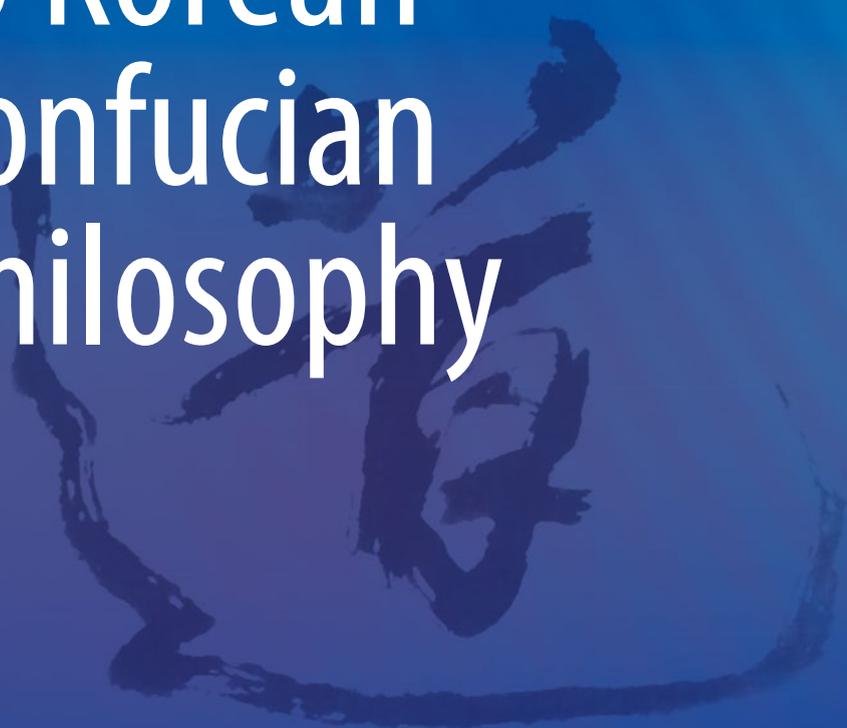


Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy 11

Young-chan Ro *Editor*

Dao Companion to Korean Confucian Philosophy



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Editor

Dao Companion to Korean Confucian Philosophy

 Springer

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A Note on Romanization

The authors of this volume adapted the *hanyu pinyin* system in romanizing Chinese words. For Korean words, this volume adapted two different systems, the McCune-Reischauer (MR) system and the Revised Romanization (RR) system. Some contributors of this volume preferred the RR system, while others maintained the MR system. To be consistent with the authors' preference, my introductory of summary of each chapter uses their preferred system. Most Confucian and neo-Confucian terminologies originated in Chinese; however, these Chinese terms and words became Korean Confucian terminologies with Korean pronunciation, although the Chinese characters remained the same. Korean Confucian scholars have used the same Chinese characters but with Korean sounds. For this reason, the authors of each chapter used Korean pronunciations when names, terms, titles, etc. appear in the Korean philosophical context (e.g., *gi* (RR) 氣 or *ki* (MR) 氣) and pinyin when names, terms, and titles appear in Chinese philosophical context (e.g., *qi* 氣)].

Clarification of Using Korean Scholars Names

Regarding the use of Korean personal names in this volume, the full name (family name and personal name) was noted and is sometimes followed by the penname, for example, Yi Hwang 李滉 (pen name: Toegye 退溪). However, according to the Korean custom, well-known scholars and teachers were called not by their personal names but by their pennames, and thus some authors preferred using these scholars penname rather than their personal names, but even in these cases, still, their full names were introduced first and followed by their pennames at least in the initial and introductory part of the chapter.

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Chapter 1

Introduction



Young-chan Ro

Korean Confucianism is a unique phenomenon in which Korea received Confucianism from China: it faithfully followed Chinese Neo-Confucianism especially the Cheng-Zhu school as the orthodox line of the Confucian tradition. However, Korean Neo-Confucianism emerged with a highly sophisticated level of intellectual and scholarly discourse in interpreting some fundamental Confucian ideas that moved the debate beyond the discussion in the circle of Chinese Neo-Confucianism. This book has been planned for some years by the scholars and experts in the field of Korean Confucianism. The contributors to this book have tried to present Korean Confucianism as a multifaceted, intellectual, social, cultural, and religious phenomenon especially during the Joseon (Chosŏn dynasty) when Confucianism was accepted as the official ruling ideology for 500 years. Furthermore, the influence of Confucianism goes beyond the Joseon dynasty in terms of shaping the moral and ethical norms, the value systems, indeed the way of life of the Korean people. This book is an attempt to present various aspects of Korean Confucianism: the historical perspective, thematic analysis of its intellectual and philosophical development, socio-political dimensions of Korean Confucianism, religious interactions of Confucianism with other religious traditions including Buddhism and shamanism. The book not only includes the well-known Korean Neo-Confucian controversies of the Four-Seven debate and the Horak debate during the Joseon period: it also includes the Korean Neo-Confucian way of responding to Catholicism and Western science and the little known Yangming school in Korea.

The following are summary introductions to each chapter.

Michael Kalton, in his “Korean Neo-Confucian Thought,” covers the history of Korean Neo-Confucianism from the point of the intellectual history of Korea focusing chiefly on the Joseon dynasty. While Baker’s “What is Korean about

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Korean Confucianism” is a thematic survey of Korean Confucianism highlighting the uniqueness of Korean Confucianism from the perspective of moral discourse, Kalton’s chapter is a historical and philosophical development of the Joseon Neo-Confucian tradition. Kalton traces back the origin of Korean Neo-Confucianism to the early fourteenth century, the late Goryeo dynasty starting with Yi Saek 李穡 (1328–1396) who utilized the Neo-Confucian critique as a tool to reform the corrupted Buddhist establishment. JEONG Dojeon 鄭道傳 (1342–1398), the chief architect of the establishment of Joseon dynasty, was an exemplary figure who made systematic anti-Buddhist tracts. However, GWON Geun 權近 (1352–1409) wrote scholarly commentaries which added considerable weight to JEONG Dojeon’s anti-Buddhist tracts. Jeong and Gwon represent the early phase of Neo-Confucian *seongnihak* 性理學 (the study of human nature and its principle) in Korea.

Kalton examines the Confucian tradition of the moral self-cultivation or character formation which was the essence of all learning. In following the Cheng-Zhu school, Korean Confucianism was also characterized as *dohak* 道學 (the learning of true Way) or *seongnihak*. Learning in this sense had both intellectual and moral significance in Korean Neo-Confucianism. He states that *seongnihak* is pursued not just as a mastery of complex and subtle ideas, but to draw on that understanding for personal spiritual formation. In this *dohak* spirit, Korean Neo-Confucianism became a source of inspiration for developing “forest of literati (*sarim* 士林) mentality under the circumstance of the bloody “literati purges” which punctuated the first half of the sixteenth century. Jo Gwangjo 趙光祖 (1482–1519) was the most illustrious representative of the *sarim* movement. Although he was the most trusted of King Jungjong’s (r. 1506–44) Confucian officials and the premier icon of Korean Neo-Confucianism, Jo and his youthful, idealistic Neo-Confucian followers pushed their agenda too far too fast, thus alienating older officials and finally exhausting Jungjong’s patience with their moral preaching. In 1519 Jo was exiled and soon executed, and his supporters were declared a faction and purged. Kalton, in this chapter, describes the historical and moral significance of the *sarim* mentality of Joseon Neo-Confucianism, highlighting Jo Gwangjo who was personally and deeply committed to rigorous self-cultivation or *dohak*. Kalton traces this *dohak* dimension of Neo-Confucian learning through the transmission of Neo-Confucian learning in Korea including JEONG Mongju 鄭夢周 (1337–1392), GIL Jae 吉再 (1353–1419), KIM Jongjik 金宗直 (1431–1492), KIM Goengpil 金宏弼 (1454–1504) to Jo Gwangjo, and Yi Eonjeok 李彦迪 (1491–1553). Kalton also surveys the philosophical debate in the Joseon *seongnihak* tradition in tracing the Neo-Confucian issues of *li-qi* (*i-gi*) relationship from Yi Eonjeok (1491–1553) to the Four-Seven debate between Yi Hwang 李滉 (pen-name: Toegye 退溪, 1501–1570) and Gi Daeseung, 奇大升 (pen-name: Gobong 高峰, 1517–1572), and between Yi Yi 李珥 (pen-name: Yulgok 栗谷, 1536–1584) and SEONG Hon 成渾 (pen-name: Ugyeo 牛溪, 1535–1598) on the *dao* mind and human mind. Kalton further investigates the complexity of seventeenth century Korean Confucianism from many different angles including Joseon’s relationship with Ming China and the way Joseon Confucian scholars understood themselves in terms of the preservers of the true tradition of civilization. In this regard, SONG Siyeol 宋時烈 (1607–1689), a leading

Ming loyalist, became an icon of this conservative wing of Korean Neo-Confucianism.

Kalton also discusses the historical development and philosophical discussion of the *horak* debate that also surrounded by the issue of *li* (Kor. *i*) and *qi* (Kor. *ki* or *gi*) regarding human beings and other sentient beings. This chapter covers up to the end of the Joseon dynasty discussing “*sirhak*” 實學 (practical learning) scholars covering various subject concerning practical matters such as statecraft, agriculture, economics, Korean geography, medicine, etc. He argues against the idea that *sirhak* was an anti-Neo-Confucian movement as found in the case of Yi Ik 李瀼 (1681–1763) who maintained both conventional *seongnihak* and practical learning.

However, arguably, the best representative of *sirhak* was JEONG Yagyong 丁若鏞 (茶山, Dasan, 1762–1836) who also challenged the Neo-Confucian tradition. Kalton maintains Dasan also was profoundly influenced by Catholicism by reading the works of Jesuit Catholic missionary to China, Matteo Ricci, in his construction of Classical Confucianism from the theistic point of view. Another development was “evidential learning” (*gojeung/kaizen* 考證), or searching for the truth in actual learning (*silsa gusi*, 實事求是). Kalton also covers the three thinkers of the late Joseon dynasty: Im Seongju 任聖周 (1711–88), Gi Jeongjin 奇正縝 (1798–1876), and Yi Jinsang 李震相 (1818–1885).

Don Baker in his “What is Korean about Korean Confucianism” presents an overview of Korean Confucianism from his unique perspective. He surveys the Korean Confucian tradition in highlighting the moral dimension of Korean Neo-Confucianism. Baker states that one of the most dominant Neo-Confucian issues during the Chosŏn dynasty was the moral discourse of human perfectibility and the recognition of human moral faculty. He characterizes Korean Neo-Confucianism, compared to Chinese Confucianism, as more focused on the psychology of self-cultivation or moral psychology. The reason for this moral issue was due to the desire to overcome human moral frailty that became the major concern for Korean Confucianism. The Four-Seven debate, the Horak debate, the way they responded to Catholicism in the late eighteenth century, and even Tonghak thought can all be related to human moral frailty. Baker sees that there is a tension between the assumption that human beings are innately virtuous and the recognition of it is not easy. This moral dilemma was a consistent theme among the Confucian scholars throughout the Chosŏn dynasty. Indeed, there is an ambiguity in the Confucian assumption of innate virtue, a lack of clarity that gives rise to tension within Confucianism. At the heart of the Confucian vision of the relationship between human beings and human virtue, there is a lack of a clear-cut distinction between the “is” and the “ought.” From this assumption, Baker develops his theory in stating that the concepts of *ch’elti* (體) and *yong* (用) can also be explained in terms of essence and potential, or ideal and real. He also relates another important pair of Neo-Confucianism, namely, *li* and *qi* (*ki*). Baker argues that Korean Confucians focused a lot of attention on the individualizing impact of *qi* and therefore were more conscious of the dangers posed by our social and material environment (the *qi* realm) than most Confucians in other countries were. For this reason, Korean Confucians felt sharply the contradiction between the assumption of human moral perfectibility

(that virtue is innate in human beings) and the reality of human moral frailty (that few, if any, humans are morally perfect). This moral sensibility, according to Baker, stimulated the Four-Seven debate as well as the split between pro-T'oebye and pro-Yulgok camps that dominated much of Neo-Confucian discourse of the Joseon dynasty.

Toebye and his followers were keenly aware of the moral frailty of human beings in keeping *li* as the normative pattern governing human beings, while Yulgok and his followers focused on *qi*'s role in providing both the arena and the tools for moral struggle. While Toebye was clear about providing a moral interpretation of "good" and "bad" in relating to *li* and *qi*, Yulgok considered it wrong to assert "good" is a result of *li* and "bad" a result of *qi*. The moral dimension of *li* and *qi* also influenced the *ho-rak* controversy about whether human nature is unique or the same as the nature shared by animals and other sentient beings. The moral concern is also found in Tasan Chŏngyagyong 丁若鏞, emphasis on the moral nature of human being as the most distinguishing character of human being *vis à vis* animals and other sentient beings. Baker also argues that it is also true that the reason for Tasan's unique theistic vision of Confucianism was not just due to the influence on him from Catholic missionary publications when he was young. Rather, Baker claims, Tasan's theism was because he shared the strong Korean concern for human moral weakness and wanted to find a way to overcome by assuming a transcendental God or a deity. Baker also analyzes Tonghak or Eastern Learning founded by Ch'oe Cheu, 崔濟愚 (1824–1864). Baker considers Tonghak primarily Confucian although it also was influenced by shamanism, Daoism, and Catholicism. It emerged out of the same search for a resolution to the frustrating contradiction between a belief in human moral perfectibility and a recognition of human moral frailty that runs through the main stream Confucian thought over the course of the Joseon dynasty.

Edward Y. J. Chung discusses the Four-Seven Debate in full extent in his chapter, "History, Philosophy, and Spirituality of the Four-Seven Debate: The Korean Neo-Confucian Interpretation of Human Nature, Emotions and Self-Cultivation." Chung traces back to the textual origin and the background of the Four-Seven legacy to situate the Korean Neo-Confucian debate on the Four-Seven controversy and establish a philosophical, moral and psychological link between the Four Beginnings and the Seven Emotions. He goes back to *Mencius* for the *locus classicus* of the Confucian term Four Beginnings and the *Book of Rites* for the Seven Emotions. The Neo-Confucian development, especially the Cheng-Zhu school, is thoroughly discussed in this chapter by describing the intellectual history of Neo-Confucianism in relationship with the idea of emotions or feelings. The other issue related to the Four-Seven debate was the Song Neo-Confucian doctrine of "original human nature" and "physical human nature" in relationship with *illi* and *ki/qi* respectively. However, Korean Neo-Confucianism took the relationship of the "original human nature" and "physical human nature" in terms of *li* and *qi* and the Four and Seven. Chung goes on to discuss on another dimension of the Korean Neo-Confucian debate, namely, the controversy surrounding the "moral mind" (*dao* mind) as found in the debate between Yi Yi 李珥 (Yulgok 栗谷 1536–1584) and Sŏng Hon 成渾

(pen-name: Ugye 牛溪 (1535–1598). He discusses the Four-Seven debate in detail, between Yi Hwang 李滉 (T'oegye, 退溪, 1501–1570) and Ki Taesŭng 奇大昇 (pen-name: Kobong 高峰, 1525–1572) and Yi Yi 李珥 (Yulgok 栗谷, 1536–1584) and Sŏng Hon 成渾 (Ugye, 牛溪, 1535–1598). He also discusses the issue of the “moral mind” and the “human mind” in relationship with the Four and the Seven, and the concept of *i* and *ki* respectively in Yulgok’s attempt not to divide these contrasting concepts but to find the unity of them. The influence of T'oegye and Yulgok on the later Neo-Confucian tradition in Korea in shaping the school of the primacy of *i* and the school of the primacy of *ki* was also conceived.

Although the Four-Seven Debate was arguably the most well-known Korean Neo-Confucian debate, the controversies on the relationship between “human mind” (*insim* 人心) and “moral mind” (*tosim* 道心) came along with the Four-Seven Debate. In fact, the theories of “human mind” and “moral mind” were intrinsically connected to the Four-Seven debate, and further to the discussion of *i* and *ki* as found in all the Korean Neo-Confucian scholars involved in the Four-Seven Debate. However, the Korean Neo-Confucian discussion on “human mind” and “moral mind” was deeply influenced by the Chinese discussion on this issue. In this regard,

Yueh-hui Lin in her “A Sixteenth-century Neo-Confucian Korean Critical Response to the Chinese LUO Zheng’an’s 羅整菴 (pen-name: Qinshun 欽順, 1455–1547) theory of the Human and Moral Mind” discusses the Chinese Confucian scholar LOU Zheng’an’s influence on the Korean Neo-Confucian scholarly debate on “human mind” and “moral mind.” Lin traces back to the origin of “human mind” and “moral mind” in Chinese Confucianism and discusses the Neo-Confucian discourse on “human mind” and “moral mind” in China and Korea especially focusing on how these concepts became prominent Korean Neo-Confucian controversy. Lin argues that by the sixteenth century, the Korean Neo-Confucians had a sufficient understanding and grasp of ZHU Xi’s thought, they were further develop the realm of discourse and examine the similarities and differences of ZHU Xi and LUO Zheng’an. Lin states that LUO Zheng’an’s theory of “human mind” and “moral mind” became a focal point of a scholarly debate in Korean Neo-Confucianism. No Susin 盧守愼 (pen-name: Sojae 蘇齋 1515–1590), for example, was deeply influenced by Luo’s theory of “human mind” and “moral mind” in understanding that “the moral mind is nature, the human mind is feelings. The mind is one, but one speaks of it as two because of the distinction of activity and tranquility and difference of substance and function.” No Sojae, like LUO Zheng’an, believed that the difference between moral mind and human mind was based on the divisions of the mind with respect to: substance and function and the state before the feelings are aroused and the state after the feelings are aroused. Lin also discusses the debate on human mind and moral mind between No Sojae and Yi Ilje 李日躋 (1683–1757) Finally, Lin’s discussion includes most prominent Joseon Neo-Confucian scholars such as Yi Toegye, Gi Gobong, Yi Yulgok and their assessments and critiques of LUO Zheng’an’s theory of human mind and moral mind.

Jung-Yeup Kim’s “Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk and the Rise of the Philosophy of *Ki* 氣” investigates the philosophy of the Korean Neo-Confucian Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk 徐敬德 (1489–

1546, pen name: Hwadam 花潭). According to Kim, although Sō Kyōngdōk's philosophy is a complex synthesis of various positions, it can be regarded as a philosophy of *ki*. Kim argues that Sō Kyōngdōk contributed to the formation of an alternative paradigm of thought based more upon *ki* than on *li* within Korean neo-Confucianism. Kim begins by showing that the key message that underlies Sō Kyōngdōk's philosophical position is that the ultimate source of creativity is inherent in this world and ourselves. Articulating this point is important for Sō Kyōngdōk because it sets the cosmological grounds for the possibility and need for cultivating and realizing our potential to create productive relationships amongst ourselves, and with the world. Based upon this, Kim explains the practical implication of Sō Kyōngdōk's position, that is, what Sō urges us to do. Simply put, Sō asks us to endeavor to form a vital harmony amongst ourselves and nature for the purpose of enhancing the strength and the range of our shared human experience. After this, the chapter elucidates how Sō encourages us to do this by articulating his soma-aesthetic methods of self-cultivation, namely, ritual propriety and aesthetic engagement with nature. Kim brings the inquiry to an end by showing, through recorded images of Sō, how he exemplified his thoughts in his way of life.

Michael Kalton's "Toegye: His Life, Learning and Times" discusses Yi Hwang 李滉 (pen name: Toegye 退溪, 1501–1570), one of the most revered Neo-Confucian scholars in the Joseon dynasty. Kalton combines historical description and philosophical discussion in presenting Toegye in a succinct way. He describes first Toegye's personal life from his childhood to adulthood, showing his interest in and dedication to "learning." For Toegye, learning consisted of intellectual study and moral cultivation. The *Book of Changes* was influential in his early learning, just after the shocking purge in 1419 of Jo Gwangjo 趙光祖 (1482–1519) and his group of idealistic young reformers – the "literati purges" (*sahwa*). These literati purges helped the rise of the "*sarim*" (forest of literati) movement that stressed that the original idea of Confucian learning was in principle to be chiefly a matter of character formation, rather than to prepare for the civil service examination. Although Toegye had no direct connection with the *sarim* movement nor with Jo Gwangjo or members of his group, he is nonetheless considered Jo's spiritual heir. Toegye's immense learning reconstructed for the first time the complete edifice of Cheng-Zhu thought on the Korean peninsula and at the center of that edifice stands the profound moral concern and emphasis on self-cultivation that was the *sarim* hallmark. Toegye had no intention of going on to an official career, but at the urge of his mother and older brother, he took the final civil service examinations and he entered government service. He served the government well and established a reputation as a conscientious official and a man of integrity but his true passion was to retire from public service and return to his private study and self-cultivation. Toegye returned his hometown at Toegye (he took his pen name from this place).

Kalton also discusses how ZHU Xi's *Complete Works* (*Quanshu*, 全書) became a guide for Toegye's intellectual pursuit and personal self-cultivation but the most important Neo-Confucian work which had a long lasting affect was the *Simgyeong/Xinjing* 心經 or "Classic of the Mind-and-Heart" by ZHEN Dexiu 真德秀

(1178–1235), a leading scholar of the late Song period. “The Classic of the Mind-and-Heart” is a crystallization of Cheng-Zhu thought dealing with personal self-cultivation, an aspect often called *simhak/xinxue* 心學. It deals almost exclusively with the inward cultivation of the spiritual life, and emphasizes above all “reverence” *gyeongljing* 敬 or “mindfulness” as the central practice of all self-cultivation based on *Xingli daquan* 聖理大全 (*The Great Compendium of Neo-Confucianism*) along with the aforementioned *Zhuzi daquan* (The Complete Works of Zhu Xi. Kalton also summarizes the most celebrated and important controversy in Korean Neo-Confucian history, the “Four-Seven Debate” especially between Toegye and Seong Hon. Included in this chapter also was the *Seonghak sipdo* 聖學十圖 (Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning), Toegye’s last and best known work as the final summation of his appropriation of Cheng-Zhu learning and cultivation.

Young-chan Ro’s chapter “Yi Yulgok’s Neo-Confucian Synthesis” introduces Yi Yi 李珥 (pen name: Yulgok 栗谷, 1536–1584), one of the two most influential Korean Neo-Confucian scholars along with Yi Hwang 李滉 (pen name: Toegye, 1501–1570). He first surveys the historical background and the social context of Joseon Korea at the time of Yi Yulgok. The chapter describes Yulgok’s personal life and intellectual development, and his life as a public official in the government including his childhood education received from his famous mother SIN Saimdang 申師任堂. Yulgok was one of the exemplary Confucian scholars who lived the Confucian way of living the life of scholar-official. Ro tries to understand Yulgok as a non-dualistic thinker and scholar. Ro takes a “non-dualistic” approach to interpret Yulgok’s life and his scholarship. As a scholar-official, Yulgok tried to fulfill his scholarly duty and his commitment as a government official without separating one from the other. In terms of his scholarly approach, Yulgok formulated a comprehensive cosmology in his famous essay, the *Treaties of Heaven* (*Cheondocheck*, 天道策), where he discussed his idea of the unity of heaven and earth, and human beings. For this reason, Ro characterizes Yulgok’s worldview as a “cosmo-anthropic vision” in emphasizing the non-dualistic relationship of the human with heaven and earth. Yulgok’s non-dualistic thinking permeated all aspects of his life and thought. The chapter also discusses the “Four-Seven” debate Yulgok engaged with SEONG Hon 成渾 (pen name: Ugye, 牛溪, 1535–1598) and the issue regarding the “human mind” and the “moral mind.” Yulgok understood that the “Four Beginnings and Seven Emotions (or Feelings)” not in a dualistic way, unlike Toegye who related the Four Beginnings to *li* and the Seven Emotions to *qi* by separating the Four Beginnings from the Seven Emotions, but in a non-dualistic way by relating the Four Beginnings to the Seven Emotions and *vice versa*. Regarding the controversy of “human mind” (*insim*, 人心) and “moral mind,” (*dosim*, 道心) Yulgok made a unique contribution in interpreting that these two minds are not two different and separated entity in an ontological sense but they are two different manifestations of one mind.

Shinhwan Kwak’s “SONG Siyöl 宋時烈: The Revival of a *Ki*-oriented Approach to the Interpretation of the Mind” argues that the philosophers of the seventeenth century Chosŏn dynasty did not pay due attention on much by scholars in contemporary Korea. This era is usually considered to be highly influenced by polit-

ical strife, and because of this there was not much room for philosophical ideas to develop. Furthermore, it is seen as a period where Neo-Confucian philosophy became corrupt through political influence, and thus the philosophical tradition itself was deteriorating. Yet, Kwak contends, contrary to this common view, that this is not the case, and that if we look closely we can see various philosophers within this era that develop rich philosophical ideas. According to him, amongst these philosophers, one of the most important is SONG Siyöl (1607–1689). According to Kwak, Song constructed his thoughts centering around the notion of *ki/qi*, and this distinguishes him from other philosophers of his era who were more focused on the notion of *li*, rather than *qi*. Kwak goes on to articulate how Song's thoughts concerning *qi* are intimately related both to his academic and political accomplishments, and also how these two dimensions are deeply correlated to one another. Kwak particularly focuses on how Song understands the mind through the notion of *qi*, and how this understanding is closely tied to his views on self-cultivation as the effort to nurture the vast moving vital forces *hoyönjiki/haoranzhiqi* 浩然之氣. In the end, we see how Song's thoughts, contrary to being corrupted by the political environment, functioned to help rectify such surroundings, while also deepening and refining our understanding of traditional Neo-Confucian ideas such as *qi* and the mind.

Oaksook Chun Kim's "Sarim Movement and Confucian Philosophy" provides a historical narrative and a philosophical analysis of the "forest of literati" (*sarim* 士林) movement, which was founded on the Confucian philosophical worldview and ethical system. Kim shows that while Confucianism was the major influence in the Joseon dynasty in all aspects, the relationship between official institutions and Confucianism was not always harmonious. According to her, while *sarim*, literally meaning "forest of literati" was not a formal political organization, a vast number of Confucian intellectuals formed an alliance with the *sarim* movement. This movement opposed corruption of members of elites amongst prestigious government officials known as *gwanhak* (官學) scholars, who imposed government sanctions on society, and also Confucian learning. According to her, this movement is meaningful because of the influence it had on the progress and construction of moral discourse within Korean Confucianism. Kim demonstrates how the movement and the intellectuals who were involved in it were inseparably tied to the historical events known *sahwa* or literati purges that went on for decades in the Joseon dynasty. In her inquiry, she articulates in succession, the details of the respective *sahwa*'s (Mu O 戊午 of 1498, Kapja 甲子 of 1504, Kimyo 己卯 of 1519, Ulsa 乙巳 of 1545) and the scholars who were involved in them. Through this, she shows how the regime abused Confucianism to oppress and manipulate the people and scholars, and how the *sarim*, through their actions and thoughts, exemplified and embodied the authentic philosophical ideals and ideas of Confucianism.

Suk Gabriel Choi's "The Horak Debate Concerning Human Nature and the Nature of All Other Beings" introduces the Horak debate, based upon translations and interpretations of the primary texts written by two major debaters, HAN Won-jin 韓元震 (1682–1751) and Yi Gan 李柬 (1677–1727). Choi begins by exploring how this debate among Korean Confucians continues ZHU Xi's Neo-Confucianism in

novel ways through examining how ZHU Xi's understanding of *mibal/weifa*, 未發) was critically advanced by Han and Yi. He argues that the contrasting views concerning this notion by Han and Yi brought the further differences between their positions. Next, he goes on to examine the central topic of the Horak debate, namely, whether the nature of human beings and the nature of non-human things are the identical or not (*innulseong-dongilon*, 人物性同一論). According to Choi, a close look at the discussion shows that it focuses on more particular issues; for example, whether humans and non-humans all have the five constant virtues, the relationship between the original nature and psycho-physical nature, and whether sages and ordinary people have the same mind-hearts. He argues that while both Han and Yi agree that there is a difference between sages and ordinary people, they disagree about the precise nature of this difference. He contends that this disagreement leads to different approaches to self-cultivation, a point which he argues has been not been sufficiently made in current scholarship. Choi concludes that while Yi and Han share the Confucian view that all can become a sage, Yi is engaged in securing the universal criteria and potential for achieving sagehood, while Han is more concerned about being aware of our limitations in attempting to achieve this goal. The work ends with a critical examination of some recent research on this debate.

So-Yi Chung's "Korean Yangming Learning" introduces Korean Yangming Learning. While the Cheng Zhu school was adapted as the orthodox line of Neo-Confucianism in Joseon Korea, the Yangming school was considered unorthodox by most Korean Confucian scholars. Nonetheless, Yangming Learning, although not a dominant trend in Korea, has maintained a significant scholarly tradition. The chapter presents an introduction to the history of Yangming Learning in Korea. This is done by a succession of sections that contain information concerning the lives and thoughts of various Korean Yangming scholars. This strand of scholarship that has been neglected in the history of Korean philosophy includes NAM Eon-gyeong 南彦經 (1528–1594), YI Yo 李瑤 (pen name: HEO Gyun 許筠, 1569–1618), YI Sugwang 李睟光 (1563–1628), JANG Yu 張維 (1587–1638), and CHOE Myeong-gil 崔鳴吉 (1586–1647). Perhaps the centerpiece of the inquiry is the section on JEONG Jedu 鄭齊斗 (pen name: Hagok, 霞谷, 1649–1739), who can be considered the greatest of Korean Yangming scholars in terms of his scholarship. Yet, more importantly, we begin to see the Koreanization of Yangming learning beginning with him. Unlike Wang who denied ZHU Xi's metaphysical framework of *li* and *qi*, Jeong synthesized Wang's mind based theory with ZHU Xi's position. Thus, Jeong produces a new position of his own that is different from the position of Wang Yang Ming. The chapter goes on to articulate the details of the later scholars who were influenced by Jeong, and ends with an analysis of two contemporary Korean Yangming philosophers, namely, PARK Eunshik 朴殷植 (1859–1925) and JEONG Inbo 鄭寅普 (1893–?). Along with JEONG Jedu, the positions of these two philosophers show how Yangming learning has been Koreanized.

The next chapter is Charles Muller's "Philosophical Bases of the Goryeo-Joseon Confucian-Buddhist Confrontation: The Works of *Jeong Dojeon* 鄭道傳 (pen name: *Sambong* 三峯 and *Gihwa* 己和 *Hamheo Deuktong* 涵虛得通. Muller describes the

relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism in Korea. Korean Confucianism can be better understood not only in the social and political context but also the religious context of Korea during the Goryeo-Joseon period. Thus he tries to provide the historical, political, philosophical and religious contexts for understanding the relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism. Muller, before getting into the Korean context, provides a historical perspective relating Confucianism and Daoism during the period of Buddhist preeminence. He traces back to the origin of Confucian reaction and criticism of Buddhism to the case HAN Yu 韓愈 (768–824). Han Yu's two best-known critical essays on Buddhism are the *Origin of the Way* 原道 and *Memorial on the Buddha's Bone* 諫迎佛骨. Han's arguments were aimed at pointing out visible excesses on the part of certain members of the Buddhist clergy and the rulers involved with the clerics: the nature of the criticism was not philosophical and substantive regarding Buddhist teaching but emotional. More substantive criticism against Buddhism, however, came from the Neo-Confucian scholars in the line of ZHU Xi and his followers mainly of the Song dynasty's *seon/chan* Buddhism, especially its nihilistic tendency. Muller found Zongmi 宗密 (780–841) and Qisong 契嵩 (1007–1072) were the representatives from the Buddhist camp responding to the Neo-Confucian criticisms of the Chan Buddhism. These responses were developed even before the development of the sophisticated metaphysics of the major Neo-Confucian scholars including the Cheng brothers and ZHU Xi. He also noted the lack of sustained commensurate response from the part of Chan/Seon tradition. It may be that the general character of Chan was not polemic in engaging in a discursive thinking and debate.

Muller points out the difference between the Chinese situation and the Korean context regarding the Neo-Confucian criticism of Buddhism. The Korean Buddhist establishment was thoroughly embedded in the state power structure and corrupted. Thus the Korean Neo-Confucian criticism was based on both philosophical and practical issues. The main complaint expressed in these arguments was that Buddhist practices were antisocial and escapist and Buddhist doctrine was nihilistic. One of the most important and well known critics of Buddhism was JEONG Do-jeon 鄭道傳 (三峰, 1342–1398) who was the main architect of the Joseon dynasty in establishing Confucianism as the state ideology. One of Joeng's best criticisms of Buddhism was his famous, the *Bulssi japbyeon* 佛氏雜辯 (Critique on Various Buddhist Doctrines) which was his most complete anti-Buddhist polemical work, containing an extensive refutation of Buddhist doctrine and practices from a Neo-Confucian perspective. His critique is thorough, covering every major aspect of the Buddhist doctrine, the primary object of his criticism was the *seon* sect 禪宗. Obviously, Jeong's critique was deeply influenced by his Chinese predecessors including primarily the Cheng brothers and ZHU Xi.

Muller also notes the influence of ZONGMI on the major figures of Korean Buddhism including Gihwa 己和 (Hamhoe Deuktong 涵虛得通, 1376–1433) among others who was the most articulate in responding to the Neo-Confucian criticism of Buddhism. Gihwa's *Hyeonjeong non* 顯正論 ("Exposition of Orthodoxy") was an attempt to respond to JEONG Do-jeon's *Bulssi japbyeon*. In this chapter Muller explains the content of the *Hyeonjeong non* in summary form: the main

theme of Gihwa's assertion was basically Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism share the same teaching of *humaneness* (in, 仁) and the myriad living beings of the universe is interlinked with one another. Yet, the three teachings should be understood as three types of expression of the same reality. Gihwa's attempt to unify the three teachings also is found in Hyujeong's *Samga Gwigam* (三家龜鑑).

Boudewijn Walraven's "A Meeting of Extremes: The Symbiosis of Confucians and Shamans".

traces the roots of shamanism or *mu* (巫) or *mudang* (巫堂) to understand Korean shamanism from historical and social contexts. He begins his essay with the problem of defining the complex nature of the shaman. Walraven investigates early Korean history in relationship with the nature and role of shamanistic rituals at the court and among common people. His main discussion of shamanism, however, is the interaction between Buddhism, Daoism, and especially Confucianism. He argues that shamanic rituals occupied a prominent place at the center of power but were gradually pushed out of the realm of state ritual, and it tended to serve the needs of individuals and families of marginal groups. With the introduction of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, the use of written language became important, and learning Chinese became essential as these religions became familiar to the people. While these religions required reading of written texts and conducting rituals in a formal manner, shamanism was spontaneous and anti-hierarchical and became a popular religion. According to Walraven, Buddhism, although individualistic, also served as an official ritual at the court during the time of Unified Shilla and Koryŏ. Confucianism and shamanism have been two opposite poles of Korean society. While Confucianism emphasized self-cultivation and personal virtue, shamanism was interested in seeking personal happiness (*kibok* 祈福), however, it does not mean that shamanism has no ethical or moral dimension. Walraven argues that shamanism has an ethical dimension based on reciprocity. He surveys shamanism in Korea by going back to the ancient Korean states, especially the founding rulers, in discussing Tan'gun or shin'gyŏ (神教) and the function of king as a shaman in charge of political and spiritual power. He also discusses the role of Buddhist monks functioning as shamans during the time of Three Kingdoms and the Unified Shilla. According to Walraven, the Koryŏ court was religiously pluralistic including Buddhism, shamanism, and Confucianism. The interaction among these religions was rather fluid. However, with the rise of the Chosŏn dynasty when Confucianism became the official ideology, shamanism was not allowed either in the court or in the city. Walraven argues that under the Confucian rule, Buddhism and shamanism managed to find tactics to survive and maintain considerable support from the commoners in spite of discriminatory government policies in characterizing "co-existence within conflict." During the Chosŏn dynasty, in general, males were educated in Confucianism, while females favored shamanism and Buddhism. Confucianism played a public and official role in governing the family and society, while shamanism addressed the private life of common people and even the elite. In this respect, even Confucian literati and government officials allowed shaman rituals in their private home. Generally, an equilibrium was reached in the relationship in the relationship between the elite Confucians and shamans.

Don Baker's "Western Learning and New Directions in Korean Neo-Confucianism" shows a new and different aspect of the Neo-Confucian development in the late Chosŏn dynasty. Eighteenth and nineteenth century Korean Neo-Confucianism took a different turn from the mainline Korean Neo-Confucian discussion including *li* and *qi* (*ki*), the issues regarding human nature, and moral mind (道心) and human mind (人心). One of the reasons for this change, as Baker notes in this chapter, was due to the first encounter Koreans had with Western learning by Jesuit missionaries in China at the end of the sixteenth century including Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607). Western Learning was influential among Korean Neo-Confucian scholars by reading Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* (*The True Significance of the Lord of Heaven* – Kor. *Chŏnju silŭi*) and another collection of Jesuit writings entitled *Tianxue chuhan* (An introduction to heavenly learning – Kor. *Ch'ŏnhak ch'oham*) compiled by the Chinese Catholic convert LeoLi Zhizao (1565–1630). The missionaries hoped that, by introducing Western science and technology, Confucians could be also being convinced to adopt the Christianity that undergirded the civilization that had produced them. However, this attempt was not all successful because Confucians were inclined more to abstract numbers than Euclidean geometry. The Neo-Confucian vision of the universe was one in which changes and patterns that direct it, are fundamental. Baker also discusses the linguistic issues among Catholics and Confucians regarding, for example, "substance" (*ch'e*, 體) or "principle" (*li*, 理).

He then moves on to discuss Jeong Yakyong (Chŏng Yagyong), the representative Korean scholar who had an early contact with Western Learning. Chŏng Yagyong 丁若鏞 (1762–1862), better known as Dasan (Tasan, 茶山), was one of the most prolific writers in the entire five centuries of the Chosŏn dynasty. In his writing, Tasan drew not only on earlier generations of Chinese and Korean writings on the classics, but also on works by the Confucian scholars of Tokugawa Japan and even on works by Jesuit missionaries in China introducing Thomism. In his writings, there are some significant differences in characterizing Tasan's philosophical orientation. There are some arguments over whether he should be considered a Neo-Confucian or as someone who had renounced Neo-Confucianism and returned to the core messages in the ancient Confucian Classics. Baker argues that there is no doubt that Tasan shared the Neo-Confucian concern for the cultivation of a moral character, and relied heavily on the Four Books promoted by Neo-Confucians as guides to self-cultivation. He also used Neo-Confucian terms in his commentaries and essays. However, there is also no doubt that Tasan redefined key Neo-Confucian concepts to make them more compatible with his vision of human beings as autonomous individuals who had to struggle to live the virtuous life demanded by Confucianism. Tasan's familiarity with Western Learning was particularly influential in determining his original philosophical orientation. However, when Tasan was trying to counter a threat to his political career that his youthful involvement with Catholicism posed, and the government started killing Catholics for their refusal to engage in the ancestor memorial rituals (*chesa* 祭祀), Tasan abandoned the Korean Catholic community. Baker further argues that Tasan was very careful never to say anything explicitly favorable to Catholic ideas in any of his writings, but he also

departed significantly from mainstream Neo-Confucianism in his interpretation of the Confucian Classics. Finally, Baker states that Tasan's idea of God or *Sangje* 上宰 (Lord Above) is a Confucian God, not a God revealed found in the scriptures who judges us after we die. Baker concludes that Tasan's God is simply a personification of morality, and functions only to inspire us to overcome our own moral frailty.

Hongkyung Kim's "Dasan Jeong Yak-yong: A Synthesizer of Korean Confucianism" discusses the significance of Dasan (茶山) and his place in the history of Confucianism in Korea. Hongkyung Kim explores the uniqueness of Dasan in the context of the historical development of Confucianism that has evolved from classical texts such as "Changes" (*Yijing*, 易經) and the "Constant Mean" (*Zhongyong*, 中庸) to the formation of the concept "principle" (*i*, 理) pivotal in the neo-Confucian philosophy. Kim argues that Dasan positively recognized the neo-Confucian project to reform, revitalize, and reinterpret classical Confucianism. Kim tries to show that Dasan attempted to integrate the idea of reforming society and exploring modern science that have been considered by contemporary interpreters as "Practical Learning" (*silhak*, 實學). However, Kim argues that Dasan's search for social reform and his way of investigating scientific topics are not to be characterized as simply "Practical Learning." Rather, according to Kim, Dasan's efforts can be characterized as "Learning of Practical Principle" (*sillihak*, 實理學) because Dasan's suggestions for social reform were about "principle in human relationships" and his studies on the modern science were about the "principle of things." Furthermore, Kim argues that Dasan was a synthesizer who tried to relate "practicality" (*sil* 實) found in pre-Qin Confucian scholars to metaphysical theory such as "principle" (*i* 理) in neo-Confucianism to create a new theoretical paradigm. In this way, according to Kim, Dasan tried to synthesize the old Confucian teachings on practical issues and the neo-Confucian learning of principle to form the "learning of practical principle."

Jisoo M. Kim's "Neo-Confucianism, Women, and the Law in Chosŏn Korea" deals with the status of women, especially the legal aspects of women in the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910). While most have illuminated the lives of elite women during the Chosŏn period, Kim takes a look at marginalized women such as widows, single women, and concubines to understand the implementation of the Neo-Confucian patriarchal and patrilineal systems had impact on the family structure of not only the elite but also the lower social strata. According to Jisoo Kim, unlike elite women, commoner and slave women led much more diverse lives according to their practical socioeconomic situations and were less bound by Confucian gender norms. This chapter by examining women's petitioning practice, focuses on how women's legal practice manifested the tensions among Confucian ideals, the law, and social practice. Jisoo Kim argues that while it was mandatory for elite women to abide by the Confucian gender norms, it was voluntary for non-elite women. During the Chosŏn dynasty, elite yangban women, for example, were regulated by the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* 經國大典 (*Great Code of Administration*) or the *Soktaejŏn* 續大典 (*Continuation of the Great Code*). In these two Great Codes, there are six representative provisions that regulated women's conduct but these provisions were to control over the sexual

behavior of elite women. Nevertheless, non-elite women were not legally bound by Confucian gender ethics as elite women were throughout the dynasty. Jisoo Kim also argues that in the Chosŏn, women not only appealed for themselves but also for family members such as husbands natal and in-law parents, and children. Whereas women were deprived of economic and ritual privileges, the state continued to recognize women as legal subjects until the end of the dynasty.

Un Sunn Lee's "Korean Confucianism and Women's Leadership in the Twenty-First Century – a religious reflection on KANG Jōngildang, a Woman Confucian Scholar in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty" argues that contemporary Korean women, while distancing themselves from the roles of being a mother or wife, simultaneously emphasize the virtues of care in their quest for female leadership. This seems to be a contradiction since these virtues constitute the heart of motherhood or wifehood in the traditional Confucian tradition. Lee argues that in order to resolve such apparent inconsistency, it is necessary to inquire into traditional Confucian women's lives and thoughts from a religious perspective. For her, the core of Confucian religiosity does not reside in the ideas of God or an afterlife, but in the way to become a sage, which involves the effort to make sacred all aspects of everyday life. By articulating how Kang Jeongildang's thoughts and actions exemplified and embodied this Confucian religiosity, Lee shows that the lives of traditional Confucian women were not as oppressed as usually believed, and reveals how their lives embodied the virtues of care, which contemporary men and women can use as models for authentic leadership. In concluding, she argues that the Confucian religiosity of traditional Korean women that Kang exemplified by her actions and thoughts can serve as a new spiritual ground for the construction of renewed post-modern feminist subjectivity in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, not only can it function as a spiritual force that can unify the rift between the public and private spheres, but also it has the capacity to be an all-embracing power that can bring together all domains of this world into life giving cohesion.

Part I
Historical and Philosophical Overview

Chapter 2

Korean Neo-Confucian Thought



Michael C. Kalton

1 Introduction: Early Joseon Neo-Confucianism

Neo-Confucianism was introduced to Korea in the early fourteenth century, at about the same time the Mongol Yuan 元 dynasty in China made the Cheng-Zhu 程-朱 understanding of the Confucian classics the standard interpretation for their reinstated civil service examination system. Yuan China was deliberately cosmopolitan: Koreans as well as other non-Chinese routinely took the exams and served for a period in government before returning to their homeland. By 1367 Goryeo 高麗 reinstated its own Confucian Academy, staffed largely by scholar-officials who had studied while in residence in the Yuan capital. Soon civil-service examinations emulating the Yuan model started to fill the lower ranks of government with young officials steeped in the new Cheng-Zhu learning.

The record of the Goryeo intellectual appropriation of the complex body of Cheng-Zhu thought is thin. In both China and Korea the ability to craft a fine poem or write an elegant memorial continued to weigh heavily in access to officialdom; it was also easier to test than character formation, the orthodox Confucian legitimation for government careers. Further, there is little evidence of serious involvement with the distinctive core of ascetical practice and theory which was the Neo-Confucian alternative to Buddhist meditative cultivation.

The great names of Goryeo Neo-Confucianism such as Yi Saek 李穡 (1328–1396) were mostly Buddho-Confucians who utilized the Neo-Confucian critique as a tool to reform the clearly corrupt Buddhist establishment. Only gradually did the radical notion of an exclusively Confucian-mediated truth take hold as the basis for a systematic rejection of Buddhism. A complete rejection of Buddhism would be

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tantamount to ending the Goryeo dynasty, so deeply were the two intertwined. Thus one hears it advocated first and most clearly as the sentiment of the group of scholar-officials who helped put Yi Seonggye on the throne as Yi Taejo, the founder of the Joseon 朝鮮 dynasty. JEONG Dojeon 鄭道傳 (1342–1398), the chief architect of the coup and dominating figure of the first decade, is famed for his three anti-Buddhist tracts, the first philosophical critiques heralding the kind of exclusivistic rejection of Buddhism that was to become common later in the dynasty. In this period, however, he seems more the exception than the rule. More typical is the other great Neo-Confucian scholar of early Joseon, GWON Geun 權近 (1352–1409). Gwon wrote scholarly commentaries which added considerable weight to JEONG Dojeon's anti-Buddhist tracts, but at the same time his own brother was a Buddhist monk, and Gwon's outstanding literary talents often found expression in composing Buddhist prayers and commemorative pieces for temple foundings or rituals supported by the devoutly Buddhist Yi Seonggye 李成桂.

Works written by JEONG Dojeon and GWON Geun in fact constitute our earliest record of the intellectual appropriation of Neo-Confucianism during this period. It is commonly noted that there is nothing especially original in the content of Jeong's critique of Buddhism: he simply reechoes well-rehearsed criticisms common in the Cheng-Zhu literature.

GWON Geun is generally considered the leading Neo-Confucian intellectual figure of this early period. Like JEONG Dojeon, it is striking how he retraces the fundamental junctures of ZHU Xi's synthesis with a joyous sense of discovery of how it all hangs together. This is especially evident in the famous first chapter of his best known work, the *Diagrammatic Explanations for Entering the Path of Learning* (*Iphak doseol* 入學圖說). Entitled, "Diagram of Heaven and Man, Mind-and-Heart and Nature, Conjoined as One," it explicitly intends to synthesize ZHOU Dun-i's 周敦頤 *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* (*Taijitu* 太極圖), the founding document of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the chief classical repository for Neo-Confucian theory of cultivating the inner life of consciousness.

Gwon's diagram in this chapter graphically captures the anthropocosmic character of the Neo-Confucian vision: it depicts the entire cosmos in the shape of a human being, with a round head and square trunk reflecting the ancient tradition that "heaven is round and earth square," and two legs representing the divergent path between following physicalist impulses and ending like an animal, versus following *i* (*li*, 理), the normative patterning principle of all things, and fulfilling oneself as a sage, whose perfect responsiveness to all situations is comparable to the all-embracing greatness of Heaven. "Heaven" in Confucian parlance refers to the ultimate, normative dimension of existence, different in history but not in content from the more philosophical Neo-Confucian term, *i*. Gwon's intuitive rooting of good and evil in *i* and *qi* (*qi*, 氣) the concretizing, energizing component of all things, is replayed more than a century later at a much higher level of sophistication, bringing up complex questions we shall see when we take up the Four-Seven debate.

Jeong and Gwon represent the early phase of Neo-Confucian *seongnihak* in Korea. *Seongnihak* (*xing-li xue* 性理學), literally, "the study of the nature (*seong* 性) and patterning principle (*li* 理)" is the distinctive Neo-Confucian intellectual

system that weaves together a metaphysics of the cosmos with the inner structure of our nature and psyche and thus establishes the essential framework for understanding the inner dimensions of serious spiritual cultivation. Moral self-cultivation or character formation had from the earliest days of the Confucian tradition been held to be the essence of all learning, and without it as the living core any other type of learning would be held as empty. In the Cheng-Zhu school this crystallized into a sort of sub-school called *dohak/dao-xue* 道學, “the learning of the true Way.” *Dohak* was noted for its rigorous moral and ritual standards and a strong focus on self-cultivation which usually included a serious meditative or “quiet-sitting” component. The *dohak* tradition was to become especially strong in Korea and was closely associated with the pursuit of *seongnihak* and ritual learning. On the other hand, though a good literary style and good poetry were the mainstays of repute in public life, literary pursuits were often deemed the antithesis of *dohak*. Thus it was fine to be praised for skill with the brush and in poetic competition, but men with *seongnihak* or *dohak* reputations would not admit to taking their polished literary skills seriously. And involvement in political life brought with it the obvious mundane rewards, introducing yet another division as those who pursued and enjoyed power and wealth were contemptuously dismissed by *dohak* Neo-Confucians as “worldly Confucians.” When *seongnihak* is pursued not just as a mastery of complex and subtle ideas, but to draw on that understanding for personal spiritual formation, *seongnihak* and *dohak* amount to the same thing; and so they did in great figures such as Yi Hwang 李滉 (pen-name Toegye 退溪 1501–70) and Yi I 李珥 (pen name Yulgok 栗谷 1536–84), the icons of Korea’s *seongnihak* tradition.

But the road from JEONG Dojeon and GWON Geun to Toegye and Yulgok is long. Clearly the central mission of the fifteenth century was institution building, and it was the work of many decades before the foundation of a formerly Buddhist society was modified to the point where the elite class took Confucian cultivation and ritual orthopraxis as a critical status marker. *Gwanhak/guanxue* 官學, “bureaucratic learning,” the political and institutionally oriented Confucian focus, was much in the forefront throughout this period, along with its common counterpart, the cultivation of literary style. The latter was by no means impractical, for literary Chinese was the language of government documents and of international relations as well. During this period Korean scholars ransacked ancient Confucian texts such as the *Book of Rites* (*Li ji* 禮記) and *Rituals of Zhou* (*Zhou li* 周禮) with an entirely new intensity and seriousness in the search for descriptions of normative ritual and institutional arrangements.

In Ming China (1368–1644) as well, the kind of consolidation and crystallization of fixed and authoritative reference points (the kind of thing prized by students preparing for civil service examinations) in the *seongnihak* tradition was just under way. A large-scale compilation project combed through all the works of the major Song and Yuan dynasty Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucians and arranged passages under topical categories for easy reference. The *Great Compendium of seongnihak* (*Xing-li da-chuan* 性理大全) was completed in 1415, and with its companion volumes containing the authoritative commentaries on the classics, the *Great Compendium on the Four Books and Five Classics* (*Si-shu wu-jing da-chuan* 四書五經大全), reached Korea a little more than a decade later. Only in the next century, however,

do we begin to find evidence that scholars have had wide access to such works so that their contents begin to become a commonplace of intellectual discourse.

In the meantime, short compendia that could be easily copied and widely distributed had a greater influence. ZHU Xi's *Learning for Youth* (*Sohak/Xiao-xue* 小學), a book of quotations from classical and Neo-Confucian authorities on proper cultivation and practice, was especially influential. It became not only the mandatory gate for all who aspired to higher learning, but as *dohak* slowly took hold towards the end of the century we find scholars of high repute such as KIM Koengpil 金宏弼 (1454–1504) making their continued devotion to it a point of honor. Under such auspices rigorous moral cultivation advanced on a track somewhat separated from immersion in *seongnihak*.

One can trace a line of increasing Neo-Confucian assertiveness through the fifteenth century as the center of public life became gradually more organized in terms of Confucian norms. The process took place somewhat in fits and starts, with intermittent recurrence to Buddhism especially in the royal household. The strong-willed King Sejo 世祖 (r. 1455–68) supported printing new editions of Buddhist sutras and found ready support among still Buddho-Confucian scholars in the highest ranks of officialdom. But this was soon rolled back by his strongly Neo-Confucian successor, King Seongjong 成宗 (r. 1469–94), under whom temples were appropriated, yangban women were forbidden to become nuns, and the ordination of monks was prohibited.

2 The *Sarim* Mentality and the Maturation of *Seongnihak*

Far more than this natural process of growth and solidification, however, the bloody “literati purges” which punctuated the first half of the sixteenth century left their imprint on the mentality of the “forest of literati” (*sarim/shilin*, 仕林) that emerged in the latter half of the century. This self-consciously moralistic *sarim* mentality was woven about a core of *dohak*, raising that dimension of the Neo-Confucian tradition to a central focus and giving it a lineage in Korea hallowed by the blood of martyrs and identified thus with the righteous oppressed.

A scholar such as Edward Wagner sees the purges in terms of institutional tensions: especially under the thoroughly Neo-Confucian King Seongjong, the Confucian ideal of remonstrating officials was allowed to develop to the extent that there were three bureaus granted the power of remonstrance (Wagner 1974). When the bureaus acted in concert, as they increasingly did in opposition to the High State Counselors, they could bring the government to a standstill. The bureaucratic remonstrators were often junior officials, young idealistic products of the civil service examination system. The Counselors were generally established men at the height of long political careers. The picture institutionally is one of the power of remonstrance coming into conflict with the executive authority of the throne and high policy makers; it also was exacerbated by its congruence with common human