of Han scholarship represented by Collected Explanations on the Analects (Lunyu Jijie 論語集解), Song scholarship represented by Collected Annotations on the Analects (Lunyu Jizhu 論語集註), and Ming-Qing era annotations, found within Cheng Shude's Collected Commentaries on the Analects. Through these commentaries, the author explored the evolving interpretative perspectives on the meaning of junzi. Although the Analects consists of brief and concise sentences, its abundant metaphors, symbols, and sometimes obscure historical contexts or situational references allow for diverse interpretations. Consequently, countless commentaries on the Analects have emerged over the ages. Among these varied commentaries, Cheng Shude's Collected Commentaries on the Analects, published during the Republic of China era, is a compilation, as its title suggests, categorizing and collecting numerous annotations. Cheng Shude's work can be described as a book that demonstrates academic openness and flexibility by embracing the diversity of various schools of thought. Adopting a relativistic perspective, recognizing diversity, and

approaching scholarship with an open mind represents the academic attitude we should embrace. It played a significant role by accumulating research from previous eras in various forms and thoroughly elucidating both exegetics (xungu 訓詁) and Confucian moral principles (yili 義理).

Upon examining sentences from the Analects where junzi 君子 appears, the author classified 86 sentences into those referring to junzi as a political administrator (weizhengzhe 為政者) and those portraying junzi as a moral ideal. From these, the author extracted several key sentences and examined the ancient annotations (guzhu 古注), modern annotations (xinzhu 新注), and commentaries by Ming–Qing era annotators. Through this, the author confirmed that junzi was used to denote a political administrator and, in some cases, the term incorporated additional moral meanings or both meanings concurrently. Additionally, the author explored Ming–Qing era annotations that offered perspectives distinct from the ancient or modern annotations. This meticulous research approach the author adopted is valuable, particularly in highlighting the differences in interpretations across various periods.

(4) Dan Yunjin: “A Comparative Study of Wang Fu-ji and Jeong Yak-yong's Commentary on <Moderation(中庸)> Chapter 1, ‘What Heaven has commanded is nature’”

The purpose of this paper is to examine and compare the commentaries of Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 and Jeong Yak-yong 丁若鏞 on the phrase 'Heaven's Mandate is Called Nature' (tianmingzhiweixing 天命之謂性) from Chapter 1 of the Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong 中庸). Through this analysis, the study aims to elucidate their commonalities and differences, thereby facilitating a comparative exploration of Korean and Chinese Confucianism.

Upon examining Wang Fuzhi's 王夫之 and Jeong Yak-yong's 丁若鏞 interpretations of 'Heaven's Mandate is Called Nature' from the first chapter of The Doctrine of the Mean, several observations can be made. Firstly, Wang's understanding of 'Heaven' (tian 天) is that of an impersonal and non-interventionist natural entity, formed from accumulating qi 氣. To Jeong, 'Heaven' is a spiritually clear, intangible ruling entity, resembling a personal God. In the context of Yin-Yang and Five Elements, for Wang, 'Heaven' represents the movements of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements (wuxing 五行), which are both substance and function. Jeong counter-intuitively argues that Yin-Yang and Five Elements emerge as light shines or is obscured, implying that there is no substantive essence but only a play of light and shadow. Secondly, Wang emphasizes that 'Mandate' (ming 命) signifies 'ordinance'. For Jeong, 'Mandate' resonates with the voice of moral mind-heart (daoxin 道心). Thirdly, regarding 'Nature' (xing 性), Wang doesn't entirely negate that nature equates to the principle of life, but he diverges from Zhu Xi by asserting that this 'principle' is the 'qi 氣's principle'. Jeong stresses that 'Nature' implies 'inclination'. The focus of Wang on 'Mandate' and Jeong on 'Nature' from the same phrase 'Heaven's Mandate is Called Nature' showcases their contrasting perspectives. However, both converge on the point of confining 'Mandate' and 'Nature' only to humans, emphasizing human practicality. Fourthly, in their mode of articulation, both Wang and Jeong draw upon the established works of preceding scholars as their theoretical foundation, critically engaging with and quoting from these past Confucian thinkers.

Wang Fuzhi emphasizes a practical interpretation of the Doctrine of the Mean philosophy, distinct from the Neo-Confucianism of the Song dynasty. Similarly, Jeong Yak-yong's interpretation of the Doctrine of the Mean stands apart from the conventional Joseon Neo-Confucianism, also stressing

an understanding from a practical perspective. This shared emphasis indicates a thematic alignment between Wang Fuzhi and Jeong Yak-yong.

(5) Wu Jie: “Reconstruction of the Monism of Human Nature : The Ideological Content and Exemplary Significance of Chen Que's Theory of Human Nature”

The author has conducted research on the human nature theory of Chen Que (陳確, 1604–1677), an eminent realist scholar of the late Ming and early Qing periods, who is not widely known in domestic circles. Operating under the premise of Mencius's doctrine of innate goodness (xingshanshuo 性善說), Chen Que opposed the dualistic approach of Song dynasty Confucian scholars who divided human nature into ‘nature by heavenly decree’ (tianmingshixing 天命之性) and ‘nature by temperament’ (qizhizhixing 氣質之性). He believed that ‘vital energy’ (qi 氣), ‘emotion’ (qing 情), and ‘talent’ (cai 才) all constitute aspects of nature (xing 性). He posited that evil arises from postnatal habits and that by ‘fully expanding one's capabilities’ (kuochongjincai 擴充盡才), the inevitability of goodness can be actualized. His arguments are characterized by a relatively strict logical structure and coherence.

The unified theory of human nature (renxinglun 人性論) reconstructed by Chen Que, which inherited the legacies of Yangming 陽明 and Jishan 戴山, paved the way for subsequent scholars like Yan Yuan 顏元 and Dai Zhen 戴震. Not only did he critique the moral rigorism encapsulated by the principle of ‘upholding principles and eliminating desires’ (cunlimieyu 存理滅欲), but he also embodied the progressive trend of ‘expressing emotions and achieving desires’ (daqingsuiyu 達情遂欲). This makes his work a crucial paradigm in the academic currents of the Ming and Qing periods. In fact,

given that Chen Que's theory of human nature is perceived to be closer to Xunzi 荀子 rather than Mencius 孟子, it is highly esteemed by Xunzi scholars. Research on such lesser-studied scholars holds significant value for the advancement of academia.

(6) Jeong Bin-na: “An Study on the Connection between Dai Zhen’s concept of ‘Emotions’ and the Experientialism”

The primary objective of this paper is to elucidate the relationship between the three elements of desire (yu 欲), emotion (qing 情), and intellect (zhi 知) as discussed within Dai Zhen's 戴震 Qi (氣) philosophical framework, with a particular emphasis on analyzing the meaning and role of emotion (情感, Emotion) from an experiential perspective. To analyze Dai Zhen's concept of 'emotion' from an experiential viewpoint, it is essential to explain and analyze its overarching concepts, vitality (xueqi 血氣) and will (xinzhi 心志). Consequently, the author examines Dai Zhen's qing 情 from the facets of (shiqing 實情) and 'felt emotion' (ganqing 感情), positing that 'real emotion' pertains to emotions inherent in all humans. Subsequently, the meanings of xueqi 血氣 and xinzhì 心志 are clarified, and their relationships with desire, emotion, and intellect, as well as with the physical body, are elucidated. This is grounded in Dai Zhen's premise that the foundations of desire, emotion, and intellect lie in the body, composed of the Yin–Yang movements and interactions, and without the body, both xueqi 血氣 and xinzhì 心志 cannot exist. Xueqi 血氣 (physical nature) and xinzhì 心志 (intellectual nature) can be correlated with experientialism's physical/bodily and abstract/mental experiences, respectively, suggesting that moral judgment in xinzhì 心志 emerges from the physicality of xueqi 血氣. In Dai Zhen's Qi philosophical reasoning, physical activities, psychological

responses, and intellectual operations are intertwined and continuous, resonating closely with the experientialist reasoning that champions a 'philosophy accountable in experience'.

The author, Jeong Bin-na, appears to be a scholar specializing in Qing Dynasty philosophy. In 2021, she published a paper on Dai Zhen, and remarkably, in 2022, she released three papers related to the Qing period. It is commendable to recognize her significant contributions to the domestic academic sphere, which has not extensively researched Qing Dynasty philosophy.

(7) JIN BO SUNG: “A Study on the Gunja(君子: An Ideal Confucian Gentleman) who is the Subject of the Public Action in Confucianism”

The primary objective of this paper is to examine how the figure of the junzi 君子 has been interpreted as the agent of 'public' (gong 公) actions within Confucian thought, spanning from the era of Confucius to modern times. Rather than exploring the overarching trajectory of this thought, this study focuses on specific figures: Confucius from ancient times, Zhu Xi 朱熹 during the establishment of Neo-Confucianism, Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 during the late Ming and early Qing transition period, and Shin Chae-ho 申采浩 from Korea's modern era. In the Analects, the junzi that Confucius speaks of embodies the moral agent of public duties, representing a moral paradigm for the community, distinct from the amoral 'petty person' (xiaoren 小人). By the Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi merges the junzi, a symbol with tangible implications, with abstract notions explaining humans and nature. The ultimate attitude of coexistence and harmony with all things can be termed as gong 公. During the transitional phase of late Ming to early Qing, Huang

Zongxi critiqued the existing morality, leading to a transformed understanding of gong 公. In modern Korea, Shin Chae-ho, drawing from a context similar to Huang Zongxi, proposed the possibility of a new morality. Instead of the traditional junzi 君子, he introduced the new citizens (shingukmin 新國民) and the masses as the new agents of public action.

Thus, the significance of this research lies in its contribution to establishing a renewed image of the junzi, serving as a link in shaping its role within contemporary democratic societies.

4. Evaluation and Outlook

As previously mentioned, the philosophy or Confucian studies of the Qing dynasty is limited in scope due to its unique historical context. Consequently, domestic research findings on Qing Confucianism are not abundant. One reason might be the scarcity of researchers in this domain within the country. However, I cautiously speculate that it might also be due to the research topics being heavily skewed towards specific subjects. Over the past decade, domestic achievements in Qing Confucianism or philosophy have seen little significant change. This makes offering a new evaluation or perspective challenging, so I reiterate some of the previous points for emphasis.

Surveying the research trends in domestic East Asian philosophy from the 1970s until now, the 1970s and '80s were characterized by a significant number of scholars studying pre-Qin philosophy. From the 1990s, there seemed to be an increase in researchers dedicated to Song and Ming dynasty philosophy. Particularly since the 2000s, there's been a surge in the study of Yangming thought, with annual international conferences on Yangming studies and a corresponding rise in researchers. Over the past decade,

perhaps due to the popularity of modern Neo-Confucianism, there appears to be a growing trend of scholars studying modern and contemporary Chinese philosophy. However, the Qing dynasty, sandwiched between the Song-Ming and modern eras, seems to have garnered less attention. Fortunately, there is consistent research, albeit not abundant, on figures from the late Ming and early Qing, such as Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武.

While the philosophical contributions of the Qing dynasty might be deemed less noteworthy compared to other eras, we cannot overlook the presence of novel thoughts that set the stage for a new era. The academic approaches led by the Gan-Jia 乾嘉 school and Yan-Li 顏李 school, which emphasized textual research and a practical, realistic academic inclination, hold significant scholarly value. Additionally, research into the so-called The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (Tianzhu Shiti 天主實義) and the Spiritual Words of Jesus (Lingyan Lishao 靈言蠡勺), which can be seen as a fusion of Eastern and Western scholarship, is deemed crucial. There are various schools of thought from the Qing era worthy of study. From this perspective, the academic community should show greater interest in Qing dynasty philosophy. If history and philosophy are continuous, studying modern or contemporary life and thought necessitates a foundational exploration of its precedents. This principle must not be forgotten.