

**The Four Seven Debate (四端七情論) I<sup>1</sup>:  
Its Philosophical Background  
—Ambiguity in Zhu Xi’s (1130–1200) *Li-Qi* Theory  
(理氣論, Principle and Material Force)  
and His Theory of Mind (心)<sup>2</sup>  
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**1. Introduction**

The tradition of Chosŏn Korea intellectual history principally owes its philosophical framework to Song Neo-Confucianism, especially Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200). Since the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) adopted Neo-Confucianism as the state doctrine,<sup>3</sup> nearly all scholars in the Chosŏn era treated the main topics of Neo-Confucianism. Pae Chong-ho (裴宗鎬) in *Han’guk yuhaksa* (Confucian History of Korea) asserts that Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism developed to scrutinize the ethical problems of human beings. He said:

Because of the state policy of the Chosŏn dynasty, *sungnyu ōkpul* (崇儒抑佛, respecting Confucianism and repressing Buddhism), Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism was destined to replace Buddhism in terms of scrutinizing the problems of mind and nature (心性問題). Accordingly it dealt with the problems of mind and nature much deeper than Chinese Neo-Confucianism and it resulted in *sadan-ch’ilchŏngnon* (四端七情論, Four Seven Debate) and *insim-tosimsŏl* (人心道心說, human mind and *dao* mind). Since its metaphysical basis is directly connected with the problem of *i* (理) and *ki* (氣), [Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism] developed *churi* (主理, *i* principle), *chugi* (主氣, *ki* principal), and *chŏlch’ung* (折衷, compromise). It later shifted over to discussion about ‘universal’ and ‘particular’, which concluded *yuri* (唯理, *i*-only) and *yugi* (唯氣, *ki*-only). Here Korean Neo-Confucianism was settled for the time being.<sup>4</sup>

One of the unique characteristics of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism is the fact that Chosŏn Neo-Confucians scrutinized human ethical problems according to Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* (principle-material force) theory (理氣論).<sup>5</sup> For example, based on Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* binary theory, Chosŏn scholars developed Neo-Confucian theory into the famous Four Seven Debate (四端七情論, *sadan-ch’ilchŏngnon*). Finally in Chosŏn *i* (C. *li* 理) and *ki* (C. *qi* 氣) discourses split into an *i*-only theory and a *ki*-only theory.

The Four Seven Debate primarily focused on whether human feelings are good or bad according to the *i-ki* binary theory based on the cardinal premise of Neo-Confucianism, that “*sŏng* (nature) is the same as *i* (principle).” That is to say, good feelings belong to *sŏng* and *i*; bad feelings belong to *ki* (material force). However the transcendental characteristic of *i* as a moral principle made it difficult to maintain “no dichotomy” (不可分開) between *i* and *ki* when attempting to explain unpredictable human

feelings. Accordingly Yi Hwang, also known as T'oegye, (李滉 退溪, 1501–70) separated *i* from *ki* and made it an independent and dynamic entity in order to justify human potential morality.

T'oegye's assertion seemed to succeed to protect innate human morality, but it immanently included a possibility to dismantle Zhu Xi's *li-qi* binary theory itself. In this paper, I will attempt to show that Zhu Xi's theory already foreshadowed the Four Seven Debate in that it becomes unstable in applying it to human ethical problems. In doing so, first, I will discuss Zhu Xi's *li-qi* binary theory and attributes of *li*. Even though Zhu Xi maintained "no dichotomy" between *li* and *qi*, but he far more emphasized *li*. Second, I will discuss the cardinal premise of Neo-Confucianism, that "*sōng* is the same as *i*" and will show *i* has dual meanings: "what is so" (所以然) and "what should be so" (所當然). Third, I will discuss Zhu Xi's theory of the mind (心) in terms of an epistemological viewpoint. Lastly, I will discuss the ambiguity in Zhu Xi's theory of mind and how they influenced the Four Seven Debate based on the preceding discussions.

Before continuing the discussions it is essential to account for general ideas of Zhu Xi's theory. To do this we must first turn to the philosophical debates that took place in Song China (960–1270) and principally centered on the writings of Zhu Xi.

Zhu Xi<sup>6)</sup> explained the universe in terms of *li* and *qi*. The relation between *li* and *qi* maintains a tension throughout his *li-qi* theory. That is to say, it is the principle of things that becomes actualized, and actualization requires both principle as its substance and material force (氣) as its actuality. *Li* is necessary to explain the reality and universality of things. It is incorporeal, single, eternal, unchanging, uniform, constituting the essence of things, and always good. It does not contain a dichotomy of good and evil nor does it create things. *Qi* is necessary to explain physical form, individuality, and transformation of material things. *Qi* is physical, multitudinous, transitory, changeable, constitutes their physical substance, involves both good and evil (depending on whether its endowment in things is balanced or partial), and is the agent of creation.<sup>7)</sup> The tension of the relation between *li* and *qi* is apparent in the following statement by Zhu Xi:

What are called *li* and *qi* are certainly two different entities (決是二物). But considered from the standpoint of things, the two entities are merged one with the other and cannot be separated with each in a different place (不可分開).<sup>8)</sup>

*Li* is an absolute, constant, and incorporeal entity; on the other hand, *qi* is a changeable, corporeal and physical entity. And Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory also requires careful understanding in terms of its two different viewpoints. First, from an ontological point of view, *qi* forms things which follow *li* (each existential pattern). Without *li*, *qi* cannot form things. Without *qi*, *li* has no place in which to inhere. Hence creating no dichotomy between *li* and *qi* (不可分開). Second, in terms of conception of primary entities of the universe, we cannot but prescribe *li* and *qi* as two different entities because they respectively have different attributes (決是二物). These two viewpoints are mixed in Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory of basic cosmology, but Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism directly applied this theory to the problem of human feelings and faced the difficulty of maintain-

ing these two mixed viewpoints.

Even though Zhu Xi himself asserted that *li* and *qi* are inseparable, the basic concept of Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory differentiates *li* from *qi*. Joseph Needham in *Science and Civilization in China* confirms this fact. According to Needham, "At bottom, Zhu Xi remained a dualist, in the sense that *qi* and *li* were coeval and of equal importance in the universe, 'neither afore nor other', though the residue of belief in some slight 'superiority' on the part of the latter was extremely difficult to discard."<sup>9</sup> Not only did Zhu Xi differentiate *li* from *qi*, he took *li* to occupy a superior status to *qi*. According to Needham, the reason lies in the social class differentiation, that is, Song Neo-Confucians conceived unconsciously that the world of *li* (Neo-Confucians) is superior to the world of *qi* (farmers and artisans).<sup>10</sup> However Zhu Xi consciously emphasized the world of *li* when criticizing Buddhism and Daoism. Zhu Xi states:

The only difference between the Confucians and Buddhists in their discourses on nature is that the Buddhists talk about emptiness whereas the Confucians talk about concreteness, and whereas the Buddhists talk about 'not having' (無), the Confucians talk about 'having' (有)..... With us Confucians, although the mind is vacuous, principle (理) is concrete. The Buddhists, on the other hand, go straightly to their destination of emptiness and void.<sup>11</sup>

It is not necessary to examine the doctrines of Buddhism and Taoism deeply to understand them. The mere fact that they discard the Three Bonds (between ruler and minister, father and son, and husband and wife) and the Five Constant Virtues (righteousness on the part of the father, deep love on the part of the mother, friendliness on the part of the elder brother, respect on the part of the younger brother, and filial piety on the part of the son) is already a crime of the greatest magnitude. Nothing more need be said about the rest.<sup>12</sup>

According to Zhu Xi, Confucianism is concerned with the world of "having," whereas Buddhism and Daoism are concerned with "not having." The world of "having" is concrete, which is the world of *li*. According to Zhu Xi, socially Confucianism emphasizes moral values, whereas Buddhism and Daoism discarded them, which is a crime. The cardinal bonds are a type of *li* or one particular expression of a single *li* and they are not distinct from *li*. Here we find that Zhu Xi's *li* includes morality along with an existential pattern<sup>13</sup> in his cosmological viewpoint; furthermore, he makes no distinction between the two characteristics of *li*. Likewise it can be said that Zhu Xi advocated *li* as the world of concrete morality.

However, even though the property of *li* in Zhu Xi's system originally meant an existential pattern of myriad things, it came to possess a "transcendental" property owing to Buddhism and Daoism.<sup>14</sup> This can be explained if we examine the intellectual atmosphere in Zhu Xi's period. According to Daniel K. Gardner, "Enlightenment was an issue of some interest to almost all intellectuals of the Song. With the popularity of the Ch'an school of Buddhism, Buddhist and non-Buddhist thinkers alike had been introduced to the ideal of enlightenment ..... for both Chu and the Ch'an Buddhists viewed enlightenment as the total understanding of the true nature of the universe."<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore Zhu Xi himself studied Buddhism. According to Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, “Chu Hsi turned toward Buddhism and Taoism after his father’s death ..... was attracted to these Ch’an teaching of Ta-hui (1089–1163).”<sup>16)</sup> Edwin O. Reischauer also concludes that Song Neo-Confucian scholars were strongly influenced by Buddhism and Daoism. Reischauer states in *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*:

The Neo-Confucian thinkers were strongly influenced by some of the Buddhist concepts that had been so important in Chinese thinking for the past few centuries. Many of them had been students of Buddhism or Taoism before they turned to Confucianism, and some had even lived in Zen monasteries. Buddhism had conditioned men to think in metaphysical terms, and one of the things that was new about Neo-Confucianism was that it developed a metaphysics for Confucianism, freely utilizing Buddhist ideas and Taoist terminology. Neo-Confucianism thus was drawn from the diverse intellectual currents of the day, just as Han Confucianism had been eclectic in its time. Essentially, however, it was a rejection of the Taoist search for immortality and the Buddhist concern with the divine and the afterlife. It returned to the ancient Chinese emphasis on mundane social and political matters, particularly ethics, and it reasserted the old agnostic, nontheistic tendencies of Chinese thoughts.<sup>17)</sup>

In short, there was “the tendency of the Buddhists to transcendentalize and supernaturalize the originally naturalistic organicism<sup>18)</sup> of Han and pre-Han times. Hence the metaphysical undertones which the word *li* had acquired by the time it was utilized by Song Neo-Confucians and from which Zhu Xi himself was perhaps never quite able to liberate it.”<sup>19)</sup> In fact, Zhu Xi, through his interpretations<sup>20)</sup> of the Four Books,<sup>21)</sup> tried to reassert a true Confucianism, stripped of all Buddhist and Daoist influences<sup>22)</sup> which had been conspicuous in the writings of previous Neo-Confucians.<sup>23)</sup> However, Zhu Xi does not seem to have succeeded in purging all the Buddhist undertones from his core concept, *li*. Needham concludes:

The work of Zhu Xi, therefore, was to remove *li* from most of its Buddhist contexts, and to restore its ancient naturalist significance, immanent rather than transcendent. The precise degree to which he was able to do this remains a matter for minute future research; certainly his critics of later centuries often believed that he did not entirely succeed in divesting the concept of its religious-metaphysical undertones.<sup>24)</sup>

In the end, Zhu Xi’s *li* came to possess two properties simultaneously: immanent and transcendental.<sup>25)</sup> These two properties of *li* do not seem to cause any problems in the cosmogonic arguments. In applying it to society, *li* naturally emphasizes the order of society. But, in applying it to ethical questions, one encounters a problem because the two properties of *li* become unstable, a fact which triggered the Four Seven Debate in Chosŏn intellectual history.

## 2. Zhu Xi's *Li-qi* Binary Theory (理氣論) and His Theory of Mind (心性論)

### a. Zhu Xi's *Li-qi* Binary Theory and Attributes of *Li*

In terms of Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory, we should be aware of a certain tension between *li* and *qi*. He states,

What are called principle and material force are certainly two different entities. But considered from the standpoint of things, the two entities are merged one with the other and cannot be separated with each in a different place. However, this does not destroy the fact that the two entities are each an entity in itself. When considered from the standpoint of principle, before things existed, their principles of being had already existed. Only their principles existed, however, but not yet the things themselves. Whenever one studies these aspects, one should clearly recognize and distinguish them, and consider both principle and material force from the beginning to the end, and then one will be free from error.<sup>26)</sup>

Basically Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory includes two viewpoints. First, when a thing comes into being, *qi* as a fundamental material requires an existential pattern<sup>27)</sup> or mode of being. In terms of "being," *li* and *qi* cannot be separated, that is, *li* is the existential pattern whereby *qi* is manifested as particular beings. Therefore *li* and *qi* cannot exist as independent entities. Hence Zhu Xi claimed, "No dichotomy" exists between *li* and *qi*. Second, suppose that we can only distinguish particular things by each existential pattern. In such a case we cannot but presume the existential pattern is a different entity from material *qi*. That is to say, the existential pattern is different from the fundamental material. For this reason Zhu Xi claimed that *li* and *qi* are, "Two different entities." Besides, in his cosmogonic view, *li* already exists before *qi* is manifested into particular things. This two-fold definition eventually had a great influence on the Four Seven Debate.

In terms of Zhu Xi's *qi* theory, it is hard to say that his *qi* theory is unique as he is merely following traditional, pre-existing *qi* theories. The question "what is *li*" seems to be a short-cut to understand Zhu Xi's *li-qi* system, but such a question might lead to confusion because it is directly related to the attributes of *li*, which naturally generate many discussions.<sup>28)</sup> Although we cannot avoid discussing the attributes of *li*, perhaps it is more helpful to understand his thought if we ask why he needed *li* in the first place. This question can also help explain the unfolding of Neo-Confucianism in Chosŏn intellectual history.

The major proposition of Zhu Xi's *li-qi* system is that he claims the universe is composed of *li* and *qi*. He states,

In the universe there has never been any material force (氣) without principle (理) or principle without material force.<sup>29)</sup>

*Li* and *qi* are not independent entities. Thus it is a short leap to suppose that *li* and *qi* have the same value in Zhu Xi's system. However, Zhu Xi did not stop at this point because his intention was not to emphasize the equality of *li* and *qi*:<sup>30)</sup>

Question: Which exists first, principle (理) or material force (氣)?

Answer: Principle has never been separated from material force. However, principle is what is above physical form (理形而上者)<sup>31)</sup> whereas material force is what is within physical form (氣形而下者). Hence when spoken of as being above or within physical form, is there not the difference of priority and posterity? Principle has no physical form, but material force is coarse and contains impurities.<sup>32)</sup>

Zhu Xi's answer reveals one of the most important attributes of *li* as transcendental or *a priori*<sup>33)</sup> in the metaphysical viewpoint. *Li* is the entity above physical form and, at the same time, *li* is also a very pure and fine entity. Furthermore, *li* is prior to *qi* in the cosmogonic viewpoint.<sup>34)</sup> He also states:

Fundamentally principle and material force cannot be spoken of as prior or posterior. But if we must trace their origin, we are obliged to say that principle is prior. However, principle is not a separated entity. It exists right in material force. Without material force, principle would have nothing to adhere to.<sup>35)</sup>

Zhu Xi appears to accept *li*'s priority to *qi* but at the same time he asserts that *li* and *qi* are not separable. The latter part of the above passage provides another important clue to understand the attribute of *li*. Even though *li* exists in *qi*, *li* itself does not have any active capacity. Without *qi*, *li* cannot do anything. Therefore Zhu Xi concludes:

*Li* has no feeling and intention, no plan and calculation and does not create anything (理却無情意無計度無造作), while *qi* can integrate and create things (氣即能凝結造作).<sup>36)</sup>

According to Zhu Xi, *li* is the transcendental or *a priori* being before form, while *qi*, which is the entity after form, is the basic element which composes the physical world. Furthermore *li* cannot be manifested by itself. That is to say, *li* does not have any active component. These two attributes of *li* must be the bottom line in discussing Zhu Xi's *li* theory. If we consider *li* according to these attributes, we could ask the question why Zhu Xi needed *li*. Here we can suggest another way to approach Zhu Xi's *li-qi* system and its subsequent unfolding in the context of Chosŏn intellectual history. Examining the necessity of *li* in Zhu Xi's system and the intellectual debates of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism provides an easier point of departure for understanding the philosophical system of the time.

Zhu Xi intended to transplant a metaphysical component into Confucianism. We can find this in Zhu Xi's comments on "An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate" (太極圖說) written by Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤, 1017–72). Zhou wrote:

The Ultimate of Non-being (無極) and also the Great Ultimate (而太極)! The Great Ultimate through movement generates Yang (陽). When its activity (動) reaches its limit, it becomes tranquil (靜). Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates Yin (陰). When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again. So

activity and tranquility alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction of Yin and Yang, and the two modes (兩儀) are thus established.

By the transformation of yang and its union with yin, the Five Agents (五行) of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth arise. When these five material forces (氣) are distributed in harmonious order, the four seasons run their course.

The Five Agents constitute one system of Yin and Yang, and Yin and Yang constitute one Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate is fundamentally the Non-ultimate. The Five Agents arise, each with its specific nature (性).

When the reality of the Ultimate of Non-being and the essence of Yin, Yang, and the Five Agents come into mysterious union, integration ensues. *Ch'ien* (乾, Heaven) constitutes the male element, and *k'un* (坤, Earth) constitutes the female element. The interaction of these two material forces engenders and transforms the myriad things. The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation.<sup>37)</sup>

“An Explanation of the Diagram” has been regarded as the essence of Neo-Confucian cosmogony. Its structure proceeds from the Great Ultimate<sup>38)</sup> to the myriad of things. That is to say, the Great Ultimate generates Yin and Yang; the Yin and Yang generate the Five Agents; then, the myriad of things come into being. Here we can ask, what is the property of the Great Ultimate as an origin of the myriad of things? Zhu Xi interpreted it as follows:

The Great Ultimate (太極) is nothing other than principle.<sup>39)</sup>

In this case, the structure of “An Explanation of the Diagram” abruptly changes. The Great Ultimate is replaced by *li*; then, *li* comes to produce the myriad of things. This is one of the most difficult parts in understanding Zhu Xi's philosophy.<sup>40)</sup> When Wing-tsit Chan translates Zhu Xi's explanation about “An Explanation of the Diagram,”<sup>41)</sup> he comments, “The difference between Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi is that for Zhou the Great Ultimate involves activity and tranquility, whereas for Zhu, it has only the principle (理) of activity and tranquility, for the Great Ultimate is absolute and is therefore above phenomenal manifestations. Actually, Zhou's Great Ultimate is identical with material force (氣), whereas Zhu's Great Ultimate is identical with principle (理). As to how the Great ultimate can produce the two material forces (Yin and Yang), Zhu's answer is vague.”<sup>42)</sup> More specifically, the question of “how *li* produces Yin and Yang” remains problematic. It has a potential problem which might be developed into “*li* issues (理發),” whereupon *li* becomes an independent substance different from *qi*. As a result, Zhu Xi asserts that the Great Ultimate is *li*. Thus *li* has a strong tendency towards becoming ‘substance’ from which the myriad of things come into being. Hughes also concluded that Zhu Xi cleared the way for an emphasis on substance in China.<sup>43)</sup>

Zhu Xi's philosophical system is based on the traditional *qi* theory. And he tried to transplant the concept of ‘substance’, namely, the transcendental property of *li*, into the world of *qi*. Thus Confucianism abruptly extended its capacity from primarily dealing with the socio-political sphere to encompassing complex metaphysical argu-

ments. Hence the emergence of the Neo-Confucian *li-qi* binary theory.<sup>44)</sup> Furthermore Zhu Xi strongly emphasizes the role of *li* in his *li-qi* system. He claims:

Before Heaven and Earth existed, there was after all only principle. As there is this principle, therefore there are Heaven and Earth. If there were no principle, there would also be no Heaven and Earth, no man, no things, and in fact, no containing or sustaining (of things by Heaven and Earth) to speak of. As there is principle, there is therefore material force to operate everywhere and nourish and develop all things.<sup>45)</sup>

In sum, Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory maintains two different positions at the same time: "No dichotomy" and "Two different entities." These two characteristics later provided a theoretical basis for the Chosŏn Four Seven Debate. Zhu Xi's understanding of *li* reveals it as having two fundamental properties. *Li* is transcendental and also non-dynamic. The former property was influenced by Buddhism and Daoism,<sup>46)</sup> and the latter was developed from the traditional meaning of *li* as an existential pattern. Zhu Xi replaced the Great Ultimate with *li* in the Diagram of the Great Ultimate (太極圖) and consequently forced *li* to play a pivotal role as the 'substance' producing the myriad of things.<sup>47)</sup> In doing so Zhu Xi further emphasized the role of *li*.

*b. Xing (性, Human Nature) is the Same as Li (理, Principle): Dual Meanings of Li*

Now we need to look into the relationship between *li* (理, principle; K. *i*) and *xing* (性, human nature; K. *sŏng*) because it is the key to understanding the unfolding of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism in the later era.<sup>48)</sup> More specifically, the Four Seven Debate concerns how to solve the moral problem of human feelings (or mind) according to *i* (理, principle; C. *li*) and *ki* (氣, material force; C. *qi*). It is thus necessary to scrutinize the relationship between *li*, or existential pattern, and *xing*.

Zhu Xi said, "*Xing* (性)<sup>49)</sup> consists of concrete *li*, complete with humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom."<sup>50)</sup> And he then declares the famous proposition as follows:

*Xing* (性) is the same as *li* (理). It is *li* of *dangran* (當然之理); it thus includes no evil.<sup>51)</sup>

This is one of the major premises of Neo-Confucianism, but the proposition, "*xing* is the same as *li*,"<sup>52)</sup> needs further analysis because it contains dual linguistic meaning. The key to understanding the problem lies in the following proposition, "it is *li* of *dangran*." The problem is caused by the use of the word "*dangran*" (K. *tang'yŏn*). Even though it can be literally translated as "natural," it includes two meanings. First, it means, "self-evident" or "apparent," and it also means that a certain proposition is true. For example, in the case of the proposition, "water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen," we can prove it to be true or false. Through an experiment we can decompose water into oxygen and hydrogen, and we can prove the proposition to be true. In this case, we can say, "It is self-evident (當然) that water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen." Second, it means, "ought to" or "should," and it describes a cer-



tain value system. For example, we can have a proposition such as “human beings should (當然) practice the Five Virtues.” This is a proposition about a value judgment. So the double meanings of *dangran* generate two propositions as follows:

- a) *Li* is *dangran*.
- b) *Xing* is *dangran*.

As we discussed before, the propositions *a* and *b* have different values. Proposition *a* concerns *li*, namely, an existential pattern, whereas proposition *b* concerns *xing*, namely, human nature. *Li* is *dangran* because it is true that things possess their own existential pattern. *Xing* is *dangran* because human beings should follow the Four Virtues. The former indicates a description of things, while the latter indicates the moral attitude of human beings. Thanks to the word “*dangran*,” the two different propositions come to be connected. On the other hand, it can be said that *li* can justify the truth value of *xing*. That is to say, human beings should follow the Four Virtues as the myriad of things possess their own existential pattern.

Thanks to the proposition, “*xing* is the same as *li*,” as we can recognize the universe with *li*, so do we recognize human beings with the same *li*. *Li* then makes the human realm united with the cosmic realm. On the other hand, the universe, or Heaven, is maintained by *li*, while human society should also be maintained by the same *li*. In arriving at this point the proposition finally achieves the Confucian goal of a unity between Heaven and human beings.

However, the argument in the proposition can also proceed in the opposite direction. Since *li* is equivalent to *xing*, *li* comes to possess the properties of *xing*. *Li*, as an existential pattern, acquires the value which is the property of *xing*. That is to say, *li* is transformed from a value free abstraction into a certain value system which prescribes and governs the world. In other words, *li* is not only an existential pattern of a thing or physical law, but becomes an existential pattern of the society, or a moral law, which, according to Benjamin I. Schwartz, is one of the characteristics of Chinese thought.<sup>53)</sup>

In sum, for Zhu Xi the cosmos itself is moral. We can assure this fact in the proposition, “*Xing* is the same as *li*” *Li* is originally an existential pattern which causes a thing to be and *xing*, as human morality, prescribes human behaviors. However, in the Neo-Confucian cosmology *li* possesses two properties of both “what is so” and “what should be so.”

### c. *Zhu Xi's Theory of the Mind: Epistemological Viewpoint*

Since Chosŏn Neo-Confucian scholars tried to explain human feelings in terms of *i* and *ki* it is necessary to examine how Zhu Xi dealt with the mind. In this section, I will discuss the mind from an epistemological viewpoint.<sup>54)</sup>

Zhu Xi states that, “*Xin* (心, mind) is the pure part of *qi*”<sup>55)</sup> and “there exists a spiritual (靈) thing in *qi*.”<sup>56)</sup> Chosŏn Neo-Confucians largely followed this definition in which the mind is *ki* and its function is beyond our understanding.

In the case of Zhu Xi though, the concept of *li* involves the mind, even though he admitted the mind is *qi*. He said,

[In terms of understanding,] there already exists *li* of understanding (知覺). But *li* does not yield understanding yet. *Qi* is integrated and formed, and *li* becomes united with *qi*; then, understanding comes to exist.<sup>57)</sup>

In short, *li* is united with *qi* in the mind. Then understanding (知覺) occurs. The agent of our understanding is our mind and our understanding comes to exist from the unity of *li* and *qi*.

Furthermore Zhu Xi's theory of the mind includes a particular epistemological element. To better understand his argument we can interpret his mind theory to consist of three steps. First, Zhu Xi divides the mind by means of *li-qi* theory into *daoxin* (道心, *Dao* mind; K. *tosim*) and *renxin* (人心, human mind; K. *insim*).<sup>58)</sup> Second, he asserts the superiority of *daoxin*, which results in *li* being innate. Then, he presents the innate *li* as the means by which humans recognize external phenomena. Third, he shows a tendency to reject the function of *renxin*.

Examining these three steps in more detail, Zhu Xi's first step entails dividing the mind into *renxin* and *daoxin* by means of his *li-qi* theory. According to Zhu Xi, the mind is empty. When we hear or see something, it is the mind that can see or hear the phenomena.<sup>59)</sup> The mind is the basis whereby we can see or know a thing.

In elucidating the major Neo-Confucian premise that "*xing* is the same as *li*," Zhu Xi asserts that, with reference to the mind, we call *li xing*.<sup>60)</sup> Finally he claims that *li* adheres to *qi* in the mind.<sup>61)</sup> These propositions entail two sub-concepts: *renxin* and *daoxin*, that is, a human being possesses both *renxin* and *daoxin*. *Renxin* originates from *qi* and it is psychophysical conditions, such as desires to see and hear, that make *renxin* perceive external phenomena. However, the case of *daoxin* is different. *Daoxin* comes from *li* and since *li* is the ontological basis for this mind, it accordingly affects its understanding of phenomena. Further difference between these two minds is that each one perceives (知覺) and understands (知)<sup>62)</sup> things differently. According to Zhu Xi, by means of *daoxin*, we can understand moral principles; by means of *renxin*, we can perceive sounds, colors, smells, and tastes.<sup>63)</sup> Even though the mind is single, the objects we can know are different. Zhu Xi accepts that that which knows or perceives is the psychophysical mind, which originates from *qi*. He divides it, though, into two different aspects by the realms to which each mind belongs. *Renxin* belongs to *qi*; *daoxin* belongs to *li*.

In the second step of his theory of the mind, Zhu Xi emphasizes the aspect of *daoxin* in the process of recognizing a phenomenon. Zhu Xi's explanation of *renxin* is comparatively easy to understand because it describes perceptions in general. However, *daoxin* is slightly more complicated and requires further elucidation. That is to say, what *daoxin* understands is *li*, while at the same time it is *li*, the basis of *daoxin*, which enables it to understand *li*. Since *daoxin* already entails *li*, there is no difference between the *li* in *daoxin* and the *li* that *daoxin* understands.<sup>64)</sup> With this argument, Zhu Xi efficiently rearranged the cognitive process centering on *daoxin*; that is, he tried to impose order (*li, daoxin*) over chaotic feelings (*qi, renxin*).

According to Zhu Xi, "The Great Ultimate is merely the principle of Heaven and Earth and the myriads of things ..... with respect to the myriad of things, there is the Great Ultimate in each and every one of them."<sup>65)</sup> Zhu Xi claims that all things pos-

sess their own *li*. Zhu Xi continues, “Although the mind is a distinct entity, it is empty, and therefore embraces all principles.”<sup>66)</sup> “Nature is principle. The mind is its reservoir and issues it forth into operation.”<sup>67)</sup> Second he is asserting that the mind is the reservoir of *li*. In this case, ‘the mind’ indicates the aspect of *daoxin*, that is, the *li* component of the mind of human beings. Then, the fact that we understand the *li* of the myriads of things means that we can understand the *li* of them within our mind, particularly *daoxin*. As a result, Zhu Xi said, “The mind and *li* are one. *Li* is not like a thing in front of us, but *li* exists within the mind.”<sup>68)</sup> Therefore, for Zhu Xi, the process of knowing the myriad of things principally leads to knowing the *li* of the myriad of things within our *daoxin*.

Generally when we say that we know a thing, according to Zhu Xi, it means that we know the *li* of the thing. Because *li* and the mind are one, we come to know the *li* within the mind, which means in knowing the *li* we also know external things since the same *li* extends throughout all phenomena. Zhu Xi states that, “What is known is the *li* of the mind; what is able to know is the spirit of *ki*.”<sup>69)</sup>

Yamada Keiji (山田慶児) clearly explained these relationships of what makes us know, what we can know, and what is known in Zhu Xi’s system. According to Yamada,<sup>70)</sup> the mind already entails multifarious *li* or cognitive patterns. When we try to understand or perceive objects, the objects become understood or perceived by cognitive patterns within our mind. Accordingly, it is those patterns within our mind that we recognize. In other words, we already possess the cognitive patterns within our mind. When we recognize an object, we try to find a well-fitting pattern for the object from our collection of cognitive patterns. For this reason Zhu Xi can claim that the mind possesses multifarious *li*. The fact that we recognize the object means that we recognize the *li* of the object. The fact that we recognize the *li* of the object means that we recognize the *li* within us, that is, within the mind. According to Zhu Xi, human beings are born with those *li* or cognitive patterns. As a result, *li* plays a pivotal role in human cognitive process.

In the third step of his theory of the mind, Zhu Xi tends to dismiss *renxin*. The relation between *renxin* and *daoxin* can be explained in the same way as that of *li-qi*. Zhu Xi compared it to the relation of a boat (*renxin*) and its helm (*daoxin*).<sup>71)</sup> If we leave the boat as it were, we cannot know where it would proceed. On the other hand, if we are at the helm, we could control the boat with our own will. In other word, we cannot rely on recognition of the world derived from *renxin*. For this reason, we need *daoxin* to provide order to *renxin*.

Here we encounter a problem in Zhu Xi’s theory of the mind. There is not much emphasis placed on the cognitive theory for *renxin* in Zhu Xi’s system. Likewise it is not easy to deal with crude sense data, desires or other things which *renxin* recognizes. As a result, Zhu Xi’s theory shows a tendency to dismiss the world of *renxin* because it exists outside of the ordered cognitive framework. His theory therefore leads to the conclusion that *renxin* is not the object of knowledge; it must be controlled by *daoxin*. Zhu Xi states:

The mind is not like a side door which can be enlarged by force. We must eliminate the obstructions of selfish desires, and then it will be pure and clear and able

to know all. When the principles of things and events are investigated to the utmost, penetration will come as a sudden release. Heng-ch'ü (Chang Tsai) said, 'Do not allow what is seen or heard to fetter the mind.' 'By enlarging one's mind one can enter into all things in the world.' This means that if penetration is achieved through moral principles, there will be penetration like a sudden release. If we confine (the mind) to what is heard and what is seen, naturally our understanding will be narrow.<sup>72)</sup>

As a result, the tendency to reject the world of *renxin* by Zhu Xi's theory led Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism to emphasize human morality much stronger than their Song counterparts and also led to the Four Seven Debate. However, despite the historical developments that would unfold in Chosŏn Korea, Zhu Xi's main intention was to build a new cognitive paradigm whereby human beings could understand the external world, that is, understand the external world as the world of *li*. Nevertheless Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory always maintains a degree of tension between *li* and *qi*.

### 3. Ambiguity in Zhu Xi's Theory of Mind

The goal of this paper is to examine the philosophical background of the Four Seven Debate in Chosŏn. For this reason, we discussed Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory in the previous sections as they provided the intellectual basis for the Four Seven Debate. In this section, we will discuss briefly what elements of Zhu Xi's theory influenced the Four Seven Debate.

Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory maintains two different characteristics at the same time: "No dichotomy" between *li* and *qi*, yet they are also "Two different entities." From an ontological point of view, *qi* forms things in accordance with *li* (existential pattern). Without *li*, *qi* cannot form things. Hence it can be said that there is no dichotomy between *li* and *qi*. In terms of conceptions about primary entities of the universe, we cannot but prescribe *li* and *qi* to be two different entities because they each have different attributes. Zhu Xi's *li* is transcendental and non-dynamic. The former is an influence from Buddhism and Daoism, and the latter developed from the traditional meaning of *li* as an existential pattern.<sup>73)</sup> Zhu Xi replaced the Great Ultimate with *li* in the Diagram of the Great Ultimate (太極圖). Consequently *li* came to play a pivotal role as "substance" in producing the myriad of things. Generally Zhu Xi emphasized the role of *li*.

However, Zhu Xi's *li-qi* theory is not so easy to apply to the mind of human beings. According to Zhu Xi, *daoxin* should control *renxin*.<sup>74)</sup> *Daoxin* comes from *xing*, while *renxin* comes from *qing* (情). In this case *xing* is the same as *li*. As a result, we arrive at the proposition, "*li* controls or should control feelings."<sup>75)</sup>

Generally speaking, the mind creates feelings, but the feelings created by the mind are not always constant. In this case it then becomes hard to describe *li* as controlling feelings within *li-qi* theory. Upon reflecting on one's feelings it is presumable that *li* does not always control feelings. Accounting for this discrepancy is one of the most difficult points of *li-qi* theory.<sup>76)</sup> The mind of human beings does not always maintain order and control over its feelings. Therefore the proposition cannot help but become changed to a value-proposition, "therefore *li* should control the feelings," or: therefore

a human being should follow nature.” This final proposition requires our value judgment.

The difficulty lies in the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians’ interpretation of *li*. Zhu Xi insisted that the crucial thing was to have the mind act in accord with principle to regulate and control the feelings.<sup>77)</sup> However it is not easy if we try to justify the origin of the good feelings within *li-qi* theory because the problem concerns the whole system of *li-qi* theory.<sup>78)</sup> The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians’ understanding was basically that bad feelings belong to *ki*; good feelings belong to *i*. The good feelings are connected to human morality. To protect human morality, Chosŏn Neo-Confucians could not help but divide *i* from *ki*; furthermore, they granted dynamism to *i* in order to justify the origin of the good feelings. T’oegye asserts *i*’s issuance. In this case *i* becomes dynamic. This viewpoint emphasizes the “two different entities” of Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* theory, and *li* is also emphasized as “substance.” Consequently *li* becomes an independent entity and dynamic. The implication of this view is contradictory to another part of Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* theory. That is to say, that *li* is non-dynamic and that there is “no dichotomy” between *li* and *qi*. The disparity between these two viewpoints of Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* theory is one of the defining characteristics of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism.

However, Zhu Xi’s writings fail to clarify whether *li* or *xing* is dynamic. When Zhu Xi was asked whether *xing* is active, he answered, “The place that moves is the mind; what moves is nature.”<sup>79)</sup> This answer is inconsistent in Zhu Xi’s philosophical system. *Xing* is the same as *li*; thus *xing* should not possess any dynamism, since *li* does not possess it. Zhu Xi also states:

*Qi* has both the states of activity and tranquility (動靜). Since *li* is loaded on *qi*, how could we say that there are no states of activity and tranquility?<sup>80)</sup>

Zhu Xi seems to concede that *li* possesses dynamism. If *qi* is active, *li* also is active because *li* and *qi* are inseparable. More importantly, in *Classified Conversations of Chu Tzu* (朱子語類), the *churionja* (主理論者, scholars of *li* principal theory) of Chosŏn found a pivotal passage to support *li* dynamism as follows:

The Four Beginnings are the issuance of principle; the Seven Feelings are the issuance of material force. (四端理之發; 七情氣之發)<sup>81)</sup>

This passage is highly controversial because *li* and *qi* are separate and possess dynamism, which is contradictory to the original “no dichotomy” and “*li*’s non-dynamism” of Zhu Xi’s original theory. Tu Wei-ming concludes, “It is well known that the problem of whether or not principle ‘moves’ (動, in Chinese, *tung*) is highly controversial in Zhu Xi’s philosophy of mind.”<sup>82)</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

The *li-qi* theory of Song China has three theoretical ambiguities for triggering the Chosŏn Four Seven Debate. First, Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* theory maintains two different positions at the same time: “No dichotomy” and “Two different entities,” which are the two wings of his theory. However the theory itself is highly unstable and Zhu Xi fur-

ther emphasized the role of *li* more than that of *qi*. These two facts provided the Chosŏn Neo-Confucian scholars with the basis to easily grant dynamism to *i*. Second, the logical ambiguity of the proposition, “*Xing* is the same as *li*,” enabled *li* to possess two properties of both “what is so” and “what should be so,” namely an existential pattern and morality. Therefore *li* itself became to possess the morality. Third, Zhu Xi divided the mind by means of *li-qi* theory into *daoxin* and *renxin*, and he asserted the superiority of *daoxin* to *renxin*. He also asserted that *renxin* should be controlled by *daoxin*, which is highly problematic in terms of whether it is always possible.

To protect human morality, the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians such as T’oegye divided *i*, *tosim*, and good feelings from *ki*, *insim*, and bad feelings, and they granted dynamism and morality to the first part. That is to say, they succeeded in providing *li* with an autonomous movement towards moral behaviors. So human beings can do moral behaviors by means of the autonomous movement of *li* in them. However the theory of the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians included a critical weak point in that they had to discard one of the two wings of Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* theory: no dichotomy. And it contains a possibility to dismantle Zhu Xi’s *li-qi* theory itself, which is one of the reasons that the debate never ended.

#### Notes

- 1) This paper is the first paper of the Four Severn Debate series. I use Pinyin for Chinese terms and McCune-Reischauer for Korean.
- 2) For the sake of consistency, I have translated “*sim* (C. *xin*) 心” as “the mind,” but it should be understood as the mind/heart, which contains intellectual and emotional faces at the same time.
- 3) Martina Deuchler writes, “Above all, however, the establishment of the Chosŏn dynasty was a moral and intellectual venture that set out to prove itself by articulating a sociopolitical program that would give the new dynasty a firm Confucian basis. It signified a felicitous conjunction between the ideological orientation of progressive reformers on the one hand, and the pragmatic aims of the military on the other. In a true sense, it was the Korean rendition of the celebrated Confucian concept of ‘renovation.’” See Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 92.
- 4) Pae Chong-ho, *Han’guk yuhaksa* (Confucian History of Korea), (Seoul: Yŏnse Taehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1983), 12.
- 5) *Li* (理) and *qi* (氣) are consistently glossed as “principle” and “material force” throughout this paper.
- 6) According to Wing-tsit Chan, Zhu Xi contributed to the development of Chinese history for four reasons. First, he determined the direction of Neo-Confucianism by choosing the philosophy of *li* of the Cheng brothers as the foundation of Neo-Confucianism. Second, he clarified the relation between principle (理) and material force (氣). Third, he developed the concept of the Great Ultimate (太極). Fourth, Zhu Xi developed the concept of *ren* (仁, humanity) to its highest point in Chinese history. See Wing-tsit Chan ed., *Zhu Xi and Neo-Confucianism*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 2–3.
- 7) See Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 590.
- 8) *Zhu-zi Quan-shu* (Complete Works of Zhu Xi), 49:5b (hereafter as ZZQS); Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 637. For consistency’s sake, I use Wing-tsit Chan’s translation of Zhu Xi’s works throughout this paper, but I amend some parts as necessary.
- 9) Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 482.
- 10) “I take it that the reason for this was unconsciously social; since in all forms of society of which the Neo-Confucians could conceive, the planning, organizing, arranging, adjusting administrator, was socially superior to the farmer and the artisan occupied with, and hence the representatives of, Ch’i

- (氣). If Zhu Xi could have liberated himself fully from this prejudice he would have anticipated by eight hundred years the standpoint of organic materialism with its dialectical and integrative levels.” See Needham, *op. cit.*, 482. However, Needham’s assertion is highly problematic in that he is in too big a hurry to apply the social class theory to the Chinese people; that is, we need to ask whether the Chinese in Zhu Xi’s period thought in terms of the class differentiation.
- 11) ZZQS, 60:14b; Chan, *op. cit.*, 648.
  - 12) *Ibid.*, 646.
  - 13) “The word *li* in its most ancient meaning signified the ‘pattern’ in things, the markings in jade or the fibrous texture of muscle, and only later acquired its standard dictionary meaning of ‘principle’ . . . . I am prepared to suggest, in view of the fact that the term *li* always contained the notion of pattern, and that Zhu Xi himself consciously applied it so as to include the most living and vital patterns known to man, that something of the idea of ‘organism’ was what was really at the back of the minds of the nature of the universe than any of his interpreters and translators, whether Chinese or European, have yet given him credit for.” See Needham, *op. cit.*, 473–474.
  - 14) See Akizuki Tanetsugu, *Shushi kenkyū* (Studies on Zhu Xi), (Tokyo: Kyōbunsha, 1927), 12–20. See also Kusumoto Masatsugu, *Sō-Ming jidai jugaku shisō no kenkyū* (Research on Confucianism in Song and Ming), (Tokyo: Hiroike Daigaku shuppanbu, 1962), 218–19. See also Charles Wei-hsung Fu, “Zhu Xi on Buddhism,” in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wing-tsit Chan, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 378–402.
  - 15) Daniel K. Gardner, *Chu Hsi and the Tā-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 56.
  - 16) Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch’eng Liang’s Challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 54.
  - 17) John K. Fairbank, et al., *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 148–49.
  - 18) This simply means the worldview that the universe is “an organism,” from which we can presume “the world of *qi*.”
  - 19) Needham, *op. cit.*, 476.
  - 20) According to Gardner, “In 1190, having studied them for more than fifty years and written commentaries on them for nearly thirty, Zhu Xi published Ta-hsueh, the Lun-yü, the Meng-tzu, and the Chung-yung as a collection entitled *Ssu-tzu*, the Four Masters.” See Gardner, *op. cit.*, 3.
  - 21) The Four Books (四書) include the *Analects* (論語), *Great Learning* (大學), *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸) and *Works of Mencius* (孟子). I have followed James Legge’s English translations for the book titles.
  - 22) According to Gardner, “The most important reason for the shift in interest from the five Classics to the Four Books can perhaps be found in the Confucian reaction to the influence of Buddhism on Chinese thought at the time.” See Gardner, *op. cit.*, 14.
  - 23) Chan, *op. cit.*, 589.
  - 24) Needham, *op. cit.*, 478.
  - 25) “Transcendent” simply means “beyond knowledge.” On the other hand, “transcendental” means “*a priori*,” which means “not by experiences.” Zhu Xi’s *li* is not beyond our knowledge, but the object we should know. In this respect, the term “transcendent” is not suitable for describing Zhu Xi’s *li*. The term ‘transcendent’ in the present context should be understood merely as the fact that *li* obtained a “transcendent” aspect owing to Buddhism or Daoism. However, *li* itself is not “transcendent.”
  - 26) ZZQS, 49:5b–6a; Chan, *op. cit.*, 637.
  - 27) “It is, however, necessary to point out that the word *li* in its most ancient meaning signified the ‘pattern’ in things, the markings in jade or the fibrous texture of muscle, and only later acquired its standard dictionary meaning of ‘principle’. This is confirmed by Zhu Xi himself, who instanced the strands in a thread, or the grain in bamboo, or the bamboo strips themselves woven into basket-work.” See Needham, *op. cit.*, 473.
  - 28) Supposing that Zhu Xi was influenced by Buddhism, we cannot escape from discussing the relation between principle—material force (理氣) and the essential nature or principle—the particular manifestation or form (理事) which is the core concept of Hua-yan philosophy. Consequently this would

- require discussing the whole Buddhist philosophy.
- 29) *Zhu-zi Yu-lei* (Classified Conversations of Zhu Xi; hereafter, ZZYL), 1:1b; ZZQS, 49:1a; Chan, op. cit., 634.
  - 30) Cheng Yi (程頤, 1033–1107) had a strong influence on this tendency. Refer to Kusumoto, *Sō-Ming jidai jugaku shisō no kenkyū*, 62.
  - 31) This originally comes from the *Book of Changes*. According to James Legge’s translation, “Therefore what is above form is called *tao*; what is within form is called *tool*.” (See Legge trans., *The I Ching*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), 323). According to Wilhelm’s translation, “Hence that which is antecedent to the material form exists, we say, as an ideal method, and that which is subsequent to the material form exists, we say, as a definite thing.” (See Richard Wilhelm trans., *I Ching*, trans. Cary F. Baynes, (Arkana: Penguin Books, 1989), 377). Legge’s translation emphasizes the metaphysical viewpoint; Wilhelm’s translation emphasizes the cosmogonic point of view. I follow Legge’s translation, but use Wilhelm’s interpretation as necessary.  
Song Neo-Confucians replace *dao* (an ideal method) with *li* and *tool* (a definite thing) with *qi* of the passage of the *I Ching*. The interpretation of this passage is highly problematic whether it concerns metaphysics or cosmogony.
  - 32) ZZYL, 1:2b; ZZQS, 49:1a–b; Chan, op. cit., 634.
  - 33) It is little difficult to use these terminologies in order to describe the relation between *li* and *qi*. However, in terms of whether we can experience *li* with our sense organs, we could describe *li*’s attribute as *a priori*. The fact that *li* exists before or above our physical world means that we cannot sense it. That is, it is *a priori*. Accordingly ‘transcendental’ can be understood in the same sense.
  - 34) Zhu Xi might be accused of confusing metaphysics with cosmogony.
  - 35) ZZYL, 1:2b; ZZQS 49:1b; Chan, op. cit., 634.
  - 36) ZZYL, 1:3a.
  - 37) *Yi-shu* (Surviving Works), 1:3a–5a; Chan, op. cit., 463.
  - 38) The interpretation of the first passage has been highly problematic. The problem concerns whether the Ultimate of Non-being (無極) produces the Great Ultimate. In Neo-Confucian interpretation, non-being can produce nothing. I think that is the most important point whereby Confucianism absorbed Daoism. Zhou adopted Daoist non-being cosmology and changed “non-being” into “being.”
  - 39) ZZQS, 49:8b; Chan, op. cit., 638.
  - 40) It is also one of Zhu Xi’s main contributions to Chinese Confucian history. For example, Hoyt Cleveland Tillman says, “First, he combined Chou Tun-i’s concept of the Great Ultimate and the Ch’engs’ discussion of principle to provide a logical explanation of the relationship between the one and the many ..... Second, he related his doctrine of the one and its many manifestations to the concept of substance and function.” See Tillman, op. cit., 56.
  - 41) Zhu Xi said, “The Great ultimate has neither spatial restriction nor physical form or body. There is no spot where it may be placed. When it is considered in the state before activity begins, this state is nothing but tranquility. Now activity, tranquility, Yin, Yang all exist only after physical form (and are with it). However, activity is after all the activity of the Great Ultimate and tranquility is also its tranquility, although activity and tranquility themselves are not the Great Ultimate. This is why Master Chou Tun-i only spoke of that state as Non-ultimate. While the state before activity begins cannot be spoken of as the Great Ultimate, nevertheless the principle of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are already inherent in it. Pleasure and joy belong to yang and anger and sorrow belong to yin. In the initial stage the four are not manifested, but their principles are already there. As contrasted with the state after activity begins, it may be called the Great Ultimate. But still it is difficult to say. All this is but a vague description. The truth must be personally realized by each individual himself.” See ZZQS, 49:11a–b; Chan, op. cit., 639.
  - 42) Chan, op. cit., 649.
  - 43) “With regard to Chu Hsi’s organicism, it is well also to bear in mind the thesis of a modern Chinese philosopher, Chang Tung-Sun, that while European philosophy tended to find reality in *substance*, Chinese philosophy tended to find it in *relation*. This might throw light on many characteristic features of the thought of both civilizations. Hughes and Chang Tung-Sun have both linked it with the personalization of the deity in Europe and the impersonality of ‘Heaven’ in China—we shall later



- glance at the great consequences which this difference may have brought in its train. Behind the metaphysical idea of ‘substance’, Hughes points out, lies the logical idea of ‘identity’, and Western philosophers laid down as a basic principle of thought that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time. Chinese philosophers, on the other hand, laid down that a thing is always ‘becoming’ or ‘de-becoming’; all the time on its way to being something else. Already in the sections on the Taoists, Logicians and Buddhists we have seen abundant examples of this tendency to skip the stage of formal logic and go straight to the stage of Hegelian logic. So also an emphasis on ‘relation’ most appropriately describes Chu Hsi’s appreciation of the organizing principle according to which parts combine in wholes. It is Hughes’ further contention that by giving so important a place in his scheme to Ch’i, Chu Hsi cleared the way for an emphasis on substance in China, just as later Leibniz was perhaps the first in Europe to clear the way for an emphasis on relation. Chinese and European thought would thus have reached a synthesis in the 17th century, unacknowledged by Western historians.” See Needham, op. cit., 478.
- 44) In fact, the metaphysical dimension of the *li-qi* binary theory did not begin with Zhu Xi. It is already evident in the writings of the Cheng brothers. However it was Zhu Xi who systemized the *li-qi* binary theory.
- 45) ZZQS, 49:3a–b; Chan, op. cit., 635.
- 46) Refer to the Introduction of this paper.
- 47) Even though Cheng brothers had already done this, it was Zhu Xi who systemized this theory.
- 48) “‘*Xing* is the same as *li*’ is the principle proposition of Song Neo-Confucianism. Chŏng Yag-yong, also known as Tasan, (1762–1836) also claimed that the references to *li* in the classics all referred to either “pattern” (*mai-li/maengni*), “order” (*zhi-li/ch’iri*), or natural law (*fa-li/pŏmni*), and that there was nothing in the classical sources that bore out the Ch’eng-Chu teaching that ‘human nature is principle.’” See Mark Setton, *Chŏng Yagyong: Korea’s Challenge to Orthodox Neo-Confucianism*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 73.
- 49) In this section, for the sake of clarity, I use *xing/sŏng* and *li/i* instead of nature and principle because I also use “natural” which is a translation of another word, *dangran/tang’yŏn*.
- 50) ZZQS, 42:6a; Chan, op. cit., 614.
- 51) ZZYL, 4:12b.
- 52) This is introduced by Cheng Yi for the first time.
- 53) “In most Chinese thought ‘oughtness’ and ‘value’ still somehow have a cosmic source.” See Benjamin I. Schwartz, *China and Other Matter*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 152.
- 54) The argument about the mind principally encompasses many questions such as morality, *li-qi* theory, and so forth. However, in this section I only interpret it from the epistemological point of view as an introduction to the Four Seven Debate.
- 55) ZZYL, 5:3b.
- 56) Ibid., 5:5a.
- 57) The original text is as follows, “先有知覺之理, 理未知覺, 氣聚成型, 理與氣合便能知覺.” See ZZYL, 5:3b. The second and third sentences might be interpreted as “Before *li* has been perceived, *qi* gathers to form shapes.” However, the second sentence should be “*li* does not yield understanding yet” because the context of the passage concerns how our understanding comes to exist within *li-qi* theory, so the former interpretation breaks the consistency of the whole passage in that it cannot elucidate the semantic relation with the subsequent sentence.
- 58) From the time of the Cheng brothers, human mind was regarded as human desire (人慾). For details and the development of human mind-*Dao* mind relation in Chinese intellectual history, see Arita Kazuo and Akira Ōshima, *Shushigakuteki shii* (Thinking like Zhu Xi), (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1990), 291–341.
- 59) ZZYL, 5:5b.
- 60) Ibid., 5:1b.
- 61) Ibid., 5:3b.
- 62) The verb in the original text is *zhi* (知), which means “to know.” Along with each context, I use two different English verbs: to know and to understand.
- 63) ZZYL, 78:35b.

- 64) Ibid., 5:3b.
- 65) ZZQS, 49:8b–9a; Chan, op. cit., 638.
- 66) ZZYL, 5:6b; ZZQS, 45:2a; Chan, op. cit., 630.
- 67) ZZYL, 5:7a; ZZQS, 45:2a; Chan, op. cit., 631.
- 68) ZZYL, 5:4b.
- 69) Ibid., 5:3b.
- 70) Yamada Keiji, *Shushi no shizengaku* (Natural Philosophy of Zhu Xi), (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1978), 440–446.
- 71) ZZYL, 78:26a. In the original text, we find that “人心如船，道心如舵。任船之所在，無所向，若執定舵，則去住在我。”
- 72) ZZQS, 44:13a–b; Chan, op. cit., 630.
- 73) Refer to Section 1 of this paper.
- 74) See the Section 2-c of this paper.
- 75) *Li* possesses two properties of both “what is so” and “what should be so.”
- 76) Zhu Xi makes it plain that the mind modulates our feelings. However it seems doubtful that we can always do this in reality.
- 77) See Tillman, op. cit., 57.
- 78) In terms of the bad feelings, it seems not so difficult to solve this problem if we follow the Zhu Xi’s assertion.
- 79) ZZYL, 5:7a.
- 80) Ibid., 5:3a. The original text is as follows: “氣既有動靜則 所載之理亦安得謂之無動靜。”
- 81) ZZYL, 53:20b.
- 82) Tu Wei-ming, “Yi T’oegye’s Perception of Human Nature: A preliminary Inquiry into the Four-Seven Debate in Korean Neo-Confucianism,” in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush, (New York: Columbia University Press: 1985), 278.