

A New Perspective in the History of East Asian Confucianism: Some Reflections on Confucian Hermeneutics[†]

Junjie (Chun-chieh) Huang^{*}

I. Introduction

In East Asian studies, the history of East Asian Confucianism from a comparative perspective is a topic with great potential for further development. As early as March of 1966, in a pre-retirement speech, ABE Yoshio 阿部吉雄 (b. 1905) of Tokyo University once called for Japanese scholars to struggle free from the bonds of Japanese centricism and to study the development of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Confucianism from a comparative perspective (Abe 1973; 1979). Professor YU Yingshi 余英時 (b. 1930) also called for scholars to pay attention to the development of Confucianism in such neighboring nations as Japan, Korea, and Vietnam from the standpoint of comparative intellectual history (Yu 1976; see also Yu 1974). Within this new field of comparative intellectual history, however, most writings have at present focused their attention upon Confucianism and its relation to modernization in East Asia. Although some studies have been done to explore issues internal to East Asian Confucianism, comparative research of a

[†] Translated by Scott Cook, Professor of Chinese, Grinnell College.

^{*} Fellow, Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica; Professor of History, National Taiwan University, 1 Section 4, Roosevelt Road, Taipei, Taiwan 107. E-mail: chun_chieh_huang@hotmail.com.

more comprehensive nature still awaits us.

There are many avenues for comparative study of the history of East Asian Confucianism; they cannot all be lumped into a single corner. For example, we can carry out such comparative study by focusing on certain central concepts within the Confucian tradition, such as *xin* 心 (heart/mind), *gong* 公 (public) and *si* 私 (private) (see Mizoguchi 1995 & Tahara 1995), *yi* 義 (righteousness) and *li* 利 (profit), and *wang* 王 (king) and *ba* 霸 (hegemon). We can also engage in the comparison of such East Asian Confucians as ITÔ Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 (Itei 維楨, 1627-1705) and DAI Zhen 戴震 (Dongyuan 東原, 1724-1777). More worthy of in-depth study, however, are interpretations of the classics by East Asian Confucians since the tenth century and the implications such interpretations reveal. Renewed interpretations of the Confucian classics and their ideas by Confucians from such areas as China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam over the past thousand years constitute an important phenomenon in the history of East Asian Confucianism. For example, ITÔ Jinsai once offered novel explanations of *dao* 道 and other concepts in such classics as the *Lunyu* 《論語》 (*Analects of Confucius*) and the *Mencius* 《孟子》; ISHIDA Umeiwa 石田梅岩 (1685-1744) once interpreted the Confucian concept of *li* 理 (order; principle) as containing not only ethical qualities, but the laws of the market as well. Such interpretations and reinterpretations of Confucianism constitute one of the most important phenomena in the history of East Asian thought.

Taking the *Lunyu* as an example, ever since Itô promoted it as “the first and foremost work in the universe” (Itô 1971: 4), it has been widely promoted by Japanese thinkers over the past 300 years; Japan has preserved, collated, and published certain ancient editions of the *Lunyu* and its annotations that have long since been lost in China, and thus possess significant value as textual artifacts. Japanese Confucians of the Tokugawa period were not subject to the bonds of the examination system, and their interpretations of the classics were thus relatively free. Since the Meiji period, Japanese scholars took the lead in applying recent Western methodologies to the study of the Eastern “bible,” the *Lunyu*, with important results achieved thereby. People from all levels of modern Japanese society are dearly fond of the *Lunyu*, and their study of it has never ceased; they have offered all sorts of novel interpretations and accumulated remarkable achievements. Thus by studying the history of *Lunyu* interpretation from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, not only can we get a glimpse of some important trends in the recent history of Japanese Sinology (such as the so-called “Japanese soul, Chinese substance”; “uniformity of Shinto and Confucianism”; “metamorphosis of the Chinese and barbarians;” and “overlord of the East”), but we can also discover some common characteristics in the ethical teachings of each of the various East Asian countries, as well as their attitudes and re-

sponses toward Buddhism and Christianity.

Japanese Confucians' renewed interpretations of the *Lunyu* over the past 300 years have taken place within the unique spatial-temporal context of Japan since the Tokugawa period. For example, what ITŌ Jinsai faced was the feudal system of the Tokugawa period and its restraints upon thought, in which the doctrines of ZHU Xi 朱熹 at once transformed into a system of thought that defended the feudal system; he thus arose in opposition to ZHU Xi's doctrines (Abe 1979: 164-177). There is a great disparity in the "contextuality" of *Lunyu* interpretations between Japanese and Chinese Confucians. The comparison of this disparity will be of great help in understanding the history of East Asian thought and the uniqueness of hermeneutics of the classics within the sphere of East Asian culture. It can thus help to lay a solid foundation for the construction of a hermeneutics with East Asian characteristics.

The purpose of this essay is to offer a new vision for the study of history of East Asian Confucianism: it focuses on interpretations of the Confucian classics by East Asian thinkers from China, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere since 1000 AD, and, from the standpoint of comparative intellectual history; it analyzes the development and uniqueness of the Confucian hermeneutic tradition in the early modern history of East Asia, in order to advance toward the construction of a Confucian hermeneutics. The essay is divided into five sections: this first section has given a brief introduction to the study of the interpretation of the classics within the history of East Asian Confucianism; the second section explains the goals of research in this field; the third section offers certain suggestions pertaining to the methodology; the fourth section explores possible directions and topics for such research; and the final section proposes some prospects for this study of East Asian hermeneutics.

II. The Goals

II.1. Hermeneutics with East Asian Characteristics

This type of study of the history of East Asian Confucianism centered upon the interpretation of the classics can help to lay a solid foundation for an "East Asian hermeneutics." This so-called "East Asian hermeneutics" refers to a hermeneutics possessing the unique characteristics of East Asian culture as revealed through the age-old tradition of commentary and sub-commentary upon the classics within the history of East Asian thought. In terms of its process of occurrence, this sort of hermeneutics with the marked characteristics of East Asian culture shares some rough similarities with the Western "hermeneutics": both arose from a subjective "rupture"

between the interpreter and the classic, making it difficult to bridge the gap between them and search for explanations. This “rupture” between the subjectivity of the two sides is in large part related to the so-called “linguisticity” of humans: people live within the sphere of language and are thus always dwelling in a dialogical relationship with others; there is a deep connection between people’s understanding of “the past” or of classics and the operations of language. Owing, however, to the separation of space and time, the phenomenon of estrangement often occurs within people’s experience of history, and it is from this that hermeneutics is produced. Looking at it in terms of its original state, East Asian hermeneutics naturally has aspects that are deeply marked by the unique characteristics of East Asian culture, and these are well worth our study.

In East Asian hermeneutics as revealed through the long-standing tradition of commentary and sub-commentary on the classics, the schools of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism each have their unique features. Among them, Confucian hermeneutics most strongly possesses the characteristic of practical application to governance, as its content of “practical learning” (*shixue* 實學) is especially pronounced. Taking, for example, interpretations of the *Mencius* by Confucians throughout the ages, we can see that Confucian hermeneutics possesses at least three prominent aspects.

1. A Confucian hermeneutics serves as the expression of the path and experience of the interpreter’s mind. Many Confucians used commentary on the classics as a means to express the path through which the mind must travel as it strives toward the realm of sagacity and worthiness. ZHU Xi, for example, compiled his collected annotations on the *Si Shu* 四書 (*Four Books*) in order to establish his own philosophy, and offered his interpretation of the *Mencius*’ “knowing words and cultivating the vital energy” (*zhi yan yang qi* 知言養氣) in order to elucidate his own personally experienced understanding of life; WANG Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529) interpreted the classics anew from within his personal understanding of the spirit of “the mind is principle” (*xin ji li* 心即理) and the “extension of innate knowledge” (*zhi liang zhi* 致良知) as garnered through his mind’s experience of “innumerable deaths and difficulties.”

2. A Confucian hermeneutics serves as a doctrine of governance. Since the political system of imperial China is centered upon the ruler, whereas the political ideal of Confucianism is centered around the people, many Confucian scholars have had difficulties in fulfilling their ambitions and reconciling their Confucian ideals with the realities of the political world (see Brandauer and Huang), and have thus imputed their political ideals of governing the age and aiding the people into the academic vocation of commentary on the classics. This type of hermeneutics is a kind of political doctrine, and within it “techniques of statecraft” are much more prevalent than the “principles of

governance.” For example, KANG Youwei 康有為 (1859-1927) wrote his *Mengzi Wei*《孟子微》(*Subtleties of the Mencius*) in the crisis years of the twentieth century when Western powers were threatening to swallow up China piece by piece, and thus imputed his great plan for saving the age into his academic works.

3. A Confucian hermeneutics serves to defend the teaching. Throughout the ages, there has never been a lack of Confucians using commentary and sub-commentary on the classics as a weapon to attack Buddhism and Daoism and defend Confucianism. WANG Yangming’s 王陽明 criticism of ZHU Xi’s doctrines through his own renewed interpretation of the classics, and Qing 清 dynasty Confucian DAI Zhen’s 戴震 (1724-1777) sharp refutation of the thought of the Song Confucians as well as the Buddhists and Daoist, are representative examples of this type of East Asian hermeneutics.

Of these three prominent aspects of East Asian Confucian hermeneutics as revealed through the history of *Mencius* interpretation, the first is of the greatest importance. Confucians throughout the ages have often used commentary on classics either as a means by which to secure themselves and establish their missions, or as a method for expressing their own inner experience in striving toward the realm of sagacity—such are examples of the Confucian idea of “learning for the self” (*wei ji zhi xue* 爲己之學), and weaving together as one explanation of the classics and one’s personal life is the traditional method of thought known as “melding the old to cast the new” (*rong jiu yi zhu xin* 融舊以鑄新). The second aspect concerns the interpreter’s vision of the prospects for the social and political worlds. The interpreter seeks, via the route of renewed interpretation of the classics, to offer measures by which to solve the social and political problems he faces—this is a mode of thought known as “returning to the roots to bring forth the new” (*fan ben yi kai xin* 返本以開新). The third aspect is when the interpreter resides in an environment of intense agitation by various trends of thought, and in order to manifest the orthodoxy of the system of thought with which he identifies, he utilizes the renewed interpretation of the classics to ward off the “unorthodox” thought—this is a kind of mode of thought known as “washing off the muddy to promote the clear” (*ji zhuo yi yang qing* 激濁以揚清) (see Huang 1977: 471-472).

II.2. Characteristics of East Asian Modes of Thinking

This type of comparative study of East Asian Confucianism will also, to a certain extent, benefit our understanding of East Asian modes of thinking. Each type of East Asian hermeneutics is deeply permeated within the Chinese tradition of education through the *Odes* (*Sbi*《詩》). This tradition often utilizes the stimulus arising from aesthetic experience to awaken a

person's perceptual or ethical subjectivity (see Van Zoeren). There are certainly different methods in expressing this "evocation" (*xing* 興) mode of thought within East Asian culture, but the imputation of one's thoughts through interpretation of the classics is the most commonly seen method: some express their personal experiences in striving toward the realm of sagacity; some grief-strickenly lay forth the faults of the age and impute a philosophy of governance into their career of commentators on the classics; and some "wash off the muddy to promote the clear," using interpretation of the classics to rebuke unorthodox sects—in all such cases there is no employment of stiff logical demonstration, but rather the communication of intent is paramount, amply demonstrating a uniquely characteristic mode of thinking within East Asian culture. Up until the present juncture, however, though there have been numerous studies on the history of East Asian thought within Sinological circles over the past fifty years, relatively few have engaged in any discussion of the modes of thinking or theoretical foundations that lay behind such thought.

Study of "modes of thinking" has long been an important topic of interest to philosophers. Since the publication of anthropologist Lucien Levi-Bruhl's (1857-1939) *Primitive Mentality*, anthropologists and sociologists have also been led to throw themselves into this field of research. In recent years, on the heels of developments in computer science and artificial intelligence, study of "modes of thinking" has taken on fresh significance. In studies of the history of East Asian thought, however, mode of thinking is a seldom-broached area of inquiry. Traditional historical research has emphasized the reconstruction or elucidation of historical events, or offered causal explanations for historical phenomena. However, researchers have neglected the manner in which people recognize themselves and the worlds in which they live; how they think about problems and construct world-views; how such world-views interpenetrate or influence their natural and social environments. Yet it is important to study "modes of thinking" because this issue touches directly upon the realm of "tacit knowing" inherent in the East Asian cultural tradition (see Polanyi). Engagement in the in-depth analysis of this issue can strengthen our understanding of the so-called "deep-level structures" within the cultural and intellectual traditions of East Asia.

Concerning East Asian modes of thinking, Japanese scholar NAKAMURA Hajime's 中村元 (1912-) massive, four-volume *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* 《東洋人の思維方法》 must count as one of the earlier and more comprehensive works. First, he looks at modes of language expression, especially grammatical structure, to explain the modes of thinking that are reflected therein. Second, centering on Indian culture, he first explores the Indian modes of thinking as reflected through its language, and then explores the Chinese and Japanese modes of thinking as seen through the ways in

which they accept the foreign culture of Indian Buddhism in the process of its transmission into China and Japan. Given Nakamura's relatively deep expertise of Indian Buddhism, it makes good sense for him to undertake his research through the study of Indian modes of thinking. The first of Nakamura's research methods involves a major issue in the study of thinking: some claim that language determines thinking, because language is the only tool of thinking. This point of view has been quite popular recently, and Nakamura for the most part adopts such a point of view. In recent years, however, such scholars as CHEN Xinxia 陳新夏 have believed instead that thinking determines language (see Chen). In fact, whether they hold that language determines thinking or that thinking determines language, both sides believe that language and thinking are intimately related, and thus that language can to some degree reflect modes of thinking.¹

III. Methodology

Methods of comparative study of the history of East Asian Confucianism will differ according to the scope, topic, and subject. For example, using European intellectual history as a model, MARUYAMA Masao 丸山真男 (1914-1996) once proposed that study of Japanese intellectual history could be approached via three different avenues: (1) history of doctrine; (2) history of ideas; and (3) history of Spirit (*Geistesgeschichte*) (see Maruyama 1961: 6-8). His arguments differ greatly from those of European and American scholars. ISHIDA Ichirō 石田一良 (1913-), on the basis of the acumen gained from his longstanding study of Japanese intellectual history, also once proposed three subjects for research in intellectual history: (1) highly systematic thought; (2) pre-*logos* modes of consciousness; and (3) thought that serves as a way of life (Ishida 1996: 134-136). I would like to open up a new path, involving two possible approaches by which to contemplate and study East Asian hermeneutics, from the two angles of linguisticity and contextuality inherent in it.

III.1. History of Ideas Method

The "history-of-ideas method" refers to (1) the focused research upon such important ideas in the history of East Asian Confucianism as *xin* 心 (mind/heart), *xing* 性 (nature), *dao* 道 (way), *jiao* 教 (teaching), *tianming* 天命

¹ Aside from this approach, others have explored modes of thinking from the standpoint of comparative culture (see Song 1991 & Muneshima 1977). There are several achievements on Chinese modes of thinking in recent years (see Yang & Huang 1996, Wu 1997, and Yang 1998). Yet there is still room for further development in this area; by focusing on the phenomena of interpretation of the classics by East Asian Confucians in recent ages, we can analyze in depth the unique characteristics of East Asian modes of thinking.

(mandate of Heaven), etc.; (2) the in-depth analysis of what kind of new interpretations such ideas garner through exegesis of the classics by Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Confucians; and (3) an analysis of the intellectual-historical and philosophical implications of such disparity in the interpretations of identical concepts. Using this method, together with the development of certain ideas in the history of exegesis of classics, we can observe the prevailing currents through the droplets, and analyze how, in the hands of East Asian interpreters of the classics throughout the ages, the “old bottle” of the classics is filled with “new wine” (Chan 1962 & Chan 1967), as well as taste the flavor of such “new wine.”

For example, Mencius’ doctrine of “knowing words and cultivating the vital energy” (*Mencius* 2A2) is concisely worded and terse in meaning, full of rich implications; many of the singular ideas within it and the interpretations given them are worthy of in-depth analysis. In particular, the idea of “knowing words” possesses great significance in the history of East Asian Confucianism. ZHU Xi explained Mencius’ “knowing words” as “knowing principle” (*zhibi* 知理) and believed that the “mind” (*xin* 心) possesses the ability to “know;” that there is no disparity between the substance and function, the manifest and subtle, of the “mind”; that it can “exhaust principle and fully integrate” (Zhu: 13.1a); and that at its greatest height it can reach the point where “there is no principle of anything in the world which its knowledge cannot reach” (Zhu 1986: 1.15.296). ZHU Xi also said that “to know words is none other than to exhaust principle” (*ibid.*). The interpretation of Mencius’ “knowing words” that ZHU Xi offered conforms closely with his interpretation of Mencius’ notion of “accumulating righteousness” (*jiji* 集義). In ZHU Xi’s view, “‘accumulating righteousness’ is like ‘storing up goodness’ (*jishan* 積善); it means something like wanting each and every event to conform to righteousness” (Zhu 1983: 3.232); it “means simply that there is nothing in which one does not strive for correctness” (Zhu 1986: 4.52.1259); it “means simply that when each and every event conforms to what is proper, [righteousness] will naturally store up in great quantity” (Zhu 1986: 4.52.1259). He also said, “*ji* 集 is like *ju* 聚 (to gather together). To handle all things with righteousness (*chu wu wei yi* 處物為義) requires that each and every event conform to righteousness” (*ibid.*). Here, ZHU Xi explains the “*ji* 集” of Mencius’ *jiji* as “gather together” (*ju* 聚), and the *yi* 義 as the manifold principles (*li* 理) of all things and events. “Accumulating righteousness” thus, for ZHU Xi, means a kind of intellectual activity of gathering up the manifold principles of each and every thing and event.

ZHU Xi’s interpretation of the notions of “knowing words” and “cultivating the vital energy” incited the intense criticism of later Confucians. WANG Shouren 王守仁 (Yangming 陽明, 1472-1529) explained “accumulating righteousness” as “extending innate knowledge” (*zhi liang zhi* 致良知), an

interpretation widely divergent from ZHU Xi's. Late Ming scholar HUANG Zongxi 黃宗羲 (Lizhou 梨洲, 1610-1695) attacked ZHU Xi's interpretation, holding that in his two-part separation of events and principles he comes close to Gaozi's doctrine of "righteousness is external" (*yi mai* 義外). The Japanese Tokugawa Confucian NAKAI Riken 中井履軒 (1732-1817) criticized ZHU Xi's explanation as "diligent in the work of [self-]control, but slight in [bringing out] the sense of expansion and fulfillment." ITÔ Jinsai opened a large-scale attack on ZHU Xi's *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books* 《四書集註》 from a monist position, pointing out the inappropriateness of ZHU Xi's interpretation of *zhi* 知 (to know) in "knowing words." Even the Chôson-dynasty (1392-1910) Korean Confucian CHONG Yap-yong 丁若鏞 (Das-han 茶山, 1762-1836) criticized ZHU Xi, believing that Zhu's interpretation of "not being stirred in the mind" (*bu dong xin* 不動心) departed from Mencius' original meaning. Even in the twentieth (and twenty-first) century there are many contemporary scholars of Confucianism who have been unable to give their stamp of approval to ZHU Xi's interpretation of "knowing words and cultivating the vital energy" (Huang 1997: 191-252).

The innumerable twists, turns, and side-paths that interpretations of "knowing words and cultivating the vital energy" have taken concretely reveal the great course of shifting trends in East Asian Confucian thought over the past 800 years. In adopting a history-of-ideas method to explore the history of interpretation of classics, we should pay special attention to the following issues: (1) What are the "unit ideas" that are included within the systems, schools, or trends of Confucian thought? What is the structural or hierarchical relationship among such "unit ideas?" (2) What kind of "tacit" "grammar" or "deep-level structures" are latent in the system of Confucian interpretation of the classics? (3) What sort of theoretical comprehensiveness does the system of Confucian interpretation of the classics have? (Huang 1997: 22-23).

For example, the "distinction between righteousness and profit" (*yi li zhi bian* 義利之辨) in the *Mencius* is not at all an independent pair of opposing concepts, but one that forms an organic, mutually-permeating relationship with such notions as the "division between public and private" (*gong si zhi fen* 公私之分) and "the difference between king and hegemon" (*wang ba zhi bie* 王霸之別). Many Confucians from all over East Asia have argued that kings preserve their minds through the "public," have the courage to act upon "righteousness" when they see it, take the welfare of the people as their standard, and thus create a "great profit" (*da li* 大利) to share with the people; hegemons, on the other hand, proceed from the notion of "self-gain" (*si* 私), forget "righteousness" when they see "profit," act out of egoism (*wei wo* 爲我) in everything they do, and monopolize all advantages for themselves. These three interrelated pairs of complimentary notions in the *Mencius* have un-

dergone different twists and transformations in the hermeneutic tradition of East Asian Confucians depending upon the person, school, or era in question; moreover, the three in fact take “sharing versus monopolization” as their “grammar.” All three pairs form an organic relationship with each other. A pull of one hair moves the entire body, and thus when we adopt the history-of-ideas method in decoding the history of East Asian Confucian exegesis of the classics, we should pay special attention to the organic interrelationship of many notions within the interpretive systems of Confucians from China, Japan, and Korea.

Of further note is that China, in fact, lay at the center of the historical development of East Asian Confucian exegesis of the classics: in terms of temporal order, many systems of interpretation first appeared in China, and were then transmitted through Korea before making their way to Japan; there is a temporal progression to their development. When taking the history-of-ideas approach, we can pay special attention to the step-by-step progression through which such ideas are proliferated as they move from China on into Korea and Japan.

III.2. Intellectual History Method

Using the “intellectual history method,” we analyze the East Asian Confucian interpretation of the classics as situated within the interpreter’s spatial-temporal context. Such a method pays special attention to the following issues: (a) in what sort of historical context and particular environment does the interpreter decode the classics? (b) in what sort of historical environment do the issues or ideals latent in the classics become problematized? (c) what sort of mutually-influential relationship do the time-period of the classic and that of the interpreter have with each other?

Some examples can illustrate the practical applications of this method. The first example involves the history of *Mencius* interpretation. Song-dynasty intellectuals and thinkers once engaged in fierce debate over Mencius’ political thought. This debate and its rich implications must be placed in the context of Song-dynasty political history before they can be accurately grasped. I once pointed out about the study of this issue that, from the Northern Song on down, the flashpoint in the debate over Mencius’ political thought was, for Song intellectuals, Mencius’ non-reverence of the king of Zhou 周 and his travels to persuade the various feudal lords on how to unify the world (Huang 1997: 127-190 & Huang 2000). The reason why Mencius’ non-reverence of the King of Zhou would become a flashpoint had, in fact, to do with the unique background of Northern-Song political history. Looking at it from within the larger environment of the Northern Song since its founding, the doctrines of the distinct natures of king and hegemon and the opposition of ruler and minister latent in the fact of

Mencius' non-reverence of the King of Zhou mixed like fire and water with both the centrally controlled political system of the Northern Song and its political philosophy of "reverence for the king." Insofar as WANG Anshi 王安石 raised Mencius in particular as the spiritual standard for his legal reforms, Mencius imperceptibly became the manifesto for Wang's reform movement, and thus invariably provoked the criticism of those who opposed the movement. Under the confluence of two such major factors in political history, Mencius' non-reverence of the King of Zhou eventually became the common target of attack, inciting the debate over Mencian learning by Song intellectuals.

Implicit in the distinction between king and hegemon that formed part of this debate was the opposition between the two political attitudes of idealism and realism. On the one hand, those Song Confucians who defended Mencius' promotion of kingship over hegemony generally held idealistic positions, taking the idealized "three dynasties" as their political standard, and Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 as their models for emulation—WANG Anshi was a prototypical example. On the other hand, those Song Confucians who criticized Mencius tended to look upon the three dynasties in the same way as they did the Qin 秦, Han 漢, Sui 隋, and Tang 唐 dynasties, discussing politics from a realist position—SIMA Guang 司馬光 (Junshi 君實, 1019-1086) was a representative figure. Also, the issue of the distinction between ruler and minister began with Mencius' proposal that "rulers who would achieve great things must have ministers whom they would not summon." Mencius' doctrine of opposition between ruler and minister was in fact rooted in the historical backdrop of the Warring States (403-221 BC), in which the prestige of the scholarly class (*shi* 士) reached a high point and most of the rulers were fond of warfare and profit. Song Confucians, however, criticized Mencius from within the context of Song history, as when SIMA Guang roundly attacked Mencius on the basis of his own political philosophy rooted in the doctrine of "titles and positions" (*mingfen lun* 名分論), and from the standpoint of his political opposition to WANG Anshi's new laws. Mencius' non-reverence of the King of Zhou and his encouragement of the feudal lords to unite the world and become its new king directly incited the king-versus-hegemon issue, and thus his non-reverence of the King of Zhou invariably involved Mencius' definition of "king" and its substantive content. When Song Confucians read Mencius' doctrine of king-versus-hegemon, they contemplated the notions of "king" and "hegemon" not only from within the context of Mencius' political philosophy, but also from within the unique context of Song-dynasty politics and philosophy. Thus, the threat that Mencius' doctrine of king-versus-hegemon posed to the Song power structure became broadly manifest; and it should come as no surprise that it would incite a fierce debate between the pro- and anti-Mencius factions.

Song-dynasty Confucians expressed their political ideals and aspirations through their renewed interpretation of Mencian thought. In substance, then, their hermeneutics is none other than a kind of political doctrine; and even more worthy of note is that this type of politics is, to great extent, a kind of moral doctrine. When supporters and attackers of Mencius debates about the distinction between king and hegemon, the division between ruler and minister, and the issue of reverence for Confucius, they at all points employed terminology full of moral content and strived toward the goal of morality. Basically, they discussed political issues from within a moral context. From this case we can discover that the realistic inclinations within Chinese Confucian hermeneutics are particularly strong. Chinese interpreters of the classics do not in fact engage in interpretation for its own sake, but rather in order to cleanse, manage, or even save the age in which they live. Within the political tradition of Chinese Confucian hermeneutics, questions of “is” and “ought” thus become profoundly unified, judgments of “fact” and “value” integrate into a single whole, and “retrospective” interpretations of the Confucian classics become seamlessly fused with “prospective” programs for the future.

The second example is the interpretation of Confucian poetry by Taiwanese poets during the period of Japanese occupation (1895-1945). In a recent study, CHEN Zhaoying 陳昭瑛 pointed out that,

As a component of traditional Han culture, Confucian poetics in the period of Japanese occupation faced, along with traditional culture, two severe tests: one was the threat of assimilation by the foreign colonists and the loss of literary heritage; the other was the opportunity for achieving “modern transformation” under the challenge of a new cultural movement. These two major factors shaped the unique style of Confucian poetics during the period of Japanese occupation. The pain of losing the country and the pressures of foreign assimilation caused critics to promote the value of the “transformed Airs and Eleganciae” (*bian feng bian ya* 變風變雅), a value choice at great odds with that of traditional Confucian poetics, wherein the “proper classics” were placed above the “transformed Airs and Eleganciae” in the canon. In terms of the overall spirit of Confucianism, the influence of ZHU Xi learning had gradually started to wane in the late Qing 清. The similar experience of losing the country caused Confucianism in the period of Japanese occupation to return to the practical spirit of the Confucianism of the southern Ming 明. In poetics, this was expressed through the repeated emphasis upon the functions of *Odes* in moral teaching and practical governance. Compared to the form of antagonistic competition between Confucianism and Buddhism (especially Chan) that had marked the poetic tradition since the Song and Ming, this period of poetics in Taiwan was one in which Confucianism alone held the day. (Z. Chen: 252-3)

The third example is the interpretation made by LI Chunsheng 李春生 (1838-1924), a Taiwanese lay-intellectual during the period of Japanese occupation. Li was a fervent Christian who achieved great wealth through business. He wrote many works in his later years and offered numerous in-

terpretations of the Confucian classics, as with such sayings, found especially in the *Zhongyong* 《中庸》, as “participating in the nurturing transformations of Heaven and Earth,” “forming a triad with Heaven and Earth,” and “exhausting the heights of Heaven.” This is because such sayings not only affirm humans’ unique place in the universe, but also elevate their position to a level where they form the third member of a triad on a par with Heaven and Earth. Given his Christian background, this was impossible for Li to accept, as it was tantamount to denying God’s transcendence and was a serious insult to God. LI Minghui 李明輝 has recently pointed out that LI Chunsheng basically adopted two hermeneutic strategies in his interpretations of the Confucian classics:

On the one hand, he emphasized that most of these phrases appear in the second half of the *Zhongyong*, that they “were phrases transmitted by Zisi 子思, and did not come from Confucius himself.” On the other hand, he devised ways to dilute the implications of those phrases that were in conflict with Christian viewpoints, interpreting “participating in the nurturing transformations of Heaven and Earth” in the sense of “using human efforts to assist in Heaven’s works,” as well as understanding the phrase “form a triad” in “forming a triad with Heaven and Earth” in the sense of the *can* 參 of *canzhan* 參贊 (assist) rather than as “on a par as the third member” (*ping lie wei san* 並列爲三). As for “exhausting the heights of Heaven,” this was a greatly exaggerated saying, wherein “the author lost the sense of caution, and the transmitter lacked understanding.” (Li 2001)

Here we see how a Confucian classic could garner an entirely different interpretation within the context of Christian thought.

From the above, we see how the East Asian Confucian interpretation of the classics took place within a complex political, social, and economic web, and thus when we study the history of East Asian Confucian hermeneutics, we must pay attention to the historical context within which the interpreter lives before we can accurately grasp his or her motives. For example, it is only from within the historical background of ZHU Xi’s doctrines becoming the official ideology that we can understand why East Asian Confucians from the seventeenth century onward, in Qing 清 dynasty China (1644-1911), Tokugawa Japan, and Ch’oson-dynasty Korea (1392-1910), engaged in such ruthless attack and criticism of the metaphysical world centered around “principle” (*li* 理) that ZHU Xi had constructed. East Asian Confucians in recent ages used renewed interpretation of such ancient Confucian classics as the *Four Books* to criticize Song learning. They all stood in their historical contexts to contemplate and criticize the doctrines of ZHU Xi. Thus the elucidation of the interpreter’s contextuality is truly an important method in studying the history of East Asian Confucian hermeneutics.

I propose to combine these two methods, “history of ideas” and “intellectual history,” as appropriate approaches to the study of East Asian Confucian hermeneutics. The former focuses on the “linguisticity” of

interpretation of the classics, paying special attention to the fact that the interpreters dwell in a linguistic world created by the classics, and decode the classics as a member of their linguistic world (see Gadamer). The latter focuses on the “historicality” of the interpreter, keeping its eye on the fact that the interpreter is a concrete individual subject to the complex interplay of historical conditions, and that a relationship of “inter-subjectivity” is formed between the interpreter and the classics. Confucian interpretation of the classics is one in which both “I annotate the six classics” (*wo zhu liu jing* 我註六經) and “the six classics annotate me” (*liu jing zhu wo* 六經註我), and thus the historicality of the interpreter occupies a crucial position (see Huang 1999a).

IV. Possible Directions

The history of East Asian Confucianism is full of vast waves and billowing tides of thought: among the various sects there has no doubt been much mutual contention, but reciprocal influence has also resulted from such confrontational exchanges, forming complex new trends of thought. Thus possible directions for study of the Confucian hermeneutics in East Asia are as varied as the trees in the forest, and cannot all be lumped into a single corner. I will try to propose three directions for research in this field from the angle of the regions involved.

1. Chinese Confucianism as the Main Axis. The development of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan and Chôson Korea is intimately related to Chinese Confucianism, and thus study of the Confucian hermeneutics of the classics in East Asia must utilize the interpretations of classics by Chinese Confucians as an important referential point. From this standpoint, we can first explore the ancient origins of Chinese Confucian hermeneutics and the formation of the Confucian classics in the pre-Qin 秦 period, as well as the commentaries on them of the Han 漢 and Tang 唐 dynasties, taking our cue from ZHU Xi's (1130-1200) dictum that “neither the commentaries of the Han nor the sub-commentaries of the Tang can be forsaken”; next, we can study East Asian Confucian interpretations of the *Lanyu* and *Yijing* 《易經》 (*Book of Change*). ZHU Xi was an epoch-making figure in the history of Confucianism, as his promotion of the *Four Books* over the *Five Classics* determined a new course for the East Asian Confucians of recent ages. QIAN Mu 錢穆 (Binsi 賓四, 1895-1900) put the matter well when he said that ZHU Xi was the number-one person in the history of Chinese Confucianism after Confucius himself (Qian: 1.2). Last, Chinese Confucianism has distant origins and a long course of development, but within it the *Chunqiu* 《春秋》 (*Springs and Autumns*) is the classic most closely connected with practical applications, as Han Confucians used it to judge court cases. Within the

Confucianism of Taiwan in its Japanese occupation (1895-1945), the spirit of the *Chunqiu* also fulfilled its function in fortifying the barrier between “barbarian” and Chinese. The manifestation of the spirit of the *Chunqiu* in colonial Taiwan awaits deeper investigation.

2. The Confucianism of Tokugawa Japan. China and Japan are in close geographic proximity to each other. Thus the cultural, political, and economic relationships between China and Japan have been intimate since antiquity. In medieval times the importation of Tang culture once incited Japan's Taika Reformation, and in the Tokugawa era Japan would absorb Chinese culture on an even broader scale. Because of Japan's invasion of China, however, there has been tension in the relationship between the two countries over the past hundred years. After entering the twentieth century, there have been a great many Chinese students studying abroad in Japan, and in 1928, DAI Chuanxian 戴傳賢 (Jitao 季陶, 1891-1949) published his *Essay on Japan* (*Riben Lun* 《日本論》), which even more strenuously called for an increased study of Japan. However, the number of scholarly works related to Japan in twentieth-century China, as compared with the numerous studies related to China in Japan, is truly a source of vexation. Scholarly works on Japanese Confucianism are even fewer in number. Over the past twenty years or so, under the impetus of the Japan Foundation, research works on Japan from the Sinological communities of Europe and the United States have appeared like bamboo-shoots after the spring rains; whether in terms of quality or quantity, those from the Chinese academic community cannot compare. In the past ten years, scholars from both sides of the Taiwan Straits have become interested in the study of Japanese Confucianism, but gauging from the works already published, it appears that most are overviews, with monographs being relatively few. If we can engage in the in-depth study of certain topics within the history of interpretation of classics by Japanese Confucians over the past four hundred years, it should prove to be of definite significance and value.

Given these considerations, research topics in this new field could include such figures as ITÔ Jinsai of Japan's ancient-learning school, the interpretations of such classics as the *Lunyu* 《論語》, *Daxue* 《大學》 (*Great Learning*), *Zhongyong* 《中庸》, and *Shijing* 《詩經》 by other Tokugawa Confucians, and their comparison with the interpretations of the same classics by Chinese Confucians. A new field of vision could thereby be opened. Aside from these, we could also study the interpretations of Chinese ritual (*li* 禮) by Japanese Confucians of the Tokugawa period.

3. Korean Confucianism of the Chôson Dynasty. Within Korean Confucianism, as the *Daxue* occupies a genuinely pivotal position in the East Asian Confucianism of recent ages, we can adopt the perspective of comparative intellectual history to explore the similarities and differences be-

tween Chinese and Korean interpretations of the *Daxue*. Next, Mencius' "four germinal heart-minds" (*si duan zhi xin* 四端之心) was a subject of some contention between the Song Confucians ZHU Xi and the Huxiang 湖湘 scholars. On the basis of his ethical structure of the bifurcation between affections (*qing* 情) and principle (*li* 理), ZHU Xi criticized YANG Shi 楊時 (Guishan 龜山, 1053-1135), XIE Liangzuo 謝良佐 (1050-1103), and the Huxiang scholars' interpretation of "humanity" (*ren* 仁). Confronting the same sort of issue, the Chôson Confucian YI T'oegye 李退溪 (1501-1570) proposed the "distinction between the four origins and seven affections," categorizing the "four origins" and "seven affections" separately as "principle" and "material force" (*qi* 氣). KI Taesong 奇高峰 (1527-1572), also on the basis of ZHU Xi's perspective, repeatedly engaged in debate with Yi, opposing his view of the "four origins" and "seven affections" as things of separate substances. Subsequently, YI Yulgok 李栗谷 (1536-1584) would continue to elaborate upon KI Taesong's position, criticizing Yi's "distinction between the four origins and seven affections" (see Chung).

Following the above directions, we will perhaps be able to develop some regional Confucian content of significance to East Asian thought and culture more generally. Mention was made above of the anti-Zhu tide in East Asian thought from the seventeenth century onward; in terms of the content of this trend, most of those East Asian scholars opposed to Zhu in recent ages have utilized the path of commentary on the classics to arrive at such oppositional goals. This tide of opposition to Zhu's doctrines not only enveloped the vast spatial territories of China, Japan, and Korea, but also the time-span of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The general significance of this tide of opposition to Zhu's doctrines lies in revealing how in each region it has possessed different intellectual-historical significance as these three nations of China, Japan, and Korea have made the march forward from tradition to modernity. In Japan, the collapse of Zhu's mode of thinking can be seen as the track of intellectual development from "natural" to "man-made;"² but in China, ZHU Xi's doctrines received the criticism from DAI Zhen, and the "modernity" was revealed in such aspects as Dai's casting aside the Song neo-Confucian dualism of principle and material force. He proposed that the "natural" (*ziran* 自然) is simply the "inevitable" (*biran* 必然); that "principle is the lack of imbalance in the affections;" and that "principle exists in desires."

Aside from looking at the regional differences of each East Asian

² This is MARUYAMA Masao's 丸山真男 view. Maruyama believes that Tokugawa-period intellectual history follows "Song Confucianism." He points out that the rise of Ogyu Sorai's doctrines caused the collapse of Zhu's mode of thinking, which had served as the ideological basis for Tokugawa's feudal system. See Maruyama 1974.

country, we can also concentrate our focus upon such important topics in the Confucian classics as the following: (a) what is the priority between knowledge and moral conduct, and why? (b) what sort of relationship pertains between the “mind” (*xin*) and “principle” (*li*)? (c) what is the relationship between natural order and cultural order? Focusing on key passages from the classics, we can then analyze the changes these passages undergo in the interpretations given them by Confucians from China, Japan, and Korea. Let me give three examples to illustrate.

1. The phrase Confucius used to describe his own spiritual pilgrimage, “at fifty, I knew Heaven’s command” (*Lunyu* 2.4), has been given a plethora of explanations by Confucian scholars from China, Japan, and Korea over the past two thousand years, with no consensus among them. Both HE Yan 何晏 (?–249) and HUANG Kan 皇侃 explained *tianming* 天命 (Heaven’s command) in the sense of “allotted fortune” (*luming* 祿命). ZHU Xi, however, explained *tianming* as “simply the operations of Heaven’s *dao* as endowed in things, or the reasons by which affairs should be as they are,” coming close to explaining it as “principle” (*li* 理). LIU Baonan 劉寶楠 (Chuzhen 楚楨 1791–1855) interpreted the phrase as follows:

“Knowing Heaven’s command” is to know that one’s self is appointed by Heaven, that one is not born for nothing. We might say that Confucius lived through the decline of the Zhou, at a time when sages and worthies had long since failed to appear. When he reached fifty, he was able to study the *Yi* (*Book of Changes*), and knowing that he had gained something from this, he made the modest claim for himself that he was “without great error,” meaning that he understood why Heaven had given him life and with what it commanded him, and that he had not failed to live up to Heaven, and thus he appointed himself the task of realizing Heaven’s command. *Ming* 命 (command) is what one establishes in oneself and receives from Heaven, and thus something the sage dares not decline. On another day, during the troubles with Huan Tui 桓魋, Confucius said that “Heaven endowed me with virtue;” what Heaven endowed him with was Heaven’s command. Only because he knew Heaven’s command did he further say that “is not Heaven the one that knows me?!” clarifying the fact that Heaven’s mind was able to communicate with his own. (Liu: 2.44–45)

He thus emphasized the unity between mankind and Heaven, in what counts as an exceptionally good explanation. XU Fuguan 徐復觀 (1902–1982) explained this passage as follows:

Confucius’ “knowing Heaven’s command” is identical with Mencius’ “knowing one’s nature” (*zhixing* 知性), and “knowing one’s nature” is the same as “exhausting one’s mind” (*jin xin* 盡心). Thus, to put it even more directly, Confucius’ “knowing Heaven’s command” was the expression of the entire substance and great function of his being “rooted in the heart/mind” (*benxin* 本心), and he is thus by no means a mystic. (Xu 1982: 388)

Among Japanese Confucians, too, this same saying has undergone a variety of different interpretations. If we take this saying as our main axis, and explore the interpretations given it by Chinese Confucians throughout the ages as well as by such Japanese Confucians as ITŌ Jinsai, OGYU Sorai 荻生徂徠, and NAKAI Riken, we can then analyze the intellectual-historical implications revealed to us through discrepancies in the interpretation of Confucius' thought by Chinese and Japanese Confucians. In order to elucidate the intellectual-historical implications of these interpretations by Chinese and Japanese Confucians of "at fifty I knew Heaven's command," we could engage in a focused analysis of the contextuality of Chinese and Japanese Confucian history. This so-called "contextuality" incorporates two meanings. The first is how individual Chinese and Japanese Confucians interpret this saying within the overall context of their thought—this level of "contextuality" involves the so-called "hermeneutic circle." The second is in what manner the interpretations of individual Confucians become connected with the overall context of Confucian history in China and Japan.

2. Confucius also said, "To overcome one's self and restore ritual is humanity. If one can one day overcome one's self and restore ritual, the world will return home (to) humanity therein. To act with humanity comes from the self—how could it come from others?!" (*Lunyu* 12.1). This statement is a most crucial one in the history of Confucian hermeneutics in East Asia; the turns and transformations in interpretations of this passage by Chinese Confucians since the fourth century AD can provide much information about the fundamental revolutions in Chinese intellectual history. In responding to YAN Yuan's 顏淵 question about "humanity" (*ren* 仁), Confucius' two phrases of "to overcome one's self and restore ritual" (*ke ji fu li* 克己復禮) and "to act with humanity comes from the self" (*wei ren you ji* 爲仁由己) hint, in a succinct and terse manner, at the complex relationship between "humanity" and "ritual" (*li* 禮). In his *Collected Annotations*, ZHU Xi states:

"Humanity" is the completed virtue of one's original mind. *Ke* 克 means to "overcome" (*sheng* 勝); *ji* 己 (self) refers to one's own selfish desires; and *fu* 復 means to "return to" (*fan* 反). *Li* 禮 (ritual) refers to the regular patterns of Heavenly principle, and *wei ren* 爲仁 (acting with humanity) refers to that by which one completes the virtue of one's mind. In the completed virtue of one's mind, there is nothing that is not Heavenly principle, and yet it cannot be [allowed to be] destroyed by human desires. Thus those who would act with humanity must have a means by which to overcome selfish desires and return to ritual, so that all affairs are [in accord with] Heavenly principle, and the virtue of one's original mind returns to completeness within the self. (Zhu 1994:182)

The *Collected Sayings of Master Zhu* 《朱子語類》 said much the same thing: "to overcome and rid oneself of selfishness, and return to Heavenly principle, is none other than humanity" (Zhu 1986: 41). In both places, the "publicness

of Heavenly principle” is contrasted with the “selfishness of human desires,” emphasizing that the former must be victorious over the latter—this is the basis upon which ZHU Xi interpreted *ke* as *sheng* (overcome). The phrase “the beginnings (*duan* 端) of overcoming the self and returning to ritual” from ZHU Xi’s commentary on the *Mencius* (1B) probably refers to this work of “overcoming and ridding oneself of selfishness and returning to Heavenly principle.” After ZHU Xi interpreted “*keji*” as getting rid of “one’s own selfish desires,” it would come to incite the criticism of Ming and Qing dynasty Confucians. For example, the late Ming disciples of WANG Yangming, ZOU Shouyi 鄒守益 (1491-1562), WANG Longxi 王龍溪, and LUO Jinxi 羅近溪, and the early-Qing scholars YAN Yuan 顏元 (Xizhai 習齋, 1635-1704), LI Gong 李塨 (Shugu 恕谷, 1659-1733), and DAI Zhen 戴震 (Tongyuan 東原, 1723-1777), all had severe criticisms of ZHU Xi’s interpretation. DAI Zhen further divided up the “selfish desires” (*siyu* 私欲) of Zhu’s commentary, explaining “selfish” and “desires” separately, holding that while the former should indeed be gotten rid of, the latter cannot. The Song neo-Confucian philosophy of “preserving Heavenly principle and discarding human desires” reached a great turning point with DAI Zhen, and “desires” came to the forefront. The changing interpretations of “*ke ji fu li*” concretely and subtly reveal the twists and turns of Ming and Qing intellectual history (see Mizoguchi 1980: 283-331).

3. The passage “Heaven’s command is what is meant by nature; to follow one’s nature is what is meant by *dao* (way); to cultivate *dao* is what is meant by teaching,” from what ZHU Xi determined to be the first chapter of the *Zhongyong* 《中庸》, is of most crucial importance in the history of East Asian Confucianism. Modern-day Confucian scholar TANG Junyi’s 唐君毅 (1908-1978) works on the reconstruction of Chinese philosophy were collected together under the title *Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun* 《中國哲學原論》 (*Discourse on the Sources of Chinese Philosophy*) (see Tang 1966-75), which is further divided into *Dao Lun Pian* 《導論篇》 (*Introduction*), *Yuan Xing Pian* 《原性篇》 (*Tracing the Source of Human Nature*), *Yuan Dao Pian* 《原道篇》 (*Tracing the Source of Dao*), and *Yuan Jiao Pian* 《原教篇》 (*Tracing the Source of Teaching*), all deriving their meanings from this *Zhongyong* passage. *Yuan Dao Pian* describes the development of metaphysics, emphasizing mankind’s ultimate realization and the *dao* upon which the human cultural world is based; *Yuan Xing Pian* describes the development of discourse on human nature; and *Yuan Jiao Pian* discusses the development of Song-Ming neo-Confucianism. Information about the philosophical positions and trends of East Asian Confucians over the past thousand years can often be gleaned from their interpretations of the three terms *xing* 性 ([human] nature), *dao* 道 (way, course), and *jiao* 教 (teaching) from the *Zhongyong*.

In his *Chapter by Chapter and Sentence by Sentence Commentary on the Zhongyong*

《中庸章句》, ZHU Xi interpreted this passage as follows:

Ming 命 is like *ling* 令 (command); *xing* 性 (nature) is simply principle (*li* 理). Through *yin* and *yang* and the five phases, Heaven transforms and gives birth to the myriad things, which take their forms through material force (*qi* 氣), yet with principle also endowed therein, as if ordained through command. At this the life of each person and thing, on the basis of the principle with which each is endowed, takes on virtues of healthy compliance to the five constancies—this is what is referred to as nature (*xing*). *Shuai* 率 means *xun* 循 (to follow); *dao* 道 is like *lu* 路 (road; course). If each person or thing follows the natural inclinations of its nature, then there will be none that in its daily functioning among things does not have its own course to follow, and this is what is meant by *dao*. (Zhu 1983a: 17)

ZHU Xi explained “nature” as “principle”: above the practical world of human relations, daily needs, food, drink, and relations between the sexes, a separate, transcendent realm driven by “principle” is posited. This transcendent world had a profound and far-reaching influence upon the East Asian world of thought from the thirteenth century onwards. CHEN Chun 陳淳 (Beixi 北溪, 1159-1223) laid forth ZHU Xi’s doctrine as follows:

The character *ming* 命 carries two senses: one refers to principle, and one refers to material force—but in fact principle does not exist outside of material force. We might say that the two material forces, which have been circulating since time immemorial, creating and recreating life without cease, are not simply empty material forces, but must have that which oversees their operations—what we call “principle.” Principle serves as the pivot between them, and thus great transformation circulates, and the recreation of life never comes to a halt. When we speak of *ming* referring to principle, this does not mean it is separate from material force, but simply that on top of material force we point out a “principle” that is not mixed up with it. For example, in such phrases as “Heaven’s command is what is meant by ‘nature,’” “At fifty I knew Heaven’s command,” and “Exhaust the limits of principle and nature and arrive at one’s command,” the character *ming* in each case refers solely to principle, that which in the circulation of Heaven’s command and Heaven’s *dao* is endowed into things. When in terms of the principles of origination (*yuan* 元), penetration (*beng* 亨), benefit (*li* 利), and perseverance (*zhen* 貞), it refers to “Heaven’s *dao*,” when in terms of the circulation of *dao* as endowed into things, it refers to “Heaven’s command.” (C. Chen: 14)

Chen here took “principle” as the pivot that holds control over the myriad things, and referred to “that which circulates and is endowed into the myriad things” as “Heaven’s command.” Chen and the philosophy of “principle” that he received from ZHU Xi were later subject to the criticism of East Asian Confucians of various nations from the sixteenth century onward. ITÔ Jinsai, for example, put forth an argument against Chen:

The sage spoke of both “Heaven’s *dao*” and “Heaven’s command”—what is referred to is different in each case. Students should comprehend the original

purport of the sage's utterances on the basis of what is said in each case. We might say that "Heaven's *dao*" refers to the ceaseless comings and goings of *yin* and *yang*, and "Heaven's *ming*" refers to the fortunes and misfortunes that arrive without being beckoned—the principles involved are clearly different. The Song Confucians did not examine this and muddled them together, an especially great [oversight] concerning the classic of a sage. In his *Ziyi Xiangjiang* 《字義詳講》, CHEN Beixi said, "the character *ming* carries two senses, one referring to principle, and one referring to material force." This explanation comes from ZHU Xi, and it was greatly fabricated. Looking at what he called the command of "principle," it is what the sage referred to as "Heaven's *dao*," whereas what the sage referred to as "Heaven's command" is merely relegated to the command of "material force." Thus "Heaven's *dao*" and "Heaven's command" were muddled together, and what the sage referred to as "command" became a one-sided aspect of command—is this acceptable? Since the sage spoke of both "Heaven's *dao*" and "Heaven's command," we can see that there is a distinction between the two. Beixi stated that there is the command of "principle" and the command of "material force," and that there are further two types of commands of "material force." Alas! Could the words of the sage be so fragmented and manifold that they would cause people such difficulty in understanding them? (Itō 1971: 120)

ITŌ Jinsai rebuked Chen and his doctrine mainly because Itō understood the *dao* in the classics of Confucius and Mencius as "the path appropriate for people to walk in their daily functions of human relations" (ibid.: 19), and thereby deconstructed the metaphysical world built upon "principle" established by ZHU Xi and other Song Confucians. ITŌ Jinsai clearly declared that "there is no *dao* outside of mankind, and no mankind outside of *dao*" (Itō 1988: 205), and advocated returning home to the original classics of Confucius and Mencius, aspiring to resolve interpretive issues in the classics through the method of critical philology. His book anticipated eighteenth-century scholar DAI Dongyuan by about a hundred years, raising the first call for the return-to-the-classics movement of East Asian Confucians in recent ages. At the same time, this movement also manifested a severe criticism of Song neo-Confucianism, concentrating its attentions on the refutation of the transcendent "principle" posited by the latter, and emphasizing the position that "Heavenly principles" (*tian li* 天理) must be sought for in human affairs. All such new trends demonstrate the important position that ITŌ Jinsai occupied in the history of East Asian Confucianism (see Huang 1999b). The eras of ITŌ Jinsai and CHEN Beixi were separated by nearly 400 years, and each believed that he was returning to the classics to interpret the original intent of Confucius and Mencius, and yet the disparity in philosophical implications between them is very great—this matter constitutes a major topic in comparative East-Asian intellectual history. ITŌ Jinsai, in his *Chnyō Hakki* 《中庸發揮》, gave further elucidation of such statements as "Heaven's command is what is meant by 'nature,'" revealing much about his philosophical position.

I have taken the first passage of the *Zhongyong* as an example mainly in order to explain how important passages from the Confucian classics often fulfill a barometer-like indicatory function in the history of Confucian hermeneutics in East Asia: the philosophical position, political beliefs, and intellectual tendencies of interpreters can often be glimpsed through their interpretive discussions of certain passages from the classics. Such passages are of course too numerous to mention.

Confucian classics are truly the *locus classici* of East-Asian intellectual history: the various philosophical issues implicit in the *Lunyu*, *Mencius*, and other classics garner different interpretations among the Confucians of various nations in East Asia, and if we can focus on key passages from the Confucian classics and analyze changes in their interpretation in history, we can certainly get a glimpse at the crux of East-Asian Confucian hermeneutics.

V. Conclusion

There are two currents of particular prominence in world history in the second half of the twentieth century. One is that the globalization and transnationalization that have come on the heels of developments in science and high technology have gradually removed the barriers between people from nation to nation and even region to region, and the so-called global village is ever-closer to becoming a reality. The other is that within this major current of internationalization, regions from all over the globe are increasingly awakening to a kind of “search-for-roots” consciousness. These two major historical trends of “globalization” and “indigenization” spur each other on and complement each other, forming a kind of dialectical relationship. From this angle of the dialectical development of “globalization” and “indigenization,” we can discover that the greater the indigenous character of knowledge or creative works, the more readily are they able to move into the global and international arena. In other words, it is only on the foundation of the preservation of indigenous qualities that globalization can attain a genuinely worldwide significance.

The study of Confucianism must also re-equip its arsenal to deal with the daily-strengthening tides of “globalization” and “indigenization” in the twenty-first century. On the one hand, we need to break through the Sino-centric outlook which Japanese scholar MIZOGUCHI Yūzō 溝口雄三 critically characterized as “national possessionism” (Mizoguchi 1989: 304) and move not only toward Asia, but further on into the entire world, looking upon Confucianism as not only the common legacy of Asian civilizations, but as a cultural resource in dialogue with other world civilizations. On the

other hand, however, we must also pay attention to the particular characteristics of each East Asian region as revealed through the historical development of Confucianism. We must incorporate observation of both general and particular aspects before we can grasp both the regional characteristics of the history of East-Asian Confucianism and its more general value.

On the basis of such a conviction, I have tried to bring to light a new vision for research in the history of East Asian Confucianism. In the second section of this essay, I proposed to make interpretation of the Confucian classics by East Asian Confucians the strategic point of our research, from which to move on toward the construction of a Confucian hermeneutics. I tried to elucidate the particular features of modes of thinking bearing East-Asian cultural characteristics. In the third section, I offered two possible directions for such research. The “history-of-ideas” method emphasizes the “linguisticity” of interpretations of the classics, while the “intellectual-history” method stresses the “contextuality” of the interpreter. In the fourth section, I offered some further possible directions for research from the two angles of Confucian regionalism and the consciousness of issues internal to the Confucian classics.³

References

- Abe, Yoshio 阿部吉雄. 1973. “The Characteristics of Japanese Confucianism.” *Acta Asiatica* 5: 1-21.
- . 1979. “The Influence of Chinese Confucianism upon Japan: The Uniqueness of Japanese Confucianism 中國儒學思想對日本的影響：日本儒學的特質.” Trans. by GONG Nixxin 龔霓馨. *Chinese and Foreign Literature* 《中外文學》 8.6: 164-177.
- Brandauer, Frederick and Chun-chieh Huang, eds. 1994. *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Chan, Wing-tsit. 1962. “The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept of *Li* as Principle.” *Tsing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies* (N.S) 2: 123-148.
- . 1967. “Neo-Confucianism: New Ideas in Old Terminologies.” *Philosophy East and West* 17: 15-35.
- Chen, Chun 陳淳. 1979. *Mister Beixi's Detailed Explanation of Philosophical Terms*

³ An earlier Chinese version of this article was read at the “International Conference on Chinese Philosophy and Global Human Relations 中國哲學與全球倫理國際研討會,” sponsored by the Philosophy Department of Suzhou 蘇州 University of Taiwan in May of 2000. I would like to thank Professor Scott Cook of Grinnell College for translating this article into English.

- 《北溪先生字義詳講》. Taipei: Guangwen Shuju 廣文書局.
- Chen, Xinxia 陳新夏. 1986. *Introduction to the Cognitive Science* 《思維學引論》. Changsha 長沙: Hunan Renmin Chubanshe 湖南人民出版社.
- Chen, Zhaoying 陳昭瑛. 2000. *Taiwanese Confucianism: Origin, Development, and Transformation* 《台灣儒學：起源、發展、與轉化》. Taipei 臺北: Zhongzheng Shuju 中正書局.
- Chung, Edward Y. J. 1995. *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi T'oegye and Yi Yulgok: A Reappraisal of the "Four-Seven Thesis" and Its Practical Implications for Self-Cultivation*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1976. "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem." In his *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Trans. & ed. by David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Huang, Junjie (Chung-chieh) 黃俊傑. 1997. *A History of Mencian Scholarship* 《孟學思想史》, vol. 2. Taipei 臺北: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Zhongguo Wenzhe Yangjiusuo 中央研究院中國文哲研究所.
- _____. 1999a. "On the Historicity of Interpreters of Classics and Other Issues from the Perspective of the History of Confucian Hermeneutics of Classics 從儒家經典詮釋史觀點論解經者的歷史性及其相關問題." *Taiwan University Journal of History* 《台大歷史學報》(December): 1-28.
- _____. 1999b. "ITŌ Jinsai's Interpretation of the Mencian Scholarship: Its Subject, Nature, and Significance 伊藤仁齋對孟子學的解釋：內容、性質與含義." In his (ed.) *Confucian Thought in Contemporary East Asia* 《儒家思想在現代東亞》. Taipei 臺北: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Zhongguo Wenzhe Yangjiusuo 中央研究院中國文哲研究所籌備處.
- _____. 2000. "Chinese Hermeneutics as Politics: the Song Debates over the Mencius." In *Classics and Interpretations: The Hermeneutic Tradition in Chinese Culture*, ed. by Ching-I Tu. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Huang, Junjie (Chun-chieh), et. al. 1997. "On the Methodology of the Study of Chinese Political Thoughts 中國政治思想史研究方法試論." *Journal of Humanity* 《人文學報》(December): 1-43.
- Ishida, Ichirō 石田一良. 1996. "The Periods and Translation of Japanese Intellectual History." *Kikan Nihon shisoshi* 《季刊日本思想史》(July): 134-136.
- Itō, Jinsai 伊藤仁齋. 1971. *The Meanings of the Analects and the Mencius* 《語孟子義》. Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店.
- _____. 1973. *The Ancient Meaning of the Analects* 《論語古義》. In *A Complete Collection of Important Japanese Commentaries on the Four Books* 《日本名家四書注釋全書》, vol. 3. Edited by SEKI Giichirō 關儀一郎. Tōkyō 東京: Hō shuppan 鳳出版.
- _____. 1988. *Childish Questions* 《童子問》. In *Essays on Modern Intellectual History* 《近世思想史文集》, vol. 1. Tōkyō 東京: Iwanami Shoden 岩波書店.
- Li, Minghui 李明輝. 2001. "LI Chunsheng's Understanding of Chinese Cul-

- tural Classics 李春生所理解的中國文化經典。” In his (ed.) *The Hermeneutic Tradition of Chinese Classics II: Confucianism* 《中國經典解釋傳統 II: 儒學篇》. Taipei 臺北: Himalaya Foundation 喜馬拉雅研究發展基金會.
- Liu, Baonan 劉寶楠. 1982. *Rectified Meanings of the Analects* 《論語正義》. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局.
- Lunyu*. In Liu.
- Maruyama, Masao 丸山真男. 1961. “Methodology of Intellectual History: Types, Scopes, and Subject Matter (*Shisōshi no kangaekata ni tsuite—ruikei, kan’i, taishō*).” In *The Method and Object of Intellectual History: Japan and West Europe*. Edited by Takeda Kiyoko 武田清子. Tōkyō 東京: Sōbunsha 創文社.
- _____. 1974. *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*. Trans. by Mikiso Hane. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.
- Mencius*. Trans. by D.C. Lau. London: Penguin Books, 1970.
- Mizoguchi, Yūmi 溝口雄三. 1980. *The Twists and Developments of the Pre-modern Chinese Thoughts*. Tōkyō 東京: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 東京大學出版會.
- _____. 1989. *China as Methodology (Hōhō to shite no Chugoku)*. Tōkyō 東京: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 東京大學出版會.
- _____. 1995. “The Public and the Private in China.” In his (ed.) *The Public and the Private in China*. Tōkyō 東京: Kenbun Shuppan 研文出版.
- Muneshima, Kyokuyū 峰島旭雄, ed. 1977. *Comparative Studies of Eastern and Western Modes of Thinking* 《東西思維型態的比較研究》. Tōkyō 東京: Tōkyō Shoseki Kabushiki Kaisha 東京書籍株式會社.
- Nakamura, Hajime. 1964. *Ways of Thinking of Eastern People: India, China, Tibet, Japan*. Edited by Philip P. Wiener. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Polanyi, Michael. 1967. *The Tacit Dimension*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Qian, Mu 錢穆. 1971. *New Studies of Master Zhu* 《朱子新學案》. Taipei 臺北: Sanmin Shuju 三民書局.
- Song, Dexuan 宋德宣, et. al. 1991. *Comparative Studies of Chinese and Japanese Ways of Thinking* 《中日思維方式演變比較研究》. Shenyang 沈陽: Shenyang Chubanshe 沈陽出版社.
- Tahara, Shirō 田原嗣郎. 1995. “The Public and the Private in Japan (*Nihon no kō shi*).” In *The Public and the Private in China (Chugoku no kō to shi)*. Edited by MIZOGUCHI Yūmi 溝口雄三. Tōkyō 東京: Kenbun Shuppan 研文出版.
- Tang, Junyi 唐君毅. 1966-75. *Discourses on the Sources of Chinese Philosophy* 《中國哲學原論》. Hong Kong: Dongfang Renwen Xuehui 東方人文學會 & Xinya Shuyuan 新亞書院研究院.
- Van Zoeren, Steven. 1991. *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Wu, Kuang-ming. 1997. *On Chinese Body Thinking: A Cultural Hermeneutics*.

Leiden: E.J. Brill.

- Xu, Fuguan. 1982. "An Examination of a Basic Topic in Chinese Intellectual History: 'Knowing the Heavenly Command by Fifties' 有關中國思想史中一個基題的考察：釋論語『五十而知天命』." In his *A New Collection of Essays on Chinese Intellectual History* 《中國思想史論集續編》. Taipei 臺北: Shibao Wenhua Chubanshe 時報文化出版社.
- Yang, Rubin 楊儒賓. 1998. *Confucian Philosophy of Body* 《儒家身體觀》. Taipei 臺北: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Zhongguo Wenzhe Yanjiusuo 中央研究院中國文哲研究所籌備處.
- Yang, Rubin 楊儒賓 & HUANG Junjie (Chun-chieh) 黃俊傑, eds. 1996. *Exploring the Ancient Chinese Mode of Thinking* 《中國古代思維方式探索》. Taipei 臺北: Zhongzheng Shuju 中正書局.
- Yu, Yingshi. 1974. "DAI Dongyuan and ITÔ Jinsai 戴東原與伊藤仁齋." *Shibuo Monthly* 《食貨月刊》 (New Series) 4.9: 369-376.
- _____. 1976. "Qing Dynasty Confucianism and its intellectual tradition 清代儒學與知識傳統" (lecture). August 7. Taipei.
- Zhu, Xi 朱熹. N.D. *Inquiries into the Mencius* 《孟子或問》. In *The Posthumous Works of Master Zhu* 《朱子遺書》. Vol. 5. Taipei 臺北: Yiwen Yinshuguan 藝文印書館.
- _____. 1983. *Collected Annotations on the Mencius* 《孟子集注》. In his *Collected Annotations on the Four Books* 《四書章句集注》. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局.
- _____. 1983a. *Collected Annotations on the Zhongyong* 《中庸集注》. In his *Collected Annotations on the Four Books* 《四書章句集注》. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局.
- _____. 1986. *Classified Sayings of Master Zhu* 《朱子語類》. Edited by LI Jingde 黎靖德. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局.
- _____. 1994. *Collected Annotations on the Analects* 《論語集注》. In his *Collected Annotations on the Four Books* 《四書章句集注》. Taipei 臺北: Da'an Chubanshe 大安出版社.