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A Study of Ch'usa Kim Chǒng-hŭi: The Introduction of Qing Evidential Learning into Chosŏn Korea and a Reassessment of Practical Learning

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the life and scholarship of Kim Chǒng-hŭi so as to examine the historical significance of Qing evidential learning in late Chosŏn Korea. In South Korean scholarship, Ch'usa (Kim's pen name), a prominent scholar and calligrapher of the late Chosŏn period, has drawn immense attention from scholars of different fields. However, Ch'usa studies have been centered around his art and aesthetics, most notably, his calligraphic innovations, while his evidential learning, as well as its historical and intellectual importance, has been understudied. Hence, I will situate Ch'usa's scholarship at the intersection of various cultural and intellectual factors, such as the emergence and development of Qing evidential learning and Han-Song eclecticism in Qing and Chosŏn, the thought of Pak Che-ga and the Pukhak movement and, most importantly, his academic exchanges with Qing literati during and after his participation in a Yŏnhaeng mission in 1809. Furthermore, I will look into Ch'usa's epigraphic studies, of which his two major works *Yedang kŭmsŏk kwaallok* and *Haedong pigo* constitute the core. Lastly, I will re-examine the relevance of the concept "practical learning" from the perspective of the nineteenth-century Chosŏn evidential scholars and their literary criticism.

Keywords: Kim Chǒng-hŭi, Qing evidential learning, Han classical studies, Song learning, seeking truth from facts, epigraphy, the Monument of King Chinhŭng, *Yedang kŭmsŏk kwaallok*, *Haedong pigo*, Sirhak.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the life and scholarship of Ch'usa Kim Chǒng-hŭi (秋史 金正喜, 1786–1856), and thereby shed new light on the historical significance of Qing evidential learning in late Chosŏn Korea. In South Korean scholarship, Kim Chǒng-hŭi, one of the most celebrated practitioners of calligraphy, epigraphers, and scholars of the late Chosŏn period, has drawn significant academic attention from scholars of different fields. However, they have mostly focused on his art and aesthetics, including his calligraphic innovations, namely, Ch'usach'e (Ch'usa style, 秋史體), but his dedication to Qing evidential studies, as well as its historical importance, has, by and large, been overlooked.¹ For this reason, in this paper, I will examine the scholarly aspects of Ch'usa in relation to various cultural and intellectual factors, such as the emergence and development

of Qing evidential learning, the advancement of Han-Song eclecticism (Han-Song *ch'ŏlch'ung*), Pak Che-ga (朴齊家, 1750–1815) and the Pukhak (Northern, i.e. Qing Learning, 北學) movement and, most importantly, Ch'usa's academic exchanges with Qing literati, such as Ruan Yuan (阮元, 1764–1849), Weng Fang-gang (翁方綱, 1733–1818), and Weng Shu-kon (翁樹崑, 1786–1815), during and after his participation in a Yŏnhaeng (燕行, Trips to Beijing) mission in 1809. Furthermore, I will shed light on Ch'usa's epigraphic studies on the Korean peninsula, the most exemplary of which is the discovery and investigation of the so-called Hunting Monument of King Chinhŭng (眞興王 巡狩碑) in 1816. Lastly, this article will conclude with a re-examination of what is called Sirhak (實學), one of the most problematic frameworks in Chosŏn intellectual history, from the standpoint of the nineteenth-century Chosŏn evidential scholars (mostly Ch'usa and his pupils) and their literary criticism.²

Ch'usa and Qing Evidential Learning: His Understanding of Han-Song Eclecticism Based on “Silsa Kushisŏl” (Treatise on seeking truth from facts, 實事求是說)

Qing Evidential Learning in Chosŏn Korea: The Emergence and Development of Han-Song Eclecticism in the Late Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century was a ground-breaking period for the Chosŏn dynasty, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In particular, its capital area (首都圈), namely, Seoul and its neighboring regions (Kyŏnggi Province), achieved a great level of political and economic growth, and therefore the Chosŏn intellectual domain further started to divide, quite radically, into the “center” (*kyŏng*, 京) and

¹ The pioneer of Ch'usa studies is the Japanese kanbun (Sinographic literature, 漢文) scholar Fujitsuka Chikashi (藤塚鄰, 1879–1948), who was a professor of Chinese philosophy at Keijō Imperial University (1926–1941). His dissertation at Tokyo Imperial University, “Shinchō bunka tōden no kenkyū: Kakyō, Dōkō gakudan to Richō no Kin Gendō” played an important role in the elucidation of Ch'usa's scholarship in light of Qing's new academic currents. Thanks to its extensive studies on Ch'usa's scholarship as a whole, this study is a massive repository of Ch'usa's works based on the author's unrelenting efforts to locate the relevant sources in the Liulichang (琉璃廠) district, Beijing. However, the study does not offer any historical insights or discuss the implications of Ch'usa's evidential studies from a macroscopic perspective. Nonetheless, it still is one of the most important references for Ch'usa studies for South Korean scholarship. Accordingly, the first (full-fledged) monograph on Kim Chŏng-hŭi in Korean is *Wandang p'yŏngjŏn* (Seoul: Hakkojae, 2002) by Korean art historian Yu Hong-jun, which relied mostly on Fujitsuka's work. From then on, it was art historians in particular who led the mainstream narrative of Ch'usa studies, with a special emphasis on his art pieces. In this sense, the most notable figure is Ch'oe Wan-su (崔完秀, b. 1942), a chief curator of the Kansong Museum (潤松美術館) in Seoul, South Korea. His two articles, “Ch'usa sŏp'ago” and “Ch'usa silgi,” which were published in 1980 and 1986 (*Kansong Munhwa* 2 and 8) respectively, played a significant role in the investigation of the Ch'usach'e and its relationship with a wide range of political, socio-economic, and intellectual factors in the late Chosŏn. On the current state of Ch'usa studies, see Pak Ch'ŏl-sang, *Na nŭn yetkŏs i choa ttaeron kkaejin pittol ūl ch'aja tanyŏtta: Ch'usa Kim Chŏng-hŭi ūi hŭmsŏk'hak* (Seoul: Nŏmŏboksŭ, 2015), 10–25.

² On the relationship between Sirhak and Ch'usa's scholarship, see Ko Chae-uk, “Kim Chŏng-hŭi ūi sirhak sasang kwa Ch'ŏngdae kojŭnghak,” *T'aedong kojŏn yŏn'gu* 10 (1993): 737–48; An Oe-sun, “Kim Chŏng-hŭi wa sirhak sasang ūi kwan'gye e taehan chaegoch'al,” *Tongyang kojŏn yŏn'gu* 21 (2004): 56–86. However, their works are rather limited in that they are strictly based on the conventional notion of “practical learning,” which includes the ideas of late Chosŏn scholars' radical denial of the speculative aspect of Zhu Xi's philosophy, as well as a new awareness of “practicality” in their scholarship. I will counter these arguments and endeavor to reconceptualize the meaning of Sirhak in the conclusion of this paper.

the “periphery” (*hyang*, 鄉) in this period (Yu Pong-hak 1991, 22). Most notably, at the same time a group of literati-scholars in the central academic world began to form a sort of ideological consensus, regardless of their factional backgrounds.³ Building upon this academic “agreement,” so to speak, they tended to pursue a new kind of knowledge. To this end, they either visited Beijing themselves as part of the Yǒnhaeng missions, or obtained a great deal of information about Qing China based upon their exchanges with those who had. As the eighteenth-century literati were generally expected to be well-versed in different kinds of ideas, and to possess up-to-date academic knowledge, these “Kyǒnggi scholars” (京畿學人), as Kim Mun-sik noted, took advantage of their regional background, in which they witnessed a higher level of academic coalescence, and where a massive amount of books from China, as well as a number of famous bibliophiles (藏書家), were concentrated (Kim Mun-sik 2004, 33).

The Kyǒnggi scholars were not only privileged in acquiring academic knowledge while living in the capital area, which was the hub of Chosŏn’s literary culture, but also greatly expanded the boundaries of their knowledge, thanks to King Chǒngjo’s (r. 1776–1800) various academic policies. Under the banner of excluding the relatives of the royal house (*ch’ōksin* 戚臣) from appointments and training scholar-officials (*sadaebu* 士大夫), Chǒngjo put forward a range of educational policies (by stages), in order to cultivate talented scholars nationwide, among which that of *ch’ogyŏ munsin* (抄啓文臣, selecting and instructing civil officials) at the *Kyujanggak* (奎章閣, Royal Library), as well as an array of programs to nurture Confucian scholars at the *Sǒngkyun’gwan* (成均館, Confucian Academy), created favorable conditions for the Kyǒnggi scholars (Kim Mun-sik 1995, 148–49). Indeed, most of them served at the *Kyujanggak*, and later firmly secured prominent positions, both in academia and the political arena, during Chǒngjo’s last years and King Sunjo’s reign (1800–1834). Among them were a liberal group of scholars, including the children of concubines, who were also hired as *kōmsǒgwan* (檢書官, librarian), such as Pak Che-ga (朴齊家, 1750–1815), Yu Tūk-kong (柳得恭, 1748–1807), and Yi Tǒng-mu (李德懋, 1741–1793). They formed a relatively independent scholarly network, mostly through marriage and academic exchange, and consequently produced a great number of books and anthologies thanks to their training in information gathering and organization at the *Kyujanggak* (Kim Munsik 1995, 149; Sin Pyǒng-ju 1994, 147–52).

Along with Chǒngjo’s academic support, the Kyǒnggi scholars continued to develop their scholarship while exchanging their personal writings and collections of (Chinese) books with each other. Most notably, these academic endeavors in the late eighteenth century resulted in a new kind of scholarly debate between themselves, namely, the “Jinwen” (current texts, 今文) versus “Guwen” (Old texts, 古文) dispute over the authenticity of the *Shangshu* (Book of documents, 尚書).

³ The majority of the Noron (Old Doctrine, 老論) and Soron (Young Doctrine, 少論) scholars, residing mostly in Seoul and its outskirts, showed the rather eclectic tendency of accepting Yi Hwang’s (李滉, 1501–1570) doctrines while maintaining the academic legacy of Yi I (李珥, 1536–1584). For more detail, see Yu Myǒng-jong, *Chosŏn hugi sǒngnihak* (Seoul: Imun Publication, 1988), 371–463.

This debate is of particular importance, not only because it shows the scope of references and commentaries the Kyōnggi scholars utilized, but also given that most of the arguments in Zhu Xi's philosophy, such as the relationship between the "human mind" (人心) and "the mind of the way" (道心), were actually grounded in the "Guwen" version of the *Shangshu*, and thus had the potential to lead to a radical reappraisal of Neo-Confucianism as a whole (Kim Mun-sik 1995, 151).⁴ Ultimately, Korean scholars' interest in the "Guwen" increased so drastically, in conjunction with the introduction of Qing evidential learning, that King Chōngjo officially brought up this issue through his lectures on the Confucian classics (經史講義) to the scholars he had selected to work at the Kyujanggak.⁵

In order to understand this scholarly debate in a broader context, the radical epistemological upheaval among eighteenth-century Chinese scholars, which Benjamin Elman characterized as a movement "from philosophy to philology," demands specific attention.⁶ That is, the discourse of Qing classical scholars during the eighteenth century reinforced a shift from Song-Ming rationalism to a more secular classical empiricism. In this regard, they saw the Song and Ming "Daoxue" (道學, Learning of the Way) as an obstacle to verifiable truth, since it seemed, at least to them, to discourage further critical inquiry into (and empirical analysis of) the Confucian classics (Elman 2011, 7–8). Hence, they sought out the Tang (618–907) and even Later Han (25–220) dynasty sources (and their commentaries), so as to overcome the limitations they found in the Song- and Ming-dynasty works (Kai-wing Chow 2015, 20–21). This led to a fierce scholarly debate between those who favored Later Han dynasty classical studies, namely, *Hanxue* (漢學, Han Learning), and those who adhered to Song-Ming Confucianism, that is, the *Songxue* (宋學, Song Learning) of Cheng Yi (程頤, 1033–1107) and Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200). By rejuvenating the tradition of Han classical learning, the empirical approach to knowledge the former scholars advocated, so-called *shishi qiushi* (實事求是, seeking truth from facts), played an important role in situating proof and verification at the heart of the organization and analysis of the classical tradition (Elman 2011, 10). Furthermore, this turn to empirically-based classical inquiry indicated that abstract ideas and a priori logical argumentation would give way in elite discussions to attention to concrete facts and verifiable institutions, ancient natural studies, and historical events (Elman 2011, 11).

Like their Chinese precursors, the Kyōnggi scholars adopted the bifurcation between Han and Song learning, as posited by the Qing scholar Ji Yun (紀昀, 1724–1805) in the *Siku quanshu zongmu* (四庫全書總目, Complete catalogue of the imperial collection of the four treasures)—King Chōngjo endeavored to purchase

⁴ The sixteen characters (人心惟危 道心惟微 惟精惟一 允執厥中) of the chapter "Counsels of the Great Yu" (大禹謨), in the *Shangshu* became one of the central doctrines in Zhu Xi's commentaries on the *Doctrine of the Mean* (Zhongyong, 中庸). See Li Chen-yang, 2013, 147–63.

⁵ On the subjects, dates, and students of the lectures, see Kim Mun-sik, 2000, 274–87. See also Kim Mun-sik, 1991, 114–23.

⁶ On the notion of "from philosophy to philology," see Elman, "From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China," *Frontiers of History in China* 6 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 32–56.

the entire collection in 1782, but ended up only obtaining its catalogue—and had a series of academic discussions over the strengths and weaknesses of the different scholarly approaches. Indeed, King Chôngjo, as a leading scholar of the eighteenth-century Chosŏn academy, clarified his own opinions about Han and Song learning in that he acknowledged the philological achievements of Han scholars (漢儒), and therefore found it inappropriate that the accomplishments of Han learning had not received adequate attention following the publication of the *Sishu wujing daquan* (四書五經大全, Great anthology of the Four Books and Five Classics) in the early fifteenth century.⁷ In the same vein, while suspicious of the authority of the “Guwen,” he critically examined the theories of Sima Quan (145 BC (?)-86 (?)) BC), Da Jia (達賈, ?-292), Ma Rong (馬融, 79-166), and Zheng Zuan (鄭玄, 127-200), because not only were they much closer in time to the composition of the classics, but the range of sources they referred to was deemed impressively expansive.⁸ However, his appraisal of Qing learning as a whole was rather lopsided in that he merely recognized the achievements of early Qing scholars, such as Gu Yan-wu (顧炎武, 1613-1682) and Li Guang-de (李光地, 1642-1718), whose main concerns revolved around Zhu Xi’s philosophy. Moreover, he objected to the fact that evidential learning disregarded the basic intention (本旨) of the Confucian classics, as it indulged too much in taxonomy (名物) and exegesis (訓詁).⁹

King Chôngjo’s understanding of Han (and Qing) learning, though rather limited, served as an important guideline for later Kyônggi scholars, such as Söng Hae-üng (成海應, 1760-1839), Hong Sök-chu (洪奭周, 1774-1842), and Chông Yag-yong (丁若鏞, 1762-1836), by allowing them to accept Han learning as part of their scholarship. In this context, Chông Yag-yong, among others, is worth referring to, as he elaborated his interpretations of the Confucian classics by incorporating the achievements of both Han and Song learning into his philosophical framework, and thereby offered his unique understanding of Han-Song eclecticism in the late eighteenth century.¹⁰ He emphasized the significance of commentaries and exegesis as a first step to determining the basic intention of the Confucian classics. However, he pointed out that it is not proper to only adhere to the scholarly findings of Han learning because it focused only on collecting, organizing, and ultimately restoring the classics, which had been severely damaged during the Warring States (475-221 BC) and Qin (221-206 BC) periods.¹¹ Nonetheless, he was never reluctant to

⁷ See Chôngjo, “Sipsamgyöng ch’aek,” *Hongje chönsö* (Seoul: Tahaksa, 1986), 84.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 82: “今古文之說盈庭。而寥寥千古。尙未有真正公案矣。夫然疑決而從違判。眞贗分而趨舍定。諸生平日解此何主。古文之可疑者有三。蓋古文十六篇。漢後諸儒皆未之得見。如鄭玄註周禮。韋昭註國語。杜預註左傳。趙岐註孟子。遇古文句語。輒曰逸書。說者以爲不立學官。故不敢顯言。而漢晉之世。上無挾書之律。下無是古之禁。則何拘於不立學官而爲是隱語。”

⁹ *Ibid.*, 91-92: “予雖否德。忝在君師之位。爲之建旗鼓申誓命。黜陟於眞僞。格量其是非。而一代之文風土趨。改澆漓。歸敦朴。職固宜然。是以有明末清初。諸家雜書購寶之禁。而禁寶猶未也。何以則人踏實地。俗厭小品。無事於禁。而并絕絕非法之書與言。純然用工於堯舜禹湯文武周公孔子之道歟。矯世衛道之一大機括。其在是也。其在是也。予大夫。其悉意條陳。予將親覽焉。”

¹⁰ On the intellectual coordinates of the Han-Song dispute in Chông Yag-yong’s scholarship, see Mark Setton, *Chông Yag-yong: Korea’s Challenge to Orthodox Neo-Confucianism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 123-28.

¹¹ Chông Yag-yong, *Yöyudang chönsö* 1 (Seoul: Tasan haksul munhwa chaedan, 2013), 432.

address the limitations of Zhu Xi's philosophy as well. In particular, his criticism was centered around the impracticality of the discourses of human nature (人性論) (e.g. the disputes over the relationship between *li* and *qi* (理氣 principle and matter), and *xin* and *xing* (心性 mind and nature)) within neo-Confucianism.¹² In this regard, Chŏng's appraisal of Han and Song learning was primarily situated in adopting their positive aspects, such as academic precision, and "cultivating one's morals (修身) and governing the people (治民)" respectively, and thereby achieving sagehood based on his own interpretations of the classics.

The Development of Han-Song Eclecticism in Ch'usa's Scholarship

As noted above, Chosŏn's intellectual sphere started to change radically, and Neo-Confucianism became a target for academic criticism from a less dogmatic perspective in the late eighteenth century. In this sense, the emergence and development of the Pukhak movement is particularly noteworthy. In 1778, Pak Che-ga, one of the most preeminent Kyŏnggi scholars, and a leading member of the Pukhak school, obtained the privilege of travelling to Qing China as a tribute emissary, and upon King Chŏngjo's request, brought back hundreds of books representing Qing literary culture to the Kyujanggak (奎章閣).¹³ Based upon this experience, Pak wrote his magnum opus *Pukhak ūi* (北學議, Discourse on Northern Learning), a travelogue of his mission to Beijing, as well as a sharp critique of a variety of social ills in his native country. In this work, Pak contended that Chosŏn scholar-officials should overcome the long-held (and ethnicized) bias against the Manchu-run Qing dynasty and emulate its cultural and intellectual achievements.¹⁴ Most notably, he severely criticized late Chosŏn (Confucian) scholars, presenting them as so ignorant and self-conceited that they had disregarded, unlike Manchu rulers and elites, the practical knowledge of governance, such as economics, social welfare, agriculture, and various kinds of sciences, which eventually led to the backwardness of Chosŏn society as a whole.¹⁵

Following his master, Ch'usa visited Qing China as a member of his father Kim No-gyŏng's (金魯敬, 1776–1837) tribute mission to Beijing in 1809, which enabled him to engage in intensive academic exchanges with Qing literati, such as Ruan Yuan and Weng Fang-gang.¹⁶ In particular, Weng Fang-gang, who was widely

¹² Ibid, 37–201.

¹³ Pak Chi-won, "Pukhak ūi sŏ," edited by Pak Che-ga: "歲戊戌，隨陳奏使入燕。縱觀其城郭室廡車輿器用。歎曰。此皇明之制度也。皇明之制度。又周禮之制度也。凡遇可以通行於我國者。熟視而竊識之。或有未解。復博訪以釋其疑。歸而筆之於書。爲北學議內外篇。其紀數詳密。" See also: O Sŏ-yŏng, 2004, 239.

¹⁴ Ibid: "以我較彼固無寸長。而獨以一撮之結。自賢於天下曰。今之中國。非古之中國也。其山川則罪之以腥羶。其人民則辱之以犬羊。其言語則誣之以侏離。并與其中國固有之良法美制而攘斥之。則亦將何所傲而行之耶。余自燕還。在先爲示其北學議內外二編。" On the diplomatic relations between Chŏson Korea and Qing China, see Adam Bohnet, "Ruling Ideology and Marginal Subjects: Ming Loyalism and Foreign Lineages in Late Chosŏn Korea," *Journal of Early Modern History* 15 (2011), 477–505.

¹⁵ Ibid: "謂禮寧野。認陋爲儉。所謂四民。僅存名目。而至於利用厚生之具。日趨困窮。此無他。不知學問之過也。如將學問。舍中國而何。然其言曰。今之主中國者。夷狄也。恥學焉。并與中國之故常而鄙夷之。"

¹⁶ *Sunjo sillok* (Veritable Records of King Sunjo), 12:41a, 1809 (Ninth Year), Tenth Day of the Ninth Month (*chŏngmyŏ*): "載瓚又啓言: "冬至使, 以兼謝恩稱號, 使臣, 當以當品差遣, 請即差出" 教以上使朴宗來加崇政, 副使金魯敬加善善, 書狀李永純陞品。又啓言: "前別檢趙貞詰登科, 已過三十年, 請陞六品。" 從之。"

known for his vast knowledge of classical studies, poetry, and epigraphy, and was deeply involved in the compilation project of the *Siku quanshu* for the eighteenth-century Qing court, served as Ch'usa's lifelong mentor and role model.¹⁷ In addition, Ch'usa studied closely with Ruan Yuan, who was then working on his project of editing the *Shisanjing zhushu* (十三經注疏, Commentaries and notes on the thirteen classics), and later asked Ch'usa to write a preface for it. Under the apprenticeship of Ruan Yuan and Weng Fang-gang, who were representatives of the group of scholars devoted to epigraphy (碑派) and that of scholars devoted to the study of albums (帖派) respectively, Ch'usa became well-versed in the doctrines and academic methods of both Han classical studies and Song learning. Furthermore, his knowledge of Qing literary culture as a whole played a significant role in the advancement of Chosŏn scholars' awareness of Qing's new and vibrant academic discourses at the time.

As stated above, Qing scholarship had long been focused on Han classical learning (訓古學), and gradually began to criticize Song-Ming Confucianism, which was being repudiated for its unpractical and philologically suspect aspects. However, its specific details were not well known to eighteenth-century Chosŏn scholars, because only a few of them were able to travel to China and willing to engage directly with Qing scholars. In this respect, Ch'usa was quite an extraordinary figure, as he witnessed firsthand Qing's up-to-date classical studies in Beijing, while his opportunity of studying evidential learning under the above-mentioned Qing masters allowed him to expand his scholarly interests to the point where he realized that Zhu Xi's philosophy was not a complete set of ideas in itself, but merely one of the philosophical frameworks, among others, containing the partial truths and moral imperatives of the world. From this time on, the doctrine of "seeking truth from facts" constituted the core part of Ch'usa's scholarship. In October 1811, in particular, Weng Fang-gang sent a letter to Ch'usa, containing his own writing entitled "Shishi Qiushizhen" (實事求是箴, Admonitions on seeking truth from facts), as well as a plaque with *shishi qiushi* (實事求是) written on it (Pak Ch'ol-sang 2015, 200–2). Through his writing, Weng Fang-gang taught Ch'usa about the basic (and proper) attitude of scholarship:

Investigating the past and proving the present;
the truth seems to be high like a mountain, and deep like a sea.
Investigating the facts lies in books,
whereas understanding the principles lies in one's heart.
One origin should not be split in two, if you try to find a proper path.
The very principle penetrating into ten thousand books lies in this admonition.

攷古證今 山海崇深
覈實在書 窮理在心
一源勿貳 要津可尋

¹⁷ On the compilation project of the *Siku quanshu*, see Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 114–17.

貫徹萬卷 只此規箴” (Pak Ch'öl-sang 2015, 201)

To reciprocate his master's gesture, in 1816 Ch'usa wrote a short essay called “Silsa kushisöl” (Treatise on seeking truth from facts, 實事求是說), which was later published as part of the *Wandang chönsö* (阮堂全集, Complete works of Wandang).¹⁸ This essay is one of his most crucial works, as it clearly reveals his viewpoints about the debate between Han and Song learning, and about Qing evidential learning in general. In this work, Ch'usa suggests that “seeking truth from facts” is a primary attitude needed to become a sophisticated scholar, because otherwise one's studies could fall into a mire of vacuous discourses.¹⁹ In this sense, the scholarship of later Han literati could serve as a model for subsequent generations because it primarily sought precision and solidity as an important part of elucidating the doctrines of ancient masters.²⁰ To prove this, he showed that those scholars invented and cherished the use of explanatory footnotes in order to predicate their studies on the notion of “seeking truth from facts.”²¹ On the other hand, they held themselves aloof from discussing profound and sophisticated themes, such as nature (性), dao (道), humaneness (仁), and justice (義), since they were deemed unverifiable and ultimately “fruitless” (無實). Their academic legacy, as exemplified by their philological skills and rigor, had a strong influence on subsequent Confucian scholars, especially during the Song dynasty (Elman 1995, 45–67).

During the Jin dynasty (265–420), however, several foreign factors took root (and became indigenized) in the Chinese intellectual sphere. From Ch'usa's standpoint, it was Daoism and Buddhism, representing nihilism and *Chan* (禪) metaphysics respectively, that played a massive role in the spreading of vacuous theories and discourses among scholars, which eventually led to the uniformization of their academic interests in China.²² In this respect, Ch'usa harshly criticized the Yangming school of thought (陸王派) in particular, because their scholarly “fever” (熱) had been deeply associated with both traditions, and hence disregarded the notion of “seeking truth from facts,” by incorporating the whole of Confucian teachings (and methodologies) into Buddhist metaphysics.²³ Nonetheless, he acknowledged that the “Learning of the Way” (道學), which developed during the Northern (and early Southern) Song, played a positive role in clarifying a wide variety of central concepts in the Confucian traditions, such as nature (性) and

¹⁸ Kim Chöng-hüi, *Wandang chönjip* (Seoul: Han'guk kojön pönyögwön, 2014), 57.

¹⁹ Ibid, 57: “漢書河間獻王傳云實事求是。此語乃學問最要之道。若不實以事而但以空疎之術爲便” For “*shishi gushi* (實事求是),” see the *Han Shu* (History of the Former Han Dynasty), 5/2410(53/1a), where it is said: 河間獻王德以孝景前二年立。修學好古，實事求是。從民得善書，必爲好寫與之，留其真，加金帛賜以招之。”

²⁰ Ibid, 57: “漢儒于經傳訓詁，皆有師承。備極精實。故不多加推明。”

²¹ Ibid, 57: “然偶有注釋。未嘗不實事求是也。至于性道仁義等事。因爾時人人皆知。無庸深論。”

²² Ibid, 57: “自晉人講老莊虛無之學。便于惰學空疎之人。而學術一變。至佛道大行而禪機所悟。至流于支離。不可究詰之境。而學術又一變。此無他。”

²³ Ibid, 58: “與實事求是一語。盡相反而已。惟陸王等派。又蹈空虛。引儒入釋。更甚于引釋入儒矣。兩宋儒者闡明道學。于性理等事。精而言之。實發古人所未發。”

principle (理), by way of elaborating their etymologies and historical contexts in a meticulous fashion.

Ch'usa was fully aware that Han learning and its methodologies had become widely popular among Qing evidential scholars, which he generally found to be a positive development. However, he warned that Han classical studies could not ultimately replace the wisdom of the ancient masters. To illustrate this, he came up with a metaphor that a threshold is to a “grand first-class house” (甲第大宅) what Han learning is to the teachings of the sages.²⁴ As the owner of the house resides in its main room (堂室), if he wants to enter it, he first needs to step over the threshold of the house. According to this metaphor, Han classical methods could serve as a wonderful scholarly “threshold,” as their erudition and academic precision provide a true guide for one’s study. However, although philological rigor is a necessary step for directing one’s scholarship in a correct manner, it still is merely the beginning of any scholarly journey, and should lead to the wisdom of the ancient masters, whose teachings were considered a shortcut for attaining sagehood in the neo-Confucian tradition.²⁵

Using the same metaphor, however, Ch'usa criticized Song and Ming Confucianism even more harshly. From his standpoint, a group of Confucian scholars during and after the Jin and Song dynasties venerated only the most lofty and highly philosophical aspects of Confucianism, and hence easily concluded that Confucius never studied “shallow and worldly” (淺近) matters.²⁶ In this regard, it is as if they were looking for the house elsewhere, as they did not even dare to find the threshold in the first place. However, Ch'usa did not stop at only criticizing neo-Confucianism, but went even further. Deeply influenced by Weng Fang-gang, he ultimately emphasized the harmonious relationship between Han classical studies and Song-Ming Confucianism as a crucial goal for one’s scholarship.²⁷ Hence, he contended that the two academic schools were neither to be divided nor compared, since the scholarship of such preeminent neo-Confucian scholars as Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi, Lu Jiu-yuan (陸九淵, 1139–1192), and Wang Shuo-ren contained both strengths and weaknesses at the same time.²⁸ In this regard, whatever school one belongs to (or identifies oneself with), what is most important is basing one’s scholarship on precision, impartiality, erudition, and righteousness, which could (and should)

²⁴ Ibid, 58: “學者尊漢儒。精求訓詁。此誠是也。但聖賢之道。譬若甲第大宅。主者所居。恒在堂室。堂室非門逕。不能入也。訓詁者門逕也。一生奔走于門逕之間。不求升堂入室。是斷僕矣。”

²⁵ Ibid, 58: “故爲學。必精求訓詁者。爲其不誤于堂室。非謂訓詁畢乃事也。漢人不甚論堂室者。因彼時門逕不誤。堂室自不誤也。”

²⁶ Ibid, 58: “晉宋以後。學者務以高遠。尊孔子。以爲聖賢之道不若是之淺近也。乃厭薄門逕而棄之。別于超妙高遠處求之。于是乎躡空騰虛。”

²⁷ Ch'usa's views as such played an integral role in the development of his calligraphic style, the so-called Ch'usach'e (秋史體), which is generally attributed to the spirit of “respecting the old, and creating the new” (法古創新). Kim Chông-hũi, “Södok” (書牘), *ibid*, 68: “孔碑臨本兩紙佳好。但少勁古底意。大槩韓勅碑極難臨。北是七人所作。非一手書也。此碑爲隸家正法。然初學當從蜀道諸刻北海相碑。先爲下手然後。不爲俗體所誤耳。”

²⁸ Kim Chông-hũi, *ibid*, 58: “故爲學之道。不必分漢宋之界。不必較鄭王程朱之短長。不必爭朱陸薛王之門戶。但平心靜氣。博學篤行。專主實事求是。一語行之可矣。”

originate from the doctrine of “seeking truth from facts.”

Ch’usa’s Evidential Learning in Chosŏn Korea: Focusing on his Epigraphy in the Early Nineteenth Century

Epigraphy is, by definition, the study of inscriptions or epigraphs as writing; it is the science of identifying (ancient) written scripts, clarifying their meanings, classifying their uses according to dates and cultural contexts, and drawing conclusions about the writing and the writers (CTI Reviews 2006, 163; Bodel 2012, 2–4). In order to study epigraphy, a great amount of disciplinary knowledge, including history, classics, calligraphy, and linguistics, is necessary, but it has been widely (and actively) conducted in East Asian scholarship as a whole. In China, for example, Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修, 1007–1072), a Chinese statesman, historian, and essayist of the Song dynasty, compiled the *Jigu ju baowei* (集古錄跋尾, Colophons for the “Recordings of collecting antiquity”) in 1026, which was geared toward the organization of a glossary and historical studies of Chinese inscriptions in general. Furthermore, he ordered his son Ouyang Fei (歐陽棐, 1047–1113) to produce a catalogue of his work, which led to the publication of the *Jiugu lumu* (集古錄目, Catalogue for the records of collecting antiquities) in 1069. This served as a stepping stone in establishing the doctrines and basic methods of epigraphy in the following periods. Hence, a great number of books on epigraphy continued to be published in China, which reached its culmination during the high Qing period (1684–1795).

The beginning of epigraphy in Korea was relatively late compared with that of China. The first study of epigraphy is purported to be Ch’usa’s magnum opus *Yedang kŭmsŏk kwaallok* (禮堂金石過眼錄, Records of Ch’usa’s epigraphic studies, *Kwaallok* hereafter), in which he showed that the monument on Mt. Pukhansan is not the work of Venerable Muhak (無學大師, 1327–1405), but should be attributed to King Chinhŭng (眞興王, r. 540–576). Interestingly, Ch’usa’s interest in epigraphy and Korean history (the former conducted to illuminate the latter) derived from his intellectual exchange with Weng Fang-gang and his son Weng Shu-kon. In particular, Weng Shu-kon, a Qing evidential scholar who had a keen interest in collecting Korean inscriptions written in classical Chinese, continuously corresponded with Ch’usa and asked for his advice regarding Korean history and its important figures, including politicians, scholars, and generals (Pak Ch’öl-sang 2015, 83). Even after Weng Shu-kon died in 1815 (at age thirty), Weng Fang-gang sent all of his rubbings and writings to Ch’usa, which arrived in October 1816, and eventually motivated Ch’usa to pursue his own study of Chinese and Korean inscriptions with the help of the theories and methodologies Weng Shu-kon adopted in his epigraphic studies.

One year after Weng Shukon died Ch’usa began his study on a variety of inscriptions across the Chosŏn peninsula. In this sense, his first goal was to shed light on the old stone monument of Pukhansan, which had been attributed to Venerable Muhak or Tosŏn (道誥, 827–898). By July 1816, Ch’usa climbed Pibong (碑峰) Mountain, and endeavored to identify what the inscription of the

stele actually referred to.²⁹ After he took rubbings of the stone, it turned out that its calligraphic style was quite similar to that of the Hwangch'oryöng (黃草嶺, Hwangch'ö Pass) stele, a memorial stone of King Chinhüŋ's northern expedition in 568. Furthermore, in the process of his investigation the character *chin* (眞) began to appear, albeit a bit compressed, in the first line of the inscription.³⁰ At the same time, Ch'usa noticed four more characters, namely, *sun* (巡), *su* (狩), *kwan* (管), and *kyöng* (境), in the combination of "Chin'aewang sunsu kwan'gyöng" (眞太王 巡狩管境: King Chinhüŋ the Great inspected and supervised the area). In addition, the characters *nam* (南) and *ch'ön* (川) on the eighth line were of particular interest to him, because the *Samguk sagi* (三國史記, *History of the Three Kingdoms*) informed him of the fact that King Chinhüŋ abolished Pukhansanju (北漢山州, Pukhansan County), and established Namch'önju (南川州, Namch'ön County) near Mt. Pukhansan in 568 (Twenty-ninth year of King Chinhüŋ).³¹ Hence, this led him to the conclusion that King Chinhüŋ set up this memorial stone after his expedition to expand Silla's territory toward the Pukhansan area in 555.

Ch'usa furthered his epigraphic studies by visiting Kyöngju in 1817, because the city, as the old capital of Silla (新羅, traditional dates 57 BC–AD 935) contained a large number of historical ruins and inscriptions related to the dynasty. Ch'usa first sought out the royal tomb of King Chinhüŋ, as his studies at the time were focused on the monarch and his memorial stones in Hamhüŋ and Pukhansan. Through a series of investigations, he realized that the four artificial hills behind the tomb of King Muyöl (武烈王, r. 654–661), which oral tradition had named Mt. Chosan (造山), were, in fact, the royal tombs of kings Chinhüŋ, Chinji (眞智王), Munsöng (武成王), and Hönan (憲安王).³² Furthermore, Ch'usa accidentally discovered the Munmuwang Pi (Stele of King Munmu, 文武王碑) in a nearby rice paddy. A rubbing of the stele had been obtained by Hong Yang-ho (洪良浩, 1724–1802), who served as Kyöngju puyun (府尹, Magistrate) between 1760 and 1762, but Ch'usa eventually retraced the original stone while staying in Kyöngju in 1817. Subsequently, he sought to complete the inscription and analyze its calligraphic style in order to conduct a comparative study of the existing Mujangsa stele (鑿藏

²⁹ Kim Chông-hûi, "Chinhüŋ ibi ko" 眞興二碑攷: "此碑人無知, 誤稱妖僧無學枉到此之碑. 嘉慶丙子秋, 余金君敬淵游僧伽寺, 仍觀此碑. 碑面苔厚, 若無字. 然以手捫之, 似有字形, 不止漫缺之痕也. 且其時日薄苔面, 映而視之, 若隨字入, 折波漫撇, 依係得之, 試以紙拓出也, 體黃草碑酷相似. 第一行眞之眞字稍漫, 而婁拓視之, 其爲眞字無疑也. 遂定爲眞古碑, 千二百年古蹟, 一朝大明, 辨破無學碑弔詭之說. 金石之學, 有補於世, 乃如是也. 是豈吾輩一金石因緣而止也哉."

³⁰ Kim Chông-hûi, "Choun Sögyöng" 趙雲石寅永: "風雨懷人, 無以遣情, 兄作何思, 鍵戶獨居, 再取碑峰古碑, 反覆細閱, 第一行眞太王下二字, 初以爲九年矣, 非九年, 乃巡狩二字. 又其下似臣字, 非臣字, 乃管字, 管字下依係是境字, 統而合之, 爲眞太王巡狩管境八字也. 此例已見於咸草院北巡碑, 第七行道人二字, 又草院碑之時隨駕沙門道人之, 昭合不誤."

³¹ Cho In-yöng, "Sünggasa Pangbigi" 僧伽寺訪碑記, *Unsök yugo* (雲石遺稿): 凡九十有二字, 如眞王三字, 巡狩二字, 南川二字, 皆實事可證, 而史文經緯也. 按三國史, 眞王十六年, 王巡幸北漢山州, 拓定疆, 二十九年, 廢北漢山州, 置南川州, 碑蓋紀其蹟也.

³² Kim Chông-hûi, "Silla Chinhüŋwang nüŋgo" 新羅眞興王陵攷: "是故知太宗陵上四大陵非造山, 卽眞, 眞智, 文聖, 憲安四王陵也. 文聖, 憲安 俱係太宗後, 不當在太宗陵上, 而倒葬之法, 後人所忌, 古則不然. 且太宗陵距四陵雖一麓, 然稍右而有間, 固亦無相礙也, 四山之爲四陵無疑也."

寺碑).³³

As the rubbings of the stelae, which Ch'usa himself produced, traveled to Beijing via a series of Yonhaeng missions, a number of Qing scholars began to mobilize their personal networks to connect themselves with Ch'usa (Pak Ch'ol-sang 2015, 172–76). However, he only corresponded with a handful who had been vouched for by his colleagues in Beijing. In this regard, Ch'usa's brother Kim Myōng-hūi (金命喜, 1788–1857) played an important role, as he often sent letters to them and met with them in Beijing for Ch'usa's sake. In 1831, for example, Liu Xi-hai (劉喜海, 1793–1852), a famous epigrapher and an author of the *Haitong jinshiyuan* (海東金石苑, Analysis on the inscriptions and epitaphs in the eastern world), sent Ch'usa a letter, stating that if Ch'usa finished his work on East Asian inscriptions and epigraphs, namely, the *Samguk kŭmsŏk ko* (三國金石攷, Investigation of the inscriptions and epitaphs of the three countries), he would like to read it as soon as possible (Fujitsuka Chikashi 1994, 64–78). Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Liu collected Korean inscriptions via Cho In-yōng (趙寅永, 1782–1850), a colleague of Ch'usa, and therefore had a deeper understanding of Korean epigraphy than his contemporary Qing scholars. Thanks to Kim Myōng-hūi (who acted as a go-between), Liu was able to start his correspondence with Ch'usa in 1831. Indeed, Liu regarded Ch'usa as a pioneer of Korean epigraphy and yearned to obtain as many of his writings on Korean inscriptions and epigraphs as possible.³⁴ In fact, every time Chosŏn emissaries travelled to Beijing, Liu and his students constantly asked them if they were acquainted with Ch'usa, and if they could bring any of his writings to Beijing.³⁵

Ch'usa's treatises on the Pukhansan and Hwangch'oryōng stelae were subsequently included in his *Kwaallok*. Strangely enough, the *Kwaallok* was not published as part of *Wandang ch'ŏktok* (阮堂尺牘, Compilation of the correspondence of Wandang) or *Wandangjip* (阮堂集, Anthology of Wandang), which were first compiled in the early 1840s and later published in 1867 and 1868 respectively.³⁶ This was because Ch'usa could not complete his project on the stelae until the 1840s, not only because of the poor condition of the Pukhansan stone, which made it difficult to read, but also because he was not able to locate the real Hwangch'oryōng stele, and hence had to work from rubbings (Pak Ch'ol-sang 2015, 158–63; Ch'oe Yōng-sōng 1997, 233–43). Meanwhile, Kwŏn Ton-in (權敦仁, 1783–1859), who served as the governor of Hamgyōng Province (咸鏡道 觀察使), came across a new (and as yet unidentified) stone of King Chinhūng on the summit

³³ Kim Chōng-hūi, *Ch'usa Kim Chōnghūi Myōngjakchŏn* (Seoul: Seoul Arts Center, 1992): “夕陰猶淫，無以破悶，更從兄文 武殘字釋文，研朱點校，擬再就訂，又承鑿石之釋，殆是眼如月，腕有見也。且絲格精好，筆劃密緻，足以誇遠人也。幸甚幸甚。文武釋文，茲又寄上。”

³⁴ Kim Chōng-hūi, “A Letter from Liu Xihai to Ch'usa”: “足下究心於金石文字三十餘年，蒐羅之富，攷據之精，素所欽佩，東國之歐陽文忠趙德父也。聞有三國金石攷之輯，如有成書，先讀為快。”

³⁵ Ren Bai-yuan, *Jingwu youyanri* (鏡遊遊燕日), Korea University: “恬菴曰：聞秋史金侍郎，集海東金石幾卷，多有古蹟，每欲一賞希珍，兼資博攷而未有徑蹊。幸兄東轅後，為我致意，得古紙幾本相示否？”

³⁶ Three extant copies of the *Kwaallok* have been found in the following locations: National Museum of Korea, UC Berkeley Asami Library, and Yuktang Ch'oe Nam-sŏn's (崔南善, 1890–1957) personal collection in South Korea. For more details, see Pak Ch'ol-sang 2015, 129–31.

of Mt. Hwangch'oryōng, and later sent its rubbings to Ch'usa.³⁷ By August 1834, Ch'usa informed Kwōn that he had finally completed his study of King Chinhŭng's stelae, thanks to the rubbings that Kwōn had sent him. Containing a great amount of such letters and writings, the original title of the *Kwaallok* was *Chinhŭng ibi ko* (眞興二碑攷, Treatise on the two stelae of King Chinhŭng), which was later re-named the *Kwaallok* by Ch'usa's pupils, in order for them to commemorate (and even exalt) their master's epigraphic study (Kim Nam-du 2003, 47–48). This work clearly demonstrates Ch'usa's acribia and academic precision, through his completion and analysis of the inscriptions of the two stones based on a diverse range of historical sources, such as the *Tangshu* (唐書, History of Tang), *Yude shenglan* (輿地勝覽, Survey of the geography of China), and *Zizhi tongjian* (資治通鑑考異, Comprehensive mirror for aid in government).

Compared with Ch'usa's reputation as a talented epigrapher, there are only a few extant writings that can be attributed to him, which is partly because he burned his writings twice in his lifetime. For this reason, the *Kwaallok* has been considered, to this day, Ch'usa's only work on epigraphy. Although Ch'usa's scholarly ability, as exemplified by the *Kwaallok*, is prominent enough to make him one of the most notable practitioners of epigraphy in East Asia, the discovery of *Haedong pigo* (海東碑攷, Treatise on the epitaphs in Korea,) in 2007, however, demands a thorough revision of this narrative. *Haedong pigo* is Ch'usa's monograph about seven ancient stelae on the Korean peninsula: P'yōng Paekche Pi (平百濟碑, Stele of the conquest of Paekche), Tang Yu Inwōn Pi (唐劉仁願碑, Stele of Liu Renyuan of Tang), Munmuwang Pi, Chin'gam Sōnsa Pi (眞鑑禪師碑, Stele of Zen Master Chin'gam), Chijōng Taesa Pi (智證大師碑, Stele of Venerable Chijōng), Chin'gyōng Taesa Pi (眞鏡大師碑, Stele of Venerable Chin'gyōng), and Mujangsa Pi (Pak Ch'ol-sang 2015, 230). The cover of the book contains the phrase “copy of Wandang's book” (阮堂謄本), and the line “Chōng-hŭi thinks” (正喜案) appears several times in the analysis of the epitaphs. This indicates that the book has been properly attributed to him, and was posthumously copied by an anonymous scholar (Pak Ch'ol-sang 2015, 237).

Among the seven stelae, the P'yōng Paekche Pi (Paekche Pi hereafter) was of particular interest to nineteenth-century Chosōn scholars. The epitaphs of the stele were inscribed on the first storey of the Chōngnimsa (定林寺) pagoda in Puyō, which had a number of nicknames, such as the P'yōngbaekt'ap (平百塔, Pagoda of the conquest of Paekche), Tangp'yōng Paekchet'ap (唐平百濟塔, Pagoda of Tang's conquest of Paekche), and Tang So Chōngbang T'ap (唐蘇定方塔, Pagoda of Su Ding-fang of Tang). In fact, the Paekche Pi had been regarded as the oldest stele among Korean scholars, before Ch'usa discovered the memorial stones of King Chinhŭng in 1816. Beginning in the eighteenth century, the stele became widely known to Chinese scholars as it had been set up to commemorate Tang's conquest of Paekche (百濟, 14 BCE–660) in 660 (Pak Ch'ol-sang 2015, 240). Originally, it

³⁷ Kim Chōng-hŭi, “Yōgwōni Chaedonin” 與權彝齋敦仁: “弟於此碑有, 一卷, 一字, 一畫, 一地, 一官無不細加核證, 至於一卷之多, 竊欲於今番仰呈, 而尚在草稿, 未即整理. 且整理然後, 可以覽閱, 故無以上可苑.”

was Pak Chi-wŏn (朴趾源, 1737–1805), who left his footnotes on the epitaphs, along with six other inscriptions, in his work *Samhan ch'ongsŏ* (三韓叢書, Complete anthology of the Three Kingdoms) (Pak Ch'ŏl-sang 2015, 72). Interestingly, the last page of the book includes Ch'usa's seal, as he added and corrected in red ink (朱筆) the omitted and incorrect characters in Pak's annotations on the epitaphs (242–43). In his painstaking pursuit of academic precision, Ch'usa went to the temple site, measured the size of the pagoda, and sought to determine the number and calligraphic style of the characters on the epitaphs.³⁸ In so doing, he realized that the four epitaphs comprised 16 fragments and 126 lines, and included 1,927 characters in total, of which 1,889 were legible, and 38 were unidentifiable.³⁹

Ch'usa's elaborate and precise verification of the foundation year of the Munmuwang Pi is indeed the pinnacle of his epigraphic studies. By July 1818, Ch'usa obtained the bottom part of the stone in the northeast section of King Sinmun's royal tomb in Kyŏngju. In fact, previous scholars claimed that the Munmuwang Pi had been set up on the seventh month of the twenty-fifth day of 682, given that the epitaph contained the following line: “Isiboil kyŏngjin kŏn” (二十五日景辰建, Erected on the twenty-fifth day of *kyŏngjin*) (Pak Ch'ŏl-sang 2015, 154–6). However, Ch'usa countered their argument, stating that the Munmuwang Pi was actually erected on the twenty-fifth day of the eighth or ninth month of the year 687. First of all, he showed that the characters of *kyŏngjin* (景辰) were originally *pyŏngjin* (丙辰, the 53rd term from the sexagesimal cycle), because, according to the *Beishi* (北史, History of the Northern Dynasties), Tang subjects were obliged to replace *pyŏng* with *kyŏng*, since Emperor Gaozong of Tang's (唐高宗) personal name was “Bing” (炳), so they refrained from using the similar character *pyŏng* (丙).⁴⁰ In the same vein, the phrase “Ch'ŏnhwang Taeje” (天皇大帝) on the epitaph was given as a posthumous epithet to Emperor Gaozong, which meant that the foundation of the stele must date to later than 684, the year the emperor passed away.⁴¹ Ch'usa then referred to a number of calendars—including the “Isipsa sak yunp'yo” (二十史朔閏表, Calendar of the leap months in the twenty books of history)—in order to trace when among King Sinmun's years (681–692) and after 684 the twenty-fifth of the month happened to be a *pyŏngjin* day, which led him to conclude that the date of the foundation was to be either the eighth or ninth month—the latter of which could be the case, given the possibility of a leap month—of the year 687.⁴²

³⁸ Kim Chŏng-hŭi, “P'yŏng Paekche Pi.” *Haedong pigo* 海東碑攷: “右大唐平百濟碑, 在今忠清道扶餘縣南二里。扶餘縣即百濟古都也。其碑四面正方, 累石而成, 面各四片, 總爲石十六片。上覆重簷, 下承以趺, 制若僧家之塔, 他碑迥殊。其文則篆額八字, 餘皆大楷, 環刻于四面。其高五尺二寸, 一面之廣, 一丈一尺六寸也。”

³⁹ Ibid: “凡碑四面十六片, 一百二十六行, 總一千九百二十七字, 其刻三十 八字, 存一千八百八十九字也。”

⁴⁰ Kim Chŏng-hŭi, “Munmuwang pi”: “碑之末行云, 廿五日景辰建, 今按景辰即丙辰也。唐高祖之父曰仁公炳, 故唐人諱丙皆代以景。若北史魏登國五年 秋八月景寅幸意辛山, 天元年六月景子定國。”

⁴¹ Ibid: “永四年閏六月景辰大關於東郊, 隋開皇六年二月景戌制刺史課之類是也。今碑但有日辰上減年月, 不知立於何年。”

⁴² Ibid: “今以曆法大月相間之例求之, 則是年五月當爲甲子朔, 六月當爲甲午朔, 七月當爲癸亥朔, 八月當爲壬辰朔也。朔是壬辰, 則廿五日自當爲丙辰。然則是碑之建, 必垂拱三年八月廿五日丙辰也。當時麟德曆法今不可詳。月之大, 雖有推移, 要之非八月則九月也。外此九年之間, 更無可擬, 今不可以他求。” Ch'usa's

Conclusion: Understanding Sirhak in a New Light

Thus far, I have examined the academic interests of Kim Chŏng-hŭi with regard to his perspective on the development of Han-Song eclecticism and the introduction of Qing evidential learning in eighteenth-century Chosŏn Korea. Moreover, I have shown that his scholarly works on the ancient stone monuments, in particular, played an important role in elevating Chosŏn's epigraphy to a higher level by correcting a number of fallacies in Korean history (and its historiography) via his study of ancient Korean epitaphs. Ultimately, his scholarship as a whole, therefore, demands a radical re-appraisal of some of the central concepts in the historiography of the late Chosŏn, among which the most notable one is, as stated above, Sirhak. In the mainstream narrative of Korean history, that concept refers to a handful of late Chosŏn (Confucian) scholars, who tried to overcome the unpractical and overly metaphysical aspects of Zhu Xi's philosophy and further expand their academic concerns into more pragmatic fields, such as governance, agriculture, geography, and historiography (to name a few).⁴³

It is widely known, however, that Sirhak is no more than a "historiographical construct" without empirical historical foundation. Hence, a number of scholars have revealed how arbitrarily the concept of Sirhak has been defined (and reiterated) among Korean historians since the 1930s.⁴⁴ Historically speaking, *shixue* (the Chinese pronunciation of *sirhak*) was one of Zhu Xi's preferred concepts in his interpretation of the canon of the *Sishu wujing* (四書五經, Four Books and Five Classics) he formulated. In the preface to his exegesis of the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸章句序), in particular, he articulated his notion of *shixue*, as follows: "This book (the *Doctrine of the Mean*) begins with one principle, spreads out to a myriad of things, and eventually returns to the original principle. If one unravels it, the world becomes complete in itself. If one absorbs it, its mysterious rules try to conceal themselves. Hence, its ambience is so strong as to be boundless. As a

argument on the foundation year of the stele is even different from all the existing theories in East Asian scholarship. Liu Xi-hai and Imanishi Ryū (今西龍, 1875–1932), for example, suggested that the stele was erected in 681 and 682 respectively, whereas recent Korean scholarship dates it at the twenty-fifth day of the seventh month of the year 682. According to Ch'usa's analysis, however, such arguments do not deserve consideration, as it was after the eighth month of the year 648 when Emperor Gaozong's epithet was given as the "Tianhuang Dadi" (天皇大帝). See Kim Chang-ho, "Silla T'aejo Sŏnghan ūi chaeŏm't'o," *Yŏksa Kyoyuk Nonjip* 5 (1983): 94–95.

⁴³ On the definition of Sirhak, see Han Yŏng-u and Ko Tong-hwan, *Tasi Sirhagiran muŏshin'ga* (Seoul: P'urŭn yŏksa, 2007), 11–24.

⁴⁴ On the historiography of Sirhak, see Kim Yong-ok, *Tok kihaksŏl: Ch'oe Han'gi ūi sam kwa saenggak* (Seoul: T'ongnamu, 2004), 42–68; Kim Sang-jun, "Sirhak ūn hanain'ga, yŏrŏsin'ga, animyŏn aech'o e ŏpsŏttŏn kŏsin'ga - Mirae sirhak ūl wihan panghyang mosaek," *Han'guk sirhak hakhoe* 32 (2016): 365–401; Yi Hun-ch'ang, "Sirhak kaenyŏm tŭl ūi t'onghapchŏk ihae rŭl wihan siron," *Han'guk sirhak hakhoe* 32 (2016): 233–96; Kim Sŭng-yun, "Kyŏngseron esŏ pon sirhak," *Han'guk sirhak hakhoe* 26 (2013): 169–212; Kim Yong-hŭm, "Hong Isŏp sahak ūi sŏngkyŏk kwa Chosŏn hugi sirhak," *Han'guk sirhak hakhoe* 25 (2013): 497–529. In Western scholarship, see Donald L. Baker, "The Use and Abuse of the Sirhak Label: A New Look at Sin Hu-dam and his Sohak P'yŏn," *Kyŏhoesa yŏn'gu* 3 (1981): 185–203. These articles share the common notion that the concept of Sirhak became established, first by the introduction of the Japanese term "Jitsugaku" (K. *sirhak*) into Chosŏn, and later by the nationalistic movement "Chosŏnhak" (朝鮮學, Chosŏn Studies), in which Korean historians attempted to find the potential for "Western modernity" in their own history in the 1930s.

whole, this deserves to be called ‘genuine learning.’⁴⁵ From then on, the concept of *shixue* became established as a general term that was coined to accentuate the significance of studying the classics as a crucial methodology of attaining sagehood in East Asia as a whole. In the Chosŏn context, the first mention of *sirhak* appears in the article of the *Taejong sillok* (太宗實錄, Veritable records of King Taejong) on the twenty-fourth day of the third month of 1407, in which Kwŏn Kŭn (權近, 1352–1409) emphasized (to King Taejong) the importance of banning plagiarism and selecting talented scholars with “genuine learning,” as opposed to the *ch'esul* (製述, composition), through civil service examinations.⁴⁶ Indeed, a number of such references to *sirhak* can be found across the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, with a variety of political (and intellectual) implications.

Ultimately, this leads to the question of how to define and translate the concept of *Sirhak* in modern languages. In fact, there already exist a few translations of the character *sil* (實) in English that are widely circulated in American and European scholarship (i.e. real, genuine, practical, concrete etc.). In this sense, the definition, if not a new understanding, of the character is clearly indicated in the *Siku quanshu zongmu*, which involves a specific description of *shixue* and its first character *shi* (the Chinese pronunciation of *sil*). That is, from the standpoint of Qing evidential scholars, *shixue* as an attempt to get at the bottom of and thereby illuminate affairs and phenomena was actually derived from the doctrine of *shishi qiushi*, as opposed to the notion of *xutan* (虛談, empty discourse), the latter of which dominated Song and Ming commentaries of the Confucian classics in general (Elman 1983, 86–87). For this reason, Benjamin Elman translated the term *shixue* as “concrete learning,” which is the best translation in this context (85–88). Hence, Ch’usa and his scholarship also deserves more attention. Indeed, it was Ch’usa and his students who played a significant role in deepening the understanding of Qing evidential learning (and its doctrine of *shishi qiushi*) among Chosŏn scholars, and further endeavored to provide a reassessment of Song and Ming Confucianism—by way of relativizing it—as a whole. Furthermore, their epigraphic studies enabled the shift from Chosŏn’s way of (and attitude toward) approaching Korean epitaphs and inscriptions as the object of (aesthetic) appreciation, to that of academic criticism based on strict empirical reasoning (Pak Ch’öl-sang 2015, 9–22). Hence, their scholarship (and literary criticism) could serve as a plausible (and innovative) solution to re-conceptualizing the concept of *sirhak* in a radical way.

⁴⁵ “其書 始言一而，中散爲萬事，末復合爲一理，放之則彌六合，卷之則返藏於密，其味無窮，皆實學也。” For the full text of the preface, see: <http://ctext.org/si-shu-zhang-ju-ji-zhu/zhong-yong-zhang-ju-xu/ens>.

⁴⁶ *Taejong sillok* (Veritable Records of King Taejong), 1407 (Seventh year), Twenty-fourth Day of the Third Month (*muin*): “文科初場，罷疑義試講論，是抑詞章蹈襲之弊，務得窮經實學之士，誠爲令典。”

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