CH'ENG-CHU ORTHODOXY AND THE FOUR-SEVEN DEBATE:

A DISCUSSION OF YI T'OEGYE AND KI KOBONG

by

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ABSTRACT

The Four-Seven Debate is one of the most famous and influential controversies in the history of Chosŏn dynasty Korea. The writer first presents background and contextual material in which the debate took place. Included is a discussion of the *loci classicus* of the Four and the Seven, which are found in the Chinese classics of *Mencius* and *Book of Rites*, respectively. Discussion is then presented regarding how these terms were used by the Ch'eng-Chu orthodox philosophers and their monistic critics. The writer argues that both these philosophies were represented in the Four-Seven Debate. On the orthodox side of the debate, T'oegye followed Chu Hsi by occupying a position between monism and dualism. The present writer makes use of the common representations of Chu Hsi's thought, succinctly expressed by Professor Michael Kalton as dualistic monism, and extends them to T'oegye. This means that T'oegye thought it permissible and essential to maintain the distinction of principle and material force vis-à-vis human nature *and* the feelings but only under a monistic framework of the *Tao* or mind-and-heart (*sim, hsin*). The writer also shows how T'oegye's thought evolved to this mature level through a reaction to Kobong's arguments. Further, the writer argues that Kobong's philosophy resonates with at least some of the Ch'eng-Chu school critics.

ROMANIZATION NOTES

All literature in pre-modern and early modern Korea was written in Classical Chinese, though the Koreans had their own pronunciation for each character. English translations are used for all relevant characters, but romanizations are given. The Korean pronunciation is given first, followed by the Chinese pronunciation. For the Korean romanization, I use the McCune-Reischauer system except for the names of modern scholars, where I follow their preferred usage. For the Chinese pronunciation, I use Wade-Giles. Except where noted, all translations are from secondary sources. Proper credit is given to each translator in the footnotes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The so-called Four-Seven Debate was of crucial importance to Korean Confucians, eventually taking center stage in their philosophical and political life during the latter half of the Chosŏn (*Yi*, 1392-1905) dynasty. Somewhat analogous to the famous Goose Lake Debate[1] of 1175 but more particularly to the subsequent written correspondences between Chu Hsi (1130-1200) and Lu Hsiang-shan (Lu Chiu-yüan, 1139-1193) of 1188 through 1189 during the Southern Sung dynasty (1127-1279) in China,[2] the Four-Seven Debate was even more of a watershed in the development of Korean political and philosophical life.[3] Chiefly, the initial debaters sought to clarify certain tensions and ambiguities inherent in Chu Hsi's synthesis. In the political sphere, because these tensions were never satisfactorily resolved, the debate played an important role in the factional strife at the Korean court. Whether as a source of the conflict or merely as a weapon used by the partisans, the Four-Seven debate was the origin of the initial split of the Ch'eng-Chu school scholar-officials into two factions: the pro-principle (*chu-li)* faction and the pro-material force (*chu-ki)* faction. In the philosophical sphere,

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[1]The debate between the Chu Hsi and Lu Hsiang-shan was conventionally and simplistically regarded as the beginnings of the division of *Tao-hsüeh* into the School of Principle and the School of the Mind and Heart. Recent scholarship, however, has shown that this was an overly sharp distinction; moreover, the debate itself was not as much of a watershed as it was thought to be in later centuries. See for example Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 203-205.

[2]Consult Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*. Professor Tillman shows how *Tao-hsüeh* developed as a discourse with several voices participating.

[3]Professor Yun Sasoon writes, "Thus the most distinctive features of the Korean Confucian tradition stem from T'oegye's Four Seven thesis." *Critical Issues*, p. 84.

the debate contributed to the ascendancy of the Ch'eng-Chu school in Korea as state orthodoxy.

The present thesis is not about orthodoxy as such; rather, it is about the Ch'eng-Chu orthodox school vis-à-vis the Four-Seven Debate. The Ch'eng-Chu school was that wing of the broader *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship which was synthesized and expurgated by Chu Hsi. The Southern Sung court established the Ch'eng-Chu school as state orthodoxy in 1241. The textual materials for the Ch'eng-Chu school, the Four Books and the commentaries by Chu Hsi and the Ch'eng brothers, became the official interpretations for the civil service exams in both China and Korea. It was this school of thought which was transmitted to Korea during the late Koryŏ dynasty and subsequently rose to state orthodoxy during the Chosŏn dynasty.[4] Accordingly, all scholar-officials in Korea would have been familiar with its tenets.

Because of the way modern scholarship on Chosŏn Confucianism has developed, I will set aside the current controversy regarding *Tao-hsüeh* and Neo-Confucianism.[5] This controversy has only recently been addressed in Korean Confucian studies. Thus, I have little option but to follow convention in assuming that the Ch'eng-Chu school was all that existed in Chosŏn Korea. However, I will briefly explore indirect evidence that Kobong was reading beyond the Ch'eng-Chu orthodox literature.

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[4]For a discussion of the Ch'eng-Chu school transmission to Korea see Appendix C.

[5]For a discussion of the controversy regarding these terms see Appendix B.

In this study, I will attempt to contribute to the ongoing debates. First, I will provide a general background of the terms and topics of the Four-Seven Debate for the Western reader. Second, I will outline Yi T'oegye's (Yi Hwang, 1501-1570) evolution of thought and attempt to show how he fine-tuned his philosophy through dialogue with Ki Kobong (Taesŭng, 1527-1572) and others until his mature philosophy resonated extremely well with the Chu Hsi tradition; indeed, T'oegye became the foremost guardian of the Ch'eng-Chu school in Korea. I will argue that T'oegye's detractors and some recent interpreters[6] have missed the mark by overemphasizing the dualistic aspect in T'oegye's thought to the neglect of his monistic frame.

The point at issue in the Four-Seven Debate was questioned the following: from where do the Four Beginnings originate and from where do the Seven Feelings originate? Or, are they the same thing? Kobong argued that they are the same feelings, one being only a subset of the other, and have the same origin; therefore, it is impermissible to speak of them as separate. T'oegye eventually concluded that although principle and material force are interdependent and inseparable vis-à-vis the arousal of human feelings, it is still permissible to speak of one aspect or the other. I will argue the "dualism" of T'oegye was only one side of T'oegye's thought, and that T'oegye followed a long Confucian tradition by harmonizing binary or dualistic elements under the one *Tao*. If a label is needed, a more accurate one would be "dualistic-monism." Here, I am indebted to Professor Michael Kalton for the term. In his summary of standard views of Chu Hsi's

[6]See, for example, Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism.*

system, Professor Kalton writes, "Whether one describes this system as a monistic dualism or a dualistic monism, the centrality of the tension created by the cosmic-moral synthesis is clear."[7] Professor Kalton appears at least somewhat ambivalent regarding word order; for the first two uses, he includes both word orders, yet in his subsequent two uses he settles on "dualistic monism." I believe, however, that word order is important and should reflect T'oegye's actual system as closely as possible. T'oegye's system of thought was standard Chu school monism with a dualistic tension; the dualism merely describes various elements at work under the larger monistic frame or base. For the present paper, I will adopt Kalton's later usage: dualistic monism. I hope to elaborate on this invention by extending it more specifically to T'oegye's argument.

It is important to note that T'oegye was not so rigidly fixed to his original statements, though on reaching a conclusion he was satisfied with he did not continue the debate. He was initially willing to take criticism even from the junior scholar and to emend his position where he found himself in error. This study will show that T'oegye's thought cannot be so readily placed under a singular static rubric, i.e., dualism, and that, as a result of the discussions with Kobong, T'oegye's thought evolved to something more closely resembling a combination of dualism and monism.

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[7]Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, xxxii, xxxv. Some of the other standard views, upon which Kalton creates his term, includes the following: Professor Wing-tsit Chan describes Chu Hsi as "neither a monist nor a dualist, or he is both a monist and a dualist, (*Source Book*, 634); Carsun Chang writes, "Chu Hsi would more aptly be regarded as occupying a peculiar position between Monism and Dualism than as being a dualist" (*Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, 260.).

Like Chu school Confucians, T'oegye was a metaphysical and logical dualist and physical or phenomenal monist.[8] T'oegye agreed that metaphysically speaking principle and material force were distinct entities with principle having priority over material force. On the physical or phenomenal level, however, T'oegye asserted that they were inseperable and interdependent. Though, what is more important to the issue at hand, T'oegye was a logical dualist. In other words, for self-cultivation purposes, one could analyze principle and material force as separate even in the phenomenal world. However, all T'oegye's seemingly strict dualistic arguments fit within a monistic framework. Indeed, T'oegye took pains to refute Kobong's allegation of overly sharp dualism.

Thirdly, I will briefly explore Kobong's argument. Only through an understanding of Kobong's argument can we see how T'oegye responded and evolved to his mature level. However, what is more important, if T'oegye's thought resonated well with the Chu Hsi tradition, did Kobong's thought resonate with Chu Hsi's critics and detractors outside of the Ch'eng-Chu school? If so, this would provide at least some indirect evidence that Kobong was reading outside of the orthodox tradition.

Finally, conventional wisdom argues that the Four-Seven Debate was a uniquely Korean debate; there were, according to Wing-tsit Chan, only two conversations regarding both the Four and the Seven as a pair recorded in Chinese philosophical writings.[9] However, I believe that, while the debate did add important clarifications and

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[8]Wing-tsit Chan, *Source Book*, 634.

[9]Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies*, 249-251. See Yü-lei, ch. 87, sec. 85 and sec. 87.

dimensions to the Ch'eng-Chu school, it is certainly going too far, as suggested by Professor Tillman and others, to declare it unique. Though perhaps not using the same terms, there are numerous similarities to the Korean Four-Seven Debate within the Chinese *Tao-hsüeh* discourse.

OVERVIEW

The debate was initiated in 1558 when Ki Kobong criticized the apparent dualism in an earlier statement made by Yi T'oegye in 1553. The statement, which was in itself an attempt to mitigate the dualism of Chŏng Chiun (1509-1561), read, "The Four Beginnings (*sa dan, ssu duan*) are the issuance of principle; the Seven Feelings are the issuance of material force."[10] While Chu Hsi had hinted at the division of feelings according to the concepts of principle *(i, li)* and material force *(ki, ch'i)*[11] by using a statement similar to the one later asserted in Chŏng Chiun's *The Old Diagram of the Heavenly Mandate*, the Koreans brought out the fuller implications of this thesis, i.e., the tension between the dualistic interpretation and the monistic interpretation of principle and material force vis-à-vis human feelings. The debate which ensued was carried on through correspondence for several years and produced many important letters. It was continued in subsequent generations and occupied such a large position in Korean thought that if a

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[10]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 402-403. Except where noted, all translations of the Four Seven Debate are from Michael C. Kalton, et. al., trans., *The Four-Seven Debate*.

[11]The translation of *Ki* is also problematic, but here too I will follow convention and use "material force" as the standard translation. For a discussion of these terms see appendix A.

scholar did not have a deep understanding of its tenets, he and his faction were not even regarded as scholars.[12]

Through a detailed discussion with a junior colleague, Yi T'oegye evolved from an earlier position of ambiguous dualism to a more clear position of using binary terms within a monistic framework. T'oegye altered his theories in direct response to Kobong's criticisms, though several points of disagreement still remained. That a senior scholar engaged a junior scholar in such a debate, let alone emended his theories, was rare, if not unique, in all of Korean history. This was testament to T'oegye's magnanimity in Confucian scholarly pursuits and self-cultivation.

T'oegye's evolution of thought, in reaction to Kobong's letters, occurred throughout the debate but is most clearly seen in the various revisions T'oegye made to Chŏng's original statement. In some cases the revision entailed only one word or was extremely subtle. This makes the translation even more crucial. Listing the revisions in order will be helpful in the following discussion. Accordingly, the revisions, in order of occurrence, are as follows:

- (Chŏng's Original Statement): The Four Beginnings originate from principle, and the Seven Feelings originate from material force.
- (T'oegye's First Revision): The origination of the Four Beginnings is from principle; the origination of the Seven Feelings is from material force.
- (T'oegye's Second Revision): Because the arising (origination) of the Four Beginnings are from pure principle, there is none which is not good. Because the

[12]Yun Sasoon, *Han'guk*, 76.

arising of the Seven Feelings combines with material force there is both good and evil.

- (T'oegye's Final Revision): It's only that in the case of the Four, principle issues them and material force follows it, while in the case of the Seven material force issues them and principle mounts it.

Though T'oegye's revisions were very subtle, one can still see where he moved away from a clear division between principle and material force vis-à-vis the origination of the Four and the Seven to a clearer delineation of the mutual involvement of principle and material force. Though I take issue with Kalton's translation of *pal* (*fa*) as "issue," the grammatical structure itself is instructive. Kalton translates Chŏng's original phrase to make the character *pal* (*fa*) the active verb, while in T'oegye's revision he translates it to be a noun phrase.

The first revision was extremely subtle, with only the character order modified slightly to produce a different grammatical structure. I believe T'oegye was initially attempting to mitigate the dualism of Chŏng by reducing the active role principle or material force plays in the arousal of the feelings. The active role is strictly exclusive, whereas a passive role allows for the influence or involvement of other elements. This is particularly true when one considers T'oegye's understanding of principle and material force. T'oegye viewed the composite of principle and material force as a dyad.[13] Therefore, when one spoke of one element, the other was necessarily involved.

[13]'Dyad' is used here in its less common denotation, viz., "two distinct elements treated as one." *New American Webster Handy College Dictionary*, s.v. "dyad."

The second revision was due to T'oegye's response to rumored criticisms before any direct correspondence with Kobong. In fact, it was part of T'oegye's first letter to Kobong. Here T'oegye, I believe, attempted to show the interactive relationship of principle and material force through an association of good and evil. T'oegye remained adamant to the end of the debate that the point of origin for the Four Beginnings was the principle aspect of the nature. In the second revision, however, T'oegye showed that because the Seven Feelings involved both principle and material force, the feelings could be good or evil. Kobong argued that this would lead people to think that there exist two different kinds of good. T'oegye concurred and revised the statement to allow for only one kind of goodness. This was accomplished by stating that the Seven Feelings were originally good but easily devolved toward evil if not carefully watched. Kobong was satisfied with the Seven Feelings side of the debate but continued to argue that the Four Beginnings were only a subset of the Seven Feelings.

Kobong argued that the Four Beginnings necessarily involved both principle and material force and therefore could be good or evil. T'oegye agreed that the Four Beginnings involved both principle and material force but disagreed that they could be good or evil. This was due to the Four's point of origin in principle. Therefore, T'oegye dropped any reference to good or evil and included and explanation of how principle or material force was involved in the arousal of the Four or the Seven. For T'oegye, the analytical distinction was found in the points of origin. The point of origin of the Four was principle with material force being subsequent; the point of origin of the Seven was

material force, and principle was subsequent. This final revision showed the mutual interaction of principle and material force in the arousal of the Four or the Seven and retained the analytical distinctions that T'oegye required. T'oegye was quite satisfied with this final statement and made no further revisions.

To T'oegye and Chu Hsi school Confucians, principle and material force can never in reality be separated. Therefore, even Chŏng's initial statement would be acceptable when viewed in this light. However, through the discussions with Kobong, T'oegye agreed that it needed some revisions to make it clearer. The final revision made explicit the fact that both aspects of the nature, i.e., principle and material force, were involved in the arousal of the feelings — the Four or the Seven. T'oegye agreed that the Four and the Seven were both feelings, and they both issued from the substance of the mind-and-heart. This was the monistic frame T'oegye required to satisfy his cosmic perspective.

T'oegye's chief aim, however, was to clarify the Four and the Seven for purposes of self-cultivation. To do this, he required analytical distinctions, which he found in the concept of "point of reference." Analytically speaking, the point of reference for the Four was principle. The point of reference for the Seven was material force. Though in actuality, T'oegye acknowledged, principle and material force were never separated. The different point of reference was made explicit so that Confucians may know to be on constant guard over the Seven, which were more prone to slip toward evil. This was T'oegye's dualistic frame, which he required for purposes of self-cultivation.

Both aspects of T'oegye's thought, the monistic frame and the dualistic frame, were important to him. One was never emphasized at the expense of the other. Indeed, they were fine-tuned so well, his theories regarding principle and material force fit neatly within his monistic frame. Therefore, Professor Kalton was correct in describing T'oegye's theory as "dualistic monism."

BIOGRAPHIES

T'oegye Yi Hwang. The first century of the Chosŏn dynasty was largely a period of institution building. During the second century of the dynasty, Ch'eng-Chu Confucianism came to full flower, though on the rocky soil of purges and factional strife. It was also during this era that Yi Hwang, pen name T'oegye, came of age.[14] Born in 1501 in *Ongye-ri*, T'oegye was the eighth son of Yi Sik, a licentiate degree holder and *Yangban*. Unfortunately, T'oegye's father died the next year. His mother made a living by farming and sericulture. Professor Edward Chung divides T'oegye's life into three main stages: education and formative, office holding, and retirement and teaching.[15] Following the conventional path, T'oegye loved learning and continued to study until he died. As we will see below, he was willing to take instruction even from a junior scholar. When T'oegye was five years old, he studied the *Thousand Character Classic* with a neighbor. At age eleven he began studying the *Analects* with his uncle. Several anecdotes were written about T'oegye's love of learning. It is commonly accepted that

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[14]Biographical material taken primarily from Yi Hwang, *T'oegye Chŏnsŏ, yŏnbo*. See also Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 3-24. *Han'guk Inmyŏng Taesajŏn*, 736.

[15]Edward Y. J. Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism,* 22-26.

T'oegye's drive to learn cost him his health. At the urging of his brother, T'oegye took and passed the civil service exams. When he was thirty-three years old, he passed the Erudite (*munkwa*) exam.

After passing the Erudite civil service exam, T'oegye quickly passed his way up the promotion ladder, even though it was not a good time to be a scholar-official, as T'oegye lived through three bloody purges. His brother, for example, was not so lucky and was beaten to death in the final purge. From that time forward, T'oegye longed for retirement. While personal safety surely had much to do with his desire to retire, the fact that he built a hut/academy where he could continue to study and to teach confirms the fact that, like others, T'oegye retired primarily to study.

It was during this time of "retirement" that T'oegye produced the vast majority of his philosophical output. During this time he continued to study and even to attract quite a number of student followers. As T'oegye's reputation grew, so did his attraction at court. During the remainder of T'oegye's life, much energy was spent either refusing or retiring from a barrage of court appointments. T'oegye did not seek court office and tried in all cases to refuse or to retire early, often claiming sickness or some other excuse. It was at one of these latter appointments, however, that T'oegye produced one of his greatest works, *Sŏnghak sipto* (Ten diagrams for sage learning). These represented T'oegye's mature theories and were diagrams and commentary meant to be written on screens for the king's perusal. It was also during this time of retirement and on again off again appointments that T'oegye had his debate with Kobong. T'oegye's first love

remained learning, and he did this to his dying day. He died in 1570 at the age of sixty-nine.

Kobong Ki Taesŭng. Ki Taesŭng was born in 1527 in Naju Provence.[16] His honorific name was Myŏngŏn, and his pen name was Kobong. At an early age, Kobong was interested in learning. By the age of seven he was reported as saying, "study brings me great joy."[17] Since the time Kobong was very young, he was well known for his talents and learning. He was also very talented at calligraphy. But it was his debate with T'oegye which was to bring him lasting fame.

In 1549, at the age of 20, he passed the Licentiate or lower civil service exam (*sama*). Many passers of this exam were content with this degree and returned home to enjoy their new status as *yangban*, but Kobong continued his studies, and in 1558 he passed the triennial Erudite or higher civil service exam (*munkwa*). He placed second on this higher exam and was appointed to the office of Official Historian (*sa'kwan*). Note that this was also the same year that Kobong initiated the debate with Yi T'oegye. Though Kobong accepted government office, as was expected of those who passed the civil service exams, he preferred the life of a scholar to the life of an official.

In 1563, Kobong was removed from office after he criticized some of the old Merit Subject officials. This was partially the result of the tension that existed between the Merit Subject officials and the *sarim*. The Merit Subjects were those officials who were granted

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[16]Biographical material taken from Ki Taesŭng, *Kobong Sŏnsaeng Munjip, yŏnbo*, 1-14. See also *Hanguk Inmyŏng Taesajŏn*, 66-67.

[17]*Kobong sŏnsaeng munjip*, 3; translation mine.

office and privilege by virtue of their helping the king ascend the throne. The first officials placed on the Merit Rosters were those who helped Yi Sŏng-gye establish the Chosŏn dynasty. However, the roster grew longer with each subsequent succession. The *sarim* (lit., forest of scholars) were those scholars who were either displaced or chose to reside outside the capital to pursue learning and self-cultivation. The *sarim* often attempted to create the ideal Confucian state, which invariably led to tension between the *sarim* and the Merit Subjects ending in four bloody purges. In 1567, however, Kobong was reinstated and assigned a higher government office. As soon as Sŏnjo (1567-1608) ascended the throne, Kobong was again elevated in office. In his new position Kobong proposed posthumous honors be given to Cho Kwangjo (1482-1519) and Yi Ŏnjŏk (1491-1553), early Chosŏn dynasty Ch'eng-Chu school scholars who were martyred during the literati purges.

The following year (1568), Kobong argued with the prime minister and was again dismissed from office. Later, when he was given the opportunity to be reinstated, Kobong politely refused, preferring instead to study in retirement. Though not as frequently as T'oegye, Kobong also repeatedly refused government appointment.

Kobong held government office one last time in 1572. However, illness prevented him from a long tenure and he was forced to submit his resignation. Kobong died on the journey home at the young age of 46, only two years after T'oegye died. King Sŏnjo awarded Kobong posthumous honors and office. Kobong was given the posthumous name Chŏngkyŏng.

II. INTERPRETERS OF THE FOUR-SEVEN DISCOURSE

CLASSICAL BACKGROUND

Four Beginnings. The Korean Four-Seven Debate was a direct offshoot of the long standing discussion of human nature and related issues in Confucian thought. Indeed, this debate provides an excellent example of how different cultures used the Confucian tradition in unique ways. Chinese thinkers were primarily interested in showing the universality of human nature, at least within Chinese culture, and accordingly discussed the nature in terms of principle (*li*) and material force (*ki*, *ch'i*) and also the feelings and the beginnings inherent in all human beings. Koreans, on the other hand, were less interested in the universality of nature than they were in discussing the expression of the nature. T'oegye put this concept clearly in a question to Kobong when he asked, ". . . since it is considered permissible to distinguish between principle and material force in speaking of the nature [which was one of the things the Chinese were doing], why should it suddenly become impermissible to distinguish between principle and material force when it comes to speaking of the feelings [which was what the Koreans and some Chinese had done]?"[18]

Prior to Mencius, human nature (*sŏng, hsing*) was rarely if ever discussed in the philosophical literature. Professor A. C. Graham argued that, prior to Mencius, the term was used primarily by those interested in their own health and longevity.[19] Confucius apparently only used the term once: "Men are close to one another by nature. They

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[18]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 406; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 10.

[19]A.C. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory," 215-274.

diverge as a result of repeated practice."[20] Indeed, his disciples even complained that "One can get to hear about the Master's accomplishments, but one cannot get to hear his views on human nature and the Way of Heaven."[21] However, by the time of Mencius, the discussion of the nature became widely debated in philosophical circles and remained an important issue.

Mencius, in postulating that human nature is good, argued against at least three popular ideas regarding the nature. The first popular theory on human nature was represented by Kao-tzu who argued that human nature was neutral, without good or evil. The second theory was that human nature was good in some and bad in others. And the third theory was that human nature may become good or bad depending on circumstances. Mencius's theory was not only that human nature was good, but that it was "universally" good; in other words, all human beings from the king down to the peasant possessed a good human nature. However, Mencius was probably not speaking about non-Chinese, or at least those non-Chinese who were not within the Chinese sphere of influence.

To prove that human nature is good, Mencius introduced the Four Virtues in the human mind-and-heart and provided analogies to prove their existence. Herein lies the *locus classicus* of the "Four Beginnings" aspect of the Four-Seven Debate. Because of the importance of this verse to the Four-Seven Debate, it is worth quoting here in full.

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[20] *The Analects*, XVII, 2; Lau, trans., 143.

[21] *The Analects*, V, 13; Lau, trans., 78.

> From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of the heart (*sim, hsin*) of compassion is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of shame is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of courtesy and modesty is not human, and whoever is devoid of the heart of right and wrong is not human. The heart of compassion is the germ [Beginning] (*dan*, *tuan*) of benevolence; the heart of shame, of dutifulness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, of observance of the rites; the heart of right and wrong, of wisdom. Man has these four germs just as he has four limbs. For a man possessing these four germs to deny his own potentialities is for him to cripple himself; for him to deny the potentialities of his prince is for him to cripple his prince. If a man is able to develop all these four germs that he possesses, it will be like a fire starting up or a spring coming through.[22]

These Four aspects are all originally good; therefore, human nature is good. However, the good nature invariably becomes muddled in all but the sages. The focus of Confucian discussion then was how to cultivate the original nature, thereby becoming a sage. Therefore, the question of the Four-Seven debaters was not just empty speculation but took on an air of critical importance to the goal of self-cultivation.

The second Mencian goal was to show the "universality" of the good human nature. Mencius argued that all men within Chinese culture have these Four Beginnings, which are all good; therefore, all men have an original good nature. Mencius must first prove that all men have these good Four Beginnings before he can move on to specific examples. He did this by way of the famous analogy of the child about to fall into the well.

> My reason for saying that no man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of other is this. Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion, not

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[22]*Mencius*, 2A/6; Lau, trans., 82-83.

> because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends, nor yet because he disliked the cry of the child. From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of the heart of compassion is not human . . .[23]

When confronted with a child about to fall into a well, he argued, all men would initially and spontaneously feel moved to compassion regardless of their latter actions. He further discounted all motives other than spontaneous compassion. Though ulterior motives may subsequently creep in, and the individual may choose not to respond with action to the child, this does not discount the initial reaction of compassion. This spontaneous feeling of compassion was Mencius's proof of the first of the Four Beginnings. That all men would feel this stirring of compassion was his proof that human nature is good and, more so, that it is universal. He left the remaining three unproved, but assumed them true by way of association.

That men would fail to act in the above situation or do so with a subsequent spurious motive was due to the fact that people "fail to make the best of their native endowment."[24] Mencius offered several examples to show the universality of the good human nature. The example of Ox Mountain was analogous to the fact that, though all men have an original good nature, appearances can be deceptive. Ox Mountain was once lush with vegetation. But men came and chopped down the trees, and animals ate all the new shoots. Therefore, in Mencius's day, Ox Mountain was bald. Mencius stated,

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[23]*Mencius*, 2A/6; Lau, trans., 82-83.

[24]*Mencius*, 6A/6; Lau, trans., 82-83.

"People, seeing only its baldness, tend to think that it never had any trees. But can this possibly be the nature of a mountain? Can what is in man be completely lacking in moral inclinations? A man's letting go of his true heart is like the case of the trees and the axes."[25] Just as Ox Mountain could be re-cultivated, Mencius believed it is possible to "re-cultivate" one's original good nature through self-cultivation. Mencius closed this discussion by quoting from Confucius, "Hold on to it and it will remain; let go of it and it will disappear. One never knows the time it comes or goes, neither does one know the direction."[26]

Seven Feelings or Emotions. If Mencius spoke of four innate feelings of the mind-and-heart which are inherently good and only need be recovered to exemplify the good human nature, Tzu-ssu in the *Doctrine of the Mean (Chung Yung*) wrote of the human feelings which need constant attention less they miss the mark. Before the feelings arise, they are in a state of equilibrium; after they arise, constant attention is required to ensure that they come to a state of harmony.

> While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in a state of equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred, and act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of Harmony. This equilibrium is the great root *from which grow all the human actings in the world*, and harmony is the universal path *which they all should pursue*.[27]

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[25]*Mencius,* 6A/8; Lau, trans., 164-165.

[26]*Mencius,* 6A/8; Lau, trans., 164-165.

[27]*Doctrine of the Mean*, 1:4; Legge, trans., 139 (emphasis in the translation).

While this passage holds many important ramifications in itself for Chinese and Korean Confucians, which will be discussed below, most Korean scholars understood the list of feelings, i.e., pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy, to be a mere abbreviation of the longer list found in the passage in the *Book of Rites*. It is this passage in the *Book of Rites*, then, that constitutes the *locus classicus* for the Seven Feelings aspect of the Four-Seven Debate. The complete list of feelings as contained in the *Book of Rites* is as follows: desire, hate, love, fear, grief, anger, and joy.[28]

The fact that the author of the *Doctrine of the Mean* emphasized that, "[if] they [the feelings] act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of harmony," suggests that there is a state of disharmony. Regulating the feelings so that they manifest in appropriate ways, i.e., at the right time and in moderation, is an important step in Confucian self-cultivation, which is achieved through education and other means. The first chapter of the *Doctrine of the Mean* put human nature in a cosmic perspective. "What Heaven has conferred is called the nature; an accordance with this nature is called the path of duty; the regulation of this path is called instruction."[29] James Legge's gloss on the subject is helpful: "To man belongs a moral nature, conferred on him by Heaven or God, by which he is constituted a law to himself. But as he is prone to deviate from the

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[28]*Book of Rites*, chapter 9.

[29]*Doctrine of the Mean*, 1:1; Legge, trans., 383.

path in which, according to his nature, he should go, wise and good men — sages — have appeared, to explain and regulate this, helping all by their instructions to walk in it."[30]

USES OF THE FOUR AND THE SEVEN

I will now turn to how the Mencian doctrine of the Four Beginnings and Tzu-ssu's and the *Book of Rites*' enumeration of the Seven Feelings was used by the Ch'eng-Chu school philosophers and others. Professor Metzger writes: "Yet whether a distinction between two different levels or two different aspects of one thing was at stake, a distinction between two different modalities was invariably made by all Neo-Confucians."[31] I will briefly address both of Metzger's "modalities" as seen in the Ch'eng-Chu school, on the one hand, and in its monistic critics, on the other hand. As Chu Hsi synthesized the thought of former *Tao-hsüeh* Sung Confucians into a coherent whole, his thought began to betray signs of dualism. As we shall see, this tendency was criticized by his contemporaries and later scholars. Obviously, only a very cursory outline of the thought of each philosopher can be given here. My purpose is only to show briefly that the roots of the Korean Four-Seven Debate are found in the monistic or dualistic tensions of Sung dynasty thought.

Ch'eng-Chu School. The previously quoted statements by Mencius and Tzu-ssu were the wellspring for the Four-Seven discourse in pre-modern East Asia and much of Korean Confucianism. Ch'eng-Chu Confucians were dependent upon the Mencian

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[30]Legge, trans. and ed., *Confucian Classics*, 383 n 1.

[31]Metzger, *Escape from Predicament*, 83.

doctrine of the good human nature and, without it, their entire system would have unraveled. The twentieth century observer Carsun Chang wrote: "If the Sung philosophers had not been able to keep this hypothesis intact, their house would have fallen. Why? Because unless the doctrine of the goodness of human nature is maintained the formula '*hsing* [nature] is *ri* [*li*, principle]' collapses."[32] However, it should be pointed out that Chang was too broad in ascribing this concept to "Sung philosophers." Many Sung philosophers, such as the Hunan school for example, held views other than "human nature is good." However, Chang's point is well taken regarding the Ch'eng-Chu school.

Chu Hsi defined the Four Beginnings in terms of substance and function. The Four Beginnings were the function of the nature. In other words, the Four Beginnings were the expression of the innate moral virtues of the nature. As the substance of the innate moral virtue, they are humanity, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. Chu Hsi wrote repeatedly regarding these Four Virtues. To cite just one example he wrote: "The nature consists of concrete principle, complete with humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom."[33] These are the Virtues which exist before their expression as the Four Beginnings and mingle with material force; as such, they are man's nature. "In man, humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are his nature."[34]

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[32]Chang, *Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, 267-268.

[33]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 614.

[34]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 615.

In Ch'eng-Chu thought, as discussed above, nature is principle. According to Ch'eng I, "Man's nature is the same as principle, and principle is the same from the sage-emperors Yao and Shun to the common man in the street."[35] Chu Hsi synthesized this concept into his own system; he wrote, "Nature is principle only." However, as Professor Chan noted, Chu Hsi clarified Ch'eng I's doctrine in relation to material force and the feelings.[36] Principle is that which is above shapes. It is that which dictates what a thing should be, e.g., the principle of a boat is that it should float on water. It is the ultimate reality of all physical phenomena, and as such it is purely good. Because the nature of man is pure principle, it follows that the nature of man is purely good.

If human nature is purely good, what accounts for evil? To Ch'eng-Chu school philosophers, evil was due to the disturbing features in material force. Principle always inhered in material force. Indeed, in the physical world there was never any principle without material force, nor material force without principle. Therefore, principle or nature can only be expressed through the vehicle of material force. If the material force was turbid, principle could not be expressed clearly. Chu Hsi wrote, "Nature is principle only. However, without material force and concrete stuff of the universe, principle would have

[35]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 567.

[36]Chan, *Source Book*, comm., 615.

nothing in which to inhere."[37] And again, "The two — material force and principle — always go together."[38]

Chu Hsi was also careful to keep the two distinct, and thereby highlight the goodness of human nature. However, because material force was always there, Chu Hsi posited an original nature of pure principle and a physical nature of principle joined with material force. Chu Hsi wrote, "When we speak of the nature of Heaven and Earth, we refer to principle alone. When we speak of the physical nature, we refer to principle and material force combined."[39]

Finally, the human mind-and-heart was what controlled and united the nature and the feelings. As will be discussed below, through a discussion with the Hunan scholars, Chu Hsi's thought evolved from one where mind was the essence of the substance/ function equation to one where mind was the master of the nature and the feelings. Chu Hsi synthesized Chang Tsai's thought regarding the mind-and-heart: "The mind is that with which man rules his body. It is one and not a duality, is subject and not object, and controls the external world instead of being controlled by it."[40] Again, Chu Hsi gave credit to Chang Tsai stating: "Chang Tsai's theory that 'the mind commands nature and

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[37]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 623.

[38]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 626.

[39]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 624.

[40]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 602.

feelings' is excellent. The nature is tranquil while the feelings are active, and the mind involves both tranquility and activity."[41]

One can readily see that, regarding principle and material force, original nature and physical nature, and the mind-and-heart and the feelings, Chu Hsi's thought betrayed some dualistic tendencies or tensions. However, as Professor Wing-tsit Chan and others have pointed out, whatever dualism was in Ch'eng-Chu thought was only superficial. Chu Hsi built his system of thought around a unity, the *Tao*. The separation of various elements was only for analytical purposes, and Chu Hsi taught that in reality there was only one nature. However, Chu Hsi's critics were not convinced and continued to accuse him of being too dualistic.

Monistic Challenge to Ch'eng-Chu School. The most obvious of Chu Hsi's contemporary critics was Lu Hsiang-shan, though others such as Ch'eng Liang and Hu Hung (1106-1161) come to mind. Lu Hsiang-shan looked for a unity within all reality. As Professor Chan pointed out, "the single and the fundamental formed the very bases of his philosophy and methodology. . . ."[42] The most important difference between Chu Hsi and Lu was the concept of mind. As stated above, for Chu Hsi, mind controlled the nature and the feelings, and nature was principle. For Lu, mind and principle were one. Lu stated, "The Four Beginnings are this mind. It is what heaven has endowed in us. All men have this mind, and all minds are endowed with this principle. The mind is

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[41]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 629.

[42]Chan, *Source Book*, comm., 572.

principle."[43] This was important in that it had ramifications as to how one practiced self-cultivation. To the Ch'eng-Chu school, knowledge was extended to examining principle in all things. To Lu, because mind was principle, one needed not look any further than one's own mind. Professor Chan describes Lu's system as follows: "The mind fills the whole universe. As such it is identical with principle. The investigation of things means nothing more than to investigate this mind."[44]

Lu further rejected any dichotomy between principle and material force and likewise between original nature and physical nature. To Lu, everything was a unity. He stated, "The theory that principle is due to nature, whereas desire is due to man, is not the best theory. If principle is due to nature and desire due to man, then nature and man must be different. The mind is one. How can a man have two minds?"[45]

According to Liu Shu-hsien, the ideas of Chu Hsi and Ch'eng I are quite different from what Mencius had taught. Mencius can be seen as a monist. "For Mencius there is no distinction between the original nature and the essential nature of man. . . . From these statements we may infer that Mencius did not seem to make a distinction between *ch'i* [material force] and *li* [principle]; the material force that filled up heaven and earth is naturally embodied with principles until it is obstructed by adverse influences so that it will

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[43]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 579.

[44]Chan, *Source Book*, comm., 572.

[45]Quoted from Chan, *Source Book*, 581.

deviate from principles."[46] Accordingly, the true heir to the Mencian school is not Chu Hsi and Ch'eng I, but rather Ch'eng Hao and Lu Hsiang-shan.

MODERN INTERPRETERS

Dualism vs. Monism. Before continuing I should say a word regarding the uses of the rubric "dualism." As briefly discussed above, within *Tao-hsüeh* and specifically the Chu school, there began to arise certain dualistic tensions. Chu Hsi's critics, such as Lu Hsiang-shan, Ch'en Liang (1143-1194), and Lo Ch'in-shun (1465-1547), accused him as having dualistic tendencies regarding principle and material force, nature and the feelings. This tension within the Chu school was never satisfactorily resolved.

In the recent past, contemporary sinologists, such as Fung Yu-lan, Carsun Chang, Ch'ien Mu, and many others, long debated the question whether or not Chu Hsi could be categorized as a dualist. However, as Professor Tillman noted, in the field of Chinese studies, at least, scholars have moved beyond the question of dualism to concentrate more on the actual thought of the thinkers involved.[47] Indeed, as early as 1963, Professor Wing-tsit Chan set aside the entire controversy saying, "The fact is that any contrast of monism or dualism does not apply to his [Chu Hsi's] philosophy."[48] In the field of Korean studies, however, scholars continue to address this issue. Accordingly, the issue of

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[46]Liu Shu-hsien, "The Problem of Orthodoxy," 451-453.

[47]Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, E-mail, 04 July 1996.

[48]Chan, Source Book, 635. See also 544.

monism or dualism will be addressed in the present thesis as it relates to the Korean Four-Seven Debate.

Though we are using the philosophical term "dualism," the reader should be cautioned against reading into it any implication of Cartesian or Platonic dualism. As Professor Metzger writes, "Thus viewing the material as inherently conscious, Neo-Confucians evaded that dichotomy between mind and body so basic in the West since at least Descartes, and they could use "mind" and "ether of materialization" [material force] in an almost interchangeable way. . . ."[49] The East Asian discourse, which involved all aspects of ultimate reality and human nature, was much broader than Western Cartesian dualism.

Chinese Historians. The debate regarding the dualism of the Chu school continued among modern Chinese historians though, as already noted, this debate within Chinese studies has largely come to a close. I will briefly discuss the thought of two such Chinese historians before moving on to the historians of the Four-Seven Debate. Fung Yu-lan's *A History of Chinese Philosophy* appears to side more with the monistic critics when he emphasizes the dualism of Chu Hsi by comparing him to Greek philosophers and ideas. Further, he sees the Ch'eng brothers as being different in their philosophical outlook and accordingly responsible for the alleged split of *Tao-hsüeh* into the School of Principle [*li-hsüeh*] and the School of Mind-and-Heart [*hsin-hsüeh*]. Both of Fung Yu-

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[49]Metzger, *Escape from Predicament*, 85.

lan's theses have been criticized by Carsun Chang and others, and I will address the criticisms below.

Fung Yu-lan saw in Chu Hsi a parallel to the Greek philosophers. Chu Hsi's concept of the Supreme Ultimate is compared to Plato's Idea of the Good or Aristotle's God. He wrote regarding the Supreme Ultimate, "Spoken of in this way, the Supreme Ultimate is very much like what Plato called the Idea of the Good, or what Aristotle called God."[50] This was supported by passages from Chu Hsi, which alleged the distinction between principle and material force. Because Chu Hsi argued that principle exists before material force, it must be similar to the Greek Forms. "The Principle or *li* of a thing is the all-perfect form or supreme archetype of that thing. This is the meaning of the word 'ultimate'."[51] Moreover, Fung sharply divided principle and material force, which he compared to form and matter. "There is only *li* or Principle in the metaphysical world that is "above shapes." Besides this metaphysical world, however, there was another concrete world "within shapes," the formation of which was dependent upon *ch'i* or Ether. Li is similar to what Greek philosophy called form; *ch'i* to what it called matter."[52] He again supported this with numerous passages by Chu Hsi which support the idea that principle and material force are separated. "According to Chu's system, there must be the Principle for any given thing before the concrete instance of that thing can exist," though Fung

[50]Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 537.

[51]Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 539.

[52]Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 542.

certainly did not completely neglect the other non-dualistic aspects of Chu Hsi. Continuing, he wrote, "Nevertheless, as to the question of the priority between Principle and the Ether (the latter regarded as a whole, rather than as differentiated to form separate objects), this can be discussed from two angles. From the matter of fact point of view, it may be said that, as soon as there is Principle, there is also the Ether."[53] Though he softened the monistic aspect by stating that "from a strictly logical point of view, however, one is forced to admit that Principle has priority."[54]

More recent scholars have criticized Fung's thesis that the Ch'eng brothers' ideas are sharply different and led to the two separate schools of thought. Though Wing-tsit Chan agreed with Fung regarding the origination of the two schools, he went on to say that "their [Ch'eng brothers] differences have been exaggerated in recent years."[55] Carsun Chang was not so kind. He emphasized the similarities of the two brothers' ideas regarding principle and material force. Chang wrote, "Fung asserts . . . that according to Ch'eng Hao, *li* is inseparable from concrete things, while for Ch'eng I the contrary is the case. If I may say so, Fung's making a Platonist out of Ch'eng I is entirely the work of his imagination. Both Ch'eng brothers emphasized that a demarcation must be drawn between *tao*, the metaphysical world, and *ch'i*, the world of matter."[56]

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[53]Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 544-545.

[54]Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 545.

[55]Chan, *Source Book*, 518.

[56]Chang, *Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, 192.

Chang was much more balanced than Fung regarding Chu's dualistic tendencies. Chang discussed Chu from both dualistic and monistic angles and concluded that neither term was applicable. Chang wrote, "In other words, he emphasized both the One and the Many [alluding to the Sung Confucian statement "Principle is one, its manifestations are many"]. He can neither be classified as a monist nor as a dualist. Both terms are inapplicable to his thought."[57] Or, "Indeed, Chu Hsi would more aptly be regarded as occupying a peculiar position between monism and dualism than as being a dualist."[58] The thesis that the monistic framework was more important to Chu Hsi was confirmed when Chang wrote, "Chu Hsi envisaged the universe as a unity, and its different aspects as coherent parts of that unity."[59]

Korean Historians. In the field of Korean studies in America, three scholars emerge as leaders in *T'oegye hak* (T'oegye studies): Michael Kalton, Yun Sasoon, and Edward Y. J. Chung. I shall attempt to outline the current state of the field before continuing. Though Professor Kalton's outline and terminology of the Chu school of thought has been important to this paper, his primary contribution to the field is one of translation. Professor Kalton maintained his theory of dualistic monism throughout his commentary. He, by and large, maintained the ambiguity regarding various classical terms so that the dualism was toned down. He further commented on T'oegye's thought, "The

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[57]Chang, *Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, 254.

[58]Chang, *Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, 260.

[59]Chang, *Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, 253.

authoritative passages referred to here had the respective functions of, on the one hand, avoiding an overly sharp view of *li* and *ki* and, on the other, of using the duality of *li* and *ki* to preserve the Mencian doctrine of the good nature, while introducing a factor internal to the human constitution that could explain evil."[60] It is on Professor Kalton's views that I build my own thesis.

Professor Yun is representative of the Korean historians.[61] Professor Yun looks at all aspects of T'oegye's philosophy, so, accordingly, his writings are much broader than Chung's, who concentrates on the Four-Seven Debate. Two theses emerge from Professor Yun's writings: first, T'oegye is the representative Ch'eng-Chu orthodox scholar in Korea; and second, there is a contradiction and irrationality inherent in T'oegye's thesis regarding the activity of principle.

Regarding T'oegye's thesis of principle and material force, Yun argued that T'oegye was representative of the Ch'eng-Chu orthodox school. By this he meant that T'oegye's thought was in line with Mencius and Chu Hsi. T'oegye adjusted his thesis to conform to his understanding of Mencian doctrine of the Four Beginnings issuing from the nature. Yun argued, "therefore, T'oegye's emphasizing the Four as the self-issuance of *li* was nothing more than a manifestation of his intention to follow the original intention of

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[60]Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, comm., 71.

[61]Kalton, Personal Communication.

Mencius by putting his own learning solidly in line with the thesis that human nature was good."[62]

Further, Yun showed where T'oegye is in line with the Ch'eng-Chu school's dualistic monism. Regarding T'oegye's methodology, Yun showed how T'oegye's approach to learning even consisted of a dualistic monism. T'oegye considered the correct approach to learning to be taking the maintaining of mindfulness and the investigation of things as combined into a single whole. Further, as T'oegye explained to Kobong during the Four-Seven Debate, even in his methodology T'oegye would look for sameness in difference and difference in sameness. As regards principle and material force, Professor Yun emphasized T'oegye's monistic understanding but also pointed to T'oegye's understanding of the analytical distinction. Yun wrote, "in terms of concrete beings, *li* and *ki* must be together and cannot be separated. [However], T'oegye often speaks of *li* without the corresponding thing, this is only analytically, — they fundamentally have no temporal priority or anteriority of which one can speak."[63] With this dual understanding of the nature of material force and principle, Yun argued that T'oegye was in line with Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy. He wrote, "T'oegye's views of truth do not differ from the thought of the Ch'eng-Chu school of Neo-Confucianism. One gets the

[62]Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 137.

[63]Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 60.

feeling that one is glimpsing the true face of orthodox Confucian learning and seeing the true character of East Asian thought."[64]

However, it was precisely in this dualistic monism that Yun saw a contradiction. To T'oegye, principle was an active force. It gave issue to the Four Beginnings and the Supreme Ultimate gave rise to *yin* and *yang*. Two problems surfaced for Yun. First, if principle is above forms, then by nature it is non-active and cannot give issuance. Yun argued, "'*Li* moves' confuses and even contradicts the concept of *li* as being above forms and hence non-active." The second contradiction Yun found in T'oegye's thesis was when principle and material force were reduced to a unity, which was T'oegye's ultimate reality. "Since this dualistic handling of the mind-and-heart, nature, and the feelings does not itself amount to any absolute distinction, the issuance of *li* of course cannot be accepted as actual. This is the element of irrationality in T'oegye's thesis." Or from another angle, "But if *li* has the actual ability to give issuance, insofar as that means it has the power to act, the distinction and contrast between *li* and *ki* disappears. Since T'oegye began with the assumption that *li* and *ki* are distinct, that would amount to a self-contradiction."[65]

Contradictions notwithstanding, Yun showed that T'oegye's purpose in positing the distinction of principle and material force was for the purposes of self-cultivation. First, Yun re-emphasized T'oegye's statement regarding the priority of self-cultivation

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[64]Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 47.

[65]Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 132.

over philosophical consistency. Yun wrote, "if it comes to the point where there is reason to fear such analytical distinctions will be taken as evidence for the separateness of *li* and *ki*, T'oegye says he would rather eradicate the passage."[66] Again Yun argued that "for T'oegye it was not exactly theoretical accuracy that was the main thing in the question of interpretation. What was foremost in his mind was the necessity of establishing the transcendence of normative heavenly principle with respect to human desires by . . . differentiating *li* and *ki*."[67]

In his work, Professor Chung looked at the Four-Seven Debate in terms of its practical implications for self-cultivation. Because, for self-cultivation purposes, T'oegye required an analytical division between principle and material force vis-à-vis the Four and the Seven, he could be seen as a dualist. Professor Chung writes, "In regard to Neo-Confucian metaphysics, T'oegye's Four-Seven thesis deliberately maintains the ontological 'seperability' and conceptual 'distinction' of *i* [*li*] and *ki*."[68] However, as discussed above, T'oegye also accepted the Chu Hsi school's doctrine that principle and material force can never be separated — thus I have followed Kalton in terming it dualistic monism. In only a few places, Professor Chung seems to acknowledge this aspect of T'oegye's thought. For example, Professor Chung writes, "the question is why did T'oegye accept the fundamental Neo-Confucian doctrine that *i* [*li*] and *ki* are inseparable

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[66]Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 93.

[67]Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 139.

[68]Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism*, 165.

in things and phenomenon, on the one hand, but insist on analyzing the Four and the Seven by separating them into two, and distinguishing them from each other, in terms of a dichotomous system of *i* and *ki*."[69] Of course the short answer is that he needed this system for his ideas regarding self-cultivation. And again, "T'oegye softened his dualistic position by recognizing more of a continuum between the original nature [the nature of Heaven and Earth] and the physical nature and by accepting Kobong's emphasis on the inseparability of *i* and *ki* in all concrete phenomena."[70] In this statement, Professor Chung recognizes both the monistic frame that T'oegye also held and the evolution of thought that T'oegye experienced through the debate.

Chung's purpose in writing the book was to show the practical implications of the Four-Seven Debate. To do this, he had to show T'oegye's understanding of the Four and the Seven regarding self-cultivation. T'oegye clearly maintained a distinction between principle and material force vis-à-vis the feelings to show that the Seven Feelings must be constantly watched over and warn that one should not confuse principle with material force. However, I believe that Chung overemphasized the dualistic side of T'oegye's argument to the exclusion of his broader monistic frame. In several places throughout his text, he labels T'oegye as a dualist without qualifying the term. "T'oegye remains a dualistic thinker."[71] "T'oegye emphasizes the Four-Seven distinction in terms of an

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[69]Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism*, 167.

[70]Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism*, 71.

[71]Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism*, 166.

ontological and conceptual *i-ki* dichotomy."[72] "This is why he maintains a dualistic approach."[73] "As a dualistic thinker. . . ."[74] Though Chung is approaching the problem from a different angle than the present work, I still believe it is misleading to characterize T'oegye as a "dualist." Parallel to Chu Hsi, whatever dualism was in T'oegye's thought was only analytical and conceptual in nature.

I believe it is problematic for Chung to place T'oegye's dualism in terms of ontology without proper explanation. Though ontology was an important arguing point during the debate, the ontology eventually broke down. One could, as Professor Chung does, place the ontology of T'oegye's Four and Seven thesis to principle and material force, respectively. The fact remains, however, that in Korean Ch'eng-Chu philosophy, the physical nature is a combination of principle as endowed with material force. Therefore, one could also place the ontology of the Four and Seven simply in the nature. I believe the term ontology is too strong a word when dealing with T'oegye's thought. The word certainly implies a more dualistic treatment than I feel is warranted. One might consider using the terms used during the debate, such as predominant element (*so chu*) or point of reference (*so chongnae*).

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[72]Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism*, 167-168.

[73]Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism*, 172.

[74]Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism*, 169.

III. THE FOUR-SEVEN DEBATE

OVERVIEW

After approximately one hundred years of using the tradition to promote institution building, Ch'eng-Chu school Confucianism finally began to blossom philosophically in the sixteenth century. Yi T'oegye was the scholar who took the ideology to this next level. The first part of the dynasty used the Ch'eng-Chu tradition in the purely practical aspects of statecraft and institution building. During the remainder of the Chosŏn dynasty, substantial energy was devoted to abstract metaphysical thought, though this too was for the practical effect of self-cultivation. Though the early Chosŏn dynasty Confucians were not without a grasp of the metaphysical aspect of the Ch'eng-Chu school,[75] an in depth discussion would have to wait until T'oegye.

In 1553 T'oegye amended a passage in Chŏng Chiun's (1509-1561) *Ch'ŏnmyŏng to* (Diagram of the Heavenly Mandate). Indeed, T'oegye made so many changes in the text that its subsequent editions attributed the diagram solely to T'oegye as the *Sin Ch'ŏnmyŏng to* (New diagram of the Heavenly Mandate). The change at issue was regarding the Four Beginnings and Seven Feelings, specifically their nature and origin. Chŏng's original statement was, "The Four Beginnings originate from principle, and Seven Feelings originate from material force." It is important to note that T'oegye's intention in amending Chŏng's phrase was to mitigate its apparent dualism.[76] Though he became more clear as his thought evolved throughout the discussion, the original emendation remained

[75]Michael Kalton, "Early Yi Dynasty Neo-Confucianism," 9-25.

[76]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 405.

vague. T'oegye's first emended statement reads, "The origination of the Four Beginnings is from principle, and the origination of the Seven Feelings is from material force."[77]

The English translation here is crucial. The classical character *pal, fa* has been translated in numerous ways: issue, manifest, arise, originate. In following traditional glosses, Kalton translates the term as "issue."[78] "Issue," it seems to me, implies a more active, thus dualistic treatment. My translation of "originate," on the other hand, implies a more passive, thereby possibly non-dualistic rendering. T'oegye's revision of Chŏng's statement was extremely subtle; Chŏng's statement seemed to imply a more active role of principle or material force in the arousal of the feelings, while T'oegye's revision probably implied more of a passive state. I believe that Professor Yun would probably concur with my revisionist translation. He writes that "the verb *pal/fa* fundamentally denotes activating or issuing forth. But when one says the nature issues as the feelings, issues cannot be taken as an active modification, for as we have seen here *pal* stands for a logical substance/function, cause/effect relationship."[79]

A few years later T'oegye heard of various criticisms made by the younger scholar Kobong regarding the emended version. Kobong was unable to criticize the senior scholar directly in the rigidly stratified society. T'oegye sent a short note to Kobong detailing his

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[77]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 405; translation adapted from Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 1.

[78]Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 1.

[79]Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 96.

position more clearly. Without even any direct discussion with Kobong, T'oegye emended his statement again. The new revision read, "Because the arising (origination) of the Four Beginnings are from pure principle, there is none which is not good. Because the arising of the Seven Feelings combines with material force there is both good and evil."[80] This was the first of the eight letters which began the debate.

Now that T'oegye initiated the discussion, Kobong was more free to detail his own opinions. This he did in a three-page reply. Kobong's reply shook T'oegye's confidence in his own position causing him to delay sending an answer. After some time, T'oegye read a comment in the *Chu-tzu yü-lei* (Classified conversations of Master Chu), which gave him confidence in his original statement. T'oegye quoted Chu Hsi as follows: "The Four Beginnings, these are the issuance of principle; the Seven Feelings, these are the issuance of material force."[81] This appeal to authority did not shake Kobong, who responded with a lengthy point by point critique. Upon receipt of this letter, T'oegye was willing to revise some of his statements and clarify others, but several he stated were irreconcilable and did not feel further discussion would clarify the matter. Scholars, after all, could have differences of opinion. After T'oegye's polite refusal to continue the debate, Kobong took T'oegye's advice to "ponder the matter" and took several years before sending two more letters, one of critique and discussion, and one of summation. T'oegye sent a short letter politely declining further debate.

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[80]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 403; translation mine. For an alternative translation cf. Kalton, *Four Seven Debate*, 1.

[81]*Chu-tzu yü-lei*, 53.17b.

THE ARGUMENT

T'oegye's first letter was a short clarification of his initial statement, which he emended a second time, and included an invitation to discuss the matter further. In this first letter T'oegye tells Kobong:

> I was also already thinking that the expression of my last interpretation was unsuitable. I was even more aware of it after your critique pointed out my course and mistaken points. Thus, I immediately amended it as follows: 'Because the arising of the Four Beginnings are from pure principle, there is none which is not good. Because the arising of the Seven Feelings combines with material energy there is both good and evil.' If it is said like this, I do not know whether it is without evil.[82]

This brief paragraph shows several points to consider and provides a model for the discussion below. First, T'oegye was initially willing to discuss and to revise his philosophy where error was pointed out to him. Upon hearing of the criticism, even from a junior scholar, T'oegye immediately made some emendations. Had he chosen to do so, he certainly could have simply dismissed Kobong out of hand as a mere student. This was the starting point which was to begin T'oegye's evolution of thought. Indeed, he revised the statement a couple more times until he settled on a final version which he eventually published in a treatise for the king, *Sŏnghak sipto (Ten diagrams of sage learning)*.[83] But equally important, the text shows T'oegye's commitment to the Confucian tenet to learn from anyone. Such an act, though a Confucian ideal, was unheard of in Korea with its

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[82]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 403; translation mine. For an alternative translation cf. Kalton, *Four Seven Debate*, 1.

[83]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 198-210. An English translation is found in Michael Kalton, trans. and ed., *To Become a Sage*, 118-141.

rigid social stratifications. Without T'oegye's willingness to initiate a dialogue with Kobong, it would have been necessary for Kobong to continue criticizing the senior scholar only behind his back, but not in person.

Second, T'oegye's evolution of thought moved away from or clarified his statements to read out any implied separateness. From the beginning, T'oegye was uncomfortable with the imprecision of his earlier statements.[84] He changed Chŏng's initial statement because he felt the dualism was too stark, then changed it a second time when he heard of Kobong's criticism.

Third, some contemporary translations seem to imply more of a dualism than is in the original. Kalton's translation of *soon-li/ch'un-li* as "purely a matter of principle"[85] seems to imply something different than my "the arising of the Four Beginnings are from *pure principle*." "[P]urely a matter" is exclusive; it does not allow for any other factors, post or ante. "Pure principle," on the other hand, describes only the nature of the principle involved, not the factors which lead to or from its arising. This is indeed important for a broader understanding of where T'oegye was going with his argument.

After receiving Kobong's three-page critique, T'oegye took the discussion much more seriously. After a lengthy delay, T'oegye sent a more thorough argument. The delay, T'oegye openly acknowledged, was largely due to his lack of confidence in his own

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[84]"My opinion was the *dichotomy was too stark*..." *T'oegye chŏns*ŏ, vol. 1, 405 (emphasis mine); translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 8.

[85]*T'oegye chŏns*ŏ, vol. 1, 402; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 1.

thesis.[86] However, T'oegye's confidence was re-established when he found a statement by Chu Hsi stating the concept in similar wording.[87] He subsequently sent a revised copy and a point-by-point discussion on theses of agreement and disagreement. Though Kobong was to send two additional letters, T'oegye let his fifth letter stand as his final argument, stating that there was no need to force agreement on everything. Following the model of T'oegye's first letter, I will outline below T'oegye's general thesis, then attempt to show how and where Kobong influenced T'oegye, and finally his evolution of thought, which culminates in a "dualistic-monism" approach.

T'oegye agreed that the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings are both equally feelings. He showed the reason for the different terminology in a parallel to other binary concepts in Chinese philosophical writings, namely substance/function and the original nature / physical nature. Like the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings, these concepts were within a monistic framework and were only conceptually distinct.

In Confucian theory, substance was latent while function was manifest. This became important for a discussion of the mind and feelings, which was spoken of in terms of unaroused (i.e., substance) and aroused (i.e., function) states. The substance of the mind-and-heart, which is its unaroused state, involves both principle and material force; likewise, the function or aroused states (i.e., the feelings) of the mind-and-heart also required both principle and material force. Principle and material force were in reality

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[86]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 407; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 14.

[87]*Chu-tzu yü-lei,* 53.17b

never separated, though in terms of substance/function, must be spoken of as two. T'oegye's words were: "For principle and material force are fundamentally mutually necessary as substance and are interdependent as function; there definitely can never be principle without material force or material force without principle."[88] In terms of the nature, T'oegye points to the polarities of original nature and physical nature. For purposes of analysis and self-cultivation, all people have both an original nature and a physical nature. The original nature is the pure goodness of the human nature. It is the part which Mencius pointed to to describe human nature as good. Accordingly, though it has both principle and material force, it is discussed only in terms of pure principle. It is through self-cultivation that humans can return to the original nature and become a sage.

If we all have an original nature of pure principle, how do we account for evil? Evil is explained due to the distorting and beclouding aspect of material force in the physical nature. The physical nature is that into which we are born. After we are born, material force veils the original nature. To the extent that material force veils the original nature, we are good or evil. Sages are able to display the original nature without interference, while wicked people's original nature is completely stopped up by the veil of material force. Though beginning with Chang Tsai and adapted by Chu Hsi, as discussed above, Confucians spoke of the polarities of original and physical nature, it was understood that there was only one human nature. T'oegye pointed to this monistic frame when he said, "Could it be anything other than a matter of approaching the composite of

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[88] *T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 405; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 8.

principle as endowed with material force and pointing to this as the aspect of principle in its original condition as endowed by Heaven?"[89]

T'oegye effectively used these traditional binary concepts to parallel his thesis regarding the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings. Principle and material force are indivisible vis-à-vis substance/function and original/physical nature, but it is permissible, indeed required, to discuss them as distinct. The cause of the binary terminology is an emphasis on the point of reference, not that there exist two separate entities. To explain the goodness of human nature one must point to the principle side of the composite; to show evil one must point to the material force side of the composite. "Since the point of reference is principle, not material force, it therefore can be described as purely good and without evil, that is all."[90] The consequences for not distinguishing them as two is an inability to see the original goodness in human nature. Likewise, if it is permissible to distinguish between principle and material force in regards to the nature, which is what the Chu Hsi school was doing, then it is permissible to distinguish between the two in regards to the feelings.

An appropriate analogy of T'oegye's notion of principle and material force vis-à-vis nature and the Four and Seven is found in our modern understanding of light. Light is indeed a similar kind of duality. When looked at as a wave, it can be understood partially as having wave-like properties; however, when looked at as a particle, we can see its

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[89]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 406; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 51.

[90]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 406; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 9.

properties as a particle. This is the wave-particle duality of light. Light is one thing, but displays two different and opposite kind of properties. Likewise, the nature is one thing, but has the "properties" of principle and material force. Indeed, like light, we can speak of one property or the other, but the implication remains that we are speaking of the monistic whole, be that light or nature.

After discussing these parallels to show the permissibility of a discussion of a monistic frame in terms of two conceptual components, T'oegye proceeded to the core of his argument. T'oegye argued that both the Four and the Seven issue from the nature. Mencius spoke of the Four in terms of the mind-and-heart, which T'oegye understood as being a composite of principle and material force. Therefore, while the Four ultimately involve both, the predominant emphasis is on principle. Because the Four are the beginnings to the Four Virtues[91] of the nature, which refers to the original nature, they are purely good. Likewise, the Seven ultimately involves both, but the predominant emphasis points to material force. Therefore, T'oegye was able to say that the Four Beginnings are all good, and the Seven Feelings are initially good but easily slip into evil.

T'oegye accused Kobong as being like "a hawk gobbling dates whole."[92] In other words, Kobong only saw the unity without allowing for analytical distinctions. T'oegye criticized Kobong's stark monism by stating, "you like sameness and hate difference; you

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[91]Humanity (*in/jen*), propriety (*yi/li*), rightness (ŭ*i/yi*), wisdom (*chi/chih*).

[92]*T'oegye ch*ŏ*ns*ŏ, vol. 1, 407; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 56.

take pleasure in the undifferentiated whole and dislike analytical distinctions."[93] The consequences for such a theory in terms of self-cultivation in T'oegye's view were disastrous. Without being able to see distinctions, one would not be able to see the differences between principle and material force. This would lead to the mistake of thinking that human desires are heavenly principle, which would be an egregious error to the Confucian.

T'oegye closed his argument by an appeal to authority. T'oegye quoted the passage by Chu Hsi which was similar to his own original statement, namely, "The Four Beginnings, these are the issuance of principle; the Seven Feelings, these are the issuance of material force." Though T'oegye used this statement as proof, he did not revert back to his original statement. He was satisfied with the progress he had made and retained his own final statement: "It's only that in the case of the Four, principle issues them and material force follows it, while in the case of the Seven material force issues them and principle mounts it."[94]

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[93]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 407; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 55.

[94]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ,* vol. 1, 204; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 65. See also, Kalton, *To Become a Sage*, 126-127.

IV. KOBONG'S CHALLENGE

OVERVIEW

On hearing of Kobong's criticisms, T'oegye emended the statement to read: "The origination of the Four Beginnings is from pure principle and therefore involves nothing but good; the origination of the Seven Feelings includes material force and therefore involves both good and evil."[95] T'oegye then sent this revision with a brief note to Kobong. Kobong responded to T'oegye's brief letter with a three-page articulation of his own theory regarding the Four and the Seven, followed by four additional lengthy letters. Kobong's thesis revolved around two important questions. First, how are the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings different? And, second, from where do the feelings arise or issue?

Kobong emphasized the monistic framework of the Four-Seven theory. He believed that the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings were not two separate sets of feelings. "It is not that apart from the Seven Feelings there are also the Four Beginnings."[96] Indeed, to Kobong, the Four were only a subset of the Seven, or to use Kobong's words "systematic sprouts" (*myo maek*, *miao-mai*). In other words, the feelings of humans are only one kind. But these feelings sometimes are expressed correctly, i.e., in harmony with the Way (*tao*), and sometimes expressed incorrectly. The human feelings which are expressed correctly, whether the Four or the Seven, are those which are originated from principle. When human feelings are expressed incorrectly,

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[95]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 402; translation adapted from Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 1.

[96]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A1b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 4.

whether the Four or the Seven, it is due to the disturbing aspects of material force. Though Kobong eventually conceded to T'oegye, initially Kobong argued that even the Four Beginnings could be expressed incorrectly. "The issuance of the Four Beginnings likewise involves cases that are not perfectly measured; one certainly cannot say that in all cases they are good."[97] Within Korean Confucian thought, the notion that the Four Beginnings could be expressed incorrectly was original with Kobong. As human feelings are one, the Four Beginnings are only those initial sprouts of feelings when the heart reacts to external circumstances. Kobong explained, "Nonetheless, they [the Four Beginnings] cannot emerge as something apart from the Seven Feelings; rather they represent the systematic sprouts of those among the Seven Feelings that issue and are perfectly measured."[98]

Within Kobong's monistic framework, the second question, from where do the Four and Seven issue, is easily answered. However, it is just this question that provided most of the fuel for the debate. For Kobong, the Four and Seven may not be divided according to principle and material force. All human feelings are issued from the nature, which is the substance of the mind-and-heart (*sim*, *hsin*). If after they are issued, the feelings are in accord with principle, i.e., good, they are expression of the good original human nature. If the feelings are not in accord with principle, that is due to the disturbing nature of material force.

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[97]*Kobong chŏnjip,* A25b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 46.

[98]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A2a; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 5.

Kobong began by placing the locus for both the Four and the Seven in terms of the latent and manifest aspect of the mind-and-heart, i.e., nature and feelings. Nature is the latent or substance of the mind-and-heart; in other words, that which is before arousal. The feelings are manifest or function of the mind-and-heart; in other words, that which is after arousal. Kobong argued that both the Four and the Seven are feelings and, therefore, representations of the active manifestation of the nature, i.e., the function of the mind-and-heart. Though the nature itself is purely good, the Four and the Seven being the aroused state of the mind-and-heart can have both good and evil. The reason that there are two terms is: "Tzu-ssu was speaking of them in a way described as 'speaking of them in their entirety,' while Mencius's discussion is described as 'singling out [the good side].'"[99]

As they are both representations of the aroused state of the heart-and-mind, the Four is merely a subset of the Seven. Kobong criticized T'oegye's statement, which he said would indicate that they are mutually involved in the issuance or arising of both feelings. This, he thought, would lead to mistakes.

Kobong next introduced the concept of systematic sprouts (*myo maek*) to explain the goodness of the Four. The Four, he argued, are merely systematic sprouts of the Seven. They are not a separate issuance. Kobong viewed the nature as being expressed through a veil of material force (*ki*). If material force interferes in the expression of the feelings, then there arises both good or evil. But if the material force does not interfere

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[99]*T'oegye chŏns*ŏ, vol. 1, 407; translated in Kalton, *Four Seven Debate*, 3.

and pure principle issues the feelings, those feelings are purely good. It is not that there are certain feelings which are always good, while there are feelings which are good or evil. Even the Four can be evil if they are not properly expressed.

Kobong continued in line with Sung Confucians and wrote that, cosmologically, principle (*li*)and material force (*ki*)are distinct, but cannot be separated in physical things. Physically, principle is not external to material force.

In Kobong's third letter, he offered the traditional Ch'eng-Chu analogy of the moon and moonlight and applied it to the discussion at hand. When one looks at the reflection of the moon in a pool of water, there are two moons, the one in the sky and the one in the pool. However, though we may now speak of the two moons, there is in reality only the one. This was compared to the discussion of principle and material force. The water may be compared to material force. When it is turbid, the reflection of the moon is muddied. When the water is clear, the moon is plainly seen. So the reflection of the moon is inseparable with the water, and yet they are always distinct. Likewise, principle and material force are always inseparable and yet they are also distinct. Because principle and material force are inseparable, Kobong argued that it is impermissible to discuss the feelings in terms of one or the other.

This posed an interesting challenge to T'oegye. If T'oegye was the defender of the Chu school in Korea, was Kobong in line with the Chu school critics? Where was Kobong influenced to follow this line of reasoning? Professor Tillman has suggested that

Kobong's thought resonated well with the Hunan school and especially with Hu Hung and Chang Shih (1133-1180).

KOBONG AND BEYOND CH'ENG-CHU ORTHODOXY.[100]

As early as 1241 the Southern Sung court adopted Ch'eng-Chu as the official state orthodoxy and was firmly established when the Mongols selected Chu Hsi's commentaries on the Four Books as the official interpretations for the civil service exams.[101] It was this school that was transmitted to Korea and established there also as state orthodoxy. However, prior to the Chu school's ascension to orthodoxy, Chu Hsi's was only one voice in the broader *Tao-hsüeh* movement. In reviewing these other voices, one might get a glimpse of the material that influenced Kobong's challenge to T'oegye.

Beginning roughly with the Sung dynasty, several schools of thought emerged during the Confucian revival. Even within *Tao-hsüeh* itself, several voices participated as a "fellowship."[102] However, for our purposes we need only look at two. The two schools or thinkers that are most relevant to Kobong are, first, the Hunan school, specifically Hu Hung and Chang Shih, and second, the Ming Confucians, Wang Yang-ming and Lo Ch'in-shun.

There is ample direct and indirect evidence that T'oegye and Kobong would have been familiar with these Chinese thinkers and their writings. Most philosophical writings

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[100]The following discussion is heavily indebted to Professor Tillman and his *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy*.

[101]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 1; see also Appendix B.

[102]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, x-xi, 2, 3-4.

were quickly transmitted from China to Korea.[103] Even Wang Yang-ming's writings, which were considered heterodox and never caught on as a school of thought, arrived in Korea as far back as 1521.[104] The evidence includes either direct quotations from the various works or mentioning other work in T'oegye's or Kobong's extent writings. Also, for Kobong at least, there is much evidence which suggests borrowing or influence from other writers outside the narrow Ch'eng-Chu school.

Professor Wing-tsit Chan has analyzed T'oegye's annotations to the *Chu-tzu hsing-chuang* and found that T'oegye devoted much energy to Chu Hsi's letters to Chang Shih.[105] T'oegye included four of Chu Hsi's letters to the "gentlemen of Hunan" in his compilation and annotations. Chan suggests that these selections can be considered the best of T'oegye's work.[106] As chief defender of Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy in Korea, one may assume that T'oegye would be familiar with the arguments of the Hunan school and other critics. One other critic important to our discussion was Lo Ch'in-shun.

Though Lo's work, *K'un-chih chi* (Knowledge painfully acquired), was transmitted to Korea in the early 1550s,[107] followed by several Korean editions of the work,[108] we may take Kobong at his word about not having heard of the Ming Confucian.

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[103]See Appendix B.

[104]Chung, "Wang Yang-ming School," 16.

[105]Chan, "How T'oegye Understood Chu Hsi," 295.

[106]Chan, "How T'oegye Understood Chu Hsi," 294.

[107]Deuchler, "Reject the False," 391.

[108]Bloom, *Knowledge Painfully Acquired*, 11.

However, we are certain that T'oegye was familiar with him and his writing, as he accused Kobong during the course of the debate of being similar to Lo. Kobong denied the accusation and even eventually wrote a critique of the *K'un-chih chi*; however, as we shall discuss below, one can understand T'oegye's mistake, as there exist similarities between Kobong and Lo.

One additional piece of circumstantial evidence that Kobong was influenced by the Hunan school was in the various letters from which he quoted. Specifically, two of the letters from which he quoted were written by Chu Hsi in response to letters from "the gentlemen of Hunan," including Chang Shih and T'sai Yüan-ting. In the letter, Chu conceded a mistake in the sayings of Master Ch'eng. We can infer two things from Kobong's use of these quotations. First, Kobong was familiar also with the arguments of the Hunan school. And second, in that Chu Hsi criticized the Hunan school in several respects, the fact that Kobong quoted from a letter in which Chu Hsi conceded to the Hunan school shows Kobong must have had sympathies for that school.

Similarities. We may immediately dismiss the Lu-Wang school as a possible influence on Kobong. At first glance, Kobong's arguments do appear to resonate well with the monistic leanings of the Lu-Wang school. Even though the Four-Seven debaters would have known of this system of thought, as Professor Kalton notes, they completely bypassed, or used the "meat cleaver approach," to the Lu-Wang school.[109] One of the

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[109]Michael Kalton, "Yi Hwang," in *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*, 613-614.

main premises of the Lu-Wang school was that principle and mind-and-heart are one.[110] While I believe that this monistic approach appealed to Kobong, he remained a Ch'eng-Chu Confucian. Rather than the monistic approach to principle and mind-and-heart, Kobong followed the Ch'eng-Chu tripartite thesis regarding the mind-and-heart, nature, and feelings. One premise to this thesis was that the nature was composed of principle and material force, which Kobong also accepted. Further, in the debate with T'oegye, Kobong cited exclusively Ch'eng-Chu orthodox writings and the Four Books to prove his thesis. So, wherein did Kobong diverge from the strict T'oegye / Ch'eng-Chu interpretation? Following Tillman's suggestion, I believe he was at least partially influenced by the Hunan school and its leaders Hu, Hung and Chang Shih.

While there were no direct quotations from the Hunan school used in the debate, I believe there were enough similarities and parallels to provide at least indirect evidence that Kobong was reading outside the orthodox Ch'eng-Chu tradition.[111] That there was no direct quotations could be due to the fact that non-Ch'eng-Chu writings were considered heterodox, and Kobong needed orthodoxy to prove his point to T'oegye. But more important, Kobong and Hu Hung/Chang Shih were using the tradition to accomplish different philosophical tasks and within diverse cultures. According to Schirokauer, Hu and Chang did not even discuss how principle and material force were

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[110]Chan, *Source Book*, 655.

[111]Chu Hsi apparently used the Hunan school as a "sounding board" in developing his own theories, first embracing then criticizing Hu Hung and Chang Shih. Though Hu and Chang were read out of the Ch'eng-Chu orthodox line in favor of Chu's theories, they were early leaders of the broader *Tao-hsüeh* tradition. See Appendix A and Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 29-36, 64-70, 76.

related, which would have gone to the heart of the Four-Seven Debate, though they did discuss the terms individually.[112]

While Kobong's thought diverged from Hu in several important aspects, such as Hu's notion of nature being beyond good and evil, the two philosophical systems seem to resonate well when taken as a whole. Kobong's thought is strikingly similar to Chang's mature thought. These three thinkers have been for centuries seen as defending and promoting a philosophy of monism. Professor Schirokauer wrote that Hu "emphasized the unity of the world," and that he had a "cast of mind which naturally sought to avoid making too many distinctions."[113] Likewise, Kobong had monistic leanings and was anxious to prove the indivisibility of principle and material force.

Specifically, I believe Hu's notion of mind-and-heart and the nature broadly speaking was influential on Kobong's thought process. To Hu, the mind-and-heart and the nature were just two aspects of the same reality; the mind-and-heart was the function, and the nature was the substance. Therefore, the mind-and-heart was that state after the feelings are aroused. Chang Shih followed his teacher faithfully in this doctrine. Professor Tillman writes, "Building upon Hu Hung's notion of the nature as essence in tranquility and the mind as nature's function in motion, Chang associated human nature with the tranquil or not-yet-expressed state and the mind [mind-and-heart] with the active or

[112]Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi and Hu Hung," 487.

[113]Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi and Hu Hung," 496.

already expressed state."[114] I will discuss this below in relation to the Four Virtues or Beginnings, but one can readily see, then, that this is close to Kobong's idea that the feelings are the function of nature. Kobong wrote, "For before a person's mind-and-heart is aroused, the condition is considered the nature, and after it is aroused, it is considered the feelings."[115]

One additional thesis of Hu's that finds a parallel in Kobong's thought is Hu's understanding of principle and desire. To Hu, there was no absolute distinction between human desires and heaven's principle. They are the same in essence but differ in function. He argued that principle and desire are inseparable before the feelings are aroused and, after the feelings are aroused, desire is measured according to the mean. Chang Shih took this one step further and "identified the desires of the nature with the movement of the nature in response to things."[116] This parallels Kobong's notion that the Four and the Seven are identical before arousal, and after arousal measured against the mean to determine good or evil. Further, the Four Beginnings can be expressed contrary to the mean. It is interesting to note that just as Chu Hsi criticized this notion in Hu, T'oegye criticized Kobong along similar lines. T'oegye argued that Kobong's approach will lead people to "ineluctably slip into the abuse of discussing the nature in terms of material force

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[114]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 49-50.

[115]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A1b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 3.

[116]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 51.

and *fall into the calamity of thinking of human desires as heavenly principle*. How could this be allowed!"[117]

The two analogies or examples which Hu used to prove his thesis regarding the unity of principle and desire are also found in Kobong's thought. First, he argued that even the sages have feelings and desires, and that they do not reject them is proof of the unity with the nature. Schirokauer explains that for Hu, "the difference between the sage and the common man is that when the sage's feelings and propensities are aroused, they attain . . . 'due measure and degree.'"[118] This same example was used by Kobong to prove that the Seven also issue from principle. Kobong wrote: "Mencius's feeling of joy to the extent that he could not fall asleep, was indeed joy. Shun's punishment of the four criminals was anger. Confucius's mourning cry was sorrow. . . . How could these examples not be the original substance of principle?"[119]

Second, Hu argued that just as water reflects all things, so, too, does the mind-and-heart reflect all things.[120] This was to prove the unity of mind/nature and external things and the function of the mind. While Kobong and Hu used the analogy to do different things and, therefore, diverged somewhat, they are similar enough for my purposes. Kobong used an analogy of water to prove the unity of the nature as follows:

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[117]T'oegye *chŏns*ŏ, vol. 1, 407, emphasis mine; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 14.

[118]Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi and Hu Hung," 489.

[119]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A17a; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 34.

[120]Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi and Hu Hung," 490.

just as the moon reflected in the water may become distorted through waves or mud, the nature as descended into material force may become distorted.[121]

Chang Shih. Now we move more singularly to the thought of Chang Shih. Though Chang remained faithful to Hu in many areas, he also enlarged Hu's thought in some areas and rejected it in others. As Professor Tillman notes, because of the editing and expunging done to Chang's work by Chu Hsi, we are unable to determine with any certainty the process of evolution of Chang's thought.[122] However, as Chang's thought matured, it appears that he moved closer to Chu Hsi in some areas. Kobong's argument squared more clearly with Chang's mature thought than with Hu's. Examples of similarities between Chang and Kobong are found in Chang's notions regarding the Four Virtues, movement of the mind-and-heart and good and evil.

Chang Shih spent considerable energy discussing the Mencian concept of the Four Beginnings and the good human nature. As this goes directly to the premises underlying the Four-Seven Debate, I will address this issue at some length. For Chang Shih, the function of the nature is the feelings. When speaking here of the "feelings," he is specifically speaking of the Four Beginnings or Four Virtues. However, as we shall see below, I believe Chang's concept of the feelings was more closely aligned with how Kobong understood them than with how T'oegye understood them. In other words, for Chang there was only one set of human feelings expressed when the mind-and-heart was

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[121]*Kobong chŏnjip*, B112a; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 91.

[122]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 82.

active. Tillman writes, "Chang associated human nature with the tranquil or not-yet-expressed state and the mind with the active or already expressed state."[123] This thought is clearly expressed in Chang Shih's statement, "This is why the nature and feelings are related as essence and function, and the *Tao* of the mind-and-heart resides as master in the nature and feelings."[124] Though this premise was revised by Chu Hsi to make the mind-and-heart, not the *Tao*, the master, the nature and feelings continue as substance and function. In this concept Chang Shih moved away from his teacher Hu Hung, who argued that human nature is beyond good and evil. Chang Shih said, "nature is purely good and not evil. *Its activity is feelings*. . . . Evil emerges because of feelings. Is it nature as it originally is? The saying by Ch'eng Hao, 'It cannot be said that evil is not man's nature,' describes how nature has drifted to that state, but nature as it originally is still remains."[125]

Though Kobong would agree with the Chu school tenet that the mind-and-heart is the master or unifier of the nature and the feelings, his thought seemed to resonate well with the substance/function aspect of Chang Shih. Kobong argued, "for before a person's mind-and-heart is aroused, the condition is considered the nature, and after it is aroused it

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[123]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 49-50.

[124]*Nan-hsien chi*, 8.1a-2a; translated in Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 48.

[125]Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies*, 417 (emphasis mine). Professor Chan uses this quote to show Chang Shih defending Hu's theory of the nature as beyond good and evil. However, there appears to be controversy regarding whether or not Chang Shih held his teacher's belief. Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies*, 417, and Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 49. However, my purpose here is merely to point out that Chang holds that the activity (function) of nature is feelings. I will have more to say about this issue when I address the notion of good and evil.

is considered the feelings."[126] Again Kobong said, "When it [the substance or essence of nature] is within, it is definitely pure Heavenly Principle. However, at that time it can only be called the nature; it cannot be called the feelings. But the moment it is aroused, it becomes feelings, with the differentiation of harmony and unharmonious."[127] It is clear that Kobong and Chang Shih are similar in their approach to the nature and feelings. We should not be surprised to learn that this concept of latent and manifest is not far removed from T'oegye's Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy, though subtle distinctions remain; Professor Kalton noted that the latent and manifest concept is "frequently encountered in East Asian thought."[128] Broadly speaking, T'oegye agreed that the feelings are the function aspect of the nature; however, he disagreed with the ontological portion of Chang/Kobong's premise. This will be seen more clearly in a discussion of good and evil.

To T'oegye, the Four were inevitably good because they were direct expressions of the nature. To Chang and Kobong, however, the Four were just feelings and could be either good or evil depending on whether they were expressed according to the mean or not. Here I am following Tillman's suggestion that Chang moved away from his teacher's thesis regarding the nature as beyond good and evil.[129] Chang said, "Mencius called the nature good because it is where humaneness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom are

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[126]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A1b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 3.

[127]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A16b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 33.

[128]Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, commentary, 3-4.

[129]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 49.

maintained. *And if in their expression there are no self-centered human desires to disorder them*, there is then nothing but [the Four Beginnings]."[130] Further, Professor Chan noted that Chu Hsi criticized and interpreted Chang's theory ". . . as going too far. But what he meant by nothing does not mean that there is no principle inherent in the feelings, but that when selfish material desires play havoc with them, there is not yet time to purify or calm them."[131] Chu Hsi's interpretation of Chang squares completely with the thesis Kobong would later set forth. In Chang we can see that, first, the Four are feelings as expressed by the mind-and-heart and, second, there is the possibility of disorderly expression. This is strikingly similar to Kobong's thesis.

Kobong first argued that, "In that case the nature involves nothing but good, while the feelings involve both good and evil."[132] He subsequently refined his argument to include the possibility that the Four can be expressed not according to the mean, and likewise, the Seven feelings, when expressed according to the mean are the same as the Four. He said, "then the issuance of the Four likewise involves cases that are not perfectly measured; one certainly cannot say that in all cases they are good." And again, "when the natural manifestation of material force is neither excessive nor deficient, is that not the fundamental substance of principle."[133] We can see the expression of the feelings was an

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[130]Chang, *Meng-tzu shuo*, 3.1a (emphasis mine); translated in Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 49.

[131]Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies*, 409.

[132]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A1b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 3.

[133]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A25b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 46.

important determining factor for both Chang and Kobong. To both thinkers, expression involved movement.

How the Four arise involved movement vs. tranquility of the original nature. Slight differences exist because Kobong and Chang were using the thesis to prove different things; Chang spoke of movement to discuss self-cultivation, while Kobong wanted to prove the similarity or oneness of the feelings. However, the basic thesis is the same. The feelings are the movement of the nature when stimulated by external events. Chang said, "When tranquil, the substance of humaneness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom is present. And when in motion, the beginnings of commiseration, shame and dislike, respect and reverence, and right and wrong are realized. . . ."[134] Tillman noted, "Chang identified the desires of the nature with the movement of the nature in response to things."[135] This finds a parallel concept in Kobong's thesis that *both* the Four and the Seven are stirred by external things and move and, therefore, are equivalent. Kobong argued: "that being the case, feelings being stirred by things and moving is a natural principle. For it is because there is a given principle within that there is a match with the stimulus given externally . . . the mind-and-heart is aroused and moves." Kobong applied this premise to the Four Beginnings also, "in being aroused by things, [the Four] are no different from the Seven."[136]

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[134]*Nan-hsien chi*, 8.1a-2a; translated in Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 48.

[135]Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 51.

[136]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A16b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 33.

It is not particularly surprising to find influences or parallels between the Hunan school and Kobong; philosophical writings from the Southern Sung were readily available to Chosŏn scholars. Furthermore, much space was devoted to Chang Shih and the "gentlemen from Hunan" in Chu Hsi's collected works, with which all scholar-officials of Chosŏn would have been familiar. As mentioned above, the Wang Yang-ming school of the Ming dynasty was dismissed out of hand as heterodox; however, one scholar of the Ming dynasty bears discussion, Lo Ch'in-shun.

Lo Ch'in-shun.[137] Kobong vehemently rejected T'oegye's accusation of similarity between Lo and himself. Kobong stated that he had not even heard of the scholar and that he did not agree with the allegation that his philosophy was like Lo Ch'in-shun's as T'oegye had explained it. Sharp differences between Lo and Kobong do exist; however, T'oegye was not far off the mark in seeing affinities between the two scholars. Lo Ch'in-shun saw himself as a faithful Ch'eng-Chu scholar, but along the lines of loyal opposition or loyal critic. Therefore, many of the similarities with Kobong or Ch'eng-Chu, such as latent/manifest or the regulation and expression of the feelings, which have already been discussed, will not be addressed again here. What concerns us here is primarily wherein T'oegye saw similarities between the two thinkers.

[137]For the following discussion of Lo, I have relied on Professor Irene Bloom's translation and commentary of *K'un-chih chi*. See Bloom, *Knowledge Painfully Acquired.*

Kobong and Lo both approached their topic from a position of monism, and they criticized the dualistic tensions inherent in the Chu school. Professor Bloom addresses Lo's approach as follows:

> The discovery that their understanding of fundamental metaphysical categories, concepts of human nature, psychological attitudes, and views of personal cultivation betray signs of dualism poses a difficult series of intellectual problems for Lo. He [Lo] hopes to approach a consistent and unified understanding of a Nature which reveals in the order of its operations the ultimate consistency and unity of nature.[138]

Lo argued that principle and material force are not two separate entities, rather "*Li* [principle] must be identified as an aspect of *ch'i*."[139] In other words, everything is material force, and only the fact that material force can expand and congeal is the principle. Lo said, "I would venture that the integration of *ch'i* [material force] is itself the *li* of integration and that the disintegration of *ch'i* is itself the *li* of disintegration. It is merely the fact that there is integration and disintegration that we refer to as *li*."[140]

Kobong's monistic challenge to T'oegye caused T'oegye to accuse Kobong as being similar to Lo. T'oegye accused Kobong as follows:

> . . . you regard the natural manifestation of material force as the fundamental substance of principle. If one follows this line of thought, it leads to thinking of principle and material force as one thing with nothing that distinguishes them. Recently Lo Cheng-an [Ch'in-shun] has advocated the thesis that principle and

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[138]Bloom, *Knowledge Painfully Acquired*, 16.

[139]*K'un-chih chi*, II/35; translated in Bloom, *Knowledge Painfully Acquired*, 134.

[140]*K'un-chih chi*, II/46; translated in Bloom, *Knowledge Painfully Acquired*, 148.

> material force are not two things. . . . [W]hich is not to say that the intent of your letter seems similar.[141]

When Kobong denied knowing of Lo Ch'in-shun, T'oegye left out reference to Lo but left intact the criticism that Kobong's thought will lead people to think of material force and principle as one thing.[142] Kobong responded, "As for me, I certainly do not regard principle and material force as a single thing, nor do I say that they are not two different things."[143] However, Kobong's arguments do appear similar to Lo's in some instances.

Kobong stated in his first letter to T'oegye: "If one regards the Four as issued from principle and the Seven as issued by material force, then this splits up principle and material force and makes them two distinct things."[144] And again, similar to the statement criticized by T'oegye, Kobong stated, "Principle is not external to material force, and cases where material force has its natural manifestation without excess or deficiency are the same as the original substance of principle."[145] However, what Kobong meant in these instances was that only in concrete, physical things principle and material force cannot be separated. In the same letter Kobong further explained, "principle is the master of material force, and material force supplies the material for principle. The two are certainly distinct, but when it comes to their presence in actual things, they are certainly mixed

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[141]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 407; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 14.

[142]See *T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 412; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 55.

[143]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A21a; translate in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 40.

[144]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A1b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 4.

[145]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A2b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 6.

together and cannot be split apart."[146] This is clearly in line with the Cheng-Chu orthodox school of T'oegye. More on T'oegye's thoughts on this matter will be discussed below.

[146]*Kobong chŏnjip*, A2b; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 6.

V. DUALISTIC MONISM AND T'OEGYE'S EVOLUTION OF THOUGHT

OVERVIEW

I will now show where T'oegye was influenced by Kobong's argument and changed his own thesis accordingly, while several points of complete disagreement remained. While T'oegye's first letter exhibited T'oegye's initial willingness to revise his own thesis, T'oegye's third letter to Kobong clearly showed where T'oegye was influenced, and where he remained unaffected.

T'oegye's initial letter certainly set the tone of the coming debate. Here he immediately revised the statement in question, and then implicitly asked what Kobong thought about the revision. This concern for Kobong's thoughts, following the Confucian dictum, was then made more explicit in T'oegye's subsequent letters. In his second letter he supported his revision by stating that it was not an un-problematic version, but that he had hoped to engage a discussion regarding it. T'oegye stated, "This was for mutual support in working it out clearly. It's not that I thought that there was no problem in the expression."[147] Again, in T'oegye's third letter he made explicit his understanding that some of his remarks were not quite right. He wrote, "Having received the kind instruction of your second letter, I recognized that my words in my first letter were in some cases inexact or missed the mark. Therefore I have corrected it. . . ."[148] Clearly, some of these

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[147]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 405; translated in Kalton, *The Four-Seven Debate*, p. 8.

[148]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 411; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 49.

statements are owing to the hyperbole of polite letter writing. However, the fact that T'oegye did, indeed, revise several of his statements lends credence to his platitudes.

KOBONG'S INFLUENCE

Kobong's influence, which led T'oegye to make various revisions, is easily and clearly seen in T'oegye's third letter. In this letter, T'oegye responded to Kobong's criticism by first resubmitting his second letter with the corrections made and the originals retained in the interlinear space. Secondly, T'oegye systematically outlined and responded to points of agreement, to points where they agree on the original but reach separate conclusions, and to points of complete disagreement.

T'oegye revised his third letter in six places to conform more closely to Kobong's thesis. Most revisions were made to soften the apparent dualistic nature of T'oegye's original statements. The first revision was regarding the necessity of distinguishing the physical from the original nature vis-à-vis material force. The text reads, ". . . then it was also not practical to refer to it [*ki*] ~~without distinguishing it from the original nature.~~ **purely in terms of the original nature**."[149] The original text would have had the effect of completely excluding original nature. This clearly was not what T'oegye wanted to project and the revised form did not exclude original nature; it just stated that we cannot speak only of it. This left intact the ability to argue that, while the two are inseparable, we can make reference to one or to the other without excluding the one or the other.

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[149]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 411; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 51. In the original text the revised text was placed in the text with the old text placed interlinearly. Kalton adopts the method of strikeout the initial text and bolding the revised version which is retained here.

The second revision was as follows:

> As for the issuance of the Seven Feelings, ~~Master Chu says they originally have a standard of what they ought to be, so it's not that they are without principle.~~ **Master Ch'eng speaks of them as "a movement within," and Master Chu characterizes them as "each having its proper place," so they definitely likewise combine principle and material force.** [150]

This revision had the two-fold effect of appealing to the authority of the Master Ch'eng and Master Chu, but also more clearly stating that the Seven Feelings combine principle and material force. Though the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings combine both, each is dominated by either principle in the case of the Four, or material force, in the case of the Seven. This is what comes out more clearly in the next two revisions.

Revision three:

> . . . or that what is externally aroused [i.e., the Seven Feelings] is physical form, but its issuance ~~is the original substance of principle.~~ **looks back to principle not to material force.**[151]

Revision four:

> In the case of the Seven Feelings, then, ~~good and evil are not yet fixed. Therefore as soon as we have them but are not able to exercise discernment, the mind and heart will not attain its proper condition. And only after they have issued with proper measure can be called harmonious.~~ **they are originally good but easily devolve into evil. Therefore, when they issue with proper measure, they are called "harmonious." As soon as we have them but are not able to exercise discernment, then the mind-and-heart is already in the condition of missing its proper condition**.[152]

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[150]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 412; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 52.

[151]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 412; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate,* 52.

[152]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 412; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 52-53

T'oegye used these two revisions to clarify his position regarding the combination of principle and material force vis-à-vis the feelings. Indeed, T'oegye argued that neither of the two are ever separated but that, regarding the Four or the Seven, each one points to its origin in the principle or in the material force. T'oegye wrote, "From this perspective, then, although neither of the two is separable from principle and material force, on the basis of their point of origin, each points to a predominant factor ~~and emphasis,~~ so there is no reason why we cannot say that the one is a matter of principle and the other a matter of material force."[153] That this is, indeed, monistic will be discussed further below.

T'oegye agreed that the Seven also issue from the unaroused state of the mind-and-heart. Because it is the unaroused state, they are surely good. But the nature of the Seven is such that they easily slip toward evil. This is an important fact for self-cultivation in T'oegye's view. Because the Seven easily slip, the Confucian must constantly watch over them. If anger occurs, one must remember to return to principle or original nature. It is interesting to note that Professor Yun Sasoon, in the introduction to his Korean translation of the Four-Seven Debate, gives equal weight to T'oegye's first statement, "good and evil are not yet fixed" and to the final version, "they are originally good but easily devolve into evil" without mentioning that the first statement was stricken out completely.[154] Neglecting to mention the revision privileges the dualistic side of T'oegye's thought.

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[153] *T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 412; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate,* 52-53.

[154] Yun Sasoon, *Hanguk,* 77.

Revision Five:

> This is all a matter of approaching principle and material force in their mutual fulfillment of each other and ~~one sidedly referring exclusively to the material force aspect.~~ **referring to the combination, but with a predominant focus on material force.** How are these four cases anything but a matter of approaching what is similar and understanding that there are also differences?[155]

Again, T'oegye emphasized the combination of principle and material force. However, the last sentence of revision five was also a gentle criticism of Kobong. T'oegye throughout criticized Kobong for being too quick to see similarities and blind to differences. To T'oegye, Kobong suffers, as it were, from not seeing the trees for the forest.

The fifth revision was more of a response to Kobong rather than an influence on T'oegye. Because it furthered the Chu Hsi -T'oegye orthodoxy, I will explore this more below. Suffice it to say here that T'oegye allowed himself to be influenced by the junior scholar. I will now turn to where T'oegye was influenced; namely, T'oegye progressed toward a more clear position of what Kalton has called dualistic monism.

DUALISTIC MONISM

Semantics played an important role throughout the debate. Indeed, Professor Kalton believes that Kobong's final acceptance of T'oegye's theory lied not so much in the fact that he was swayed by T'oegye's argument, but that he misinterpreted T'oegye's use of words.[156] Certainly, much hinged on the semantics of various words and phrases.

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[155]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 412; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate,* 54.

[156]Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, commentary, 63-64.

In certain cases only one or two characters were revised or omitted. From the beginning of the debate, T'oegye was uncomfortable with the semantics and phraseology. With the help of Kobong, T'oegye moved more to a monistic position, albeit retaining an analytical or logical dualism in the phenomenal realm; hence, I follow Kalton's interpretation that the T'oegye thesis was "dualistic monism."

As mentioned above, T'oegye set the tone early in the debate with what he hoped to achieve. The main reason, he stated, for his revision of Chŏng's diagram was that "the dichotomy was too stark."[157] This was a clear indication that he wanted to achieve a more monistic approach. I believe he was successful in this.

T'oegye began with the monistic argument that both the Four and the Seven are equally feelings. He then accepted the burden of proof as to why they have separate terminology, but remain the same kind of entity. As discussed above, he used the binary terms of substance/function and the original/physical nature as analogy. If it is permissible to speak of the nature in terms of binary concepts while retaining the idea of only one nature, then surely it is permissible to speak of the feelings in terms of principle and material force, while recognizing that there is only one set of human feelings. What was important to T'oegye at this point was the "point of reference." As the original nature points back to principle, or the purely good state of nature in itself; so, too, do the Four Beginnings point back to principle, or the pure state of the mind-and-heart. Likewise, the Seven Feelings' point of reference is material force. However, as T'oegye

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[157]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 405; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 8.

clarified several times throughout the debate, principle and material force are never separated; therefore, the Four and the Seven likewise involve both, but for conceptual and self-cultivation purposes, the Chu School Confucians like T'oegye make the distinctions. As T'oegye writes, "Could it be anything other than a matter of approaching the composite of principle as endowed with material force and pointing to this as the aspect of principle in its original condition as endowed by Heaven?"[158] Again, when seen from Chu School semantics, dualism was only part of T'oegye's thought.

The reason for the dichotomous terminology then was due to ancient Confucians and T'oegye doing different things with the terminology. Mencius singled out the Four in an effort to prove human nature is good. The Four being Beginnings of the nature are purely good. Therefore, because all humans have these Four Beginnings within, human nature can be called good. Tzu-ssu spoke of the Seven Feelings as those human feelings which must be watched over to become "harmonious." T'oegye also emphasized the analytical distinction of the Four and the Seven in terms of self-cultivation. Like other Chu School thinkers, T'oegye's final statement specifically regarding the Seven was that they are originally good, but easily slip toward evil. This was not the case with the Four, which are the physical manifestations of the good human nature. The consequences of this distinction, then, is as follows: first, the distinction is required so as to not confuse human desire with heavenly principle, and second, that the Seven, therefore, require constant attention.

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[158]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 406; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 9.

As I have pointed out in the above discussion of Kobong's influence on T'oegye's evolution of thought, T'oegye progressed to a more clear philosophy of dualistic monism. This is seen clearly in T'oegye's fourth revision. T'oegye struck out of the text the phrase, "one sidedly referring exclusively to the material force aspect" to elucidate more clearly the *combination* of principle and material force. From this point on, T'oegye carefully worded his statements so that it was clear he was referring to the dyad of principle and material force. This is T'oegye's monistic framework. He approached the reality of sameness, but was able to see the conceptual differences.

At the end of T'oegye's revised letter, he attached a lengthy discussion regarding points of agreement and disagreement. T'oegye furthered the argument by introducing new phraseology and by making use of older analogies. T'oegye introduced the concept of mutual issuance (*hobal*, *hufa*) to show that principle and material force are mutually involved in the arousal of both the Four and the Seven. The analogy T'oegye chose to prove his monistic framework was the Chu school analogy of the horse and rider to show the mutual interaction of principle and material force.

As Chu Hsi had done, T'oegye used the traditional horse and rider analogy to prove the mutual issuing, yet distinguished, entities. This analogy, which Sung Confucians originally used in the cosmic context of principle and material force, showed that one may speak exclusively to principle or material force, but that the other was always there, though implied. The analogy stated that one could speak of the horse, but it was understood that the rider was there; or vice versa, one could speak of the rider, and people

knew the horse was there. This was an important analogy for T'oegye. He needed to retain the distinctiveness of the Four and the Seven for self-cultivation purposes, but that both principle and material force were always present and needed to be included.

Mutual issuance which, according to Kalton, remained a pivotal issue for several years, was a term introduced by T'oegye to prove both interdependence and distinguishableness.[159] T'oegye argued that the *function* of principle and material force is mutually issued. Because they both play a role, it is permissible to speak of them as a whole or as the individuals apart, though we recognize that they are never separated. In T'oegye's words, "Since both are included, there is certainly an undifferentiated way of speaking of them; since each has its particular role, therefore there is nothing impermissible in a way of speaking that distinguishes them."

For T'oegye the Four-Seven Debate was not empty speculation, but rather of the utmost importance for purposes of self-cultivation. Therefore, the consequences of the theory were more important than winning the debate. For T'oegye, then, the consequences of Kobong's theory were dire indeed. To T'oegye, Confucians must be able to separate the Four and the Seven so as not to confuse the two, and to be able to watch over the Seven when it is noticed they are slipping towards evil. T'oegye stated,

> How could one refer to this kind of vulgar thesis as grounds for confusing the status of the Four Beginnings as the pure issuance of Heavenly Principle! This kind of theory not only is of no benefit in clarifying the true Tao, but on the

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[159]Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, commentary, 63.

> contrary I fear that it would be harmful to pass it on as instruction for later students.[160]

Therefore, the final wording of the statement that caused the discussion also included a clear description of the combination of both. Though T'oegye did not respond at any length to Kobong's subsequent letters, the fact that T'oegye included this final wording in his diagrams for the king proves that he was quite satisfied with the outcome of the debate. Further, the final statement was the culminating effort of a great scholar who was humble enough to accept some advice and criticisms from a junior scholar and make appropriate modifications in his thesis. But the final wording also shows T'oegye's evolution of thought towards a dualism under a monistic framework. His final statement reads, "It's only that in the case of the Four, principle issues them and material force follows it, while in the case of the Seven material force issues them and principle mounts it."[161]

The final reading implied an active role for principle. Though Yun Sasoon showed problems with it,[162] the theory allowed T'oegye to retain the distinctive elements required for self-cultivation while showing the mutual interdependence of principle and material force required for the cosmic view. T'oegye was much more interested in making the self-cultivation part easier to follow than clarifying abstract cosmology. Indeed, T'oegye

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[160]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 423; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 77.

[161]*T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, vol. 1, 417; translated in Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, 65.

[162]Yun Sasoon argues that the theory of an active role for principle produces a contradiction. Yun Sasoon, *Critical Issues*, 63-82.

said we would need to wait for a latter-day Chu Hsi to do this for us. However, in my opinion, even the active role of principle in T'oegye's thought is not inconsistent with Chu Hsi's philosophy, which also allowed for the Great Ultimate (*t'ai-chi*), which he called pure *li*, to have an active role in issuing the two *ch'i*, i.e., *yin* and *yang*.

VI. CONCLUSION

CH'ENG-CHU ORTHODOXY AND THE FOUR-SEVEN DEBATE

The Four-Seven Debate was an important watershed in the development of Korean Confucianism. In that the controversy was continued in subsequent generations, it contributed in no small way to the Ch'eng-Chu school's status as state orthodoxy and as an important school of thought in Korea. It is going too far, however, to suggest that the Koreans were exclusively devoted to Ch'eng-Chu philosophy. Korean thinkers had access to and were influenced by writers both inside and outside the Ch'eng-Chu school. In T'oegye's evolution of thought, one can see T'oegye moving to a position that clearly represented the Ch'eng-Chu orthodox philosophy. However, one can see in Kobong's thought similarities to the Chinese critics of the Ch'eng-Chu school.

T'oegye, defender of the faith. T'oegye was Korea's foremost defender of the orthodox Ch'eng-Chu school. As viewed from his evolution of thought towards a more clear theory of dualistic monism, though he certainly clarified the Chu school concepts of principle and material force vis-à-vis the Four Beginnings and Seven Feelings, he remained in line with Chu Hsi's teachings. Indeed, T'oegye was satisfied that even the initial statement by Chŏng Chiun could stand, when viewed in light of Chu Hsi's teachings.

As discussed above, within Chu Hsi's synthesis of Sung Confucians there existed a certain dualistic tension. Though this dualism was only superficial, there were enough statements in Chu Hsi's thought that certainly appeared dualistic. When taken as a whole, however, one can see that Chu Hsi was monistic with only analytical or logical dualistic aspects to his thought. Though several examples regarding the dualism or monism of Chu

Hsi could be given, one statement seems to imply both aspects of Chu Hsi's thought. "Fundamentally principle and material force cannot be spoken of as prior or posterior. But if we trace their origin, we are obliged to say that principle is prior. However, principle is not a separate entity. It exists right in material force. Without material force, principle would have not to adhere to."[163] Commenting on this statement, Wing-tsit Chan said, "Thus principle is both immanent and transcendent. In other words, he is neither a monist nor a dualist, or he is both a monist and a dualist."[164] Or as Professor Kalton has succinctly described this system, "dualistic monism."

T'oegye's evolution of thought to a position of monistic dualism is a clear example that T'oegye understood well this aspect of Chu Hsi. Though Kobong was convincing in various areas, T'oegye never gave up the idea that, though principle and material force are interconnected and inseparable, one may, for purposes of self-cultivation, conceptually distinguish them. This, T'oegye argued, was necessary first, to distinguish between heavenly principle and human desires, and second, to encourage due vigilance over the Seven Feelings. The Four Beginning were natural expressions of the nature and, accordingly, did not need vigilance for them to attain the mean.

Kobong's monistic challenge. If T'oegye was the defender of Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy, where does that leave Kobong? In most respects, Kobong was a faithful follower of the Ch'eng-Chu orthodox school. However, as we have seen, many aspects of

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[163]Translated in Chan, *Source Book*, 634.

[164]Chan, *Source Book*, comm., 634.

his thought seem to resonate with some of the Ch'eng-Chu critics. This, at least indirectly, calls into question conventional wisdom regarding Chosŏn dynasty's "exclusive devotion" to Ch'eng-Chu writings. Professor Deuchler acknowledges that while most "heterodox" (i.e., non-Ch'eng-Chu) writings were known, Chosŏn Confucians "did not, however, tolerate deviations from the scriptural basis of the Ch'eng-Chu school."[165] Indeed, traditional wisdom assumes that these heterodox teachings were often banned, ignored, or studied surreptitiously.

Nonetheless, in the person of Kobong, we see evidence that the broader Confucian tradition was studied on top of his desk. Kobong shows striking similarities to the Hunan school and to Lo Ch'in-shun. Though Kobong disavows knowlege of Lo Ch'in-shun, these two schools of thought were known in Korea at the time of the Four-Seven Debate. And they must have exerted some influence on his thinking. Some of the similarities to the Hunan school include the following: first, mind-and-heart as substance is nature, as function is the feelings. This is different from T'oegye, who agreed with Chu that the mind controlled the nature and the feelings. Second, regarding movement of the mind-and-heart, both Kobong and the Hunan scholars saw the Four and the Seven as being aroused by external things. And third, with regard to good and evil, though Chang Shih moved away from Hu Hung's thought that nature is beyond good and evil, he allowed for the possibility that the Four Beginnings could be expressed incorrectly. This is almost identical with Kobong's thesis regarding the Four as merely a subset of the Seven.

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[165]Deuchler, "Reject the False," 382; see also Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, xvii, xix;

Interestingly, in the course of the debate, T'oegye accused Kobong as being like Lo Ch'in-shun. This implies both a knowledge of non-Ch'eng-Chu writings and that scholars were reading them. Though the similarities are not as striking as they initially seem, both scholars criticized the dualistic tensions in the Chu school. Though Kobong disagreed with Lo's idea that all reality is material force, Kobong's monistic concept of principle and material force cannot be said to be dissimilar.

One can see that T'oegye is Korea's foremost Ch'eng-Chu scholar. His thought regarding principle and material force vis-à-vis the feelings is consistent with what Chu Hsi wrote regarding the nature and the feelings. In the person of Kobong, however, evidence exists that he was reading and was influenced by textual material outside the Ch'eng-Chu school. More research needs to be done on the Four-Seven Debate taking into account a broader spectrum of thinkers.

APPENDIX A

THOUGHTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Multiple natures. As mentioned above, the Chinese Confucians discussed principle and material force vis-à-vis human nature and gave scant attention to the feelings. The Korean Confucians, on the other hand, primarily focused on principle and material force vis-à-vis the feelings. Professor Wing-tsit Chan correctly points out two reasons why Chinese thinkers did not debate the topic on the level of the feelings: they relied primarily on the *Doctrine of the Mean* with its four feelings rather than the *Book of Rites* with its seven feelings; and, they had a long tradition of matching philosophical concepts which was unsuitable to seven feelings.[166] However, why did the Koreans go this route? One possible answer, which deserves further research, is Herman Ooms's notion of multiple natures.

In *Tokugawa Village Practice*, Professor Ooms discusses the *eta:hinin* of Japan in terms of status and racism. The *eta:hinin* constitute the lowest class status in Japan; indeed, Professor Ooms argues that they are a "nonstatus" category or outside of the traditional class structure of Japan.[167] The *eta* fill those occupations such as butchers, tanners, etc., and like the other four classes was hereditary. The *hinin*, or "nonhuman," were the beggars, prostitutes, etc., and was not hereditary. One could enter or leave this status according to various circumstances. This group of people experience discrimination and segregation at the hand of the majority Japanese. Most majority Japanese viewed the *eta:hinin* as polluted and biologically different. They were required to distinguish

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[166]Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies*, 249-251.

[167]Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, 243.

themselves from the majority Japanese by wearing animal fur. They were also victim to other discriminatory laws such as an early curfew, a prohibition against entering peasant homes, different punishments in the courts, etc. Professor Ooms writes, "This led not only to perceptions of *kawata* [*eta*] as lawbreakers and their communities as 'hotbeds of criminals' but also to racist views that naturalized the *kawata* as literally nonhuman."[168] Professor Ooms then shows various examples were the eta:hinin and also foreigners are viewed as nonhuman. He quotes one Tokugawa scholar as follows: "Prostitutes and kawaramono are considered lowly people . . . [b]ecause they are of a *different stock*."[169] And again regarding the animalistic aspects of the *eta*

Ooms quotes another scholar as follows: "[they have] one rib-bone lacking; they have one dog's bone in them; they have distorted sexual organs; they have defective excretory systems; if they walk in moonlight their neck will not cast shadows; and, they being animals, dirt does not stick to their feet when they walk barefooted."[170] Regarding this multiple natures existing within Japanese society Ooms writes, "Tokugawa scholars may have tended to downplay or ignore the notion of the universality of human nature so central to Confucianism."[171] This model of downplaying or ignoring the concept of the

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[168]Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, 292.

[169]Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, 301; emphasis mine.

[170]Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, 303.

[171]Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, 301.

universal human nature and seeing in the various class groups a biological origin is also seen in Korean society of the Chosŏn dynasty.

It is possible that though the Chinese argued for a universal human nature, the Koreans implicitly sought multiple natures among the different classes. Korea was rigidly hierarchical, having not only the traditional four classes, viz., scholar, farmer, artisan, and merchant, but also a mean or low-born class of butchers, tanners, and slaves, etc. Even within these classes, people where distinguished by age and gender. These classes and hierarchies were not quite as rigid as a caste system, but still primarily hereditary. There is evidence in Korea also of what Ooms terms "intra-race racism." [172] By the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn dynasties, the slave population grew so large that early Korea can be classified as a slave society.[173] Professor Deuchler comments that "T'oegye forcefully defended Korea's hierarchical social order which was built upon the differentiation of primary and secondary descent lines and between high and low status."[174] Accordingly, T'oegye probably wished to de-emphasize the universality of human nature in order to justify the existence of slaves and outcasts. Indeed, outside of the Four-Seven Debate much energy was spent to show how slaves were different from the rest of society. Though they were racially and ethnically identical, the Koreans viewed them as of a different kind. Stories and philosophical theories abounded regarding not only the

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[172]Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, 302.

[173]Ellen Salem, "Slavery in Medieval Korea" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1978), 140, 152-154.

[174]Deuchler, "Reject the False," 391.

difference of slaves, but also the moral degeneracy of the class. Salem quotes from the *Koryŏsa* several instances which show how slaves are of a different kind (*lei*) , i.e., worse, stock; and further, that they possess a "hereditary moral taint."[175] She quotes a letter the Korean King sent to the Chinese emperor. In this letter he argued that "slaves possessed a hereditary predisposition to do evil" and further that they [slaves] "are of a different kind (*lei*)."[176] Because slaves were thought to be at least different, if not degenerate, and because this status was hereditary, one can assume that Koreans presupposed that slaves possessed a different kind of nature. When one looks to the feelings rather than the nature, two consequence emerge. First, the whole question of universality is thus avoided. And second, differences can even be emphasized depending on the evil or goodness of the feelings aroused.

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[175]Salem, "Slavery in Medieval Korea," 77.

[176]*Koryŏsa*, 85:39:43b-44a9, 631; quoted in Salem, "Slavery in Medieval Korea," 77.

APPENDIX B

TERMINOLOGY

Pre-modern Korea used Classical Chinese in all correspondence. Therefore, a discussion of these Classical Chinese terms which are central to the debate is in order. Chinese philosophical terms rarely have a one to one English translation, and this necessitates a broader discussion. Furthermore, often within the contemporary scholarly community the same word is used to mean an entirely different context which blurs if not obliterates communication. The danger, it seems to me, is in a kind of linguistic solipsism, in other words, the "term means only what I say it means and no more." However, words are always used within a diachronic language of a community. To understand the debates and culture of pre-modern Korea we must be able to understand how they used the terms. But because our definitions color how we view history, in addition to the English translations, a review of contemporary thought on these definitions is useful.

CLASSICAL TERMS

***Li*[177]** [Principle]: Like all words, English or Chinese, the denotation and connotation of terms evolve over centuries of use. The Chinese term *li* is a good example of a word which has gone through considerable evolution over the previous two millennia. It rose from a little used term to a philosophical concept central to the Confucian renaissance during the Sung. So important did the term *li* become to the Ch'eng-Chu school during the Sung that "[t]he entire movement is called *Li-hsüeh* (School of *li*)."[178]

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[177]For additional succinct discussions of terminology see the following: Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy,* 783-791; Kalton, *To Become a Sage*, 210-218.

[178]Wing-tsit Chan, "Neo-Confucian Concept of *Li*," 123-148.

Prior to the Sung the term was rarely used in the Classics, and then usually in a different denotation. For example, it does not appear in the *Analects* and only twice in *The Doctrine of the Mean* where it means "distinctive, discriminating."[179] Some of the early meanings were grains or lines found in a piece of jade or the polishing of jade.[180] In other instances it is used as a verb meaning to put in order or to distinguish.[181] However, the meaning which became most crucial during the Sung and beyond is something akin to normative pattern, law, reason, pattern, or most commonly, principle. It is also commonly used as a binomial meaning moral principle (*I-li*) and in conjunction with Heaven (*t'ien*), human nature (*hsing*), and the Great Ultimate (*t'ai-chi*). One modern Chinese philosopher went as far as to equate *li* to the Platonic Forms of Greek philosophy.[182] Sung Confucians were not the first to use it to denote abstract principle; it was first used in this sense by *Mo Tzu*, and it also appears in the *Chuang Tzu* and the *Hsün Tzu*. Mencius used the word in this denotation three times, but Buddhists during the T'ang dynasty made it a major philosophical concept.[183] But, Professor Chan argues that it was not until the "Five Masters of the Northern Sung that the idea of *li* acquired the important status."[184]

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[179]James Legge's translation. See James Legge, trans., *Confucius*, 481.

[180]Chan, "Neo-Confucian Concept of *Li*,"128.

[181]Chan, "Neo-Confucian Concept of *Li*,"123.

[182]Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 2, 507.

[183]Chan, "Neo-Confucian Concept of *Li*,"124-126.

[184]Chan, "Neo-Confucian Concept of *Li*," 137.

With the concept of *li* occupying such a prominent philosophical position during the Sung, it is natural that the term takes on much more complex and subtle connotations. Further, each faction or philosopher during the Sung would have different uses for the term. For example, Lu Hsiang-shan (1139-1193) and Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529) said that "mind is principle."[185] For the Ch'eng-Chu school, Professor Willard Peterson translates *li* as "coherence" and then provides eight premises regarding uses and connotations. Because many of these premises were at the root of the Four-Seven Debate, and much of contemporary scholarly discussion, they are worth quoting here in full:

> One, there is coherence (*li*) for each and every thing, whether that thing is taken as heaven and earth as a whole, or a thing smaller than a cricket, an ant, or a blade of grass. Two, coherence (*li*) is unitary. Three, coherence (*li*) of objects or phenomena is not locatable independently of *ch'i*. Four, coherence (*li*) is categorically distinct from the *ch'i* of which things are constituted. Five, coherence (*li*) is transcendent as well as immanent. Six, coherence (*li*) is that be which a thing is as it is. Seven, each phenomenon has its associated ultimate or "perfect coherence" (*chih li*), which may or may not be attained. Eight, coherence (*li*) is intelligible on all levels of integration, a blade of grass, a school of fish, the experience of a life-time, heaven and earth, the Great Ultimate.[186]

Ch'i / Ki [Material Force/ Energy]: The early meaning of *ch'i* was similar to air, breath, vapor, or weather and often retains this meaning in modern parlance. Early on however it takes on the added denotation of spirit or force. Mencius uses the word in

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[185]Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 572.

[186]Willard Peterson, "Another Look at *Li*," 13-31.

terms of a 'moving force'[187] or 'flood-like *ch'i*'[188] (*huo jan chih ch'i*) which is the result of Confucian cultivation. The most familiar usage in the Western world is the two complementary aspects of the Great Ultimate (*t'ai-chi*), viz. the *Yin* and *Yang,* which are the passive and active phases of reality, respectively. As a result of *Yin/Yang*, *ch'i* manifests its material aspect. *Ch'i* is that material stuff from which the universe is made. It is through *ch'i* that the universe has differentiation and individuation. *Ch'i* can be extremely refined and pure, such as in spirits, sages, and humans, or rough and impure, such as in animals, plants, and minerals. It is also the concretetizing aspect of reality. When *ch'i* moves or condenses, things come into being. Similar to the concept of *hsin* (heart- and- mind), *Ch'i* also carries with it a two-fold denotation, though there is no spirit/ matter dichotomy of the Western type implied. Fortuitously, our modern definition of energy is remarkably similar to *ch'i*. Einstein's theory tells us that energy and matter are related in a holistic way. This way is parallel to the Chinese concept. Energy can condense to become matter and matter can likewise expand to become energy. It is both two and one. It is at once the vital energy of the universe and the stuff with which it is made. Accordingly, some of the common translations include the following: material force, ether, vital energy, matter energy, psycho-physical energy, or just energy.

Tao-hsüeh / To-hak [True Way Learning] and **Neo-Confucianism**: Neo-Confucianism has been the focus of much debate by contemporary intellectual historians.

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[187] Fung, *A History*, Vol. 1, 131.

[188] *Mencius,* 2A/2; Lau, trans.,76-80.

This school, in its narrow sense of the learning of human nature and principle (*hsing-li hsüeh / Sŏng-li hak*), which convention tells us enjoyed near exclusive attention during the Chosŏn dynasty. I will attempt to review briefly the current debate and then delineate its uses for the present study. Conventional usage of the term "Neo-Confucianism" has been used by many scholars to mean quite different things. The Chinese philosopher Fung Yu-lan stated in his early work that "[t]he term Neo-Confucianism is a newly coined Western equivalent for *Tao-hsüeh.*"[189] Though in his later work he, according to Tillman, "called for scholars in China to use the term "*Tao-hsüeh*" in its historical sense as it was used during the eleventh and twelfth centuries rather than to follow the Ch'ing practice of confusing *Tao-hsüeh* with the later (mid-thirteenth-century) and more narrow term *li-hsüeh* (School of Principle, i.e., Chu Hsi's school, also called Neo-Confucianism by some modern scholars)."[190] Professor Wm. Theodore de Bary uses the term to capture "all aspects" of Sung learning and beyond. At the same time, however, he also identifies Neo-Confucianism as *li-hsüeh,* but again wants his usage broader (to some unspecified degree) than *li-hsüeh* implies.[191] At the other end of the spectrum, Professor Wing-tsit Chan used the term in the narrower scope of the Ch'eng-Chu school. On a totally different

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[189]Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, 268.

[190]Feng [Fung] Yu-lan, "Lüeh-lun Tao-hsüeh te t'e-tien, ming-ch'eng ho hsing-shih" [A brief discourse on the characteristics, name, and form of *Tao-hsüeh*]. In Chung-kuo che-hsüeh-shih hsüeh-hui [Association for studying the history of Chinese philosophy], ed., *Lun Sung Ming li-hsüeh* [Studies on Sung and Ming Confucianism]. Hangchow: Che-chiang jen-min, 1983; quoted from Tillman, *Confucian Discourse*, 266.

[191]William Theodore de Bary, "The Uses of Neo-Confucianism," 541-555.

wavelength, Professor Conrad Schirokauer argues that the term is only part of Western discourse about China and cannot be directly linked to any Chinese term.[192] However, he wrongly asserts the Chinese term *hsin ju-hsüeh* (New Confucian Learning) is a Chinese translation of the word "Neo-Confucianism." With such a wide disparity of definitions, confusion or lack of clarity will ultimately arise. Professor Tillman argues that the term "Neo-Confucianism" in Professor de Bary's usage is so vague and so broad as to render it useless as an analytical category. Referring to the whole range of usages, Tillman states: "This all-too-convenient rubric has been employed by various people to refer to quite different circles of philosophers and positions."[193] He suggests rather an adoption of "historical terms that are more specific about the range of the thinkers included."[194] Often, Chu Hsi himself, or later dynasties narrowed the range of thinkers involved with the movement which proved a red herring for modern scholars due to the elastic boundaries of the school throughout history. Many schools and voices participated in the Confucian Renaissance of the Sung dynasty. Within *Sung hsüeh* (Sung Learning) were many different schools of thought: the group of reformers led by Wang An-shih, the poet-scholar Su Shih, and finally the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship, just to name a few. In addition, there were "conventional Confucians" who did not participate in, nor identify with, the

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[192] Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, *Ordering the World*, 11.

[193] Tillman, "A New Direction in Confucian Scholarship," 455-474.

[194] Tillman, "A New Direction in Confucian Scholarship," 457.

Confucian Renaissance of the eleventh-century, but rather chose to continue T'ang or even earlier Confucian traditions.

As Professor Tillman shows, the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship developed as a discourse with many thinkers interacting during the Sung dynasty. As Chu Hsi's contemporaries died, his own voice became more authorative. With his ascendency, he was able to narrow considerably the scope of the fellowship. The expurgated version of *Tao-hsüeh* gradually became known as the Ch'eng-Chu school because of Chu Hsi's extensive use of the Ch'eng brothers, particularly Ch'eng I, and the exclusion of other voices. Part and parcel to the narrowing of *Tao-hsüeh* tradition, many voices were eventually either marginalized, such as Li T'ung and Shao Yung, or completely expunged from the tradition, such as Ssu-ma Kuang and Lu Chiu-yüan (Hsiang-shan), etc. Eventually, beginning in the Yüan and continuing through subsequent dynasties, the Ch'eng-Chu faction ascended to full orthodoxy, but it can be considered only a narrow wing of the broader *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship of Sung times.

The concept of transmission of the Way (*Tao-t'ung*) was vitally important to the Confucian revival, especially during the Southern Sung. The members of the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship viewed themselves as recoverers and transmitters of the true Tao of Confucius. This intra-cultural transmission of the Tao, *as presented by Chu Hsi*, had been interrupted by more than a thousand years between Mencius and Chou Tun-i. The fellowship saw itself as recovering this Tao and transmitting it to their disciples and students. It is interesting to note that Chu Hsi did not include his own teacher, Li T'ung, in the line of

transmission.[195] Chu Hsi fixed this line of transmission, which ultimately became orthodoxy, as follows: beginning with the ancient sages such as Yao and Shun, to Confucius and Mencius, then Chou Tun-i, Ch'eng Hao, Ch'eng I, and Chang Tsai, concluding with himself and his disciple.[196]

In partial response to Mongol encroachment, the Southern Sung court established the Ch'eng-Chu school with its orthodox line of transmission as state orthodoxy in 1241 in an attempt to prove themselves keepers of the true Confucian Way. Likewise, in an attempt at legitimation, the Mongols began worshiping at a Confucian temple and began establishing a civil service exam. After the Mongols conquered the Sung dynasty in 1279, Ch'eng-Chu Confucianism became firmly ensconced as state orthodoxy in 1315 when it was selected as the official interpretations for the civil examinations.

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[195]Chu Hsi, however, was inconsistent over time in who was included or excluded. In 1194, Chu Hsi included his teacher Li T'ung to show a personal connection with the line of transmission. See Tillman, *Confucian Discourse,* 138.

[196]Chan, *A Source Book*, 482, 520, 589.

APPENDIX C

BACKGROUND

Korean Context

How is it that our two Korean philosophers placed themselves in the middle of a Chinese debate thereby causing shifts in the Korean *Zeitgeist* and *Realpolitik*? First, location of the Korean peninsula plays an important factor. Unlike Japan where physical distance and an ocean separate her from China, the modern Korean peninsula's northern border is conterminous for all but a small fraction with what was in the Republican period of the twentieth century called China's Northeast (*Dongbei*). China's major eastern coastal ports are only a short distance by boat over the Yellow Sea.[197] The ancient Korean kingdom of Parhae (Chinese, *P'o-hai*; 713- 926) extended its borders well into modern *Dongbei* where they dominated the region and established a highly advanced civilization based on the T'ang dynastic model.[198] At the fall of Parhae in 926, Koryŏ began pushing its borders northward toward the Yalu and Tumen rivers, though there were several disputes and incursions along the northern border with both the Khitan and the Jurchen. The peninsula's location, however, is a double-edged sword; on the one hand, close proximity to China gave it easy access to Chinese culture, but, on the other hand, the same northern tribes that menaced or defeated China also did the same to Korea. Korea was forever defending its borders from outside aggressors: Chinese, Japanese, or the Khitan, Jurchen, Mongols, and Westerners.

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[197] For one example of communication over this route see Lee, *Sourcebook*, 44.

[198]The *Parhae* kingdom was ruled by people of Koguryo ethnic stock. When the dynasty fell, the elite fled southward. They ruled over ancestors of later Jurchen. Modern Korean scholars suggest that the greatness of Parhae was an example to the Jurchen to establish their own dynasty, the Chin. See Ki-baik Lee, *A New History*, 91.

Second, China was long a suzerain state over the smaller peninsular state of Korea. This did not distress the Korean monarchy for several reasons. Although it was a tributary system and Korea was required to give tribute to China on several occasions, China usually reciprocated with gifts. This was the only officially sanctioned form of trade between the two countries. To this end Korea sent several envoy missions to China each year, usually on such special occasions such as an emperor's birthday, New Year, or a new emperor's ascension. Having the larger state of China as a suzerain, Korea often received protection from China at a time of foreign aggression, but without accompanying interference in its domestic affairs. In addition, Korea was a willing participant in the Chinese sphere of influence — which meant that Koreans usually saw themselves as civilized to the extent that they were able to emulate Chinese culture. In the suzerain relationship, Korea had greater access to the culture which it so admired. This meant that Korean emissaries often returned with Chinese material and intellectual culture. Through study of these books Koreans became competent in Chinese philosophy, and not a few actually studied at the Confucian academy in the Chinese capital. Some even passed the civil service exam. However, Korea staunchly retained its own unique culture even at the height of Chinese cultural influx; indeed, Korea was not afraid to fight off China when the latter was too much encroaching in her internal affairs.

Through Korean envoys to China, Korea imported large amounts of material and intellectual culture. Included among these were Chinese philosophy and religion. Though the exact circumstances are unknown, Han Confucianism was probably imported

first into the northern kingdom of *Koguryŏ* where it then spread to the southern kingdoms of *Silla* and *Paekchae*. There is evidence of a National Academy (*T'aehak*) established in *Koguryŏ* by 372, so one can assume that the Confucian textual materials were probably imported long before. Confucian ideology remained predominately within the educated elite circles and the government officials. Korea remained essentially Buddhist or Shamanic in her religious life for the next thousand years.

When An Hyang brought back Chu Hsi's writings around 1286, Buddhism was at the height of its power. Buddhism was ensconced at court as exemplified in the appointment of a Buddhist monk, Sin Ton, to a major post. Buddhism controlled thousands of acres of tax exempt land, thousands of monks who were exempt from corvée labor and taxes, and also multitudes of slaves, who were also exempt from corvée and taxes. At this time, Neo-Confucianism grew up peacefully and co-existently with the predominant Buddhist ideology. Indeed, scholars and monks studied Neo-Confucianism together at Buddhist temples. It would not be until the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty that Neo-Confucian scholars began to criticize Buddhism.

Around 1390, Neo-Confucian scholars teamed up with military leaders to overthrow the Koryŏ dynasty. In 1392, Yi Sŏng-gye declared the Koryŏ corrupt, ascended the throne, and declared a new dynasty. Several Confucian scholars loyal to the Koryŏ court fled the capital and refused to serve the new dynasty. The legacy of these scholars gave rise to the *sarim* faction. With Confucian scholars now in place as Merit Subjects and Neo-Confucian scholars also residing in the countryside, one can see several

important correlations in the rise of Neo-Confucianism and the nascency of Chosŏn dynasty. These correlations or tools set the foundation for the establishment of Neo-Confucianism in Chosŏn Korean, which eventually led to the philosophical environment and the Four-Seven Debate during the 16th century. First, the Confucian revolutionaries used the paleo-Confucian concept of Change of Mandate (*hyŏngmyŏng, ke-ming*) to justify the overthrow of the Koryŏ.[199] Second, early Chosŏn scholars saw in Neo-Confucianism a tool for practical governance.[200] Third, the adoption and adaptation of the *Chiangnan* model of agriculture, which utilized water control and fertilizers to enable wet-rice cultivation, allowed for a rise in productivity which in turn aided the growth of Neo-Confucianism outside the capital.[201] Fourth, after the fall of the Ming in the seventeenth century, Koreans saw themselves as the guardians of Civilization and of course its attendant ideology, thus securing a place for Neo-Confucianism in Korea.[202]

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[199]Lee, *Sourcebook*, 479. Yi Sŏng-gye's founding edict reads in part, "Some have been blessed with the Mandate of Heaven and others have lost it. This is a principle that has remained constant." *T'ae-jo sillok*, I:43a, translated in Lee, *Sourcebook*, 480.

[200]For a more complete description of how Neo-Confucianism was used to transform Korea into a Confucian civilization see Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea.*

[201]One hundred years elapsed before Koreans were able to fully adapt the Chiangnan model to the dryer Korean climate. By the sixteenth century, which was the time of Yi T'oegye and the growth of Neo-Confucianism, innovations such as the "water wall" were in wide scale use. Yi T'ae-jin, "The Socio-Economic Background."

[202]Professor Kalton writes, "the Koreans self-confidently pronounced themselves the sole guardians of the True Learning. In no other East Asian society did the Ch'eng-Chu school of thought enjoy such exclusive attention or intensive development." Kalton, *The Four-Seven Debate*, xix. See also Deuchler, "Attitudes Toward Heterodoxy," 377, 401.

KOREAN CH'ENG-CHU SCHOOL

Under the Mongol's Yüan dynasty (1271-1368) *Koryŏ* Korea began importing Ch'eng-Chu writings. The introduction of Ch'eng-Chu philosophy to Korea is traditionally credited to An Hyang (1243-1306) who first became acquainted with the works of Chu Hsi in 1286 while staying at the Yüan capital as a Korean envoy to the Mongol court.[203] He copied the literature and returned with it to his native Korea.[204] This was a time of great cosmopolitanism and cultural exchange in the Yüan capital. In an attempt to control the Korean court, many Korean kings were forced to take Mongol brides and their children resided in Yüan China. In addition, many scholars also studied at Peking, and some even passed the civil service exam and took official appointments.

[203]Even though the Korean Koryŏ dynasty had relations with the Sung and Chin dynasties, traditional wisdom states that Neo-Confucianism was not imported until the Mongol domination (1258-1368). Traditionally, this is accepted as true for two reasons. First, Buddhism was thoroughly ensconced in the Korean court and society. Second, Korea was often under attack from the Jurchen, Khitan, and Mongols, therefore material goods were more important than books, and in any case, books were not as accessible. However, Professor Tillman's research shows *Tao-hsüeh* writings influencing Chin thinkers and also the existence of a *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship as early as 1190 onward in the Chin (see Tillman, "Introduction" and "Confucianism under the Chin," in *China Under Jurchen Rule*, 15, 71-114). In light of this new research coupled with the fact that Korea had entered into a peaceful suzerain-subject relationship with the Chin, it is not unreasonable to assume that *Tao-hsüeh* was probably known in Korea much earlier than traditionally accepted.

[204]The historical record is unclear regarding which text or texts An Hyang read and introduced to Korea. His biography notes only "the works of Master Chu" (see *Hoehŏn silgi,* entry of 1290). The official biography in the *Koryŏsa* is also silent (see *Koryosa,* 105:2a-b, 315-321). *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*, ed. Peter H. Lee, wrongly asserts the text was *Chu-tzu ch'üan-shu* (Complete Works of Chu Hsi). However, this text was not compiled until 1713. He may have been exposed to the *Chu-tzu yü-lei* (Classified Conversations of Chu Hsi) which was compiled in 1270, however, documentation proves the complete text was not received in Korea until 1476 and 1482. More than likely it was the *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* [Collected writings of Chu Hsi], which was compiled in 1245. In addition, some of Chu's writings circulated in the Chin by around 1190, and it is possible that these Chin texts of Chu's writings might have formed part of the corpus that An Hyang copied.

During this time, Koryŏ Korea imported large amounts of cultural and intellectual material. For awhile, the newly imported Neo-Confucian ideology co-existed peacefully with the dominant religion of Koryŏ, namely Buddhism.

However, the Ming dynasty, which sprang up in China only twenty-four years prior to the Chosŏn dynasty in Korea, was not as cooperative. The Ming was extremely suspicious of the dynastic change in Korea due to misinformation regarding Yi Sŏng-gye, the founder of Chosŏn. Cultural exchange became severely restricted for most of the first half of the Ming dynasty, leaving Korean scholars to interpret this abstruse corpus unaided. As time passed, Korean Confucians became more confident in their ability to read and interpret Ch'eng-Chu writings.

The late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn saw the transmission and growth of the Ch'eng-Chu school. Such early scholars as An Hyang (1243-1306), who is traditionally credited with the introduction to Korea of the works of Chu Hsi, Chong Mongju (1337-1392), who was Korea's first great *sŏng ni hak (Hsing Li Hsüeh)* scholar and anti-Buddhist, and Chŏng Tojŏn (d. 1398) helped shape the new dynasty around Confucian and Neo-Confucian ideology.

With the demise of Koryŏ following Yi Sŏng-gye's coup d'é-tat, a new ideology was needed to justify the new regime.[205] This was found in Neo-Confucianism. Yi Sŏng-gye and his literati supporters made such extensive use of Confucianism and *To-hak*

[205] Preceding the coup, Koryŏ culture was thoroughly devastated due to several historical events, including the following: the previous loss of autonomy to the Mongols, Japanese piracy, Red Turban raids, and Ming dynasty encroachment. This devastation undermined Koryŏ culture which paved the way for the rise of a new dynasty and a new ideology, viz., Neo-Confucianism.

writings that it can be said that Chosŏn was the only East Asian regime officially founded under "Neo-Confucian auspices."[206] Indeed, the Confucian scholar-official Chŏng Tojŏn was quoted as saying he made use of Yi Sŏng-gye to fulfill his [Chŏng's] own dreams [of establishing a Confucian state based on *To-hak*].[207] The new régime made use of the paleo-Confucian concept of the Mandate of Heaven (*chŏnmyŏng, t'ienming*) to justify their usurpation of the Koryŏ throne by making explicit that the Mandate had fallen from the Koryŏ on to the Chosŏn. Some of Koryŏ's idealistic Confucian scholars nevertheless did not agree with the change of mandate and refused to serve the new dynasty.

The first century of Chosŏn could be characterized as an explosion of learning. Encouraged by the new Confucianism, scholars published during this period many monumental works of histories, gazetteers, anthologies of literature and medicine.[208] Though, what the Chosŏn is most known for is its devotion to Confucian ideology, both philosophy and ritual.

It is generally accepted that one of the distinctive characteristics of Korean Confucianism was its exclusive development of the Chu Hsi tradition. The Koreans knew of the early fifteenth century Chinese thinker Wang Yang-ming, but considered his school

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[206]Lee, *Source book*, 604.

[207]Lee, *Sourcebook*, 470.

[208]This was also the period of King Sejong (1418-1450) who is credited with the creation of the Korean alphabet (Hangŭl). In addition to literary output, advances were made in agriculture and technology as well. Such items as the printing press, astronomical clocks, sundials, and water clocks were either invented or improved on under King Sejong's rule.

heterodox and only a few disenfranchised scholars surreptitiously studied it.[209] The Chu Hsi philosophy retained its position as the official ideology of the state, but not without a price. Four bloody literati purges occurred when the Chu Hsi school was still in its Korean infancy: in 1498, 1504, 1519, and again in 1545.[210] These purges were due in large part to the tensions inherent in the Chosŏn polity. Kalton writes,

> Creative intellectual development of the tradition was not the first order of the day, however. The first century of the new dynasty was largely a time of institution building, as the new dynasty established its political and social character. The potentials of the Ch'eng-Chu vision were bifurcated, as busy bureaucrats attended to government affairs at the center, while those ousted for one reason or another from the power struggles at the center taught and pursued the intensive self-cultivation dimensions of Neo-Confucian learning in the countryside. The division was to prove explosive.[211]

These tensions came from primarily two sources: first, factionalism of conservatives and idealists (see below); and second, the power struggle between the aristocratic/bureaucratic officials and the king.[212] One result of the purges was many scholars retired from government positions to private country academies. In this political atmosphere, Yi T'oegye (Yi Hwang, 1501-1571) was one of those scholars-officials who constantly requested retirement or leave from office.

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[209]Chung, "The Wang Yang-Ming School,"15-22.

[210]See Wagner, *The Literati Purges*.

[211]Kalton, *Four-Seven Debate*, xx.

[212]Chosŏn Kings were seldom despotic or autocratic monarchs. Authority resided with the Kings, but power was often in the hands of the Yangban elite in the three censoring organs. Tensions resulted when the king attempted to bolster his power by playing the factions against each other, or when the factions would try to force the will of the king. See Sohn, "Social History."

However, government office continued to be the means to status and advancement during the late Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties. The ruling elite was selected primarily from the *yangban* class who passed the Chinese style civil service examination on the Confucian classics. Professor Ch'oe Yŏng-ho challenges traditional wisdom by showing that education and the examination system were open to all classes.[213] However, Professor Ch'oe does not offer any numbers of non-*yangban* who actually passed the tests and subsequently promoted to higher office. One can assume that the *yangban* had at least a de facto, if not de jure, monopoly on government office. Though the civil service exam was used in the recruitment of officials from all classes, only the *yangban* had the money and leisure to train their sons in the Confucian classics on which the tests were based. Even if the commoners had money, they rarely could afford the time away from the fields.[214] Further, the *yangban* made extensive use of the privilege or protection (ŭ*n, yin*) system, which allowed all upper level officials to have one son or a close relative bypass the exam and be directly appointed in the government. The protection system was changed slightly in the Chosŏn dynasty limiting its use to those sons of officials second rank and above. This caused the examination system to grow in importance for access to government positions, further tightening the Yangban's grip on government.

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[213]Yŏng-ho Ch'oe, *Civil Examinations and the Social Structure*, 91-98.

[214] Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 180.

Traditional historiography argues that Yi Sŏng-gye's coup d'é-tat had brought about a true revolution in Koryŏ.[215] The Koryŏ aristocracy was replaced by two classes of people in the Chosŏn. First were the meritorious elite or Merit Subjects (*kongsin*) who were placed on merit rosters on the basis of helping Yi Sŏng-gye and subsequent rulers ascend the throne. In the early part of the dynasty when there were succession struggles and usurpations, these lists often grew quite long. Merit Subjects were always close to the throne and always awarded special privileges. The second group were the *sarim*. These were the Neo-Confucian scholars who lived outside the capital and usually refused government appointment. While *all* scholar-officials were Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucians, it was those scholars who retired to the country that became the more moralistic of the two groups. Because of their moralizing attempts at creating the perfect society and at pursuing self-cultivation, the so-called *sarim* group put themselves in constant struggle with the Merit Subjects. This was in large degree responsible for the factionalism that marked the Yi dynasty.

Factionalism gradually became endemic in the Yi dynasty, as power struggles intensified between the meritorious elite and the *sarim.* It continued to rage even after each of the two groups were divided into sub-groups. Each group was then named according to geography or age, but eventually they became known just as the "four

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[215]However, recent scholarship is beginning to prove that the coup was not such a true revolution but rather the same class and even the same families were kept in the elite circles during the Koryŏ and Yi dynasties (See Carter J. Eckert et al., *Korea, Old and New*, 114. John Duncan, personal communication, UCLA, summer 1995). The *Yangban*'s exclusive use of the protection system and their firm grip on the examination system was at least partially responsible for the elite families' longevity.

colors." The Four-Seven Debate was just one of various dividing factors among the "four colors." Yi T'oegye's followers belonged to the "Easterner" faction and Ki Kobong's followers (Yi I continued Kobong's thesis and became the central figure) belonged to the "Westerner" faction.[216]

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[216]Ki-baek Li, *A New History of Korea*, 221.

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