



Jeong Yak-yong's Novel Understanding of the Heart-Mind Theory through the Western Learning

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Abstract

Traditionally, Confucianism did not strictly separate the mind from the body, and it explained the nature of human beings and the structure of moral practice from the standpoint of an integrated understanding of the two. Jeong Yak-yong (1762-1836, known by his penname “Dasan”), one of the most prominent Confucian philosophers of Korea’s Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), made an important change to the existing Neo-Confucian theory. Among other things, Jeong reexamined the prevailing tendency to understand the heart-mind’s moral, psychological, and theoretical systems separately through the lens of medicine and physiology. By paying close attention to Jeong’s *Essential Meaning of the Mengzi* (*Maengjayoui* 孟子要義), a commentary on the *Mengzi*, this talk introduces his novel approach to the Confucian heart-mind theory and discusses how in doing so, he utilized the Western Learning.

Short Biography

Kim, Seonhee received Ph.D. from Ewha Womans University (2008), and is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy of Ewha Womans University in Korea. Her research interests focus on East-West Comparative Philosophy, Philosophy in East Asia, Korean Philosophy, and Western Learning in pre-modern Asia. She has published several books, including *Western Learning: A Mirror that Joseon encountered* (Seoul: Mosinun Saramdle, 2018) and *Matteo Ricci, Chu-hsi and Jeong Yak-Yong: The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (天主實義) and *the Horizons of Confucianism in East Asia* (Seoul: Simsan Publishing, 2012) in Korean. Her representative English articles are “The Challenge of Western Learning as Heterodoxy: Re-reading Sŏng-ho School’s Controversies and Conflicts over Western Learning in Chosŏn” (*Acta Koreana*, 2016) and “A Religious Approach to the *Zhongyong*: With a Focus on Western Translators and Korean Confucians” (*Journal of Korean Religions*, 2015).