THE REVIEW OF KOREAN STUDIES

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The Review of Korean Studies (ISSN 1229-0076) is published annually by The Academy of Korean Studies (AKS), 50 Unjung-dong, Pundang-gu, Sŏngnam-shi, Kyŏnggi-do, Korea 463-791. The *Review* welcomes submissions for publication consideration. Contributors should follow the instructions provided in the back of this volume.

Price per copy: ₩10.000

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Printed by Jimoondang Publishing Co.
Phone: (02)743-3192~3, Fax: (02)742-4657, (02)743-3097
E-mail: jimoon@shinbiro. com

The Review of Korean Studies

Vol. 2. September 1999

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Publishing.
Eckert, Carter J. et al. (1990). *Korea Old and New: A History*. Seoul: Ilchogak.
Fairbanks, John K., Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig (1973). *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
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The Buddhist-Confucian Conflict in Early Chosŏn and Kihwa's Syncretic Response: The *Hyŏn chŏng non*

A. Charles Muller

The *Hyŏn chŏng non* (顯正論 "Exposition of the Correct") is a comparative essay on the relationship of the three East Asian thought-systems of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, composed by the eminent Buddhist monk of early Chosŏn, Kihwa (Hamhŏ Tŭkt'ong). Kihwa wrote this treatise in response to the avalanche of Neo-Confucian polemic that had gathered strength during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and which reached its fruition with the ousting of Buddhism from its position as official state religion at the outset of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1398. The major leader of the rising Neo-Confucian movement during this period, Chŏng Tojŏn, had assembled all the anti-Buddhist complaints in a final polemic work, *Pulsshi chappyŏn* (Arguments Against Mr. Buddha), and it is to these arguments that Kihwa responded. Being an accomplished Confucian scholar in his own right, Kihwa knew the Chinese classical tradition well, and so was able to identify and analyze the core issues in the relationship of the doctrines of the three traditions, with his final testing stone being the degree to which the adherents of each of the traditions actualized the practice of "humanity" (Korean *in*; Chinese *jen*). This paper starts by outlining the basic positions contained in the conflict, then summarizes the positions of *Pulsshi chappyŏn*, and concludes by

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presenting the rebuttal of Kihwa, including translations of key passages from the *Hyŏn chŏng non*.

Introduction

While Confucian teachings had been a part of the Korean intellectual milieu since the early Three Kingdoms period, the Sung reinterpretation of Confucian thought, especially as seen in the works of the Ch'eng brothers (Ch'eng-hao 程顥 1032-1085, and Ch'eng-i 程頤 1033-1107) and Chu Hsi (朱熹 1130-1200) brought much new impetus to Confucianism on the Korean peninsula. Neo-Confucian writings began to command increasingly greater attention during the thirteenth century, and during the fourteenth century, Neo-Confucianism became a powerful force, which succeeded in displacing Buddhism as the officially sanctioned thought-system. Subsequently, anti-Buddhist government policies continued to expand in scope, to the extent that Buddhists were driven not only out of the courts, but also out of cities and towns, deep into the mountains.

A major portion of the Neo-Confucian polemical attack that energized these sweeping changes was socio-political in nature, focusing on the excesses engaged in by the Buddhist clergy. Buddhist temples had been tax-exempt, and many Buddhist leaders enjoyed wealth and power that came in the form of the possession of prize lands, slaves and positions of privilege in the court. The second major component of the Neo-Confucian criticism was a philosophical/religious opposition to Buddhist doctrine and practice that developed out of the writings of the above-mentioned Sung Neo-Confucian architects. The main complaint expressed in these arguments was that Buddhist practices were antisocial and escapist, and that the Buddhist doctrine was nihilistic. Buddhism, according to the Neo-Confucians, led people to abandon respect for the norms of society and to forget the all-important task of polishing one's character in the midst of human relationships.

While there is a long list of Korean Neo-Confucian polemicists who criticized Buddhism during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the most influential leader of the Neo-Confucian camp during the final years of Koryŏ was Chŏng Tojŏn (鄭道傳 pen name: Sambong 三峰 1342-1398).[1] Chŏng was an accomplished scholar who had studied in his youth with

1. For a comprehensive treatment of Chŏng Tojŏn, see Han 1973. In English, see Chung 1985.

most of the important Korean Neo-Confucian thinkers of his time. He later wrote extensively, becoming well known as the author of three major critiques of Buddhist doctrine and practice. These are: (1) *Shimmun chŏndap* (心問天答 Questions from the Mind Answered by Heaven; 1375), wherein he presented a critique of the Buddhist doctrine of karma, offering instead a Neo-Confucian interpretation of the interaction of principle (*i* 理) and material force (*ki* 氣); (2) *Shimgiri pyŏn* (心氣理篇 On the Mind, Material Force and Principle; 1394) where he carried out a comparative study of the natures of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism from a Neo-Confucian perspective; and (3) *Pulsshi chappyŏn* (佛氏雜辨 Arguments Against Mr. Buddha; 1398), in which he presented his most comprehensive refutation of Buddhism, singling out Buddhist doctrines and practices for detailed criticism.[2] Chŏng stated that this book was written with the objective of refuting Buddhism once and for all "lest it destroy morality and eventually humanity itself" (*Sambongjip* 274).

The charges leveled against Buddhism in *Pulsshi chappyŏn* constitute a full inventory of the various arguments made by Confucians and Neo-Confucians from the time of the introduction of Buddhism to East Asia during the second century C.E. These arguments are arranged in eighteen sections, each of which is a critique on a particular aspect of Buddhist doctrine or practice. The first of the charges made in the *Chappyŏn* was that Buddhism encouraged people to abandon their families and society to join the *sangha*. Thus Buddhist teaching was destructive to the five constant relationships:[3] "Buddhists regard the [five] human bonds as mere provisional combinations. Thus, the son does not treat his father as a father; the subject does not treat his ruler as a ruler. People treat their parents like strangers and treat their rulers like children" (*Sambongjip* 262).

Closely related to this argument was the charge that Buddhists regarded material existence as illusory and that only mind was real. This was one of the standard criticisms made by the philosophers of the Ch'eng-Chu school, who claimed that in Buddhism, everyday affairs and human relationships were scorned and only quiet meditative inner cultivation was valued. This perception of Buddhism as a religion which regards the world as illusory and of Buddhists as people who absorb

2. These essays are all found in Chŏng's collected works, *Sambongjip* 三峰集.

3. The five relationships are those between parents and children, ruler and subject, elder and younger, husband and wife, friend and friend.

themselves in escapist meditation also constitutes the core of Chŏng's argument in this treatise, as he repeatedly characterizes Buddhism as the sect that "takes nothingness as its basic doctrine" 以虛無爲宗 (*Sambongjip* 269). Citing Ch'eng-hao, he writes: "Ch'eng-tzu says, 'the method of Buddhism includes the use of *reverence to correct the internal*, but does not include *righteousness in order to correct the external*."[4]

Chŏng also assails the Buddhist doctrines of karma and transmigration from the viewpoint of Neo-Confucian metaphysics of *yin* and *yang*, spirits (*hon* 魂 and *paek* 魄) and the five agents (五行), as found in earlier classical works such as the *I Ching* (Book of Changes). Chŏng further revives Han Yü's (韓愈 768-824) argument of Buddhism being a "foreign" religion (despite the fact that Buddhism had at this time been in East Asia for over a millennium),[5] and also accuses Buddhism of being a harbinger of misfortune, offering an arrangement of history which implies that natural calamities necessarily follow the appearance of Buddhism. He also criticizes the practice of begging for food, labeling Buddhists as parasites.

The Buddhist Response in Korea

Despite the frequency and intensity of the Neo-Confucian diatribe, the force of the Buddhist response was minimal. John Goulde, the only Western scholar who has written at length on this topic, has suggested that the weakness of the Buddhist response can be attributed in large part to the high degree of authority already attained by the Confucian literati and their teachings, which translated into a concomitant unassailability (Goulde 1985: 238). This was no doubt a major factor. But on the other hand, at this time the Buddhist establishment had been in place in Korea for almost a millennium, and Buddhist leaders had been serving as intimate advisors to rulers for most of this period. Therefore they obviously still commanded a good deal of authority. Hence, we can be sure that there must be further reasons for the relative lack of Buddhist response to these

4. Sambongjip 260. "Reverence to straighten the internal, righteousness to correct the external" (敬以直內, 義以方外) is a common Neo-Confucian adage, popularized by Ch'eng-hao. Its *locus classicus* is the *I Ching*, in the extended commentary to the first two hexagrams. See Legge 1996: 420. This criticism of Buddhism by Ch'eng-hao is from the *I-shu*, 4:4b. Also see Chan 1969: 535.

5. Among the most well-known of Han Yü's criticisms of Buddhism are the *Origin of the Way* 原道 and *Memorial on the Buddha's Bone* 論佛骨表. See Gregory 1995: 35-36.

criticisms.

One factor that may have helped to impede the construction of an effective Buddhist response was simply that too many of the Confucian charges were based on indisputable facts. The rampant corruption of the Buddhist establishment was evident for all to see, and this actuality certainly placed limitations on the ability of Buddhist leaders to construct a convincing defense. It would have been equally difficult for mountain-dwelling Sŏn monks to deny charges of escapism and nihilism, especially within a frame of discourse appropriate to the type of audience that had been the target of Chŏng's works. It is furthermore apparent that the overall intellectual vigor and discipline of the nascent Korean Neo-Confucian movement was more than a match for a devitalized Buddhist *sangha*.

Nonetheless, although the number of Buddhist responses made during the decades following Chŏng's influential publications was few, there were one or two of sufficient merit to command our attention. The most important of these was a work composed by the leading Buddhist scholar-monk of the generation, Kihwa.

Kihwa

Kihwa (己和 Hamhŏ Tŭkt'ong 涵虛得通, 1376-1433) was born just sixteen years prior to the Koryŏ/Chosŏn dynastic transition, into an elite family, and was educated with other upper-class sons at the recently-established Sŏnggyun'gwan (National Confucian Academy). In the course of his studies at this institution, Kihwa is said to have attained a remarkable level of proficiency in Chinese philosophy and literature, as his biographer goes to unusual lengths to convey the extent to which his instructors esteemed him:

> Entering the academy as a youth, he was able to memorize more than a thousand phrases daily. As time passed, he deeply penetrated the universality of the single thread, clarifying the meanings of the classics and expounding their content. His reputation was unmatched. Grasping the subtlety of the transmitted teachings, all their profundities were disclosed in his explanations. He was possessed of a sonorous voice and graceful beauty, like flowers laid upon silk brocade—even such metaphor falls short of description. People said that he would become the minister truly capable of

> transmitting the heavenly mandate, extending upward to the ruler and bringing blessings down to the people. In his grasp of the correct principles of society he had no need to be ashamed even if he were to appear before the likes of Chou and Shao.[6]

Acknowledging the obvious hyperbole that is invariably seen in the biographical sketches written by disciples of eminent Buddhist teachers, we must nevertheless pay attention to what is contained in this passage for two reasons. First, there is not, in the entire corpus of Korean Buddhist hagiographies an appraisal of scholarly (Confucian) acumen comparable to this. Second, this strong assessment of Kihwa's early abilities is corroborated in the degree to which he, later in his Buddhist career, took such a strong interest in, and showed such unusual ability in literary/philosophical/ exegetical pursuits. Furthermore, a reading of his later works shows an unusual mastery of the Five Classics, Four Books and the Taoist canon.

Despite Kihwa's deep love of Confucian learning, he was greatly affected at the age of twenty-one by the tragic death of a close friend, and as a result, turned to the Buddhist path. After a short period of wandering and study, he became a disciple of the National Teacher Muhak (無學 1327-1405), a master of the Imje Sŏn *kong'an* tradition. Kihwa spent the rest of his days immersed in meditation, travel, teaching and an extensive literary pursuit that included commentarial work, essay writing and poetry. Despite the diminished influence of Buddhism, toward the end of his life he served as a tutor to the royal family. After this stint, he retired once again to the mountain monasteries, where he taught and wrote until his death in 1433. During his life, Kihwa wrote several important and influential treatises and commentaries on Buddhist works that established him as one of the leading thinkers in the entire Korean Buddhist tradition.[7]

Placed as he was, in the position of leading representative of the Buddhist *sangha* at the time when it was under siege, Kihwa no doubt felt considerable pressure to offer response to the Neo-Confucian charges. Respond he did—in the form of a philosophical treatise that has become a landmark in Korean intellectual history—the *Hyŏn chŏng non* (顯正論;

6. A reference to Chou kung-tan 周公旦 and Shao-kung 召公, two worthies who cooperated together in the establishment of the Chou dynasty. This passage is from the *Hamhŏ tang Tŭkt'ong hwasang haengjang*, HPC 7.250c6-11.
7. For a list of Kihwa's Buddhist works, please see the bibliography in Muller 1999a.

Exposition of the Correct; hereafter abbreviated *HCN*). In the *HCN* Kihwa attempted to answer the standard set of criticisms made by the Neo-Confucians that had been summarized in *Pulsshi chappyŏn*. Therefore the relationship between the *Chappyŏn* and the *HCN* is such that we might well characterize the latter work as almost a direct rebuttal to the former.[8]

The circumstances of Kihwa's composition of this treatise in defense of Buddhism against Confucian-based criticisms have a direct precedent in the circumstances surrounding Tsung-mi's (宗密 780-841) essay, *Yüan jen lun* (Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity; 原人論),[9] written in answer to the polemical tracts of the Neo-Confucian Han Yü.[10] Tsung-mi, like Kihwa, was placed in the position of having to defend a well-entrenched and largely corrupt Buddhist bureaucracy. Tsung-mi was also much like Kihwa in being a scholar of considerable non-Buddhist classical background, who held a solid respect for many aspects of Confucian and Taoist learning. Thus both men also shared, in a general sense, their broad vision of all three teachings being viable religious paths.[11]

While treating similar topics from similar perspectives, the two treatises differ in their basic line of argument. Tsung-mi's work, reflecting its author's interest in doctrinal classification, is primarily an attempt to

8. I stress this point in view of the fact that Han Young-woo has explicitly stated that the "*Hyŏn chŏng non* is not a refutation of the *Pulsshi chappyŏn*." See Han 1973: 53, note. Prof. Han's view is accurate only in a very strict sense. It is true that Kihwa did not sit down upon the publication of the *Chappyŏn* and write an immediate, point by point rebuttal. In 1398, when Chŏng wrote the *Chappyŏn*, Kihwa would have been twenty-two, a mere novice in Buddhism. Yet even though the timing may be a bit off, and although Kihwa neither mentions Chŏng by name, nor writes his responses in the *Hyŏn chŏng non* corresponding to the exact order of the *Chappyŏn*, he nonetheless directly replies to all of its accusations. Given the fact that Chŏng was regarded as the leading Neo-Confucian thinker of his generation and that his works held such influence, how could it be the case that a budding Confucian scholar in the Sŏnggyun'gwan such as Kihwa would not have been deeply familiar with it? Since the *Chappyŏn* contains virtually all the important arguments against Buddhism, if a Buddhist were to fully respond to Neo-Confucian ideological attacks, he would, in one way or another, have to respond to the arguments raised in Chŏng's treatise—and Kihwa does.
9. English translation by Peter Gregory 1995.
10. For a discussion of Han Yü and his writings, see Chan 1969: 450-456.
11. Kihwa also followed closely in the path of Tsung-mi in his composition of Buddhist exegetical works on texts such as the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, *Awakening of Faith* and *Diamond Sutra*. See the discussion of this relationship in Muller 1999a: 34-35.

show how Confucianism and Taoism are related to Buddhism as expedient, but nonetheless heterodox (外教 *wai-chiao*) teachings. His tone toward Confucianism and Taoism is conciliatory, but he will clearly distinguish the two from Buddhism as being teachings of "men and gods." Kihwa's argument, on the other hand, relies primarily on an understanding of the presence of a metaphysics of interpenetration that operates equally in all three teachings of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, but which he claims has been brought to different levels of actualization by the practitioners of each. Kihwa perceives the three teachings as varying expressions of a singular reality. Thus, despite his conversion to Buddhism, he did not reject his earlier Confucian and Taoist learning. Accordingly, in his Buddhist apologetic writings he did not seek to disparage the fundamental Confucian doctrine; rather, he sought to show that while the Confucian teachings were worthy of deep respect, the Confucians themselves had often missed the deeper implications of their own texts.

Kihwa's basic hermeneutical principle for analyzing the relationship between the three teachings is one that blends the paradigms of essence-function (體用 *ch'e-yong*) and interpenetration (通達 *t'ongdal*), both of which were ubiquitous in variant forms in pre-Buddhist East Asian thought,[12] and which were incorporated as basic hermeneutical tools in East Asian Buddhist philosophy, as exemplified in such works as the *Awakening of Faith* and the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.[13] Using the essence-function formula, Kihwa explains that the single reality, or principle—that is, the enlightened mind of Buddhism, the Tao of Taoism and the *in* 仁 (Chinese *jen*) of Confucianism, are in essence the same thing, differing only in terms of their linguistic expression according to the time and circumstance. The three teachings share on vital points: a belief in the basic goodness of the human mind and the possibility for the proper actualization of that mind through training (or, in the case of Taoism for example, "untraining").

Kihwa begins his essay by focusing on the most fundamental point that Buddhism and Confucianism have in common: the perfectibility of the human being through practice. In the pattern of the essence-function

12. Although the precise technical terminology of essence-function (*t'i-yung/ch'e-yong*) did not appear until the latter Han dynasty, the paradigm that it expresses is readily identifiable in much earlier works, including the *Li Chi* (Record of Ritual) and *I Ching*. See the discussion in Muller 1999b: esp. 95-100.

13. For a discussion of the role of essence-function and interpenetration in East Asian thought, see Muller 1996.

framework, he introduces the passions/discriminations (*chŏng* 情) as the manifest function of the originally good (Buddha/human) nature (*sŏng* 性). Here he alludes to the opening paragraph of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, reinterpreting its key terms: nature, passions/discriminations and the Way:

> The nature is neither existent nor non-existent; yet it pervades existence and non-existence. That which originally lacks ancient and modern and yet which pervades ancient and modern is the Way. Existence and non-existence rely upon the nature and the passions. "Ancient" and "modern" depend on life and death. Even though nature originally has no passions, delusion of the nature produces the passions. Once the passions are produced, wisdom is blocked; thoughts transform and the essence is altered. This is how the myriad things are formed and how life and death originate. The passions have purity and impurity, good and evil. Purity and goodness are the things that produce sagehood; impurity and evil bring about the condition of foolishness. Hence you should know that if the passions are not produced, neither sage nor fool has the means to exist (*HPC* 7.217a5-13).

Kihwa proceeds by pointing out that the primary goal of all three traditions is ridding the mind of impurities, or what is termed in the *Great Learning* as "rectification of the mind." Once the mind is rectified, it can be used for anything: governing the state, bringing peace to the land, or becoming a bodhisattva. Buddhism has a method of accomplishing this that is in full congruence with Confucian principles.

While Kihwa endeavors to answer all of the Neo-Confucian objections to some extent, the linchpin of his argument lies in the fact that he considers Confucians to have inadequately grasped the implications of their own texts, most notably the primary Confucian principle of *in/jen*. Here he focuses on a famous line of Ch'eng-hao which says "the man of *in* regards heaven, earth and the myriad things as his own body."[14]

To introduce this dimension of his argument, Kihwa refers back to a passage from the beginning of Tsung-mi's *Yüan-jen lun*, where Tsung-mi equates the five lay precepts of Buddhism with the five norms of Confucianism, these correlations being: *in/jen* (仁 humanity, benevolence)

14. *Honan erh-ch'eng i-shu* p. 15. Also see Chan 1969: 530, section no. 11. No doubt part of the reason Kihwa focuses on this particular citation is that it comes from the same section of Ch'eng-hao's *I shu* that contains most of the philosophical arguments that form the basis for Chŏng's arguments in the *Chappyŏn*.

is equal to 'no killing'; *ŭi/i* (義 righteousness) is equal to 'no stealing'; *i/li* (禮 propriety) is equal to 'no sexual misconduct'; *chi/chi* (智 wisdom) is equal to 'no consumption of alcohol'; and *shin/hsin* (信 faith, trust) is equal to 'no false speech'.[15] However, Kihwa is not concerned with elaborating on all five of these pairs. Instead, he focuses on the first.

Kihwa focuses on the correlation of *in/jen* with the Buddhist notion of *āhimsa*, the fullest expression of which he finds in the Hua-yen doctrine of mutual containment of the myriad things of the universe. He uses it as the main point of departure for his argument for the superiority of Buddhism, emphasizing Buddhism's completeness in both understanding *and* practice of *in/jen* interpenetration. The foil here is the ancient cultural practice (condoned in Confucian texts) of killing of animals for food or for ritual sacrifice. While Ch'eng-hao has stated that "the man of *in/jen* forms a single body with the universe and all creatures," Kihwa argues that it is only Buddhists who truly act in accordance with this principle. If Ch'eng-hao means what he says, then how could it be acceptable for this "man of *in*" to kill those creatures? Among the three teachings, it is only Buddhism that takes an unequivocal position against killing. Kihwa explains:

> Since Heaven and Earth are the father and mother of the myriad things, then all those things that are born between Heaven and Earth are the children of Heaven and Earth. The relationship of Heaven and Earth toward the myriad things is just like the relationship of a mother and father to their child. Between children there are differences in intelligence in the same way that there are differences in luminosity between humans and the other things of the universe. Yet even if a child is stupid the parents love it and treat it tenderly. . . . How much more are they concerned about its being harmed?
>
> Simultaneously killing life and nourishing life is like killing one of one's children in order to nourish another. What kind of parent can do this? Having their children kill each other is certainly not the wish of any parent. How could the mutual inflicting of harm among people and the animals be the wish of Heaven and Earth? Humanity and the myriad things already possess the same material force. While sharing in the same principle of Heaven and Earth, they also share the same space in Heaven and Earth. Since they are already endowed with the same material force and principle, where can there exist a separate principle that condones killing life in order to nourish life?! It is like these sayings: "The universe and I share the same root; the myriad things and myself are one body" (*T* 2016.48.915a8). These are the words of Sakyamuni. "The man of *in* takes Heaven, Earth and the myriad things as his own body." These are the words of a Confucian. Only when one's words are fully in accord with one's actions is one completing the Way of *in*!
>
> In the medical texts, conditions of numbness or paralysis of the limbs are technically termed "non-*in*" (*purin* 不仁). The limbs are the extremities of the body, and although it is the extremities that show the symptoms of sickness, the problem is actually that the material force is not penetrating (*pult'ong* 不通). This means that in this case the term *in* refers to Heaven and Earth and the myriad things in fusion as one body—that is, there is no separation between them. If you deeply embody this principle, then no matter how insignificant a living being, there is no way you will inflict harm upon it. This can indeed be called "the attainment of the Way of *in*!" If it is not this way then the material force of people and animals is blocked and does not flow; principle is obstructed and does not penetrate, just like the numbness of the hands and feet. . . .
>
> The *Analects* say: "When the master fished he would not use a net; when hunting he would not shoot a perched bird" (*Analects* 7:26). Mencius said: "The superior man stays far away from the kitchen. If he hears the screams of the animals he cannot bear to eat their flesh" (*Mencius* 1A:7). These are all examples of incompletely actualized *in*. Why don't they try to come up to the level of "forming a single body?" The *Doctrine of the Mean* says: "His words reflecting his actions, his actions reflecting his words—how can this Superior Man not be sincere through and through?"[16] Who among those I have cited here comes up to this level? This is an example of the Confucians preaching about the goodness of the path of *in* but not following through. If it is necessary to place limits on the killing of birds, why even shoot the arrow at all? If it bothers you to shoot a perched bird, why shoot it when it is flying? If the

15. Peter Gregory explains the locus classicus of these five correspondences to be in the *T'i-wei Po-li ching*, an early apocryphal scripture written to convince the Chinese of the equivalence of Buddhism and the native traditions. See Gregory 1995: 110-117. The original citation is from *T* 1886.45.708c.17-19.

16. *Doctrine of the Mean*, section 13 of the commentary. Cited from "Web Resources" Muller 1995b.

> superior man is going to avoid the kitchen, why does he eat meat at all? (*HPC* 7.2129b-c).

This is the basic line of Kihwa's defense of Buddhism. He is not going to expend his energies defending Buddhist practices, in great part, no doubt, because he feels that the attacks do not merit a defense. But it is also obvious that he believes that on a strictly philosophical and moral basis, the attackers stand on weak ground.

As we move on to other portions of the debate, for instance, where Chŏng Tojŏn uses passages from the *Analects* and *I Ching* to criticize the Buddhist theory of causation, Kihwa cites passages from the same texts to show that they actually teach the law of cause and effect. In fact, he maintains that the whole Confucian concept of human refinement cannot but rely on the principle of karmic habituation. In regard to this point he elucidates:

> Dreams are the play of the human spirit, not the domain of external form. Confucius dreamed of the Duke of Chou because his mind abode daily in Chou's Way. Because he concentrated on practicing it, his spirit naturally became attuned to it. All people are like this. Day by day they are focusing on either good or evil. The good see greatness in their dreams, while the evil see misery. Why is this? The good unflaggingly follow righteousness; the evil voraciously seek their own gain. As the good concentrate on righteousness, with each action they become increasingly attuned to the good. As the evil abandon themselves to profit, with each action they depart further from righteousness. Since the good accord with goodness in every activity, others will naturally regard them as good. Since the evil depart from righteousness in each activity, others will naturally regard them as evil. Since people regard the good as good, they will naturally stand out, and they will be rewarded with praise and emolument. Since people regard the evil as evil, they will naturally stand out and they will meet with punishment. Because of this, the good person gradually grows in happiness and attains prosperity. The evil one, continually miserable, schemes to avoid his demise (*HPC* 7.222a-7-14).

In the latter portion of the *Hyŏn chŏng non* Kihwa quickly runs through the more superficial arguments raised by Chŏng: that Buddhism should be discredited as a "foreign" religion; that Buddhism is a harbinger of

personal and national calamity, and that the *sangha* is parasitic and corrupt. He dismisses the characterization of "alien" as ridiculous, asking how the Way can be "Indian" or "Chinese." Where, he asks, is the "great center of the world?" (*HPC* 7.223b.15).

In response to the argument that the advent of Buddhism has inevitably been followed by calamity, Kihwa first points out the great disasters that were endured even by the sage-emperors in pre-Buddhist times. He also reminds his readers that on the personal level, even Confucius and Yen-hui were unable to avoid poverty. He then points out the grand successes of the great Buddhist-inspired dynasties, such as the T'ang in China and Unified Shilla in Korea. To the charge of parasitism, Kihwa answers that Buddhists work hard at their own job, which is to bring goodness and succor to the masses. When people are lazy, he says, it is not the fault of Confucianism or Buddhism—it is individual failure. He asks how critics can expect all Buddhist followers to be perfect. "Since the death of Confucius, have we seen another Yen-hui?"[17]

To the criticism of Buddhism's usage of the Indian custom of abandoning the secular life to enter the priesthood, he replies that the only real essential is "not to depart from the Tao, nothing more" (*HPC* 7.218a. 20-21). Nonetheless, he says, the afflictions in the human mind lie deep, and since they arise fundamentally from attached love,[18] sometimes the renunciation of worldly life can be helpful in advancing one's religious consciousness. To further defend the practice of leaving home against protestations, which is equivalent to breaking the eternal human relationships, Kihwa invokes the doctrine of expedient means,[19] equating "expediency" with flexibility. Both the eternal and the expedient are needed, he says, "but if you lack the eternal, there is nothing to protect the norm. If you lack expediency, you have no way to adapt to others and transform them" (*HPC* 7.218b.11).

He then cites examples from Buddhist and Confucian history that show how the reinterpretation of the rules ended up with better results. For instance, the leaving of home by Sakyamuni (an act criticized by Neo-Confucians) actually brought more good reputation to his parents than

17. *HPC* 7.224b.22-23. Yen-hui was the favorite disciple of Confucius, who Confucius often praised for his high level of intelligence and sincerity.
18. Here he quotes a line from the *Yüan chüeh ching*, which says: "attached love is the root of transmigration." See *T* 842.17.916b.6-7, and Muller 1999a: 141.
19. An equivalent concept of expedient means had also developed in Neo-Confucianism, written as *ching-chüan* 經權 rather than the Buddhist *fang-pien* 方便.

any other course could have.[20] This means that the sage has the authority to adapt to conditions in order to bring about the actualization of the highest principles. Kihwa finishes out this section by defending Buddhism against the charge of non-loyalty to the rulership by pointing out that Buddhist priests have always prayed for the well-being of the ruler and the state. Buddhism's encouragement of the people towards good has also brought about greater peace.

It is not until the end of the essay when Kihwa answers the charges of Buddhist nihilism. This is probably the least philosophically sound portion of his argument, as he attempts to show through a somewhat contrived textual citation that Confucianism and Taoism also contain the doctrines of *anatman* and *sunyata*.

> Haven't you heard? "In the world there are not two Ways; the sages lack doubleminded-ness." This means that even if sages are separated by the distance of a thousand *ri* and the time of ten thousand generations, their minds lack the slightest difference.
>
> Confucius said, "no willfulness, no arbitrariness, no stubbornness, no self" (*Analects* 9:4).
>
> The *I Ching* says: "Turning his back, there is no self; walking in court, there is no person. Without self or person, where can there be defilement?"[21]
>
> The Buddha said: "There is no self and no person to cultivate all good dharmas. This is the attainment of wisdom."[22]
> This is an example of sages being from different ages but being identical in their minds (*HPC* 7.224c14-19).

For those familiar with the context of these citations in the *Analects* and *I Ching*, it is obvious that Kihwa is stretching things a bit here, as neither of these non-Buddhist intimations of "no-self" come close in

20. One of the virtous acts of a filial son is bringing his parents honor.
21. *I Ching*; commentary to Hexagram number fifty-two, interpreted by Wilhelm as "keeping still." What has been offered here by Kihwa is quite different than what appears in the standard version of the *I Ching* text. It is not clear whether Kihwa is just paraphrasing, or whether he was working with a text or commentary of which we are not aware.
22. Paraphrase from the *Diamond Sutra*, *T* 235.8.751c25-27.

connotation to the Buddhist notion of *anatman*. He does do a bit better in his final comparison however, in drawing a correspondence among the three teachings in terms of a common understanding of the integration of movement and stillness—a way of expressing Buddhist emptiness:

> So what are the samenesses and differences, the relative strengths and weaknesses of Lao-tzu, Sakyamuni and the Confucians?
> Lao-tzu said: "No doing and no not-doing; eternally doing yet not-doing"[23]
> Sakyamuni said: "Quiescent yet constantly luminous, luminous yet constantly quiescent" (*T* 2016.48.528a01).
> Confucius is recorded as having said: "The Changes have neither thought nor activity, still and unmoving they extend and penetrate the world."[24]
> Now this "stillness" which has never failed to "extend," is the same thing as the "quiescence" which is "eternally luminous." The "extending and penetrating" which has never not been "still," is exactly the same as the "luminosity which is eternally quiescent." "No doing and no not-doing" is none other than "still, yet eternally extending." "Eternally doing yet with nothing to be done" is none other than "extending, yet eternally still." If you can grasp this, then the words of the three teachers fit together like the broken pieces of the same board—as if they had all come out of the same mouth! (*HPC* 225b1-9).

This constitutes the bottom line of Kihwa's understanding of the fundamental philosophical unity of the three teachings. It is within the realms of "empty yet not empty" or what Buddhism calls the "middle path," that Kihwa finds a unifying principle. The position of "empty yet existent" reflects a metaphysical understanding that is guided by interpenetration, in that there should not be either a physical or conceptual obstruction between emptiness and existence. They mutually contain each other; they are neither the same nor different.

Absent in Kihwa's essay is a sustained defense against the long-standing charges of antinomianism that had been leveled against the Ch'an and Sŏn schools for centuries. It may be that he feels he has already replied to this in his "nobody is perfect" argument (where he remarked that

23. For the first phrase, see *Tao te ching*, chapter thirty-seven.
24. *I Ching*, *Hsi-tzu*, Part One.

Confucians also have difficulty meeting the standards of Yen-hui). He may also have felt that the doctrinal arguments required at this point demanded too much Buddhist technical knowledge on the part of his audience—as it is clear from statements in the conclusion of this essay that it is aimed directly for reading by the rulership. Kihwa's response can be characterized more moralistic than rigorously metaphysical, as the core of his argument lies in seizing one of the Confucians' most cited dictums of "practice what you preach" and turning it back on them. This sort of response by Kihwa is not surprising when we reflect on the nature of his commentarial works, where his tendency is to focus directly on the relation of the application of a particular doctrine to practice, rather than on its theoretical background.

The *Hyŏn chŏng non* stands out as a very special document, not only in Korean intellectual history, but also in the intellectual history of the entire East Asian tradition. There are simply no other works of this caliber composed by Buddhists during the several centuries-long period of conflict that attempt a full-scale response to the avalanche of anti-Buddhist Neo-Confucian polemic.[25] While there is, from the Neo-Confucian side, no shortage of anti-Buddhist literature, most of this is incredibly simplistic in its treatment of Buddhist doctrine and practice. Most obvious here are the anti-Buddhist works of Chu Hsi and the Ch'eng brothers—all formidable thinkers who had a solid background in Buddhism—and yet whose writings badly distort or ignore basic Buddhist concepts to a surprising extent. It is therefore the relative balanced view exhibited in the *Hyŏn chŏng non* that gives it a special place in East Asian intellectual tradition.

Noting the turn of events consequent to the publication of the *Hyŏn chŏng non*, it would appear that the treatise had little lasting effect on the overall outcome of Buddhist suppression. During subsequent decades, Confucian-sponsored government measures against the Buddhist *sangha* would grow in severity before they finally leveled off. The *Hyŏn chŏng non* nonetheless remains a vitally important document for grasping the intellectual climate at a time of great transition in Korean religious history. It is also a fine example of the writing of

25. There is one other significant "three teachings" work composed during this period, the *Yusŏk chirŭi non* (Questions and answers between Confucians and Buddhists 儒釋質疑論), of unclear authorship, which is often attributed to Kihwa. This work lacks the literary economy and flow of the *Hyŏn chŏng non*, and thus does not seem to have commanded the same level of influence.

one of Korea's most important Buddhist philosophers.

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Abbreviations

T = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (Japanese Edition of the Buddhist Canon) (1924-35). Tokyo: Daizōkyōkai.
HPC = *Han'guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ* (The collected texts of Korean Buddhism) (1984). Seoul: Dongguk University Press.
HCN = *Hyŏn chŏng non.*

Feminism and Nationalism from the Perspective of Third World Women

Hyun-Back Chung

It is true that many feminists have shown the tendency to reject nationalism, due to the fact that it has played a major role in maintaining patriarchal systems and behaviors. Also, since most of the pioneers in feminist theory have been white middle-class women, the negative connotation of nationalism in North American and European society has been passed on to present day feminists.

However, what many feminists fail to comprehend in the relation between feminism and nationalism is the role of history and spatial conditions. In other words, the function of nationalism, and its relations to feminism have varied according to historical context and the actual conditions of each nation. In certain cases, while concentrating on up-to-date feminist studies of Western capitalistic countries, there is a tendency to disregard our situation, which lags anywhere from fifty to one hundred years behind depending on the issue. Therefore, it is essential to consider both historical and spatial characteristics when studying the relationship between feminism and nationalism.

One question raised here is why have feminists deliberated on nationalism that was bound to have a negative effect on their movement. Why, then, did feminists not distance themselves from nationalism, since it merely reinforces patriarchal ideology and practices? This question has no simple answers. We cannot ignore the enormous mobilizing potential nationalism has, and due to its powerful impact on the masses even women

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The Review of Korean Studies 2(201-210)