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Reform and Order

— Jeong Yak-yong丁若鏞(1762-1836)'s Theory of Rule of Ritual

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Classics for Reforming the State

In traditional East Asia, political thinkers and statesmen expressed their visions of politics by reference to the Confucian Classics. By invoking the canonical authority of those documents, they could represent their plans for government as legitimate. By traditional political thinkers I mean scholars and statesmen who spelled out their political visions with what Benjamin Elman calls "classical literacy."[1] Using the common language of classical learning, these thinkers participated in the transnational forum of debate over major issues of good government based in their own local surroundings. The ancient models of good government in the Confucian Classics enabled them to criticize the *status quo*, develop their theories of government, and propose plans for reforming state institutions. In this sense, I would argue that the Confucian Classics functioned almost as the "constitution" of East Asian civilizations.[2]

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1) Benjamin Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), especially, Chapter 2: " … an authorized classical language, which as an instrument of social and political policy, which also functioned as the lingua franka of classically educated literati."

2) I use the term "constitution" in a broad sense in distinction with the constitutional law of the modern state. Admittedly, the constraining power of the Confucian Classics was much weaker than the constitutional law of the modern state; however, the traditional state also worked on a set of political norms, traditions, practices, statutes, and principles, both tacit and explicit, which formed the basis of political stability. For this reason, I would argue that the Confucian Classics was the constitution of the traditional state in post-Qin(221-206BC) East Asian history. Moreover, the Confucian Classics seems to have functioned as the ideological buffer between the elite and the state in traditional East Asia.

Jeong Yak-yong's unfinished *magmum opus*, the *Gyeongse Yupyo*經世遺表(*Last Memorials for Ordering the World*, hereafter *Gyeongse Yupyo*), offers an extraordinarily rich case in which a traditional political thinker invoked the Classics to propose a comprehensive set of reforms. In this comprehensive work of statecraft, Jeong draws upon a number of Chinese sources: the Confucian Classics, histories, encyclopedias, as well as literary collections. Amongst these sources, the *Rituals of Zhou*(the *Zhouli* 周禮; hereafter *Zhouli*), one of the *Thirteen Confucian Classics*, is by far the most important because Jeong organized the structure of this book following the *Zhouli* model: the Offices of Heaven, Earth, Spring, and Summer(although the other two, Autumn and Winter, were left undone).

The *Zhouli* is attributed rather controversially to the legendary lawgiver the Duke of Zhou(ca. 11th Century BC). By comparing the existing systems of the Joseon state with the idealized model of an archaic bureaucratic system in the *Zhouli*, he could propose a set of policies designed to transform the established institutions of the dynasty.[3] With reference to the *Zhouli*, obviously, he could gain the constitutionality of his plans for a fundamental reform. Therefore, this paper will begin with Jeong's view of the *Zhouli*: what it gave him, how he used it, and what he intended to achieve by using it.

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3) Jaeyoon Song, *Traces of Grand Peace: Classics and State Activism in Imperial China* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), chapter 1.

Beyond the context of late-Joseon Korea, Jeong Yak-yong participated in the transnational community of *Zhouli* studies. In this community, a long line of renowned classicists, statesmen, and political thinkers in East Asian history actively participated, collaboratively constructing the growing body of exegetical studies.

In Chinese history, we can think of such luminaries as the late Han classicist Zheng Xuan鄭玄(127-200), the Tang classicist Jia Gongyan賈公彦(ca. 7th century), the reform-minded scholar Li Gou 李覯(1009-1059), the reform councilor Wang Anshi王安石(1021-1086), the early Ming legislators Song Lian宋濂(1310-1381) and Fang Xiaoru方孝孺(1357-1402), the thwarted reformer of the late Ming and early Qing Huang Zongxi黃宗羲(1610-1695), the late Qing classicist Sun Yirang孫詒讓(1848-1908), to name but a few. In Tokugawa Japan, Ogyū Sorai荻生徂徠(1666-1728) and Dazai Shundai太宰春臺(1680-1747) as well as the scholars of the late Mitō school such as Fujita Yūkoku藤田幽谷(1774) and Aizawa Seishisai 會澤正志齋(1782-1863) also participated in this community.[4] In Joseon Korea, we can think of Jeong Tojŏn鄭道傳(1342 -1398), Yun Hyu尹鑴(1617-1680), and, finally, Jeong Yak-yong.[5]

4) Nakai(2010), pp. 279-292.

5) Haboush(2010), pp. 309-313. Jeong Dojeon authored the *Statutes for the Governance of Joseon*(*Joseon Gyeongguk jeon*朝鮮經國典) and Yu Hyu authored *A Diagrammed Treatise on the Offices of Councilors and Mentors*(Konggo chickchang tosŏ公孤職掌圖說).

Jeong Yak-yong's Approach to the *Zhouli*

Jeong Yak-yong devoted his late years to the compilation of the *Gyeongse Yupyo*, carrying on the statecraft tradition of Joseon Confucianism represented by such luminaries as Yu Hyeyong-won柳馨遠(1662-1673) and Yi Yik李瀷(1681-1763). To articulate his plans for reform in a systematic way, Jeong Yak-yong used the *Zhouli* as an overarching framework of reference. JaHyun Haboush's research has shown that the Joseon literati, while showing respect and interest in the *Zhouli*, produced but a few commentaries on it.[6] In his late years in exile, he decided to take up this classic for articulation of his reform agenda.[7] Throughout his life, Jeong was more concerned with the *Book of Documents* and the *Book of Changes*.[8] Why, then, did he decide to use the *Zhouli*, a problematic classic often associated with Wang Mang 王莽(45BC-23AD) and Wang Anshi(1021-1086), the two most widely

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6) Ibid., P.311.

7) The *Gyeongse Yupyo* was originally a transcribed version in forty-four chapters under the title of the Manuscript of the Rituals of an Enfeoffed State in 1817, and was printed for the first time in the 1910s. For one hundred years this book was kept in the original hand-transcribed version. In other words, this book never influenced the Choson Dynasty per se. For this reason, this book has been compared to Huang Zongxi's Waiting for the Dawn which, though written in the early Qing, would influence the reformists of the early twentieth century.

8) Jo Seong-eul조성을, "Jeong Yak-yong ŭi Churye Yŏngu wa gaehyŏk sasang(丁若鏞의 周禮硏究와 改革思想)" In *Hankuk chungse ŭi Jeongch'i sasang kwa churye*(한국중세의 정치사상과 주례), edited by Yonsei Univ. Kukhak Yŏnguwŏn(Seoul: Hyean, 2005), 226-228.

condemned reformers in Chinese history?

In the history of classical learning, the *Zhouli* has remained a controversial text up to the present times. In Chinese history, it was used twice by illegitimate political reformers and once by alien regimes during the Period of Disunity(220-589). Especially in Northern Song(960-1127) China, the reform councilor Wang Anshi's commentary on the *Zhouli* held sway as one of the three imperially sanctioned standard classics of the New Policies government. With the fall of the Northern Song and the subsequent cessation of the New Policies, Wang Anshi's scholarship was suppressed to the degree irrecoverable. Southern Song(1127-1279) literati took the *Zhouli* back by redefining it as the constitution of a smaller *laissez faire* government. Jeong Yak-yong was, of course, well-aware of the *Zhouli*'s place in Chinese history. He had to defend his use of the *Zhouli* against critics who would readily disparage it as repeating Wang Anshi's error in the late Joseon context.

Jeong Yak-yong trusted the canonical authority of the *Zhouli* throughout his career.[9] Following a long line of Chinese classicists since Zheng Xuan, he believed that the *Zhouli* contained "the *Traces of Grand Peace*"(*Taiping zhi ji*太平之迹) achieved by the Duke of Zhou in the Western Zhou(ca. 1046-771 BC) founding. Jeong was, however, was opposed to the methods of both Zheng Xuan and Wang Anshi. He thought that more than seventy percent

9) Ibid.

of Zheng's fastidious comments on the *Zhouli* were erroneous. He also believed that Wang Anshi's approach was simply wrong-headed. Jeong was, in fact, ambitious enough to use the *Zhouli* without relying on the Han and Tang scholia.

In "the Introduction," Jeong Yak-yong begins by addressing the tension between ritual and law, a long-standing issue in the history of East Asian political thought. Confucianism, as when it ascended to become state orthodoxy in the early Han(BC 206 –AD 220), was an alternative to the Legalist doctrine of the Qin Empire(221-206 BC). Jeong advocates the *Zhouli* by elaborating on the concept of ritual. This classic is called the rituals, rather than laws, of the Zhou, explains Jeong, because the central idea of good government in antiquity was "to lead the people through the means of rituals(以禮而道民)." The sage kings of antiquity ruled the state and edified the population by means of ritual. Whereas the rule of ritual is in accordance with the natural order of things and harmonizes with human feelings, Jeong contends, law is the means of controlling the people by coercion and pressure. "When these rituals of antiquity fell into disuse," he argues, "the name of law began to arise."[10] He defines the meaning of ritual as: "that which is coherent when viewed in light of Heavenly Principle and that which is harmonious with human sentiment when applied to realities."[11] He concludes:

10) *Gyeongse Yupyo* 1.1: "至禮之衰而法之名起焉."

11) Ibid.: "揆諸天理而合, 錯諸人情而協者, 謂之禮; 威之以所恐, 迫之以所悲, 使斯民兢兢然莫之敢干者, 謂之法."

"The Former Kings made rituals the basis of law whereas the Later Kings regards laws as laws."[12)]

In the history of Confucian classical learning, the transformation of the *Zhouguan*(Offices of Zhou) into the *Zhouli*(*Rituals of Zhou*) was a hermeneutical turn. Based on cumulative commentaries, Zheng Xuan declared that the old-script document we now call the *Zhouli* is the rituals the Duke of Zhou created in the seventh year of his regency for his nephew King Cheng.[13)] Following Zheng Xuan's lead, Han and Tang classicists viewed the *Zhouli* as one of the *Three Rituals* in the corpus of the *Thirteen Confucian Classics*. Jeong acquiesces to this view, yet he argues for the superiority of ritual to law. As shown above, he understands ritual as a broad concept, the underlying principle of order in things, natural, political, social, anthropological. As he does so, he puts forward a rather simplistic dichotomy between ritual and law: rule by ritual prizes the harmony between nature and man whereas government by legal coercion disrupts the harmonious order of things.

Jeong apologetically defends the canonical authority of the *Zhouli* itself. To rescue the *Zhouli* from its critics was the first statement of the *Gyeongse Yupyo*. In his view, the *Zhouli* is a legitimate set of "rituals" as designed by the Duke of Zhou, not a system of laws. He stresses this point at the outset in order to redefine good government within the legitimate boundary of the Confucian

12) Ibid.: "先王以禮而爲法, 後王以法而爲法."

13) *Zhouli zhushu* 1.2.

Classics.

In Jeong Yak-yong's view, good government consists in state activism, the state's active engagement with social and economic plans: he writes that Kings Yao and Shun, often viewed as being non-activist, were indeed activist rulers. In his own words:

> Those in the world who discuss the government of the Tang and You(=Yao and Shun) period say that "they all sat back with their arms folded and kept silent; although they just sat under the roof, their moral suasion permeated [the people] as the fragrant wind enwraps the people." … .. When there is a new policy or a movement, they suppress it by referring to the Tang and You period, and say: "the harsh and detailed methods of Hanfeizi韓非子(280-233 bc) and Shang Yang商鞅(395-338), which were appropriate for governing the decadent customs of a chaotic era; however, as Yao and Shun were benevolent and the Yings of the Qin state were cruel, they regarded what is loose and lax as correct and what is tight and urgent as wrong.
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> 世俗言唐虞之治者曰堯與舜, 皆拱手恭己. 玄然默然, 以端坐於茅茨之屋, 而其德化之所漸被, 若薰風之襲人, 於是以熙熙爲淳淳, 以皞皞爲蘧蘧. 凡有施爲動作, 輒引唐虞以折之, 謂韓非商鞅之術, 刻覈精深, 實可以平治末俗, 特以堯舜賢而嬴秦惡, 故不得不以疎而緩者爲是, 密而急者爲非云爾."

In my view, Yao and Shun stoop up and did their best to have the people of all-under-heaven work to the utmost without pursuing convenience even when they took rest; moreover, Yao and Shun had the people of all-under-heaven respectfully crouch themselves in fear so that they would not harbor untruthful thoughts. Although Yao and Shun were the most diligent in the world, they misrepresent them as practising non-action; although nobody was more precise than Yao and Shun, they misrepresent them as being lax and far-fetched. They have the ruler not desire activism and give up on such idea by thinking about Yao and Shun. This is why all-under-heaven has become corrupt without renewal. When Confucius said that Shun did nothing, he meant that "since Shun had twenty-two bright and sagely ministers what else should he do?" His words had far-reaching implications and conflicting effects so as to gain exquisiteness beyond words, people today only stick to that particular phrase and say that Shun sat back with his arms folded without moving a finger, yet all-under-heaven was transformed [by his ruling] spontaneously, and they thoughtlessly forget "the Canon of Yao" chapter and "the Counsels of Kaoyao" chapter in the *Book of Documents*. How lamentable!

以余觀之, 奮發興作, 使天下之人, 騷騷擾擾, 勞勞役役, 曾不能謀一息之安者, 堯舜是已. 以余觀之, 綜密嚴酷, 使天下之人, 夔夔遬遬,

瞿瞿悚悚, 曾不敢飾一毫之詐者, 堯舜是已. 天下莫勤於堯舜, 誣之以無爲, 天下莫密於堯舜, 誣之以疎迂, 使人主每欲有爲, 必憶堯舜以自沮, 此天下之所以日腐而不能新也. 孔子謂舜無爲者, 謂舜得賢聖至二十二人, 將又何爲, 其言洋溢抑揚, 有足以得風神於言外者, 今人專執此一言, 謂舜拱默端坐, 一指不動, 而天下油油然化之, 乃堯典皐陶謨, 皆浩然忘之, 豈不鬱哉.[14)]

In Jeong's view, the classic Confucian critique of state activism is based upon a particular non-activist misreading of the Confucian Classics. In critique of Legalism and the Qin Empire, critical thinkers disparaged even the slightest attempt of government action as the technique of Hanfei zi and Shang Yang. He believes that good government consists in "tightness(密)" and "urgency(急)" as opposed to "looseness(疎)" and "slowness(緩)." By "tightness" he means the making of specific institutions for addressing the existing problems of the state and society at large, and by urgency, the government's responsiveness to the needs of the people. In other words, the state should address the existing problems of society by installing specific institutions for the improvement of the *status quo*. In denial of a classic *laissez faire* view of the state, he calls on the state to act on the world. This view contradicts the long-standing belief that Kings Yao and Shun opted for "non-action(wuwei)." Simply put, he argues that given the way in which their activities

14) *Gyeongse Yupyo* 1, "yin."

are recorded in the *Book of Documents*, Yao and Shun should be viewed as activist rulers. By representing the government of Yao and Shun as activist, he redefines good government for his time: the state should assume the role of transforming the corrupt structures of the Joseon administration.[15)]

By invoking the *Zhouli* model of institution-building and bureaucratic structuring, he intended to represent his reform policies as being in harmony with the fundamental spirits of the ancient sage rulers. In opposition to the traditional conservative visions of *laissez faire* government, Jeong Yak-yong argues that the state ought to take responsibility for resolving problems in society. His purpose seems to have been straightforward: to present a systematic method of reforming the corrupt structures and failing institutions of the existing Joseon administration. Four hundred years after the founding, he diagnosed, the Joseon dynasty was nearing a systemic breakdown. The bureaucratic structure of the Joseon dynasty was in disarray, and the discipline of the bureaucracy, lax and loose. The ruling elite of the dynasty had misused "the ancestral laws of the founders" to serve their interests; intensifying the exploitative systems of government, they monopolized economic resources at the detriment of the population at large.[16)]

Calling for a fundamental reform, Jeong pointed to an ideal world of antiquity, in which the sage rulers governed with a

15) Ibid., 1, "yin," 1.

16) Ibid., 1, "yin," 1.

comprehensive set of institutions. These institutions he believed were not invented by a political genius overnight, but evolved through trials and errors, as shown in the *Book of Documents*. At the outset of the *Gyeongse Yupyo*, he emphasizes how ancient kings and ministers created institutions one by one, reflecting cumulative lessons learned from the actual processes of establishing government in reality. In his own words:

> The rituals of the Xia dynasty were not invented by the Xia alone, but created by Kings Yao, Shun, Yu, and [their ministers] Ji, Xi, Yi, Gaoyao, et al., who, with all their spirits, earnestness, and intelligence, established the standard systems for ten thousand generations. How could anyone change any of those clauses and examples? However, when the people of the Yin dynasty replace the Xia, there must have been increases and decreases. When the Zhou people replaced the Yin, there must have been increases and decreases. How so? The ways of the world shift as the flowing rivers and streams; if established for eternity without changes, it cannot be naturally so.
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> 夏后氏之禮, 非夏后氏之所獨制也. 卽堯, 舜, 禹, 稷, 契, 益, 皐陶之等所聚精會神. 竭誠殫智, 爲萬世立法程者也. 其一條一例. 豈人之所能易哉! 然殷人代夏, 不能不有所損益, 周人代殷, 不能不有所損

益, 何則? 世道如江河之推移, 一定而萬世不動, 非理之所能然也.[17]

In the *Gyeongse Yupyo*, Jeong Yak-yong constructs his grand constitutional vision of restructuring the Joseon state. By referring to an ideal model suggested in the *Zhouli*, he gains the constitutional legitimacy of reforming the state. As the blueprint of the Duke of Zhou's government, the *Zhouli* provides the administrative model of an archaic bureaucratic state. For this reason, a long line of political thinkers and statesmen in Chinese history had formulated their own constitutional agenda by explicating the models of good government in the *Zhouli*.

The *Zhouli* Structure of the *Gyeongse Yupyo*

As one of the *Thirteen Confucian Classics*, the *Zhouli* offers the bureaucratic listings of 366 offices, staffed with an army of over 93,000 officials and functionaries, divided into the Six Ministries(Offices). It defines the specific duties and staff members of each of these 366 offices with the chain of command and lines of communication. On the summit of its bureaucratic structure stands the King, aided by the Six Ministers, namely, the premier(heaven) and the five other ministers of education(Earth), ritual(Spring),

17) Ibid., 1, "yin," 2.

war(Summer), justice(Autumn), and works(Winter). These offices in the *Zhouli* are systematically organized to perform the basic tasks of government including personnel administration, fiscal management(collection of taxes and allocation of resources), education, social organization, local control and surveillance, the maintenance of the defense system including recruitment and training of local troops, police control, court administration, foreign relations, diplomatic protocols, etc. At the same time, it also describes the petty bureaucracy of low-ranking officials and functionaries such as eunuchs, court women, medical doctors, cooks, servicemen, etc., in painstaking detail.

In global historical perspective, we might say that among the ancient documents describing the archaic bureaucratic states, the *Zhouli* is probably the most detailed and systematic one.[18] In Chinese history, the *Zhouli* provided the ancient reference for the organization of the basic government structure: from the Sui(581-618) dynasty onward, the imperial government continued to adopt the Six-Ministry system which was obviously modeled after the Six Ministries of the *Zhouli*. Moreover, the *Zhouli* was a primordial form of the normative bureaucracy for the traditional Chinese intellectuals: since Ban Gu班固(32-92) wrote "the Treatise on Hundreds of Offices" in the *Hanshu*, the official dynastic histories all followed the basic format of the *Zhouli* in terms of describing

18) Jaeyoon Song, *Traces of Grand Peace*, "Introduction."

the bureaucratic structures of their dynasties. In short, the *Zhouli* functioned as one of the important references for showing the ancient prototype of state administration and bureaucratic organization in Chinese history.

As a proposal for state reform, the *Gyeongse Yupyo* is perhaps the most ambitious of its kinds in East Asian traditions. Jeong Yak-yong proposed a fundamental restructuring of the existing bureaucratic structure of the Joseon state by explaining the purposes of the 120 offices he re-introduces for the Joseon by finding their prototypes in the offices of the *Zhouli*. The number 120 symbolizes the size of the state administration for "an enfeoffed state that the Joseon was in Jeong's view: "The *Zhouli* is the rituals of the Son of Heaven. Our country is an enfeoffed state(*fanguo*藩國). Its institutions should be less."[19] Whereas the *Zhouli* as "the rituals of the Son of Heaven(*tianzi zhi li*天子之禮)" gives the number of three hundred sixty offices, the offices of the Joseon dynasty should be around 120. With the *Zhouli* model in mind, Jeong also referred to the old statute of the Joseon dynasty. He reorganized the 110 existing offices assigned to the central government in the capital into a six-part government, each ministry with twenty offices, overall 120 offices patterned after what he thought was "the institutional number of Heaven and Earth(*tiandi dushu*天地度數).[20]

Why did Jeong try rather forcibly to fit the existing bureaucratic

19) *Gyeongse Yupyo*, 1.1: "周禮, 天子之禮, 我國家, 藩國也, 制度宜小."

20) Ibid.

system into the prototypical mold of the idealized government of the Duke of Zhou's regency? As a minister in exile, he seems to have been under pressure to provide the canonical grounds of his reformist plans. As the blueprint of an archaic bureaucratic state, the *Zhouli* was indeed the most effective for his purposes. Even as he proposes a set number of offices for the Joseon bureaucracy, he was flexible enough to consider it alternable.

Noting that the number of offices in the *Zhouli* itself is not numerically perfect, he believes that it would be possible to formulate the optimal system of government for eternity by amending a few offices as required by the conditions of time. However, his proposed scheme for restructuring of the Joseon administration must have been a ground-breaking provocation for those in power at the time. Based on a harsh evaluation of governance in the dynasty at the time, Jeong points out how from the very beginning the government system of the Joseon dynasty was ill-conceived. He invoked the *Zhouli* in the first place to trump the ancestral laws of the Joseon dynasty itself.

Jeong Yak-yong thought that the Border Defense Council (*pipyŏnsa*備邊司) since the early 16th century came to monopolize powers at the eclipse of the State Council(*ŭiJeongbu*議政府), traditionally the superlative administrative organ of public deliberation comprised of the highest ranking ministers. To address this problem, he points to the Three *Gong*(*sangong*三公) and the Three *Gu*(*sangu*三孤) given in "the Officers of Zhou"

chapter in the *Book of Documents*.[21] The Three *Gong*(the Grand-Master, the Grand-Assistant, and the Grand-Guardian) and the Three *Gu*(the junior Master, the junior Assistant, and the junior Guardian) combined formed the collective leadership of the Zhou government, according to "the Officers of Zhou." This is in conflict with the Grand Steward(*taizai*太宰) of the *Zhouli* system; however, Jeong invokes the paragon of collective leadership as the model for the Joseon bureaucracy.

The State Council of the Joseon, he proposes, should be reorganized to fit the Three *Gong* and Three *Gu* model. With the State Council as the summit of the Joseon bureaucracy, Jeong matches the ideal model of the Zhou bureaucracy with the overall 120 offices of the Joseon bureaucracy. By using the *Zhouli* model, he could re-examine the objectives of each office and propose a new way of restructuring the existing offices of the Joseon bureaucracy. The ultimate aims of his proposed bureaucratic reform were to guard against the concentration of power, to remedy the corruptive structures of bureaucracy, to call for the restoration of the six-ministry system, and to rationalize the bureaucratic system predicated upon occupational specialization.

With this general understanding of the *Zhouli* model in the *Gyeongse Yupyo*, let us now turn to the central issue of our inquiry: Jeong's plan for land redistribution.

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21) Ibid., 1.1.

Debates on the Well-Field System in Chinese History

Debates on land taxes lay at the heart of Chinese statecraft discourses during the Tang-Song transition.[22] In traditional East Asia, the land system was of utmost importance in statecraft discourses simply for the fact that most than ninety percent of the population were farmers in agrarian communities. Joseon Korea was no exception, and Jeong Yak-yong took the reformation of the land system seriously. He devoted more than a third of the *Gyeongse Yupyo* to discussion of the field institutions.

Jeong Yak-yong was as much a product of Chinese classical learning as of eighteenth and nineteenth century Joseon society. In order to remedy the social evils of 'landlordism,' he systematically developed his land-reform plans by reference to the ancient Confucian Classics; moreover, he articulated his own scheme of the well-field system through an in-depth critical survey of Chinese debates on the well-field system.[23] In the *Gyeongse Yupyo*, Jeong Yak-yong cites from a wide range of Chinese sources including the Confucian Classics, dynastic histories, encyclopedias, and

22) Jaeyoon Song, "Debates on Just Taxation in Ma Duanlin's Comprehensive Survey" in *State Power in China, 900-1325*, ed., Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Paul Jakov Smith(University of Washington Press, 2016), chapter 7.

23) Jeong Yak-yong read Southern Song and Yuan commentaries on the *Rituals of Zhou*. For more information of Southern Song and Yuan sources, see Jaeyoon Song, *Traces of Grand Peace: Classics and State Activism in Imperial China*(Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), chapter 14.

literary collections.[24] He constructed his view of the well-field system in connection with those Chinese thinkers. To convince the king of the soundness of his policy proposal, Jeong Yak-yong routinely briefs on the general history of Chinese political thought. By examining the trials and errors of Chinese institutional history, Jeong Yak-yong designs the optimum polices for Joseon Korea. To locate Jeong's place in the history of East Asian political thought, a general survey of traditional Chinese debates on the well-field system seems necessary.

The following is a list of representative thinkers in Chinese history who either advocated or criticized the attempt to reinstate the well-field system.[25] How to view the well-field system divided thinkers of Chinese statecraft into the two opposing camps: restorationsist and sympathizers vs. modernists and critics.

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24) Among the encyclopedias, Jeong Yak-yong routinely references Ma Duanlin's Wenxian tongkao.

25) Lai Jiangcheng賴建誠, *Jingtian bian*井田辨, chapter 9. "復井田論與井田不可復論."

26) *Yantie lun* 1.29. "文學曰, 故理民之道, 在於節用尚本, 分土井田而已."

27) Ibid., "大夫曰, 富國何必用本農, 足民何必井田也?"

28)《後漢書》,〈仲長統傳〉. "今欲張太平之紀綱, 立聖代之基址, 齊民財之豊寡, 正風俗之奢儉, 非井田莫由也."

29) 荀悅,《申鑒》2,〈時事〉. "或曰: 復井田歟? 曰: 否. 專地非古也, 井田非今也. 然則如之何? 曰: 耕而勿有,以俟制度可也."《漢紀》8, "且夫井田之制, 不宜於人眾之時, 田廣人寡, 苟為可也. 然欲廢之於寡, 立之於眾,土地布列在豪強, 卒而革之, 并有怨心, 則生紛亂, 制度難行."

Restorationists and sympathizers	Modernists and critics
The Han Dynasty	
• The Literati文學(《鹽鐵論》) praised the WFS as the foundation of good government based on their agrarian communitarian visions.[26]	• The Lord Grand Secretariat大夫(《鹽鐵論》) emphasizes the importance of commerce and trade, and disparage the idea of restoring the WFS.[27]
• Zhong Zhangtong仲長統(179-220) who served Cao Cao曹操(155-220) defended the WFS as the basis of "grand peace(taiping)," the means by which to equalize the people's wealth and correct customs.[28]	• Xun Yue荀悅 (148-209) argues that the WFS could not be restored in the Later Han because the population had increased and the powerful families had already seized the vast area of cultivable land.[29]
Tang(618-907) and Northern Song(960-1127)	
• Bai Juyi白居易(772-846), the renowned Tang poet, proposes the restoration of the WSF as the fundamental solution to the widespread landgrossing of the day.[30]	• Liu Zongyuan柳宗元(773-819) criticizes the restorationalist idealization of the ancient institutions in his most famous essay, "*On fengjian*(封建論)
• Li Gou李覯 argues that the re-instatement of the WFS would increase the productivity of land by incentivizing the farmers to reclaim the frontier areas.[31]	• Su Xun蘇洵 (1009-66) is well known for having proposed the theory of limiting the ownership of land. In lieu of reinstating the ancient ideal of the WFS, he proposes as a moderate alternative that the state should cap the amount of land to be owned by the individuals.[32]

30)《白居易集》64.1349-1351,〈議井田阡陌〉.“自三代之後, 厥制崩壞, 故井田廢, 則游隨之路啟；阡陌作, 則兼併之門開. … 臣以爲井田者廢之頗久, 復之稍難, 未可盡行, 且宜漸制.”

31) Jaeyoon Song, *Traces of Grand Peace*, Chapter 4.

32) 蘇洵(1009-66),《蘇老泉先生全集》卷5,〈田制〉.“周之時用井田, 井田廢, 田非耕者所有, 而有田者不耕也, 耕者之田資于富民. … 其弊皆起于廢井田. 井田復, 則貧民有田以耕, 穀食粟米不分于富民, 可以無飢; … 是以天下之士爭言復井田. … 夫井田雖不可為, 而其實便於今. 今誠有能為近井田者而用之, 則亦可以蘇民矣乎! … 夫端坐于朝廷, 下令于天下, 不驚民, 不動眾, 不用田之制, 而獲井田之利, 雖周之井田, 何以運過于此哉.”

33)《宋史》361,〈范如圭傳〉.“今屯田之法, 歲之獲官盡征之, 而田卒賜衣服廩食如故. 使力穡者無贏餘之望, 惰農者無飢餓之憂. 貪小利, 失大計, 謀近效, 妨遠圖, 故久無成功. 宜籍荊淮曠土, 畫爲丘井, 倣古助法, 別爲科條令政役法, 則農利修而武備飭矣.”

34) Jaeyoon Song, “Debates on Just Taxation.”

35) Fang Xiaoru. “且人之言曰: 古法有不可行於今者, 若井田是也. 斯言甚惑. … 若井田者, 更三四聖人而始大備, 酌古今之中, 盡裁成之理, … 流俗之謂不可行之者, 以吳越言之, 山溪險絕, 而人民稠也. … 今未知天下之故, 而曰井田不可行者, 是橋井之蛙之類也. 且僕鄙之意, 以為不行井田, 不足以行仁義者, 非虛語也. … 是殆不然, 井田之行, 則四海無閑民, 而又有政令以申之, 德禮以化之, … 僕故曰井田之廢, 亂之所生也. 欲行仁義者, 必自井田始. 吾子欲舍井田而行仁義, 猶無釜而炊也, 決不得食矣.”

36) 丘濬,《大學衍義補》14.12.“井田已廢千餘年矣, 決無可復之理. 說者雖謂國初人寡之時, 可以為之, 然承平日久, 生齒日繁之後, 亦終歸于壞廢. 不若隨時制宜, 使合于人情, 宜于土俗, 而不失先王之意.”

37) 譚嗣同,《譚嗣同全集》.“盡改民主以行井田, 則地球之政,可合而爲一. … 西人深贊井田之法, 爲能禦天災, 盡地利, 安土著, 平道路, 限戎馬, 均貧富. … 西人又極拜服中國井田之法, 其治河用之, 頗收奇效. 又言欲地球皆太平, 非井田封建不可. 故行井田封建, 兼改民主, 則地球之政可合爲一.”

38) Lai Jiancheng, *Jingtian bian*井田辨: 諸說辯駁, chapter 2.

Southern Song and Yuan	
• Fan Rukui范如圭(1102-1160) proposes in the early Southern Song(1127-1279) to rearrange the frontiers of the Jing 荊 and Huai淮 regions by adopting the ancient well-field model.[33]	• Zhu Xi朱熹(1130-1200) praises the well-field system in his commentaries on the Four Books; however, he argues that due to historical change the attempt to revive the WFS should create tremendous social unrest and chaos. For this reason, he argues that the realistic solution should be found in the transparent cadastral survey of land and the fair imposition of taxes on land. In his view, the state should implement a gradualist reform policy through prudent negotiations with the rich people. • Ye Shi葉適(1150-223) is probably the most systematic proponent of the private ownership of land. By noting the vast social and economic changes of the so-called Tang-Song transition, Ye Shi develops envisions a new theory of good government based on elite participation, social diffentiation, and economic growth. • Ma Duanlin馬端臨 (ca. 1254-1323) also criticizes the restorability of the WFS and endorses Ye Shi's view by noting historical change over time.[34]

Ming and Qing Periods	
• Fang Xiaoru方孝孺(1357-1402), the martyr of the Jianmen建文regime(1399-1402) opposes the widely held belief that the WFS could not be restored.[35]	• Qiu Jun丘濬 (1420-95) also argues that to restore the WFS is impossible for later times. As to the view that it would be possible to reinstate the WFS in the founding of a new dynasty, he argues that it would be more realistic to realize the intents of the former kings of antiquity by devising feasible institutions on a local basis.[36]
The Late Qing and the Republican Periods	
• Tan Sitong譚嗣同(1865-1898) explicitly calls for the reinstatement of the WFS as the fundamental solution to social and economic problems in China at the time.[37]	• Hu Shi胡適(1891-1961),the icon of the May Fourth Movement(1919), refuted the historicity of the WSF itself as the unfounded idealism of traditional thinkers in opposition to those who argued for the historicity of the WFS such as Hu Hanmin胡漢民(1879-1936), the leader of the GMD government in the 1920s.[38]

• Wang Anshi王安石(1021-1086) does not propose the full re-instatement of the WSF; however, he praises the WSF and tries to emulate its ideal in his New Policies.[39]

39) Higashi, Ichio 東一夫, *Ō Anseki shinpō no kenkyū*王安石新法の研究, Tōkyō：Kazama Shobō, 1970.

• **Zhang Zai**張載(1020-1077) famously eulogizes the reinstatement of the WFS, and argues that it was inseparable from the *fengjian* system.[40)]

• **Yang Jian**楊簡(1141-1226), who was closely affiliated with Lu Jiuyuan陸九淵(1139-1193), proposes the gradual reinstatement of the WFS:[41)]

• **Lin Xun**林勳(years unknown) invoked the WFS to reinstate its ideals through a fundamental land rearrangement in the early Southern Song countryside(1129).[42)]

• **Neo-Confucians** such as Hu Hong胡宏(1102-1161), 胡寅(1098-1156), Lü Zuqian呂祖謙(1137-1181), Zhu Xi commonly praised the WFS and deplored the collapse of the Tang equal-field system.[43)]

• **Hai Rui**海瑞(1514-87) calls for the flexible application of the well-field model to restribute land to the populace.[44)]

• **Wang Ao**王鏊(1450-1524) argues that it would be possible to reinstate the WFS in the north China plain although such attempt would fail in the Lower Yangzi area.[45)]

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40)《張載集》. "井田至易行,但朝廷出一令,可以不笞一人而定."

41)《宋史》卷407,〈楊簡傳〉有〈論治道〉共13 條, 其中2 條是："「一曰募兵屯田以省養兵之費；二曰限田以漸復井田.」這兩種見解基本上是空論,雖無可行性,但也可以看出耕地的急迫性,以及耕地分配的公平性,在當時所構成的壓力,讓士大夫一再地聯想到理想中的井田制."

42) For further analysis, see Jaeyoon Song(송재윤, "田賦의 公共哲學"), p. 250.

43) Ibid., pp. 248-252.

44)《明史》,〈海瑞傳〉493. "聖王之治遍天下而井里之矣, 于以爵祿夫天下也, 于井里之中養焉. … 井田之政, 又嘗遍天下而程督之矣. 欲天下治安,必行井田."

45) 王鏊,《震澤長語》卷上〈食貨門〉. "井田之法,後世不復行.愚以爲江南信不可行矣.北方平原沃野,千里彌望,皆不起科,使勢要得占爲莊田.於此略倣井田之法,爲之溝洫畎

• Huang Zongxi黃宗羲(1610-1695) specifically argues that the state could reinstate the WFS by redistributing the vast territory of land, either state-owned or newly purchased, to the population.[46)]

• Gu Dazhang顧大章(1567-1625), one of the Six Worthies of the Donglin Party, also criticizes the attempts to restore the WSF in reality.

• Hu Peihui胡培翬(1772-1849) argues that the reinstatement of the WFS should entail the redistribution of wealth, and create uncontrollable social chaos.

• Kang Youwei康有爲(1858-1927) includes the adoption of the WSF as one of his reform policies in 1888.

• Liang Qichao梁啓超(1873-1929) writes in 1899 that "China's ancient jingtian stands on the same plan as modern socialism."[47)]

• Hong Xiuquan洪秀全(1814-1864), the leader of the Taiping Uprising(1805-1864) attempts at the equitable redistribution of land for collective farming, which resembles the WSF, as one of the social economic policies of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.[48)]

• Sun Yat-sen(1866-1925) praises the WFS and applies its principle to his "principle of livelihood"(minsheng民生).[49)] However, Sun denies the restorability of the WFS for modern China while

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澹,公私有分,旱潦有備,不亦善乎？而世以爲不可行. … 姑於此先試之：自一鄉漸推之一州、一郡,以至一省. … 天子親命之,使民曉然知此意,乃或有濟."

46) 黃宗羲,《明夷待訪錄》,〈田制〉.

47) *Chinese History and Culture*, edited by Yü Ying-shih et al., p. 171.

48) Cui Zhiqing and Hu Chenyou, *Hong Xiuquan pingzhuan*洪秀全評傳, 174-181.

49) *Chinese History and Culture*, edited by Yü Ying-shih et al., Vol.2, p.170-171.

being influenced by the Confucian idea of equalization(*jun*均).

〈Table 1: On the Restorability of the ancient well-field system(WSF)〉

As shown on Table 1 above, throughout Chinese history a long line of critical thinkers praised the well-field system as the basis of social equity and economic stability. Since the Han dynasty(206 BC-AD 220) political thinkers and statesmen invoked the well-field system to promote "the Confucian ideal of equalization," in Yü Ying-shih's words.

Roughly put, debates on the private ownership of land grew more intense during the Tang Song transition. The Tang equal-field system collapsed in mid-eighth century, which marked the beginnings of vast socio-economic changes, the Tang-Song transition or "the medieval economic revolution."[50] The Tang imperial state legalized the private ownership of land, and relinquished standard per household taxes in favor of taxing property.[51] Subsequently, a class of large-scale estate-owners emerged.[52] With the development of the commercial economy, private land transactions in the countryside grew apace, without much state interference. Wang Anshi tried to alleviate economic

50) Miyazaki, *Chūgokushi* vol.1, chapter 5; Sudō, *Chūgoku tochi seido shi kenkyū*, chapter 1; Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*.

51) Twichett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, chapters 1-3; Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, chapter 2.

52) For the development of estates in the late Tang onward see Sudō, *Chūgoku tochi seido shi kenkyū*, chapters 2-3.

inequality through the interventionist state-intensive New Policies. In opposion to the New Policies model of income redistribution, Southern Song thinkers and statesmen counseled a variety of solutions of their own: 1) reinstating the Tang equal-field system, 2) imposing limits on the size of landholdings, or 3) clarifying farm boundaries. Some emphasized the mutual reliance between rich and poor, and some emphasized the positive functions of the wealthy as the natural pillars of society.[53]

For our purpose, we should note Huang Zongxi's fundamentalist argument in favor of the well-field system. By calculating the overall area of official and private land, Huang concludes that by redistributing official land(30 % of the total land under cultivation), "each household would receive fifty mou and there would still be 170,325,828 mou left over."[54] Based on a meticulous reckoning, Huang tries to prove the feasibility of the well-field system. As we shall see, Jeong Yak-yong's actual plans to reinstate the well-field system in Joseon society echo Huang Zongxi's plan.

We should also note that during the late Qing and Republica periods, a large number of reform thinkers and statesmen began to reflect on the well-field system as the indigenous Chinese doctrine

53) For the descriptions of general Southern Song opposition to state activism and elite voluntarism, see von Glahn, "Community and Welfare" and Hymes, "Moral duty and self-regulating process" and "Introduction," in Hymes and Schirokauer, *Ordering the World*. For literati voluntarism and community-building from Southern Song to Ming, see Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, chapter 7.

54) Huang Zongxi, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince*, translated by William Theodore de Bary, pp. 131-133.

of social equality and economic equalization. Their discourses on the well-field system attest to the intellectual tendency of modern Chinese thinkers and activists toward social equity, which helps explain the rise of socialism and communism in modern China. Amongst these thinkers and statesmen should be found Jeong Yak-yong's place in East Asian intellectual history; although not directly related to these thinkers, Jeong Yak-yong's mode of thinking shows a remarkable similarity with their political visions. Instead of viewing Jeong Yak-yong as a modern thinker, I would think of him as an indigenous champion of the long-standing Confucian idea of equalization(*jun*).

With these views in mind, let us now turn to Jeong Yak-yong's plan for land reform in general and his strategies of reinstateing the well-field sytem in particular.

Jeong Yak-yong's Plan for Land Reform

Jeong Yak-yong's call for a fundamental reinstatement of the well-field system in the early 19th century Joseon has persplexed researchers since the early 20th century. Existing scholars are still divided as to whether Jeong Yak-yong was for or against the privatization of land. Since the 1930s, scholars have continously argued that Jeong Yak-yong constructed his own theory of land reform without challenging the existing mode of landownership in

Joseon society. Korean historians have generally viewed that Jeong Yak-yong promoted the equitable imposition of taxation. In critique of such views, An Byeong-jik argues that Jeong did not simply promote the theory of equitable taxation but did in earnest call for reinstatement of the well-field system.[55] Jeong Yak-yong tried to secure the state-ownership of land for the reinstatement of the well-field system. In other words, the state should "nationalize" the total land of the country. The state system Jeong envisioned was, although not exactly modern, akin to an absolutist model which might point toward the making of the modern state.[56]

Jeong Yak-yong devoted one third of the *Gyeongse Yupyo* on "the Institutions of Land"(*jeonje*田制), chapters1-12. He composed this work through an extensive survey of the Chinese Classics and the land institutions of the Joseon dynasty. For this reason, it discusses the theories of the well-field system itself, the land system of the Joseon dynasty, and the strategies of reinstating the well-field system in Korea. In other words, "the Institutions of Land" discuss the actual plans for the implementation of the well-field system in Joseon society. Without considering the well-field system, it would be completely misleading.

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55) Ahn Byeong-jik안병직, chapter 3「정전법과 왕토(The Well-Field System and the King's land)」,『경세유표에 관한 연구(An Inquiry into the Gyengse-yupyo)』, 경인문화사, 2017.

56) Ibid., 261-262.

1. Theoretical approaches to the well-field system(chapter 1-5, ca. the early 1810s).
2. An inquiry into Joseon's land institutions(chapters 6-8, 1816-1817)
3. Discussions on reviving the well-field system in Joseon (chapter 9-12, after 1817).[57]

In 1799, when Jeong Yak-yong articulated his initial visions of land reform in the seven essays of "On Field"(*jeonron*田論). In it he emphasized the importance of redistributing the land only to the peasantry as the economic basis for the bottom-up construction of good government. Scholarship to date has emphasized his earlier essays such as "Tracing Officials to its Root"(*wŏnmok*原牧) and "On King Tang"(*tangron*湯論)" as being central to his political thought. In these essays, Jeong expressed what might strike us as the inkling of modern republicanism: Jeong argues that the sage rulers of antiquity were selected from among the people at the local level and rose upward through various levels of political order; the government of the sage rulers in antiquity was consolidated through popular participation at the various levels of human society.

In "On field," which was written around the same period, Jeong also articulates his visions of land redistribution. Instead of the well-field system, he envisioned a cooperative commune system,

57) Ibid., 189-190.

according to which thirty households should be grouped into one Lü閭, the basic unit of local state administration. Lü had the communal ownership of land, and the Chief of Lü appointed by the state should be in charge of managing man power at this level.[58] Yi Hyeongchang's argues that Jeong's plan for land redistribution was not in perfect harmony with this seemingly republican ideal described in "Tracing Officials to its Root." Whereas the village chief(lizheng里正) in "Tracing Officials to its root" is the democratically selected senior representative of the villagers, the Chief of the Lü閭 in "On the field" is a salaried official appointed by the state for the purpose of collecting taxes and managing the military system.[59] With the introduction of the Lü system, Jeong also envisioned economic development; by giving the tillers the freedom of movement, he thought, the tillers would move to reclaim the land and maximize agricultural productivity.[60]

"On Field" reflects Jeong Yak-yong's early idea of land redistribution. When he proposed this plan at the age of thirty-eight, he was skeptical as to the reinstatement of the well-field system for Joseon society. His view of the well-field system would gradually change over time. During the time of exile in Kangchin康津 the southernmost part of the Korean peninsula, he extensively read the

58) Pak Chanseung박찬승, 「Jeong Yak-yong ui Jeongchŏnje ron kochal(丁若鏞의 井田制論 考察 -≪經世遺表≫ 〈田制〉를 중심으로)」, 『歷史學報』 110, 1986, pp.105-112.

59) Yi Heongchang(2012), pp.16-17.

60) Ibid., p.17.

Classics and articulated his own views on major issues of statecraft. Based on the evidential survey of the ancient literature, he gradually formed a firm faith in the well-field system as the fundamental solution to the social evils of landlordism in Joseon society.

Let us now turn to his mature ideas in the *Gyeongse Yupyo*. In "On the Well-field井田(1)," Jeong seeks to restore the well-field system to remedy the economic inequalities of the Joseon at the time. The well-field system, he declares, is the universal institution for human society, ancient or modern. Because the well-field system is considered "the canonical policy of the sages," Jeong argues, that the well-field system should be restored in the modern times.[61)]

With this fundamentalist zeal in mind, he sets out to dispute the two most widely spread skeptical views: that the conditions of land are unsuitable for the well-field system, and that the number population is unstable. In Northern Song China, as discussed above, Su Xun famously made these two arguments against the restorability of the well-field system itself.[62)] In Su Xun's view, to reinstate the well-field system, the state had to level the mountains and fill up the waters. Jeong disputes Su Xun's idea by emphasizing that the natural terrains of the earth have not changed much since the ancient times.

Having declared his convictions in the restorability of the well-field system for the modern times, Jeong investigates into its

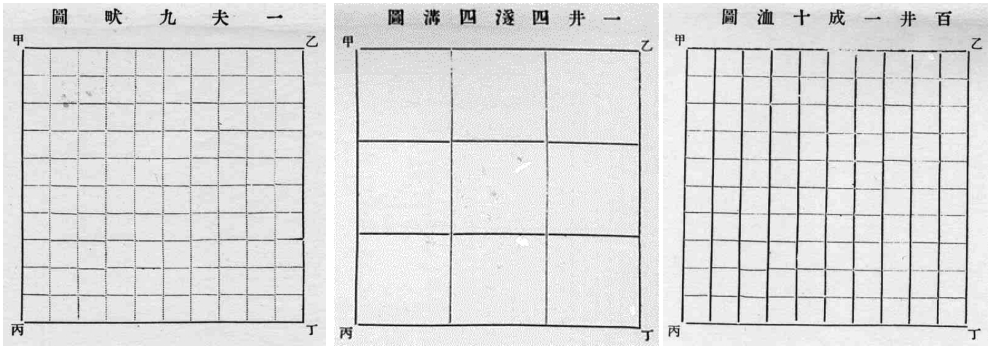
61) *Gyeongse Yupyo*, 5.1: "井田者,聖人之經法也.經法, 可通於古今."

62) *Gyeongse Yupyo*, 5.1.163.

origin through an in-depth literary survey of the Classics. Based on his close survey of the *Book of Documents* and the *Zhouli*, he attempts at the reinstatement of the well-field system. As he called for restoring the well-field system, Jeong either blinded himself to the widespread privatization of land in the late Joseon or called for a social revolution. His idea was modeled after the ancient Confucian idealism that the well-field system would form the basis of economic stability in society, which was the sine qua non for moral suasion, the ultimate aim of good government in early Confucian thought. For this reason, Jeong proposed a systematic set of policies combined with the well-field system: the reformation of landownership, the management of mountains and waters, the construction of the road network, the reorganization of land, etc. In other words, he proposed the well-field system in combination with other plans as fundamental solutions for a complex set of socio-economic problems such as economic inequality, social disorder, and the decrease of agricultural productivity and taxation.

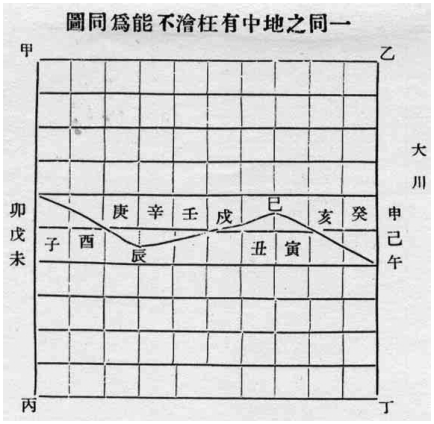
As regards the well-field system, Jeong Yak-yong was well-aware that it was predicated on the equitable segmentation of land into a unit of nine parts; he knew that to attempt to allocate land in this model in a mountainous and hilly Korea would be almost impossible. For this reason, he thought out several methods of realizing the sages' original intents by rearranging different types of land, especially in the mountains or marshland. He offers ten diagrams, each showing a different method of realizing the de

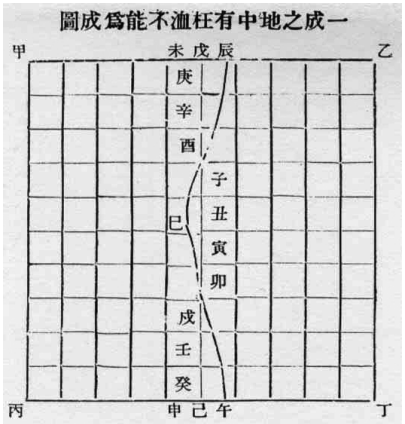
facto well-field system designed to fit the geographic terrains of the Korean peninsula, as shown below:

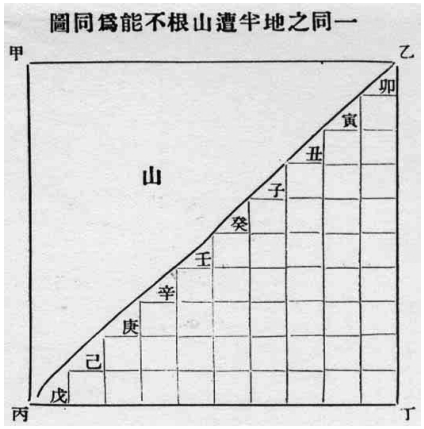


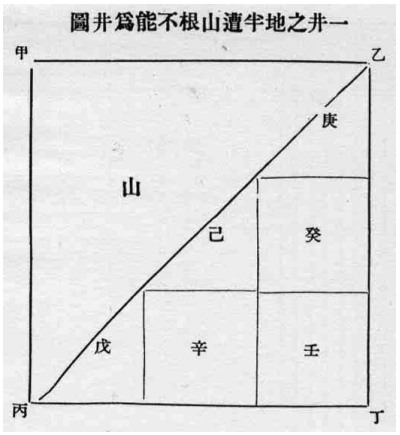
The diagram on the left signifies the basic unit *pu*(*fu*夫) of one hundred *myo*(*mu*畝; ca. 154.3㎡ in the traditional Korean measure).[63] In the middle is the unit of Jeong(jing井), comprised of nine *pu*. On the right is the unit of *seong*(*cheng*成) comprised of one hundred *Jeong*. These three units form the basic structure of the well-field system. On a higher level, one hundred *Jeong* makes one *dong*(*tong*同). Jeong reconstructed the well-field system into a nested hierarchy of segmented land units: *pu, Jeong, sŏng, t'ong*, respectively. Then Jeong Yak-yong addresses the special areas whose geographic contours do not allow for the standard well-field system. As shown below, each diagram describes how best to apply the well-field system in the areas with the waters or by the mountains.

63) *Gyeongse Yupyo*, 5.14.176.









The diagram on the left illustrates a specific terrain with a meandering stream in the middle which makes it impossible to constitute a complete unit of *dong*.[64] The diagram on the right shows the method by which Jeong calculates the area of land at the foot of a mountain.[65]

64) *Gyeongse Yupyo*, 5.20.182.

65) Ibid., 5.22.184.

It seems undeniable that Jeong Yak-yong's was a Confucian fundamentalist plan to nationalize(or collectivize) all the fields of Joseon Korea. His plan should antagonize the powerful lineages of the landlord class. He even argued clearly that only the tillers should be granted fields; as to Zheng Sinong鄭司農's commentary on the official's field(*shitian*士田),Jeong Yak-yong argues that there should not be a separate category of the official's field because the descendants of lower officials should only receive fields as farmers, not as members of a privileged class. Jeong even argues that "it would be irrational to say that a son should till an official's field because his father was a salaried official."[66] From this statement it seems clear that Jeong Yak-yong called for restoration of the ancient ideal that "all the land under heaven is the king's(溥天之下, 莫非王土)."[67]

By invoking the well-field system as the canonical policy of the ancient sages, Jeong sought to present his plan as legitimate. In this way, he used the *Zhouli* as the classical grounds to defend and rationalize his plans for land reform. His plan must have struck the powerful lineages of the day as nothing less than subversive and radical. He argued with a fundamentalist voice that the king's rule of ritual should entail a radical land reform in three steps: 1) the

66) Ibid., 5.3: "先鄭曰, 士大夫之子得而耕之田也 … . 臣謹案, 古者世祿, 大夫之子, 必不躬耕. 若庶士之子, 遂為農夫, 則但當受田百畝, 編於井邑, 又何為別給士田乎. 若云父方食祿,子又耕田, 則尤屬非理."

67)《詩經》, 小雅 · 北山之什 · 北山.

reassertion of national farmland, 2) the reorganization of agrarian communities comprised of landed farmers, and 3) the expansion of tax base and the collection of land taxes. We know that he was righteously agitated by the harsh realities that the tenant farmers, not the landlords, paid land taxes.[68)]

Whether Jeong Yak-yong called for a social and economic revolution should be discussed in full later. To regard his policy proposals as a coherent system of political thought should be misleading: to the modern reader, Jeong Yak-yong's plans may well seem at times strained to an idealist model and even contradictory. For example, it is well-known that he defended Joseon slavery in critique of King Yeongjo's ruling that slaves the follow the status of their mothers(*jongmobeop*從母法) instead of following the basest status of either parent(*jongcheon beop*從賤法).[69)] In this light, his plans for social reform were limited and even contradictory. For now, suffice it to say that the classical reference of the Confucian Classics, especially the *Zhouli*, enabled him to present his plans in the name of rule of ritual.

68) Yi Younghoon이영훈, 「茶山의 井田制改革과 王土主義」, 『민족문화』 19, 1996, 55-111.

69) 《牧民心書》, 〈禮典六條〉, "辨等": "蓋自奴婢法變之後.民俗大渝.非國家之利也."

Conclusion: Classics, Constitution, and Political Philosophy

This article has focused on Jeong Yak-yong's constitutional agenda as articulated in his magnum opus the *Gyeongse Yupyo*. The main purpose of this paper is not to illuminate the overall structure of his plans but to address the relation between the Classics and his political thought. Why did Jeong invoke the *Zhouli* for the purpose of proposing his own constitutional agenda for a fundamental overall of the Joseon state? What did the *Zhouli* give Jeong? Instead of looking for answers within the context of Joseon Korea, in broader perspective, we might raise some larger questions: what roles did the Confucian classics play in East Asian traditions? How did the enduring tradition of Confucian classical learning contribute, if it did, toward shaping the administrative structure of the state in East Asian history? How did a long line of classical commentators(the Confucian exegetes) understand the relationship between their classics and their government?

In East Asian history, the Confucian Classics provided political thinkers and statesmen with arguably the only *legitimate* reference of political thought. The standard imperial compendia compiled in the Han and Tang Dynasties might create the impression that the imperial court took initiatives

in apotheosizing the Confucian Classics.[70] For this reason, a number of scholars have viewed the Confucian Classics as the ideology of autocracy. The actual contents of the original Han and Tang classical commentaries, however, tell us otherwise. It was a long line of classicists and thinkers who voluntarily wrote commentaries on those classics for various purposes. Scholars of the Confucian Classics had their own constitutional agenda. Traditional as they were, they were not mere exegetes in service of the Classics or doctrinaire ideologues reproducing the standard views of the state. As self-motivated political thinkers, they put the Classics in service of their political visions. Throughout history, we find that the Classics offered the forum of debate for traditional political thinkers to develop, formulate, and propose their constitutional agenda.

Jeong Yak-yong was no exception on this point. He chose to invoke the *Zhouli* as an overarching frame of reference for his comprehensive plans for government. As he notes in "the Introduction," the *Zhouli* serves the purpose of legitimating "state

70) The Five Classics rose to preeminence in the early Han(206 BC-220 AD) under the auspicious of the imperial court; in the early Tang, the imperial course compiled the *Correct Meanings of the Five Classics*(*Wujing zhengy*五經正義); the corpus of the standard classics expanded overtime: to become the *Nine Classics* by the mid-Tang(b/w 713-741), twelve by the late Tang(b/w 836-839), finally the *Thirteen Classics* by the late 12th century(b/w 1190-1194). In fact, traditional political thinkers in East Asia were under the constraint of the Confucian Classics, more specifically, the *Thirteen Confucian Classics with Commentaries and Sub-commentaries*(Shisanjing zhushu十三經注疏).

activism." It was a burdensome claim because he had before him the condemned cases of Wang Mang and Wang Anshi. He even deplores that those conservatives in power who envisioned Kings Yao and Shun as the champions of laissez faire government identified themselves as Han Qi韓琦(1008-1075) and Sima Guang 司馬光(1019-1086), the anti-reformist ministers of Northern Song politics. In factional struggle, Jeong Yak-yong could effectively use the Classics as the legitimate grounds of his political thought. He derived from the *Zhouli* a certain set of values such as the public ownership of land, the communal management of economic resources, the roles and responsibilities of the state vis-à-vis the people, the efficiency of bureaucracy, so forth and so on. By emphasizing the legitimate foundation of state activism implied in the very structure of the *Zhouli* model government, he could propose his plans for a fundamental overall of the Joseon state. The Classics provided him with the constitutionality of his political thought.

Jeong Yak-yong's use of the Classics seems to have exemplified a particular mode of thinking that is quite common to diverse traditions of political philosophy and constitutional thought, regardless of East and West or pre-modern and modern. Most political thinkers tend not to be idiosyncratic outliers in isolation but the individuals in context, members of communities. More often than not, they develop their own ideas of good government

in dialogue with their peers: they contextualize their individual views in relation to the shared texts of significance. Conscious or not, most political theorists today also play the roles of 'exegetes' explicating the important books of our time. The exegetical mode of thinking, that is, the method of developing one's ideas with reference to a particular text, is still around us in various forms of political or constitutional discourses today. In short, political thinkers tend to build up their arguments upon layers of cumulative traditions.

In this regard, the Confucian Classics seems to have secured, rather than limited, a certain realm of political freedom for traditional political thinkers and statesmen to express their political visions. Jeong Yak-yong's *Gyeongse Yupyo* shows how an "outcast" scholar-official in exile could rely on the Classics, the shared "constitution" between the elite and the state in traditional East Asia, to propose his own constitutional agenda for a fundamental restructuring of the existing Joseon state.

In nineteenth-century East Asia, he was not alone: in fact, he was among a number of contemporary political thinkers and activists who called for the equitable redistribution of land according to the ideal model of antiquity. By placing Jeong Yak-yong among the radical reformist thinkers of nineteenth century East Asia, we can illuminate how they rekindled the ancient ideal of land redistribution toward the end of "traditional society," and how their

ideas prepared the way for the rise of the socialist and communist movements in modern East Asia.

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국문요약

정약용은 만년의 유작 『경세유표』에서 『주례』의 통치이념과 정부조직을 재해석해 19세기 조선朝鮮(1392-1897)의 현실에 부합하는 개혁정책을 제시했다. 『경세유표』에서 정약용은 유가경전, 역사서, 유서類書 등을 망라하는 방대한 고전 문헌을 인용하여 당대 조선의 모순과 병폐를 극복하는 국가 개혁의 청사진을 제시한다. 특히 정약용은 『주례』라는 당시의 보편적 통치이념을 조선 정부조직의 개편을 위한 이른바 개혁의 방례邦禮로 재해석했다. 정약용에 의한 『주례』의 조선적 변형은 단순한 외래이념의 토착화를 넘어 보편이념의 창의적 확산을 보여주는 매우 중요한 사례라 할 수 있다. 동아시아 사상사에서 정약용의 위치를 밝히기 위해선 우선 그가 『경세유표』의 저술에 활용한 『주례』 주석사의 성과를 밝혀야만 한다. 이 논문은 경세유표에 제시된 정약용의 예치 이념을 밝힌다. 특히 그의 토지 개혁안을 동아시사 사상사의 맥락 속에서 재조명한다.

주제어 | 정약용(1762-1836), 『주례周禮』, 유가경학, 예치禮治, 정전제井田制, 토지개혁.

Abstract

Reform and Order

— Jeong Yak-yong丁若鏞(1762-1836)'s Theory of Rule of Ritual

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JeongYak-yong's unfinished *magmum opus*, the *Gyeongse Yupyo* 經世遺表(*Last Memorials on Ordering the World*), written during the period 1817-1822, offers an extraordinarily rich case in which a traditional political thinker invoked the Classics to propose a comprehensive set of reforms. In this comprehensive work of statecraft, Jeong draws upon a number of Chinese sources: the Confucian Classics, histories, encyclopedias, as well as literary collections.

Amongst these sources, the *Rituals of Zhou*(*Zhouli*周禮) is by far the most important because Jeong organized the structure of this book following the *Zhouli* model.

By comparing the existing systems of the Joseon state with the idealized model of an archaic bureaucratic system in the *Zhouli*, he could propose a set of policies designed to transform the established

institutions of the dynasty. With reference to the *Zhouli*, obviously, he could gain the constitutionality of his plans for a fundamental reform. This essay analyzes Jeong's view of the *Zhouli*: what it gave him, how he used it, and what he intended to achieve by using it. For this purpose, the later part of this essay will focus on Jeong's plans for land reform.

Key Words | Jeong Yak-yong(1762-1836), *Gyeongse Yupyo*, *Zhouli*, *Rituals of Zhou*, Rule of Ritual, the well-field system