Special Feature

The Learning of Principle and the Governing by Culture in Joseon

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Introduction

Confucianism sought to govern state affairs through virtue and ritual. It was a way to resolve and prevent disputes arising from governing by way of force and punishment. The learning of principle (jhak 理學) reestablished the political ideology of Confucianism using Mencius (Mengzi 孟子). It aimed to guide rulers including kings to first suppress their individual desires and practice human imperatives. As the popularity of the learning of principle grew, various systems and schools of study guiding the willing and spontaneous practice of human imperatives were established and implemented throughout East Asia. A variety of books on rituals including Family Rites as well as books on the learning of principle for the education of the sovereign such as Extended Meaning of the Great Learning (Daxue yanyi 大學衍義) were produced and used widely, while institutions such as the royal lectures (gyeongyeon 經筵) that held the power of the king in check and ruled through public opinion spread as new forms of politics. As a result, state affairs were governed through various learnings, which sought to realize human imperatives through virtue, and through laws pertaining to rites and rituals, which were the embodiment of human imperatives in everyday life—in other words, governing by culture (munchi 文治) developed across East Asia.

The learning of principle was accepted by the intellectuals of Goryeo during their exchanges with Yuan as a line of reformist thought. It provided the basic political ideology for the founding of Joseon and functioned as the central principle throughout the Joseon period, from politics to everyday life. Examining how Joseon made use of the learning of principle therefore will give us a better understanding of the characteristics of Joseon as a Confucian society, as well as the status and historical significance Joseon carries in the history of Confucianism in East Asia. The present article focuses on how the learning of principle was used politically in Joseon and analyzes the following three areas.

The first is how Family Rites (jialu 家禮), the product of the learning of principle, was used in the process of establishing and completing the state rituals of Joseon. Although Family Rites had been compiled as a guideline for performing family rites in scholar-official households, the government also used it to establish and supplement the manuals of state rituals in addition to its use as the standard for family rites practiced among scholar-officials. In this article, I focus mostly on its use by the government and cast new light on how Family Rites was used in Joseon.

Second, I look at features of the textbooks used in royal lectures that were newly compiled or used in Joseon after the Extended Meaning of the Great Learning. The royal lecture was a political institution that was actively and continuously utilized in Joseon after it was revitalized during the Song dynasty. Based on the idea of rectifying the mind of the ruler (gyeokgunsim 格君心) of Mencius, scholars of the learning of principle established the political theory of the learning of the sages (seonghak 聖學), compiled books on the learning of the sages, and used them to educate the king during royal lectures. Among the countries of East Asia, royal lectures were the most actively held in Joseon over a long period of time. Therefore, examining the books used during the royal lectures that were compiled or used in Joseon can provide us with insight into what was emphasized or deliberated over in realizing the political ideology of the learning of principle in Joseon.

Third, I look at the political stance Joseon took in response to the international changes the Ming-Qing transition brought through the lens of the Sino-barbarian dichotomy (hwairon 華夷論). Although this dichotomy was proposed in each East Asian country, Joseon was distinct in that it was argued in the context of realizing the ideology of the learning of principle. Thus, the present article looks at how the Sino-barbarian dichotomy developed in Joseon in relation to the legitimacy of the dynasty and takes a fresh look at how the argument to revere the Confucian king (jonwangnon 尊王論) changed to practicing the Confucian king (haenguwangnon 行王論).

The Use of Family Rites

Rule by ritual was carried out by documenting the laws governing rituals into manuals and continuously supplementing them. After the Manual of the Five State Rites (Gukjo oryeui 國朝五禮儀) was compiled in 1474, the 5th year of the reign of King Seongjong, supplemented manuals for state rites were further compiled during the reign of King Yeongjo, including Sequel to Manual of the Five State Rites (Gukjo sok oryeui 國朝續五禮儀) (1744), Supplement to Sequel to Manual of the Five State Rites (Gukjo sok oryeui bo 國朝續五禮儀補) (1750), and Compiled Supplement to Manual of Funerary State Rites (Gukjo sangrye bopyeon 國朝喪禮補編) (1752, 1758) (An 2006). King Jeongjo subsequently had these
combined into the Comprehensive Collection of Manual of the Five State Rites (Gukjo ore ye tonggyeon 國朝五禮通編) (1788, 1810), 1 while also compiling all the laws governing rites and rituals that had been established and implemented during the Joseon period into the Comprehensive Study of the Board of Rites (Chungwan tongyo 春官通考) (1788). The process of supplementation continued on to the Handbook of the Five Rites (Orye pyeongo 五禮便考) and the Illustrated Handbook of the Five Rites (Orye pyeongo dosik 五禮便考圖式), although these did not make it to publication (Kim 2004).

A prominent feature in the continuous process of documenting manuals of state rituals throughout the Joseon period was that the rules of Family Rites were used as a standard. Although Family Rites was created based on rituals carried out in scholar-official households, it was used throughout as a standard for rituals of the royal household before and during the establishment of the Manual of the Five State Rites as well as during its modification.

In the National Code (Gyeongguk daejeon 經國大典), the examination on Family Rites and Elementary Learning (Sohak 小學) were designated as prerequisites for the second examination of the Classics Licentiate Examination, in essence, making into law what had been the practice since King Sejong. 2 Yi Hwang 李滉 specified in the school regulations of the Nisan private academy (Nisan seowon 尼山書院) that Family Rites and Elementary Learning would be studied as the first step of the school curriculum. This regulation was later more widely selected in the private academies of Joseon (Lee 2010, 112). With Family Rites selected as a test subject and introductory subject for private academies, it became possible for the scholar-officials of Joseon to study and acquire Family Rites as basic knowledge in addition to Elementary Learning. According to one study, there are more than 480 types of books on family rites personally compiled by the scholar-officials of Joseon, which is far more than anywhere else in East Asia including China, Japan, and Vietnam (Jang 2013b, 210).

Family Rites was used as an important reference in creating illustrated records of funerary rites of the royal household including the king before establishing the Manual of the Five State Rites. 3 Specifically, King Taejong followed Family Rites for the mourning of King Taejo and recorded the funerary ritual process in the Illustrated Record of the Funerary Rites for the Great King Taejo Gangbeon (Taejo Gangbeon daewang sangiang uigwe 太祖康靖大王喪儀執), which King Sejong followed when mourning for King Jeongjong. When mourning for King Taejong, King Sejong compiled the Illustrated Record of the Funerary Rites for the Great King Taejong Gongjeong (Taejong Gongjeong daewang sangiang uigwe 太宗恭靖大王喪儀執), which used the General History of Institutions and Critical Examination of Documents and Studies (Wexian tongkao 文獻通考), Encyclopedia of Rites (Tonglian 通典), and Family Rites as reference. For example, the ceremonies preceding the ceremony of repose (uje 虞祭) were to be performed by designated attendants for each step, while the ceremony of repose and those following it were to be done by the successor king, according to the Rites of Zhou (Zhou li 周禮) and Family Rites. This deviated from the Commentary of the Death Rites of Emperor Taizong of Great Tang (Datang yuanling yi zhu 大唐元陵儀注) and the rites performed for the mourning of Emperor Qinzong of Song, which stipulated that the ceremonies starting from the second ceremony to clean and shroud the deceased (daeyeomjeon 大欽奠) were to be done by the successor emperor in person. 4 In other words, the Joseon court used Family Rites and ancient examples as the basis to revise Chinese commentaries on rites.

The early laws of Joseon were based on the Six Codes of Administration (Gyeongje yukjeon 經國六典). During the reign of King Taejong, suggestions to revise the dress code of the Six Codes of Administration based on the rules of Family Rites were raised and subsequently applied in enacting the National Code. For instance, (a) the attire for the mourning of nieces and nephews on the maternal side were to be mourning clothes called sogong 小功, while those for a married niece were to be sima 淑貞; (b) the mourning attire for one's wife's

1. Following the order of King Jeongjo, Yu Uiyeong combined these manuals on ritual into the Comprehensive Collection of Manual of the Five State Rites (Gukjo ore ye tonggyeon 國朝五禮通編), producing a draft in 1788, which Yi Jiyong completed after correcting in 1810. It was not, however, published. For more on this, see Kim 2007.


3. After King Taejo died in 1408, most of the mourning attire for funerary rites of the royal household followed Family Rites. Taejong sillok, gwon 15, 24th day of the 5th lunar month “太上王薨于別殿…治喪一依朱子家禮” Sejong sillok, gwon 5, 27th day of the 9th lunar month; “王上崩薨趙弔，亦以日易月，十三日兩祭，其用服，亦依朱子家禮”。大妃ㆍ明嬪以下宮人，亦依趙弔日易月，至新三年：諡紀，典禮服之制。亦以日易月。”

4. Sejong sillok, gwon 22, 8th day of the 10th lunar month.
parents and one's son-in-law were to be *simia*; (c) the mourning clothes for maternal female cousins that were not married were to be *simia* or none if they were married; and (d) the mourning attire for the wife of one's daughter's child was *simia*, same as that for a grandchild. The second example (b) was a revision of the custom harkening back to the Goryeo dynasty when the system of one's son-in-law living together (*deril sawije*) was popular and the mourning for the parents of one's wife had required wearing mourning attire for a year and *simia* for the son-in-law. Based on *Family Rites*, the mourning clothes for both cases, as mentioned above, were modified to be *simia*. This example shows that during early Joseon, *Family Rites* was used as a standard in the revision of the law and customs of the previous dynasty, Goryeo.

The *Manual of the Five State Rites* (1474) was established based on Chinese books of rituals, from *Rites of Old and New* (*Gogeum sangjeongrye* 古今詳定禮) to the *Hongwu Book of Rites* (*Hongwu lizhi* 洪武禮制), and *Prescribed Ritual Texts of Past and Present* (*Gogeum sangnye idong* 古今儀節) of Goryeo, in addition to *Family Rites*. *Family Rites* was particularly referred to for rules regarding high officials and both elites and non-elites (Jang 2013a). Even after the *Manual of the Five State Rites* was used as a standard in the revision of the law and customs of the previous dynasty, Goryeo.

Proposals regarding the revision of the *Manual of the Five State Rites* were actively made in the 17th century. Kim Jip 金集, in response to King Hyojong's request for advice regarding the mourning of King Injo, presented his proposal for revision under the title “Discussion of a Comparative Study of Funerary Rites of Old and New” (*Gogeum sangnye idong* 古今儀節) as well as the rules of *Family Rites* were used for revision.

Proposals for revising the *Manual of the Five State Rites* were made by Song Jun-gil 宋浚吉 in response to King Hyojong's request for advice regarding the mourning of King Injo, presented his proposal for revision under the title “Discussion of a Comparative Study of Funerary Rites of Old and New” (*Gogeum sangnye idong* 古今儀節), which was a collection of pertinent discussions during that era. This proposal, together with the one proposed by the Board of Rites and Yi Gyeong-seok, were used as reference for revision when King Yeongjo was compiling *Sequel to Manual of the Five State Rites, Supplement to Sequel to Manual of the Five State Rites*, and again when compiling *Compiled Supplement to Manual of Funerary State Rites* (1757).

The *Manual of the Five State Rites* stipulated that during the funerary ritual of the 1st anniversary of one's mother's death that was performed after 11 months in the case that the father was still alive (*yeonje* 稾祭), the mourning dress and head ornament should be *choebok* 超服 and *yeonbok* 稾服. In the case of King Hyojong in 1660, Song Jun-gil 宋浚吉 argued that the *yeonbok* and *yeonbok* 稾服 should be worn based on “Diagram on Changing Clothes during the Yeonje Ritual” (*Yeonje juyeon* 稾祭服圖) of the *Comprehensive Explication of the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies* (*Yili jingeum tongjie* 儀禮經傳通解), and this revision was carried out with the support of the officials of the court. Song Jun-gil's proposal was documented in *Sequel to Manual of the Five State Rites* during the reign of King Yeongjo. This shows an example of revising the rules of the *Manual of the Five State Rites* based on ancient examples recorded in the *Comprehensive Explication of the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies*.

*Compiled Supplement to Manual of Funerary State Rites* was the result of revisions carried out after King Yeongjo discussed with court officials the parts he found unreasonable in the funerary rites and proprietary rules of the royal household that he had experienced. The revisions were based either on ancient examples or on *Family Rites*, or Zhu Xi's explanations of rites. The following are examples of the latter: (a) revision of the rules regarding official attire for officials and when marriage ceremonies could be carried out during periods of national mourning based on the Zhu Xi’s “Explanation of Court Attire” (*Junchen fujyi* 君臣服議); (b) requiring that the morning and evening offerings of food in front of the altar (*sangsik* 上食) be continued until the funerary ritual offered at the second anniversary of a person's death (*daesang* 大祥) following the explanation of Zhu Xi; (c) following *Family Rites*, if the gravesite is too far and the first funerary ritual after the funeral (*chou* 朝初) was hard to perform upon returning from the gravesite, it could be done in a temporary palace, and to discontinue the morning and evening wailing after a person's death (*joseok gok* 朝夕哭) after *yeonje*; and (d) the ritual of putting a marble or rice in the mouth of the deceased when dressing it in shroud (*banham* 食含) would be done not by the...
Educatng the King with Books on the Learning of Principle

Effectively putting a check on the political power that was concentrated in the king was an extremely important and difficult task throughout the history of East Asia. Mencius argued that the foremost political task of the minister in order to stabilize the state was to “rectify the king’s mind” (gyeokgunsim 格君心). The learning of the sages and royal lectures were specific realizations of Mencius’s argument by scholars of the learning of principle. These scholars reestablished the study of Confucianism from the perspective of the learning of the sages, which contemplated ways to attain the ideal character of the sages such as that of Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun. By presenting the methods they developed to the king during royal lectures and educating him, they controlled the political power that was centered on the king.

Making the learning of the sages the main line of pursuit in the study of Confucianism, that is, understanding the sages not as objects of worship but as model characters anyone could attain by self-cultivation, was a novelty that distinguished the learning of principle from previous traditions of Confucianism. Based on the learning of the sages, scholars of the learning of principle proposed that the more urgent political task for the king than displaying heroic abilities was to ceaselessly guard against and suppress his individual desires. For instance, Zhen Dexiong 真德秀 pointed out in the Extended Meaning of the Great Learning that in the politics of the three dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou, the king always cautioned against the human mind (insim 人心) that could degenerate into human desire (inyok 人欲), and the minister stood on his guard and corrected the king lest he fall into committing wrongdoings, thereby arguing that this should be the foremost political priority for the kings and ministers of future generations. In other words, the king possessed physiological and personal wants (insim 人心) that could degenerate into human desire (inyok 人欲), and the most fundamental qualities of a good king was whether he could be constantly watchful of the former. He also saw the minister

8. Gojong sillok, 15th day of the 10th lunar month, 1870.
11. Extended Meaning of the Great Learning (Daxue yanyi 大學衍義), gwon 1: “誠意正心之要二·戒逸 欲·逸欲之戒：人心惟危，自昔所畏，惟聖人，不敢忘操存之功，大臣事聖人，不敢廢規儆之益，後之君臣宜觀以為法.”
as holding the immensely important responsibility of making sure the king was vigilant against any behavior that followed his individual desires.

Unlike China, where royal lectures were not regularly held after the Ming dynasty except for the 10 years following the Wanli Emperor's ascension to the throne, Joseon continued to hold them, from King Taejong to King Gojong. Joseon thus can be described as having been a dynasty of royal-lecture politics. Under the Yongle Emperor, textbooks of the learning of the sages such as the *Precious Mirror for the Palace of Literary Splendor* (*Wenhua baojian* 文華寶鑑), *Method of the Mind for the Learning of the Sages* (*Shengxue xinfa* 聖學心法), and *Lessons of Attending to the Fundamentals* (*Wuben zhi xun* 務本之訓) were compiled; during the Chenghua 成化 era, Qiu Jun 丘濬 wrote the Supplement to *Extended Meaning of the Great Learning* (*Dazue yangui bu* 大學衍義補), which was reprinted several times after that; and finally, during the first 10 years of the Wanli Emperor, when Zhang Juzheng 張居正 was in charge of state affairs, royal lectures were held actively (Zhu 2007, 428-39). Seen as a whole, however, the royal lectures remained an institution that did not exert much practical influence until the end of the Qing dynasty. In contrast, the royal lectures of Joseon were continuously held starting from the earlier days of its founding to the reign of King Gojong. Although it was discontinued for a while during the reign of King Sejo, it was back in full swing after the restructuring King Seongjong carried out in 1470, moving the Hall of Worthies (Jiphyeonjeon 集賢殿), which was in charge of the royal lectures during the reign of King Sejong, to under the control of the Office of Special Advisors (Hongmungwan 弘文館). Following Kim Sangheon’s suggestion in 1646, King Injo invited scholars that had not taken the civil examination and instead were devoting themselves to research and practice of the learning of principle in realms outside of politics, appointed them as officials, and bestowed upon them governmental posts including senior 3rd rank of the academy for the crown prince (Chanseon 贊善) and senior 4th rank of the academy for the crown prince (Jinseon 進善), thus allowing them to join royal lectures. In this way, during the latter half of Joseon when private academies flourished, the scholars that were not in power did not serve on any governmental post, and instead devoted themselves to passing down and carrying out the learning of principle in private academies—the so-called rustic literati (*sallim* 山林)—directly participated in managing state affairs through royal lectures. Unlike those that had passed the civil examination, the rustic literati held responsibilities not as the king’s subject but as his teacher, and thus could voice their opinions with a certain level of independence. The influence of the rustic literati who participated in royal lectures changed depending on the period, but the participation of these scholars in royal lectures including voicing their own opinions regarding state affairs was a distinct characteristic of the royal lectures of Joseon (Ji 2009).

The textbooks used during the royal lectures in the Joseon period produced the required text along two lines. One direction not only referred to Chinese history but also made sure the historical experience of Joseon informed the education carried out during the royal lectures. The *Exemplar for Efficient Government* (*Chipyeong yonam* 治平要覽) (1516), compiled by the orders of King Sejong during the reign of King Jungjong, and the *Compendium of Extended Meaning of the Great Learning* (*Daehak yeonui jimnyak* 大學衍義輯略) (1472), which was compiled by Yi Seokhyeong under King Seongjong,12 included cases of Korean history preceding Joseon in addition to Chinese history as a resource for the king. As for the politics of the period of preceding kings, the *Newly Compiled Precious Mirror for Succeeding Reigns* (*Sinchan gukjo bogam* 新撰國朝寶鑑) (1458), *Sequel to Precious Mirror for Succeeding Reigns* (*Sok gukjo bogam* 續國朝寶鑑) (1500), *Precious Mirror of the Reign of King Seonjo* (*Seonmyo bogam* 宣廟寶鑑) (1684), and the *Precious Mirror of the Reign of King Sukjong* (*Sungmyo bogam* 肅廟寶鑑) (1730) were compiled and were continuously referred to. King Jeongjo gathered examples of the politics of all the kings from King Taejo to King Yeongjo and published it as the *Precious Mirror for Succeeding Reigns* (*Gukjo bogam* 國朝寶鑑) in 1782, which was supplemented again in 1908 under the reign of King Sunjong, two years before Joseon fell (Hong 2017, 189-95). Reflecting upon the politics of preceding kings thus continuously took place in Joseon.

The other direction in which text for the royal lectures was produced was to supplement the books on the learning of the sages. Yi Hwang’s *Ten Diagrams on the Learning of the Sages* (*Seonghak sipdo* 聖學十圖) (1568) and Yi I’s *Essentials of the Learning of the Sages* (*Seonghak jipyo* 聖學輯要) (1575) were initially ways to study the learning of the sages that were presented to the then king, King Seonjo, but became the foundation of the learning of principle of Joseon after that. Yi Hwang explained the whole structure of the learning of principle with

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12. *Seongjong illok*, 16th day of 4th lunar month, 1472.
10 diagrams and accompanying captions and attributed meaning in terms of self-cultivation onto them in relation to the main entities of Elementary Learning and Great Learning (Daxue 大學). Specifically, the study of Elementary Learning was the study of fostering (hanyang 涵養), which was to familiarize oneself with something as to make it natural and entailed the practice of human imperatives in everyday life so that the goodness innate in human nature would naturally settle and spread throughout the body and mind. The study of the Great Learning was the perfection of knowledge until all doubt was resolved (chiji 致知) and meant deepening the intellectual understanding of the learning of principle. Yi Hwang presented the side-by-side pursuit of these two studies as the method of self-cultivation and emphasized that these two studies must always be based on the efforts to abide in attentiveness (geogyo 居敬) (Lee 2010, 116-17).

Regarding the king’s self-cultivation, Yi I placed significance on transforming the physical constitution (gijil 氣質), or disposition, and appointing wise and talented individuals. To transform the physical constitution, Yi I argued, one must study in the following sequence of convergence (suryeom 收斂), i.e., collecting the distracted mind to one, the exhaustive search for principle (gungni 質理), i.e., ensuring sufficient intellectual understanding, and the completion of the truth (seongsil 業實), i.e., to exclude individual desire and making one’s thoughts sincere. Efforts must also be made, he also argued, to subdue one’s self (geukgi 克己). In addition, he asserted that to appoint wise individuals, virtuous men, and petty men must be distinguished, and the latter, who pursued desires of the self, must be expelled. As a way to detect the latter, Yi I recommended examining the ways in which human imperatives operate and grasping the intention of what was said (jieon 知言) while exhaustively searching for principle.

The study and practice of the learning of the sages, although effective when practiced, could not yield any results if the king himself did not willingly make an effort. Thus, Yi Hwang and Yi I emphasized to King Seonjo that the king should be the first to set his mind on the learning of the sages. In particular, Yi I placed the chapter proclaiming the intention to embark upon this path of study (sipji 立志章) to come at the beginning of the Essentials of the Learning of the Sages and Important Methods of Eliminating Ignorance (Gyeongmong yogyool 擊蒙要訣), thus making the determination to pursue the learning of the sages be the first step of study.

During the royal lectures of late Joseon, Zhen Dexiu’s Classic of the Mind and Heart (Xinjing 心經) was often used as the textbook. Zhu Xi referred to the section on the human mind and the moral mind (renxin daoxin 人道心) of “Da yu mo” 大禹谟 of Hallowed Documents (Shangshu 尚書) as the origin of the study of mind and heart. Based on this perspective of Zhu Xi, Zhen Dexiu extracted proverbs that could serve as guidelines in the study of the learning of the sages, beginning with the section on the human mind and the moral mind from the Classics and writings of the scholars of the learning of principle during the Song dynasty and compiled them into Classic of the Mind and Heart. In early Ming, Cheng Minzheng 程敏政, given that Zhu Xi focused on maintaining constant inquiry and study, i.e., the pursuit of knowledge (daowen xue 道學), early on, after which the focus of his studies shifted to honoring one’s virtuous nature (zunxing 尊德性), added relevant comments of the scholars of the learning of principle during the Song dynasty as additional notes along with his explanations and compiled this as Additional Explication of the Classic of the Mind and Heart (Xinjing fuzhu 心經附註). Yi Hwang used Additional Explication of the Classic of the Mind and Heart in his own self-cultivation throughout his entire life and wrote the Sequential Discussion of Simgyeong (Simgyeong huron 心經後論) in 1565, explaining that the Classic of the Mind and Heart itself was helpful as a guideline for self-cultivation regardless of the argument of Cheng Minzheng. The contents Yi Hwang lectured during his later years remain in Yi Hamhyeong’s Lecture Notes on the Classic of the Mind and Heart (Simgyeong gangnoi 心經講録) and Yi Deok-hong’s Questions about the Classic of the Mind and Heart (Simgyeong jiura 心經質疑). In Joseon, the version of Additional Explication of the Classic of the Mind and Heart that included Yi

Hwang’s Sequential Discussion of Simgyeong was published and used along with Lecture Notes on the Classic of the Mind and Heart during royal lectures (Lee 1995; Yi et al. 2014, 1300-05).

The Classic of the Mind and Heart was used in Joseon during royal lectures in order to provide the king with a way to control the human mind, or physiological wants (insim 人欲). After Yi Hwang, the Confucian scholars of Joseon reestablished the study of mind and heart within the learning of principle to distinguish the human mind (insim 人欲) and human, or immoral desires (inyyok 人欲). Yi Jeong mostly equated the two. Despite what Zhu Xi had said, it was not uncommon to see the former regarded to be the same concept as the latter. However, the Confucian scholars of Joseon saw what Zhu Xi argued during his later years as the orthodoxy of Confucianism, which was that the former (insim 人欲) was physiological wants that were common to anyone with physical form, or the body (hyeonggi 形氣), from sages to ordinary people. The human mind (insim 人欲) was distinguished from individual wants (sayok 私欲), which was desire that had lost its balance and had fallen into selfishness or excess or deficiency. After Yi Hwang, Confucian scholars of Joseon, irrespective of their school of study, saw the human mind (insim 人欲) as wants that should be appropriately realized according to decorum and individual wants (sayok 私欲) as wants to overcome. What the learning of principle during the Song era had explained from the perspective of abstinence, these scholars interpreted from the realm of restraint (Lee 1995, 29-40).

Along with Additional Explication of Xinjing, Yi Hwang’s lecture notes were used during royal lectures starting from the reign of King Hyojong. In 1658, King Hyojong, accepting the suggestion of Yi Dansang, encountered Yi Hwang’s Lecture Notes on the Classic of the Mind and Heart in person, after which the officials conducting the royal lectures used the Classic of the Mind and Heart as well as Yi Hwang’s arguments for supplementations. Song Jun-gil, lecturing the idea of the human mind and the moral mind of the Classic of the Mind and Heart to King Hyojong, explained that the human mind (insim 人欲) was a natural and innate desire that stemmed from the physical form (hyeonggi 形氣), which, when practiced with appropriate constraint, could become a moral mind (dosim 道心).16 In essence, he explained the physical and physiological desire not from the stance of abstinence but of controlled restraint, telling the king that its measured use was a core point in the studies of the learning of the sages. This was in line with Yi I’s opinion that the appropriate use of the human mind was thus to achieve a moral mind.

The use of Zhen Dexiu’s Classic of the Mind and Heart in royal lectures was a distinct feature that has not been discovered in other areas of East Asia including China. Reestablishing the orthodoxy of Zhu Xi and the learning of principle during his later years through the examination of the human mind and the moral mind and applying them in the study of the learning of the sages was the essence of Confucianism in Joseon after Yi Hwang. Educating the king during the royal lectures to use this as a way to pursue the learning of the sages continued throughout late Joseon. This scene could not have been seen in other countries of East Asia, including China.

Revering the Confucian King, Practicing the Confucian King, and the Sino-barbarian Dichotomy

Each country across East Asia, including Qing, faced the task of reestablishing their political identity as the Ming dynasty transitioned to the Qing dynasty. During that process, the dichotomous concept of Sino-barbarian (hwai 華夷), which used to represent the international order of East Asia, underwent changes. The former concept, Sino- (hwai 華) was originally a combination of a value concept—civilization—with geographic and ethnic concepts. As the Chinese characters of the term Middle Kingdom (Jungguk 中國) indicated, China was the center of all under the heavens in terms of geography as well as civilization. However, as geography gradually become relative, the countries of East Asia, depending on their political situation, reexamined the implicit significance of the term Sino- from the geographically independent perspective of civilization or culture in contrast to barbarianism.

Qing established a system where the Manchu, which formed the minority, governed a variety of ethnic groups that were spread out over the wide territory, including the Han, the Mongol, the Uyghur, and the Zang 藏族. In order to integrate these multiple ethnic groups, Qing reestablished the Sino-barbarian dichotomy from the perspective that regarded the Han and the barbarians as one family (hwai ilga 華夷一家). The logic was that regardless of geography or

16. Hyojong süllok, 14th day of the 10th lunar month, 1657.
Among the scholars of Joseon, the consensus was that the study of ritual was relatively underdeveloped in the learning of Zhu Xi. Efforts to supplement insufficient parts of *Family Rites* in order to compile a more complete book on family rituals were undertaken throughout the Joseon dynasty. One example of the fruits of such efforts were the books on ritual compiled by Kim Jangsang, who compiled *Collected Commentaries to Family Rites* (*Garye jimnam*). Song Siyeol, one of the scholars from Joseon during the 17th century, requested that Kim Jangsang be enshrined at the State Shrine of Confucius given that he had developed the study of ritual, which Zhu Xi had not been able to complete. In short, the Confucian scholars of Joseon during the 17th century established the learning of Zhu Xi as orthodoxy and sought to complete the study of ritual, which they perceived as insufficient in the learning of Zhu Xi, thus solidifying their position as the legitimate heir in the transmission of the Way (*dotong*). 

When Qing overthrew Ming and established a new dynasty, Joseon took this as civilization being overthrown by barbarianism. The queue and the change in costume clothes were in particular serious indications that all decorum had collapsed amidst the tumult.

During the beginning of Qing, when Ming’s barely continued existence in the South was yet feeding faint hopes of restoration, there was a widespread sense of political responsibility in Joseon. This responsibility was that as the only legitimate heir to transmit and preserve the succession of the Way (*dotong*), and since the Ming dynasty had enfeoffed the king of Joseon and provided help during its reconstruction after the Hideyoshi Invasions, Joseon needed to restore the now barbarian-controlled China. The Sino-barbarian dichotomy naturally became politically significant in terms of revering the emperor and expelling the barbarians (*jonwang yangjang*). Politics in Joseon basically took the direction of well preserving the culture and learning of the civilized in preparation for when a legitimate dynasty was reestablished in China, while also arming itself with military force in order to eliminate the barbarians that had taken over China. The argument Zhu Xi had made to Emperor Xiaozong as the path Southern ethnicity, he who was virtuous became the owner of all under the heavens, and once the owner of all under the heavens was determined, all ethnicities under the heavens were united as one family regardless of geography. Naturally, the Han as an ethnic group and the geographic concept of the Middle Kingdom were left out from the concept of Sino- as civilization. In terms of political institutions, important ruling organs such as the Deliberative Council of Princes and Ministers (Yizheng wang dachen huivyi 議政王大臣會議), the Southern Study Room (Nan shufang 南書房), and the Office for the Handling of Confidential Military Affairs (Junji chu 軍機處) excluded the Han while the Manchu emperor allied with the Mongols, the Uyghur, and the Zang to govern. The position that the Han and the barbarians were one family, in other words, was a logic of integration at the same time it was a logic to exclude the Han from the center (Min 1990, 25-28; 37-43).

In Joseon, the argument that the tradition of the learning of Zhu Xi was the legitimate transmission of the Way (*dotong*), asserted in no uncertain terms in face of the popularity of the learning of Wang Yangming, had already been applied to politics before the transition to Qing. Yi Hwang compiled the *Comprehensive Record of the Learning of Principle of Late Song, Yuan, and Ming* (*Sonegye Won Myeong ihak tongnok*), thus establishing the lineage of the learning of principle from Zhu Xi forward around the learning of Zhu Xi. In other words, it carried on what Zhu Xi had done in the lineage of the learning of principle from Zhu Xi forward. After Zhu Xi, he became politically significant in terms of revering the emperor and expelling the barbarians (*jonwang yangjang*). Politics in Joseon basically took the direction of well preserving the culture and learning of the civilized in preparation for when a legitimate dynasty was reestablished in China, while also arming itself with military force in order to eliminate the barbarians that had taken over China. The argument Zhu Xi had made to Emperor Xiaozong as the path Southern

17. Yi I, “Seonghak jipyo” in *Complete Works of Vulgak Yi I (Vulgak jonsoen 論古全書)*, gwon 26, je 5, dan 1-jang: "今日議論先儒之說，聖賢道統之体，自始伏羲，終於朱子，又無的傳，此臣所以長於聖學也!"

18. Sukjong sillok, 22nd day of the 4th lunar month, 1682.

19. Song Siyeol 宋時烈, “Non munmyo jongsa so” 述文廟從祀疏, *Collected Works of Master Song Siyeol (Songsi daesang 宋時烈) gwon 17*, “文元公於聖學，道統之書莫先於周禮，然此於聖學之要，亦非定本所及也。其所纂集諸家禮類醇體，或取於記録，或取於事，或取於詞，或撰於聖手，皆有所折衷，而一主於程朱之說，故趨向異數之家，無不皆通，其功可謂盛矣…以詠諸禮之文，而則且與於聖學之享，況文元公是東方禮家之大成耶!”
Song should take after being driven south by the Jin dynasty—to repel barbarians by stabilizing domestic affairs (maetsu eyeonyong 內修外攘)—became an important foundation for the policies of late Joseon. Like Zhu Xi, late Joseon saw stabilizing the economy through strengthening the domestic situation as the urgent task if they were to equip themselves with forces to eliminate the barbarians. Bureaucrats and scholar-officials constantly emphasized that excessively building and strengthening military forces would cause taxes to rise, which would eventually threaten the livelihood of ordinary people. They criticized the private management of the royal finances and argued that the Royal Treasury should be abolished. This was a policy focusing more on strengthening the domestic situation than dealing with the external barbarians.

As the Qing dynasty gradually stabilized, the intellectuals of Joseon judged that Joseon possessed sufficient knowledge for a monarchy and did not need to receive it from Qing. Although he acknowledged that some problems existed in the learnings of the Song dynasty, he argued that they were not mutually exclusive with the individual practice of monarchy depending on the domestic situation than dealing with the external barbarians.

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22. Hong Daeyong argued that if Confucius had been born and active in Joseon, he would have backed the argument of Spring and Autumn (Chunchu ron 春秋論), namely, that Joseon should have been designated as the Middle Kingdom and the surrounding areas as barbarians. Hong also saw civilization as flowing from advanced to lesser regardless of geography or ethnicity. This led to the conclusion that even without getting rid of the barbarians of China, the higher civilization of rule by monarchy, when realized in Joseon, could simply be spread to China. Hong Daeyong’s opinion was shared widely among intellectuals, mainly the School of Northern Learning, including Park Jiwon and Park Jegu.

King Jeongjo once asked his officials about the difference between revering the Confucian king (jon wang 尊王) and practicing the Confucian king (haeng wang 行王) as espoused by Confucius and Mencius. During his reign, King Jeongjo continued to conduct scholarly compilation projects that established the transmission of the Way (dotong 道統) of the learning of principle, including the compilation of the Essentials from the Great Learning (Daehak yuui 大學類義), Illustrated Guide to the Virtues of the Five Human Relationships (Oryun haengsil do 五倫行實圖), Combined Edition of the Community Compact and Local (Wine-Drinking) Rite (Hyangnye hapyeon 鄉禮合編), Elementary Learning, and Collected Writings on Revering Zhou (Jon ju hwipyeon 尊周彙編).

The aforementioned question King Jeongjo posed reflects his will to realize a monarchy based on the understanding that the learning of principle of the Cheng-Zhu learning was the orthodox learning 正學 (Baek 2020, 24-26).

Jeong Yak-yong’s view was that the practice of revering the emperor and expelling the barbarians, which defeated violators and usurpers of the throne, was not mutually exclusive with the individual practice of monarchy depending on the domestic situation than dealing with the external barbarians.


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on the given conditions of the era; instead, his reinterpretation saw them as being carried out side by side if necessary. Regarding the traditional position that saw Confucius as arguing to revere the Confucian king while Mencius argued to practice the Confucian king, Jeong Yak-yong understood the former to be part of the latter’s point of view. He pointed out that in the chapter “Aigong wenzheng” 哀公問政 of the Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong 中庸), the answer Confucius gave to Duke Ai of the state of Lu corresponded to items of a monarchy, not duties of revering the Confucian king, and persuaded King Jeongjo that practicing the Confucian king was a task that must be carried out regardless of the circumstances of the given times. In sum, the Sino-barbarian dichotomy of revering the emperor and expelling the barbarian in the 17th century that had been common following expectations that the descendants of the Ming would stand again in China changed into the concept of practicing the Confucian king in the 18th century. The belief that Joseon realize rule by the Confucian king, thus becoming the Middle Kingdom ruled by a monarchy, determined the direction state affairs took in Joseon.

Conclusion

Joseon used Family Rites to perform the rites and rituals of the royal family before establishing the Manual of the Five State Rites and then as reference for the continuous revision of the established manual. It is rare in the history of East Asia for the documentation of the manuals of rites, such as the Supplement to Sequel to Manual of the Five State Rite, the Compiled Supplement to Manual of Funerary State Rites, and the Comprehensive Collection of Manual of the Five State Rites to continue until late Joseon. The use of Family Rites in revising the manuals was not to demote the rites and rituals of the king to the same level as those of the scholar-officials. Instead, it was to reinforce the public aspects of the rites of the king as an official state rite rather than a private rite of the royal household. It also aimed to make sure that the king sufficiently practiced the duties of filial piety and veneration in the performance of ritual so that the ideology of the learning of principle was realized from the top, and in this process, naturally carrying out virtuous rule by observation of and absorption of the practices of rites and ritual (guwangam 觀感).

Royal lectures also continued throughout Joseon. Not only did the king actively lead the compilation of books used in the royal lectures, including Exemplar for Efficient Government, Precious Mirror for Succeeding Reigns, and Essentials from the Great Learning, but the scholar-officials also produced books for the royal lecture such as the Ten Diagrams on the Learning of the Sages and Essentials of the Learning of the Sages to substitute the Extended Meaning of the Great Learning and Supplement to Extended Meaning of the Great Learning. The Classic of the Mind and Heart was often used as a textbook during royal lectures in late Joseon, and, as a rule, renowned scholars of the learning of principle who were not in power and called rustic literati were to participate in royal lectures and express their opinions to the king regarding scholarly matters as well as the current state of things. Joseon was a country of royal-lecture politics given how these lectures were used politically. Practicing fostering and the perfection of knowledge side by side was presented as the way the king was to pursue the learning of the sages, and he was guided to appropriately control physiological and personal wants (insim 人心) in the sense of controlling, not abstaining from, desire. This reflected the view of the learning of principle during late Joseon that distinguished the human mind (insim 人心) from selfish and exclusionary desire (inok 人欲) and instead saw it as a normal human desire which was also a moral mind when practiced appropriately according to the rules of propriety.

After Yi Hwang and Yi I, there was a sense of self-awareness among the scholars of the learning of principle that the legitimacy of the learning since Zhu Xi lay in Joseon. Thus, when the Qing dynasty proclaimed itself as the self-claimed virtuous being who received the mandate of the heavens and put forth the unifying principle of seeing the Han and barbarians as one family, Joseon saw them as barbarians causing disorder by replacing civilization, including attire, with barbaric practices. During early Qing, Joseon sought to preserve learning and civilization based on revering the emperor and expelling the barbarians on the one hand, while getting state affairs in order and also stabilizing the everyday lives of the people in order to ultimately arm itself and eliminate the barbarians. This was an application of repelling the barbarians by stabilizing domestic affairs, which the scholars of the learning of principle would practice and transmit through the manuals of rites and rituals.
including Zhu Xi had presented as the course of action the court of Southern Song should take in face of the threat of the Jin dynasty. However, as the Qing dynasty became more stable, the understanding of the Sino-barbarian dichotomy changed from transmitting the system of rule by a Confucian king to realizing the Confucian king in Joseon so that it would spread to Qing this way. In other words, the practicing of Confucian King or using Sino-culture and civilization to transform barbarians (용화변夷) became the prevailing belief among the scholars of Joseon. That King Jeongjo compiled projects that saw the learning of principle by the Cheng-Zhu learning as orthodox and sought to complete the records of protocols such as the Comprehensive Study of the Board of Rites and Comprehensive National Code were all outcomes of the will to realize rule by the Confucian King in Joseon.

With the Opium wars breaking out 4 years after Jeong Yak-yong’s death in 1836, the Confucian societies of East Asia rapidly collapsed and shifted towards the modern system of the West. Since the Japanese Colonial period, researchers have argued that the Sino-barbarian dichotomy of Joseon was a conservative political theory that did not respond appropriately to the civilizational shift in history that was already taking place. This is true just by looking at the results. But the two World Wars humankind experienced after the late 19th century and Japan’s invasion and plundering of its surrounding countries in East Asia largely stemmed from an imperialistic political theory that sought to create a rich country and a strong military. In the history of East Asia, to be a sovereign aiming for this rich nation and strong army was to take a completely different path from Confucian scholars, who pursued the politics of the comfort of people’s lives. The revering of the Confucian king and the practice of the Confucian king was a development of the Kingly Way seeking the comfort of the people, which had been pursued ever since Mencius. The fall of Joseon meant the fall of Confucian political ruling based on the comfort of the people in a tumultuous world where the political theory of rich nation, strong military was leading world history. Looking back at the history of humankind, this Confucian political ideology and the specific ways of how it was practiced in Joseon are valuable assets that can guide us to move past the political theory of building a rich nation with strong military forces. It would be worth contemplating their significance.

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References


The Learning of Principle and the Governing by Culture in Joseon


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Abstract

This article examined the characteristics of rule by culture, which Joseon established based on the learning of principle, from the following three aspects: the use of Family Rites in the enactment and revision of state rites and ritual; the education of the sovereign during royal lectures based on the ideology of the learning of principle; and the reliance on revering the Confucian king and practicing the Confucian king as the ideology guiding state affairs based on the Sino-barbarian dichotomy of the learning of principle after Qing was founded.

The main findings include first, that the public aspect of the king’s rites was strengthened through Family Rites, and the king was led to practice the duty of filial piety and veneration through the performance of rites to naturally carry out virtuous rule by observation of and absorption of ritual practices. Second, when educating the king on the learning of the sages, the appropriate control of the human mind and the simultaneous training of fostering and the perfection of knowledge based on learning of the sages according to the learning of principle were emphasized. The system included the inviting scholars that were not in power called rustic literati to royal lectures and having them teach the learning of the sages to the king and express their opinions regarding state affairs. In addition, using Classic of the Mind and Heart as a textbook of royal lectures was a unique characteristic of Joseon and shows that the royal lectures were an important space of political activity. Third, before the emergence of Qing, Joseon believed itself to be the legitimate heir of the learning of Zhu Xi. The initial policy towards Qing of repelling the barbarians by stabilizing domestic affairs based on revering the emperor and expulsing the barbarian was the application of the policy of the learning of principle that had been taken in the past against the threat of the Jin dynasty. As things stabilized in Qing, practicing the Confucian king, or using Sino-culture and civilization to transform barbarians, and thereby realizing monarchy in Joseon so that it would spread to Qing became the basic direction of policy. King Jeongjo carried out compilation projects that saw the study of the principle of the Cheng-Zhu learning as orthodox, and the establishment of the manual of state ritual including Comprehensive Study of the Board of Rites and Comprehensive National Code were products of the will to realize a system of monarchy in Joseon.

Keywords: rule by culture (munchi 文治), family rites (garye 家禮), royal lecture (geongyeon 經筵), foster (hamyang 放), perfection of knowledge (chiji 欲知), Sino-barbarian dichotomy (hwai 华夷), revering the Confucian king (jonwang 尊王) and practicing the Confucian king (haengwang 行王)