*Korea Journal*, vol. 64, no. 3 (Autumn 2024): 5–38.
doi: 10.25024/kj.2024.64.3.5



# Ideas on the Public and the Private of 18th-century Joseon Confucian Scholar Seongho Yi Ik

Minjung BAEK

**Abstract**

*This article examines ideas on the public* (公) *and the private* (私) *among Joseon scholars of the 18th century, with a particular focus on Seongho Yi Ik (1681–1763). Yi Ik understood the private as the state one personally feels and experiences and the public as the state one shares and sympathizes with others. The private acquires universality when one rejoices together in what pleases others and hates what others dislike. Although he did not believe all diverse desires and emotions experienced at the private level to be inherently universal and public in nature, he argued that the understanding of the moral foundations of the public could not be detached from the consideration for innate human desires and common emotions. Yi Ik recognized the public value not only of the special emotions known as the four sprouts* (四端)*, but also of general emotions known as the seven emotions* (七情)*, if they were expressed with situational appropriateness through empathy with others. Seongho saw human nature as having empathy for others and an aspiration for coexistence, and understood the social realization of these natural tendencies as the public* (公)*. Thus, the public was understood primarily as stemming from spontaneous human nature and emotions, rather than being enforced through institutional or legal coercion.*

**Keywords:** public, private, seven emotions, coexistence, Oneness of All Things, benevolence

---

This paper was first presented at the International Academic Conference, "Practical Philosophy across East Asian Traditions," held at National Chengchi University in Taiwan on October 6, 2023.

Minjung BAEK is a professor in the Department of Philosophy, The Catholic University of Korea. E-mail: mjbaek@catholic.ac.kr.

## Introduction

In contemporary Korean society, if citizens are paying attention to the concept of *gong* 公 (public), it is due to a growing social interest in the notion of justice centering on fairness. Books on the topic authored by Anglo-American writers have spurned active discourses for several years, and this interest is continuing.[1] While the understanding of justice may vary across cultures and among relevant scholars, the primary focus of contemporary Koreans lies in fairness, particularly in terms of equality of opportunities and procedural fairness. This focus hints that many Koreans are concerned with their perceived deserved rewards, aiming to maximize their own merit without being harmed, rather than focusing primarily on an ambiguous value like a harmonious society. In other words, Korean society is not free from the prevalent discourse of meritocracy, which exerts a global influence today.[2]

*Meritocracy* originally denoted governance based on merit or ability, and it is used to refer to a reward system based on alleged ability and effort in practice.[3] This perspective primarily focuses on obtaining one's own share in a fair and legitimate manner, without necessarily having a broader concern for the well-being of neighbors and others and the overall justice of the world. In contemporary Korean society, while it would not be true to say that there is no reflection and hope concerning substantial justice, such as the desire for a society where people live well together, the efforts of Koreans to contemplate and implement justice have become too focused on a narrow interpretation of procedural fairness. Although I believe that established procedures and mandatory laws have their own significance, they do not

1. For example, translated versions of recent Anglo-American works, such as Michael Sandel's *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2009) and *The Tyranny of Merit* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2020), and Stephen McNamee and Robert Miller's *The Meritocracy Myth* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), have gained popularity in Korea.
2. For a critical analysis of the relationship between meritocracy and Confucianism in South Korea, see Na (2023) and Jang (2021).
3. On this, see K. Park (2021, 8).

inherently promote the overarching goals of coexistence and mutual flourishing. In the political liberalism and meritocracy of society today, there is a shared foundation wherein individuals should accept any outcome if opportunities are equal and the procedure is fair, and each person should take responsibility for the results. Nevertheless, the faith in equal opportunities and free choice does not address the reasons capable individuals should protect and support social minorities, vulnerable groups, and foreigners beyond their own circles.

In this article, I will focus on the ideas of *gong* 公 (public) and *sa* 私 (private) in the thought of Seongho 星湖 Yi Ik 李瀷 (1681–1763),[4] who belonged to the Gyeonggi Namin 京畿 南人 party and was also known as leader of the Seongho school,[5] a school engaged in intellectual and political activities from the late 17th century to the 18th century following the power shift from the Ming to the Qing dynasties in China. The significant upheaval in East Asia of that period generated the following political and intellectual changes: from a political perspective, as the once-clear distinction between Chinese-centered civilization and barbarianism began to blur, there arose a fundamental reflection on the essence of Confucian civilization. On the other hand, from a theoretical perspective, this situation presented significant challenges and engendered skepticism regarding pairs of

4. The Chinese *gong* 公 is a very difficult concept to translate. It is commonly translated as publicness, publicity, impartiality, fairness, justice, public good, common good, etc. Unfortunately, none of these translations seem to accurately convey the meaning of the concept of *gong* 公 as used by Confucian scholars. Previous studies used public value, publicness, publicity, impartiality, and so on. First of all, I used the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese character *gong* when dealing with the concept alone, and translated it into public, publicness, public value etc. as needed. In the case of the concept of *sa* 私, when it is used alone, I presented it with the Korean pronunciation and translated it as the private in some cases.
5. For a comprehensive introduction to works related to Seongho Yi Ik and the Seongho school's philosophy, mind-nature theory, and four sprouts and seven emotions discussion and more, refer to Sangyik Lee (1999); Ahn (1999a, 1999b); S. K. Choi (2003); Keum (2003, 2012); J. Kim (2002, 2017); Won (2003); Moon (2003); Kwon (2005); D. Kim (2009); Lim (2014); Seo (2018); S. Kim (2013, 2023); Choo (2015); J. Y. Choi (2016); Ha (2021); and Back (2023).

concepts, such as Heavenly Principle/human desire and public/private.[6] By reflecting on the political situation and the aforementioned rapid political and intellectual changes in East Asia, and by exploring newly imported Western literature through China, scholars in the Seongho school came to think of human nature, emotions, and desires in different ways from before.

Seongho Yi Ik and Habin 河濱 Shin Hudam 愼後聃 (1702–1761), a disciple of Yi Ik, deeply contemplated how individuals might reconcile their personal desires with the public values of Confucianism. Their common idea was to find the origin of the public in human nature (or *ren* 仁). Based on the ontology of Neo-Confucianism, scholars from the Seongho school understood the public as the social actualization of inherent nature within specific relationships. The public embodies the value of *ren* 仁 (benevolence) in the nature that goes "beyond the conscious differentiation between self and others in terms of interests" (無彼此, 無私心). To scholars of the Seongho school, the public meant the voluntary realization of one's true nature in society, resulting in a harmonious coexistence between oneself and others.

Seongho thought that as human nature itself possesses public values, cultivating appropriate relationships and seeking coexistence with others was crucial to fully realizing one's inherent nature. This process leads to personal fulfillment and growth. For him, the journey to realize one's inherent nature begins with reflecting on personal desires. In other words, the exploration for the universality of desires, and further, the exploration for the foundation of the private, connected with the diverse bodily disposition. While not all personal emotions bear public value, Seongho believed that public value could be fully and properly realized only through deliberation and balancing of the diverse emotions associated with human physical dispositions. As we will see again below, he recognized the Heavenly Principle as the metaphysical basis of the public, as traditional

6. For issues related to a theory of justice based on Confucianism, the significance of public reason in Confucian society, and how the Confucian political tradition emphasizing public opinion has been adapted and inherited in Korea's modernization process, refer to Seunghwan Lee (2002, 2005).

neo-Confucians commonly thought. Nevertheless, it should be noted that he ingeniously contemplated the idea that human emotions that stemmed from physical desires could be public in some cases. At least in this regard, Yi Ik actively explored public value in the realm of concrete and lively individuals, rather than in the realm of metaphysical philosophy itself. In this essay, I aim to examine the significance of the public based on the understanding of human nature and emotion, rather than procedural or legal fairness, as articulated by Seongho Yi Ik.

## Reflecting on One's Desires: Attention to Private Desires

Seongho Yi Ik reflects on human desires. His reflection raised a question vis-à-vis conventional Confucian thinking, which assumed a clear distinction between Heavenly principles (天理) and human desires (人欲).[7] Seongho noted that beings with vitality (血氣) and perception necessarily hold primal desires. He contends that humans inherently possess fundamental sensory desires, such as those related to sound, taste, and smell. Among these, the most intense desires are the longing for life and the avoidance of death. Desires for food, sex, possessions, and honor are grounded in these fundamental desires.[8] These desires are felt and sensed by individual beings with *qi of physical form* (形氣). He explains that individual entities, composed of *qi* in one's physical form, move in response to the objects they come into interact with. At times, their *qi* in physical form radiates outward

7. Yi Ik emphasizes skepticism and self-realization as important attitudes in learning. He required his disciples to question even the statements of Zhu Xi and to make their own judgments. These attitudes toward scholarship have been described in detail in work of S. K. Choi (2003), Keum (2003, 2012) and Won (2003).
8. 凡有血氣心思者, 莫不有欲. 其生與飮食, 陰陽之欲, 人與禽獸同有, 苟可以避死趨生, 則飮食, 陰陽可廢, 是生之欲尤甚也. 五性之欲, 聲色臭味及安逸, 是也. 此由侈心而益熾, 故禽獸微, 而人爲甚也. 富貴之欲, 惟人有之, 貴尊而富賤, 貴又可兼富, 故貴之欲甚於富也. 名之欲, 惟自好者有之, 薄於待己, 然後名可得, 故其厭富貴而取名者, 千百一人矣. 義理之欲, 惟君子有之, 故其捨生取義者, 億萬一人矣. 然富貴之欲亦重矣, 貪濁者, 或以生易之. *Seongho saseol* 星湖僿說 (Collected Works of Seongho), *gwon* 7, "Insamun" 人事門 (Category of Human Affairs), "Yok" 欲 (Desires).

intensely, while at other times, it converges inward.[9] In this process, personal emotions and desires arise, constituting their particularity pertaining to the realm of the private.

In the traditional perspective of Neo-Confucianism, Yi Ik viewed the *sa* 私 as having a similar meaning to the terms *gi* 己 or *a* 我, which refer to the individual or the self. Furthermore, he believed that while *gi* pertained to the private, the *gong* 公 represented the world or the people of the world. He expressed it as, "*gi* is *a* 我, spoken in contrast to the people of the world. *gi* is private, and the world is public."[10] However, Yi Ik's perspective, which contrasts the private and public, includes a more complex idea. Firstly, he viewed the private, referring to individuals composed of particular *qi* in physical forms, as a value-neutral concept. He believed that the private comprises one's personal boundaries that others cannot intrude upon. "The private is what belongs to oneself and cannot be shared with others. It is not hard to distinguish between oneself and others."[11] For example, when I feel hungry or cold, people around me may not feel hunger and cold at all. However, the desire to satisfy hunger and avoid the cold is an emotion or desire that living entities universally experience. Based on this observation, Yi Ik noted the connection between the realm of the private and realm of the public.

> (Someone asked.) What is the private of *qi* in one's physical form?
> (Teacher replied.) Feeling hungry, full, cold, or hot, all of these arise from one's vitality and physical form and are unrelated to other people; this is

9. 蓋形氣者, 人之私也. 物觸而動中, 或發散, 或蘊結, 或激作, 或含畜, 細而推之, 其名極夥. *Seongho jeonseo* 星湖全書 (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 7, *Sachil sinpyeon* 四七新編 (New Compilation of the Four- Seven Debate) *gwon* 12, "Goin nonjeong budong" 古人論情不同 (Ancient People's Discussions on Feelings are Different).
10. 己, 我也, 對天下之人而言也. 己則私, 而天下則公, 故克己, 則天下歸仁也. *Seongho jeonseo* (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 4, *Noneo jilseo* 論語疾書 (Quick Comments on the Analects), "An Yeon" 顔淵.
11. 私與公對, 其名亦多, 曰己曰我, 皆吾身之自有, 而非與於他人也: 私與公對, 其名亦多. 曰己曰我, 皆吾身之自有, 而非與於他人也, 其分不難知也. *Seongho saseol* (Collected Works of Seongho), *gwon* 21, "Gyeongsamun" 經史門 (Category of Classics and History), "Mua" 毋我 (Emptying the Self).

> what we call the private (私). First, there are sensations of hunger, cold, and pain (飢寒痛痒), and then liking and disliking toward the above sensations are formed. Liking and disliking are significant clues among the *seven emotions* (七情). Happiness, anger, sadness, and joy are each triggered depending on whether one obtains what one likes, avoids what one dislikes, or encounters what is acceptable or unacceptable. Therefore, when Zhu Xi discussed the human mind (人心), his reason is profound why he initially used the category of sensations like hunger, cold, and pain as examples, contrasting them with *four sprouts* (四端) without immediately mentioning the seven emotions. While it is acceptable to say that one cannot hastily equate the seven emotions with the human mind, if we discard the seven emotions and discuss the human mind, that would also be incorrect.[12]

Yi Ik first emphasizes that feeling hunger and cold are individual sensations that cannot be shared with others. He distinguishes between the layer of these primal sensations like hunger, cold, and pain and the layer of liking and disliking (for example, humans disliking hunger, enjoying fullness, disliking cold, and preferring warmth). The former is what Yi Ik refers to as "sensations of hunger, cold, and pain" (飢寒痛痒), while the latter belongs to the category of the seven emotions. Since individuals personally experience these innate sensations of hunger, cold, and pain, they cannot be interfered with by others, therefore they are not the subject of moral assessment. However, the seven emotions, which involve liking or disliking, can be the subject of moral assessment; they can be seen ethical when the emotions are appropriate to the situation, while if these emotions are not suitable for the circumstances, they are seen as misguided human desires (人欲). Thus, Yi Ik believed that we should not merely compare physical desire itself with the four sprouts addressed by Mencius as ethical emotions, but rather compare

12. 問: "形氣之私?" 曰: "如飢飽寒煖之類, 皆生於吾身血氣形體, 而他人無與, 所謂私也. 先有飢寒痛痒, 而後欲惡形焉. 欲惡者, 七情之大端也. 喜怒哀樂, 各因其得失順逆而發. 故朱子論人心, 不擧七情, 而乃以飢寒痛痒之類, 與四端相對說下, 其旨微矣. 然謂七情不可遽以人心看, 則可; 若舍七情而論人心, 則不可. *Sachil sinpyeon* 四七新編 (New Compilation of the Four-Seven Debate), *gwon* 8, "Chiljeong pyeonsi insim" 七情便是人心 (Seven Feelings are the Human Mind).

the four sprouts with the seven emotions pertaining to physical desire.[13]

Yi Ik did not draw the impenetrable line between the ethical mind, often referred to as *Dao mind* (道心), and the non-ethical mind, which he referred to as *human mind* (人心). This perspective stemmed from his belief that the human mind was not synonymous with misguided desires (人欲). The seven emotions, which are the emotions that arise when the mind encounters situations, can degenerate into narrow and selfish emotions if they do not respond appropriately to the circumstances. However, when these seven emotions consider both oneself and others, manifesting in harmony with the situation, sometimes they become public emotions belonging to Dao mind. In short, Yi Ik emphasized that the key lies in the emotional or attitudinal disposition (of the seven emotions) toward innate desires that people naturally experience (hunger, cold, etc.). This disposition can either transform the human mind into Dao mind or degenerate it into misguided desires, depending on how it aligns with concrete circumstances. Yi Ik believed that people possess a single mind, not two, which perceives objects and situations, as well as bears primal desires related to those objects and situations. That is, it can be good or evil based on how one adjusts the seven emotions, which pertain to liking and disliking primal desires, rather than there being distinct good or bad minds.

> Dao mind is the recognition of the Way, while the human mind is the perception of primal sensations such as sound, color, scent, taste, and so on. If we distinguish Dao mind as the Heavenly Principle and human mind as misguided desires, it will imply the existence of two separate

13. The four moral emotions, called the four sprouts in *Mencius*, and the general emotions, called the seven emotions in the *Book of Rites*, have long been debated and various interpretations of both concepts have been proposed by Joseon scholars, most notably from Toegye Yi Hwang, Kobong Ki Dae-seung, and Yulgok Yi I to Seongho Yi Ik. This article focuses on Seongho Yi Ik's views on the four sprouts and the seven emotions, with particular attention to his interpretation of the seven emotions. For a discussion of the controversy surrounding the concepts of four sprouts and seven emotions in Korean Confucianism, see chapter 4, "Sage Learning and the Four-Seven Debate," in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Korean Confucianism entry: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/korean-confucianism.

> minds. However, humans possess only one mind. Therefore, it would be wrong to directly equate the human mind with misguided desires…The human mind involves both perception and desire within itself. For instance, how could one deny that statements in ancient texts such as, "I desire to practice benevolence," "I follow what my heart desires," and "Desires manifest themselves as impulses towards external objects," indicate workings of the inner desires of the human mind? Nevertheless, if one succumbs to temptation and veers in one direction, harm can result. For instance, in the context of food, the natural desires to eat and drink due to hunger and thirst are all expressions of the human mind. However, because there is a guiding principle (義理) [recognized by the human mind], there are distinctions between what can be eaten and what cannot be eaten.[14]

In Yi Ik's view, human primal desires exhibit a duality, serving as one motive for Dao mind, which fosters empathy with others through psychological interactions, yet can also devolve into selfishness focused solely on one's own satisfaction. What is important here is that human primal desires have become a significant subject of observation.[15] Yi Ik argues that innate desires and the emotions associated with liking or disliking them, known as the 'seven emotions', are not inherently bad or evil. However, desires and emotions that emerge from the private of *qi* can become inappropriate or volatile in relationships with others. Therefore, such desires and emotions need to be disciplined. Yi Ik believes that there is a guiding principle (理) that harmonizes human desires and emotions. While Yi Ik did distinguish between the realms of *li* 理 and *qi* 氣,[16] as is common in Neo-Confucianism,

14. 道心是知覺得道理底, 人心是知覺得聲色臭味底. 若說道心天理, 人心人欲, 却是有兩箇心. 人只有一箇心, '人心, 人欲也', 此語有病." ... "人心是此身有知覺, 有嗜欲者, 如所謂 '我欲仁', '從心所欲', '性之欲也, 感於物而動', 此豈能無? 但爲物誘而至於滔溺, 則爲害爾. 且以飮食言之, 凡飢渴而欲得食飮, 以充其飽且足者, 皆人心. 然必有義理存焉, 有可以食, 不可以食. *Sachil sinpyeon* (New Compilation of the Four–Seven Debate), *gwon* 8, "Chiljeong pyeonsi insim" (Seven Feelings are the Human Mind).
15. There is an interesting reconstruction of how Yi Ik thought about the potential impartiality of private emotions (seven emotions). On this, see Back (2023).
16. In this paper, I generally write these two concepts as *li* and *qi* according to their Chinese pronunciation, but depending on the context, I also translate *li* as "principle."

he did not conceive of the Heavenly Principle in a metaphysical or disconnected way from human desires. According to him, *li* is first of all manifested through the moral emotions, such as four sprouts, but on the other hand, when the seven emotions are appropriately revealed, it is also present in them. Therefore, for an understanding of the principle (理), humans need to closely observe their own desires and emotions, in addition to the moral emotions, the four sprouts.

> Without the need for formal learning, the seven emotions can naturally arise, but just because they can emerge without formal instruction does not necessarily make them inherently bad. However, since they originate from the private of *qi* in physical form, they can easily incline towards negative expressions…To discipline the seven emotions means aligning with the innate emotions that humans possess but allowing the Heavenly Principle to govern them, preventing them from flowing towards negative directions. Before they are disciplined, they exist solely as personal emotions, but once disciplined, they cease to be limited to the private realm of oneself…[Through this cultivation], sometimes the seven emotions become public, but this public nature of the seven emotions is a result of discipline and not their original state…Although the principle (理) can govern the seven emotions in this way and make them public, it cannot prevent the seven emotions from originating in the private. As mentioned earlier, examples like Mencius' joy and King Shun's anger are rooted in personal emotions, but serve as instances where sages use them to manifest benevolence (仁) with others…Zhu Xi advised his disciples in this manner: "In today's world, people experience private joy, private anger, private sadness, private fear, private love, private hatred, and private desire. If one can overcome their narrow, selfish mindset and expand it significantly, then joy can become public joy, anger can become public anger, and similarly, sadness, fear, love, hatred, and desire can all become public emotions without exception."[17]

17. 夫七情, 不學而能. 不學而能者, 未必皆惡, 但出於形氣之私, 故易至於惡也…人之於七情, 治之, 則純善, 不治之, 則易流於惡. 治之云者,卽從本有之情, 以天理管攝他, 使不得流於惡也. 其未治之前, 只是私有底情, 已治之後, 便却有不涉於私者…七情則又依舊在, 而或有時乎爲公, 則是公者, 治情之功, 非情之本然也…理能使七情爲公, 而不能使七情不出於私. 若向所謂孟

Yi Ik distinguished between the original nature itself of the seven emotions and this emotion's public nature resulted from aligning with the principle (理), which shows that he also made the distinction between the seven emotions and the Heavenly Principle as traditional neo-Confucians did. However, we should note a crucial statement in the above-quoted passage: "Although the principle can govern the seven emotions in this way and make them public, it cannot prevent the seven emotions from originating in the private." This highlights that while the principle is required for the public value of emotions, it does not make the realm of the private necessarily separate from the public. The key was how to discipline the private, rather than excluding it. Yi Ik argues that emotions of sages are private in the sense that they are felt personally, yet they are public in the sense that they represent the emotions and desires of others, presenting instances from classical texts where Mencius exhibited joy or King Shun displayed anger in accordance with the appropriateness of the situation. Also, Yi Ik quotes Zhu Xi, who stated that by expanding one's emotions beyond the confines of personal desires and resonating with the emotions of others, private emotions would naturally transform into public emotions. This shows that Yi Ik's exploration was not about a simple dichotomy or opposition between the public and the private; rather, he paid attention to the realm of the private reflecting on the personal desires and emotions in pursuit of uncovering the public from them.[18]

---

子之喜, 舜之怒之類, 亦是聖賢同仁之私也. ... 朱子訓門人曰: 今人喜也是私喜, 怒也是私怒, 哀也是私哀, 懼也是私懼, 愛也是私愛, 惡也是私惡, 欲也是私欲. 苟能克去私己, 擴然大公, 則喜是公喜, 怒是公怒, 哀懼愛惡欲, 莫非公矣. *Sachil sinpyeon* (New Compilation of the Four–Seven Debate), *gwon* 4, "Seonghyeon ji chiljeong" 聖賢之七情 (Seven Feelings of Sages and Worthies).

18. Yi Ik himself stated that he inherited Toegye Yi Hwang's position on the Four-Seven Debate. Thus, it is already well known that he drew attention to the innate moral sentiment of the four sprouts. However, this alone does not distinguish Seongho Yi Ik's thought from the Confucians before him. As we know from previous studies, his debates with his disciple Shin Hudam led him to focus even more attention on the seven emotions, noting that although the seven emotions are manifested in an individual's private physical needs, they are eventually sublimated into public emotions when they become emotions that resonate with others. By focusing on the latter aspect, I want to emphasize the point at

## From the Private to the Public: The Process of Sharing the Right Emotions

Seongho Yi Ik and his disciples reinterpreted the longstanding debate on the four sprouts (*sadan* 四端) and the seven emotions (*chiljeong* 七情) stemming from Toegye Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501–1570) within the framework of the public and the private.[19] The Seongho Yi Ik distinguished the feeling of commiseration (惻隱之心), mentioned by Mencius, from sorrow (哀), one of the seven emotions discussed in the *Book of Rites*, and Seongho made the distinction by seeing the former as a public emotion and the latter as a private one.[20] While sorrow is primarily a personal emotion concerning one's distress, the feeling of commiseration is a public emotion, characterized by empathy and compassion toward the sorrow of others.[21] That is, Seongho differentiated between the seemingly similar emotions as either personal

which Yi Ik's thought differs from that of Toegye Yi Hwang. In fact, in Yi Ik's time, Confucians in the Yongnam region, especially Toegye's disciples, criticized Seongho Yi Ik for only superficially representing Toegye's theories and actually importing Yulgok Yi I's theories. The reason for this criticism was that Seongho emphasized the seven emotions.

19. This passage is not centered on the Four-Seven Debate and does not analyze this theory itself. However, there is an accumulated body of research on the formation and development of this debate. For a more detailed account of the Four-Seven Debate between Toegye Yi Hwang and Kobong Ki Dae-seung, see O. Kim, et al. (1994); E. Chung (1995); Ivanhoe (2016); and H. Kim (2015). For further analysis of the discussion in the correspondence between Ugye Seong Hon and Yulgok Yi I, see Ivanhoe (2015) and Ro (1989, 2017). For a lengthy discussion of how the Four-Seven Debate developed, from the early Joseon scholar Gwongeun, to Yi Huang, Yi I, and Seongho Yi Ik, and the meaning of Korean *jeong* 情 that developed in the direction of moral emotion and social values, see S. Park (2023). And on the continuity and differences in the theories of mind and nature between Toegye, Seongho, and Dasan, see S. Chung (2013).
20. For a general introduction and analysis of Seongho's philosophy, see the papers mentioned in footnote 5 above. The following studies note that Seongho analyzed the traditional theory of the Four-Seven Debate in terms of the concept of public and private: Sangyik Lee (1999); Ahn (1999a, 1999b); J. Kim (2002, 2017); Kwon (2005); S. Kim (2013); Ha (2021); and Back (2023).
21. 公私二字, 實爲此論之肯綮. 惟哀與惻隱相似, 而哀是傷切於己, 與惻隱之公不同. 七之惡, 卽有惡於己私, 而四之惡, 惡其不善, 則公也. 四七之間, 公私顯別. *Seongho seonsaeng jeonjip* 星湖先生全集 (Complete Works of Master Seongho), *gwon* 17, "Dap Yi Yeogyeom" 答李汝謙 (Reply to Yi Yeo-gyeom).

sorrow, when it concerns solely one's self, and public commiseration, when one shares sorrow of others. Similarly, he distinguished between personal resentment directed toward harm of oneself and belonging to the realm of the seven emotions, and objective aversion directed towards actions harmful to everyone, which falls under the category of public anger within the four sprouts.

Going further from dividing the four sprouts and the seven emotions into the public and private, Yi Ik and his disciples contemplated the necessity of the distinction between the four sprouts and the seven emotions themselves. In other words, if the seven emotions that originated from one's private *qi* in physical form were not limited to oneself but could be extended to share the sorrow and joy of others, then the appropriately extended seven emotions could be seen as ethical emotions that emerged from the activation of principle (理), just like the four sprouts. This public nature of the seven emotions was particularly emphasized by one of Yi Ik's outstanding pupils, Habin Shin Hudam.[22] This topic, called the *seven public emotions* or *public happiness and anger* debates, highlighted the point that not only the four sprouts, which are spontaneously manifested the principle, but also the general seven emotions, which arise from private physical realm, can be public. The core implication of these debates is that they—Seongho and Habin—sought to find potential public values not only in the innate moral minds of sages, but also in the minds of ordinary people, that is, in their private desires and emotions.[23]

---

22. His teacher Seongho Yi Ik, in a discussion with Shin Hudam, admitted that the seven emotions, which originate from an individual's physical needs, can also become moral emotions, or public emotions, just like the four sprouts. Seongho, of course, reversed this view midway through. However, his attention to and acknowledgment of the public value of the seven emotions is what distinguishes him from the four sprouts-centered interpretation that descends from Toegye Yi Hwang. In this paper, I note that Seongho acknowledged that the seven emotions also can be public emotions. See also, Kang (2011); S. Chung (2014); J. Park (2015); Hong (2017); Sangyik Lee (2020); S. Kim (2022); and J. Y. Choi (2022).
23. As Kim Seohee notes, "Seongho's significance lay not in the public itself but in what can be seen as the 'public' dimension within the private. Even in the private, there exists the public. The concept of the 'public in the private' entails extending well-tuned emotions to

The debate over whether, in the case of public happiness, anger, sadness, and joy—that is, when the seven emotions become public—the seven emotions were instances of the spontaneous manifestation of *li* (理發) (the issuance of *li*), as in the case of the four sprouts, or whether the seven emotions related to private physical realm were still the instances of the manifestation of *qi* (氣發) (the issuance of *qi*), unlike the four sprouts, which were purely moral emotions, continued within the Seongho school even after Yi Ik's death. Yi Ik's other students, Yun Dong-gyu 尹東奎 (1695–1773) and Ahn Jeong-bok 安鼎福 (1712–1791), criticized Shin Hudam's assertion—that the seven emotions also could be triggered by *li*—while Yi Ik's descendant, Jeongsan Yi Byeong-hyu 李秉休 (1710–1776), supported Shin Hudam's position. According to Yi Byeong-hyu, in *Sachil sinpyeon* 四七新編 (New Compilation of the Four-Seven Debate), Yi Ik initially argued that even the perfect seven emotions of sages, such as Mencius's joy and Shun's anger, were mediated by the private physical realm, and thus were still the instances of manifestation of *qi*, based on the private (私). However, Yi Byeong-hyu believed that Yi Ik had modified some of his views in the second postscript to the book mentioned above and written by Seongho, and in Yi Ik's letter to Yun Dong-gyu. Yi Byeong-hyu argues that Yi Ik ultimately endorsed Shin Hudam's view and recognized the public seven emotions and the pure four sprouts triggered by principle to be almost the same thing.[24] The relevant passage from Yi Ik's letter to Yun Dong-gyu is shown below. Yi Ik viewed a sage's joy and anger as based on their own emotions, but at the same time, transcending those emotions. An example of this is when a sage empathizes and resonates completely with others' joy and anger.

---

the world, sharing joy and anger with the world. Seongho seemed to place trust in the expansiveness of 'the private' and the associated societal responsibility. In fact, without such a belief, the public could become a purely ideological issue, potentially rendering it a meaningless assertion. If one cannot extract the public nature from everyday emotions, then the actualization of the public would be limited to sages" (S. Kim 2013, 348).

24. 按此三段中上兩段之義, 已見於新編者也, 惟下一段, 乃是因耳老說添補者. ... 但新編, 以舜怒孟喜, 擬諸同體之私, 而置於氣發之科. 今則以此類, 謂發於理義, 而歸之理發者, 爲少變也. 他書又謂'公喜怒一段外, 舊見未嘗動者', 是也. *Jeongsan japjeo* 貞山雜著 (Miscellaneous Writings of Jeongsan), "Sang Yun jangseo" 上尹丈書 (A Letter to Yun Donggyu).

> If someone honors his mother, I rejoice; if someone twists his brother's arm, I am angry; if someone loses his friend, I grieve; if someone harms his flock, I am afraid. Even though these are from one's own private feelings and not yet arising from a state of considering all things as one, the meaning is not established by separating these feelings from *the oneness* (物我一體) (the oneness of I and others), so the four cases mentioned above have the same origin as those mentioned in the chapter "Ritual Operations" in the *Book of Rites*. Since we are not yet completely in the state of *Oneness of All Things* (萬物一體), we have just only distinguished between the four sprouts and the seven emotions in terms of the public and the private…However, the anger of King Shun, which I mentioned before, is like the reflection of things in a mirror, and does not involve one's own private judgment, so how can we distinguish between the purely good anger of the sense of shame (羞惡之心) (one of the four sprouts) and the anger of the sage (which belongs to the seven emotions)? We should think upon this again.[25]

Based on this quote, it seems that Yi Ik was more concerned with the distinction between the public and private nature of emotions, than the original distinction between the four sprouts and the seven emotions themselves.[26] In particular, he believed that the sages' expressions of the seven emotions would all conform to the Heavenly Principle, so for sages, the four sprouts and the seven emotions should be regarded as the same

---

25. 或有敬其親則喜, 紾其兄則怒, 喪其朋則哀, 害其衆則懼. 雖非一己之私, 皆從物我同體中發出, 此離一, 其字不得, 則禮運所指, 畢竟同根. 未然者, 可以公私二者, 斷四與七矣. (..) 且舜所謂舜之怒, 如物之照鏡, 己不與焉, 則與羞惡之惡, 奚別? 此皆更加諦思也. *Seongho jeonseo* (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 19, "Dap Yun Yujang" 答尹幼章 (Reply to Yun Dong-gyu).
26. In the case of a sage, Yi Ik explained, "If someone else experiences joy, it is clear that it will become an interest to others, so I also feel joy. If someone else becomes angry, it will cause them distress, so I also become angry. I feel the joy and distress of others as if it pierces my own heart." 禮運將論形氣之七情, 而必先言與天下一體. 其義若曰, 氣與相貫, 萬物屬己. 人之有喜, 必明於其利, 而吾亦喜, 人之有怒, 必達於其患, 而吾亦怒. 彼之利患, 莫不如針箚己也. 此古人立言之旨也. 彼既形氣之發, 而吾與之共體同情, 則屬之氣發, 恐似無妨. *Sachil sinpyeon* (New Compilation of the Four–Seven Debate), "Jungbal" 重跋 (Second Postscript).

public emotions. But what about ordinary people? As Yi Ik consistently argued with his disciples, he was interested in the potential value of private emotions, which ordinary people experience through their private bodies. By observing the workings of the primal needs that every human being has, such as appetite and sexuality, and the aversion to poverty and suffering, and emotions that drive them to fulfill or avoid these needs, Yi Ik explored the possibilities of the public from this ordinarily private realm.

> Are the seven emotions public or private? The desire for food, for men and women, and the aversion to death, poverty, and suffering are experienced by both sages and ordinary people. However, when desires are restrained to the appropriate extent and aversions are limited as they should be, that is what I consider *the appropriateness in the private realm* (私中之正也). What does the "appropriateness" mean here? It means that even though a person has not strayed from their private bodily sphere, their private emotions have not turned to a selfish wrong direction. People align their desires with those of the rest of the world, and their aversions align with what the world dislikes, making it *the public in the private realm* (私中之公). What does the public mean? It involves treating things as if they were one's own, even when they do not directly concern one's own affairs. This is a principle-driven result…The emotions I mentioned earlier—the joy of Mencius and the anger of King Shun—were manifestations of benevolence (仁) displayed by sages who resonate with common people, *a private aspect of shared benevolence* (聖賢同仁之私). As the *Great Learning* states, "When I like women, I like them together with the people, and when I like wealth, I like it together with the people." This represents the transition from the private realm (私) of one's own preferences to the public realm (公). Mencius found joy in a good man governing, and King Shun abhorred when barbarians violated their roles; this was indeed the benevolence that extended beyond oneself to encompass other matters. We do not perceive any evidence that sages artificially expanded their emotions. Is this not the sharing of the private aspects [of sages] with the world by diminishing the object-obsessed desires and upholding the Heavenly Principle?[27]

27. 七情果公乎, 果私乎? 飮食男女之欲, 死亡貧苦之惡, 聖愚同有, 而欲止於所當欲, 惡止於所當

> Ordinary people all love their household because they consider them as one's own body. Sages, on the other hand, love all of humanity and see the entire world as one family, and China as one person. When one regards China as one person, then everything within it becomes a part of me, and my spiritual-bodily *qi* naturally connects with them, so that the joys and sorrows of the people in the world become my own. If my limbs and body feel pain or itchiness, I can apparently sense it. This is why it is said in scripture that "A sage does not act from selfish intentions but always with an awareness of emotions that are universally shared by all people." The private realm of ordinary people is limited, while a sage's private emotions extend far because they are guided by the principle. How can the principle be private? Nevertheless, the emotions of sages can be described as both private and public at the same time. The former pertains to their natural, innate bodily emotions and the latter refers to the aspect of the principle—the facet of universal empathy with the emotions of all people.[28]

Yi Ik believed that the private encompassed one's personal feelings and individual experiences, those aspects that pertain solely to one's own needs. The public, on the other hand, involves the sharing of emotions and the capacity for empathy with others. As mentioned earlier, the private pertains to the personal sphere, which is unrelated to others, such as feelings of hunger or physical pain that we individually experience. However, regardless of how private these experiences may be, failing to address one's physical

---

惡, 乃私中之正也. 正者, 何也? 雖不離己私, 而不流於邪. 欲天下之所同欲, 惡天下之所同惡, 乃私中之公也. 公者, 何也? 雖不繫吾事, 而一視於己也. 此卽理之爲也. ... 若向所謂孟子之喜, 舜之怒之類, 亦是聖賢同仁之私也. 傳曰, "好色, 則與百姓同之, 好貨, 則與百姓同之"者, 方是自吾身欲惡之私, 而推向公去也. 喜善人之爲政, 怒四凶之分背者, 實以己及物之仁, 而不復見其推之之迹, 玆豈非物欲淨盡, 天理流行, 與天下同其私者乎 *Sachil sinpyeon* (New Compilation of the Four–Seven Debate), *gwon* 4, "Seonghyeon ji chiljeong" (Seven Feelings of Sages and Worthies).

28. 凡衆人, 莫不愛一家之人, 是以一家爲一人也. 聖人, 偏愛人類, 是以天下爲一家, 以中國爲一人也. 旣是一人, 則物皆屬己, 而氣自貫通. 天下之喜怒, 卽吾之喜怒也. 如四肢百體, 痛痒必覺, 外物之感, 莫不切己. 故曰, 非意人也, 必知其情也. 衆人之私, 及近; 聖人之私, 及遠. 所以遠者, 理爲之主也. 理何嘗私? 然則謂之私, 可也; 謂之公, 亦可也. 私以本情言, 公以理言. *Sachil sinpyeon* (New Compilation of the Four–Seven Debate), *gwon* 4, "Seonghyeon ji chiljeong" (Seven Feelings of Sages and Worthies).

and mental needs in a balanced and appropriate manner can lead to an unhealthy and unwell state of body and mind. Therefore, Yi Ik refers to the *appropriateness in the private realm* (私中之正) as the desire for what is appropriately deserved and the avoidance of what is appropriately avoided. This implies, among other things, maintaining emotional and physical equilibrium, practicing frugality without indulgence, and diligently engaging in productive activities without causing harm to others.[29] Indulging in excessive eating, extravagance, and overly expressive displays of emotions and suffering are considered inappropriate in matters of the private. These actions still primarily concern the individual.

On the other hand, Yi Ik describes sharing in the emotions of others, feeling as if those emotions were one's own even when they are not, as the *public in the private realm* (私中之公). This concept relates to personal desires (private desires) that have attained universality through the process of rejoicing in the same things as others and disliking what others dislike. Yi Ik characterizes this as a personal desire in which a sage realizes benevolence (仁) alongside ordinary people, in other words, *a personal desire that has gained universality and social value*. What initially began as a personal desire evolved into a public one.

Sages, in particular, were regarded as figures who achieved perfect harmony not only with their own feelings, but also with the feelings of others. Even if sages follow their own inclinations, there is no conflict with others because the sage's feelings are guided by the Heavenly Principle. According to Yi Ik, when sages extend their sentiments to others, it happens spontaneously, without any trace of artificial effort, as the Heavenly Principle actively engages in the extension. When contemplating the intersection of the public and private, Yi Ik realized that the distinction between sages and ordinary people lay in the extent to which they moved from the realm of the private to the public, encompassing others and the world. In other words,

29. 此利己而不利人, 私也, 非公也, 利所以不可行也. 若利吾身吾家而達之天下, 亦無害者, 亦不害爲公利. 如耕田而食, 鑿井而飮, 雖無利於他人, 而吾何憚不爲哉. 使天下之民, 各有耕鑿之利, 天下斯利矣. 此聖人之所欲也. Seongho jeonseo (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 4, *Noneo jilseo* (Quick Comments on the Analects), "Liin" 里仁 (Virtuous Village).

sages have the capacity to extend their emotions and apply them universally to everything in the world, while most ordinary people can only extend their emotions to themselves and their close family. Yi Ik explains that the emotions of sages can be expressed as both the private and the public. It is still private because a sage's emotions fundamentally originated from the private feelings and desires most people experience. The desire for sustenance and intimacy, the aspiration to avoid poverty and suffering, the joy experienced when acquiring desired things, and the frustration when unable to obtain them, are common emotional experiences shared by both sages and ordinary people. These are the *original emotions* to which Yi Ik refers. However, the emotions of sages can be described as public because these emotions are consistently guided by the principle. The presence of the principle becomes evident when a sage's emotions resonate fully with the emotions of all people.

In this manner, Yi Ik delved into the potential for the public value within the universality of desires shared by ordinary people. However, he did not equate the *public in the private realm* with the *inherent rightness of the Heavenly Principle* (天理之當然 義理) itself. Yi Ik illustrates this with the following example: "When an Emperor divides the world for governance alongside other lords, sharing with those who have merit can be seen as a public action within the realm of the private. But when the world is divided into regions and counties in a way that allows all people to support a single ruler (天子), it becomes even more private within the realm of the private. Therefore, this arrangement is unquestionably not in accordance with the rightful Heavenly Principle."[30] Yi Ik assessed that when, in establishing a nation, an emperor divides the land and allocates it to individuals based on their merit, there is still some degree of public element within one's private desires. However, when the emperor organizes the world to serve their own interests, this desire is further denigrated into the realm of the private.

30. 然分封天下, 與有功者共之, 私中之公也; 悉爲州郡, 以天下奉一人, 私而益私, 斷非天理之當然. 後人論其得失, 只以國祚之長短爲言, 不過擧前迹而證之. 彼歷代之君, 何嘗不以前驗耶? *Seongho saseol* (Collected Works of Seongho), *gwon* 26, "Gyeongsamun" (Category of Classics and History), "Bongeon" 封建 (Feudal).

According to Yi Ik, neither of these two examples aligns with the Heavenly Principle. In a letter to his disciple Yun Dong-gyu, Yi Ik once mentioned that there are three levels of the private that one should contemplate. The first is the personal realm, which concerns only the self, such as feeling hungry or wanting to avoid pain. The second is *public* (*sa* 私), where one considers other people as part of the same body as oneself. This corresponds to the previously mentioned *public in the private realm* (私中之公). Finally, there are emotions that are ignited by the rightful principle (emotions that are perfectly aligned with what is appropriate), such as the joy and anger experienced by sages.[31]

Merely because the majority of people share a particular emotion does not automatically make it the right emotion. This is why Yi Ik appears to have established a final standard, the Heavenly Principle, to differentiate between various private emotions. Yi Ik referred to a passage from a debate between the Confucian scholars Toegye Yi Hwang and Kobong Ki Dae-seung 奇大升 (1527–1572) known as the *Four-Seven Debate*. Ki Dae-seung stressed that the examples of the seven emotions, including Mencius' joy and King Shun's anger, were so public that, in the end, there was little distinction between the seven emotions and the four sprouts. However, Yi Ik believed that Ki Dae-seung placed excessive emphasis on the public aspect of emotions while neglecting the question of the rightness of these emotions.[32] Even if an emotion is experienced by a large number of people, there must be a valid criterion for determining whether it is the appropriate emotion to feel. Yi Ik believed that Ki Dae-seung overlooked this aspect and just simply advocated the perfection of seven emotions based on the ideal emotions of sages. For Yi Ik, *being public* meant transcending one's own

31. 然則有發於一己之私者, 有發於同體之私者, 有發於義理者, 必須分三段說, 究極於毫忽之際, 方可以語此矣. *Seongho jeonseo* (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 19, "Dap Yun Yujang" (Reply to Yun Dong-gyu).

32. 經曰: "喜怒哀樂之中節, 天下之達道也." 何謂達道? 惟其理爲主, 故皆謂之"達道". 然則高峯所謂"達道, 不可謂氣發"一句, 殊覺未備. 退溪之反加稱許, 何也? 蓋高峯只偏擧孟子之喜·舜之怒, 公底一邊, 有此云爾. 才如此說, 便闕却欲當欲, 惡當惡, 正底一邊. 而又況孟子之喜, 舜之怒, 原其自, 則亦只是氣發耶? *Sachil sinpyeon* (New Compilation of the Four–Seven Debate), *gwon* 4, "Seonghyeon ji chiljeong" (Seven Feelings of Sages and Worthies).

narrow emotions and connecting with others, empathizing with their preferences and aversions. However, Yi Ik emphasized empathizing with people based on what they genuinely deserved to empathize with, rather than merely sharing emotions with them. In his quest to transition from the private to the public realm, he continually questioned what the true foundation of public values was. Yi Ik understood this foundation to be rooted in human nature, particularly the virtue of benevolence. In this article, I noted that Yi Ik emphasized the potential public nature that seven emotions can achieve. According to Yi Ik, for the seven emotions to be public, they must be consistent with the principle of benevolence (仁). In the next section, I will emphasize benevolence as Yi Ik's final ground for the public value.

## Benevolence (仁) as the Basis for the Public: Emphasizing Coexistence over Fairness

Yi Ik delved into the concept of the public during his contemplation of human nature, building upon the discussions among Neo-Confucian thinkers about benevolence (仁) and the public (公). In his work, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), who compiled *Yan Ping dawen* 延平答問 (Dialogues with Master Yan Ping) featuring his conversations with his teacher Yan Ping Li Tong 李侗 (1093–1163), elucidated the idea that benevolence represents a state devoid of self-interest distinctions between oneself and others.[33] Li Tong conceived benevolence as a state where selfish and self-centered sentiments have disappeared. He conveyed to Zhu Xi that the absence of biased, one-sided distinctions or boundaries between the self and others leads to the human mind attaining its *most expansive public state* (廓然大公).[34] This state, he explained, signifies the unity of the human mind with the

33. 先生曰, 仁只是理, 初無彼此之辨. 當理而無私心, 卽仁矣. *Yan Ping dawen* 延平答問 (Dialogues with Master Yan Ping Li Tong), *gwon* 1, article 41.

34. 某嘗以謂, '遇事若能無毫髮固滯, 便是灑落.' 卽此心廓然大公, 無彼己之偏倚, 庶幾於理道一貫. 若見事不徹, 中心未免微有偏倚, 卽涉固滯, 皆不可也. 未審元晦以爲如何? 爲此說者, 非理道明, 心與氣合, 未易可以言此. 不然只是說也. *Yan Ping dawen* (Dialogues with Master Yan

principle and the complete realization of its inherent nature— benevolence.

Zhu Xi's perspective on human nature and public states closely aligns with that of his teacher. He posited that benevolence represented the inherent principle within one's nature, while the public manifests in one's external interactions with others.[35] To put it differently, when benevolence embodies the potential essence of human nature, public value reveals itself as the outcome of an individual's efforts to reconcile and overcome their basic material and physical needs. Zhu Xi believed that engaging in the public becomes possible only when there is a natural foundation of benevolence. Zhu Xi asserted that a person can truly embody the value of the public only after they have cultivated benevolence, because he understood human nature as inherently possessing a public-oriented nature. Zhu Xi further held that the practice of benevolence becomes achievable only when an individual's narrow, self-centered consciousness gradually diminishes, allowing them to view all entities in the world as if they were beings akin to themselves. This, he argued, is the result of a person fully realizing benevolence.[36]

Taking into consideration the perspectives of Li Tong and Zhu Xi, it becomes evident that the public (公), which emerges through interactions with others within a community, does not find its roots in external things or social structures. Instead, it is initially made possible by an individual's inner nature and their personal cultivation to realize that nature. In this context, Zhu Xi elucidates the public as a mental state that remains impartial in its regard for oneself and others. He also mentions that the realization of the principle (理) within such a state of mind is referred to as *rightness* (正).[37]

Confucians, in their pursuit of public values, generally emphasized

---

Ping Li Tong), *gwon* 1, article 28.

35. 或問仁與公之別. 曰, 仁在內, 公在外. 又曰, 惟仁然後能公. 又曰, 仁是本有之理, 公是克己工夫極至處. 故惟仁然後能公, 理甚分明. *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Classified Conversations of Master Zhu), *gwon* 6, article 102.

36. 無私, 是仁之前事; 與天地萬物爲一體, 是仁之後事. 惟無私然後仁. 惟仁然後, 與天地萬物爲一體. *Zhuzi yulei* (Classified Conversations of Master Zhu), *gwon* 6, article 109.

37. 公者, 心之平也; 正者, 理之得也. 一言之中, 體用備矣. *Zhuzi yulei* (Classified Conversations of Master Zhu), *gwon* 26, article 21.

human spontaneity over external influences. This emphasis is closely associated with their interests in self-discipline and personal effort as the means to realize one's inner nature. As a Confucian scholar, Yi Ik shared this perspective. He understood the public as the outcome of an ethical effort to harmonize one's private desires. According to his view, one can be considered public-minded when he or she aspires to share the good with others rather than monopolize it. Conversely, someone of lesser character can be labeled as inclined towards the private when he or she does not wish for others to attain the same level of goodness as themselves. This is how he firstly distinguished between the status of a public-minded individual (*gunja* 君子) and a private-minded individual (*soin* 小人) based on their inner mindset.

Yi Ik, who believed that the realization of the public was achieved through the process of an individual's voluntary self-cultivation, like Zhu Xi, understood benevolence as a state in which there is no division between oneself and others. He emphasized that it must evolve into a state of *none of private mind* (無私心), where it is devoid of personal desires that pertain only to oneself, for the true effectiveness of benevolence, the benevolent virtue, to manifest. The concrete manifestation of benevolence basically occurs in the public relationships between oneself and others.[38] According to Yi Ik, public relationships based on their innate benevolent nature refer to a state where one regards the desires and emotions of others as if they were one's own, essentially reflecting the oneness of all things. Yi Ik viewed the public not as a matter of institutions, procedures, or fairness in distribution, but rather as the strongest implication of coexistence among oneself, others, and all beings. If we were to apply a modern term reflecting our contemporary concern for *justice*, Yi Ik might have considered a harmonious coexistence of all individuals as the most just state. He describes a virtuous person (仁者) who best embodies the essence of humanity as one who considers all existence as one with themselves, despite differences in ability

38. 仁者, 無物我之間. 旣克其己, 便是爲仁. 至於無我, 其功全矣. *Seongho saseol* (Collected Works of Seongho), *gwon* 21, "Gyeongsamun" (Category of Classics and History), "Mua" (Emptying the Self).

and wisdom, just as people have differences in appearance.

> Heaven has made people alike, so all people from the Four Oceans are my brothers. Generally, in the hearts of the common people, there are truly similar aspects, and naturally, there are similar reasons for their innate liking and disliking. However, just as faces may differ from one another, there is also a variety of differences in foolishness and wisdom… Furthermore, when they work and live together harmoniously, a virtuous person (仁者) regards all existence as if it were part of their own body.…If the teaching of benevolence disappears among the ruling class, the people will begin to compete and argue.[39]

> In general, the principles of ancestral rituals, from common people to lords and emperors, involve an increasing scale of reciprocation to their ancestral spirits as their status elevates. As they offer more profound tribute to their own ancestors, their benevolence towards the people below them expands. When he conducts rituals for his father, all his paternal brothers can also partake in benevolent actions together. Likewise, when paying tribute to great-grandfathers and ancestors, the same principle applies. When a prince initially pays tribute to his ancestors, even if it is not on a grand scale, over time, as he extends the gratitude to his imperial ancestors (ancestors' ancestors), the influence of benevolence will widen its reach. If a regional lord conducts rituals in their natural surroundings, all the people within that area can engage in benevolent acts together. When an emperor conducts rituals in suburban areas and sacred grounds, people from all walks of life within a country can collectively practice benevolence.[40]

---

39. 賦天均爲人, 四海乃兄弟, 民情固大同, 好惡自根底. 然如面貌別, 愚智異品第. (...) 泛與同優遊, 仁者視一體. (…) 上焉闕仁化, 衆尙競奔勢. *Seongho jeonseo* (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 1, "Si" 詩 (Poetry), "Huijak banjeolgyosi" 戲作反絶交詩 (A Poem Opposing Cutting Off Human Relationships).
40. 凡祭之道, 自庶人祭寢至五廟, 七廟, 位愈高, 則報本愈遠. 報本愈遠, 則施下愈廣也. 祭及於禰, 則其親兄弟, 可以同仁矣. 祭及於曾, 高者, 亦然. 王者祭始祖, 而猶爲未遠, 又及於所出之帝, 則用此推廣, 仁之所及者遠矣. 諸侯祭封內山川, 凡在山川之內者, 可以同仁矣. 天子郊, 社, 則凡天下又可以同仁矣. *Seongho jeonseo* (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 4, *Noneo jilseo* (Quick Comments on the Analects), "Balil" 八佾 (Eight-Line Dance).

Yi Ik firmly asserts that the social extension and realization of the inherent nature of benevolence result in a Confucian community where everyone lives well together. He particularly elucidates this point through the mechanism of rituals. He evaluates Confucian rituals as having a significant societal function of inducing those participating in the rituals to empathize with each other sufficiently and coexist harmoniously. While Confucian ethics focused on virtues that manifest the characteristics and significance of benevolence as a fundamental aspect of human nature, the Confucian rule of rituals can be seen as offering a specific solution to how people can manifest their innate public nature. In the case of the rituals Yi Ik mentions, based on the performance of different scales of rituals, they act as catalysts, driving the participants to voluntarily extend their innate desires and emotions outward, towards others. In Confucian society, rituals played precisely such a catalytic role. Yi Ik's emphasis on rituals rather than laws stemmed from the belief that various rituals effectively served as means to encourage individuals to voluntarily expand their innate nature. For Seongho and his disciples, what was crucial in pursuing social publicness based on benevolence was the spontaneity and expansiveness of emotional expression, and it was believed that rituals played a role in fostering social publicness without forcibly constraining or regulating specific behaviors.

What was important when Yi Ik contemplated the nature of benevolence was that it not merely refer to a metaphysical dimension quite distinct from personal desires or emotions, as previously mentioned. Instead, he developed his reasoning from the ordinary desires and emotions that people typically experience. To Yi Ik, benevolence is a dispositional force that seeks to coexist, sustaining oneself and others together. In a similar way, the human inclination to want to live, eat, and alleviate suffering or harm can also be considered one of the important inherent tendencies of human beings. Yi Ik aimed to transform these individual tendencies, which are typically self-centered (私), toward a path that allowed for coexistence with others (公). Yi Ik expressed this as "to benefit oneself while also benefiting others" (利己而不利人). While he considered self-benefit as the private in a negative sense if it only benefited oneself at the expense of others, he acknowledged it as the public if it benefited oneself while also

benefiting others.[41]

Even as urban commerce and industry were already beginning to develop in Joseon of the late 18th century (during Yi Ik's lifetime), he continued to uphold an agrarian-centered perspective. This was because he believed that the logic of commercialization and currency proliferation benefited some while causing significant harm to others.[42] His criticism of commerce stemmed from his belief that the actions of merchants primarily served their own personal interests without considering the communal concept of simultaneously fulfilling the desires of other people.[43] Furthermore, he warned that if rulers were to disregard the nature of benevolence, ordinary people would eventually engage in disputes and competition to pursue only their own self-interests. When individuals pursue their own interests personally, completely forgetting their innate communal nature—that is, their potential to be public—society becomes entirely self-centered, characterized by a lack of mutual understanding and cooperation.[44]

Yi Ik emphasized the importance of voluntary human efforts in realizing the public. In another passage, he focused on the practical endeavor of individuals to shape their own destinies, emphasizing the concept of *jomyeong* 造命, where people themselves actively shape their life's destiny.

---

41. 利者, 義之和也. 天地間, 元有此理. 利若無人己之別, 則何所往而不可. 聖人者, 以四海爲家, 固欲同仁而極利之. 則愈利愈善, 惟恐其一毫之不利也. 若主一國, 則利吾國, 而未必利他國...主一身, 則利吾身, 而未必利他身. 此利己而不利人, 私也, 非公也, 利所以不可行也. 若利吾身吾家, 而達之天下, 亦無害者, 亦不害爲公利. *Seongho jeonseo* (Complete Works of Seongho), *gwon* 4, *Noneo jilseo* (Quick Comments on the Analects), "Liin" (Virtuous Village).
42. 財非天降, 此益則彼損, 民如何不損? *Seongho saseol* (Collected Works of Seongho), *gwon* 11, "Insamun" (Category of Human Affairs), "Jeonhae" 錢害 (Harm of Money).
43. 彼商賈之類, 不過其人之私, 願於齊民何益? *Seongho saseol* (Collected Works of Seongho), *gwon* 6, "Manmulmun" 萬物門 (Category of Various Things in the World), "Maje" 馬蹄 (Horseshoe).
44. Seongho, like traditional Confucian scholars, emphasized the importance of benevolence. However, he went further to highlight a new perspective: in the context of the development of cities and the prevalence of commerce and industry in 18th-century Joseon, benevolence could serve as a principle for restraining people's excessive competition and selfishness.

He believed that longevity and death were unavoidable mandates from Heaven, but the ability to avoid disasters and bring blessings depended on one's own efforts, creating a destiny (造命) through one's actions.[45] He emphasized that this was not something exclusive to kings, high-ranking officials, or scholars, but something that could be achieved by ordinary people as well. In this short passage, Yi Ik criticized the social customs of the late Joseon period that discriminated between the nobility and the commoners, particularly suppressing the talents inherent in the lower classes and slaves.[46] He saw in both the nobility and the commoners a shared foundational nature, the ability to coexist, which served as the basis for realizing public values. Hence, he believed that there should be no discrimination between the nobility and commoners in the pursuit of public values. Seongho believed that, based on this universal human nature and the Confucian rituals that help individuals realize this nature, all people could participate together in political actions aimed at fostering public values.

## Conclusion

This article analyzed the concepts of the public and the private in the thought of the late Joseon scholar Seongho Yi Ik. Seongho developed his theory of the public and the private in the context of longstanding debates among Joseon Confucian scholars regarding the four sprouts and the seven emotions, reanalyzing various human emotions in light of the framework of this pair of concepts. Yi Ik argued that while not all personal emotions

45. 有天命, 有星命, 有造命. 天命者, 氣數之長短, 淸濁, 厚薄, 是也. 長者壽, 而短者殀; 淸者賢, 而濁者愚; 厚者貴, 而薄者賤也. 星命者, 七曜, 四餘及星斗, 經緯錯綜, 互相乘除, 吉凶生焉, 後世推命之術, 是也. 雖往往有中, 然有大數存焉, 不過一曲之損益, 何足信取乎? 造命者, 時勢所値, 人力參焉, 李長源所謂"君相造命", 是也. 若專言天命, 則善不可賞, 而惡不可罰也. 不獨君相爲然, 士庶亦然, 如勤力事育, 知幾避凶之類, 皆足以移易禍福. 默觀衰末之世, 此路多占分數, 如貴賤一段, 可見. 今東俗, 品別族類, 奴隷下賤, 百世而無榮達, 卿相之家騃頑者, 彙進. 噫, 惜哉! *Seongho saseol* (Collected Works of Seongho), *gwon* 3, "Cheonjimun" 天地門 (Category of Sky and Earth), "Jomyeong" 造命 (Creating a Destiny).

46. For an analysis of the late Joseon dynasty's customs and the presentation of reformist social theories in Yi Ik's works, including *creating a destiny*, see S. Kim (2013, 366).

influenced by *qi* in physical form could be considered public, the public values we aspire to do not entirely exclude or suppress the private. When individuals harmonize their emotions to extend them into relationships with others and assess the appropriateness of these emotions, Yi Ik introduced the principle (理) as the ultimate criterion, as previous Neo-Confucians believed. But, he argued that the principle is not detached from the realm of the private particularity of *qi* in physical form without undermining the importance of the principle. In short, the question was not to exclude or suppress the individual dimension of privateness as it relates to innate desires, but rather to explore how these realms of the private could be harmonized to expand a dimension of the public that extended beyond one's personal realm.

In this regard, Yi Ik sought the possibility of public value on a practical level, grounded not in metaphysical dimensions but in the concrete and dynamic realm of individual entities. He realized through discussions with his disciples that this was one way of expanding and cultivating public value to effectively observe and expand innate desires and emotions, encompassing others with similar desires. His intellectual exploration revolved around the idea of active engagement with others while forming and continually sustaining the self through relationships with numerous individuals. The common theme he pursued was locating the origin of the public in innate human nature (仁), considering this nature to be the ontological basis for the public values achievable within human communities. Seongho understood public values as the result of humans spontaneously practicing and nurturing their innate nature to coexist with others.

Certainly, nowadays people may naturally think of the public in political terms, assuming that it requires the support of various social institutions, organizations, and the exercise of governmental authority. They might criticize the idea that public value can be achieved solely through individual moral dimensions, instead emphasizing the need for coercive institutions and fair procedures to realize it. However, it is important to remember that Confucian scholars had a longstanding tradition of creating legal codes and systems of punishment. These scholars were deeply

concerned that such coercive legal systems could suppress human spontaneity and, consequently, hinder the continuous realization of public value. Confucian scholars believed that coercive legal systems could potentially obstruct the spontaneous expression of human nature and, consequently, impede the harmonious realization of communal values. Thus, they sought to discover and reconstruct the fundamental source of public values in the innate nature of human beings and focused on the autonomy of individuals in achieving these values rather than relying on external systems. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of realizing innate nature through voluntary actions. Scholars of the late Joseon period, including Seongho Yi Ik himself, developed a practical philosophy wherein individuals, based on their aforementioned universal human nature, worked to achieve the public within society through their own efforts. For future studies, I think it essential to consider these intellectual trends of the late Joseon period within the broader context of the intellectual history of East Asian Confucianism. This comparative philosophical perspective will help us better understand the development of Confucian thought in East Asia.

## REFERENCES

### Primary Sources

*Daehak gongui* 大學公議 (Public Implication of the Great Learning).
*Jeongsan japjeo* 貞山雜著 (Miscellaneous Writings of Jeongsan).
*Maengja jilseo* 孟子疾書 (Quick Comments on Mencius).
*Maengja youi* 孟子要義 (Core Meaning of Mencius).
*Noneo jilseo* 論語疾書 (Quick Comments on the Analects).
*Sachil sinpyeon* 四七新編 (New Compilation of the Four-Seven Debate).
*Seongho jeonseo* 星湖全書 (Complete Works of Seongho).
*Seongho saseol* 星湖僿說 (Collected Works of Seongho).
*Seongho seonsaeng jeonjip* 星湖先生全集 (Complete Works of Master Seongho).
*Yan Ping dawen* 延平答問 (Dialogues with Master Yan Ping Li Tong).
*Yeokju sachil sinpyeon* 譯註 四七新編 (Translation and Annotation of the New Compilation of the Four-Seven by Yi Ik). Translated into Korean by Sangyik Lee. Seoul: Daeunsam, 1999.
*Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Classified Conversations of Master Zhu).

### Secondary Sources

Ahn, Young Sang. 1999a. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui sadan chiljeongseol" (Theory of the Four-Seven Debate of Sungho Yi Ik). *Dongyang cheolhak* (Journal of Asian Philosophy in Korea) 11: 41–69.
_____. 1999b. "Seongho hakpa-ui ujuron-gwa dodeok silcheoljeok simseongnon-ui bulli" (A Study on the Distinction between the Principles of Cosmology and the Principles of Moral Practical Mind Cultivation in the Sung-ho School). *Minjok munhwa yeongu* (Korean Cultural Studies) 32: 383–414.
Back, Youngsun. 2023. "Yi Ik on Compassion and Grief." *Religions* 14.2: 1–15.
_____, and Philip J. Ivanhoe. 2017. *Traditional Korean Philosophy: Problems and Debates*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
Baek, Minjung. 2012. "Yugyo jisigin-ui gong gwannyeom-gwa gonggong uisik: Yi Ik Jeong Yagyong, Shim Daeyun-ui gyeongu-reul jungsim-euro" (Confucian Intellectuals' Notions of the Public and Public Consciousness: Focusing on the Cases of Yi I k, Chong Yag-yong, and Shim Dae-yun). *Dongbang hakji* (Journal of Korean Studies) 160: 1–45.
Choi, Jeong Yeon. 2016. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui simseol-ui hyeongseong-e gwanhan

nonui: Sunjaseol-gwa samhonseo-reul jungsim-euro" (Discussion on the Formation of Seongho Yi Ik's Mind-heart Theory: Based on Xunzi's Theory and the Three Divisions of Soul Theory). *Hanguk sasang sahak* (Study of Korean History of Thought) 54: 185–214.

_____. 2022. "Habin sinhudam-ui jadeuk-gwa seongho seongniseol-ui bipanjeok gyeseung: Sadanchiljeongnon-gwa inmulseongnon-eul jungsim-euro" (Habin Sinhudam's Self-Acquirement and Critical Succession to the Theory of Nature and Principle of Seongho: Focusing on the Theory of Four-Seven and Theory of Nature of Men and All Things Non-Human). *Hanguk silhak yeongu* (Korean Silhak Review) 43: 305–347.

Choi, Seok Ki. 2003. "17–18-segi-ui haksul donghyang-gwa Seongho Yi Ik-ui gyeonghak" (An Academic Trend in the 17th-18th Centuries and Seong-ho Yi Ik's Study of Confucianism). *Nammyeonghak yeongu* (Journal of Nammyeong Studies) 16: 103–161.

Choo, Je-hyeop. 2015. "Yi Ik-ui sadan chiljeongnon-gwa Seongho hakpa-ui sasangjeok bungi" (Yi Ik's Four-Seven Theory and the Sungho School's Philosophical Branch). *Hangukhak nonjip* (Keimyung Korean Studies Journal) 61: 305–341.

Chung, Edward Y. J. 1995. *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi T'oegye and Yi Yulgok: A Reappraisal of the 'Four-Seven Thesis' and Its Practical Implications for Self-Cultivation.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Chung, Soyi. 2013. "Toegye Yi Hwang, Seongho Yi Ik, Dasan Jeong Yak-yong simseongnon-ui yeonsokseong-gwa chai-e daehan yeongu" (Toegye Yi Hwang, Seongho Yi Ik, and Dasan Jeong Yak-yong's Theories of Human Mind and Nature: Continuity and Transformation). *Ingan, hwangyeong, mirae* (Humanity, Environment, and Future) 10: 37–70.

_____. 2014. "Habin Sin Hudam-ui sadan chiljeongnon: Jeongsan Yi Byeonghyu-wa Dasan Jeong Yagyong-ege kkichin yeonghyang-eul jungsim-euro" (Four-Seven Theory of Shin Hu-dam: Its Influence on Yi Byeong-hyu and Jeong Yag-yong). *Yugyo sasang munhwa yeongu* (Study of Confucian Thought and Culture) 58: 473–504.

Ha, Na. 2021. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui sadan chiljeongnon-e natannan gonggongseong-ui cheolhakjeok gicho" (Philosophical Foundation of Publicity Based on Seongho Yi Ik's Theory of the Four-Seven: Achieving Justice through Empathy). *Cheolhak* (Korean Journal of Philosophy) 149: 31–55.

Hong, Seongmin. 2017. "Yi Ik-gwa Sin Hudam-ui sachillon-eseo jungjeol-ui uimi" (The Appropriateness in Yi Yik and Shin Hudam's Theories of Moral Emotion). *Cheolhak yeongu* (Philosophia) 141: 313–342.

Ivanhoe, Philip J. 2015. "The Historical Significance and Contemporary Relevance of the Four-Seven Debate." *Philosophy East & West* 65.2: 401–429.

_____. 2016. *Three Streams: Confucian Reflections on Learning and the Moral Heart-Mind in China, Korea, and Japan.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Jang, Eunjoo. 2021. *Gongjeong-ui baesin: Neungnyeokjuui-e gachin hanguk-ui gongjeong* (Betrayal of Justice: Korea's Justice Trapped in Meritocracy). Seoul: Pieona.

Kang, Byungsoo. 2011. "Habin Sin Hudam-ui sachillon jeongae: Huinoi balseol-ui hyeongseong baegyeong-gwa geu yeonghyang" (Development in Habin Shin Hu-dam`s Four-Seven Debate [四七論]: Formation Background and Its influence in Gonghuinoi balseol). *Hanguk silhak yeongu* (Korean Silhak Review) 22: 201–235.

Keum, Jangtae. 2003. *Joseon hugi yugyo-wa seohak: Gyoryu-wa galdeung* (Confucianism and Western Learning in the Late Joseon Era: Exchange and Conflict). Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

_____. 2012. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui Toegyehak insik-gwa gyeseung" (How Did Seong Ho Understand, and Succeed to the Toegye Learning?). *Gukhak yeongu* (Korean Studies) 21: 33–59.

Kim, Daejoong. 2009. "'Jageun jonjae'-e daehan Seongho Yi Ik-ui 'gamseongjeok insik'" (Songho Yi Ik's Emotional Cognition of Small Things). *Daedong munhwa yeongu* (Daedong Journal of Korean Studies) 65: 233–274.

Kim, Hyoungchan. 2015. "The Li-Ki [*li-qi*] Structure of the Four Beginnings and the Seven Emotions and the Intention of the Four-Seven Debate: A Critical Reflection on the Methods of Explaining the Theories of the Four Beginnings and the Seven Emotions in Korean Neo-Confucianism." *Acta Koreana* 18.2: 561–581.

Kim, Jongseok. 2002. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui seongniseol-e isseoseo gong gaenyeom-ui uimi-wa gineung" (On the Meanings and Functions of Public Spirit in the Philosophy of Seongho Yi Ik). *Gukhak yeongu* (Korean Studies) 1: 1–24.

_____. 2017. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui cheolhak sasang-e isseoseo silcheonseong-ui uimi" (Meaning of Practicality in Philosophical Thought of the Seongho Yi Ik). *Gukhak yeongu* (Korean Studies) 33: 129–164.

Kim, Oaksook C., et al. 1994. *The Four-Seven Debate: An Annotated Translation of the Most Famous Controversy in Korean Neo-Confucian Thought.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Kim, Seonhee. 2013. "Inyeom-ui gong-eseo silhaeng-ui saro: Gongsa gwangyeom-eseo bon Seongho Yi Ik-ui sahoe gaehyeongnon" (From Ideology of the Public [公] to Practice of the Private [私]: Seongho Yi Ik's View on Social Reform).

*Hanguk sasang sahak* (Study of Korean History of Thoughts) 45: 339–371.

_____. 2022. "Seonghohak-eseo sachillon-ui han bungi: Sin Hudam-eseo Yi Byeonghyu-kkaji" (A Theoretical Divergence of Songho's Four-Seven Theory: From Shin Hu-dam to Yi Byeong-hyu). *Dongyang cheolhak yeongu* (Journal of Eastern Philosophy) 109: 73–108.

_____. 2023. "Seongho Yi Ik's New Approach to Zhijue (知覺) and Weifa (未發): Stimulation by Western Learning and the Expansion of Confucianism." *Religions* 14.2: 1–18.

Kwon, Hyangsook. 2005. "Gongsa gaenyeom-eul tonghae bon Yi Ik-ui cheolhak" (Yi Ik's Philosophy through the Concept of Public and Private). PhD diss, Seoul National University.

Lee, Sangyik. 1999. "Seongho Yiik-ui sadan chiljeongron" (The Four-Seven Debate of Sungho Yi Ik: Focousing on the *Sachil Shinpyeo*). *Hanguk sasang-gwa munhwa* (Korean thought and Culture) 4: 239–266.

_____. 2020. "Habin Sin Hudam-ui iseong igiron-gwa geu bipan" (Two-Nature Two-Ki [氣] Theory' of Habin [河濱] and Its Criticism). *Toegyehak nonchong* (Toegye Studies) 36: 109–138.

Lee, Seunghwan. 2002. "Hanguk mit dongyang-ui gongsagwan-gwa geundaejeok byeonyong" (Conception of Public/Private in East Asia and Its Modern Variations). *Jeongchi sasang yeongu* (Korean Review of Political Thought) 6: 45–65.

_____. 2005. "Dongyang-eseo gongjeok habriseong-ui teukseong-gwa geundaejeok byeonyong" ('Public Reason' in Neo-Confucian Tradition and Its Modern Variation). *Cheolhak yeongu* (Philosophia) 29: 3–45.

Lim, Boo Yeon. 2014. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui simhak: Simgyeongbujujilseo-reul jungsimeuro" (Seongho Yi Ik's Learning of the Mind-and-Heart). *Hanguk munhwa* (Korean Culture) 65: 273–308.

Moon, Sukyoon. 2003. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui simseol-e gwanhayeo" (Theory of Mind in Seongho Yi Ik). *Cheolhak yeongu* (Philosophia) 86: 5–31.

Na, Jongseok. 2023. *Daedong minjujuui-wa 21-segi yugajeok bipan iron-ui mosaek* (Daedong Democracy in Confucianism, and Practical Learning in the 21st Century). Seoul: Yemoon seowon.

Park, Ji-hyun. 2015. "Habin Sin Hudam-ui sadan chiljeongnon-gwa gongni-eseo balhaneun chiljeong" (Habin [河濱] Shin Hudam [愼後聃]'s Theory of Four-seven [四端七情論] and the Seven Public Feelings [公七情]). *Gukhak yeongu* (Korean Studies) 26: 153–186.

Park, Kwonil. 2021. *Hanguk-ui neungnyeokjuui* (Korean Meritocracy). Seoul: Idea.

Park, Sojeong. 2023. "The Dynamic Characteristics of '*Jeong* 情': A New Perspective

on the Korean Neo-Confucian Four–Seven Debate." *Religions* 14.5: 1–13.

Ro, Youngchan. 1989. *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi Yulgok*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

_____. 2017. "Yi Yulgok and His Contributions to Korean Confucianism: A Non-dualistic Approach." In *Traditional Korean Philosophy: Problems and Debates*, edited by Youngsun Back and Philip J. Ivanhoe, 69–83. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Seo, Geunsik. 2018. "Seongho Yi Ik-ui sachil sinpyeon-e natannan sadan chiljeong-non yeongu" (A Study on the Sadan chiljeong non [四端七情論] in *the Sachil sinpyeon* of Seongho Yi Ik). *Yulgokhak yeongu* (Journal of Yulgok Studies) 37: 235–264.

Won, Jaerin. 2003. *Joseon hugi seongho hakpa-ui hakpung yeongu* (Studies on the Academic Accomplishment of the Seongho School in the Late Joseon Dynasty). Seoul: Hyeahn.

Received: 2023.10.22. Revised: 2024.03.20. Accepted: 2024.04.03.