

## **CONFUCIANISM AND RITUALS FOR WOMEN IN CHOSŎN KOREA**

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**Abstract.** This essay offers an analysis of the writing and practices of Song Siyŏl as a way to explore the philosophical concepts and philosophizing process of Confucian ritual in relation to women. As a symbolic and influential figure in Korean philosophy and politics, his views contributed to shaping the orthodox interpretation of the theory and practice of Neo-Confucian ritual regarding women. By demonstrating and analyzing what kinds of issues were discussed in terms of women in four family rituals, I delineate the ways in which Song Siyŏl positioned women in his ritualist metaphysics and examine his philosophizing process.

### **I. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>**

This essay participates in the ongoing conversation about Confucianism and women by focusing on the deconstruction of Confucianism and its male-centeredness with a special focus on ritual (禮). I explore the writings of and debates around Song Siyŏl 宋時烈 (1607–1689), a symbolic and influential figure in Korean philosophy and politics in the late period of Chosŏn 朝鮮 (1392–1910). His views contributed, directly and indirectly, to shaping the orthodox interpretation of the theory and practice of Neo-Confucian ritual regarding women. I critically examine, analyze, and demonstrate how Confucian philosophy positioned women in its ritualist metaphysics by re-reading and analyzing Song Siyŏl's arguments and views on four types of family rituals: sacrifice (or ancestral offerings), mourning, marriage, and coming-of-age, with a primary emphasis on women and the use of philosophical language and concepts.

Song Siyŏl, a seventeenth century Korean neo-Confucian, showed a fervent religious zeal to promote the practice of rituals as a way to address widespread corruption and restore morality throughout society after Korea had suffered the trauma of debilitating wars with the Japanese and Manchus. With the fall of the Ming dynasty, his sense of mission to correct people's minds and lead them toward the Way grew even more intense. As a follower of the sages, Song Siyŏl revived family rituals, which the tradition regarded as the foundation for human morality. Korean Neo-Confucian discussions of the four family rituals, as the core and beginning of the Confucian ritualist worldview, exemplify the ways in which religious traditions position one within their metaphysics and philosophizing process.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based upon parts of my Ph.D. dissertation, "Confucianism and Rituals for Women in Chosŏn Korea: A Philosophical Interpretation of Confucian Rites" (Binghamton Univ., 2018). A later, substantially revised, version was presented at the *International Conference on Confucianism, Rituals, and Modern Life*, Sungkyun Institute of Confucian Studies and East Asian Philosophy (SICEP), Sungkyunkwan Univ., Seoul, Korea, November 8–9, 2019. I have benefitted from comments and suggestions received at that conference and from anonymous reviewers for the *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. Special thanks to Philip J. Ivanhoe for reading through several drafts of this paper.

## II. SONG SIYÖL ON FAMILY RITUALS<sup>2</sup>

Song Siyöl, style name *Uam* 尤庵, also known as Master Song (宋子), was a faithful follower of Cheng-Zhu 程朱 Neo-Confucianism and arguably the most influential figure in philosophy and politics of Chosŏn Korea. The transmission of the Way as he redefined it, began from Confucius 孔子 (551–479 BCE) and was handed down through Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), Yi I 李珥 (1536–1584), style name *Yulgok* 栗谷, and Kim Changsaeng 金長生 (1548–1631), style name *Sagye* 沙溪.<sup>3</sup> Later Confucians established him as a legitimate successor to the Way.<sup>4</sup> His significance in Chosŏn society is attested by the publication of his writings under the title, the *Complete Literary Works of Master Song* (*Songja taejŏn* 宋子大全; ST hereafter), by royal order of King Chŏngjo 正祖 (r.1776–1800) in 1787. Song Siyöl is known as a synthesizer and implementor of ritual. While the seventeenth century is known as “The Period of Ritual Learning” (*yehak sidae* 禮學時代), Korean women regard it as a dark age in the history of women. Feminist scholars, in particular, have focused on the negative changes in women’s roles and privileges and the roles of Confucian family rituals and agnatic principles as these became prevalent beginning in the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Song Siyöl left a considerable amount of writings on women, including writings to his daughter-in-law and didactic writings addressed to his eldest daughter, *Admonishments for My Daughter* (*Kyenyösŏ* 戒女書). He also wrote numerous tomb inscriptions, condolences, and sacrificial writings for women. His comments on altered rites (*byŏnye* 變禮) attained authoritative status and were accepted as standard by later Chosŏn Neo-Confucians. The *Extended Interpretations to the Family Rituals* (*Karye chünghae* 家禮增解), for example, compiled by Yi Ŭicho 李宜朝 (1727–1805) and known as the Westerners’ ritual text, contains numerous comments by Song Siyöl about altered rites that were not discussed in previous ritual texts. Song Siyöl’s comments were treated as *de facto* unchanging rites, not just altered rites. It should be noted that in his academic lineage are several prominent women philosophers, such as Im Yunjidang 任允摯堂 (1721–1793) and Kim Hoyŏnjae 金浩然齋 (1681–1722), who embraced and further re-appropriated the orthodox Neo-Confucian philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

Confucian family rituals, as well as rituals concerning coming-of-age, weddings, funerals and ancestral worship, describe the lifecycle of human beings in terms of ritual. By performing the carefully choreographed behaviors and actions of rituals, people were expected to “not only absorb the Confucian values expressed in the ceremonies but also gain a greater consciousness of sharing in a common Chinese culture [civility].”<sup>7</sup> Ritual manuals like *Master Zhu’s Family Rituals* (*Zhuji jiali* 朱子家禮; *Family Rituals* hereafter) were newly formulated in order to promote family ethics, which they considered to be universal regardless of one’s positions in a society. Song Siyöl regarded the *Family Rituals* as the only book that includes not only the complete set of the four family rituals but also the principles and usages of rituals. He found the book so important that he declared it comprehends both the substance and function (*cheyong* 體用) as well as unifies roots and branches (*ponmal* 本末) of the Confucian Way.<sup>8</sup>

2 In Zhu Xi’s *Jiali* [Family Rituals], the order of the four family rituals is: coming-of-age (capping), marriage, mourning, and sacrifice in accordance with life cycle. In this paper, however, I examine the four family rituals in reverse order.

3 Song Siyöl, *Songja taejŏn* (ST hereafter) 151.39b–40a. For his detailed effort to redefine the lineage of transmission, see Lee Yeon-suk, “Uam hakp’a yŏn’gu” 尤庵學派 研究 [The study on Uam School] (Chungnam National Univ., 2002), 13–21.

4 Sukjong sillok 21.23.

5 Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1992), 439.

6 Kim Kyŏngmi. 2009. “Seoul chiyŏk noron kamun ūi yŏsŏng kyoyuk kwa munhwa”, *Che ishipp’al ch’a Han’guk kojŏn yŏsŏng munhakŏe haksul taehoe* [28th Conference of the Society of Korean Classical Woman Literature], 1–11.

7 Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “Education Through Ritual”, in *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Univ. of California Press, 1989), 278–79.

8 ST 139.20a–b; 139.20a–b; 139.20b–21a; and 139.20a–b. For more elaborate philosophical explanation of substance and function, see Zhang Dainian, “Substance and Function *Ti-yong* 體用”, in *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Edmund Ryden (Yale Univ. Press, 2003), 240–57.

### II.1 Sacrificial Ritual: Inclusion & Exclusion for Unity

In the cosmos described by Confucian ritual canons, such as the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies* (K. *Ūrye* ; C. *Yili* 儀禮) and the *Book of Rites* (K. *Yegi*; C. 禮記), ancestors are connected with descendants through sacrificial ritual.<sup>9</sup> The dead depend on their descendants for food and the living can benefit from the blessings of their ancestors.<sup>10</sup> The dead can be capricious or antagonistic, but, through sacrificial rites, in which sacrificial victims, ritual, and music are properly arranged and flourishing, there would be no harm from the ghosts and spirits and no resentment from the hundred families of the living.<sup>11</sup> Confucian sages transform the “spirit worlds into a hierarchical pantheon of ordered genealogical descent interested in its living descendants’ welfare.”<sup>12</sup> The dead become ancestors by the ritual performance of the living.

Officiators preside over these rituals; they have the power to transform the dead into ancestors; they locate themselves at the center of the cosmos, substantialize the cosmic order, and have access to sagehood. The line of officiators, however, is handed down only through a patriline. Therefore, the status of a woman as an ancestress depends on her link to the officiator, the eldest main-line lineage heir, which was created by her relationship with her husband. An analysis of Song Siyöl’s writings on sacrificial ritual confirms the power of an officiator in this important Confucian rite.<sup>13</sup> Song Siyöl discussed women’s roles as officiators in three respects: as a daughter, daughter’s son, and daughter-in-law. The first two are related to her position in her natal family, while the last is related to her husband’s family.

For Song, a daughter’s officiation of a sacrifice for her parents was acceptable, and even a married daughter could officiate. Nevertheless, the daughter’s officiation must be signified as an “altered rite,” using a tablet made with paper instead of wood.<sup>14</sup> Officiation of a daughter’s son (*oe’son pongsa* 外孫奉祀), however, was strictly forbidden. Song Siyöl claimed it inappropriate, citing the authority of Zhu Xi, “Zhu Xi opposed the idea that the son of a daughter can offer sacrificial rites [for his mother’s descent-group] because he does not belong to the descent-group.”<sup>15</sup> This opposition was based on the understanding that an agnatic consciousness is the core of sacrificial ritual. The descent-group and sacrificial rituals succeeded only through a patriline. A man’s grandchildren through a daughter do not belong to his descent group; therefore, they cannot officiate sacrificial rituals for maternal ancestors. If adoption is unavoidable, the adoptee should be a male from the descent-group.

Women’s roles as officiators are most acknowledged in the case of daughters-in-law. Song Siyöl knew the importance of a wife’s role in ancestral rites and devoted one work to specific instructions regarding sacrificial ritual. A daughter-in-law’s sincerity would, Song claims, impact her fortune and virtue as well as that of her husband (and his family).<sup>16</sup> A man and husband may be the ritual subject, but a woman and wife are the *de facto* subject in offerings.<sup>17</sup> Her ritual status and role disappear if her husband dies without a male heir. In Korea, however, an eldest daughter-in-law (*chongbu* 冢婦) enjoyed greater ritual and economic prerogatives. Unlike her Chinese counterpart who lost her ritual status and role, a Korean

9 In this study, I will use the term, “sacrificial ritual” (*cherye* 祭禮) primarily, but also other interchangeable terms, when necessary to emphasize different meanings.

10 Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China: A Social History of Writing About Rites* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), 22.

11 *Book of Rites*, “P’yogi 表記” in SSJZS v.15, p.1745; The English translation is adapted from Michael Puett, “The Offering of Food and the Creation of Order: The Practice of Sacrifice in Early China”, in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, ed. Roel Sterckx (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 82.

12 Michael Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Harvard Univ. Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2002), 198.

13 For the changes in women’s rights to officiate and to be officiated from mid Chosŏn and onward, Kim, Yun-jung. 2009. “Chosŏn chunggi kamyŏje wa yŏsŏng cherye ūi pyŏnhwa” 조선중기 가묘제와 여성제례의 변화 [The system of domestic shrines and the transformation of women’s ritual for ancestor worship in the middle Chosun]”, *Kukhak yŏngu* 14: 453–88.

14 ST 57.55a.

15 ST 122.272a-b.

16 Song Siyöl, *Uam Sŏnsaeng Kyenyŏsŏ* [Admonishments for my daughter by Master Uam] (Chŏngŭmsa, 1986), 22.

17 Kim Miyŏng, “Chosang hesa ūi silchil chŏk chuchŏ: Chesa wa yŏsŏng [The actual subject of ancestral rites: Offerings and women]”, in *Chesa wa cherye munhwa* 제사와 제례 문화, edited by Han’guk Kukhak Chinhungwon, (Han’guk Kukhak Chinhungwon, 2005), 167–91.

eldest daughter-in-law kept her right to designate an heir and take possession of property, such as land and slaves, which were set aside in order to sustain the ancestral services. Most importantly, her ritual status and right to preside remained. As patrilineal consciousness developed, however, the ritual status of the eldest daughter-in-law weakened, especially beginning in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Song Siyöl seemed to support ritual officiation by the eldest daughter-in-law; as long as the temporary nature of her officiation was secured, her serving in this capacity would not damage the legitimacy too seriously. Nevertheless, he was still reluctant because another principle of ritual propriety stood out clearly to him: ritual classics do not mention woman's officiation. His disciples in the late period of Chosön, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, continued his view and searched for evidence in the Confucian classics while further developing it.<sup>19</sup>

In Confucian sacrificial rituals, a woman as the object of sacrificial rituals depends on her link to the eldest main-line lineage heir, which was created by her relationship with her husband. If she was a primary wife married through the appropriate ritual, she can share “one [spirit tablet] case...[when] husband and wife enter an offering hall together.”<sup>20</sup> A woman who was called mother (*mo* 母) and wife (*chō* 妻) while alive will be called ‘the corresponding one (*pi* 妣)’ and ‘the honored one (*pin* 嬪)’; these posthumous names and titles of kinship symbolize her new roles<sup>21</sup> in her husband's family. A place for one's spirit tablet in a family shrine and receiving a sacrificial rite symbolize one's spiritual and ontological place.

Song Siyöl's discussion of the appropriate table size to be used in an ancestral rite shows an interesting symbolic dimension of a woman's significance to her husband. In his reply to one of his disciples, Song Siyöl emphasizes the principle of displaying all spirit tablets, even when there is more than one wife and the offering hall cannot accommodate a larger table. He solved the difficulty by making each tablet smaller.<sup>22</sup> Once a woman has become the wife of a father, a son should treat his stepmother as his own mother. The “becoming” means “through rituals.” Once a relationship has been ritualized, the relationship cannot be undone easily. Having a son is a secondary matter for her ontological status because she can have a son or male ritual heir who would offer her sacrificial rites and remember her based on the righteous principle (*üiri* 義理) of their ritual relationship, not on a consanguineous connection.

Other writings of Song Siyöl discuss women from the viewpoint of a man, not as a son, but as a father and husband. These writings concern his female family members who were already married off to other families and who became a part of his family through marriage. One question raised in these texts was: What if the descendent of his late aunt was not able to come back to participate in the ritual on time? While waiting for the descendent to arrive, can her spirit tablet be placed at her deceased father's family shrine? Song Siyöl accepted it “temporarily” in an “annex,” but “By all means, [her spirit tablet] cannot be placed in the offering hall with ancestors.”<sup>23</sup> A female family member, once she is married to another family, does not occupy a place in the offering hall. The annex can accommodate her spirit tablet as this, her natal family, was a temporary lodging before returning to her real home, her husband's. Her connection to her biological father and ancestors is temporary and secondary to that to her husband's and her son's.

Examining Song Siyöl's writings about women in relation to sacrificial writings reveals the ways in which women are included and embraced, but also excluded and negated in important family rites. This inclusion and exclusion of women in the system of sacrificial ritual illustrates the ways in which women's subjectivity becomes both augmented and restricted by the ritual practices of the Confucian tradition.

18 For the changes in the roles and prestige of the wife of the descent-group heir in early and mid Chosön, see Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, 155–61.

19 For the details, see Kim Yun-jung, “18-segi yehak yōngu: nangnon üi yehak üi chungshimüro” [A Study on the ritual theory in the 18th century: Focused on discourses of the Nak school] (Hanyang Univ., 2011), 111–12.

20 Zhu Xi, *Jiali* 4.24a; The English translation from Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals*, 113. Probably Zhu Xi indicated “府君夫人只為一匣” from Sima Guang, *Simashi shuyi* 司馬氏書儀 [Mr. Sima's writing about ceremonies] 7.9a.

21 Bret Hinsch, *Women in Early Imperial China* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 151n96.

22 ST 117.38b.

23 ST 107.35b.

A Confucian self establishes ontological meaning by officiating at sacrificial rites. Officiation is an act of centering oneself within a continuing line of selves and integrates individuals into a single family, and a family-like society and world. The line thus established is singular, unilineal, and hierarchical. It follows a patriline, giving the power of sacrificer and center to men. Ritual power resides in the role of the son as a sacrificer. One must be a son to have access to the possibility of the filial action to officiate as the presider (*chuin* 主人) in a sacrifice.<sup>24</sup>

The male-centered unitary family, lineage, and society on which Neo-Confucians placed ritual primacy led them to reconsider the relationship of a wife to her husband's family, "The wife should fully become part of her husband's family."<sup>25</sup> Neo-Confucians included the wife in her husband's family by eclipsing a matriline. Song Siyöl allowed female participation in a carefully designed way but excluded women from key roles or confined women to less significant roles. By allowing women's participation, rituals gain an air of universality and completeness, but the exclusion-enacted gender hierarchy through symbolic ritual performance reproduced male superiority.<sup>26</sup> Universalism is not egalitarianism. The universalist tendency of Neo-Confucian ritualism requires and consolidates a strict hierarchical distinction.<sup>27</sup>

### II.2 Mourning Ritual: Re-/arrangement of Unity

Mourning rituals are important both to send off people who are close to one and as expressions of one's mind to commemorate the deceased. It is the last act of Confucian ritual life. Mourning is also important because the ritual symbolizes a moment of transition between generations. Through this moment, those who are still alive confirm their range of intimacy and re-arrange their positions in a family. Mourning rites, therefore, reveal not only Confucian views on life and death, but also on social philosophy.

Song Siyöl was involved in several scholarly debates on mourning for mothers and wives in a three-generation family, grandfather-father-son. The first such debate raised the question of how to mourn 'for a mother when a father is surviving' (*pujae wimo* 父在為母).<sup>28</sup> The issue was not new for Confucians. Three-years of mourning, regardless of a parent's gender, was emphasized as the ritually proper way of reciprocating "the love and care given earlier by their own parents"<sup>29</sup> in *Analects* 17.21.<sup>30</sup> However, Confucian ritual texts stipulated different mourning practices for mothers and fathers. A child owes three-year mourning for both parents, but for the father a child wears "untrimmed," and for the mother "trimmed" mourning attire. The matter of trimming symbolizes the degree of grief. The idea is that if one's grief is greater, one cannot think to trim the cut cloth. Even mourning one's mother for three years in trimmed attire, however, applies only when one's father is already deceased. "When one's father is still alive," the ritual classics teach people to reduce the mourning period from three to one year.<sup>31</sup> The reasoning behind this ritual was "[In a family] no two [are equally] honorable (無二尊)."<sup>32</sup>

24 Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/performance in Eighteenth-Century China* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997), 213.

25 Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Harvard Univ. Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard Univ. Press, 2008), 244.

26 Hinsch, *Women in Early Imperial China*, 147.

27 Sangjun Kim, "Inventing Moralpolitik: A Sociological Interpretation of Confucian Ideology, Ritual, and Politics" (Columbia Univ., 2000), 168–69.

28 *Book of Rites*, "Sangbok saje 喪服四制". Several Korean women scholars have explored and analyzed this issue from the perspective of women. For more detailed discussion, see, for example, Lee Hai-soon, "18-segi 'puchaewimo' tamnon kwa mosöng insik" [Discourse on funeral rites in cases when a mother has passed away earlier than a father and the recognition of motherhood in 18th century Chosun], *Taedong munhwa yön'gu* 59 (2007): 269–300.

29 Daniel A. Bell, "Confucian Constrains on Property Rights", *Confucianism for the Modern World*, eds., Daniel Bell and Chaibong Hahm (Cambridge Univ. Press), 229n33.

30 Bret Hinsch reads this passage [*Analects* 17.21] as "Confucius's gender egalitarianism." Hinsch argues that in this passage Confucius advocated for the same period of mourning for father and mothers, unlike other ritual specialists, argued for more respect for the father. Hinsch, *Women in Early Imperial China*, 150.

31 *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies*, "Sasangnye 士喪禮". The English version, see Steele, *The I-Li, or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* (Probsthain & Co, 1917) v.2, pp.9–16.

32 *Book of Rites*, "Sangbok saje" and "Yeun 禮運"; Angela Zito, "Grand Sacrifice as Text-Performance: Writing and Ritual in Eighteenth-Century China" (Univ. of Chicago, 1989), 195.

During the Tang dynasty, Empress Wu proposed to change the mourning period for a mother back to three years, regardless of whether the father was surviving or not.<sup>33</sup> Song Neo-Confucians were critical of the custom and made it very clear that it was a wrong. Zhu Xi maintained the three-year mourning period for the mother in his *Family Rituals*, but he did not mention what to do when the mother dies while the father was surviving, therefore leaving the matter ambiguous.

From the early Chosŏn, Confucian scholar-officials recognized the discrepancy between the ancient ritual classics and the *Family Rituals*.<sup>34</sup> The *National Code* (*Kyŏngguk taejŏn* 經國大典) stipulated a one-year mourning period for a mother if a father was still surviving, by adding “mourning in one’s heart” (*simsang* 心喪).<sup>35</sup> Still, many Confucians remained uncomfortable about not being able to “express” their grief for their mother with the full three years. T’oegye allowed offering food at morning and evening, considering the offerings as a form of “mourning in one’s heart,”<sup>36</sup> and the Yŏngnam School followed his teaching. The Kiho School, which Song Siyŏl belonged to, held a stricter orthodox attitude and did not allow offering either meal. When his disciple considered offering food acceptable because the textual teaching of Zhu Xi and Kim Changsaeng allowed it, Song replied “If one sets forth a meal in the morning and evening, this [action] does not show the meaning of [a mother’s] bending (*kul* 屈) for a father. This is different from Master Ju’s thought.”<sup>37</sup> In the end, Song Siyŏl denies equal three-year mourning periods for both parents and setting forth a meal until completing a three-year mourning period for a mother. Still, he allows one-year of mourning for a mother when a father performs the substance of three-year mourning, arguing that the one year of mourning while carrying a staff—to support one in one’s grief—for a mother when a father is still alive expresses the substance of the three years of mourning.<sup>38</sup>

Another issue discussed in this connection concerns whether a mother’s death meant that the father has lost his wife. Both the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies* and the *Book of Rites* establish one-year mourning with a staff, the same degree with a mother when reduced because of a surviving father. But if the father’s father is alive, the father should reduce his mourning degree for his wife to one year without a staff<sup>39</sup> because the grandfather is a presider.<sup>40</sup> If a son mourns his mother for one year without a staff, the ritual is two degrees reduced from the standard. The mourning does not meet the standard of three-year mourning, thereby violating his filial duty. Song Siyŏl solved the problem for the grandson by following the more recent sage’s prescription, Zhu Xi’s *Family Rituals*.

A man who is the eldest son of a lineage, who has lost his mother, mourned her for one year with a staff, one degree reduced, because his father was alive. Then, if his wife also died, he mourned his wife for a year with a staff. As a result, his mother and wife were mourned at the same degree, although the mother was the more honorable compared to his wife. Song Siyŏl decided on a full three-year mourning for a grandson. In this grandfather-father-son relationship, if the father mourns his wife for one year without a staff, the son cannot officiate a *tan* sacrifice, and, therefore, cannot complete the ‘substance of a three-year mourning.’ By basing the mourning ritual for a mother and a wife on the premise of ‘the substance

33 Norman Kutcher, *Mourning in Late Imperial China: Filial Piety and the State* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 36–37.

34 Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, 112–13.

35 *Kyŏngguk taejŏn*, “Ye chŏn 禮典”. For the details of the discussion between Chosŏn neo-Confucians over this matter, see Lee Soon-Koo, “Chosŏn chŏgi chongpŏp ūi suing kwa yŏsŏng chiwi ūi pyŏnhwa” [The Propagation of the Chong-pŏp and the Changes in the Status of Women during the Early Chosŏn Dynasty] (Academy of Korean Studies, 1994).

36 *T’oegye chip* 30.5b–6a.

37 ST 117.25b–26b.

38 For the three-year’s mourning, when a year has passed, the first sacrificial rites for good fortune (*sosang* 小祥) are conducted. After this sacrifice, one changes into the refined garments that are called (*yŏn* 練). On the second anniversary of the death, the ‘second sacrifice for good fortune’ (*taesang* 大祥) is performed. After this sacrifice, one changes into the post mourning garments that are called (*tan* 禫). The *Book of Rites*, “Chapgi ha 雜記下” chapter, says that, “For the one year of mourning, in the eleventh month one officiates the *yŏn* sacrifice, in the thirteenth month officiates the *sang* sacrifice, and in the fifteenth month officiates the *sang*.” Song Siyŏl argues that by adopting the practices associated with *yŏn*, *sang*, and *tan* from the three-year mourning, the one year of mourning with a staff expresses the substance of the three years of mourning.

39 A staff is to lean on, therefore used by the weak, such as the old, or those who are closest to the deceased, and, therefore, their bodies cannot endure the greater grief.

40 *Commentaries on the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies* (*Yili zhushu* 儀禮註疏); in SSJZS vol.11, 658–59.

of a three-year mourning,' the Kiho school and Song Siyöl could establish a presiding role for the father in practicing rites and allow three-year mourning, a full expression of filial piety, to a son.<sup>41</sup>

Song Siyöl's solution, however, violates the principle of "no two are equally honorable" from the women's perspective. In the succession of the descent-line, a father figure mourns his mother and wife at the same level. This apparent inconsistency did not attract interest from Song Siyöl or later philosophers. In fact, the ritual hierarchy between father and mother was well-established. When Zengzi 曾子 asked about the situation in which funerals for both mother and father take place, Confucius implies a relative priority between father and mother, with mother being less important.<sup>42</sup> Mother and father were served differently. The differentiation in ritual performance was implemented for both paternal and maternal families. The differentiated ritual performance reflects the choice of righteous principle (üiri 義理) over emotions (chöng 情).<sup>43</sup>

In his own practice of mourning rites, Song Siyöl sometimes showed a great degree of flexibility and emotional expression that exceeded ritual propriety. He served his older sister who lost her husband, leaving no child, at his home like his mother, and performed a funeral for her. For his daughter's daughters, he became a presiding man at their funerals and even made a spirit tablet for them. His flexibility and violation of rules as written in *Zhu Xi's Family Rituals* and other ritual classics were possible because women were excluded from the succession of descent-line that symbolized ritual unity. His two granddaughters, daughter's daughters, died before getting married. Their unmarried status allowed Song Siyöl to be more flexibility because they still did not go back to their place. When his sister, who lived with Song Siyöl for a long time after her husband's death, passed away, Song Siyöl made sure to return her coffin to her husband's family, although she had lived apart from the in-laws for a long time. By analyzing the usage of the term "returning a coffin" (*pan'gu* 返柩) and "returning to and associating in the main offering hall" (*kwibu* 歸柩), Kim Nam-yi argues that the returning was a way to secure the core idea of the *Family Rituals*, which is an agnatic principle with one root (一本).<sup>44</sup> The place to return or place of one's belonging was an important issue in Confucian mourning ritual. For women, the place to return was even more important since her belongings changed throughout her life.

The complex and subtle ways in which patriarchal ideology is embedded in Confucian mourning rituals and related gendered issues cannot be dismissed. The analysis of Song Siyöl's writings on mourning ritual reveals the mutual entanglement of various concepts in Confucian philosophy. Honor and affection or closeness, one and many, principle and emotion cannot be understood or discussed in a simple manner. Yet, Song Siyöl reinforced the right of the descent-line, or a patriarch, and contributed to the spread of patrilineal consciousness. This consciousness, he believed, was based on the heavenly righteousness between father and son. Therefore, the oneness of the patriline, the succession between father and son, was considered the basis of universal ritual propriety because it consolidates the distinction.<sup>45</sup> Women (mothers and wives) are fragmented and distinguished and must plug into the clear-cut patrilineal ideals of Confucianism.

41 Kim, "18-segi yehak yön'gu," 127.

42 *Book of Rites*, "Chüngja mun 曾子問"; in SSJZS vol.13, p. 671. The rule is that the burying of the less important should have precedence, and that of the more important follow, while the offerings [of food] to the more important precedes and that of the less important follows ... It is the rule that the sacrifice of repose should first be offered to the more important, and afterwards to the less important."

43 Lee Hai-soon, "16-segi Chucha Karye tamnon üi chön'gae wa t'üksöng- Karye üi munhwajök suyong yön'gurül wihan yebijök koch'al" [Discourse on Chu Si's Family Ritual in 16th Century of Chosun: A Preliminary Approach to its Cultural Reception], *Chöngshin munhwa yön'gu* 29, no. 2 (2006), 22.

44 Kim Nam-yi, "17-segi sataebu üi Chucha Karye e taehan insik kwa ilsang esöüi ye silchön -Uam Song Siyöl üi kyöng'u lül chungsimülo" [The Confucian courtesies recognized and practiced in a daily life by the gentry in the 17th century: Centering on Song Siyöl], *Chöngshin munhwa yön'gu* 29, no. 2 (2006), 103.

45 Kim, "Inventing Moralpolitik", 169.

### II.3 Marriage Ritual: The Root of the Way

The husband and wife relation is the beginning of all other human relations, such as father and son, ruler and minister, and the high and low relationship. Here women and men are regarded as two different sexes and their sexual difference was understood as a prerequisite to the way to produce and reproduce, therefore as the unceasing process of change.<sup>46</sup> Whence it is said, “The marriage ritual is the root of ritual propriety.”<sup>47</sup> The *Doctrine of the Mean* (K. *Chungyong*; C. *Zhongyong* 中庸) emphasizes conjugal relationship, saying, “The Way of an exemplary person begins the first step from husband and wife.”<sup>48</sup>

Marriage, however, has never been simply a matter of two individuals, but a way to perpetuate families through procreating new members of a family and incorporating new members of a family. The “Meaning of the Marriage Rite” chapter of *Book of Rites* notes the purpose of the marriage rite is “In its retrospective character, to secure the services in the ancestral shrine, and in its prospective character, to secure the continuance of the descendant line.”<sup>49</sup> All realms of life derive from the household, family is the root of all human relations, and the family begins with the relationship of husband and wife.

Chosŏn Neo-Confucians tried to reform the marriage institution and its practices from the previous Koryŏ (918–1392) dynasty. The reforms included rectifying family relationships that resulted from uxorial residence and transforming the style of wedding into proper Confucian form. The prohibition of intermarriage between close kin, or implementation of strict clan exogamy, and a ban on women’s remarriage were also important to the transformation of the marriage ritual. Song Siyŏl was also involved in discussing the ritual propriety of marriage between the same surnames and remarriage of women.

The ban on marriage between people with the same surname was an important part of the Confucian renovation of marriage. Not marrying a woman with the same surname was considered a sign of ritual propriety from the time of Confucius. For example, the story of the elder Ja of O (C. Wu Mengzi 吳孟子) appears in three Confucian canons, the *Analects*,<sup>50</sup> the *Spring and Autumn Annals*,<sup>51</sup> and the *Book of Rites*.<sup>52</sup> In *Analects* 7.30, Confucius admitted that he was mistaken to have acknowledged Duke So as knowing how to observe ritual propriety because he later discovered that the duke had violated this principle.<sup>53</sup> Clan exogamy was considered a signifier of ritual propriety.

The Neo-Confucian founders of Chosŏn thought the marriage with a same descent group was one of the major causes of the ultimate collapse of earlier dynasties. Pre-Chosŏn marriage customs such as uxorial marriage, marriage between the same surnames or close kin, for example, uncle and niece, or marriage with the sister of the deceased wife, were now regarded as barbarian and patrilineal exogamy should be adopted.<sup>54</sup> Despite the ongoing effort, a strict clan exogamy that excludes clan with different ancestral seats (*pon’gwan* 本貫)<sup>55</sup> could not be implemented till Song Siyŏl’s time.

By the seventeenth century, patrilineal exogamy was accepted as the norm, but old customs still persisted. Song’s contemporaries still argued that if people have different ancestral seats, symbolizing a closer or more recent ancestor compared to different surnames, they were far enough apart to get married; therefore, marriages between people with different ancestral seats would tie people closer together, as the

46 *Book of Changes*, “Kyesa 繫辭”.

47 *Book of Rites*, “Honŭi 昏義”.

48 *Doctrine of the Mean*, chapter 12. The English translation is adapted from Roger Ames, *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 93.

49 *Book of Rites*, “Honŭi”. The English translation is adapted from James Legge, *The Sacred Books of China*. Pt. 4, *the Li Ki*, Xi-Xlvi (Clarendon Press, 1885), 428.

50 *Analects* 7.30.

51 In the twelfth year of “Aegong 哀公” in *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* 春秋左傳 [Zuo’s commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*].

52 *Book of Rites*, “Panggi 坊記”.

53 See also Ames and Rosemont, Jr, Trs., *The Analects of Confucius*, 117–18, which numbered the passage as 7.31.

54 For the detailed description of pre-Chosŏn marriage customs, see Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, 35–39.

55 An ancestral seat usually comes from the name of the administrative unit where the descendants of the original settler had established themselves as local power-holders at the end of Silla or in early Koryŏ. See Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, 85.

Classics teach. In 1669, at court, Song Siyöl formally requested to ban marriages between people with the same surnames but with different ancestral seats. His request clarified marriageability within three kin groups by extending the range of patriline and decreasing the role of matrilineal and affinal relatives.<sup>56</sup>

Song Siyöl's codification was part of an ongoing effort to restructure and make clear who among relatives was marriageable. The extension of patriline by restricting matrilineal and affinal marriages was practiced in his family. In the later years of his life, Song Siyöl planned to arrange a marriage between his daughter's son and the great granddaughter of his second cousin. The proposed couple was in a relationship of a maternal uncle and a niece, sharing the fourth ancestor. The relationship sounds quite distant; therefore, Song Siyöl's marriage arrangement does not seem to pose any problem. But from the perspective of the two women, the two male first cousins were about to be married to two women who were in a relationship of aunt-niece, sharing the blood of one man, Song Kihu 宋基厚 (1621–1674).

Song Siyöl justified this marriage based on Zhu Xi's actual practice and supporting philosophical ideas of “gathering and dispersing,” which are connected to the principle of *üm* 陰 and *yang* 陽 convergence. The case of Zhu Xi's grandchildren was most often used to support his argument for marriages between people with different surnames, even cross-cousins.<sup>57</sup> A passage that Song Siyöl quoted reads:

The principle of sameness and difference is like the case in which the same surnames are close by nature, but they become distant as generations pass. The different surnames are originally distant, but later they marry each other, thereby becoming closer. This is the [same] with the principle that *üm* and *yang* converge, and with the principle that ten thousand things gather and disperse.<sup>58</sup>

Two types of surnames, same or different, are distinguished by their initial (*bon* 本) qualities; however, the two types of surnames interpenetrate each other, transforming their qualities. The degrees of being “close” or “distant” are not fixed. By this principle, people who originally were distinguished into two categories seem to become one. The two categories are not different in kind, but there are degrees of disparity like the principle of *üm* and *yang*.

The transformation, however, does not change the innate quality of one surname. The principle of gathering and dispersing was applied only to kin who are connected to a male through their female kin. The closeness between patrilineal kin does not change. Different surnames become closer together by absorbing a woman into another patriline, bearing a different surname. A female relative also shares the common vital energy with a male, but the female relative's vital energy was thought to not impact her offspring. Therefore, a woman's vital energy transmitted to her offspring does not impact their marriageability.

This is not without problems. Song Siyöl understood the marriage between the grandchildren of Zhu Xi as “a case that cousins who are very close and sharing the same vital energy (*gi* 氣) married to each other.” He justified the marriage of Yun Chugyo as a marriage between “more remote relatives.” In other words, Song Siyöl acknowledged that cross-cousins with different surnames share “the same vital energy.” In general, the Chinese sense of sharing the same vital energy was applied only to patrilineal kin.<sup>59</sup> Song Siyöl's comment contradicts not only our general understanding of *gi*, but also his own words; this calls for further examination, which we are unable to carry forth here.

Women's remarriage was an important issue for Neo-Confucian philosophers.<sup>60</sup> The *Book of Rites* teaches that a woman: “Once mated with her husband, all her life she will not change (her feeling of duty

56 *Hyönjong sillok* 16.2a.

57 For example, see ST 105.6a.

58 Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei* 138.7a. See also ST 129.11a–12a.

59 Lee Sook-in, *Tong asia kodaie üi yösöng sasang: Yösöng juüi ro pon yugyo* [Thoughts on Women in Ancient East Asia: Confucianism From a Feminist Perspective] (Yöiyön, 2005), 275–76.

60 For a detailed discussion of Song's views on remarriage, see Hwa Yeong Wang, “Against the ban on women's remarriage: Gendering *ui* 義 in Song Siyeol's philosophy.” *Asian Philosophy* 30, no.3 (2020): 242–257.

to him) and hence, when the husband dies she will not marry (again).<sup>61</sup> Song Neo-Confucian Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107) is famous for saying, “Starving to death is a very minor matter; losing one’s integrity is a matter of the gravest importance.”<sup>62</sup> Zhu Xi reiterated Cheng Yi’s comment by including the saying in the *Jinsi lu* 近思錄 [Reflections on things at hand]<sup>63</sup> and the *Xiaoxue* 小學 [Elementary Learning].<sup>64</sup> Chosŏn Confucians had taken the issue seriously from the beginning because in the previous Koryŏ dynasty women’s remarriage after the husband’s death was common.<sup>65</sup>

During the early period, women’s remarriage received the serious attention of Confucian legislators. Land grants called “land to preserve faithfulness” (*susinjŏn* 守信田), which previously had been given to widows, were abolished in 1466<sup>66</sup> and the offspring of remarried women were barred from civil and military office in 1485.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, debates on the ban did not end easily. Some Confucians tried to abolish the law barring the offspring of remarried women, but they were never successful.

The abolitionists’ failure was based on the Confucian analogy between loyal subject and chaste wife.<sup>68</sup> Not-remarrying was interpreted as an expression of wifely virtue, as loyalty toward her husband. Moreover, such wifely virtue was interpreted as a reflection of male family members’ virtue. Therefore, it was considered inappropriate for the male offspring of a twice-married woman to stand in the court and participate in politics. Male Confucians who took the side of abolishing the ban not only were accused of promoting licentious deeds, but also had their loyalty as subjects questioned, since wifely fidelity was closely associated with a subject’s loyalty to his ruler.

The metaphor remained strong in Song Siyŏl’s time. Song’s rather flexible attitude toward the ban on women’s remarriage could be interpreted as an attempt “to degrade the three bonds<sup>69</sup> (*wiyok yek samgang* 爲欲斃三綱).”<sup>70</sup> Despite the danger, Song Siyŏl expressed his disagreement with a legal ban on women’s remarriage when King Hyojong 孝宗 (r. 1649–59) asked his opinion on the matter. Song Siyŏl noted that the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies*, which he considered a work of the Duke of Ju 周公,<sup>71</sup> designates a son’s mourning duty for a stepfather.<sup>72</sup> The inclusion of this passage within the Classics means that women were not prohibited from remarriage.<sup>73</sup> Cheng Xiang 程珦 (fl. 1091), the father of Cheng brothers, also gathered widows and had them remarried off. Cheng Yi wrote a necrology and praised [this] as a ‘good deed’ (*misa* 美事).<sup>74</sup> The ritual classic passage and wise Confucians’ endorsement bring in another Confucian tradition of sympathy for widows who were left behind and for the parents of widows.

Song Siyŏl suggests that ritual propriety (*yeui* 禮義) be illustrated and taught to commoners, along with ritual teaching (*yegyo* 禮教), so that people would be transformed every day. This is the rule of the sage [Confucius] and different from that of legalists. Severe punishments and stringent laws (*ŏmhyŏng chunbŏp* 嚴刑峻法) alone cannot prevent the heart-mind from misconduct. Song Siyŏl was against legally

61 *Book of Rites*, “Kyo’ŭksaeng 郊特牲”. For the English translation, see James Legge, *The Li Ki, I-X*. Vol.3 of *The Sacred Books of China* (Clarendon Press, 1885), 439.

62 Cheng Hao, *Er Cheng yishu*, 22B:5b. The English translation adopted from Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Univ. of California Press, 1993), 199.

63 Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian, *Jinsi lu*, 6.5b.

64 Zhu Xi and Chen Xuan, *Xiaoxue jizhu*, 5.22b.

65 Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, 72.

66 Deuchler, 278 and 374n177.

67 Deuchler, 276–80.

68 For a detailed discussion of Song’s views on chastity in comparison to David Hume, see Hwa Yeong Wang, “Chastity as a Virtue”. *Religions* 11, no. 5 (2020): 259. doi:10.3390/rel11050259.

69 The Three Bonds, or the “Three Cardinal Guides”, originated from the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) onwards and came to be known as the foundations of the Confucian social order. The Three Bonds include “a ruler guides the ruled, a father guides his son and a husband guides his wife. See *Routledgecurzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, s.v. “San gang 三綱”.

70 ST 13.36a-b.

71 ST 26.4b.

72 Indicates the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies*, “Sangbok”; In SSJZS vol.5, pp.674–75.

73 ST 39.29b-30b.

74 Song Siyŏl, *Songja taejŏn sŭbyu* 宋子大全拾遺 [Augmented Great Compendium of Master Song] 9.11a-b. The actual story appears in *Collected Writings of the Two Chengs* (*Er Cheng ji* 二程集), vol.13, 10a. The original passage of Cheng Yi does not contain an expression of ‘good deed,’ but only says that “People considered it a difficult thing to do.”

prohibiting and punishing people from remarrying; he wanted them freely to choose not to remarry as a matter of moral principle. He claimed that women's not-remarrying is "the heavenly principle and earth's righteousness (*chǒng'gyǒng chiiü* 天經地義)," a form that can be achieved fully and perfectly. Song's choice of ritual propriety over law is aligned with the old Confucian strategy to commemorate virtuous deeds, such as filial children, docile grandchildren, the righteous man, and a chaste wife. This approach is also connected to the method of transforming people by "leading them with excellence (*tök* 德) and keeping them orderly through observing ritual propriety so they will develop a sense of shame, and moreover, will order themselves."<sup>75</sup>

Song Siyöl's stances on clan exogamy and women's remarriage seem to conflict because he took the strictest stance to exclude someone from a different ancestral seat, thereby strengthening patrilinealism, while he was lenient about banning women's legal remarriage. The former, he argues, is a legal issue, while the latter is an ethical issue. Even though Song mainly discussed the necessity for legal restriction, the clan exogamy argument was also based on metaphysical beliefs about *ümyang* and *gi*. Moreover, his distinction between legal and ethical issues calls out for further analysis, which I have offered in other work.

#### II.4 Hairpinning Ritual: Maturation and Adulthood

The Confucian coming-of-age ritual is not simply an affirmation of one's biological maturation, the ritual signifies one's ritual adulthood, which is accompanied by intellectual, moral, and sociopolitical commitment to Confucian sagehood. While they did not explore its significance in detail or at length, Song Neo-Confucian philosophers thought that the gradual attainment of maturation applies to everyone and they regarded women's hairpinning as an independent ritual, a "separate but equal" correlate to men's capping. Zhu Xi's *Family Ritual* constantly uses the word, "identical (*tong* 同)" in the hairpinning section. Song Siyöl argued for the significance of women's coming-of-age and performed it in his family.

Hairpinning, however, was not really intended to be equal, much less identical, with capping. The process of women's hairpinning was simplified and several parallel steps were omitted in comparison to men's capping. For example, Song Siyöl discussed that female initiates were not presented to the elders of the family. He also confirmed Zhu Xi's prescription of not using an assistant for the hairpinning ritual. The differentiation of the coming-of-age ritual, based on one's gender, was obvious. For example, female initiates change garments only one time while males change three times. Since the number of garment changes represents a symbolic progress of the initiate's virtue, the different number of the garment changes between male and female initiates is meaningful.<sup>76</sup> However, this obvious difference was not noted by Song Siyöl or other Confucian scholars.

Like the different number of garment changes, the omission of the act of presentation at the offering hall at the end of the coming-of-age ritual<sup>77</sup> did not generate any Confucian commentaries. Even in Song Neo-Confucians' reformed hairpinning ritual, the presentations at the offering hall and to the elders are omitted. Song Siyöl explained the reason why a female initiate was not introduced to the elders as owing to her shyness.<sup>78</sup> Male initiates were encouraged to overcome their young, and, therefore, rather self-centered, emotional reaction in accordance with ritual propriety and to become full members of social communities. By justifying women's emotional reaction as a way to divert their participation in this ritual propriety, Song Siyöl not only attempted to essentialize shyness as part of women's disposition, but also to justify this perception of women's immaturity in both moral and ritual senses.

The Confucian Classics describe cases in which there can be an excessive expression of emotions in appropriate rituals, but feelings, in general, are expected to be regulated to obtain the mean of the Way (*chungyong* 中庸). Lee Sook-in argues that Chosön Neo-Confucians watched whether their acts

75 *Analects* 2.3. The English translation is adopted from Ames and Rosemont, 76.

76 See the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies* for its original passage and Zheng Xuan's comment. *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies*, "Sagwallye 士冠禮"; in SSJZS vol.1, p.16.

77 *Book of Rites*, "Kwanüi 冠義"; in SSJZS, vol.15, pp.1884–85.

78 ST 99.8b.

were determined based on personal feelings or on unchanging principles, which apply universally.<sup>79</sup> Tu Wei-ming also points out that attaining emotional stability and maturity was an important indicator of an adult's independence of mind, “[T]he unperplexed adult is not only intellectually alert but emotionally stable and strong. His independence of mind is as much an indication of moral courage as a sign of wisdom.”<sup>80</sup> It can be stated that there was a tendency to control feelings rather than unleashing them.

Song Siyöl was not an exception to this general Confucian tendency to control feelings. As a follower of Yulgok, he did not believe there are innately good or bad feelings. The Yulgok school recognized that human feelings cannot be categorized before their issuance in heart-mind. One must watch the direction of the already-issued feeling. If it is “appropriate to the time (*shii*時宜)” and “appropriate to the pattern-principles (義理),” the action can be said to be “good.” Yet these are abstract principles. To apply these principles in actual circumstances, more concrete factors, such as “the current situation, priority, methodology, and textual evidence and justification”<sup>81</sup> should be considered. In other words, good or bad is context-dependent. Finding the most “appropriate” and “fitting” ways of emotional expression, therefore, requires that the self be stable and disciplined.

Song Siyöl was one of the few Chosön Neo-Confucians who recognized the import of women's hairpinning and made a great effort to practice it. Yet, for him, women's coming-of-age was not distinguished from the marriage ritual, another signifier of adulthood. Men's capping also had a weaker status than other family rituals.<sup>82</sup> However, as we can see from the analysis of the hairpinning ritual in Song Siyöl's writings, women's hairpinning had an even weaker status. This weaker status makes women's adulthood ambiguous because of the lack of social recognition and the less distinct ritual transition.

The indistinctiveness or ambiguity of women's adulthood can be clarified only through comparison with men's capping, which is interrelated with rituals other than family rituals, such as school rituals and local rituals. Through the ritual of introduction to the local elders, for instance, a male initiate obtains membership in local and scholarly communities. Local elders are also colleagues and scholarly peers of his father. Admission to a wide public circle confirms the male initiate's succession to his father in a patriline. For female initiates, the introduction was omitted. Her adulthood does not expand her horizon into a larger community and does not confirm her status in her natal family. On the contrary, hairpinning restricts her range of life, making it smaller and narrower. After her hair has been pinned, she is not introduced as an adult to her male family members. While her counterpart crosses the boundary of inner and outer realms, she is confined within the inner quarter. Ironically her coming-of-age isolates and detaches her from her natal family and prepares to attach and merge her to another family, that of her future husband.

From the analysis of Song Siyöl's writings on women and coming-of-age, I have tried to bring out meaningful observations to further philosophical discussion about women and Confucianism. My analysis of his views on women's hairpinning in comparison with men's capping and of their philosophical meanings provides us clues for further research and development. The inconsistency and ignorance, or indifference, about hairpinning raises questions concerning the role of emotion and rituals, and the boundaries between immaturity and maturity in the Confucian maturation process. The philosophical concepts of “purpose” (*chi* 志) and “virtue” (*tök* 德), for example, can be discussed in relation to adults or complete persons (*söngin* 成人).<sup>83</sup> The analysis of Song Siyöl's views and the discussion of women and the coming-of-age ritual opens a new possibility for philosophical discussion of womanhood, adulthood, personhood, and sagehood in Confucian philosophy.

79 Lee Sook-in, “Chosön uhakesö kamsöng üi munje” [The Problem of Emotion in Chosön Confucianism], *Kukhak yöngu* 14 (2009): 391–412.

80 Wei-ming Tu, “Confucian Perception of Adulthood”, *Daedalus* 105 (2), 118.

81 Kim Hyun-soo, “Song Siyöl üi yehak sasang koch'al” [A reflection on Song Siyöl's ritual theory], *Tongsö chörhak yön-gu* 48 (2008), 93.

82 Ann Beth Waltner, “The Moral Status of the Child in Late Imperial China: Childhood in Ritual and in Law”, *Social Research* 53.4 (1986), 677.

83 See Artuher Waley's interpretation of *Analects* 14.13. Waley, trans. *The Analects of Confucius*, 183.

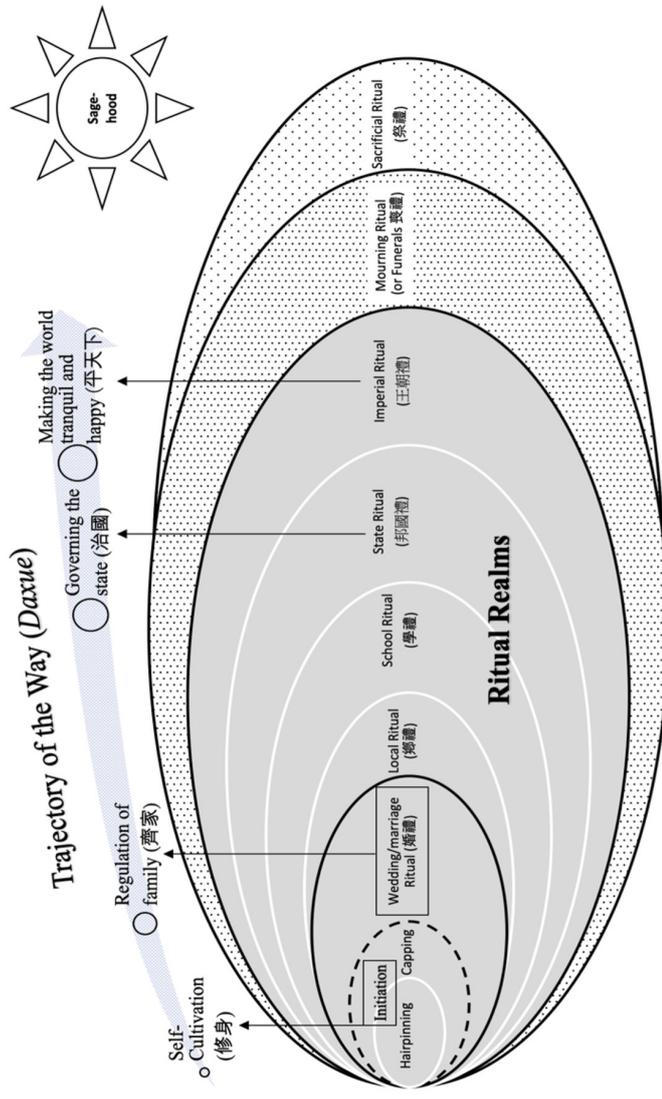
### III. WOMEN IN CONFUCIAN RITUALIST METAPHYSICS

Zhu Xi included hairpinning as part of the coming-of-age ritual in his *Family Rituals*. He placed the coming-of-age ritual, capping and hairpinning, as the first rite among four rites of life passage. The structure of his *General Exposition of the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies and its Commentaries* (*Yili jingzhuan tongjie* 儀禮經傳通解) shows that Zhu Xi re-organized rituals according to the life cycle of people, with the time and place in which rituals take place as follows: family - local community - school - nation - empire - mourning - sacrifice. The new order reflects the stages or periods through which a Confucian scholar-official ideally goes in this world and after death as well. From family to empire reflects the range of human activity, from smaller to wider realms. Family to empire is a realm of the living, while mourning and sacrifice belong to the realm of the dead. The new order, Park Mira notes, coincides with the trajectory described in the *Great Learning*, which begins from individual moral cultivation and extends to the wider community of the world.<sup>84</sup> In short, Zhu Xi re-constructed rituals according to a life cycle that can be applied universally. Mourning and sacrificial rituals are also included as a part of the life cycle because the dead remain as family members and offerings to them are an important duty for the living.<sup>85</sup> The coming-of-age ritual of capping and hairpinning was the very first ritual of all seven passages of rituals in Zhu Xi's restructured ritual system. This trajectory of spiritual development is correlated to ritual performance in Diagram I below.



84 Park Mira, "Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies jingzhuan tongjie üi cheje e nat'anan Zhu Xi üi yehak sasang"[Zhu Xi's ritual thought in the structure of the *General Exposition of the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies and its commentaries*], *Chonggyo wa munhwa* 3 (1997), 228–32.

85 Waltner, "The Moral Status of the Child", 669n6.



Based on Zhu Xi's *General Exposition of the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies and its Commentaries (Yi jingzhuan tongjie 儀禮經傳通解)*

Song Siyöl considered the

*General Exposition* indispensable for a stable and flourishing society.<sup>86</sup> In his sealed memorial to the newly enthroned King Hyojong in the year of *kich'uk* 己丑 (1649), he outlined his view on the kingly way of Confucianism. According to his memorial, the theoretical foundation for the Learning of Ritual had been completed by the two masters, Zhu Xi and Kim Changsaeng; the structure of the memorial followed the *Great Learning*, and the main contents were largely adopted from Zhu Xi's memorial.<sup>87</sup> In this work, Song highlighted the importance of the *General Exposition* and he strongly encouraged the king to publish and distribute it throughout the country.<sup>88</sup>

86 ST 5.7a-b.

87 For analysis of Song's memorial, in comparison with that of Zhu Xi, focusing on their political philosophy, see Chöng Chaehun, "Uam Song Siyöl üi chöngch'i sasang- Zhu Xi waüi pigyo riül chungshimüro" [Philosophical Thought of Uam Song Siyöl- In comparison with Zhu Xi], *Han'guk sasang gwa munhwa* 23 (2004), 63-89.

88 ST 5.7a-b.

Diagram I clearly shows that the ritual realm corresponds to the course of the Way. The Way not only reflects a Confucian's commitment to sagehood, it also provides a metaphysical vision based on the proper relationship of a human life to the greater cosmos. Angela Zito has noted that what "concerns the shape of the cosmos and humanity's play, and the uses of *li* [ritual] within it" constitutes a distinctive "ritualist metaphysics."<sup>89</sup> Through rituals, humans constantly center the world through their ritual actions, which may both transgress and reproduce previously given boundaries, establishing a "ritual-based vision of reality."<sup>90</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This essay has analyzed and illustrated a range of issues concerning four Confucian family rituals that Song Siyöl, a seminal figure of Korean neo-Confucianism, singled out and actively advocated. By examining what kinds of issues, he and his contemporaries considered important and warranted further inquiry and discussion, and how Song addressed, articulated, justified, and theorized such issues, this work has revealed that these family rituals did not have equal weight within their shared 'ritual-based vision of reality' and that women were not positioned the same way as men within it. The analysis has delineated the subtle and detailed underlying principles and applications behind their views of these rituals.

I have described and diagrammed the shape of Song's ritual metaphysics, in which the trajectory of the Way corresponds to various ritual realms; this scheme was based on the philosophy of Zhu Xi, whom Song Siyöl and Korean neo-Confucian scholars regarded as orthodox and followed scrupulously. Diagram I allows us to unmask the underlying rules of exclusion, negative implications, and the ways in which Confucian ritual positioned women within its gendered hierarchy in the name of "unity that contains difference."<sup>91</sup> Women are restricted from the beginning of life. The hairpinning ritual is by no means identical to male capping and does not prepare women to advance to the next ritual stage, leading to sagehood.

This analysis of Song Siyöl's writings on family rituals and women helps us delineate the ways in which women are positioned in Confucian ritualist metaphysics and its philosophizing process based on Confucian views about and understanding of women and gender and associated philosophical concepts. Song Siyöl's philosophy of ritual, which focuses on actualization, enables us to highlight the processual and creative aspects of Confucian rituals and thereby helps us see the rules of gendering that inform and constrain Confucian philosophy.

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89 Zito, *Of Body and Brush*, 97.

90 Michael Puett, "Constructions of Reality: Metaphysics in the Ritual Traditions of Classical China". In *Chinese Metaphysics and Its Problems*, ed. Chenyang Li and Franklin Perkins (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015), 120.

91 Zito, *Of Body and Brush*, 214.

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