Territory of the Sages: Neo-Confucian Discourse of Wuyi Nine Bends Jingjie

by

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the effects of Jingjie, a multi-layered term whose meanings include “territory,” “spiritual realm,” and “poetic landscape,” has largely been studied as a philosophical idea and aesthetic trope. These investigations, however, often overlook the connection between Jingjie’s diverse meanings and the term’s role in the production of territorial knowledge.

Using the method of discourse analysis, this study explores Jingjie as a discourse of territoriality that constructed and represented forms of space, power, and identity through the process of horizontal and vertical territorialization, traversing geopolitics, philosophy, and poetry.

The development of Neo-Confucianism can be traced through the intricate interplay of the multiple discourses of Jingjie, particularly in the conception of sagely learning and living. The “Jingjie of the sages,” proposed by Neo-Confucians as a new subject of inquiry and goal of learning, was conceived as a moral and spiritual territory to be
claimed and reached, a poetic territory to be experienced, and a geopolitical territory to be restored.

The most pronounced expression of Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse is found in the discursive development of Wuyi Mountains and its Nine Bends Stream (Wuyi Jiuqu 武夷九曲). Well-known because of its association with Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200 AD), Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie as a geopolitical territory developed into both the physical and symbolic centre of Cheng-Zhu learning, and was recreated throughout China and Korea as a sign of legitimate orthodoxy and as a base for factional expansion.

As a poetic territory, Wuyi emerged as an important site of shared cultural memory, forging bonds between Neo-Confucians across generations. The discussion of Wuyi as a philosophical jingjie revolved around the interpretation of Zhu Xi’s poem “The Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends 武夷九曲櫂歌,” which became the source of hermeneutic debate that lasted for several centuries and contributed to an important philosophical literature.

On the whole, by examining the development of Neo-Confucianism in light of the traditional discursive context of jingjie, this study reveals how the philosophical, political, and cultural movement was conceived and understood by the Neo-Confucians themselves as the joining together of different modes of territoriality, thus providing a richer, more nuanced and complex picture of the development of Neo-Confucianism in China and Korea from 12th-18th centuries.
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Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085)  
Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107)  
Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200)  
Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139-1193) |
| Yuan 元 (1271-1368) | Chen Pu 陳普 (1244-1315)  
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| Ming 明 (1368-1644) | Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357-1402)  
Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428-1500)  
Hu Juren 胡居仁 (1434-1484)  
Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水 (1466-1560)  
Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529) |
| Qing 清 (1644-1911) | Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695)  
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Introduction

**Jingjie as Territorial Discourse**

The twelfth-century was a critical turning point in the history of Confucianism. It saw the emergence of innovative minds who shared a passion for reviving what they considered to be the true spirit of Confucian learning. This movement, which we in the West came to call Neo-Confucianism, moved the ancient teaching in a “new” direction by claiming sagehood, hitherto deemed unreachable, was indeed an attainable goal: Confucian learning was now “sage learning” (*sheng xue* 聖學), the ultimate aim of which was individual attainment of sagehood. Central to the Neo-Confucian conceptualization of sagehood and sage learning was the discourse of *jingjie* 境界, the term whose complex definition has raised much debate. What was the “*jingjie* of the sages” (*shengren de jingjie* 聖人的境界)? The question was asked repeatedly, and the answers given became the building blocks for constructing Neo-Confucian ideology, a philosophical, political, and cultural force that affected and continues to affect East Asian societies and their people.

This is a study of Neo-Confucian *jingjie* discourse. But to explore the topic in any comprehensible manner, we first need to probe into the larger issue: that is, understanding *jingjie* as discourse. A multilayered term, whose far-reaching implications are strongly felt in the unfolding of Chinese society and culture, *jingjie* has often been translated and investigated as “territory,” “spiritual realm,” and “poetic landscape.” In this study, however, in order to capture its multivalent nature, it will be referred to in its Romanized form. Through time *jingjie* evolved into a complex concept, thanks to the contribution of
many bright minds who left us with a wealth of critical literature on the subject to savour and with which to grapple.

The conceptual exploration and adaptation of *jingjie* has a long history. First used to convey the geopolitical idea of “territory” and “boundary,” *jingjie* grew out of this preliminary literal meaning as early as the Eastern Han period (25-220) when, after undergoing complex conceptualization, it was incorporated into the Buddhist lexicon to signify a number of essential philosophico-religious ideas, including the notion of “spiritual realm.” Then, in the Southern and Northern Dynasties period (420-589) it emerged as a literary and artistic idea to denote “poetic scenery” or “landscape.”

The beginning of modern scholarly investigation of *jingjie* is often traced back to Wang Guowei, whose study of *jingjie* as an aesthetic category is considered a pioneering work in the field of literary criticism. Wang’s greatest contribution, however, is found not in original interpretation but in the exploration of the traditional idea in light of Western Romantic Idealism. Nevertheless, his study opened the floodgates of modern scholarly inquiry of *jingjie*, turning it into a new frontier of modern Chinese scholarship. The discussion was taken up by major Chinese thinkers of the twentieth-century, and some of them even identified *jingjie* as the quintessence of Chinese thought and the future of modern philosophy.¹

What is noteworthy in these modern scholarly endeavours is the use of their systematic approach. *Jingjie* has largely been examined in the context of mapping the history of ideas in China. Envisioning philosophical and cultural tradition as a system built upon a set of concepts or categories, numerous attempts were made to determine the key ideas in Chinese thought and to trace the evolution of their meanings and
interpretations. Such Structuralist undertakings led to the construction of a linear history of jingjie’s conceptual development.

The diachronic tracing of the chronological succession of jingjie often ended with an all-too-familiar conclusion that views history of jingjie as advancement from a less developed to a more developed idea. Based on this progressive interpretive model, the development of jingjie was explained as a forward movement from the lower geographical and religious meanings to the higher aesthetic meanings, mystifying and idealizing the aesthetic. Ye Lang, for instance, asserted the development of jing was a movement from and against xiang 象 (image), which he expounded as the shift from limited representational aesthetics to limitless onto-phenomenological aesthetics. For Li Ming the conceptual development of jingjie represented an evolution from the Daoist and Buddhist religious understanding to the aesthetic understanding.

There are two main problems with such an interpretative approach. First, by correlating chronological succession with conceptual maturation, it ascribes relative value to different meanings of jingjie, in turn creating a vision of hierarchy. The result is devaluation of the geopolitical and the concrete in favour of the metaphysical and the abstract. However, it is important to note that the extended philosophical and aesthetic meanings of jingjie never came to replace the geopolitical use of the term: instead, the three were used concomitantly, not one lording over the other. The hierarchical interpretation undermines the interconnection amongst the three uses, more specifically the underlying territorial theme which becomes evident when we regard them as parallel developments.
Second, overriding interest in the conceptual has often meant preoccupation with the task of uncovering and expounding the meaning—even the “true” meaning—of jingjie as a philosophical notion and literary trope, based on a tacit presumption that language expresses and reflects meaning. But insights from the linguistic revolution of the twentieth-century, particularly the studies of Saussure and Wittgenstein, have shown us the limits of simple “language-meaning” equations, and more importantly the significance of recognizing language’s role in the production of knowledge. Previous interpretations have come up short when it comes to answering jingjie’s role in the production of particular knowledge of the world and reality: in other words, recognizing jingjie as a discourse.

The present study explores jingjie as a territorial discourse. Since its inception jingjie has been and continues to be an integral linguistic expression in the geopolitical, philosophico-religious, and aesthetic discussions, affecting and shaping the representation of knowledge—that is, serving as an essential discursive framework—in various fields. Our study posits and surveys the development of jingjie as a discursive writing of territoriality, traversing geopolitics, philosophy, and arts. Territoriality—“a spatial expression of power,” “the process whereby individuals and groups lay claim to territory [bounded space]” —has been a subject of scholarly inquisition in the fields of international relations, human geography, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and more recently critical geopolitics, cultural theory, and border theory. Territoriality’s ability to link space, power, and identity has made it an imaginative juncture for interdisciplinary research. A significant part of recent scholarship on territoriality has focused on its modern expressions and their connection to the construction of the nation-state, and its
prospects in the globalizing socioeconomic environment. In particular, we have seen the
endeavours to seek and understand alternate forms of territoriality in the face of
increasing domination of and conformity to the form of territoriality promoted by
capitalist democracy.

It is precisely in this context our study of jingjie is situated: the discursive
development of jingjie reveals complex formations of territoriality in pre-modern China
and Korea, the process that generated different yet interconnected territorial constructs
which continue to exert much influence to this day. My decision to regard jingjie as a
discursive process of territoriality is grounded in this: jingjie fundamentally interweaves
the problems of space, power, and identity, and its metamorphosis manifests their
changing forms.6 Investigating the evolving representations of territorial knowledge, the
study of jingjie therefore necessarily concerns the construction of historiography. A
historiographical approach to jingjie brings to light a cumulative development of
territoriality—territoriality which grew in complexity, entailing not only geographical
and political spheres, but also spiritual, moral, and aesthetic spheres.

Although complex philosophization at times obscured jingjie’s fundamental
connection to land and bounded space, its territorial link was never fully forgotten, as
evined in its modern conceptions as “world,” “horizon,” and “spiritual territory.” It was
Tang Junyi who first suggested that jingjie corresponded to the western concepts “world”
and “horizon,” and used it as a framework for mapping life-existence, composed of three
realms (jie) and nine worlds/horizons (jing).7 Tang’s identification had a huge impact on
the modern philosophical and literary study of jingjie, as many, following his lead, began
to adopt “world” as the interpretation and translation of jingjie, including the key figures
in Chinese literary studies, James J.Y. Liu and Stephen Owen. Among the modern studies, the most explicit exploration of *jingjie*’s territorial link is found in the work of Xu Fuguan, who defines *jingjie* as a spiritual “territory” (*jieyu* 界域) attained by a person. This personal spiritual territory, he argues, consists of vertical and horizontal dimensions; *jingjie*, therefore, can be said to be high and low, expansive and narrow, the magnitude of which depends on one’s life cultivation and effort. Xu’s discussion of verticality and horizontality highlights the dimensional structure of *jingjie*, which, compared to Wang Guowei’s earlier discussion of relative dimensional difference—large and small—of the poet’s *jingjie* 詩人之境界, more clearly brings to the fore *jingjie*’s spatial configuration.

These scholarly endeavours demonstrate the importance of territorial vision in the philosophical envisioning of *jingjie*. But understanding *jingjie* as a territorial “discourse” involves more than a simple recognition of its territorial connection. It involves historicizing *jingjie* as a development of territoriality deeply rooted in time and space, which shaped the world and the lives of those who inhabited it.

The Foucauldian theory of discourse has contributed greatly in restoring historicity to the study of territoriality. Foucault defines discourse as “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about—a way of representing the knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment”; the study of discourse, in other words, fundamentally concerns the study of the representation of knowledge. The exploration of territoriality based on discourse theory, therefore, focuses on investigating the *systematic representation of territorial knowledge*. The theory also allows us to examine territorial knowledge as culturally and historically situated, created, and re-worked discourses.
The discursive approach is particularly useful for historicizing *jingjie*, its discourses, its representations, and its relation to the creation of identity and reality. *Jingjie*, like other forms of territoriality, was a discursive process—the process through which "words [took] on meanings," the process that produced an array of territorial discourses. These discourses, these "large scale, cultural-cognitive formations and linguistic structures," functioned as "conceptual fields" for generating territorial knowledge. The investigation of *jingjie* as a discursive development involves attending to the sociopolitical and historical context in which particular uses and expressions of *jingjie* emerged and lived. As our discussion throughout the course of the study will show, the territorial knowledge promoted by *jingjie* discourse exhibits and embodies the two essential vectors of territorialization: namely, horizontality and verticality. As a horizontal territorializing force, *jingjie* creates mutually existing—and often competitive—domains; it divides and organizes the world into "insides" and "outsides," acting as a site of struggle where various dichotomic ideologies (i.e. us vs. them, civilized vs. uncivilized) came into clash, expressing the limits of dominion and ownership. As a vertical territorializing force, *jingjie* creates successive stages; it generates a hierarchy of differences, controlling access and mobility. The vision of hierarchical progression has been most prominent in the philosophico-religious discourses of *jingjie*. But as some modern scholars—Wang Guowei, Feng Youlan, Zong Baihua, and Tang Junyi—have suggested, the vertical territorializing force of *jingjie* also contributed to the rise of categorical and typological understanding of social and moral hierarchy. Together the horizontal and vertical vectors of *jingjie* mapped out the world and created order and identity.
The territorial knowledge generated by *jingjie* discourse reveals *jingjie*’s fundamental connection to changing forms of power and their impact on social and material construction. *Jingjie* became naturalized and normativized, and eventually came to colour and shape important aspects of Chinese and Korean sociopolitical and cultural imaginations. It is the key to understanding the parallel constructions of the Middle Kingdom, the Buddhist religious world order, the poetico-spiritual reality, the aesthetic individuality, the Neo-Confucian onto-ethical vision of human and world, and literati political factionalism. I am not suggesting that *jingjie* was a continuous undercurrent in the making of Chinese and Korean society and culture. Quite the opposite, the discursive formations of *jingjie* unfolded in a “discontinuous atemporality”; that is to say, instead of creating a vision of continuity, *jingjie* as a discursive process reveals much overlapping and gaps and unveils how it as a “domain of discursive formations” influenced and fashioned “forms of thought,” giving rise to various discursive practices which underwent continuous reinventions.

In the following chapters we will examine the discursive formations of *jingjie* and their changing territorial representations. By focusing on discursive representation, we are moving away from the ontological divide between the physical and the spiritual, between imitation and essence that hitherto dominated the discussion on *jingjie*. In the discursive model such distinctions dissolve, as both opposites—in fact, all things, both real and imaginary—are deemed as representations. The discursive turn also entails that *jingjie* be examined, not in isolation, but together with an array of related ideas—mainly *jing* and its multifarious derivatives—of which *jingjie* was a part and together with which it constituted territorial knowledge.
This study will unfold in three parts. Part I will examine the discursive development of jingjie as geopolitical, philosophico-religious, and poetic territory prior to the rise of Song Neo-Confucianism, thereby laying a broad historiographical groundwork for the rest of the study. In Part II we will proceed to investigate jingjie discourse at work in the formation of Neo-Confucian philosophy and culture. What did the jingjie of the sages represent in the minds of Neo-Confucians? Our study reveals the Neo-Confucian conception of sagely jingjie involved an intricate interweaving of philosophy, poetry, and geopolitics, a traversing and integrating of diverse territorial discourses. On the whole, the application of jingjie framework configured Neo-Confucian sage learning into a territorial undertaking, an intellectual, cultural, and political pursuit with clearly territorial ramifications. And lastly Part III will examine the discursive development of the jingjie of Wuyi Mountains and its Nine Bends Stream (Wuyi Jiuqu 武夷九曲), which, because of its association with Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), became the most celebrated example of Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse. We will look into the complex amalgamation of geopolitical, poetic, and philosophical jingjie in the construction of Wuyi’s Nine Bends discourse. As it will be shown, the expansion of Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie played a seminal role in the development of Neo-Confucianism in China and Korea.

Overall, our historiographical investigation will demonstrate an inseparable and unmistakable connection between jingjie discourse and the evolving forms and discussions of territoriality. The envisioning of jingjie as a discursive writing of territoriality enables us to explain jingjie’s multifariousness and the many modes of territoriality it generated. This, by no means, is the only way to think about jingjie. But
certainly the recognition of jingjie’s connection to territorial discourse will yield many more insightful discussions, and this study is a preliminary step to this cause.


2 Ye Lang explained the development of jing 境 as a movement from and against xiang 象, identifying jing as xiang wai 象外 (outside or beyond xiang). Jing as xiang wai differs from xiang in that while xiang refers to an isolated and limited physical appearance, jing denotes an overall prospect of nature or human life, including not only xiang but also the void outside xiang. Xiang is limited, but jing is limitless. Instead of representing an individual and particular entity (i.e. one plant, one flower, etc.), jing signifies the creative Nature in which flows the Original Qi. The development of jing (and jingjie), therefore, is a forward movement from xiang. See Ye Lang 叶朗, Zhongguo meixue shi dagang 中国美学史大纲 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1985), 167-176.


5 For the summary of scholarship on territoriality in these fields, see David Delaney, Territory: A Short Introduction (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).


10 Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927), Ren jian ci hua 人間詞話 (Remarks on Ci Poetry in the Human World) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), juan shang, 2. The book has been translated into


13 Delaney defines discourses as “large scale, cultural-cognitive formations and linguistic structures into which social actors and socialized, and which condition thought or consciousness and practice in particular ways. … They are conceptual fields through which difference and sameness are registered. … They may be closely associated with the production of knowledge and the expert authority.” See Delaney (2005), 92.

14 See Delaney’s discussion on horizontality and verticality, and their connection to territorialization. See Delaney (2005), 31.

15 The complex multi-dimensionality of the Chinese conception of territoriality can be seen in the subtle meanings attributed to the notion “land” (*tu*), the territorial radical. While the western idea of “territory” displays a clear connection to the state, its power and its domain of influence, the Chinese *tu*, on top of its geopolitical association, conveys the socio-political and cultural tension—the essential distinction between indigenous and foreign, culturally refined and culturally unrefined.

16 Wang Guowei’s theory of three types of *jingjie* was earlier proposed as the theory of three types of *jieji* 階級, which can be translated as “level,” “stage,” and even “class.” Jiang Yongqing’s study on the subject is particularly insightful. See Jiang Yongqing 蒋永青, *Jingjie zhi ‘zhen’: Wang Guowei jingjie shuo yanjiu 境界之《真》: 王国维境界说研究* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2001). Feng Youlan’s study explored the social dimension of *jingjie*. He proposed the theory of four types of *jingjie*—natural *jingjie*, utilitarian *jingjie*, moral *jingjie*, and heaven-and-earth *jingjie*—which, according to him, represented four levels of individual and social existence. See Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895-1990), “Zhongguo zhexue zai xiandai shijie 中國哲學在現代世界,” in *Feng Youlan xuan ji 楊友蘭選集* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), Ibid., vol. 2, ch. 3., 274-8. Following the lead of Feng, later scholars Zong Baihua and Tang Junyi also explored the typological constitution of *jingjie*; Zong suggested six types of *jingjie* and Tang three *jie* and nine *jing* as the different levels of existence which compose human social life. See Zong Baihua 宗白華 (1897-1986), “Zhongguo yishu jingjie zhi danshen 中國藝術意境之發生” in *Meixue sanbu 美學散步* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2005), 120. Originally published in *Shi yu chao wényì 詩與潮文藝*, 1943. See Tang Junyi (1977), 5. For a study on Tang’s theory of *jingjie*, see Sin Yee Chan, “Tang Junyi: Moral idealism and Chinese culture,” in *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Chung-Ying Cheng and Nicholas Bunnin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002): 305-326.

17 Naturalization and normativization are the two important means through which territoriality exercises its control. Sack and Harvey underline the importance of recognizing and questioning any natural and normative connections made between territory and people. See Sack (1986), 26-7, and Storey (2001), 19.


19 Ibid., 135-7.

20 The discourse theories examine both “real and imaginary” as semiological phenomena. See White’s discussion in Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), x.
Part I. Theoretical Exploration

I.1 The Geopolitical Discourses of Jingjie

As pointed out in the introduction, the geopolitical dimension of jing and jingjie has been neglected in previous studies, and even when it was recognized the focus was on philosophical analysis rather than historiographical investigation. Dong Zhiqiang, for instance, probes the conceptual development of jing 境 by taking an etymological approach. He argues that jing 境 is a development from jing 竟, the latter defined in the Han dictionary Shuowen Jiezi 説文解字 (Explanation of Simple and Derived Characters) as “the end of a musical performance”—the meaning derived from the radical “sound 音,” which the dictionary identifies as the word’s etymological origin. As the earliest extant systematic dictionary, the Shuowen’s interpretation became the basis for later etymological studies. Even the Qing dynasty Kangxi Cidian 康熙辭典 (Emperor Kangxi’s Dictionary), which established the standard lexicon in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, repeats the Shuowen’s definition of jing 竟 and jing 境. From this dictionary definition, Dong infers that jing 境, originally a temporal notion, during its development also took on a spatial meaning, and eventually came to signify spatio-temporality. This conclusion, although might appear sound in deductive reasoning, turns out to be flawed when we examine the actual historical development of the two words.

As we shall see in detail later on, from the time of the earliest written records until the early Warring States period, jing 竟 signified ideas of territoriality. By the end of the Warring States period—to be more exact by 239 BC, the year the Lüshi Chunqiu 呂氏春秋 (Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals) was completed—jing 竟 as a territorial
notion fell out of use and was replaced with the character with earth-radical, jing 境. This means by the time the Shuowen was written in 121 AD, jing 境’s original territorial connection was almost completely lost. Therefore, contrary to what Dong suggests, jing’s territorial association predates the musical or temporal one. As this brief account illustrates, in order for us to grasp the socio-political and cultural impact of jing and jingjie, we need to engage in a historiographical and discursive investigation. With this goal in mind, this chapter will examine the development of jing and jingjie as geopolitical discourses, and their contribution in constructing the knowledge of territoriality.

The earliest accounts of jing 境 are found in the oracle bones from the Shang 商 dynasty (1600-1046 BC). While the Shuowen interprets jing as the combination of “sound 音” and “person 人,” the oracle bone script presents a completely different picture: it shows xin 辛 held over ren 人, the image that has raised much scholarly speculation. As for the meaning of xin, scholars have offered divergent views: Wu Qichang asserted that xin represents a “stone execution knife,” which makes jing “the execution of a person.” More recently, Wu Kuang proposed that xin is a hieroglyph of a “stone awl,” a popular carving tool used in the Shang time.2 But the most comprehensive and coherent interpretation is found in Guo Moruo’s seminal work Jiagu wenzi yanjiu 甲骨文字研究 (The Study of the Oracle Bone Script), in which xin is identified as a “tattoo knife.”3 Guo’s view was later adopted and furthered by James C.H. Hsu, who contextually examined the meanings of xin and its related characters, and more importantly expounded their socio-cultural connection to the practice of tattooing in early China.
Tattoo in the Shang-Zhou period symbolized three things: power, death, and collectivity. First, tattoo as a sign of power helped create a system of social strata, which in turn led to the formation of political order. Tattooing became a standard method of punishment in the Shang—probably the least severe form of chastisement—given to lesser offenders and war captives. Hsu describes the tattooing of the face as a reprimand that involved the “least bodily harm” but was effective as “a warning to the offender and a mark of leniency.” In this context, the tattoo knife symbolized political authority, the power to inflict punishment. The oracle bone graph zai ("to govern") shows the image of “a tattoo knife inside a house,” indicating that the power holder was also the holder of the tattoo knife—the word which came to signify “to kill,” “to rule,” and later “the highest ranking minister in the state.” Consequently, being under the control of the tattoo knife denoted being in the position of the ruled, the inferior, and the political subject.

The investigation of etymological derivatives from xin illustrates this point: for example, the oracle bone graph of qie ("concubine") shows a tattoo knife held over a woman—the image of xin, in this case, can be seen as a sign of the lower social status of the concubine. Hsu’s study does not include the examination of jing as a development from xin, but following the similar line of logic, we can safely infer jing, “a man with a tattoo knife over his head,” represents 1) a tattooed person who previously was a war captive or a minor criminal; 2) a person belonging to the low stratum of the Shang society; and 3) a generic title for the Shang subject. The plausibility of our deductive conclusion is reinforced when we look at the oracle bone graph of pu ("servant"), which shows “a person with a tattoo knife over his head”—identical to the oracle bone graph for jing—“emptying a garbage basket.” From these examples we can construe that jing signified
compliant servants and inferior members of the Shang society whose purpose was to serve the ruling class. The designs of tattooed figures on the jade and metal works from the Shang-Zhou period provide further physical evidence that proves the widespread practice of tattooing in early China.  

Second, tattoo as a sign of death distinguished the dead body from the living body. Tattooing the chest of the deceased was practiced in the Shang as a part of ceremonial procedure before burial. Hsu explains such custom was derived from earlier ceremony of blood-letting which was performed on the deceased to enable his or her spirit to escape the body through the blood. Hence, tattooing of the dead differed fundamentally from tattooing of the criminals or slaves: the former done on the chest in red, often using cinnabar, to symbolize blood; the latter on the face in black. The oracle bone graph of wen 文, depicting a person with tattooed chest, evinces the character which later came to signify “literature” and “culture” represented the tattooed body of the deceased in its earliest form. As Hsu demonstrates, in the Shang the character wen was only used to refer to the dead: for example, it was given as a posthumous title to deceased kings as a measure to show reverence.

Third, tattoo as a sign of collectivity differentiated various ethnic and cultural groups which used tattooing as a means of body decoration. Early historical records state the members of the coastal communities had fish scale tattoos, which were believed to function as camouflage in water. Even though it is difficult to reconstruct just how prevalent the practice of tattooing was among the ruling class and the living, we learn that the image of a tattooed person was not an undesirable one, even as a name for a member of the Shang royal family. The inscriptions on the bronze vessels from the late Shang and
early Western Zhou tell us that one of the royal producers of the vessels was a man by the name of Jing _CLIP1, demonstrating that the character jing was not reserved for denoting social inferiority.7

Unfortunately, due to the fragmented and terse nature of the oracle bone and bronze script texts, it is hard to reconstruct a clear picture of the intricate discursive formation of jing in the Shang. Jing’s connection to the practice of tattooing, however, yields some intriguing and valuable discussions. Tattoo played a vital role in the construction of the Shang world, drawing the boundary between the ruler and the subject, the superior and the inferior, the living and the dead, and us and them. The body functioning as a text was inscribed to mark these differences; tattooing transformed the “physical body” into the “social body,” which became the locus of Shang’s social and political control.8

In the succeeding Zhou 周 period (1046-256 BC), however, we see an important discursive change. It is in the Zhou that jing came to signify the “frontiers,” the territorial interpretation with which we are more familiar. How can we understand this drastic shift in meaning—the shift from the body to the land? The answer to this question is found in the conception of territoriality: despite their seeming differences, the tattooed body and the frontiers were but representations of territoriality—that is to say, the shift was a change in the representation of territoriality, from the inscribed body to the inscribed land. The Shang authority used corporeal markings to claim its possessions and to visually communicate the extent of its rule—the tattooed people of the Shang were the bearers of the territorial knowledge. This does not mean that the Shang did not develop a clearly
defined spatial order: studies have shown that the Shang world was composed of “four directional quadrants” which surrounded a central square. But the bond between state power and state territory was not particularly pronounced in the Shang. Moreover, the nature of political power in the Shang, borrowing Lewis’ expression, was “itinerant.” The Shang king “displayed his power by travelling, hunting, and inspecting along the pathways of his realm.” The capital did not serve as the administrative centre, and the whole state was envisioned as “a network of pathways and encampments along which the king moved and sent commands.” These developments illustrate that Shang’s political legitimacy came from its status as the representative of tribes and clans, and not the defender of a given geographical area.

However, in the Zhou the land-based conception of power emerged as evidenced in the firming of borders and hardening of geographical identity. The changing discourse of jing, in fact, played a vital role in the development of the land-based understanding of the state. While the Zhou in its early stage continued and extended the Shang model of governance, it still perceived itself as a culturally distinct group from the Shang, and this they displayed in their rejection of the socio-political use of tattoo. The denunciation of tattooing physically and visually distinguished the people of the Zhou from the former Shang subjects and other tattooed cultural groups. These tattooed people—jing— inhabited the area outside the Zhou borders, and through the process of association, jing came to indicate the frontiers, the outermost region of the Zhou state. Important to note in this development is the connection drawn between the tattooed communities, their physical remoteness, and their lack of civilization—the correlation which became essential for the formation of the tattooless and civilized Middle Kingdom. The practice
of tattooing, however, was not completely eliminated even within the borders of the Zhou. As we know, at least two states from the Eastern Zhou period (770-256 BC)—Wu 吳 and Yue 越—customarily practiced tattooing. Historical records show that the connection between tattooing and barbarism was fully established by the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods.\(^\text{11}\)

The territorial accounts of jìng are found in the Zhou texts on rites. According to the \textit{Yì lì} 儀禮 (Rites and Proprieties) the people of the Western Zhou saw their world as divided into three regions: the state (guó 国), the outskirts (jiāo 郊), and the frontiers (jìng 竟)\(^\text{12}\), indicating that jìng was understood not as “boundary” and “border” in an abstract sense, but as a specific geopolitical area. The three regions were clearly demarcated. The \textit{Zhou lì 周禮} (The Rites of Zhou) records:

\begin{quote}
    The frontiers (jing) of all states’ (guó) capitals have dykes and trees so they will be difficult to access. The outskirts (jiao) also follow this custom. The citizens are responsible for maintaining them. If there are mountains and rivers, then they will be taken advantage of [as boundaries].\(^\text{13}\)
\end{quote}

The Western Zhou state (1045-771 BC) identified and distinguished these three geopolitical units by designing and requiring different behavioural codes for each region: for instance, the \textit{Yì lì} lists rules and regulations for hunting in the different regions.\(^\text{14}\) As the outermost boundary, jìng assumed significant and complex geopolitical functions. The crossing of jìng into another state was carefully regulated: as in the case of sending emissaries to another state or in the case of betrothal from one state to another. The Zhou rites prescribed meticulous instructions and ritual procedures for marking the leaving and entering of jìng.\(^\text{15}\) These early accounts establish jìng as a marker of difference in socio-political and cultural allegiance. Jìng was a line of division and an enclosed area, the
geographical basis of identity. The crossing of jing, therefore, took on a great political significant—something that had to be commemorated ritually, transforming the cultural behaviours and creating the civilization of propriety. As demonstrated by Hsu and Linduff, Zhou’s feudal society was built upon “a combination of contractual and personal bonds” which were ritualistically established and reinforced.\textsuperscript{16}

The territorial knowledge of jing, discursively produced in the Zhou ritual texts, also relied on the imaginal process for its formation and dissemination. The Western Zhou state’s territorial envisioning of the world—the world “divided into “Four Quarters” surrounding a core”—was engraved onto the bronze vessels, cast and circulated for the purpose of legitimizing and valourizing Zhou’s political and cultural authority.\textsuperscript{17} The territorial knowledge was also imaginally constructed through the making of maps. Although no cartographic examples from the period have survived, it has been shown that the Zhou state instituted two map-making offices—one for the general land survey purpose and another for the military strategy purpose\textsuperscript{18}—and that maps were used during sacrifices and rituals.\textsuperscript{19} The connection between mapping and governance illustrates that already during this time maps were used as a means of articulating power and authority.\textsuperscript{20} We can only conjecture what these maps actually looked like, but in all probability they must have contained visual representation of geopolitical divisions, including jing which outlined the frontier regions.

In short, jing of this early period can be characterized as—borrowing Di Cosmos’ expression—a “permeable” frontier. His excellent study of the early history of China’s northern frontiers shows although frontiers existed during the Shang and the Zhou, they functioned as a site of cultural exchange—a “liminal zone”—with the surrounding states
and not as an isolating wall.\(^{21}\) Li Feng also opined that the idea of frontier in the Western Zhou was “far more zonal than linear,” representing “an intermediate or transitional zone” between different cultures.\(^ {22}\) This vision of reciprocal cultural interactions across jing, however, did not last long as the frontiers began to solidify.

The Eastern Zhou—conventionally divided into two sub-periods, the Spring and Autumn (770-476 BC) and the Warring States (475-221 BC)—was a time of political disunity and radical socio-political transformations. The Spring and Autumn period experienced further politicization and even militarization of jing, the development closely related to the changing political realities and the hardening of the state borders. The period saw a rapid growth in the number of cities. Walls were built to mark the limits of the states\(^ {23}\), and the growing enclosure transformed the discourse of jing. The Zuo zhuan 左傳 (The Chronicle of Zuo) clearly identifies jing as a site of militaristic confrontations.\(^ {24}\) Jing had to be defended and secured, and a state’s geopolitical identity came to be defined as that which was enclosed by four jing.\(^ {25}\) The solidification of jing was accompanied by more insular and isolating socio-political frame of mind. If in the Zhou the crossing of jing was a matter of ritual regulation and commemoration—the practice that was within the bounds of propriety—, in the Spring and Autumn period it came to be recognized as a violation and breach of propriety and correctness (fei li 非禮 and fei zheng 非正), as a result, greatly restraining the socio-cultural interaction across jing except through formally diplomatic and militaristic actions.\(^ {26}\) The period is characterized as the beginning of China’s ethnocentricism by Tao Jing-shen, who argues it was during the Spring and Autumn period that China came to see the world as being
composed of “the internal or the “civilized” center … surrounded by the uncivilized
world of the “barbarians.”  

The Warring States period that followed witnessed the discursive shift from jing 竟 to jing 境. In the Lüshi Chunqiu 呂氏春秋 (Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals), completed in the late Warring States period, the evidence of the change can be seen. As to what caused this shift, we can only speculate. One thing that we can observe is the absence of jing 境 in the records from the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn periods, from which we can conjecture that jing 境 was coined only in the Warring States period and came to replace the earlier territorial uses of jing 竟. By the time of Han, jing 竟 became fully established as a musical notion as evinced in the Shuowen and also in the Han dynasty commentary of the Zhou li by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200 AD). 

Jing 境 continued the territorial and militaristic discourses of its antecedent.

Enclosure and fortification of the states were intensified during the Warring States period. Following the rise of powerful “peripheral” states, the state of Zhou began to decentralize, and the antagonism between rivaling states deepened. Disintegration of the feudal system spurred the development of new socio-economic forms and the construction of numerous ramparts “to enclose the industrial quarters, the commercial streets and suburbs,” sketching the blueprint of archetypal Chinese city for later developments. These political and spatial transformations brought about a heightened awareness of territoriality on multiple levels of society. Jing delineated the political and economic border and the domain of a state, and its hardening meant increasing hostility amongst competing states.
Another important discursive development in the Warring States period was the emergence of the territorial notion *bianjing* 邊境 (frontier). The documents from the period describe *bianjing* as a source of unrest and trouble, the place where enemies dwell, and therefore, in need of constant watch and fortification. The parallelization between *bianjing* and *jing nei* 境内 (within *jing*), between the frontier and inland, surfaced as a common theme in the political rhetoric. Maps which visually translated such territorial discourse became an invaluable source of information during this time of ceaseless warfare, often playing a decisive role in military actions. The writings of contemporary political strategists all reveal the critical importance of territorial knowledge in state security.

Qin 秦’s conquest of Qi 齊 in 221 BC brought an end to the two and a half century-long political turmoil. The first dynasty, although short-lived, produced lasting transformations in the territorial conception and landscape of China. Upon unification, the Emperor Shi Huangdi 始皇帝 (259–210 BC) dismantled the internal walls and connected the external walls, constructing for the first time a “continuous barrier between China and the northern nomadic peoples.” The project, which later evolved into the Great Wall, fashioned a vision of internal solidarity and external hostility.

The earliest accounts of the pairing of *jing* 境 and *jie* 界 can be found in the records from the Western Han 西漢 period (206 BC–9 AD). Although not yet in the form of the compound noun *jingjie*, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (135–86 BC)’s *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian) makes combined references to *jing* and *jie* as in an example
“connected in jing, joined in jie” (jie jing rang jie 接境壤界). Jie, also signifying “border” and “boundary,” is found in the Erya 尔雅, the oldest extant dictionary from the third century BC. While pre-Han texts do not present jing and jie as related concepts, as the Shiji’s examples demonstrate the two concepts were jointly discussed in the Western Han. The gradual coming together of the two shows that jingga was a derivative of the discursive formations of jing.

Another important development in the Han was the heightening contrast between bianjing and zhongguo 中国, the frontier and the Middle Kingdom. The concept zhongguo was in use as early as in the Zhou dynasty, but it was only beginning in the Han that it came to be used in the opposite sense of bianjing. As the first dynasty to achieve lasting unification, the Han came to view itself as the Middle Kingdom, once again realizing the ancient vision of the sage-kings. The success of Han’s new identity as the Middle Kingdom was possible only to the extent of the effectiveness of the reverse identity, bianjing. Without clearly defining the frontiers and the outside, the identity of the Middle Kingdom would not stand firm. As Di Cosmo observes the discursive building of the Han empire was in direct correlation with the discursive building of the “other” empire—the “nomadic empire of the Xiongnu 匈奴,” the former occupying the Middle Kingdom, and the latter the frontier. The increasing emphasis on bianjing was one of the measures to reconstitute and reinterpret the north as the “other,” which in turn helped Han’s creation of its own self-image.

The zhongguo-bianjing dichotomy was more than just a geopolitical construct. It was also a cultural and moral construct, the dichotomy embodying the contrast between within and without, between civilization and barbarism. The Qian Han shu 前漢書 (The
History of the Former Han) openly expresses this opposition in the accounts that juxtapose the civilized life of the people of zhongguo and the “animalistic” life of people living in bianjing. The Middle Kingdom was conceived as an area enclosed by the Four Seas—the enclosure that was both geographical and socio-cultural. The revived notion of the Four Seas—which in the Zhou times referred not only to the four bodies of water but also to the four barbaric tribes surrounding the Middle Kingdom—as the limits of the Han’s domain once again highlights the vision of isolating enclosure. Based on this ideology of separation, some Han thinkers came to conclude that the fall of the Qin was caused by its failure to remain within the Four Seas. They argued the First Emperor failed to listen to the advice of Li Si 李斯 (280-208 B.C.), who warned him that the conquering of the Xiongnu was an unprofitable venture, and that the right way to deal with barbarian tribes was to leave them alone. In other words, the unnecessary and even self-destructive effort to incorporate the barbarian tribes into the Middle Kingdom eventually led to the Qin’s demise.

Comparable to the notion of the Middle Kingdom was the idea of tianxia 天下 (all under Heaven), which was also used to contest bianjing. The opposition of tianxia and bianjing reveals that Heaven in this case did not refer to a cosmological or universal phenomenon, but a political and cultural canopy that hung over the Middle Kingdom and did not extend over to bianjing. These developments demonstrate that the revival of the Middle Kingdom discourse and the resulting promotion of the vision of unified China were only possible through the construction of the frontiers. The claim of centrality had to be founded on the recognition of peripheries.
Yet despite the separatist political ideology, the breach of bianjing remained a huge concern for the Han government. For one thing, the neighbouring tribes continued to challenge the boundary drawn between zhongguo and bianjing. For another, the Han state itself still engaged in military expansion. Han’s legitimization of its own violation of the dichotomy is vividly captured in Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (cir. 179-127 BC)’s advice to Emperor Wudi 武帝 (156-87 BC) on the expansion policy. Sima wrote:

When a truly wise ruler has ascended the throne, how can you expect him to give his attention only to petty deeds and trifles, to be bound by the letter of custom and led by common ways, to abide only by the stories and traditions of the past, seeking nothing more than the approval and delight of his own generation? Rather will he honour lofty ideals and farsighted proposals, embark upon new undertakings to insure the continuance of the dynasty, and provide a model for ten thousand ages to admire. Thus will he strive with all his might to bring new lands and people beneath his sway and expend every thought to match the virtue of the life-giving earth, and with earth and heaven to form a triad! Is it not said in the Odes,

Beneath all heaven
There is no land that is not the king’s;
Throughout the borders of the earth,
None who are not his subjects!

Therefore, within the six directions and beyond the eight corners of the earth, wherever his virtue flows, if there is any creature that is not touched and transformed by his mercy, the wise ruler considers it a source of shame.

Now, within the borders of the nation, the men of China [zhongguo] with their hats and girdles all enjoy the highest blessing, and none are excluded or left out. But in the lands of the strange-mannered barbarians, in the distant regions of the foreigners, where our boats and carriages cannot penetrate and our people seldom set foot, the teachings of our government are as yet unknown and the wind of virtue which issues from our sovereign blows but faintly. Therefore, when they enter our borders they turn their backs upon duty and insult propriety, while within their own lands they commit all manner of wanton evil, banishing or assassinating their leaders. Among them, ruler and subject change places, and honourable and lowly are confounded; fathers and elders suffer for crimes they have not committed, and children and orphans are taken as slaves, bound and weeping. Then do they look toward our land and cry out in anger, saying, ‘We have heard that in China there is a ruler of supreme benevolence,
whose virtue is manifold and whose mercy is all-embracing, so that under him all beings find their just place. Why are we alone deprived of his blessing?’ On tiptoe they stand, gazing longingly like men in drought at a distant rainstorm. Even the cruelest of men would shed tears for them; how much more, then, must a great sage like our ruler be moved to pity by their plight!

For this reason he sent his armies north to attack the powerful Xiongnu, dispatched his envoys to hasten south and reprimand the headstrong rulers of Yue, extending his virtue to the lands on every side. Then the chieftains of the west and southwest came to him by the millions, swarming together like fish that battle their way upstream, begging to receive titles from the ruler of China. It was for this reason that he extended the boundaries to the Mo and Ruo rivers, moved the frontier to Zangge, opened up a way through Ling Mountain, and bridged the source of the Sun, building a new road for justice and virtue and establishing for the sake of posterity a new regime of benevolence and righteousness. Then may his mercy extend far and wide, bringing succour to every foreign land, and the remote regions will no longer be shut up; the dark and inaccessible places will be illumined with a great light of understanding, so that we in China may at last lay down our weapons and the barbarians may find rest from invasion and punishment; near and far will become one body, and China and the lands beyond it will together enjoy good fortune. Will that not be a joyous day indeed? To rescue the people from the sea of troubles in which they flounder and to serve the cause of the highest and most beautiful virtue; to turn back a dying age from the course of decay and ruin and to carry on the dynastic labours of the Zhou kings which were cut off: these are the urgent tasks which confront the Son of Heaven. Though the execution of them may mean toil for the common people, how can he cease on that account?

Sima justified the military conquest of the surrounding regions on two grounds: first, it is the privileged mission of the Middle Kingdom to save and liberate barbarians from their uncivilized ways by delivering civilization to them, and second, in this way troubles will cease as all will join the domain of one big Middle Kingdom. This totalitarian vision, far from creating a discourse of unity, intensified the antagonism between the Middle Kingdom and the frontier, the civilized and the uncivilized. What Sima put forth was the legitimization of invasive and dominating moves as civilizing and pacifying actions, carried out wearing the mask of a benevolent redeemer.
Overall, in the Han we notice intensifying polarization of the Middle Kingdom and the frontier, the development which became the backbone of the formation and continuation of the Han Empire and its sovereignty. The discursive construction of the Han Empire also relied on the production of the visual representations of its territory. The Han state charted the maps of the empire (yudi tu 奧地圖) for the emperor and the feudal princes. The maps also served ritualistic functions; for instance, the enfeoffment ceremonies included the presentation of the maps to the emperor, a public reaffirmation of the emperor’s right to and dominion over the territory.\textsuperscript{46} There were major breakthroughs in cartography; the technical advancement found in the Han maps are unmatched by contemporary maps from other parts of the world. In fact, the complex surveying and mapping techniques applied in the Han maps have caused some perplexity about “the lack of significant progress in cartographic techniques during subsequent centuries.”\textsuperscript{47} The advancement in cartography and the success of the imperial project were not unrelated: “both “empire” and “map” are discursive constructions, … defined in opposition to nonempires and nonmaps.”\textsuperscript{48} The mapping of the Han territory, in other words, was an indispensable part in creating the self-image as the Middle Kingdom and the image of the cultural other as the periphery, bianjing.

\textit{Jingjie}’s joining of the territorial discourse took place in the succeeding Western Jin 西晉 period (265-316). In the \textit{Sanguo zhi 三國志} (Records of the Three Kingdoms), written by the Western Jin historian Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297), \textit{jingjie} was used to refer to territorial border and boundary.\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Jingjie} continued the earlier geopolitical discourses of \textit{jing} and \textit{bianjing}, but it came to convey a stronger sense of area and domain compared
to the other two, employed, for instance, to describe the area assigned to each military
general to guard and fortify.\textsuperscript{50} In keeping with the territorial discourses of \textit{jing} and
\textit{bianjing}, \textit{jingjie} promoted the opposition between centre and frontier both in the
geopolitical and cultural dimensions, and such territorial uses of \textit{jingjie} can be found in
later historical documents, including the Southern and Northern Dynasties period
publication of the \textit{Hou Han shu} \textit{後漢書} (The History of the Later Han), the Tang
publications of the \textit{Liang shu} \textit{梁書} (The History of Liang), \textit{Jin shu} \textit{晉書} (The History of
the Jin), and \textit{Nan shi} \textit{南史} (The History of the Southern Dynasties), and the Song
publications of the \textit{Xin Tang shu} \textit{新唐書} (The New History of the Tang) and \textit{Tongzhi} \textit{通志} (General Records), the Yuan publication of the \textit{Song shi} \textit{宋史} (The History of the
Song), and the Ming publication of the \textit{Yuan shi} \textit{元史} (The History of the Yuan).\textsuperscript{51}

Another notable attribute that set apart \textit{jingjie} from the two earlier expressions
was its connection to internal territorialization; while the discourses of \textit{jing} and \textit{bianjing}
primarily focused on the level of empire and state, \textit{jingjie} permeated into the discourse on
lower levels of polity, including prefecture, county, even institutional and private estate.\textsuperscript{52}
\textit{Jingjie} came to represent administrative and economic units and boundaries within the
Chinese empire. The administrative \textit{jingjie} controlled and restricted the movement of
population, and economic activities taking place outside of legally designated \textit{jingjie}
were prosecuted.\textsuperscript{53} These discursive formations of geopolitical \textit{jingjie} demonstrate the
growing division and compartmentalization of the national geography and the increasing
complexity of power structure. This is not to say that prior to the discursive spillage of
\textit{jingjie} local administrative units did not exist in China. What the widespread use of
\textit{jingjie} does suggest, however, is the hardening of the administrative boundaries and the
strengthening of regional, institutional, and individual identities, constructed and disseminated through the production of gazetteers, maps, and writings of all kinds.

Forming the multi-levels of geopolitical and cultural border, boundary, and territory, *jing*, *bianjing*, and *jingjie* enriched the discourses of territoriality and ordered and shaped the land and people’s lives. It is important to note that the formation of these discourses was not a process of a linear transition from one to the next, but rather a gradual sedimentary accumulation that created a composite body of discourses. Together they constituted firm belief and knowledge that fundamental territorial and cultural divisions were not only politically necessary but also sagely measures instituted by the ancient sage-kings. The discourses of division and enclosure came to be understood as an essential component in establishing order and in constructing identity, belongingness, and ownership. Following this logic, expansionist policies were often frowned upon and were regarded as a cause of political instability and downfall, and the closing of the border (*bi jing* 閉境) came to be seen as a sign of a benevolent rule focusing on promoting the well-being of the people rather than on pursuing the political ambition of the ruler.

The territorial discourses of centrality and polarity remained strong even in times the Middle Kingdom could not live up to its name. Tao Jing-shen’s study of the Northern Song 北宋 (960-1126) attitudes towards the Khitans shows while in the official diplomatic letters to Liao 遼 (915-1125) the Song court acknowledged the Khitan empire as an equal partner and showed respect for its political sovereignty, in the internal documents circulated within its own court the ideology of the Chinese superiority over
the “barbarians” continued to prevail. Tao observes: “In these documents, officials asserted that the Sung attained legitimacy of reunifying all of China. … the Sung had extended its power to a thousand li beyond its borders and was in control of ten thousand countries. Remote “barbarian” kingdoms and peoples beyond the northern desert had come to pay tribute.” Yet the “barbarian” intrusion of the frontiers continued to plague the Middle Kingdom, becoming a serious political issue that demanded an answer: “Why did the “barbarians,” having been sinicized, still violate the frontiers?”—this was a question asked to the special examination candidates in 1037. That is to say, even in times when political reality betrayed the ideology of superiority and opposition, the territorial discourses which gave life to these ideas were sustained and even reinforced—as we see in the heightened philosophical endeavour in the Song to distinguish the “human” (viz. the Chinese) from the “barbarians.” The discursive nature of territory makes it difficult, even impossible, to throw out “Sinocentric hierarchy” as a “myth” as Yang Lien-sheng suggests. Yang’s call to differentiate political reality from myth is not an easy one, because the so-called “myth” continued to influence, if not political reality, the language of the people.

The discourses of jing, bianjing, and jingjie travelled with Chinese language, and their reverberations were felt in the territorial imagination of the neighbouring peninsular kingdom—Korea. Due to their use of the Chinese written language, the Koreans came to share the Chinese rhetoric of the dichotomy between the Middle Kingdom and the frontier, inside and outside, us and them. They regarded the Great Wall as a physical sign of the fundamental disparity between hua 华 (Chineseness) and yi 夷 (foreignness), the
separation that was scarred unto the surface of the earth, the wall dividing and enclosing hua and yi (jingjie hua yi 境界華夷). But instead of creating an image of political and cultural inferiority, the discourses of jing, bianjing, and jingjie helped the Koreans to be keenly aware of their geopolitical and cultural uniqueness, their distance and distinctiveness from China. The rulers and administrators of Koryŏ 高麗 (918-1392), continuing the militaristic discussions of these territorial discourses, erected the kyŏnggye (jingjie) steles 境界碑 along the state boundary as a reminder of the last armed confrontation and the victory won. In the Chosŏn 朝鮮 (1392-1897), as was in China, jingjie came to delineate and configure the local geography—throughout the country, kyo gyke plates (交界牌) were set up where two boundaries intersected to mark the limits of administrative authorities. Another significant development in the Chosŏn was the emergence of the notion “our country’s jingjie” (aguk kyŏnggye 我國境界), representing Chosŏn’s own domain of political authority and influence, the basis of its political independence. The idea of “our country,” of course, needed an antithesis—the “other country (t’aguk 他國),” and in the context of escalating nationalist sentiment, Qing China became the “other country” for Chosŏn. Indeed, the territorial discourses of jing, bianjing, and jingjie became a breeding ground for the ideas of nation and national identity, involving not only China but also Korea, Japan, and various northern states outside China’s borders. The impact of these territorial discourses still lives on in our time. Even though bianjing might have fallen out of use, jingjie still remains a crucial discursive basis in the continuing border disputes amongst East Asian countries, echoing many of the geopolitical issues examined in this chapter.
We have traced the changing geopolitical discourses of jing and have learned that as far as discourse is concerned jing and jingjie are inseparable, both contributing to the discursive building of territoriality. The isolated investigation of the two, therefore, would be an ahistorical attempt which overlooks their interactive and cumulative development. Such integrated development of jing and jingjie, as we will see, was shown not only in the development of geopolitical discourse, but also of religious, philosophical, and poetic discourses as well.

The discursive development of geopolitical jingjie reveals the unfolding of both horizontal and vertical territorialization, which not only divided and enclosed, but also hierarchically organized the world. The discussion of dichotomy is closely linked to that of hierarchy, splitting the world not just into “us” and “them,” but into “us” the superior and “them” the inferior, whether morally or culturally. In jingjie we also see the changing territorial expressions of power and of the society that grew in complexity, which gave rise to diverse forms of individual, regional, state, and national identities.

The exploration of the geopolitical discourse of jingjie is vitally important as a starting point for the rest of this study. Jingjie, in its earliest form, was a geopolitical discourse, yet this fact was often neglected in scholarly discussions which favoured conceptual investigation. Our discussion in this chapter brings us back to the oldest but still very active layer in the discursive unfolding of jingjie, and brings to light its fundamental connection to the formation and transformation of territoriality. The discourses of jing, bianjing, and jingjie situate at the centre of the evolving forms of power and their territorial expressions, and it is such linking of power and territory that
makes the overall discursive development of *jingjie* a socially significant phenomenon, affecting the land, the society, and the lives of people.

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2. Some modern dictionaries of the oracle bone script repeat *Shuowen*’s interpretation of *jing*, as we see, for instance, in Liu Xinlong 劉興隆, *Xin bian jiaoguwen zidian 新編甲骨文字典* (Beijing: Guoji wenhua chuban gongsi, 1993), 128-9. The systematic study of *jing*’s development, however, shows *xin* 辛 as its origin, see Ji Xusheng 季旭昇, *Jiaoguwen zigen yan 甲骨文字根研究* (Taipei: Wen shi zhe chubanshe, 2003), 623-5. Also see Li Leyi 李乐毅, *Hanzi yanbian wu bai li 漢字演變五百例 (Evolutionary Illustration of Chinese Characters)* (Beijing: Beijing yuyan wenhua daxue chubanshe, 2000), 178.
3. Guo Moruo’s interpretation was summarized by Xu Shan. In his essay specifically devoted to the analysis of the oracle bone character *jing*, Xu presents *jing* as the combination of *xin* 辛 and *xiong* 在里面, which he interprets as the “end of a ritual ceremony.” His was a little far-fetched attempt to bridge the gap between the oracle bone image and its *Shuowen* definition. Most importantly, he fails to support his reading of *xiong* with evidence. See Xu Shan 徐山, “Shi ‘jing’ 释 ‘竟’ (Interpretation of the Chinese Character “Jing” in the Form of Inscriptions on Bones or Tortoise Shells of the Shang Dynasty) *Shangluo shifan zhuanke xuexiao xuebao 商洛师范专科学校学报* (Mar. 2006) 20.1: 50-51.
5. Carrie E. Reed’s study of the *Shang shu 尚書* (The Book of History) shows that “crimes deserving of tattoo” required lowest fine substitution, and that “large numbers of crimes … were ordinarily punishable by tattoo.” In her investigation of the practice of tattooing in early China, she primarily traces the instances of *wen* 文 found in early texts, the approach that leads her to the conclusion that there is no concrete evidence of the widespread practice of tattoo in ancient times. Hsu, however, demonstrates the widespread practice of tattooing in early China, drawing on the study of the oracle bone script, bronze script, and archaeological evidence. See Carrie E. Reed, “Tattoo in Early China,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120, 3 (Jul.-Sep., 2000): 364-5.
7. Ibid., 617.
8. Inscriptions have been found that read: “Jing made this ritual tripod for Father Yi” and “Jing made this treasured sacrificial vessel for Jue.” The first inscription is found on *jing zha fu yi ge 竟乍父乙鬲* at the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada, and the second *jing zha bao yi jue 竟乍寳彜厥* at the Center for Archaeological Research at the Chinese School of Social Sciences. For the translation of the inscriptions, I referred to Shaughnessy’s study on the bronze vessels. See Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 112-3.
10 Ibid., 136-7.
13 [SKQS] Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200), Jia Gongyan 隔公彥 (Tang dynasty, 618-907), and Lu Deming 鄭德明 (cir. 550-630), *Zhou li zhu shu* (Notes and Commentaries on the Rites of Zhou), 30.17a.
Original Text: 凡國之為, 有泮樹之固, 邑亦如之. 民皆有職焉. 若有山川, 則因之.
14 *Yi li zhu shu*, 5.90a-91b.
15 *Zhou li zhu shu*, 8.12a-14b.
22 Li Feng (2006), 175, 187, and 301. Recent scholarship on the frontier reflects on its affinity to a zone or a region, rather than a line. For reference, see Bradley J. Parker and Lars Rodseth, eds. *Untaming the Frontier in Anthropology, Archaeology, and History* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2005).
24 [SKQS] Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (cir. 502-422 BC), Du Yu 杜預 (222-284), and Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648), *Chunqiu Zuo zhu zhu shu* 春秋左傳注疏 (Notes and Commentaries on the Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals), 3.38a.
25 For the discussion on the violation of *jing*, see *Chunqiu Guliang zhu zhu shu*, 32.16a-b and 37.7a. For the discussion on four *jing*, see *Chunqiu Zuo zhu zhu shu*, 35.7a. Also see [SKQS] Guliang Chi 竹梁赤 (575-221 BC), Fan Ning 范寧 (339-401), and Yang Shixin 楊士軒 (fl. 630). *Chunqiu Guliang zhu zhu shu* 春秋穀梁傳注疏 (Notes and Commentaries on the Guliang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals), 8.23a.
26 For the discussion on the socio-cultural inappropriateness of marriage arrangements across *jing*, see *Chunqiu Guliang zhu zhu shu*, 3.11b-12a, 5.8b, 5.15b, 5.33b, 6.2a-b, 7.18b, 9.12a, and 9.28b. Also see
The inseparable relationship between empire building and mapping has been explored in recent scholarship. See Matthew H. Edney, “The Irony of Imperial Mapping” in The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire, edited by James E. Akerman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 12.

Chen Shou describes the meeting of Liu Bei 劉備 (161-223) and Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220) at the border region as the meeting at jingjie. See [SKQS] Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297), Sanguo zhi 三國志 (Records of the Three Kingdoms), Wu zhi 吳志 (The Record of Wu), 13.7a.

Sanguo zhi, Wu zhi, 19.7a-b.

52 For the discussion on *jingjie* with regards to the border, boundary, and territory of prefecture, see *Song shi*, 488.18a, and *Yuan shi*, 45.21a-b; of county, see [SKQS] Luo Bi 羅泌 (b. 1131), *Lu shi 路史* (The History of the Path), 40.3b; and of institutional estate, see [SKQS] Agui 阿桂 (1717-1797), *Ping ding liang jin chuan fang lü e 平定兩金川方略* (Official Military History of the Jinchuan Wars), 51.7a, and [SKQS] Xie Min 謝冕 (cir. 1729) and Tao Cheng 廖成 (*jinsi* 1709), *Jiangxi tong zhi 江西通志* (Jiangxi Gazetteer), 124.16a.

53 The Tang law forbade the crossing of *jingjie* for personal reason. See [SKQS] Changsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (594-659), *Tang lü shu yi 唐律疏義* (The Interpretation of the Tang Law), 9.5a. The Qing law prohibited fishing outside one’s provincial *jingjie*. See [SKQS] Qinding da Qing huidian ze lie 欽定大清會典則例 (The Imperial Collection of Rules of the Great Qing), 114.8b. The *Da Qing lü lü e* records that on one occasion a Chinese fishing boat was captured at the Korean border for fishing illegally. The crews were prosecuted by the local Korean government. See [SKQS] San Tai 三泰 (18th c.), Xu Ben 徐本 (d. 1747), and Liu Tongxun 劉統勛 (1700-1773), *Da Qing lü lü e* 大清律例 (The Laws and Regulations of the Great Qing), 20.21a.

54 The development of these territorial discourses can be investigated in light of Foucault’s study of knowledge, which sees “history as inertia and weight, as a slow accumulation of the past, a silent sediment of things said.” See Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (Translated from the French by A.M. Sheridan Smith) (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 141.

55 The sage-king Yu 禹’s institution of the Nine Divisions 九州 of the world continued to be seen as a model of order by later generations. See *Shang shu zu shu*, 5.1a.


58 Yang argues the idea of Sinocentric world order is not founded on historical reality. He understands “myth” as the opposite of “reality.” Applying the theory of discourse, however, the sharp divide between reality and myth dissolves as both are considered to be discursive constructs. Yang’s study predates the introduction of the discourse theory. See Lien-sheng Yang, “Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order,” in *The Chinese World Order*, John K. Fairbank, ed. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 20-22.

59 Pak Yi-jang 帕立章 (1540-1622), *Yongdam chip 延潭集* (The Collected Works of Yongdam), 1911, 4.9a-b Samhaekwan si sŏ 山海經詳序. For other discussions of *hua yi jingjie*, see Sim Ôn-kwang 沈彦光 (b. 1487), *Ôch on chip 魚村集* (The Collected Works of Ôch'on), 1572, 5.17b mang Changbaeksan 望具白山. Also see Yi Kyŏng-yŏ 李敬輿 (1585-1657), *Paekkang chip 白江集* (The Collected Works of Paekkang), 1684, 4.34b sil 失題.

60 Yi Ik 李禹 (1681-1763), *Sŏngho sa sŏl 星湖堂說* (Trivial Sayings by Sŏngho), 3.20b-21a Konghŏmbi 公嶮碑. Yi recounts the history of the *kyŏnggye (jingjie)* stele 境界碑 in the town of Konghŏm, erected in the second year of King Yejong 貞宗 of Koryŏ (1107) after Yun Kwan 尹璇 (d. 1111) drove out the Jürchen force from Hamkyŏng province.

61 Anon. *Kyesan kichŏng 遊山紀程* (Records of Trips to Kyesan), 1976, 5.6b tori 道里. Kyogye plates 交界碑 with two or three doors, which had the names of the prefecture and post station written, were set up along the major roads in the Chosŏn.
Yi Myŏng-han established jingjie as the basis of Chosŏn’s political independence. While detained in the Qing for his pro-Ming stance, Yi was asked to explain his calling of the Qing as the “other country 他國.” To this Yi answered: “Each has its jingjie. Why not call it the other nation?” Original text: 答以各有境界. 何以不謂之他國. See Yi Myŏng-han 李明漢 (1595-1645), Paekchu chip 白洲集 (The Collected Works of Paekchu), 1646, paekchu Pyŏlko 白洲別稿. 3, tap Kang Kong-hŏn 答姜公獻. The expression “aguk kyŏnggye 我國境界” is found in Yi Minhwan’s writing. See Yi Min-hwan 李民寏 (1573-1649), Cha-am chip 紫巖集 (The Collected Works of Cha-am), 6.18b wŏl kang hu ch’urok 越江後追錄.

For a discussion on Chosŏn’s jingjie, see Qinding da Qing hui dian ze lie, 114.8b; on Japan’s jingjie, see [SKQS] Li Xian 李賢 (1408-1466), Ming yi tong zhi 明一統志 (The Unified Record of the Ming), 89.6b; on the northern states, see [SKQS] Aixinjueluo Hongli 愛新覺羅弘曆 (1711-1799), Huang chao wen xian tong kao 皇朝文獻通考 (Comprehensive Studies of Imperial Documents), 284.28b, [SKQS] Fu Heng 傅恒 (d. 1770), Ping ding zhun ge er fang lü e 平定準噶爾方略 (The Official Military History of Zhun-ge-er), 29.15a, and Ping ding liang jin chuan fang lü e 平定兩金川方略, 1.4a tian zhang er 天章二.
I.2 The Buddhist Spiritual Discourses of Jingjie

The expression *jing* is found in early Daoist texts: in the *Zhuangzi* to convey the idea of “boundary” (i.e. “distinguishing the boundary between honour and shame 辨乎榮辱之境”)¹ and in the *Huainanzi* to represent the idea of “territory” (i.e. the sages let their hearts roam in the “territory where there is no outside 無外之境”).² In these early appearances, however, *jing* was used largely in a metaphoric sense and was not explored as a special philosophical concept.

It was Buddhism that transformed *jing* and *jingjie* into major philosophical notions. Introduced to China during the Eastern Han period, Buddhism became an important channel through which the Chinese came to contact with new ideas and customs from India and her neighbours. One of the important changes that occurred as a result of this encounter was the emergence of the territorial discourse of spirituality. While cosmology—not territoriality—in Buddhism has been the focus of much scholarly attention, it should be noted that the Buddhist understanding of cosmos, world, and reality was founded upon a particular conception of territoriality. In Mahayana Buddhism the Buddha Land, not only as a paradisiacal destination to be reached after death but also as an ever-present spiritual reality, was envisioned as a territory composed of multiple spiritual domains, which were clearly demarcated and identified. This new territorial vision of spirituality had to be communicated to the Chinese, and this was achieved by adapting and expanding on the territorial discourse of *jingjie*.

The task of translating from phonographic Sanskrit into logographic Chinese was a challenging one. The early translators of Buddhist texts had to take into consideration both the sound and meaning of the original Sanskrit concept and find a commensurable
expression for it in the Chinese language. The translated texts show us that in rendering the spiritual world and reality of Buddhism, the pioneering translators turned to the expressions *jing* and *jingjie*. *Jing* appears in the *Si shi er zhang jing* 四十二章經 (The Sūtra of Forty-two Chapters), the earliest extant Chinese translation of Sanskrit Buddhist text, translated into Chinese by Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaraksha in 67 AD during the Eastern Han period.³ In the *Fo shuo nei zang bai bao jing* 佛說內藏百寳經 (The Sūtra of the Hundred Gems of the Inner Treasury as Expounded by the Buddha)⁴, translated by Lokakṣema in the late Eastern Han period between 156 and 189 AD, an early use of *jingjie* is found.⁵

The readers might recall at this point that *jingjie* as a geopolitical territorial notion only emerged in the Western Jin, forty-five years after the fall of the Eastern Han. The earlier appearance of *jingjie* in the Buddhist discourse has led some to identify *jingjie* as first and foremost a Buddhist concept, initially presented by the Buddhist and later adapted by others.⁶ However, to regard *jingjie* as an independent conceptual development is to overlook its relatedness to *jing*—the two are often used interchangeably in the Buddhist discourse—and the discursive tradition of *jing* which predates the introduction of Buddhism. As we saw earlier, the coming together of *jing* and *jie* was a gradual process: in the Western Han geopolitical territorial discourse, the joint appearance of *jing* and *jie* is already witnessed. When we overemphasize the spiritual meaning of *jingjie* in Buddhism, there is a danger of failing to notice the shared territorial connection. Instead of deeming *jing* and *jingjie* as altogether new spiritual ideas, it seems more appropriate to think of them as expressions adapted to translate the idea of territoriality in the new spiritual context.
On the whole, jing and jingjie were used to translate four distinct Sanskrit Buddhist terminologies: viṣaya, gocara, artha, and prajñā. Defined as the ‘‗spheres‘ of the six senses and their objects, comprising colour-form, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and thoughts and feelings,’ viṣaya connotes the bodily and material gratification. Gocara—literally meaning “pasture ground for cattle”—signifies “domain” or “range.” In Buddhism it refers to the domain of the six senses. Artha implies “aim, object, goal, purpose,” “an object of perception,” and “meaning and significance.” It also stands for “wealth,” one of the four goals of human life. Lastly, prajñā represents “wisdom, perfect knowledge,” and “direct insight into the truth taught by the Buddha, as a faculty required to attain enlightenment.”

One might ask why the translators of Buddhist sutras decided to employ the same expression to translate four distinct, even conflicting, ideas. As it appears they did not seem to have problematized the association of jing and jingjie with multiple meanings. One possible explanation can be that jingjie was able to render the territorial and spatial connotations found in the Sanskrit terms. Jingjie, signifying border, boundary and territory, can communicate the spatial implications—sphere, domain, and range—of viṣaya and gocara. A discourse of division and enclosure, jingjie also effectively describes the idea of boundedness and limitedness of human existence conveyed in viṣaya, gocara, and artha—particularly, the boundedness and limitedness to senses and objects which constrain human beings from experiencing the true reality. Jingjie, in this sense, signifies “circumstance” or “circumstantial knowledge,” an essentially conditional existence. Paradoxically, jingjie was also used to translate prajñā, wisdom or perfect knowledge, which transcends the conditional existence of human beings. The connection
between *jingjie* and *prajñā* can be better understood when we examine the nature of wisdom envisioned in Buddhism. The perfection of wisdom, *prajñā paramita*, is explained as an act of “crossing to the other shore,” crossing from the domain of illusion to the domain of emptiness. Here, wisdom is presented in territorial terms, and the attainment of wisdom a journey across the border.

Through the complex course of translation *jingjie* became established as one of the central notions in Chinese Buddhist thought. The development of *jingjie* discourse in Buddhism had important ramifications. First, the translation into *jingjie* amplified the territorial implications—more specifically, the dividing and enclosing quality—inherent in the Sanskrit concepts. The territorial discourse of *jingjie* brought order to the spiritual world and reality as it had done to the physical reality. Strong expression of both horizontal and vertical territoriality is visible in the Buddhist discourse of *jingjie*. On the one hand, we see the horizontal binary opposition at work: the world and reality are divided into “illusory” and “true,” or “unreal” and “real” antitheses of *jingjie*. On the other hand, we also see the operation of vertical hierarchy and progression: the world and reality are composed of various levels of existence, and enlightenment can be attained by climbing to the highest level. The horizontality and verticality of *jingjie* discourse were not always on congenial terms with each other. The contention between the horizontal binary discourse and the vertical progressive discourse was manifest in the emergence of the two competing approaches to enlightenment—the sudden and the gradual: the former envisioning enlightenment as a sudden leap from illusory existence to true existence, and the latter as a gradual movement towards a goal through continuous cultivation.
The two modes of territoriality are visible in the representations of Buddhist cosmographies; both in the images of Theravāda’s single-world system and Mahāyāna’s multiple-world system, we can observe a clear divide between the non-Buddha realms and the Buddha realms, and also an upward movement towards the divine realms. In these cosmologies, *jingjie* represents spiritual but also ontological and epistemic domains which make up world-existence, the vision of reality seen through the Buddha eye, the enlightened eye.

Important to note is the fact that these cosmological visions were firmly founded on a particular conception of territoriality, the one that was intricately rooted in the Indian vision of kingdom and kingship. Orzech’s study has shown the importance of sovereign imagery in the making of Buddhist—especially Mahāyāna—cosmologies, and how such imagery became the ground for the Buddhist claiming of “world transcendence” but also “world conquest.” The image of the Buddha as the world conqueror and world-existence as his territory is clearly established in the *Ren wang hu guo bo re bo lo mi jing* (Transcendent Wisdom Scripture for Humane Kings), the sutra that became the textual authority in the creation of national protection Buddhism in China. Many a time this geopolitically based spiritual vision was articulated again in the geopolitical world by the rulers who aspired to become “humane kings” and realize the *jingjie* of the Buddha on earth. In this sense, the Buddhist use of the expression “jingjie” is particularly fitting as it aptly captures and translates the underlying geopolitical discourse. *jingjie* as a territorial expression of religious and political power—or “cosmocratic authority” as Orzech puts it—demarcated and enclosed, creating world-existence that is “impersonal, structural, and positional.”
Such cosmological framework carved out identities based on ontological and epistemic differences. Determining to which spiritual *jingjie* one belongs, however, has long been an issue of contention. While the distinction between the animal, human, and divine realms is easily accepted, the exact stage in human spiritual progress—and therefore, spiritual authority—is certainly more difficult to assess and agree upon. History has shown us that often such spiritual authority was translated politically and reinforced the already existing sociopolitical division and power. The result was the merging of dominant political ideology and religious orthodoxy, both now justified in ontological and epistemic terms.

Second, the sharing of one expression “*jingjie*” contributed to the forging of stronger connections amongst the divergent ideas. The result was the reconciliation of the two seemingly contradictory domains: the domain of senses, illusion, and confining conditions and the domain of perfect wisdom, reality, and ultimate emancipation. The joining together of the two domains is most clearly displayed in the development of Chan Buddhism which pursues the discovery of the ultimate in the present everyday reality, the merging of the horizons of being and Being. The sixth patriarch of the Chan School, Huineng 惠能 (638-713), revolutionized the Buddhist understanding of *jingjie* when he declared that “true crossing” (*zhen du* 真度) does not consist in crossing over to the “other shore” but in recognizing that the “other shore” is found where one stands right now. This view was a direct challenge to the more common understanding of *jingjie* as the crossing from “this shore” to “that shore”—the journey that involves three, five, or nine stages (*du* 度) depending on the theory, particularly evident in Pure Land Buddhism. Huineng
dissolved the distinction between “this shore” and “that shore,” a fundamental foundation in the gradational and teleological understanding of jingjie.\textsuperscript{14}

The effect of this new spiritual realization—the dissolution of binary opposition so essential in the conception of Buddha Land and spiritual goal—was a radical transformation in the envisioning of jingjie, a creative poetic reinterpretation of jingjie that became the hallmark of Chinese Chan Buddhism. Communicating this meditative spiritual wisdom—the wisdom that cannot be transmitted through words—was a challenging task. Chan Buddhists located the locus of the merging of “this shore” and “that shore” in the mind (xin 心), as a result making “xin jing 心境” the new focus in their spiritual quest. The relationship between xin and jing in Chinese Buddhist thought is a complex one. As far as the six senses are concerned, “xin jing” refers to one of the six sensory domains (liu jing 六境) associated with “thoughts and feelings” (yi 意), just as the “jing of colour (se jing 色境)” is with the eye (yan 眼). In this sense, jing functions as a conceptual unit for describing and classifying the existence in the sensory world into “six roots and their jingjie,” which as Daoshi 道世 (cir. 660) expounds, “do not infringe on each other.”\textsuperscript{15} Xin and jing, however, are also juxtaposed as contrasting ideas. Xin, representing the inner and the locus of consciousness, is contrasted with jing, the outer and the phenomena at large. The xin-jing opposition is called to attention when explaining knowledge formation as the consequence of xin (individual consciousness and the subject of knowing)’s encounter with jing (outside world and the object of knowing).

The Chan Buddhist understanding of xin jing was built on the premise of xin-jing opposition. But instead of affirming, the Chan Buddhists sought to challenge and overthrow the subject-object binary by identifying it as an imaginary construct; as the
Tang dynasty Chan Master Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (8-9th c.) remarked: “The common people seize jing, and the Buddhist monks xin, but the true teaching lies in forgetting both xin and jing.”¹⁶ “Forgetting” here does not denote putting the two out of one’s mind but rather transcending the mode of existence and knowing based on the subject-object divide. The opposition is abolished when one recognizes the inseparability and eventual oneness of xin and jing. This spiritual insight was wonderfully captured and articulated by Chan Master Niutou Farong 牛頭法融 (594-657) in his influential work Xin ming 心銘 (The Mind Inscription).

Opening the eyes and seeing forms,
Xin arises in accord with jing.
Outside xin there is no jing,
Outside jing there is no xin.
Extinguishing jing with xin,
Both are interfered.
When xin is quiet, jing also is quiet.
Not releasing, not grasping.
Jing is extinguished together with xin,
And xin disappears together with jing.
When neither arises,
There is stillness and empty luminance.¹⁷

Farong expounds the fundamental interdependence and, more importantly, unity of xin and jing, of consciousness and phenomena. This meant that for the Chan Buddhists “xin jing” represented a paradoxical truth of oneness, the coming together of the subject and object, the merging of “this shore” and “that shore,” and in this paradoxical truth was found spiritual freedom, a new mode of being, bound neither by outer world nor by inner self. The division of the phenomenal and the spiritual that once overshadowed the Buddhist understanding of the world was dispelled in the Chan vision of xin jing. The
Chan understanding of xin jing had a lasting influence on later conceptualization of jingjie, as the overcoming of dichotomic thinking—in particular, the obliteration of the subject-object divide—became identified as one of the characteristic features of jingjie discourse.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{The Poetico-Spiritual Discourse of Jingjie in Chan Buddhism}

The task of conveying this new spiritual truth—the fusion of the phenomenal world and the spiritual world, however, was a challenging one. The fact that this truth was specially transmitted outside the scriptures meant that conventional religious expressions were not up to the task. The much controversial debate over the complete abolishment of language also was not useful in producing a viable solution. What was needed was the invention of a new expressive mode fit for communicating the new religious knowledge: a new communicative mode that offered an alternative to the traditional religious language based on descriptive narratives and extensive commentaries, a new religious language capable of capturing the spontaneous and intuitive reality and of opening up the world for meditation—in other words, the poetic language.

The Chan masters found in poetry the perfect medium for conveying the synthesis of the phenomenal and the spiritual. In particular, they noticed the epistemological and methodological affinities between Chan meditation and mountain-and-water poetry (\textit{shanshui shi} 山水詩). The latter’s ability to seize the moment without expounding or philosophizing, but most importantly to do so with the absence of agency, had a great appeal to Chan practitioners who used poetry to describe the experience of personal spiritual enlightenment and to confer spiritual instructions.\textsuperscript{19} In both cases, the goal of
Chan poetry was to capture the reality of emptiness in which neither the subject nor the object existed through the poetic representation of *xin jing*. *Xin jing*, in this context, came to take on a new meaning—“the territory of mind”: mind not understood as the locus of subjective consciousness but as the enlightened mind, the Buddha mind. *Xin jing*, in other words, represented the territory of the enlightened mind, the world seen through the Buddha eye; and poetically rendered, *xin jing* came to embody “poetico-spiritual territory,” the poetic manifestation of individual spiritual attainment.

The subtle integration of spirituality and poetry and the creation of poetico-spiritual *jingjie* are demonstrated in the story of the Tang dynasty Chan master Chonghui 崇慧 (d. 779). The *Wu deng hui yuan* 五燈會元 (Collected Essentials of the Five Lamps), a Southern Song compilation of Chan stories, records a conversation between a student monk and Chonghui, the abbot of Tianzhu (Heavenly Pillar) Monastery. The student begins a series of inquiries with an intriguing question:

僧問：如何是天柱境？
The monk asked: What is the *jing* 境 of Heavenly Pillar?

師曰：主簿山高難見日，
To this the master replied: “The Book Keeper Mountain is so high that it gets in the way of seeing the sun.

玉鏡峰前易曉人.
Before the Jade Mirror Peak it is easy to understand oneself.”

Both the question and the answer are loaded with meanings and can be interpreted on multiple levels. However, if we have to simplify the picture, we can say there are two main ways of approaching this dialogue: the poetic approach and the spiritual approach. On the one hand, the question may be about the scenery—the poetic territory—of Heavenly Pillar Mountain where Chonghui’s monastery was located. In this context, the answer can be read as a scenic description—the representation of poetic territory—of the
distinctive features of the mountain. On the other hand, the spiritual implications are too transparent to be missed. The question can be read as an inquiry about Chonghui’s spiritual attainment or about the maxim of his establishment—in other words, about the spiritual territory of the monastery and its founder. Chonghui’s response, in this light, presents a summation of his spiritual wisdom: it is not through canonical learning (symbolized by the Book Keeper Mountain) but through self-reflective meditation (implied in facing the Jade Mirror Peak) that one encounters the spiritual truth. But to separate the poetic and the spiritual interpretations in this manner would be to forego the very purpose of this dialogue and to undo the impact of its achievement—namely, the merging of the poetic and spiritual discourses of jingjie. The conversation shows more than just an instance of allegorical speech but represents the jing of Heavenly Pillar as a poetico-spiritual territory, the territorial expression of Chan spirituality. The discussion of Heavenly Pillar as a poetico-spiritual territory continues in the remainder of conversation.

問：如何是天柱家風？
師曰：時有白雲來閉戶，
更無風月四山流

問：如何是天柱山中人？
師曰：獨步千峰頂，
優游九曲泉。

The monk asked: What is the family tradition (jia feng 家風) of Heavenly Pillar?  
The master replied: At times white clouds come and block the gates, and there is not even the wind and the moon to meander in the four mountains.  
The monk asked: How is the person in Heavenly Pillar Mountain?  
The master replied: Alone treading the thousand peaks, he leisurely roams the nine bends spring.

What this anecdote represents is the amalgamation of poetic life with spiritual life, not just in the sense of the figurative framing of religious experience, but of poetic language’s active becoming of religious language. The vision of religious life described by Chonghui
was a poetico-spiritual life unfolding in the poetico-spiritual territory of Heavenly Pillar. Herein we notice that the connection between Chan Buddhism and *shanshui* poetry was grounded in their common endeavour to articulate the understanding of “territory,” that is, in their sharing of the discourse of *jingjie*. Their collaboration has often been explained as an imagistic development. But it is important to realize even their imagistic connection originated from mutual effort toward *territorial* representation.

Another important discursive development in Chan poetry was the linking of poetico-spiritual territory with the problem of perspective, best illustrated in the Tang dynasty Chan master Kefu 克符 (cir. 860)’s theory of four *jing*. In his poem “Paper Garment Monk’s four poems extolling the crossing of the four *jing* 紙衣和尚頌臨濟四境詩,” Kefu presents the four *jing* of spiritual enlightenment in connection with poetic representation: “seizing the person but not *jing* 奪人不奪境,” “seizing *jing* but not the person 奪境不奪人,” “seizing both the person and *jing* 人境兩俱奪,” and “seizing neither the person nor *jing* 人境俱不奪.”21 Here, spiritual attainment is rendered in the four different ways of perceiving the world, the ways that are unmistakably poetic in nature. Kefu echoes the *xin-*jing* binary* we examined earlier in his *ren* (person)-jing* formulation: *ren* representing the conscious agent or subject and *jing* the phenomena or objective world. Similarly, the highest level of spiritual attainment is expounded by him as the obliteration of both *ren* and *jing*, of the subject and the object.

The four *jing* signify four distinct poetico-spiritual territories, stages, or horizons, which illuminate the coming together of aesthetic and spiritual perspectives. The transition from incomplete views, to the complete view of fullness, and finally to that of emptiness establishes the realization and embodiment of emptiness as the point of
convergence between the spiritual and poetic ideals. Kefu’s theory of four 莹 had a huge impact on the Chan envisioning of poetico-spiritual territoriality, and was adopted by many Chan masters who deemed it as an important spiritual insight. Its influence was also felt in the modern scholarship on 莹jie, particularly in Wang Guowei’s conception of “ying with I 有我之境” and “ying without I 無我之境.”

On the whole, we can say Kefu approached 莹 as an epistemological inquiry of perspective, commensurable to the western philosophical notion “horizon.” 莹jie has been translated as and compared to “horizon”—as, for instance, we saw in Tang Junyi’s conception of 莹jie as “world/horizon.” A closer examination of the two reveals notable correspondences, particularly with regards to their affiliation with territorial discourse and the problem of perspective. Etymologically the two share very similar origins: the root of horizon is horos, which in Greek means “boundary, limit, frontier, and border”; horizein, derived from horos, denotes “to divide or separate as a boundary; to mark out boundaries, and limit.”22 The Greek imagination of territorial boundary, however, differed from that of the Chinese in that while 莹jie was quadrilateral, horizon was circular—the difference which probably stemmed from the distinct experience of the continental and oceanic worlds. The image of horizon as “the separating circle” became an influential discursive and methodological framework particularly in the study of perception. In the fields of optics and astronomy, horizon became a principal paradigm for the scientific investigation of vision. In the field of philosophy, horizon became an epistemological framework signifying the “boundary of human knowledge”—the conception of knowledge that was intrinsically connected to the problem of seeing. As an epistemological concept, horizon came to represent the boundary of human knowledge that is “finite at any given time,
but … can be extended indefinitely, since we can always conceive of a standpoint enabling us to transcend the current boundary of our knowledge.” Husserl employs the expression to elucidate perception as the perceiving of both “inner horizon” and “outer horizon” of the object. Heidegger uses horizon in the sense of a “vantage point from which one can view certain matters, ask and answer appropriate questions about them,” and at the same time, points out the importance of finding a vantage point located farther away in order to unveil a wider horizon. Overall, we notice horizon as a discursive framework primarily concerns the problems of seeing, of concealing and unveiling, and their connection to knowledge.

*Jingjie*, likewise, especially as it pertains to Chan poetry, underscores the important connection between seeing and enlightenment. Chan emphasizes *guan*—which literally means the act of “seeing” but in the Buddhist context denotes “meditative visualization”—as a principal mode of meditation, more so than other Buddhist sects. Poetry as an embodiment and expression of individual perspective and perception aided and accompanied the Chan learning of “observing the true mind (*guan zhen xin*).” In this light the four *jing* suggested by Kefu can be seen as the poetic manifestation of meditative visualization, in which four different perceptions of and perspectives into the world and reality are revealed. Ultimately, the highest poetico-spiritual *jingjie* of Chan poetry was believed to be the moment of enlightenment in which the ontic divide between subject and object that got in the way of true understanding disappeared.

The close association of *jingjie* with the moment of enlightenment has created the impression of antagonism between *jingjie* and *gongfu* (*工夫*) (work or effort). Indeed, the
knowledge of jingjie devoid of the concern for effort became a target of Neo-Confucian reproach and criticism of Chan Buddhism; that in stressing the experience of unity, Chan understated the need for critical thinking and laborious learning. The relationship between jingjie and gongfu became a contentious topic of intellectual discussion, involving the almost universal battle between genius (innateness) and effort (cultivation) and their relation to creativity and spirituality.

The dissolution of the subject-object split and the resulting achievement of the unity of “knowing and being” came to be regarded as the common goal in both Chan enlightenment and poetic enlightenment. Above all, the idea was adopted and expanded by the Song dynasty’s Jiangxi School of poetry, dedicated to exploring the poetic potentials of Chan. By describing how all things appear to the enlightened eye, the members of the school tried to capture the moment of sudden enlightenment when both the subject and the object cease to exist. Poets such as Han Ju 韓駒 (d. 1135) and Wu Ke 吳可 (jinshi 1109) openly discussed the resemblances between the learning of Chan and that of poetry—Han, for instance, asserted when enlightenment is complete and one’s eyes are corrected, one can simply trust the movement of hand and all will be written well. Such interaction between poetico-spiritual jingjie and Chan poetry was aptly summarized in a poem by the Koryŏ scholar and writer Yi Saek 李穡 (1328-1396):

心與蓮花境界融 The mind and the lotus, their jingjie merge.
內外不分功自熟 Inside and outside not divided, the work matures naturally.

The conception of jingjie as the territory of individual’s poetico-spiritual perception continued, and so did the efforts to evaluate and rank various degrees of poetico-spiritual jingjie. Wang Guowei’s theory of “three life jingjie” which he expounded in three
separate poetic lines was a continuation of the centuries-long endeavour to comprehend the spiritual and the poetic as a joint phenomenon—the endeavour that still lives on in the Chinese scholarly and literary circles today.28

The discursive formation of jingjie played a crucial role in the development of Buddhist spirituality in East Asia. The discourse of jingjie was used to shape and communicate distinct visions of spiritual authority and identity. Unfolding vertically it helped create spiritual authority and identity based on one’s place in the hierarchical jingjie ladder which represented the sum-total of one’s cumulative effort and faith. Unfolding horizontally it helped represent the experience of enlightenment as a sudden leap from blindness to sight, from illusory existence to true existence. But as the Chan discussion on xin jing illustrates, the vertical and horizontal vectors of jingjie intersected, creating a more complex vision of spirituality. The negation of the xin-jing dualism marked the end of the identity of independent and conscious subject which was transcended by the spiritual identity of the Buddha mind. This, however, did not lead to the complete refutation of dichotomic mindset, but in fact gave way to the creation of another dichotomy: the shifting of the dichotomy from the opposition of xin and jing to the opposition of enlightenment and non-enlightenment. The vertical vision of spiritual progress also found its expression in Chan spirituality, as we see in Kefu’s envisioning of jingjie as vertically organized poetico-spiritual territories. In other words, both the horizontal and vertical unfolding of jingjie discourse contributed to the constitution of spiritual authority which was rendered territorially as both being on the side of enlightenment (horizontal) and being close to enlightenment (vertical).
Overall, as the geopolitical discourses of jingjie constructed dichotomy and hierarchy in the geopolitical sense, the Buddhist discourses of jingjie did so in the epistemic and ontological sense by forging the division and opposition between the subjective (inner) and the objective (outer) and by categorically organizing levels of existence; and as we will see, such discursive development also had a significant bearing on the development of poetic jingjie discourse.

1 Chen Guying, Zhuangzi jin zhu jin yi 莊子今注今譯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 14.
2 Huainanzi 淮南子 (d. 122 BC), Huainanzi 淮南子 (Taipei: Zhongguo zi xue ming zhu chen bian yin ji jin hui, 1977), 708.
3 Two instances of jing are found in the text. In Chapter 12 jing is used in the sense of “phenomena”—as in “It is hard for people to stay unmoved on perceiving a phenomenon 睹境不動難.” In Chapter 33 jing signifies “circumstance”—as in, the one pursuing the truthful way “should confront the circumstances in front of him undauntedly 精進勇鋭不畏前境.” See Si shi er zhang jing 四十二章經 (Sūtra of Forty-two Chapters), juan 12 and 33. The English translation comes from The Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters, translated and annotated by Venerable Cheng Kuan (Taipei: Vairocana Publishing Co., Ltd., 2005), 17 and 34.
5 Notice the expressions “the realm of One Buddha” (yi fo jingjie 一佛境界) and “the realm of the present people” (xian ren jingjie 現人境界) in the Fo shuo nei zang bai bao jing 佛說內藏百寶經 (Sūtra of the Hundred Gems of the Inner Treasury as Expounded by the Buddha). See Qianlong da zang jing 乾隆大藏經 (Emperor Qianlong Edition of Great Buddhist Canon) (Taipei: Bao yin fo jing liu tong chu, Chuan zheng youxian gongsi, 1997-1999), vol. 42, 397.
9 Ibid., 18.
I.3 The Poetic Discourses of Jingjie

The discussion of jing as a poetic discourse—its association with poetic scenery or landscape—did not emerge until the Southern and Northern Dynasties period (420-589). The accounts of jing found in the literary texts from earlier periods clearly demonstrate that the expression was used in the geopolitical sense. For instance, most examples of jing in the Han yuefu 樂府 appear in the context of the “frontier” narrative in which the poems describing the life at the frontier (bianjing) contributed to the discursive construction of the Han Empire as the Middle Kingdom.

The geopolitical discourse of jing in literature continued through the Three Kingdoms period (220-280) and into the Jin dynasty (265-420). The “Record of the Peach Blossom Spring” (Tao hua yuan ji 桃花源記), written by the Jin poet Tao Qian 陶潛 (365-427), presents jing as a territorial border. The author describes the Peach Blossom Spring’s separation from the world as the “severing of jing” (jue jing 絕境), denoting that it was the spatial and political severance from the world that made the mythical land possible.¹ About three centuries later, the Tang poet Wang Wei 王維 (701-761) retold the story in the style of yuefu. His reiteration also includes a reference to jing, but differing from Tao’s earlier use of the expression, Wang employed jing to convey the idea of poetic scenery, portraying the Peach Blossom Spring as a “spiritual territory” (ling jing 灵境).² The comparison of the two accounts reveals that within the context of literary development the geopolitical discourse of jing preceded the poetic discourse, and that the two different discourses of jing framed and affected the interpretation of the story.

The earliest texts in which we find the discussion of jing as an aesthetic discourse come from the Southern and Northern Dynasties period. In the Wenxin diaolong 文心雕
龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), a systematic study of literary theories written in the fifth-century, the author Liu Xie 刘勰 (cir. 465-520) introduces the Buddhist discourse of jing—its connection to prajñā, the ultimate wisdom—into the aesthetic discussion. Liu asserts in his literary analysis that the Eastern Jin writers had the tendency to focus on the problem of either being or nonbeing. The solution to this “problem,” he argues, lies in the ultimate wisdom (prajñā 般若之絕境) which will enable one to “penetrate the source of mystery.”加入 the Buddhist epistemology and literary theory, Liu establishes jing as the key to understanding the essence of literary creation.

In the sixth-century writings of Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531), we see the early signs of jing’s association with the description of scenic beauty. Although Xiao alludes to jing’s Buddhist connection—for example, in his discussion of the distinction between true and illusory jing—他 also clearly presents jing as a scenic landscape for leisurely travel: as in the expression “roaming in the scenic landscape” (you sheng jing 游勝境) in which jing is identified as a site for playful wandering (you 游). You—easy and leisurely wandering—emerged as a principal mode of experience in both shanshui poetry 山水詩 (mountain-and-water poetry) and tianyuan poetry 田園詩 (field-and-garden poetry) of the Southern and Northern Dynasties period. Xiao’s linking of jing and you firmly establishes the former as a poetic territory, existing both in the physical landscape and its poetic representation.
Problematizing the Imagistic Understanding of Poetic Jingjie

In the study of Chinese poetic arts, jing(jie) has often been translated as and compared to “poetic scenery” or “poetic landscape.” Jing(jie)’s association with scenery and landscape—the two key concepts in the Western landscape tradition—has led to many insightful scholarly investigations with which we have become familiar. Reflecting the influence of the Western critical discourse, these studies have focused on identifying and analyzing poetic imagery, the essence of landscape poetry and painting. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the modern study of Chinese poetry has been dominated by the theory of poetic imagery, the trend that is clearly noticeable in both Chinese and Western scholarships on the subject.

The earliest example of the imagistic approach to jingjie can be found in Wang Guowei’s theory which has had a monumental influence on the modern study of Chinese poetry and interpretation of jingjie. In the Ren jian ci hua 人間詞話 (Remarks on Ci Poetry in the Human World), Wang expounds jing as the outcome of harmonious integration of “objects 物” and “sentiments 情.” Together with yi 意 (intent or meaning), jing is presented as one of the two defining components of literature. Wang divides poetic jing into two subcategories: “jing with I 有我之境” and “jing without I 無我之境”: in the former, it is “I,” the observer, who observes the object (the world), and in the latter, the observer “I” is obliterated and the object is seen from the point of view of the object. As it has been pointed out by many, the idea of jing put forward by Wang—particularly, his formulation of “jing with and without I”—resonates with the idea conveyed in the Western literary notions “poetic scene” and “poetic view.” Jing for Wang represented poetic imagery imbued with emotion and jingjie “poetic state.”
Later scholars followed Wang’s line of thought and continued to explore jingjie from the imagistic point of view. The result of their scholarly endeavours was the framing of jingjie as a question of “seeing,” the development most evident in Mou Zongsan’s study. Mou interpreted jingjie as “vision,” a subjective mode of seeing the world from one’s level of cultivation which stands in opposition to the objective mode of seeing; in other words, jingjie, as he saw it, essentially concerned the issue of perception. A similar approach is also found in Ye Lang’s investigation where jing is identified as a poetic mode of seeing, distinguished from the ordinary mode of seeing represented by xiang. Together, jing and jingjie were expounded by Ye as the object and goal of poetic representation.

In the Western scholarship, James Liu’s formulation of jingjie as the “fusion of emotion and scene” has been a widely accepted view. Although we can say this idea was grounded in pre-modern conceptualization—for instance, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692)’s parallelization of jǐng 景 and qíng 情, and Buyantu 布顏圖 (cir. 1740)’s definition of jingjie as qíng-jǐng—Liu’s highlighting of this particular explanation and his linking it with the search for poetic imagery in Chinese poetry has strengthened the imagistic understanding of jingjie.

Overall, these developments make us wonder if our understanding of jing and jingjie has been influenced by the age-old Chinese literary tradition, as much as it has been by the Romanticist and Imagist view of poetry. Indeed, in explaining the relationship between scenery and emotion embodied in jingjie, scholars have often resorted to the theory of poetic imagery, the primary legacy of the Romanticist and Imagist poetics—the principal example being Wang Guowei. The poetic exploration of the relationship
between image, self, and nature—the defining focus of the Western landscape tradition—has also shadowed the modern study of jingjie and Chinese poetry in general. The close linking of jingjie with poetic imagery has led some to regard jingjie as a special aesthetic concept and phenomenon, separated from the geopolitical and religious discussions. Jingjie has largely been studied as a literary trope and not as a discourse with many faces; and even when jingjie’s multi-faceted development was recognized, often these observations were dismissed in favour of literary investigation.12

In making these claims, I am not suggesting that imagistic development was absent in Chinese poetics. In fact, in the discourse of xiang 象 we find the kinds of conundrums we encounter in the Western theories of image and seeing—the problems of imitation, mediation, and revelation. The relationships between the signifier and the signified, phenomenal world and symbolic world, and reality and representation are discussed in the discourse of xiang, the imagistic in-between concept and phenomenon.

There is also jĭng 景, another expression frequently translated as “scenery” or “landscape,” and used interchangeably with jing(jie)—at least, in the field of poetry and art. When we consider their discursive formations, however, huge differences can be discerned. Most importantly, jĭng is a temporal and visual and not a territorial discourse. Various meanings associated with jĭng reveal a strong influence from the word’s earliest meaning—the sun and sunlight 日光. The oracle bone version of jĭng shows the sun 日 shining on a city 京, representing an illuminated city which the Erya interprets as a sign of greatness.13 The Erya also notes that jĭng’s connection to the sun is manifest in its representation of the change of the four seasons and the agricultural pattern of life that follows the cycle of germination, growth, harvest, and rest.14 In the Xunzi 荀子, a
reference to jīng’s connection to the sunlight is also found, where it was used to convey the idea of darkness and light.¹⁵ These early references help us to understand the later connection between jīng and the landscape, which brings to the fore similar temporal and visual qualities. Jīng captures the temporal manifestation of the landscape, the transforming vistas of the world following the change of seasons. Jīng is the momentary aesthetic illumination that brings to light the aesthetic in everyday world.

The commensurability between jīng and jīng is found in that both are aesthetic units used in the discussion of poetic landscape, but while the former underlines its territorial link, the latter highlights its illuminative quality: jīng is the extent to which aesthetic illumination reaches.¹⁶ Another major difference between the two discourses is found in their magnitude: jīng remained primarily within the bounds of climatic and visual discussion; jīng, on the other hand, was a much more complex discursive phenomenon interlacing geopolitical, religious, aesthetic, and moral domains.

**Jingjie as Poetic Territory**

The significance of the poetic discourse of jīngjie does not lie in its continuation of the visual discourse, but in its introduction of a new territorial conception of the poetic world—a territorial way of thinking about, imagining, depicting, and talking about the poetic world. If, in the context of xiāng discourse, mountains and waters were seen as poetic imagery which “unfolded” and “revealed,” in the discursive framework of jīngjie they were represented as a territory, a bounded space. We should be careful not to be deceived by the seeming “boundlessness” of the Chinese landscape that has become so “natural” to us. Despite the impression, shanshui and tianyuan poetry were none other
than the poetic representations of bounded spaces, the particular types of poetic space which were clearly demarcated and constructed.

Here, understanding the distinction between “nature” and “shanshui” or “tianyuan” becomes very crucial. Nature refers to the collective phenomena of the physical world whose antithesis is human or human creations. Shanshui and tianyuan, on the other hand, indicate bounded spaces. Mountains and waters, despite the popular symbolic and moral interpretations of the shan-shui juxtaposition, have always functioned as geographical and cultural boundaries—that is, as jingjie. Shanshui poetry and paintings aim at representing the poetic territory consisting of and demarcated by mountains and waters. Fields and gardens, needless to say, are delimited and inhabited spaces for human activities. The recognition of poetic territoriality prompts us to rethink about the prevalent belief that the Chinese “landscape” arts exhibit a relationship between nature and human that is not based on domination and control but on harmonious coexistence. To make such a claim is to fall into the dualistic understanding of nature and human, and, moreover, to assume what is represented in the Chinese “landscape” arts as a vision of “nature.”

*Jingjie* became firmly established as a poetico-territorial discourse by the Tang, and its effects were seen in the rapid growth of poetic territories which were defined, delineated, and mapped out through the process of aesthetic division and enclosure. The construction of poetic territories was a two-tier development, involving the territorialization of poetic knowledge and geographical knowledge.

On the one hand, the discursive development of poetic *jingjie* gave rise to the territorial conception of poetry—more specifically, *jing* became a defining feature of poetry and the poetic description of *jing* the goal of poetic creation. The writings of Tang
poets and literary theorists demonstrate their creative attempts to comprehend and
expound poetry in light of *jing*. In his much influential essay, “*Shi ge* 詩格 (Standards of
Poetry),” Wang Changling 王昌齡 (698-765) asserts that poetry is comprised of three
*jing*—wu *jing* 物境 (the *jing* of things), qing *jing* 情境 (the *jing* of sentiments), and yi *jing* 意境 (the *jing* of intent).\(^{17}\) Wang clearly posits *jing* as a territorial notion, distinguishing it from *xiang* and *wu*. *Jing*, he argues, is to be “entered through the heart 心入,” while *xiang* is to be “sought 搜求,” and *wu* “spiritually encountered 神會.” His theory of three *jing*, therefore, can be seen as a territorial classification of poetry, sketching the world of poetry composed of the three domains or territories. His categorization reflects both horizontal and vertical territorialization: the three *jing* can be interpreted as mutually existing domains but also as progressional stages—the former signifying stylistic choices and the latter levels of poetic competence. Wang’s theory of three *jing* became the forerunner of the territorial exploration and analysis of poetry, and was soon followed by the upsurge of terminologies that describe various poetic territories, including the “immortal *jing* 仙境,” “spiritual *jing* 神境,” “wondrous *jing* 妙境,” and “true *jing* 真境.”

As the types of poetic territory increased, so did the endeavour to render detailed representations of them. The Tang poet and theorist Jiaoran 皎然 (730-799) saw “seizing of *jing* 取境” as the quintessence of poetry and identified the nineteen types of *jing* in his *Shi shi* 詩式 (Models of Poetry).\(^{18}\) The nineteen types—expressed in the form of nineteen characters—were interpreted as “moods” by Owen and “poetic styles” by Wong.\(^{19}\) But the close reading of the text reveals Jiaoran’s elucidation of the nineteen types was an extension of his discussion of the “seizing of *jing*,” an intense and perilous search for *jing*.
which he compares to the entering of the tiger’s den to catch the tiger. His description of various jing shows that the construction of poetic territory involved not only the portrayal of the physical and spatial attributes but also that of the poetic situations, sites, objects, and sentiments. In assigning value-laden titles to the types of jing—such as “loftiness 高” and “reclusiveness 逸”—Jiaoran made clear that any discussion of poetic territory necessarily entailed the determination of what qualifies as poetic territory and what does not. The art of grasping jing, therefore, was an art of dividing and enclosing, the carving out of poetic territory from undistinguished everyday reality. The discourse of poetic territory inspired the poets and theorists of many generations, and the exploration of jingjie as boundary that determines the limits of poetry continued, as we see in the Qing literary critic Liu Xizai 劉熙載 (1813-1881)’s exposition on poetry’s relation to jing:

| 花鳥纏綿 | Flowers and birds blending together, |
| 雲雷奮發 | Clouds and thunder forcefully moving, |
| 弦泉幽咽 | Strings and fountains quietly singing, |
| 雪月空明 | The snow and the moon empty and bright: |
| 詩不出此四境 | Poetry does not exceed these four jing. |

Poetic territory, however, was not to be sought in words or in a collection of subject matters, but in the heart-mind (xin). Herein the merging of the poetic and spiritual discourses of jingjie, which we earlier examined in the Chan constitution of poetico-spiritual territory, becomes important. The literary discussion of xin jing often echoed the Buddhist premises of the xin-jing relation. Excellent poetry was seen as the outcome of the fusion of the inner xin and outer jing, the coming together of subjective consciousness and objective world which was also explained as the fusion of si 思 (thought) and jing 境 and of yi 意 (intent) and jing 境. The perfect correspondence between xin and jing was
regarded as the pinnacle of poetic achievement: the unmatched excellence of Tao Qian’s poetry, said the Yuan literary critic Fang Hui 方回 (1227-1305), was due to the seamless correspondence between the poet’s xin and jing.22

The poetic xin jing thus created was believed to exude naturalness—it formed and grew naturally (ziran sheng cheng 自然生成 and ziran er chu 自然而出).23 This naturalness, however, was to be cultivated, and herein the connection between poetic jingjie and personal jingjie is made manifest. The Northern Song landscape artist Guo Xi 郭熙 (1020-1090) noted the effortless correspondence between mind (xin) and hand (shou 手) occurs when one’s jingjie reaches maturity.24 The varying degree of interaction between mind and hand gave rise to different aesthetic jingjie: for instance, the sagely jing (sheng jing 聖境), divine jing (shen jing 神境), and transformative jing (hua jing 化境) as expounded by the Qing dynasty literary critic Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆 (1608-1661).25 What is important to note is that the creation of aesthetic jingjie was seen as a territorially inspired act. Poetic creation was often explained as an act of “opening up (kai 開)” one’s own poetic territory, the act of carving out and laying claim on personal and unique poetic territory. Fang Dongshu 方東樹 (1772-1851) pointed out in order to open up personal poetic territory (shi jing 詩境), the poet has to avoid copying the ancients; the result of imitation, he argued, would be like “placing a bed on a bed, and building a house on a house.”26 The Qing poet Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1798) also emphasized the importance of creating personal poetic territory which, he argued, cannot be obtained through book learning alone.

Poetic territory (shi jing) is most expansive. One seeks it inside the book and gains it outside the book. Poetic territory is most expansive. Even
though a literatus masters ten thousand volumes of books until he exhausts his life and energy, he cannot get to its deep centre (kun ao 閫奧). Women and commoners with simple learning by chance compose one or two phrases before which even Li Bai and Du Fu would bow in admiration. This is the greatness of poetry. Those who write poetry must understand these two principles, and then can seek poetry inside the book and gain it outside the book.²⁷

*Kun ao*, translated here as “deep centre,” literally refers to “deep inner chamber” and a “centre of a domain,” and was used by Yuan to express the attainment and experience of poetic creativity as a territorial endeavour, a journey towards the centre of poetic territory. The primary goal in writing poetry, Yuan asserts, is to create expansive poetic territory, and to do so writers should be careful not to adhere inflexibly to poetic meters and rules which would lead to the narrowing of poetic *jingjie*.²⁸ Great poetic accomplishments, therefore, were described in terms of disclosing and claiming of hitherto uninhabited poetic territory. Ye Xie 葉燮 (1627-1703), for instance, praised Su Shi’s poetry for “opening up a *jingjie* that has not been in the past or present.”²⁹ What we see in these discursive developments is the territorialization of poetic individuality, the result of which was the formation of territorial understanding and representation of individual poetic personality and competence, as conveyed in the expression “Li Bai’s *jingjie*.”³⁰

This way of understanding and evaluating individual poetic accomplishment is still widely popular among the lovers and students of Chinese literature. The conception of personal poetic territory also assured that the reading and experience of poetry be seen as a territorial act, as an act of entering into and roaming about the poet’s territory. This is precisely what Xu Fuguan explored in his study of *jingjie* as an individual spiritual territory. He aptly presented *jingjie* as a hermeneutic and epistemic ground, and the act of reading as an encounter between the *jingjie* of the author and that of the reader. What Xu
did not point out, however, is that *jingjie* discourse framed not only poetic individuality but also individuality at large.

*Jingjie* discourse contributed to the territorial constitution of individual lives. Within the *jingjie* discursive framework, one’s life was seen to be composed of various territories: for example, the territory or domain of childhood and adulthood, and the territory of favourable circumstances and unfavourable circumstances. The expression “circumstance”—literally denoting the act of “encircling” and “encompassing”—is a particularly fitting translation that captures the territorial implication of *jingjie*. In a similar fashion, *jingjie* can be understood as a circumstance that encircles oneself, a territory one finds oneself in. Life also was believed to consist of temporal territories which marked various stages in one’s life journey: for instance, the territories of fifties and seventies were considered to be momentous stages in life. Moreover, major threshold events in life, particularly death, were interpreted as the experience of entering another *jingjie*. All these developments led to the territorial ordering and framing of individual life, giving rise to the understanding that various territories one occupies and experiences in life determine and shape one’s individuality—in other words, the territorial knowledge of individuality.

The territorialization of temporality was not limited to the bounds of personal life but was also applied to overall history. Each historical epoch manifested itself as temporal territory—as we see in the expression “the *jingjie* of the Tang people.” This meant that the distance between present and past was also translated as a territorial problem; the popular juxtaposition of “present *jingjie*今日境界” and “*jingjie* of the ancients 古人境界” exposes the territorial rendition of a temporal relation and also of a value relation, since
the contrast was often made between the deplorable state of the present *jingjie* and the glorious days of the past *jingjie*. Accordingly, the solution to overcoming such temporal separation was found in territorial actions. The territorial conception of temporality made the past accessible, not through turning back the clock but through locating and entering its territory. The belief that the past can be revisited and relived in such a manner influenced many restoration movements, both intellectual and literary. As Mencius asserted the literati were to find friends in history and build friendship with the ancients through the reading of their poems and writings.\(^3\)

The construction of poetic territories, however, also involved the territorialization of geographical knowledge. The literary configuration of poetic territories and individuality was accompanied by the equally fervent zeal to discover and even fashion various poetic territories in the physical environment. Numerous travelogues and local gazetteers tell us that the popular practice of literati travel was driven by the desire to experience extraordinary *jingjie*, or even better, to discover hitherto unknown *jingjie*. The joy of strolling in the picturesque *jingjie* and the elation of stumbling upon an exceptional *jingjie* in an unexpected place are repeatedly mentioned throughout these records.\(^3\) In these developments we see *jingjie*, the poetic territory, acting as the building block of the poetic world. The copious textual and visual records of travels are signs of poetic territorialization, the charting of poetic territories scattered throughout the country.

The desire to inhabit and claim poetic territories brought about geographical transformations. The development of landscape gardens in China was spurred precisely by the effort to create and recreate poetic territories that can be physically inhabited. The Ming dynasty manual of garden architecture, the *Yuan ye 园冶* (*The Craft of Gardens*),
shows just how much meticulous planning and expertise went into the making of
gardens.\textsuperscript{38} Every corner of the garden had to be transformed into a poetic territory, and
that was the work of the “master” no mere workmen could realize. As the author Ji Cheng
計成 (cir. 1635) emphasized the key to creating a serene and poetic oasis in the middle of
the busy and dreary urban setting was the establishment of clear boundaries which
separated one world from another. The Tang poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) created his
own poetic space by planting bamboo around his house, and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) by
making a pond with a bowl.\textsuperscript{39} The physical size of these spaces did not matter since, as
Tao Qian pointed out, the size of the poetic territory corresponded with the expansiveness
of the poet’s heart: “when the heart is distant, the place will naturally become remote 心
遠地自偏.”\textsuperscript{40}

Taken as a whole, the poetic territory created by \textit{jingjie} discourse was literary,
individual, historical, and geographical, and the territorial conception of poetry meant that
poetic experience also had to be a territorial one. Aesthetic living, in this context, was
envisioned as the act of inhabiting the poetic territory. In the discourse of \textit{jingjie}, poetry
grounded human beings and made dwelling possible—the prospect Heidegger and
Bachelard saw in poetry.\textsuperscript{41} The knowledge of the multiple levels of poetic territoriality
leads us to a new understanding and appreciation of the various spatial modes of aesthetic
experience that accompanied \textit{jingjie} discourse, namely travelling (\textit{xing} 行), dwelling (\textit{ju}
居), and wandering (\textit{you} 遊).\textsuperscript{42} Indeed, only when we recognize the territorial nature of
the poetic world do we begin to make sense of the significance of these aesthetic
experiences.
Let us look at “wandering” (you) as an example. The fact that poetic jingjie was not only found in poetry but also in physical environments, persons, and historical periods suggests that the act of poetic wandering also was a multifaceted activity. First of all, you signified wandering in the poetic territory created by the poetic arts. The experience that stemmed from the reading of poetry and viewing of paintings was often characterized as wandering. This kind of wandering, of course, involved more mental and spiritual exercise, and to distinguish it from physical wandering, the Chinese invented the expression wo you 臥遊 (reclined wandering) — the spiritual journey through the poetic territory in one’s own private space. The poetic and visual representations of shanshui and tianyuan which inspired and allowed for such spiritual wandering were deemed to be excellent. The Song art critic Zhao Xigu 趙希鶚 (fl. 1180-1240) described his viewing of Li Cheng 李成 (919-967)’s shanshui painting as an experience of wo you during which he lost all consciousness of physical surroundings and spiritually wandered in the poetic territory depicted by the artist. Wo you helped one to reach beyond the limits of immediate reality and enter into the poetic world where aesthetic freedom could be attained.

Due to its spiritual connection, wo you has often been compared to the idea of xiaoyao you 逍遙遊 (free and easy wandering) found in the philosophy of Zhuangzi 莊子. However, there exists an essential difference between the two notions: while wo you principally refers to the aesthetic experience of poetic territories, and thus remains a phenomenological quest, xiaoyao you is an ontological idea which denotes the transcendental and free state of being. Zhuangzi described “free and easy wandering” as a state of being which conforms to the universal flux, the state which can be achieved
through the forgetting of self and surrounding. Whether phenomenological or ontological, wandering was an important mode of experience and being in the domains of both poetic arts and philosophy.

Second, you expressed the experience of wandering in the personal poetic territory. The territorial conception of poetic individuality meant that shanshui and tianyuan were not only found in poetic works or in the physical realm, but more importantly also in the individual heart-mind. The reading of poetry, therefore, was more than just an experience of wandering in the poetic territory found in the work; it was also an experience of wandering in the poet’s personal poetic territory, the wandering in “the hills and valleys in the poet’s breast.” The possession of poetic territory in the heart-mind was seen as a sign of true genius and artistry, distinguishing masters from craftsmen. But to make this aesthetic encounter complete, it was required that similar poetic territory be found in the heart-mind of the reader. The Chinese poets dreamt of such a reader—like Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) who longed for the “appreciative heart” (shang xin 賞心) to join him in his contemplation of landscapes; for only in the presence of an understanding reader would the work of poetry glow in its true colours. What this shows is that you represented interactive wandering: not a furtive or forced entry into another’s poetic territory, but a sharing of each other’s poetic territory which led to a deep mutual appreciation. The interactive quality of you was also evident in the social realm, where it was used to represent the act of associating with and establishing relationship with someone: to you with Scholar Li meant to befriend him, and to you at Scholar Li’s meant to pay him a friendly visit. In fact, the popular literary genre you ji 遊記 (travelogues or, more literally, the records of you) can be read as an attempt to create a virtual representation of the
experience of wandering to be shared with the reader; that is, the writing and reading of travelogues was an essentially interactive activity.

Third, you also represented wandering in the poetic territory of the past. The poetic works from the past embodied not only the poetic territory of the poet but also that of the historical period: the experience of reading the poetry of Li Bai allowed the reader to wander in the poetic territory of the Tang people. The idea that the poetic territory of the past could be wandered was grounded in the belief in its continued existence, even through the change of time. The possibility of wandering in the past poetic territories implied that they could also be revived in the present. The endeavour to embody and reinterpret the poetic territories of the ancients, in fact, has been one of the major driving forces in the development of Chinese poetry, resulting not only in the continuation of poetic tradition but also the invention of new poetic modes.

Fourth, you represented playful physical wandering in natural and man-made landscapes. The playfulness of you is highlighted in its connection to the related character you 游 (to swim and to play) which appears in the famous saying by Confucius “gentlemen should you in the arts 游於藝,” which can also be translated as “gentlemen should play with or enjoy themselves in the arts.” You 游 and you 游 are often used interchangeably to express playfulness, but with a slight difference: the former refers to playful movement on land, and the latter in water. The comparison between wandering and swimming is an insightful one; the Chinese, in fact, often likened the act of wandering in the garden to that of the fish swimming in the pond, both believed to be fun-filled appreciation of environment.
The importance of play in aesthetic living has been explored by Gadamer who examined the link between human physical movement and play. According to him, instead of asking why humans play, we should say humans also play, much like the animals and other natural occurrences. Gadamer drew attention to another often neglected aspect of playing; that is, "all playing is a being-played." The idea of "being played" is particularly significant for our understanding of playful wandering in the poetic territory. Carefully chosen and built poetic territories in the physical environment became the site of playful wandering, which transformed the wanderer into a part of the poetic representation. As Clunas pointed out the journey through the Chinese garden is not a linear one where there is a fixed point of departure and a destination; on the contrary, there are hidden paths and unexpected turns and views that continue to surprise the visitor who is led through the various points in the poetic territory. More importantly, the garden’s complex system of view-framing incorporates the visitor into the overall poetic territory, causing the human to become an active part in its creation. In other words, the Chinese literati garden was a walled, spatial extension of a poet-official’s inner jingjie over which he could exercise physical and discursive control.

While acknowledging the enclosing and demarcating effects of jingjie discourse, we have to be careful not to conclude that the poetic discourse of jingjie was delimited to the exploration of already pre-allotted and secured poetic territories. Herein jingjie’s capacity of “opening up” becomes crucial. Expressions such as “the self-opening of one jing 自開一境” and “the opening up of another jingjie 別開境界” remind us that jingjie signified an “opening,” a poetic territory that disclosed new possibilities. The opening up of jingjie proceeds from the desire to overcome the boundedness and
limitedness found in jingjie discourse. The effort to locate openness within enclosure echoes the Buddhist search for perfect wisdom in the dusty realm. The Chinese poets and artists were well aware of the disclosing power of poetic territory—as Ji Cheng put it “the garden, though made by humans, is opened up from heaven 雖由人作, 莫自天開.” The opening up of jingjie allows us to envision poetry’s relation to mountains and waters and fields and gardens as a territorial relation as opposed to a visual relation. The Ming artist and theorist Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636)’s statement “poetry takes mountains and rivers as its jing, and mountains and rivers take poetry as its jing 詩以山川為境, 山川亦為詩為境” points out that the inseparability of poetry and these environments is grounded in their mutual opening up—that poetry opens up mountains and rivers and causes them to bloom 開, and that mountains and rivers open up poetry and cause it to bloom. Mutually opening up, poetry and mountains and waters usher each other into a new poetic realm.

The discursive development of poetic jingjie played a crucial role in the forging of literary power which, together with geopolitical and philosophico-religious powers, generated different forms of identity and space. The poetic discourse of jingjie was particularly important for the construction and perpetuation of the literati class, the holders of this new form of power. Jingjie as poetic territory was regarded as the embodiment of poetic authority and identity, representing their level of cultural and moral cultivation and defining them as men educated in literature—wen ren 文人. This poetic territory was expressed in their writings, personal dwellings, and most importantly, in their person. On the whole, jingjie discourse illustrates such literary power was constituted and represented in territorial terms, which defined, legitimized, and
strengthened the supremacy of the literati class. The territorial discourse of *jingjie* had a lasting impact on the conception of poetic knowledge in China and wherever Chinese writing was used. Advancing the territorial knowledge of poetry, *jingjie* continued to draw up the boundaries of poetry and the poetic world well into the nineteenth-century.

**Part I: Concluding Remark**

The first part of this dissertation was devoted to the laying of the theoretical foundation for studying *jingjie* as a discourse of territoriality. We have examined the complex discursive formations of *jingjie* as geopolitical, spiritual, and poetic territories which developed as creative responses to the changing historical environment. The identification of *jingjie* as “territory,” especially with regards its religious and aesthetic uses, might seem a little perplexing to some who are familiar with imagistic interpretations of *jingjie*. Some might argue that to describe *jingjie* as spiritual and poetic “territory” is to subject its religious and aesthetic meanings to the dominion of geopolitical discourse, undermining their unique philosophical significance. I do acknowledge the need for flexibility of expression when translating critical concepts of Chinese origin into English. As James Liu pointed out expressions such as *qi* 氣 can be and sometimes has to be translated into more than one English expression depending on the context. But at the same time, I also believe the relatedness of expressions in the original language needs to be recognized and respected. Indeed, as far as discourse is concerned, there are definite advantages in discussing *jingjie* as integrated territorial discourse. Most notably, it makes the connections between different *jingjie* discourses
more evident: after all, one cannot deny that the poetic discourse of *jingjie* was fundamentally connected to *jingjie* as geopolitical and spiritual discourses.

While, for the sake of analysis, the three types of *jingjie* discourse were separately investigated, it should be noted that in real life the three intermingled to form interactive discourses of composite nature, as we saw in the development of the poetico-spiritual discourse of *jingjie*. Such discursive amalgamation gave rise to multifaceted yet integrated territorial knowledge which manifested itself in a variety of socio-cultural settings. The impact of such discursive interaction was particularly evident in the unfolding of the Neo-Confucian movement in which geopolitical, philosophical, and poetic discourses came together to construct the understanding of the “*jingjie* of the sages,” a fundamental idea and goal in the development of Neo-Confucianism. In what follows we will investigate the formation of the Neo-Confucian discourses of sagely *jingjie*. As we will see, the intricate vision of sagely territory can be captured only when we consider the many faces of *jingjie* discourse.

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the Wenxin diaolong is found in Liu’s discussion of fu (chap. 8, quan fu), where he uses the expression “hua jing 畫境” to denote “to distinguish”: “these writers first gave the namefu to their writings, consciously distinguishing [hua jing] it in this way from poetry.” (Translation by Shih, 46.) Such use of jing affirms its territorial implication.


5 Ibid., 1.9a Zhong shan jie jiang 鍾山解譯.


8 Mou Zongsan (1998), 73.


11 James J.Y. Liu 理 (1962), 84.

12 Rickett, for example, explored the development of jingjie as a geographical and Buddhist concept, but later focused only on the literary development of the idea. See Rickett (1977), 23-24.

13 Guo Pu and Xing Bing, Er Ya zhu shu, 1.3b.

14 Ibid., 5.15b.

15 Xunzi relates “dull brightness” and “clear brightness” to inner and outer jing. See [SKQS] Xun Kuang 荀況 (312-230), Xunzi 荀子, 15.12b. For English translation, see Burton Watson, Xunzi: Basic Writings (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 137.

16 Jìng has been defined as “jing, the limit or boundary of the illuminated area 景, 境也, 明所照處有境限也.” See [GJTSJC] li xiang hui bian 曆象彙編, qian xiang dian 乾象典, 29.9.23b shi tian 謝天.

17 Wang Changling 王昌齡 (698-756), Shi ge 詩格 (Standards of Poetry).

18 Jiaoran 皎然 (750-779), Shi shi 詩式 (Models of Poetry) in Wang Zhenfu (2003), vol. 1, 294.


21 For example, Sikong Tu 司空圖 (837-908) identifies the essence of poetry as the coming together of si 似 and jing, and Su Shi 苏轼 (1037-1101) of yi and jing. See [SKQS] Sikong Tu 司空圖 (The Collected Writings of Sikong Biaosheing), 1.9b-10b yu Wang Jia ping 威予 輔靖評詩. [SKQS] Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329-1410), Shuo fu 说郛 (The Environ of Fiction), 81.13a ti Yuanming yin jiu shi hou 蘇明完於詩後.

22 Fang Hui 方回 (1227-1305), Tong jiang ji 桐江集 (The Collected Works from Tong River) (Taipei: Guoli zhongyong tushuguan, 1970), 86-91 xin jing ji 心境記.

23 See Yao Nai 鄧之立 (1731-1815), Xibao xuan quan ji 慕剋軒全集 (The Complete Writings from the Xibao Studio), (Taipei: Shijie shu ju, 1960), 222. See Xu Xiongtai 徐熊飛 (1762-1835)’s “Xiu zhu lu tan shi wen da 修竹盧談詩問答 (Questions and answers on poetry from the Bamboo Trimming Hut)” in Shi wen si zhong 詩問四種 (Four Kinds of Questions on Poetry) with commentary by Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1526-1590) et al. (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1985), 264.


30 [SKQS] Xie Min 謝旻 (cir. 1729) and Tao Cheng 陶成 (jinshi 1709), ed. Jiaxing tong zhi 江西通志 (Jiangxi Gazetteer), 160.17b-18b. The Song dynasty poet Wu Han 吳沆 (1116-1172) described his brother’s experience of reading Li Bai’s poetry as “entering Li Bai’s jingjie.”

31 In his commentary on the Great Learning, the Ming dynasty Neo-Confucian Cai Qìng stated from the age of fifteen one belongs to the jingjie of adulthood. See [SKQS] Cai Qìng 蔡清 (1453-1508), Si sheng yin 四書蒙引 (Introduction to the Four Books for Beginners), 1.49a.

32 The Qing Neo-Confucian publication, the Ri jiang Si Shu jie yì, describes how in life people will encounter two jing—shun jing 順境 and ni jing 逆境. [SKQS] Bashashi 鄰沙里 (cir. 1677) and Chen Tingjing 陳廷敬 (1638-1712), eds. Ri jiang Si Shu jie yì 日講四書解義 (Daily Lectures on the Four Books and Their Commentaries), 2.41b.

33 The Chosŏn Neo-Confucian Yi Sangjong made the connection between jingjie and aging when he said he has “drifted along to the jingjie of seventies.” See Yi Sangjong 李象靖 (1710-1781), Taesan chip 大山集 (The Collected Works of Taesan), 27.19b tap Sŏ Sangbo 宋永思. Yi Kwangjong 志光靖 (1552-1627), Sosan chip 小山集 (The Collected Works of Sosan), 3.14b-15a tap Ch’oe Ippu 蔣鬆立夫.

34 Ha Hongdo 河弘度 (1593-1666), Kyŏmjae chip 謙齋集 (The Collected Works of Kyŏmjae), 7.9b-11b che Sŏng Sangbo 孫承祚.

35 See Su Shi 魏絳 (1037-1101)’s discussion on understanding the poetic jingjie of the Tang people. [GJSJC] li xue hui bian 文學會編, wen xue dian 文學篇, 233.640.53b. Also see Lu Shiyong 陸時雍 (1608-1651), gongsheng 供聲 (gongsheng 1633). Shi jing zong lun 詩經總論 (Comprehensive Discussion of Poetic Mirror) in Li dai shi hua xu bian 歷代詩話續編 (Continued Edition of the Remarks on Poetry through History), edited by Ding Fubao 丁福保 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), vol.2, 1409.


37 [SKQS] Jin Hong 金鴻 (15th c.) and Qian Yuanchang 錢元昌 (b. 1676), eds., Guangxi tong zhi 廣西通志 (Guangxi Gazetteer), 107.10a-13a Fu jiang kai lu ji 府江開路記. [SKQS] Jiang Pu 蒋圃 (1708-1761), Wang Youdun 江由敦 (1692-1758), and Dong Bangda 董邦達 (1699-1769), Qin ding pan shan zhi 欽定盤山志 (Official Compilation of the Records of Great Mountains), 1.9a-10a Jīngjì shan zhuang 靜寄山莊. [GJSJC] tang yu hui bian 方異編, shan chuan dian 山川典, 115.192.39b you shan jì lù 遊山記略.


Also see Xiaoshan Yang’s discussion on the poetics of space in Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 68-9.

40 This is Pauline Lin’s translation. See Pauline Lin, “Rediscovering Ying Qu and His Poetic Relationship with Tao Qian,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (June 2009), 69:1: 55.


42 The three, together with gazing (wang 望), were identified by Guo Xi as the four principal modes of experiencing the poetic landscape. See Guo Xi, *Lin quan gao zhi* 林泉高致, 2a-b.

43 While the expression wo you 有 was more commonly used to describe the aesthetic experience of poetry and paintings, it was also employed to represent the experience in small gardens, as in Zheng Yuanxun 鄭元勳’s saying “those who wish to have wo you in a small space should all consult Ji Cheng,” See Zheng Yuanxun’s forward in *Yuan ye* 隱逸, 37-41.


45 Zhao Xigu 趙希鶚 (fl. 1180-1240). For his account, see Bush and Shih (1985), 211.

46 Zheng Yuanxun emphasized the importance of having and actualizing the “hills and valleys” in the heart-mind of garden’s owner because without them a garden will simply be a work of craftsmanship and not a genuine manifestation of natural landscape. See Ji Cheng (1988), 29.

47 For a study on Xie’s understanding of shang xin, see Alison Marshall, “Xie Lingyun’s reflections on the ‘appreciative heart’,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy and Religion* Vol. 7 (2002): 131-145.

48 These social meanings of you are found in common expressions such as “cong you 從遊,” which literally means “to follow in wandering,” but also signifies “to establish relationship with someone,” and “jue you 絕遊,” which literally means “to stop wandering,” but also refers “to put an end to friendship.”

49 [SKQS] Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), *Si shu zhang ju ji zhu—Lunyu ji zhu 四書章句集註 論語集註* (Commentary on the Four Books—Commentary on the Analects), 4.2a.


51 Ibid., 106.


53 Gadamer’s ideas of “playing” and “being played” are useful for understanding the concepts of “seeing 看” and “being seen 被看,” the two important aesthetic modes of experience in the Chinese literati garden.

54 Fang Dongshu 方東樹 (1772-1851), *Zhaomei zhan yan 昭昧詹言* (Trivial Sayings of Zhaomei), 1.32a.

55 Guangxi tong zhi, 15.45b, Long-an xian 隆安縣.


57 [SKQS] He Fuzheng 賀復徵 (cir. 1625), *Wenzhang bianti huixuan 文章辨體彙選* (Genre Differentiation and Selected Collection of Prose), 362.5b-6a Qian Xiangxian jin jin 竺錫先荆南集引.

Part II. Understanding the Neo-Confucian Sagely *Jingjie*

II.1 The Philosophical Discourse of Sagely *Jingjie*

The discourse of *jingjie* played a paramount role in shaping the intellectual and sociopolitical landscape of East Asia, particularly in constructing the Neo-Confucian discourse of sagely *jingjie*. The connection between Confucian philosophy and *jingjie* has been discussed by the scholars of the twentieth-century New Confucian movement. As Jiang Wu observed, these scholars, in their effort to revive Confucianism, “reinterpre[ted] the meaning of being a sage” by exploring the concept *jingjie*.¹ The investigation of Confucian sagehood in view of *jingjie*, however, first emerged in the twelfth century as a part of the Neo-Confucian development. Introduced into the Neo-Confucian discourse by the Cheng brothers and expanded by Zhu Xi, *jingjie* thereupon grew into a major discursive tradition within Neo-Confucianism.² It is important to note that by the time Neo-Confucianism came to being, the geopolitical, philosophical, and poetic discourses of *jingjie* we have examined had fully penetrated the language and imagination of the Chinese literati. The interplay of these three types of *jingjie* discourse is clearly demonstrated in the Neo-Confucian adaptation of *jingjie* discourse.

As we shall see, the embracing of the *jingjie* discursive framework had significant ramifications for the development of Neo-Confucianism. On the whole, it meant that sage learning was interpreted as a territorial act, as understanding and attaining to the *jingjie* of the sages—or sagely *jingjie*—became the principal goal in Neo-Confucian learning. The discursive formations of Neo-Confucian sagely *jingjie* came about as a result of intricate interaction of philosophy, poetry, and politics. As a kind of systematics with “its own intrinsic logic,” *jingjie* served not only to help interpret but more importantly to help
practice; in the Neo-Confucian development, it signified the bringing together of understanding and action, of sagehood as knowledge and as a living reality. In this chapter we will examine the discursive development of *jingjie* in Neo-Confucian philosophy, particularly focusing on the investigation of the two expressions: the *jingjie* of the sages (shengren de jingjie 聖人的境界) and the *jingjie* of the heart-mind (xin de jingjie 心的境界).

The principal feature that distinguished Song Neo-Confucianism from previous Confucian developments was its radical reinterpretation of sagehood: sagehood not as an exclusive and distant ideal but as an open and very present possibility for all. Chŏng Chi-uk’s study of the changing views of the Confucian sages discusses the significance of this intellectual shift. He shows even until the early Song the three-tiered system which divided humanity into three rigidly defined categories (the high, the middle, and the low) was a widely shared view among the Confucian literati. This view was accompanied by a deterministic outlook on human conditions which concluded that the foolish cannot be changed and that sagehood cannot be learned. Directly overturning this popular belief, Neo-Confucians bravely declared that “sagehood can be learned and achieved 聖人可學而至.” It was more than just a pronouncement of hope but a completely new way of envisioning the relationship between the sages and the rest of the human race.

The Neo-Confucian reinvention of sagehood has been discussed by many, particularly its connection to the new program of learning proposed and practiced by the founders of the movement, but it should also be noted their radical reinterpretation of sagehood resulted from a new mode of talking about sagehood, in other words, a new discursive framework through which sagehood was discussed—*jingjie*. Neo-Confucians
introduced, for the first time, the expression “jingjie of the sages” or “sagely jingjie” as a new approach to thinking about sagehood. The establishment of jingjie as a new discursive mode implied a significant shift in the study of Confucian philosophy. On one level, it was a shift away from the learning of the words of the sages which culminated in the textual study of Han Confucianism. On another level, it was a movement away from the learning of the political accomplishments of the sages, a rejection of overtly political use of Confucianism in the Tang. As an alternative to the two, Neo-Confucian learning suggested the attainment of sagely jingjie as a new objective. What exactly was the jingjie of the sages? This very question was the driving force in the Neo-Confucian discussion of sagehood.

In what follows we will examine the Neo-Confucian philosophical exploration of sagely jingjie. More specifically, we will trace the general thematic formations of jingjie discourse: that is to say, instead of following a chronological trajectory, we will investigate a number of discursive themes developed over a long time by both Chinese and Korean scholars. These multiple themes of jingjie became available as a resource upon which thinkers and writers could draw to express their thoughts.

*The Neo-Confucian Reclaiming of Jingjie*

The Song Neo-Confucians were aware of the Buddhist discourse of jingjie, which had dominated the philosophico-spiritual discussion of jingjie, and were critical of it. In his scholarly correspondences with Li Tong 李侗 (1093-1163), Zhu Xi 朱熹 criticized the contemporary state of learning. He proposed the reason why the literati of his time failed to advance in learning was because they remained in the jingjie of selfish thought
and inaction. This *jingjie*, he argued, was the *jingjie* the adherents of Chan Buddhism belonged to. The solution to this predicament was to critically examine and rectify one’s selfishness with shame and remorse, and to actively engage in social responsibilities instead of constantly immersing oneself in inactive meditation. The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians also disapproved the Buddhist understanding of spiritual *jingjie*. Chŏng Kyŏng-se 鄭經世 (1563-1633) condemned Chan Buddhism for failing to recognize the importance of cultivation with effort which he believed was the way to *jingjie* as understood by Neo-Confucians.

Among all Neo-Confucians, Ming’s Luo Qinshun 羅欽順 (1465-1547) wrote most extensively about and against the Buddhist conception of *jingjie*. In his *Kun zhi ji* 困知記 (Knowledge Painfully Acquired) Luo demonstrated the supremacy of the Neo-Confucian learning by displaying the flaws within the Buddhist thoughts, including the Buddhist understanding of *jingjie*. Characterizing the Buddhist *jingjie* as “the *jingjie* of no distinction between truth and delusion,” Luo argued what the Chan Buddhists see is only “a section of void, empty, and open *jingjie*,” and criticized Chan Buddhism for downplaying the importance of cultivation in reaching the *jingjie* of spiritual wisdom. Luo forcefully claimed in contrast to Buddhism, which pursued the “*jingjie* of void and emptiness 虛空境界,” Neo-Confucianism engaged in the study of reality 實學 based on strict cultivation of self and critical investigation of all things. Yet in his discussion Luo primarily presented *jingjie* as a Buddhist concept, and did not employ the idea to expound Neo-Confucian teachings. The critique of the Buddhist view of *jingjie*, however, did not lead to the Neo-Confucian desertion of the expression itself. Instead, as we will see, the dissemination of the “correct” understanding of *jingjie* became one of the major tasks in
the Neo-Confucian philosophical endeavour, and the promotion of sagely *jingjie* their means of claiming intellectual territory.

*The Jingjie of the Sages*

What makes a sage a sage? The answer to this question unveiled not only one’s understanding of sagehood but also, and more importantly, the key to attaining sagehood. The zealous effort to unravel this mystery led to the surfacing of many—at times contesting—views. Critical comparisons of the different views of sagehood have brought to light that the Neo-Confucian contemplation on sagehood was a complex and dynamic development, one that evolved significantly over time. Yet amidst the wide-ranging interpretive grappling with sagehood, a shared sense of mission can be felt: that is, to reject the mystical elements of sagehood and to seek explanation, contextualization, and application of sagely living.

The introduction of the discursive framework of *jingjie* contributed greatly in creating this new interpretive habitat. It is not enough to just claim the importance of *jingjie* in the Neo-Confucian discourse as some have done. Pushing the discussion forward, we need to examine the role of *jingjie* discourse in the production of knowledge, the knowledge of sagehood. As we will see, the Neo-Confucian knowledge of sagehood that emerged from the *jingjie* discursive framework quintessentially reflected and promoted the concerns of territoriality.
*Jingjie and Shijie*

Were Neo-Confucians themselves cognizant of the territorial implications of the *jingjie* discourses they were creating? The answer to this question is affirmative. That *jingjie* was used and understood in the territorial sense is clearly demonstrated by the fact that in the Neo-Confucian discussions *jingjie* was often paired with *shijie* (time or season), a temporal notion. *Jingjie* and *shijie* are jointly seen in the writings of many Neo-Confucians. The Ming Neo-Confucian Sun Shenxing 孫慎行 (1565-1636) compared mean and harmony 中和 to an inexplicable *shijie* and *jingjie*,¹⁴ and Chosŏn’s Chŏng Chong-no 鄭宗魯 (1738-1816) expressed the life of self-cultivation as “a watchful *shijie* and a leisurely *jingjie* 惺惺時節與灑灑境界.”¹⁵ The *jingjie*-*shijie* duo also appears in the Ming Neo-Confucian Cai Qing 蔡清 (1453-1508)’s discussion of the meaning of *fu* 復 (return or restoration) found in Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077)’s poetry.

Shao Yong’s eight-sentence poem only points to the place of return and shows people their divergence from Fuxi, King Wen, and Confucius. It is summed up in this one word—return. What a wonderful *shijie* and *jingjie* would the realization of this return be! Beginning with the Cheng brothers, return began to spring forth again, and Shao’s poem precisely and appropriately describes it.¹⁶

These examples of the parallel use of *jingjie* and *shijie* reveal the spatio-temporal dispositions within the Neo-Confucian conceptualization of sagehood, sage learning, and sagely world. They testify that the realization of Neo-Confucian ideals and objectives, and even the ideals themselves (i.e. mean and harmony), signified the realization of a certain temporal and territorial state.

The framework of *jingjie*-*shijie* (or territory-season), however, is to be distinguished from that of time and space, or even spacetime, which came into being
under the influence of modern science. Conceived as dimensions in a coordinate grid with the purpose of measuring and mapping a point and its relation to other points, time and space are seen to “envelop” and “provide the context for human existence.” On the contrary, jingjie and shijie in the Neo-Confucian discourse essentially concerned the constitution of sagehood which could be reached and occupied. As the defined and bound piece of space and time, territory and season signify inhabitability. Sagely territory-season represented sagehood which was made accessible and inhabitable, sagehood not only as a historical event but a universal event. Sagehood thus understood traversed past experience, present possibility, and future destination. Cai Qing’s description of the Neo-Confucian development as a return of this territory-season, Chŏng Chong-no’s rendering of self-cultivation as a return to sagely territory-season, and Sun Shenxing’s praise of this mystery all express the traversality of the jingjie-shijie discourse.

Sagely territory-season moreover signified an onto-phenomenological state of the heart-mind. Neo-Confucians employed the territory-season framework to describe the state of sagely heart-mind. For example, the application of the jingjie-shijie framework in the interpretation of sagely heart-mind is found in Pak Yun-wŏn 朴胤源 (1734-1799)’s portrayal of the accomplishments of Confucius and Mencius. Pak writes:

Confucius said: “At forty, I was without doubts.” Mencius said: “At forty, my heart-mind did not waver.” What kind of jingjie does being without doubts point to? What kind of shijie does the unwavering heart-mind point to? Being without doubts at forty is like jingjie in which there is nowhere that cannot be reached in all things, both outside and inside, fine and coarse. The heart-mind that does not waver at forty is like shijie that comes after the vast and overflowing qi is nurtured.\textsuperscript{18}

Pak’s allusion to reaching and waiting clearly highlights the territorial and seasonal implications of Confucius’s jingjie and Mencius’s shijie. Another Chosŏn Neo-Confucian
Pak P’il-chu 朴弼周 (1665-1748) employed the jingjie-shijie framework to probe the onto-phenomenological workings of the heart-mind, particularly the relationship between the state of *weifa* 未發 (not yet aroused) and the state of *yifa* 已發 (already aroused).

After describing *weifa* as a combination of jingjie and shijie, he writes:

> Considering *weifa* as jingjie and shijie teaches us at any time and any place one cannot be without task. Therefore, in the time of tranquility, preserve and nurture; in the time of movement, embody and examine. Each one has a place to belong to. How can we say jing境 and shi時 are singular and independent, and that they are not controlled by the heart-mind? Can this be possible? And how could it also be that jingjie and shijie do not concern effort?\(^\text{19}\)

Pak’s account brings to light the pedagogical implications of the Neo-Confucian jingjie-shijie discourse—jingjie and shijie represented constant vigilance and enduring effort in the process of self-cultivation. It also stresses the inseparability of jingjie and shijie, and the heart-mind’s control over them.

In both examples we see jingjie and shijie used as a way to express and explain the state of the cultivated heart-mind, in which being and experience are intricately intertwined. In the context of overall Neo-Confucian philosophical development, however, the importance of jingjie overrules that of shijie. While jingjie became the breeding ground for complex discursive practices, shijie did not undergo the development of similar magnitude. But the pairing of the two clearly illustrates the territorial nature of the Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse, and that Neo-Confucians were not only conscious of it but more importantly creatively utilized it to produce new ways of understanding sagehood.
The Field of the Sages

Closely related to *jingjie*, another territorial expression of sagehood we find in Neo-Confucian writings is *tiandi* 田地 (field). Though not as prevalently used as *jingjie*, *tiandi* reveals the pervasiveness of territorial discourse in the Neo-Confucian conceptualization of sagehood. It is in the writings of the Cheng brothers we first come across the expression “reaching the field of the sages” (*dao shengren tiandi* 到聖人田地) used to refer to arriving at sage learning. The field of the sages, they argued, could be reached once one’s practice of immersive learning (*hanyang* 涵養) matures.\(^{20}\) Zhu Xi also employed the expression to expound the process of sage learning. He asserted one must set the “reaching of the place of the sages and the field of the sages 得到聖人處聖人田地” as the goal of learning.\(^{21}\) Also stressing the supreme importance of reverence, Zhu remarked “even though one attains the field of the sages, if one lets go of reverence, one cannot be like Yao and Shun.”\(^{22}\) *Tiandi* also occupied a significant place in the philosophy of Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139-1193), Zhu Xi’s contemporary and rival, particularly with regards to his conceptualization of the Way and principle: “The Way and principle are only the Way and principle before one’s eyes. Even though one sees the field of the sages, it only is the Way and principle before the eyes.”\(^{23}\) Believing in the unity of principle and heart-mind, Lu preached principle was not far away, and in fact was found in one’s own heart-mind. Similarly, he also emphasized the field of the sages, the goal of sage learning, was also always present before one’s eyes. Although in limited number, the discussion of the field of the sages surfaced in the writings of later Neo-Confucians. The Yuan scholar Chen Hao 陳浩 (1260-1341), for instance, interpreted the
field of the sages as “people,” and the Ming scholars Lü Nan 吕柟 (1479-1542) and Zheng Shanfu 郑善夫 (1485-1523) both stressed the importance of effort in reaching the field of the sages. What these developments demonstrate is the importance of territorial discourse in the envisioning of Neo-Confucian sage learning, that the reaching and attainment of the “field of the sages” came to represent the goal of sage learning. The philosophical discussion of sagely field, however, did not develop into a major discourse but was soon absorbed into the philosophical discourse of jingjie, in which similar territorial ideas were explored. In what follows we will investigate the ways in which jingjie discourse gave rise to the territorial conception of Neo-Confucian sagehood, more specifically, how it interpreted sagehood as a territory to be reached, seen, entered, sought, created, and occupied.

Sagehood as a Territory to be Reached

First of all, jingjie discourse in Neo-Confucian philosophy expounded sagehood as a territory to be reached (zhi 至, dao 到, da 達 or ji 及). Zhu Xi’s writings reveal that he and his contemporaries envisioned the attainment of sagehood as the reaching (zhi) of jingjie. The explanations of what this jingjie entailed varied. According to Zhu sagely jingjie corresponded to abiding in humaneness 仁 through the preservation and critical examination of oneself 存省, becoming completely one with heavenly principle 天理, and harbouring no selfish desire. The Ming Neo-Confucians Hu Juren 胡居仁 (1434-1484) and Gao Panlong 高攀龍 (1562-1626) also voiced a similar opinion when they compared arriving at (dao) sagely jingjie to the completion of humaneness through arduous daily cultivation, the process that illuminates the heart-mind through heavenly
principle until not even a hint of selfish human desire is found. The cultivation must continue until one arrives at (zhì) the jing of not thinking and not trying but doing it naturally. After a long and strenuous cultivation, one can reach (jì) the “great and transformative jing 大而化之之境;” the journey also described as a return to the “unified original jingjie 澂然先天境界.”

This act of reaching jingjie had clear territorial connotations. Cai Qing, for instance, outlined the goal of sage learning as the “reaching of the territory (jing) of the sagely and divine, and the reaching of the domain (yi) of ultimate goodness 至於聖神之境至善之域,” clearly drawing out the territorial import of jing in the parallelization of jing and yi. The territorial significance of the reaching of jingjie was also made apparent in the discussions of Chosŏn Neo-Confucians who interpreted cultivation of self as a journey towards a defined and gated territory. Chŏng Kae-ch’ŏng 鄭介淸 (1529-1590) described cultivation as the joining “of the jingjie of mean and harmony, and of the family of the sages and worthies 中和境界，聖賢門戶,” and Kim Nak-haeng 金樂行 (1708-1766) an upward and downward movement which leads to one way and one territory 門路境界. The reference to menhu 門戶 and menlu 門路 presents sagehood and sage learning as a territory with a fixed entrance, once again affirming the territorial imagination inherent in the Neo-Confucian philosophical discourse of jingjie.

Yet such envisioning of cultivation had another side: as much as it was a journey towards sagely jingjie, it also was a journey away from unsagely jingjie. The dichotomic nature of jingjie discourse is vividly illustrated in Song Myŏng-hŭm 宋明欽 (1705-1768)’s account:
Reverence is about one. Knowing is about two—right and wrong. In the distance, there are myriad things under the heaven. Nearby, there is one family and one body. Due to their yin and yang, good and evil, there is the difference between humans and animals, foreigners and the Chinese, heterodoxy and orthodoxy, kindness and wickedness, righteousness and profit, public and private, horizontal and vertical, facing and turning away, and repulsive and attractive. There is nothing that does not have its opposite. Thousands of words and ten thousands sayings of the sages and worthies are only about wishing that people will seek in their nature and find this out. Right means extremely right, and wrong means extremely wrong. There is no half right and half wrong. Arriving at lukewarm and dull jingjie, how can there be extensive knowing?

Song postulates while sage learning upholds oneness, it also promotes clear dualism. The division between the sagely and the unsagely was to be maintained, and the blurring of the boundaries was to be avoided. In other words, the jingjie rhetoric helped create a vision of binary opposition, rendering a two-fold aim of Neo-Confucian cultivation: adherence to sage learning and rejection of unsage learning.

Once sage learning was established as a matter of arriving at a clearly defined jingjie, one’s advancement in sage learning also came to be expounded in territorial terms—that is, as a question of succeeding in reaching certain moral and intellectual territory. This meant that jingjie was understood as a category for assessing and differentiating individual jingjie, the territorial expression of individual cultivation.

Such a view was held by the Yuan Neo-Confucian Chen Tianxiang 陳天祥 (1230-1316) who deemed jingjie to be a territorial manifestation of individual difference. Chen located the source of individual distinctiveness of jingjie in the difference in qizhi 氣質 (material force and disposition): the person whose qizhi was not slanted much was believed to have more “good jing 善境” and less “not good jing 不善之境,” and the opposite for the person whose qizhi was much slanted. But there were also different voices. Chosŏn’s
Pak Se-ch’ae 朴世采 (1631-1695) believed the dissimilarity in jingjie was due to the difference in talent and character 才品, and the Qing dynasty official commentary on the Four Books, the Ri jiang Si Shu jie yi 日講四書解義 (Daily Lectures on the Four Books and Their Commentary), elucidated the divergence comes from the heart-mind—the difference in the jing of the heart-mind 心境. However one interpreted the makeup of individual jingjie, distinguished Neo-Confucian scholars were believed to have reached certain admirable jingjie, and comprehending and pursuing their jingjie came to be seen as following the secure path of the great teachers.  

But arriving at sagely jingjie was a very difficult task. No Kyŏng-im 盧景任 (1569-1620) reminded his contemporaries that the jingjie of the sages and worthies is not a place that can be reached in one stride. Hu Guang 胡廣 (1369-1418) and Yi Sang-jŏng 李象靖 (1710-1781) encouraged the devotees of sage learning by assuring them if they do not give up and continue in their effort, one day they would unexpectedly run into the jingjie of sage learning. Yet to many the experience of sagely jingjie remained a distant goal.

I have not yet experienced the ultimate savouring of clear and peaceful jingjie. I am not sure whether it is nearby or will appear suddenly. I must continue to study the works of the ancient sages. Living in deep seclusion in a misty mountain, I will cultivate the clear qi, and exert and refine my intent. Things beyond these two will not lead me to the humane Way.

These words of Ku Pong-nyŏng 具鳳齡 (1526-1586) aptly capture the struggle the pursuers of sagely jingjie faced in daily life. Many felt disheartened by this overwhelming task, particularly by the challenge of sagehood’s naturalness and effortlessness. One of the signs of sagely jingjie was believed to be an apparent lack of
assertiveness; the sages did not seek things but things responded to them, and did not give trust but people trusted them.\textsuperscript{43} Between the demand for more effort and the aspiration for effortlessness, Neo-Confucians struggled to find a foothold. After spending most part of their life cultivating the self, some began to doubt the possibility of reaching sagely \textit{jingjie} in their lifetime, unsure of how much more effort was still needed.\textsuperscript{44} Some facing impending death lamented that they were not able to reach the \textit{jingjie} of the sages in their life.\textsuperscript{45} Some even came to believe reaching the \textit{jingjie} of the sages was humanly impossible: the \textit{Ri jiang Si Shu jie yì} states “arriving at the \textit{jing} of not thinking and not trying but doing it naturally, this cannot be achieved through human effort.”\textsuperscript{46}

In the midst of these contending voices, we witness the age-old struggle between the sudden and gradual approaches to \textit{jingjie} unfold in the Neo-Confucian context. The two major camps in Neo-Confucianism—the Learning of Principle (\textit{li xue} 理學) and the Learning of the Heart-Mind (\textit{xin xue} 心學)—represented the two contrasting methods of reaching sagely \textit{jingjie}: the gradual and the sudden, respectively. The Learning of Principle, mainly represented by the Cheng-Zhu School, stressed the importance of strenuous cultivation of self through study and practice. The Learning of the Heart-Mind, headed by Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529), interpreted the reaching of sagehood as a matter of consciously recognizing and experiencing sagehood as a perpetually present reality. Their dissension highlighted the controversial relationship between \textit{jingjie} and \textit{gongfu}; the two schools’ philosophical and methodological differences, to a great extent, stemmed from their discrepancy in the understanding of this relationship. It was not simply an issue of embracing or rejecting \textit{gongfu}; it should be noted that both acknowledged the inseparable connection between
jingjie and gongfu. What was at stake, however, was the different interpretation of gongfu, which one saw as laborious praxis and the other as enlightening realization—the latter, we can say, emerged as a result of the former’s failure to present a clear trajectory of the cultivation process. These developments once again bring to the fore the difference between the horizontal and vertical conceptions of jingjie, which we earlier saw in the Buddhist discourse of jingjie. But attempts were also made to reconcile the two divergent approaches to sagely jingjie: the Ming Neo-Confucian Wang Longxi 王龍溪 (1498-1583), for instance, identified both gradual and sudden approaches as legitimate and compatible methods of sage learning. These diverse Neo-Confucian responses demonstrate the complex philosophical implications of the territorial envisioning of arriving at sagely jingjie.

Sagehood as a Territory to be Seen

Sagely jingjie was also to be seen (kan 看 or jian 見). In his letter to Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133-1180), Zhu Xi points out the importance of seeing the jingjie of the original state of the heart-mind. Zhu writes:

How can we in one day see this jingjie? Therefore, the sages had to tell us: Rectify your heart-mind. To rectify your heart-mind, you must first make your intent sincere. To make your intent sincere, you must first extend your knowledge. … This is not one day’s work.

Here, Zhu asserts the Neo-Confucian perception of sagely jingjie required the exertion of much effort, which, as Luo Qinshun put forth, was fundamentally different from the Chan Buddhists’ seeing of the void and empty jingjie. Yet as Zhu Xi’s student Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159-1223) aptly put, Neo-Confucians bemoaned the fact that “the sages’ lofty, bright,
broad, and great jingjie was not seen again; and their refined, profound, stern, and meticulous effort was not followed again.”51 As such, the beholding of sagely jingjie became an imperative task and aspiration of Neo-Confucians.

A student of Zhu Xi, Chen Zhi 陳埴 (jinshi 1214) regarded seeing sagely jingjie as a supreme goal in Neo-Confucian cultivation; the person who failed to see the jingjie of understanding the Dao with the heart-mind wasted his life, even if he mastered all the classics, said Chen.52 Chen, like his teacher, believed the ability to observe sagely jingjie came with the maturation of effort; without exerting effort to preserve reverence, one would never see sagely jingjie.53 After successfully calming one’s heart-mind, one would be able to see that all things have the mind of spring, the jingjie that the sages and the worthies saw.54 Many Neo-Confucians also agreed that the beholding of sagely jingjie was a result of cultivation. Nie Bao 聂豹 (1487-1563), one of the principal members of the Lu-Wang School, elucidated the result of life-long cultivation as the seeing the jingjie of calm quietude and peaceful reflection.55 Song Si-yŏl 宋時烈 (1607-1689) remarked in order for one to see the sagely jingjie of past teachers, one first had to get to their standing, once again emphasizing the role of cultivation.56 An Chŏng-bok 安鼎福 (1712-1791) also asserted after undergoing much painful jingjie, the pursuers of sage learning would finally see the lively and easy jing.57

However, as it was with the reaching of sagely jingjie, the beholding of sagely jingjie proved to be an overwhelming task. Yi Sang-jŏng expressed doubts about his cultivation method when it did not lead to the witnessing of sagely jingjie.

After long and persistent practice, the purity and maturity of principle and righteousness can be reached. After gradually purifying and maturing, there will be a surplus of profound creation. … I have worked hard for a
long time without ceasing, but I regret that I have not yet seen this jingjie. I am afraid working so hard must have the problem of distorting the true method.  

Like other Neo-Confucians, Yi resorted to the tension between naturalness and effort in search for an answer to his problem.  

*Sagehood as a Territory to be Entered*  
The Neo-Confucian sagely jingjie was also a territory to be entered (ru 入 or jin 進). If the expression “reaching sagely jingjie” denoted a sense of direction and of journey to a destination, “entering” presented sagehood as a territory to be explored and experienced. Ming’s Lü Huai 吕懷 (jinshi 1532) identified the difference between the ancients and the later generations as the former’s success and the latter’s failure in entering the jingjie of self-contentment.

Among the ancients, there was none who did not enter the jingjie of self-contentment. Jingjie was originally not about abandoning all things and crossing to the other side. It was only about seeking the unified vivaciousness. … The vivacious territory (huo popo di 活潑潑地) is without a hint of human effort. Not gaining but having, this is called self-contentment. If this jingjie does not come from guarding against fear, personal vigilance, exhaustive investigation, and sincere rectification, how can one say it is the vivacious territory?  

Lü clearly distinguishes the jingjie of the ancients from that of the Buddhist, which he characterizes as the jingjie of “abandoning all things and crossing to the other side.” His linking of the sagely jingjie of self-contentment and the “vivacious territory”—the correlation of jingjie and di 地—highlights the territorial discourse.  

The entry into sagely jingjie was to be a peaceful and quiet one. To enter sagely jingjie, one had to grasp the jingjie of the sages’ silent presence: “When entering the pack
of animals, the sage does not disturb the pack; when entering the skein of birds, the sage does not disrupt the skein.”

The Ming Neo-Confucian Lu Ningzhong (16th c.) proposed the remedy to all contemporary problems was found in the entering of thejingjie of tranquility, an expansive territory as vast as the six directions, empty and still inside.

*Sagehood as a Territory to be Sought*

If reaching and entering presupposed the certainty of the whereabouts of sagely jingjie, sagehood as a territory to be sought (qiu 求) presented sagely jingjie as that which had been obscured or lost and needed to be found. Earnest seeking of sagely jingjie was the mark of true eagerness for learning. Sŏ Hyŏng-su (1749-1824) pointed out the problem of many people came from their seeking of wrong jingjie: instead of desiring tranquil sagely jingjie, many turned to the jingjie of aroused emotion. Where and how can sagely jingjie be found? Many struggled with this question, and the Southern Song Neo-Confucian master Lü Zuqian (1137-1181) had this to say:

> In my bosom there originally was sagely jingjie. I can go back and search it, and it must be there. This can be compared to the meaning of all things under heaven returning to humaneness through overcoming oneself and restoring propriety.

Lü located sagely jingjie in the individual’s own heart-mind or bosom, interpreting the search for sagely jingjie as an inner quest, a search into one’s own self. He further explained the recovery of sagely jingjie was essentially the recovery of the infant’s heart-mind in one’s own heart-mind’s jingjie. King Shun retained sagely jingjie because he was able to preserve the infant’s heart-mind in the jingjie of his own heart-mind. Lü believed
Mencius’s promise of sagehood for everyone was rooted in the belief that in everyone’s heart-mind Yao and Shun’s jingjie can be found. The task of seeking sagely jingjie, therefore, became the task of recovering and reclaiming the territory of sagehood already existing in everyone’s heart-mind.

Sagehood as a Territory to be Created

It was also believed that sagely jingjie could be created (zao 造) through the personal cultivation of self. The idea that individuals can create sagely jingjie through effort generated an interesting debate among Neo-Confucians: namely, the evaluation of individually created sagely territory. Were individually created sagely jingjie same or different in essence? The intricacy of this issue is clearly shown in the debate between Im Sŏn-gju 任聖周 (1711-1788) and Yi Chae 李絳 (1680-1746). Im writes:

Not wavering [from humaneness] for three months and doing so only for a day or a month—are the created jingjie same or different? I once asked Toam [Yi Chae]. He answered: “Jingjie is all the same. What differs is only the maturation of effort, and the depth of meaningful savouring.” Why not say then when people create and reach their territory (yi 域), there is no difference in their jingjie and in their not wavering? But people’s similarity only lies in their qi and xiang 氣象. The actual illumination of their heart-mind and body still has not reached its fullness. The effort of overcoming oneself still has not been reached. How can a momentary stone fire be not different from Yan Hui’s complete embodiment of great function 大用! … Therefore what Zhu Xi described as impure and incomplete embodiment was spoken regarding ordinary people. Even though one could reach there in time, I am afraid the word “pure” cannot be applied.

Im’s question to Yi Chae derives from a saying by Confucius: “As for Yan Hui 顏回, for three months his heart-mind would not waver from humaneness. Others could attain to this for a day or a month at the most.” Yi understood all jingjie to be sagely, and that
the same sagely jingjie, identical in essence, was shared by people. Individually created jingjie could differ based on the difference in effort and interpretive experience. A similar opinion was expressed earlier by another Chosŏn Neo-Confucian Yun Hyŏng-no 尹衡老 (cir. 1507) when he said although it may be momentary the same jingjie that is found in the sages can be shared by common people. On the contrary, Im saw people’s created jingjie was essentially different depending on the extent of their cultivation. Jingjie for him was a relative measure, a matter of purity, and therefore, the jingjie of the sages differed in essence from that of ordinary people. These intellectual debates demonstrate the intricacy of the Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse, particularly in the construction of various interpretations of sagehood and sage learning.

*Sagehood as a Central Territorial Position to be Occupied and Maintained*

Earlier we examined jingjie as a discursive framework of territoriality that communicates not only the notion of area but also the notion of centre. The Neo-Confucian conception of sagely jingjie, likewise, envisioned sagehood as a central position to be occupied and maintained. Zhu Xi viewed the attainment of sagely jingjie as a matter of preserving 中: “the sages did not strive but were in the middle, did not think but followed the middle way.” The competence in keeping the central position, Zhu Xi argued, distinguished the sages from the worthies, and the worthies from ordinary people. While the sages, naturally and without exerting effort, were able to hit jingjie in the bullseye 中, much effort was needed for those aspiring to become sages in order to maintain the secure middle position. Min U-su 閔遇洙 (1694-1756) expounded that staying in the central position entailed not being affected
by any disturbance, and carefully guarding sagely *jingjie* in order that one may not lose it.\(^7^4\) This notion of centrality had a clearly territorial connotation; as Sŏ Hyŏng-su explained the *jingjie* of the centre referred to the area in the middle, enclosed within the limits of the four directions.\(^7^5\)

The discursive formations of the six principal modes of territorial engagement with sagely *jingjie* display the dilemma Neo-Confucians found themselves in: the never-settling conflict between the newly found possibility of sagehood and the colossal task it entailed. While the possibility of reaching, seeing, entering, seeking, creating, and maintaining sagely *jingjie* was given, the work involved was so great that for many this newly found hope was only a distant reality. Herein we see the important paradox within the Neo-Confucian territorial discussion: *jingjie* represented limitation and accessibility at the same time. This paradox posed a serious interpretive challenge, leading to the emergence of divergent discourses on sagehood. On the one hand, sagehood was interpreted as innateness and perfectness. The sage, whose heart-mind always preserved and illuminated heavenly principle, and who did so without thinking and without exerting great effort, was by nature different from common people. On the other hand, sagehood was seen as an outcome of cultivation. What defined the sages was their continuous and arduous cultivation of self that transformed them. In other words, it was their cultivatedness and not their faultlessness that made them sages. As Chen Zhi put it, the sages’ *jingjie* was that they were without *big* faults—not completely without faults—and that they asked and learned all their life. Hence, there was no essential difference between the sages and the common people; through effort everyone could become a sage.\(^7^6\) Faced
with this challenging situation, Neo-Confucians searched for a role model who would show them the way to sagely jingjie, and their search led them to the (re)discovery of Yan Hui.

Yan Hui and Sagely Jingjie

The study of the Neo-Confucian sagely jingjie cannot be complete without the investigation of Yan Hui’s role in this discursive development. Yan Hui, the favourite disciple of Confucius, is known to posterity as a man who fully devoted himself to moral cultivation without seeking wealth, fame, or power. His selfless dedication to the betterment of humanity was praised by his teacher, who deeply mourned the death of this outstanding disciple at the age of thirty-two. Due partly to his untimely death, Yan Hui remained a mysterious figure for a long time, with only the scattered words of his master in the Analects to testify to his moral excellence. It was only in the Song dynasty that he began to emerge as a key figure in the Confucian discourse. Yan Hui was the new icon of the Neo-Confucian movement. It was through the study of his life that the founders of Neo-Confucianism came to the radical conclusion of the possibility of sagehood for all. He was regarded as someone who succeeded in reaching, seeing, and entering sagely jingjie, and moreover, was able to create a jingjie of his own. The investigation of Yan Hui’s jingjie became a vital part of the Neo-Confucian quest for sagely jingjie.

So what was it about Yan Hui that appealed to the Song Neo-Confucians? Neo-Confucians were especially fascinated by the two attributes of Yan Hui: 1) that he did not waver from humaneness for three months, and 2) that he found joy while living in poverty. These two qualities embodied the triumph over the challenges that all serious
Neo-Confucian literati had to confront; that is, constant vigilance towards one’s moral state, the courage to abide by the moral principles even at the expense of material wellbeing, and even more importantly, the ability to genuinely embrace and celebrate such living. Yan Hui’s life opened up the possibility of sagely living for ordinary people. As Su Shi (1037-1101) tells us compared to other disciples of Confucius Yan Hui was just an ordinary person who possessed no special talent. Yet despite his ordinariness, he was commended by Confucius to be the only disciple who understood and lived out sage learning. Yan’s manifestation of sagely living in his own life supported the Neo-Confucian conviction in the possibility of sagehood for all.

The above-mentioned two accomplishments of Yan Hui came to be regarded as the marks of his jingjie by the Song Neo-Confucians. Zhu Xi himself did not discuss extensively about Yan Hui’s achievements in terms of jingjie, but from one of his dialogues with students we learn that viewing Yan Hui’s attainment as jingjie was an existing practice during Zhu Xi’s time. In the context of the discussion of Yan Hui’s “not wavering from humaneness for three months,” Zhu was asked:

> The students of today might preserve and examine themselves several times a day. Yet some disciples in the past were able to do so for the whole day and some for the whole month. But it should not be so sparse and brief. I believe humaneness is complete heavenly principle without a hint of selfish desire. The students of today, even though they talk about preservation and self-examination, have not reached this jingjie. Did the accomplishments of other disciples of Confucius reach this jingjie or not?79

Here, Yan Hui’s accomplishment of abiding in humaneness for three months was rendered as the jingjie of preservation and self-examination. By asking whether other disciples also attained this jingjie, the inquirer highlighted the distinctiveness of Yan Hui. Zhu Xi did not comment on other disciples’ moral accomplishments but agreed with the
inquirer that the problem of today’s students laid in their lack of seriousness and their proneness to distraction.

What then was the secret of Yan Hui’s jingjie of not straying from humaneness for three months which other disciples could not achieve? Chen Zhi explained Yan Hui’s learning was none other than the learning of becoming a sage. This learning and this jingjie, according to Chen, could not be attained through expanding one’s knowledge or through conforming oneself to the rules of propriety, but only through the clearing of the dregs in one’s heart-mind. In other words, the learning of sagehood was very much a self-initiated and self-guided undertaking, and as such depended solely on one’s own effort and not other’s instruction. Chen emphasized the self-directedness of sage learning when he said “the way of the sage is not with the sage but only in the heart-mind,” hence “the sages could not instruct Yan Hui, and Yan Hui could not receive it from the sages.”

He also argued that Yan Hui’s jingjie of not straying from humaneness for three months resulted from the maturation of effort (gongfu). Comparing the process of concentrating one’s efforts to the melting of snow and ice and the dissolving of dregs, he expounded that when Yan Hui first began his learning, the dregs filled and blocked his bosom. After exerting much effort, however, Yan was able to clear the dregs away from his heart-mind. Such cultivation process was described as the experience of “seeing the lofty and firm, before and after jingjie,” the jingjie that suddenly opens up and encounters you when you are not expecting it.

However, even for Yan Hui dwelling in humaneness was not a permanent reality. After all, his sagely living lasted without interruption for three months only. Chen Zhi interpreted that Yan’s sagely living was disrupted due to the sprouting of selfish thoughts,
which caused him to depart from humaneness. Completely filled with humaneness, only the sages were capable of not having even a hint of selfish desire from birth to death. Yet sagely living—that is, dwelling in humaneness—was an accessible and very present reality. Some reached the jingjie of dwelling in humaneness, but the problem was they departed from it too soon. Yan Hui, however, even when he departed from this jingjie, was not far from it, making his return to it an easier task. In an interesting analogy, Chen compared Yan’s relation to humaneness to that of the master of the house to his house; although he might leave his home, he would return to it before long. In contrast, many people lived as visitors and guests to this jingjie, only making occasional visits. Chen’s analogy highlights the territorial dimension of the Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse that interweaves the dynamics of relationship and ownership.

Yan Hui’s jingjie of not wavering from humaneness for three months continued to inspire the Neo-Confucian scholars of later periods who endeavoured to comprehend and expound its meaning and implication. Different interpretations emerged. Lü Nan argued that Yan’s jingjie was founded in his undivided work of seeing, listening, speaking, and moving in propriety through which he was able to overcome himself. Considering humaneness as forming one body with heaven and earth, Lü asserted Yan could attain this jingjie by overcoming himself and restoring propriety. The Ri jiang Si Shu jie yi elucidates Yan’s learning as the learning of selflessness which leads one to the “great and transformative jing.” Yet despite the emergence of various exegetical attempts, the underlying theme in the story of Yan Hui’s unswerving dedication to humaneness remained unchanged: through the continuing cultivation of self and the blotting out of
selfish desire from one’s heart-mind, one can overcome oneself and be ushered into the *jingjie* of abiding in humaneness.\(^85\)

Another attribute of Yan Hui’s *jingjie* was his ability to remain joyful even in dire living conditions. In the sixth chapter of the *Analects*, Confucius remarked:

> Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui! With a single bamboo dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy (*le* 樂) to be affected by it. Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui!\(^86\)

The unchanging joy of Yan Hui became a source of much inspiration and discussion for Neo-Confucians. The joy of Yan Hui was often mentioned together with another famous saying by Confucius in which he stressed the importance of joy in learning: “They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight (*le* 樂) in it.”\(^87\) Believing that the joy experienced by Confucius and Yan Hui was long lost, Neo-Confucians sought to recover the joy of learning as a part of restoring sage learning.

After examining the joy of the sages and the worthies of the past, Wang Chongyun 王充耘 (b. 1304) concluded what the ancients delighted in did not exceed the bounds of the *dao*. Believing that among the disciples of Confucius only Yan Hui reached the *jing* of sagely joy, Wang pointed out that the difficulty in realizing the *jingjie* of joy lies in the fact that it could not be transmitted through words; it could only be reached by personally entering and grasping it. Those who profess to be learned yet have not reached this *jingjie* of joy, Wang said affirmingly, cannot claim to be learned.\(^88\)

Yan Hui’s joy was not an outcome of an easy and restful living but a hard-won trophy for his untiring effort towards overcoming himself. Chen Zhi claimed that the *jingjie* of true joy could only be realized after one’s effort matures.\(^89\) Cai Qing remarked
the *jingjie* of joy could be reached through the work of overcoming oneself.\(^{90}\) The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians also recognized the strong connection between self-cultivation and joy. Chŏng Kae-ch’ŏng put forth that in order to imitate the joy of Confucius and Yan Hui, one has to gradually enter the *jingjie* of mean and harmony through the practice of immersive nurturing of the heart-mind.\(^{91}\) Chŏng Yak-yong 丁若鏞 (1762-1836) asserted that the joy of Confucius and Yan Hui was not in eating and drinking but in the *jingjie* of joy. Unless one reaches their heights, one cannot savour their joy.\(^{92}\)

In order to feel the impact Yan Hui’s joy had on the development of Neo-Confucianism and on individual Neo-Confucians, we have to mull over the state of Confucian learning in the eleventh century. The socio-political and economic environments of the eleventh-century Song China and their connection to the rise of Neo-Confucianism have been expounded in depth by Peter Bol in his *Neo-Confucianism in History*.\(^{93}\) Compared to previous dynasties, the Song regime took an even more active role in the promoting and shaping of Confucian learning. Endeavouring to extend the state control over the practice of Confucian learning, the government established Confucian schools throughout the country mainly for the purpose of preparing the students for the civil service examination. The result was an unprecedented expansion of Confucian learning, and the rapid growth in the number of people seeking the official career. By the eleventh century, the flaws of this system became apparent. The country was plagued with the rising number of unemployed and disenchanted Confucian literati, as the government was unable to create enough positions for those who passed the civil service examination; the Confucian learning promoted by the state came under growing scrutiny. It was in this very context that the purpose of Confucian learning came into
question. What is the purpose of Confucian learning aside from securing a bureaucratic career? The founders of the Neo-Confucian movement deplored the fact that Confucian learning had become a means to political ambition and economic wellbeing rather than a goal in itself. With these concerns in mind, they turned to Yan Hui who wholeheartedly pursued learning for the love of it and for the joy it brings. The life of Yan Hui, who continued in sage learning even in poverty, offered hope and promise of liberation from the bondage of the rewarding-seeking Confucian learning and from the political ambitions and vain conceits it accompanied.

The desire for wealth and fame and the fear of poverty and no recognition were the critical dilemmas for the Confucian literati then as they are for us now. Lü Nan’s account shows us that the anxiety over poverty was regarded as a major stumbling block in the progress towards sage learning.

The inquirer asked: “Yan Hui’s eating from a bamboo dish and drinking from a gourd did not change his joy. The Master, therefore, regarded him worthy. Zi Lu wore wadded clothes, and was not ashamed before those who wore beautiful clothes made of fox-fur. The Master liked those two disciples even though the depth of their cultivation differed. The students of today can seek to reach this jingjie only when they are able to be freed from the concerns about poverty and wealth.

The master (Lü Nan) replied: This is the first thing that learning can achieve. The concerns about poverty and wealth can block up heaven and earth and belittle the nobility. It is said “When the junzi leaves humaneness, the villain makes a name for himself.” Therefore, today we must seek humaneness only. And if one has a part in humaneness, one must consider the examples of the bamboo and the gourd dishes and of the fox-fur.94

To the Neo-Confucians struggling to overcome the worries of wealth and poverty and desiring to seek humaneness with an undivided heart, Yan Hui’s unchanging joy was a powerful testimony because his was joy tested and proven. Many sought to understand and attain his inspirational jingjie. Yuan’s Chen Tianxiang asserted that by residing in joy
and following the principle, one could reach the *jingjie* of peace and humaneness which transcends poverty and wealth.\(^9^5\) Chosŏn’s Kang Paeng-nyŏn 姜柏年 (1603-1681) discussed the challenges posed by poverty and wealth, and remarked if one can discern the boundaries between righteousness and profit, there would be nothing but ultimate joy any time and anywhere.\(^9^6\) All in all, as Ming’s Wang Najian 王納諫 (17\(^{th}\) c.) noted, sage learning could be summed up as the *jingjie* of joy and no resentment—enjoying one’s own journey of moral cultivation and holding no bitter feelings about one’s meagre situation.\(^9^7\)

It should also be noted that along with the story of Yan Hui, the Neo-Confucian discourse on joy also memorialized the account of another disciple of Confucius, Zeng Dian 曾晉. When asked by his teacher what his wishes were, Zeng replied: “In this, the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would wash in the Yi [River], enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.” To this Confucius responded: “I give my approval to Dian.”\(^9^8\) Zeng’s “enjoying the breeze among the rain altars, and returning home singing” came to be regarded as a sign of superior joy by Neo-Confucians. The accounts of Yan and Zeng often appear together in the Neo-Confucian discussion of joy, as in Yi Tong-gŭk 李東汲 (1738-1811)’s saying, “joy is in the spring breeze, the narrow lane, and the bamboo dish.”\(^9^9\) Zhou Zongjian 周宗建 (*jinshi* 1613), a member of late Ming’s Donglin Faction, elucidated that Zeng Dian was able to discover the wonder of Yan’s attainment by comparing himself to and illuminating himself by Yan Hui’s *jing* of the heart-mind, and his successful discovery was reflected in his own account of joy.\(^1^0^0\)
Yan Hui became a Neo-Confucian role model by setting an example of abiding in humaneness and finding joy in all situations. Yet becoming like him was a tough challenge. Gao Panlong opined that among all Song Neo-Confucians only Cheng Hao was able to follow and imitate the joy of Confucius and Yan Hui. ¹⁰¹ Yan Hui was not a symbol of perfection. Gao observed even though Yan achieved the jingjie of abiding in humaneness and rejoicing in poverty, he was not able to attain the complete investigation of one thing through which one experiences the interconnectedness of all things. ¹⁰² But it was precisely this incompleteness of Yan Hui that continued to inspire Neo-Confucians of all times and places. He was not a sage, but he was a sage in becoming. The pioneering spirit of Yan Hui and the territorial nature of his accomplishments were aptly conveyed in Zhang Shi’s correspondence to Zhu Xi.

After Mencius, the great learning was not made known, and among those who followed [the Confucian learning] there was none who understood it. It is like saying: “Go and learn to serve your father and brother. In serving what is there that cannot be done?” They simply acted without training and without examining. Knowing it and putting it into action can be compared to a clear and bright day. It is like walking on the solid ground with bare feet, with steps corresponding to each other. Not knowing yet proceeding into action is like groping in the dark, and many are those who are unsure whether they are on the right path or not. Zeng Dian, however, was not like the people of present day who claim that they see but do not go ahead and walk in it (or carry it out 践履). Seeing the open expanse, they call it the jingjie of the sages, but they do not follow the example of Yan Hui and Zeng Dian who fought the challenges. For the achievement of cautiousness, Yan Hui and Zeng Dian engaged in a battle. How can the achievement of cautiousness be nothing? Acting only for a moment is not acting in reverence. It is like the lack of action in the people of present day who have not yet tasted the true wisdom. Employing this true wisdom is like understanding water and fire. How can one dare to tread something that cannot be treaded?¹⁰³
In this, one of the earliest accounts of the Neo-Confucian discussion of sagely *jingjie*, Zhang employed territorial analogies to present Yan Hui and Zeng Dian as the pioneers who daringly marched into sagely territory and strode steadily and confidently on the solid ground of sagehood. The belligerent description captures the confrontational nature of sage learning, the war against one’s unsagely thoughts and actions. It was such bold determination, Zhang argued, that was needed in seizing sagely *jingjie*, the quality that he saw was lacking in the lives of his contemporaries.

The Neo-Confucian exploration of *jingjie* discourse inspired the conception of sagehood as a territory, clearly set apart from the Buddhist and other unsagely domains. In this new philosophical framework, the pursuit of sage learning was seen as a territorial act, as the reaching, seeing, entering, seeking, creating, and occupying of sagely territory. The discussion on Yan Hui’s *jingjie* also reveals that the nature of sage learning was essentially territorial, a brave march into the moral and spiritual territory first opened up by the ancient sages. On the whole, in these philosophical explorations we see the development of discursive themes, which served like patches on a loosely put together philosophical quilt—invoking the work of many over a long period—rather than building blocks for a philosophical system.

*Jingjie as a Neo-Confucian Interpretive Framework*

So far we have examined the ways in which the *jingjie* discursive framework influenced the Neo-Confucian re-envisioning of sagehood. In what follows we will investigate how the discursive formations of *jingjie* impacted the interpretations of various Neo-Confucian philosophical concepts, in other words, the shaping of the
conceptual world of Neo-Confucianism. Jingjie became one of the principal modes of imagining and interpreting the Neo-Confucian self and world. This meant that all things—including human beings, the world they inhabit, and the various elements that constitute human beings and their world—found their places within the discursive structure of jingjie.

Within this interpretive framework, the contemplation on human beings was transformed into a territorial exploration of the ontological composition and workings of human beings. In order to understand human beings, one first had to determine the territorial identity of human beings—the jingjie of human beings. Yi Sang-jŏng saw the jingjie of human beings to be found in its in-betweenness. Born together with heaven and earth, human beings inhabit the area demarcated by heaven and earth, the area enclosed within the four seas and the eight wastelands. Of all living creatures only human beings were endowed with correct form and qi, and together with heaven and earth, humans formed the cardinal triad.105 Moreover, an individual human being was conceived of as being composed of two coexisting yet opposing territories: the territory of nature 性境界 and the territory of the heart-mind 心境界. The ontological makeup and operation of a human being was explained in terms of the dynamic and contentious relationship between the two territories.106

The territorial notions of area, boundary, and border also made their way into the interpretation of philosophical concepts. Applying the jingjie rhetoric, Xu Jian 許謙 (1269-1337) explained “mean” 中庸 to be composed of two distinct territories: the jingjie of prudent solitude 慎獨境界 and the jingjie of guarding against fear 戒懼境界.107 Kang Paeng-nyŏn called on the quality of border when he said the jingjie of mean and harmony
separates and distinguishes sincerity and insincerity 中和境界分誠僞. Chŏng Chong-no and Sin Mong-sam 辛夢參 (1648-1711) discussed the jingjie of the Great Ultimate as oneness which penetrates the boundaries of action and tranquility. Chen Zhi and Shen Shouzheng 沈守正 (1572-1623) explained interpenetration and interconnectedness 一贯境界 as the jingjie from which nature and heavenly dao originated. Wang Najian elucidated selfishness can be overcome by seeing not from the territory of desire 欲境 but from the territory of principle 理境. Expanding on the implication of area and border, the jingjie of aloneness 獨之境界 was expounded by Sun Shenxing and Sŏ Hyŏng-su as where one must dwell 所處 and meet 所接. Other philosophical ideas such as propriety, righteousness and principle, emotion, and humaneness were also articulated in territorial terms. In all these examples jingjie functioned as an underlining conceptual framework, creating an integrated metaphysical and theoretical field bound together by a common awareness of territoriality. But the best example of the discursive unfolding of jingjie can be seen in the Neo-Confucian interpretation of the nature and operation of the heart-mind, a subject of centuries-long debate.

The Jingjie of the Heart-Mind

Much has been said about the importance and the role of the heart-mind in Neo-Confucian philosophy. What I want to call attention to here is the territorial dimension of the understanding of the heart-mind—how the employment of the jingjie interpretive framework configured the exploration of the heart-mind into a problem of territoriality. First of all, the attempt to grasp the nature of the heart-mind was formulated into the
quest for the *jingjie* of the heart-mind. Laying out the boundary of the heart-mind meant determining the reach of its power and control. Hao Jing 郝敬 (1558-1629) stressed before one can cultivate one’s heart-mind, one first has to know the body of the heart-mind 心體. Quoting Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428-1500)’s poem, Hao stated “to preserve the heart-mind, first know its boundary. ... One piece of round and harmonious expansiveness that can be known, it is in this *jingjie* that ten thousand things are complete. It is the complete embodiment of humaneness.”

The description is a momentous one. It identifies the domain of the heart-mind to be expansive in dimension and also ontically and ontologically complete. Accordingly, the heart-mind was also the cradle of moral virtues. Chen Tianxiang saw that all principal virtues of Confucian learning resided within the bounds (*jing*) of the heart-mind. Such inclusive nature of the *jingjie* of the heart-mind was aptly described by Yu Sŏng-nyong 柳成龍 (1542-1607):

> Although the heart-mind as an object is located in the centre of the body, it controls the principle of heaven and earth. Within the cosmos, the high and the low and the four directions all constitute the *jingjie* of the heart-mind. That which is inside cannot be said to have entered, and that which is outside cannot be said to have come out of it.

Yi Sang-jŏng also voiced a similar opinion:

> Even though the heart-mind is just one part of the body, as for its substance (*ti*) its greatness equals that of heaven and earth, and as for its function (*yong*) it flows and penetrates together with heaven and earth. The four seas and the six directions, they are all the *jingjie* of the heart-mind. Therefore, gathering in one square-inch cannot be called entering of the heart-mind, nor can responding to events and things be called coming out of.

In all of these examples the domain of the heart-mind is explained to be a cosmological, geographical, and ontological one, completely enveloping all things and beings. Its all-encompassing character defies any discussion of entering or exiting. It is the absolute
givenness, the domain of existence itself, which nullifies the inner-outer division. The domain of the heart-mind also represents wholeness and completeness to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be subtracted. The affirmation of the all-inclusive-oneness of the heart-mind’s jingjie had a huge impact on the Neo-Confucian envisioning of the cultivation of self. Neo-Confucians realized the most expansive domain—the domain of existence itself—was also located in their very heart-mind. This meant the cultivation of one’s heart-mind, a deeply personal activity, was also a change of cosmic scale, transforming not only the inner world but also the outer world. It is such vision of integrated oneness that made essential ontological change a possibility.

However, as far as the operation of the heart-mind was concerned, Neo-Confucians turned to the divisive and territorializing quality of jingjie. The all-embracing and unifying jingjie of the heart-mind was considered to be composed of multiple sub-jingjie. Yi I 李珥 (1536-1584) elaborated on the partitioning of the unified heart-mind:

One must know nature and heart-mind, emotion and intention are essentially the same, but each has its jingjie. ... What does being the same mean? The heart-mind that is not aroused yet (wei fa 未發) is called nature, once aroused (yi fa 已發) it is called emotion. Following arousal, explaining, it is called intention. This is what is meant by being the same. What does each having its jingjie mean? When the heart-mind is tranquil without moving, it is the jingjie of nature. When it is moved and opened up, it is the jingjie of emotion. After being moved, clarifying and explaining—it is the jingjie of thought. There is only one heart-mind, but each has its jingjie.

Yi spelled out how nature, emotion, and intention are different manifestations of the heart-mind, all belonging to the heart-mind yet having distinct territories or domains. For the most part, the dividedness of the jingjie of the heart-mind was expressed in terms of the relationship between two opposing, yet not mutually exclusive, concepts. Two major
sets of relationships were called into question: *dong* 动 and *jing* 靜 (activity and stillness) and *weifa* and *yifa* (the not yet aroused state and the already aroused state). The relationship between the constituents of each pair was expounded as the relationship between two *jingjie*, and at stake were issues of identity and interaction.

The philosophical exploration of the two *jingjie* of the heart-mind was more prominent in Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism. The heart-mind was thought to be composed of the *jingjie* of activity and the *jingjie* of stillness. Both domains could be entered, even though entering one often meant exiting the other. It was believed that at birth humans have or belong to the domain of stillness, but later enter the domain of activity as they grow older. Some saw the goal of cultivation as the recovery and return to the domain of stillness. Kim Ch’ang-hŭp 金昌翕 (1653-1722), for instance, regarded Yan Hui’s not wavering for three months as an example of residing in the *jingjie* of stillness, which, as he put it, was an extremely difficult task.

Others, however, saw the relationship between the *jingjie* of activity and of stillness as a mutually non-exclusive one. Pak P’il-chu said:

> The heart-mind has activity and stillness. And just like the Great Ultimate, when [the heart-mind] is aroused, it cannot be without stillness, and when tranquil it cannot be without activity. When the two poles alternate, we can say they flow. When the two substances mutually counter each other, then they can be called opposites. Not only is one bearing the other natural for activity and stillness, but activity and stillness must also follow each other. Each has assigned tasks corresponding to its *jingjie*.124

In this interpretation the *jingjie* of activity and of stillness define and depend on each other in a complementary relationship. This position, however, was challenged by those who deemed the difference between the two *jingjie* to be a fixed separation, one that does
not consent to merging or blurring of the border. Commenting on the Diagram of Activity and Stillness, Yi Kwang-jŏng 李光靖 (1552-1627), noted:

Activity and stillness here [in the diagram] represent the jingjie of the heart-mind. It is not like the Great Ultimate’s yin and yang which have the distinction of the way and the vessel (dao and qi). Therefore, a line was drawn to divide and represent activity and stillness.¹²⁵

Yi disputed the correlation between the Great Ultimate and the jingjie of activity and stillness we saw in Pak’s discussion, and portrayed jingjie as a line, a border, that separates activity and stillness. These contrasting discourses demonstrate how different imagination of jingjie affected the rise of different interpretations; while Pak highlighted jingjie’s connection to belongingness, Yi emphasized its connection to division and duality.

More complex discursive formations of jingjie can be seen in the interpretation of the relationship between weifa and yifa. Without attempting to present in any comprehensive way the intricate interpretive development involving the two concepts, I will focus on demonstrating the often neglected contribution of the jingjie framework in instigating and shaping the debate. The Neo-Confucians in China used the expression jingjie of weifa and yifa to refer to the state of the heart-mind before and after the activation (or formation or release) of the seven emotions—joy, anger, grief, fear, love, hate, and desire.¹²⁶ The domain of weifa, particularly, was compared to the heart-mind of an infant, the jingjie of one and empty brightness.¹²⁷ But it is in the Chosŏn that we see the full-fledged development of the discussion of weifa and yifa jingjie.

First of all, regarding jingjie as a fixed border that divides the two domains, a group of Chosŏn scholars interpreted the weifa-yifa relationship as a binary opposition. O Hŭi-sang 喬熙常 (1763-1833), for instance, argued that between the domains of weifa
and yifa there is no jingjie one can occupy, signifying the absence of middle ground and denying any room for irresoluteness. Han Wŏn-jin 韓元震 (1682-1751) became the leading voice for this position. He saw the weifa of the heart-mind as nature, and the yifa of the heart-mind as emotion. According to him, weifa and yifa each forms a jingjie in one heart-mind, and the two jingjie do not intermingle. More importantly, he claimed the same weifa and yifa jingjie are found in the heart-mind of the sages and of ordinary people.

Han’s understanding was severely criticized by Yi Kan 李柬 (1677-1727) who believed there is an essential difference between the weifa jingjie of the sages and of ordinary people. The debate between Han and Yi over the nature of weifa and yifa became a part of the famous Horak debates 湖洛論爭 between the two groups within the Yi I School. Yi Kan argued that prior to the formation of weifa the common people’s heart-mind already contains material force and disposition (qizhi) which creates the difference in good and bad. Therefore, weifa also reflects a distinction of good and bad, shallow and deep. In other words, the weifa of the sages is pure and complete, while the weifa of the common people is impure and incomplete. In brief, while Pak considered weifa and yifa as the two related functions of the heart-mind, Yi only focused on weifa jingjie as the true state of the heart-mind, describing it as the great origin of principle and material force (li qi) and the foundation on which the heart-mind and nature are built. Yi, therefore, condemned Pak of limiting the discussion of weifa to the realm of the weifa of qizhi and not including the sagely realm of weifa.

In reaction to these criticisms, Han accused Yi of creating division within weifa jingjie when it should be regarded as one. He also denounced Yi for separating nature
(xing) and material force and disposition (qizhi), and for considering the former to be
good and superior and the latter to be bad and inferior. On the contrary, Han saw the two
to be always in interaction with each other, both taking part in weifa jingjie. Cho
Hyŏn-myŏng 趙顯命 (1690-1752) also voiced a similar criticism against Yi Kan’s
multiple division of jingjie for creating two levels of jingjie within weifa jingjie.

Despite these harsh criticisms, Yi’s distinction between the sagely weifa jingjie and the
common weifa jingjie was agreed upon by many, and even became the basis for some
radical ideas, including the claim that no weifa jingjie can be found in ordinary people’s
heart-mind.

But perhaps Yi’s most notable contribution in this intellectual debate was his
linking of weifa and effort (or cultivation), interpreting weifa jingjie as a result of arduous
cultivation, in contrast to Han who viewed weifa as simply one of the two states of the
heart-mind. Following on this idea, other Neo-Confucians came to explore the
connection between weifa-yifa and effort (gongfu). Pak P’il-chu refuted the equation of
weifa with stillness and yifa with activity, based on which some argued the exertion of
effort cannot exist in weifa jingjie, because effort belongs to yifa jingjie. He listed the
four influential views circulating in his time that repudiated the linking of weifa and
effort: 1) weifa is the ground or state before the sprouting of conscious thought, 2) weifa
is the state before the exercise of preservation and nurturing, 3) only outside the domain
of weifa, effort can begin, and 4) effort is a response to pain and sickness—in other words,
without pain and sickness, there can be no effort. Pak criticized all these views for
regarding jingjie as an independent development, unrelated to the rest of the Neo-
Confucian learning. They only focused on the distinction between stillness and activity,
and neglected the oneness of their principle. For him not recognizing the interrelatedness of jingjie and gongfu meant rejecting the integrated oneness of all principles. Pak’s view was later echoed by Sim Yuk 沈鈞 (1685-1753) and Song Myŏng-hŭm who argued the distinction between weifa and yifa jingjie is determined by their relation to effort and not by their relation to stillness and activity. Yun Pong-gu 尹鳳九 (1681-1767) even identified weifa jingjie attained through effort as weifa’s true jingjie, differentiating it from other weifa jingjie.

So what can this rather lengthy account of the weifa-yifa debate tell us, particularly with regards to the topic under study? I would like to propose that the Horak debate over the weifa-yifa relation, to a great extent, was a clash between the two divergent jingjie discourses. On the one hand, Han Wŏn-jin and his followers envisioned jingjie as a defined area with a clear boundary, and it was this shared understanding that led them to see the relationship between weifa jingjie and yifa jingjie as that between two neighbouring territories with distinct identities and functions. Yi Kan and his supporters, on the other hand, regarded jingjie as territoriality with relative gradation; as a result, their vision of weifa jingjie displayed comparative differences, even jingjie within jingjie. In other words, it was the two conflicting discourses emerging from the larger discursive framework of jingjie that became the basis of the divergent interpretations and guided the course of this particular Neo-Confucian philosophical dialogue.

Although the Horak split over these two discourses of jingjie sparked the most substantial debate, there were also other attempts to creatively understand weifa and yifa by drawing on other jingjie discourses. One notable development was Pak Yun-wŏn’s investigation of jingjie as a liminal discourse, a discourse of becoming. Emphasizing
jingjie’s connection to the idea of “border 邊,” he argued jingjie is to be distinguished from “place 處.” Expanding on this point, Pak proposed arriving at the jingjie of weifa should be comprehended as arriving at the “border” of weifa, and not as arriving in the place or area of weifa; as a border weifa jingjie could not be occupied and inhabited.  

Furthering his discussion on the border-like quality of jingjie, he suggested the goal of learning is to arrive at the jingjie (border) “between” weifa and yifa, the jingjie of half stillness and half activity—the liminal ground between weifa and yifa. Based on this claim, he construed weifa and yifa jingjie represented the state of “becoming,” and criticized the attempts to identify them as fixed destinations or concepts. In contrast, Pak Se-ch’ae highlighted jingjie’s connection to earth, identifying weifa and yifa jingjie as grounds. He described weifa jingjie as the place from which the first sprout germinates, the ground on which the first step is advanced. These actions, he explained, do not trespass weifa jingjie, as they occupy the area between having the desire to act and not yet acting. The reference to “trespassing 干犯” is significant, as it communicates the presence of clear boundary and the crossing of this boundary as a violation.

These extended examples demonstrate the great impact the discursive formations of jingjie had on the Neo-Confucian envisioning and theorizing of the heart-mind and its operation. On the whole, the conception of the heart-mind as a jingjie composed of two competing sub-jingjie and the various explanations of their relationship and interaction highlight the territorialization of the heart-mind and of the conceptual world of Neo-Confucianism.
The Neo-Confucian Diagrams and Territoriality

The importance of territorial imagination in the Neo-Confucian philosophical development was also visually displayed in the production of diagrams. Much more so than the previous forms of Confucian learning, Neo-Confucianism relied heavily on diagrams and charts for conceptualizing and explaining its vision of life and world. Many studies on the Neo-Confucian diagrams have focused on explicating their meanings and uses. More recently, in an important study, Francois Louis examined the diagrams’ connection to the formation of Neo-Confucian genealogy. But as to how the diagramization of Neo-Confucian philosophy affected and shaped the conceptualization of philosophy itself demands more investigation.

The Neo-Confucian diagram-making was carried out with two goals in mind: first, to emulate the diagram-making practice of the ancient sages, and second, to use the diagrams to serve didactic purposes. With Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073)’s designing of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate (taiji tu 太極圖), the Neo-Confucian tradition of producing and studying the diagrams commenced. In his preface to the Ten Diagrams on Sage learning (sŏnghak sipto 聖學十圖) presented to the then seventeen-year old King Sŏnjo 宣祖 (r. 1567-1608), Yi Hwang 李滉 (a.k.a T’oegye 退溪, 1501-1570) expounded that the practice of diagram-making was first originated by the sage-emperors who wished to pass on sage learning to later generations. Comparing the diagrams to “the gate for entering the true Tao and the foundation for accumulating virtue,” Yi expressed the diagrams’ essential role in the architecturing of Neo-Confucian thought.

The shared underlying assumption behind the surge of Neo-Confucian diagrams was the belief that sage learning could be mapped out. On the two-dimensional surface,
the diagrams laid out not only the integrated pictures of cosmological and moral operations, but also the map of the road to sagehood. The mappability of both physical and cosmo-ontological worlds supposed a strong concern for and awareness of territoriality. Indeed, the diagrams reveal that many—even almost all—aspects of Neo-Confucian learning were mapped out territorially, and such tendency for diagramization demonstrates not only the metaphysical turn but more importantly for our discussion the territorial epistemological and interpretive turn in Neo-Confucianism.

The systematic grouping demonstrated in the layout of the diagrams communicates a clear sense of division and demarcation of areas and boundaries. Also prominent are the position of centre, the movement from top to bottom, and the division into right and left. The central position often represents the place of origin from which various things and concepts originate and to which they return. Assuming the form of multiple squares, concentric circles, or a branching tree, in all cases the diagrams clearly identify and distinguish the domains within. Based on the structure of this orderly arrangement, the goals and ideas were explained: the centrality of reverence, the workings of the heart-mind, and the procession of cultivation were all represented as domains consisting of various components.

One important point that has been overlooked in the study of Neo-Confucian diagrams is their connection to jingjie discourse. We have examined how the Neo-Confucian key concepts were conceptualized as each having its own jingjie.\textsuperscript{149} These various conceptual jingjie were visually represented in the diagram, mapping out the domains and territories that constitute the world of Neo-Confucian philosophy. The spatial representation of conceptual jingjie can be seen in T’oegeye’s Ten Diagrams on
Sage Learning. One of them, the “Diagram of the Learning of the Heart-Mind 心學圖,” for instance, illustrates the two key Neo-Confucian concepts—the heart-mind and reverence—as carefully constructed conceptual fields or spheres. [Plate 1] Inside a circle, representing the heart-mind, are written its three functions: “empty and spiritual 虛靈,” “knowing and perceiving 知覺,” and “divine and illuminating 神明.” Surrounding the heart-mind are its six (or three pairs of) manifestations—“original mind 本心,” “good mind 良心,” “the infant’s mind 赤子心,” “the adult’s mind 大心,” “the dao’s mind 道心,” and “the human mind 人心”—and they are placed on opposite ends to convey their complementary relationship. Below the domain of the heart-mind is reverence, which also forms its domain consisting of twelve (or six pairs of) manifestations. The heart-mind and reverence are then connected together through “oneness” (wei jing wei yi 惟精惟一), painting a picture of Neo-Confucian learning in which the heart-mind and reverence are joined in unity.

Another diagram by T’oegye, the “Diagram of the Heart-Mind Connecting Nature and Emotion 心統性情圖,” illustrates the complex relation between nature and emotion, li and qi. [Plate 2] Inside the circle representing the heart-mind is found nature, indicating their unity—the domain of weifa. The lines branching out in different directions demonstrate the domain of yifa—the manifestation of li leading to the issuing of Four Beginnings 四端 (commiseration 慰隱, modesty and deference 辭讓, shame and dislike 羞惡, discernment of good and evil 是非), and that of qi to the issuing of Seven Emotions 七情. It is important to note that such a spatial demonstration of weifa and yifa was explained by using the discourse of jingjie: as Yun Hyŏng-no and Kwak Chong-sŏk 郭鍾
錫 (1846-1919) remarked, T’oebye’s diagram offered a visual representation of the jingjie of weifa and yifa. These accounts highlight that a shared concern for territoriality inspired the philosophical exploration of both jingjie discourse and the diagrams, the former’s literary construction of ideas and the latter’s visual arrangement of ideas. Together they illustrate the impact of territorial vision in the shaping of the Neo-Confucian philosophical imagination which illuminated the way to the sagely territory.

[Plate 1] Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501-1570)’s Diagram of the Learning of the Heart-Mind 心學圖

2 Only one reference to jing is mentioned in the writings of the Chengs—“the entering and existing of the original jing of the human heart-mind takes place continuously without one being aware of it 人心縁境出入無時人亦不覺.” See [SKQS] Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), Er Cheng yi shu 二程遺書 (Posthumous Writings of the Cheng Brothers), 2b.8b. For Zhu Xi’s references to jing and jingjie, see [SKQS] Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), Zhuzi yu lei 朱子語類 (Classified Conversations of Master Zhu), 34.56b-57a, 59.48a, and 117.30a-b.

3 Fang and Schiller pointed out the merging of literature, history, philosophy, politics, and others we find in classical Chinese learning occurred due to the emphasis on “doing,” as a result developing “a systematics


7 [SKQS] Zhu Xi 杜震, *Yan ping da wen 延平答問* (The Conversations between Li Tong and Zhu Xi), 46b.

8 Chông Kyŏng-se 鄭經世 (1563-1633), *Ubok chip 悟伏集* (The Collected Works of Ubok), 1657, 9.2a-3a sang Sŏ-ae 송애 성상 上西齋先生.


10 Ibid., xu lu 傳錄, xia.11b. Also see the *Ming ru xue an* for more information on Luo Qinsun. [SKQS] Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1609-1695), *Ming ru xue an 明儒學案* (The Records of Ming Scholars), 47.2a-58b. Selections from the book have been translated into English by Julia Ching and Chaoying Fang. See Huang Tsung-hsi, *The Records of Ming Scholars* (a selected translation edited by Julia Ching with the collaboration of Chaoying Fang) (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).


12 A similar development was also seen in the Neo-Confucian study of the Confucian classics. See Huang Zhuoya 黃卓娅, “Shi xi Ouyang Xiu “Xici” deng fei shengren zhi zuo 事實歐陽修《系辭》等非聖人之作及其經學,” *Journal of Bohai University (Social Science)* 勃海大学学报 (哲學社会科学版) 26.5 (Sep. 2004): 19-22.

13 Ren Tiancheng identified the concern for the *jingjie* 人格境界 as one of the two defining characters of the Song Neo-Confucian understanding of sagehood. He, however, did not discuss the methodological, epistemological, and hermeneutic potentials of *jingjie*, and treated it as a general philosophical category. See Ren Tiancheng (1999): 65.

14 The reference to *jingjie* and *shijie* is found in Sun Shenxing 孫慎行 (1565-1636)’s discussion of Mean (中庸 zōngyōng). See Huang Zongxi, *Ming ru xue an*, 59.35a.

15 Chông Chong-no 鄭宗魯 (1738-1816), *Ipchae chip 立齋集* (The Collected Works of Ipchae), 1835, 13.1a-2a tap Ch’oe Sa-gu 宿崔士矩.

16 Shao Yong’s poem that Cai Qing is referring to is mostly likely the ninth poem of Shao’s famous “Singing in the Nest of Peace and Happiness 安樂窩中吟” See [SKQS] Cai Qing 蔡清 (1453-1508), *Yijing meng yin 易經蒙引* (Introduction to the Book of Change for Beginners), 4a.17a-b. Original text: 邵子此八句詩，只是指出復之所在，以示人不然伏羲文王孔子，只是一箇復字。至於復是何等時節，何等境界，則字字於始發之而盡之之時又精當。

究竟到此
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20 Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, Er Cheng yi shu, 23.3a.

21 Zhu Xi, Zhuzi yu lei, 95.70b-71a.

22 Ibid., 7.3b.


24 [SKQS] Chen Hao 陳皓 (1260-1341), Chen shi Liji ji shuo 陳氏禮記集說 (Chen’s Collected Sayings on the Book of Rites), 57.25b-26a.


26 Zhu Xi, Zhuzi yu lei, 31.8a-b.


28 [SKQS] Lashali 萊沙里 (1638-1712), and Chen Tingjing 陳廷敬 (1665-1748), eds. Ri jiang Si Shu jie yi 日講四書解義 (Daily Lectures on the Four Books and Their Commentary), 7.9a.

29 Ibid., 6.39a.

30 Ming’s Wang Shihuai 王時槐 (1522-1566) spoke of the return to original nature 本性 as the process of arriving at (jí) the unified original jingjie, the place where imagination and understanding cannot reach. See Huang Zongxi, Ming ru xue an 明儒学案, 1708, 1.42b-43a, insin sa wŏl sipsam il u tŏk 壬申四月十三日偶得.

31 [SKQS] Cai Qing 蔡清 (1453-1508), Si Shu meng yin 四書蒙引 (Introduction to the Four Books for Beginners), 15.88a.

32 Chŏng Kae-ch’ŏng 鄭介清 (1529-1590), Udŏk rok 愚得錄 (The Records of Ignorant Gains), 1692, 1.42b-43a, insin sa wŏl sipsam il u tŏk 壬申四月十三日偶得.

33 Kim Nak-haeng 金樂行 (1708-1766), Kusadang chip 九思堂集 (The Collected Works of Kusadang), 1801, 3.5a-b tap Yi Kyŏng-mun 答李景文.


35 Yi I’s discussion of whether Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) and Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk 徐敬德 (1489-1546) reached the jingjie of true and sincere intention shows jingjie’s role as a category of assessment and differentiation in the Neo-Confucian discourse. See Yi I 伊一 (1536-1584), Yulgok chŏsŏ 石谷全書 (The Complete Works of Yulgok), 1814, 32.9a-b Ugye chip 牛溪集.

36 [SKQS] Chen Tianxiang 陳天祥 (1230-1316), Si Shu bían yì 四書辨疑 (Explanation of the Questions on the Four Books), 4.17b-18a and 8.3a-b.

37 Pak Se-ch’ae 朴世采 (1631-1695), Namgye chip 南溪集 (The Collected Works of Namgye), 1732, 33.8a-9a, yö Im Tae-n'yŏn 興任年.

38 Lashali and Chen Tingjing, eds. Ri jiang Si Shu jie yi, 9.34a-b.

39 For a discussion on reaching Zhang Zai’s jingjie, see O To-il 欧道一 (1645-1703), Sŏp’a chip 西坡集 (The Collected Works of Sŏp’a), 1729, 27.15b kondŭk p’yŏn 剛得備.
No Kyŏng-im 鄭景任 (1569-1620), Kyŏng-am chip 敘舊集 (The Collected Works of Kyŏng-am), n.d., 2.11a-b tap Ch’oe Kye-sŏng 答崔季昇.

41 The early Ming Neo-Confucian compilation Xing li da quan 性理大全 (Great Compendium on Nature and Principle) states if one follows Zhu Xi’s instruction of daily investigation of one thing and practices its persistence, one day one’s knowledge will naturally and suddenly penetrate and connect, enabling one to reach the jingjie of extensive knowledge. Xing li da quan was compiled by Hu Guang 胡廣 (1369-1418), et al. [GJTSJC] li xue hui bian 理學彙編, xue xing dian 言行典, 89.640.40b zhi zhi 致日。Yi Sung-jŏng 李象靖 (1710-1781), Taesan chip 大山集 (The Collected Works of Taesan), 1802, 35.23a-b tap Kim Hong-bo munmok 答金弘弼問目.

42 Ku Pong-nyŏng 具鳳齡 (1526-1586), Paektam chip 椤潭集 (The Collected Works of Paektam), 1670, 8.26a-b tap Kwŏn Ŭnho sŏ 答權彚問書. Original text: 未嘗無清寧境界中卒悟耳。恐左右或忽於此否。須佛古聖遺書. 深閉雲山. 一以養清氣. 一以養精氣. 一以勵精志. 此外餘事. 不須向人道也。

43 Hu Juren identified Cheng Hao’s saying “not seeking things, but things respond; not giving trust, but people trust” as a sign of sagely jingjie. See Hu Juren, Ju ye lu, 3.8a-b. Wu Kangzhai 楊康齋 (1392-1469) also explained the jingjie of the sages as “not seeing things but things respond, not displaying trust, but people trust him.” See [SKQS] Shen Jia 沈佳 (jinsi 1718), Ming ra yun xing lu 明儒言行錄 (The Records of the Words and Deeds of the Ming Confucians), 3.44a Wu Yubi Kangzhai xiansheng 吳與弼康齋先生.

44 Yun Ki 尹基 (1741-1826), Mumyŏngja chip 無名子集 (The Collected Works of the Anonymous), n.d., 10 hu u sŏ 后又書. Pak Se-ch’ae also expressed the anxiety of not knowing what jingjie he attained. See Pak Se-ch’ae, Namnyŏng chip 南冥集 (The Collected Works of Namnyŏng), 1604, haengsang 行狀 9a.

45 Cho Sik 梁植 (1501-1572), Namnyŏng chip 南冥集 (The Collected Works of Namnyŏng), 1604, haengsang 行狀 9a.

46 Lashali and Chen Tingjing, eds. Ri jiang Si Shu jie yi 里江世書紀異, 7.9a.


48 Ding Weixiang also analyzed the two different views of gongfu within Neo-Confucianism in terms of a horizontal-vertical relationship. See Ding Weixiang 丁為祥, “Jianxing yu jianxing—Song Ming lixue zhong liang zhong bu tong de gongfu xitong 跡形與践行—宋明理學中兩不同工夫系統,” Zhongguo zhexue shi 中国哲學史, no.1 (2009): 34-44.


50 [GJTSJC] li xue hui bian 理學彙編, xue xing dian 言行典, xin xue bu 心學部, 119.607.10a da Zhang Qinfu 張欽夫 答張欽夫. Original text: 來示又謂心無時不虛，喜以恥心之本體固無時不虛。然而人欲己私汩沒久矣。安得一旦達見此境界乎。故聖人必曰：正其心。而正心必先誠意。誠意必先致知。其用力次第如此。然後可以得心之正。而復其本體之虛。亦非一日之力矣。

51 See the entry on Chen Chun 陳淳 in [SKQS] Li Qingfu 李清馥 (cir. 1757), Min zhong lixue yuan yu zhen kao 茅中理學溯源考 (The Study of the Origin of the Learning of Principle in Fujian Province), 28.15b Zhuo Ben Beixi xiansheng Chun xuepai 章本-beixi先生學排. Original text: 惟凡聖門高明廣大底境界更不復觀。而精微嚴密等工夫更不復。故凡聖門高明廣大底境界更不復觀。而精微嚴密等工夫，更不復從事具，亦可見也哉。

52 [SKQS] Chen Zhi 陳埴 (jinsi 1214), Mu zhong ji 木錦集 (The Record of Wooden Bell), 1.24a. See the entry on Nie Bao 聶豹 (1487-1563) in Huang Zongxi, Ming ru xue xian, 17.32b.
其境界與不違仁。

曾問于陶庺李縡，

子曰其心三月不違仁。

久之讀書，

則其理義至於純熟。

 luego

只以大槪氣象言耳。

宋子大全

聖人之道，

只功夫生熟。若不由戒懼慎獨格致誠正上得来。

程子曰唯有未到，

則當有應之者。

實體明而可求。

六經六蔽章

然所謂却

則其一時石火。

居聖周

明爲究竟工夫。

則其理義至於純熟，

則其一時石火。

則當有應之者。

吾能反而求之。

若不由戒懼慎獨格致誠正上得来。

元不是一切丢放度外。只求一快活了。活潑潑地。有絲毫人力。不得與焉者。此謂自得。這個境界。若不由戒懼慎獨獨特至誠正上得来。恐他說何活潑潑地。

The expression “vivacious territory” became widely used by Neo-Confucians to stand for self-determination. O Wŏn, for example, argued that the maturation of immersing nurturing (hanyang) will be followed by limitless and vivacious jingjie. See O Wŏn 吳瑔 (1700-1740), Wŏlgok chip 月谷集 (The Collected Works of Wŏlgok), 1752, 9.4a-6a Oktang chin yu p’ye chamch’a 王堂進六蔽箴箚.


D with the following：

Ibid., 7.43b-44a and 63b-64a. Yun Ponggu also argued the sages could be who they were, because they were able to retain the true jingjie. See Yun Pong-gu 尹鳳九 (1861-1677), Pyŏnggye chip 屏溪集 (The Collected Works of Pyŏnggye), 1802, 11.24a tap Yi Hŭi-gyŏng 答李熙卿.

A saying by the Ming Neo-Confucian Yuan Liaofan 黃宗羲 (cir. 1507), see Huang Zongxi, 兩韓論說集録 (The Record of Paired Pools’ Expositions), 1.78-a 8a. Original text: 吾身自有聖人境界。吾能反而求之。則當有應之者。如克己復禮天下歸仁之意也。

Vi Sang-jŏng argued once one’s effort matures, one can create the jingjie of the overcoming of oneself. See Yi Sang-jŏng, Taeasan chip 塑山集 (The Collected Works of Toam), 1803, 14.20b-26b tap Kim Chikpo mun mok 答金濟問目.

Im Sŏng-ju 任聖周 (1711-1788), Nokmun chip 鳳門集 (The Collected Works of Nokmun), 1795, 4.16b-18a tap Yi Su-i 答李濟問目. Original text: 三月不違與日月至焉。所造境界同異。曾問于陶庺。答曰境界同同。只功夫生熟。意味淺淡不同云云。蓋既可能造其域則至焉之時。其境界與未違。皆無不同。然所謂同者。只以大槪氣象言耳。其實心體之明。

學者不論。然則未著所謂不純非全體者。固是學平生自見之者。而其至焉之時。恐亦於純全何所得矣。于汝所說之經驗是之。由此可推知其本體大用。只然則未著所謂不純非全體者。固是學平生自見之者。而其至焉之時。恐亦於純全何所得矣。于汝所說之經驗是之。由此可推知其本體大用。只

Yi Chae’s original discussion is found in the collection of his writings. See Yi Chae 李悌 (1680-1746), Toam chip 塑山集 (The Collected Works of Toam), 1803, 14.20b-26b tap Im Chungsa munmok 答任仲思問目.

[KSQS] Kong Qiu 孔丘 (551-479 BC), Lun yu zhushi 論語注疏 (Notes and Commentaries on the Analects), commentary by He Yan 何晏 (d. 249) and notes by Xing Bing 邢昺 (932-1010), 6.5a. Original text: 子曰。回也。其心三年無違仁。其餘則日月至焉而已矣。
After examining Yan Hui’s life, Cheng Yi arrived at a conclusion that sagehood can be learned and achieved. See note 5.


80 Chen Zhi, Mu zhong ji, 1.36b-37a. 
81 Ibid., 1.21b-22a. 
82 Lü Nan, Si shu yin wen, 4.30a-b. 
83 [SKQS] Lü Nan 吕柟, Jing ye zi nei pian 楫野子內篇 (The Inner Chapters of Master Jingye), 15.5b-6a and 16.14b. 
84 See Note 23. 
85 For more discussion on the topic, see the works of the two Ming Neo-Confucians: Hu Juren, Jue yu, 8.20b, and [SKQS] Xia Liangsheng 夏良勝 (cir. 1521), Zhongyong yan yi 中庸衍義 (The Rich Meanings of the Book of Mean), 10.3b-4a. 
86 James Legge, Confucian Analects (Kessinger Publisher, 2004), 44. 
87 Ibid., 46. 
88 [SKQS] Wang Chongyun 王充耘 (b. 1304), Si Shu jing yi guan tong 四書經疑貫通 (The Penetration of the Questions of the Four Books), 3.3b-4a. 
89 Chen Zhi, Mu zhong ji, 1.55b-56a. 
90 Cai Qing, Si Shu meng yin, 15.29b-30a. 
91 Chōng Kae-ch’ông, Udūk rōk, 1.12a ham yang chi kong 涵養之功. 
93 Peter K. Bol, Neo-Confucianism in History (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008). 
94 Lü Nan, Jing ye zi nei pian, 17.2a-b. Original text: 顏子箪食瓢飲不改其樂. 夫子便稱之曰賢. 予儒衣敝縕袍, 與衣狐貉者立而不恥. 夫子便喜之二者, 雖有所深而不同. 今之學者. 若能於貧富闗頭擺脱得去. 便是求上逹境界. 先生曰, 此是第一件學問能乎. 此可以塞天地而輕王侯矣. 當當時門人. 便是至境界否.
95 Chen Tianxiang, Si Shu bian yi, 2.12a-b. 
97 Lu Longqi, Si Shu jiang yi kun mian lu, 4.6a-b. 
98 Legge (2004), 79. 
99 Yi Tong-guk 李東汲 (1738-1811), Man-gak chae chip 晚醫齋集 (The Collected Works of Man-gak chae), 1926, 1.12a-b ch’a Kwŏn Songgye ch’un hŭng si 次權松溪春興詩. 
100 Lu Longqi, Si Shu jiang yi kun mian lu, 11.6b. Lu quotes Zhou Zongjian 周宗建 (1582-1626). 
101 Gao Panlong, Gaozi yi shu, 10.43b-44a. 
102 Ibid.
Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133-1180). [GJTSJC] li xue hui bian 理學彙編, xue xing dian 學行典, 91.604.51b da Zhu Yuanhui 答朱元晦. Original text: 答朱元晦.... 自孟子而下, 大學不明只爲無知之者耳, 若曰: 行則學者事父兄, 事上何莫不行。惟其行而不著習, 而不察耳, 知之而行, 則譬如歧路, 當空腳踏實地, 步步相應, 未知而行者。如暗中摸索, 雖或中而中者, 亦多矣。會點非君今日。自背有見, 且直不踐履者也。正以見得開擴, 便轉大逆界。不止何時之, 高之功耳。顏回講事事, 貴之功蓋無。須與, 不敢者也。若今人之不踐履, 直未有憲知耳。使其真知, 若知水火, 之不可蹈其肯扼手。103 Yi Sang-jông also emphasized the importance of daily and personally walking on the jingjie of the ancients. See Yi Sang-jông, Taesan chip, 22.21a-22a tap Yi Hak-po 答李學甫。(104) 

Ibid., 30.11a tap Kim Chik-po mummok 答金直甫問目。

Kim Wŏn-haeng 金元行 (1702-1772), Miho chip 漢湖集 (The Collected Works of Miho), 1799, 7.11a-b tap Kim P’yŏng-jung 答金平仲。(105) 

[SKQS] Xu Jian 許謙 (1269-1337), Du Si Shu cong shuo 讀四書叢說 (Reading the Collected Sayings on the Four Books), 2.11a-b du Zhongyong cong shuo 讀中庸叢說。

Kang Paeng-nyŏn, Sŏlbon yugo, 1.15a ya um 言時。(106) 

Chŏng Chong-no, Ipcha ech, 18.30a-31a yŏ Kwŏn Sa-wŏn 與權思遠, and 23.24b-29a tap Cho Saeng-ŏn yu Ōn-hyu 答趙鶴儒彦休. Sin Mŏng-sam 辛夢參 (1648-1711), Ir-am chip 一庵集 (The Collected Works of Ir-am), 1865, 2.14a-23a tap Mun Sŏng-wŏn 答文聖源. Pak Se-ch’ae also examined the jingjie of the Great Ultimate. See Pak Se-ch’ae, Namgyechi chip, 51.35a-36a tap Kim Yŏ-jông 答金永精。(107) 

Chen Zhi, Mu chong ji, 1.66a-67a. Shen Shouzheng 沈守正 (1572-1623)’s account is found in Lu Longqi, Si Shu jiāng yi kun mian lu, 4.41a-42b. Chen Chun 陳厚 (1519-1623)’s Beixi zi yi 北溪字義 contains an entry on yi guan 一貫 in book 1. For an English translation of the text, see Ch’en Ch’un, Neo-Confucian Terms Explained: the Pei-hsi tzu-i (translated, edited, and with an introduction by Wing-tsit Chan) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 94-96. (108) 

Lu Longqi, Si Shu jiāng yi kun mian lu, juan. 12.6a-7b. 

See Sun Shexiang’s discussion in Huang Zongxi, Ming ru xue an, 59.20a-21b kun si chao 四書章抄. Sŏ Hyŏng-su, Myŏnggo chŏnchip, 17 Taehak chŏn yuk chang 大學傳六章. (109) 

For the jingjie discourse on propriety, see Yi Sangjông, Taesan chip, 34.4a-5b tap Kim Kyŏng-on 答金景藇, on righteousness and principle, see Ibid., 36.3a-4a tap Yu Ch’ŏn-sŏ 答柳天瑞; on emotion, see Yi Man-un 李萬運 (1736-1797), Mukhŏn chip 默軒集 (The Collected Works of Mukhŏn), 1938, 3.14b-16b tap Chung Chu-bo, Chung Tŏk-pu mummok 答鄭濟卿, 鄭德夫問目; and on humaneness, see Chen Zhi, Mu chong ji, 1.21b-22a, and Yun Haeng-im 尹行恵 (1762-1801), Sŏkchae ko 顔齋稿 (The Writings of Sŏkchae), n.d., 2.10a Non-ŏ ha 論語下. The jingjie framework was also applied in the Neo-Confucian study of the Book of Changes. For the jingjie discourse found in the Ming discussion of the Book of Changes, see [SKQS] Wu Guisen 吳桂森 (cir. 1610), Zhou Yi xiang xiang shu 周易像象述 (The Explanations of the Images in the Zhou Yi), 2.42a-43b. For the interpretation of yuann-heng-li-zheng 元亨利貞 (original, prosperous, advantageous, and correct) and ren-yi-li-zhi 仁義禮智 (humaneness, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom), see Chen Chai-hyŏng 李載亨 (1665-1741), Song-am chip 松巖集 (The Collected Works of Song-am), 1758, 1.33a-40b yŏ Han Sŏng-ji 輔孟子. (110) 

For the most comprehensive study on the subject, see Wm. Theodore de Bary, Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981). (111) 

See the entry on Hao Jing 郝敬 (1558-1629) in Huang Zongxi, Ming ru xue an 55.7a-b zhī yán 知言. Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428-1500), also known as Chen Baisha 陳白沙, was a renowned thinker and a poet. Original text: 心之先要論端倪。... 一片圓融大可知。即此境界，是萬物皆備，仁之全體也。112 The virtues Chen listed are humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, filial piety, brotherly love, loyalty, and faithfulness. See Chen Tianxiang, Si Shu bian yi, 13.31b-32a. Original text: 則仁義禮智孝弟忠信，所言皆在一心境中。 (113) 


119 Chŏng Kyŏng-se also pointed out the *jingjie* of the heart-mind is originally without the distinction between inner and outside. See Chŏng Kyŏng-se, *Ubok chip*, 14.29a-b. Kim Sa-gye kyŏng sŏ úmun pyŏnnon. 金沙溪書疑問辨論.


121 Yi Tŏk-hong 李德弘 (1541-1596), *Kanjae chip* 良齋集 (The Collected Writings of Kanjae), 1752, 4.3b-8a tap Kwon Chŏng-bo 答權定甫.

122 Yun Hyŏng-no, *Kyegu-am chip*, 2.27b-28a sang Yi Ko-sŏng change. 上李高城丈.

123 Kim Ch’ang-hup 金昌魯 (1653-1722), *Sam-yŏn chip* 三淵集 (The Collected Works of Sam-yŏn), 1732, 30 tae-guk mun tap 太極問答.


126 For Sun Shenxing’s discussion on the *jingjie* of weifa and yifa, see Huang Zongxi, *Ming ru xue an*, 59.35a.

127 Chen Zhi, *Mu zhong ji*, 8.32a-b and 10.2a-b.

128 O Hŭi-sang 吳熙常 (1763-1833), *Noju chip* 老洲集 (The Collected Works of Noju), 1892, 2.6b-7b sang Paek si 上伯氏.

129 Han Wŏn-jin 韓元震 (1682-1751), *Namdang chip* 南塘集 (The Collected Works of Namdang), 1675, 11.19a-48b ŭi tap Yi Kong-gŏ 答李公摶, and 11.50a-51b tap Yun Hŭi-bo pyŏlchi 答尹晦甫別紙.

130 For more information on the Horak debates, see Peter H. Lee and Wn. Theodore de Bary, eds., Sources of Korean Tradition: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 195-292.

131 Yi Kan 李柬 (1677-1727), *Öe-am yugo* 嶽嶽遺稿 (The Posthumous Works of Öe-am), 1760, 4.33a-36b sang Su-am sŏnsaeng 上達聰先生. and 12.25b-34a mi pal pyŏn 未發辨.

132 Ibid., 13.1a-6a mi pal pyŏn 未發辨後敘.

133 Ibid., 1225b-34a mi pal pyŏn 未發辨.

134 Han Wŏn-jin, *Namdang chip*, 11.19a-48b ŭi tap Yi Kong-gŏ 答李公摶, and 11.50a-51b tap Yun Hŭi-bo pyŏlchi 答尹晦甫別紙.


136 For a related criticism of Han’s view, see Kim Chŏng-nuk 金正默 (1739-1799), *Kwaiae yugo* 過齋遺稿 (The Posthumous Works of Kwaiae), 1928, 6.32a-46b sin sŏl pyŏn 心說辨. Also see Im Sŏng-ju, *Nokmun chip*, 9.48a-49a tap hok in 答或人.

137 Song Myŏng-hŭm, *Yŏkch’ŏn chip*, 7.11a-15b yŏ Im Chung-sa 與任仲思.


139 Pak P’il-chu, *Yŏhō chip*, 11 tap Yi Chung-gyŏn 答李仲謙.


141 Yun Pong-gu, *Pyŏnggye chip*, 40.9a-13b suk chung mi pal kang sŏl 鑑中未發辨説.

142 Pak Yun-wŏn, *Kanjae chip*, 8.14b-16a yŏ Im Ch’i-gong 與任仲思.

143 Ibid., 5.7a-8a yŏ Miram Kim kong 與密庵金公.
144 Ibid., 8.14b-16a yŏ Im Ch’i-gong 與任穉共.
145 Pak Se-ch’ae, Namgye chip, sok chip 續集, 18.16a-27b tap T’aech’o chil mun 答泰初姪問.
148 Kalton (1988), 29. Italicization was added for my emphasis.
149 See note 120.
150 Yun Hyŏng-no, Kyegu-am chip, 5.36a-41a sim sŏlbyŏn 心說辨. Kwak Chong-sŏk 郭鍾錫 (1846-1919), Myŏn-u chip 俛宇集 (The Collected Works of Myŏn-u), 1925, 35.5a-8b tap Chang Sunhwa 答張舜華.
151 Image source: http://blog.paran.com/blog/detail/postBoard.kth?pmcId=eastpeak&blogDataId=34359514&hrefMark=
152 Ibid.
II.2 The Poetic Discourse of Sagely Jingjie

Sagely jingjie, as much as it was a philosophical discourse, was also a poetic discourse. The Neo-Confucian discussion and experience of sagely jingjie was a profoundly poetic one. It was poetic first in the sense that the jingjie of the sages was believed to be conveyed and represented in poetry; second, that sagely jingjie represented a certain poetic mode of living, an aesthetic engagement with the self and the world; and third, that the discourse of sagely jingjie inspired poetic and artistic responses of Neo-Confucians.

The belief that poetry was an important gateway to the author’s person and life was a widely shared one among the Chinese literati. The Song Neo-Confucians, while agreeing with this basic assumption, criticized the literary practice of their time for focusing too much on the pursuit of stylish accomplishment. In his much controversial explanation of the relationship between wen 文 and dao 道, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) even remarked that composing literature can harm one’s moral cultivation. But what he and other Neo-Confucians denounced was not literature itself but its artificiality; literary cultivation without corresponding moral cultivation was seen as a problem in the eyes of Neo-Confucians. Advocating the inseparability of literary and moral cultivation, they argued ideal literature should be a natural expression and extension of one’s self, unpretentiously and transparently reflecting the moral nature of the author. Zhu Xi’s discussion of literature precisely presents such a view, underscoring literature’s intimate connection to self-cultivation and the investigation of things.¹

Neo-Confucians believed that the poetic works of the sages and great teachers manifested the authors’ personal jingjie, the jingjie of their heart-mind. Zhu Xi, for
instance, stated that the poetry of Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077) represented his expansive jingjie of the heart-mind², and the Ming Neo-Confucian Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536-1618) asserted that the landscape of poetic sentiment (qing jing 情景) in one’s heart-mind should embody one’s jing 境.³ Such close linking of poetry and individual—in other words, the construction of poetic identity—is also demonstrated in the Neo-Confucian discussion of the disposition of the sages and worthies. In Zhu Xi’s portrayal of Zhou Dunyi’s mind as “the breeze on a sunny day and the clear moon,” and in Zhu Guangting 朱光庭 (1037-1094)’s description of his visit to Cheng Hao 程颢 (1032-1085) as “sitting in the midst of a spring breeze,” we see the vital importance of the poetic discourse in the Neo-Confucian construction of individuality.⁴ The poetic figuration of sagely jingjie is aptly captured in a poem by the Chosŏn Neo-Confucian Yi Tong-gŭp 李東汲 (1738-1811):

吾儒境界本平寬
脚下從容坦路安
晩節最憐霜後菊
幽香自播谷中蘭
樂在春風陋巷簞

The jingjie of us Confucians is originally level and broad.
Under the feet, following the calm and even road is easy.
In the late season, the chrysanthemum after the frost is most lovely.
Also the faint fragrance of the freely scattered orchids in the valley.
The joy is in the spring breeze, the narrow alley, and the bamboo dish.⁵

Yi renders the jingjie of Neo-Confucians as a picturesque poetic territory, a setting for a peaceful and delightful living. The last line alludes to the stories of the disciples of Confucius and their exemplary life of contentment and simplicity. It is not hard to notice that the poetic discourse of sagely jingjie bore close resemblance to the general discourse
of poetic jingjie which promoted a poetically affected way of living strongly influenced by the shanshui and tianyuan genres of poetry. Yet despite these apparent similarities, Yi found it necessary—as did other Neo-Confucians—to poetically identify and set apart the jingjie belonging to Neo-Confucians, which, Yi believed, was an extension of the sages’ aesthetic living and was essentially different from other forms of poetic jingjie, such as the one created by the Chan Buddhists.

This brings us to our second point that sagely jingjie represented a certain poetic mode of living essential for the constitution of sagely living. The poetic conception of sagely living was deeply rooted in the belief that the sages experienced self and reality in ways fundamentally different from ordinary people. The experience of sagely jingjie, the Ming Neo-Confucian Luo Rufang (1515-1586) explained, would lead to the transformation of the self and the world: “one’s flesh and bones, skin and hair, the whole body will illuminate; rivers and mountains, grasses and trees, the whole earth will return to spring.”

Luo reveals that the sagely perception of and interaction with the self and the world was a poetico-spiritual experience—poetic in the sense that it promoted an aesthetic mode of being through which reality as is commonly known can be transcended; and the example of such living was believed to be found in the life of the sages.

The search for poetic representations of sagely jingjie, or the construction of the poetic discourse of sagely jingjie, started in the early stage of the Neo-Confucian development as part of an endeavour to humanize and personalize sagehood. Aside from studying the sages’ moral virtues and accomplishments, Neo-Confucians tried to identify the characteristics of sagely living, because their fundamental aspiration laid not in sagehood in theory but in sagehood in action, sagehood lived out. Sagely jingjie, in this
context, came to signify the poetic territory in which sagely living unfolded, the
experiencing and joining of which became an indispensable component of Neo-Confucian
cultivation. The poetic sagely jingjie made sage learning a possible way of “living” for
Neo-Confucians. The belief that the sages created and possessed personal and unique
poetic jingjie prompted Neo-Confucians to begin the task of identifying the poetic sagely
territory, and what started as independent discussions later evolved into a group of highly
standardized poetico-territorial identifications of the key figures in Neo-Confucian
thought, including the sage-kings, Confucius and his disciples, cultural icons, and the
Song Neo-Confucian masters.

The Sage-kings

Confucians had long venerated the sage-kings Yao and Shun for choosing the life
of simplicity and frugality, thereby setting a good moral example for their subjects. Their
place of their dwelling, “a thatched hut with earthen steps (mao ci tu jie 茅茨土階),” was
celebrated by Neo-Confucians as a mark of sagely living. Although the image of thatched
roof and earthen steps had been used to epitomize the humble but commendable living of
the ruler—for example, the Han historian Sima Qian recalled the image to criticize the
first emperor’s construction of Epang Palace, and the Tang historian Wu Jing 吳兢 (661-
721) to criticize the Han emperor Wendi 交帝 (r. 180-157 BC)’s extravagant spending on
palace construction⁷, Neo-Confucians showed a greater interest in exploring the image as
a model of personal sagehood rather than an ideal political exemplar.

In the new paradigm of sagehood for all, the thatched roof and earthen steps of the
sage-kings came to represent an instance of sagely living, and an environment in which
such sagely living took place. It communicated not just the message of frugality but more importantly that of joy; Mozi 墨子 (479-381 BC)’s saying that “Yao and Shun considered the thatched roof and earthen steps as propriety and joy” struck a chord in the Song Neo-Confucians, empowering them to rejoice in humble living conditions. Later Neo-Confucians also recognized the personal moral implication of the example set by the sage-kings. Yi Saek 李穡 (1328-1396) remarked that the moral lesson of the thatched roof and earthen steps was found in abiding in the middle, and not being given over to excessive indulgence, and Yi I pointed out that the sage-kings’ frugal living represented a sagely attitude of the heart-mind.

Besides frugality, Neo-Confucians also admired the ancient rulers’ dedication to self-cultivation. In particular, the story of King Shun playing the five-stringed lute in the Nanxun Palace and of the Duke of Zhou sitting down and waiting for the dawn became appreciated as instances of sagely cultivation of self. These examples of sagely living portrayed the ancient rulers not as powerful political leaders but as individuals engaging in personal cultivation in their own places. They became the themes of Neo-Confucian poetic and artistic creations, inspiring various aesthetic responses. They were, for instance, included in the list of eight Neo-Confucian themes for painting which Chang Hyŏn-gwang 張顯光 (1554-1637) composed and presented to an artistically inclined young boy for the purpose of aiding his study of the Neo-Confucian teaching. Their strong visual quality creates a lasting poetic impression of sagely jingjie, allowing anyone familiar with the visual icons of Chinese landscape painting to picture in their minds the sagely living of the ancient rulers.
Neo-Confucians also searched for the example of poetic sagely *jingjie* in the life of Confucius and his disciples. The image of Confucius teaching his students at the Ginkgo Platform came to be regarded as the poetic representation of his sagely life. But more so than the poetic *jingjie* of the master, it was that of his two disciples—Zeng Dian and Yan Hui—that came to truly captivate the Neo-Confucian poetic imagination.

Zeng Dian, the father of Confucius’ prominent disciple Zeng Shen 曾參 (505-435 BC), is remembered in the *Analects* as someone whose desires the master approved. In the previous chapter, we already looked at the story of Zeng Dian’s wish for joyful idleness and Confucius’ agreeable reply. In the image of “bathing in the river, enjoying the breeze among the rain altars, and returning home singing” Neo-Confucians found the joy that accompanied sagely living; it was seen as the manifestation of “true joy” and the expression of the “joy of unrestrained humaneness and wisdom.” The idle wandering together and sharing of joyous life later came to represent ideal fellowship among the Neo-Confucian literati.

We have examined the Neo-Confucian philosophical discussion of Yan Hui’s *jingjie*, and how his life of poverty and moral cultivation became a source of great inspiration for Neo-Confucians. His habitation in the narrow lane and the sustenance of a bamboo dish of rice and a gourd dish of drink was esteemed as the poetic expression of his sagely *jingjie*, making frequent appearances in Neo-Confucian poetry, particularly in the abbreviated form of “the narrow lane, and the bamboo and gourd dishes (*louxiang danpiao*陋巷簞瓢).” In his poem presented to Lin Yi-e 林一鶚, a young scholar who harboured the intention of becoming a Buddhist monk, Zhu Xi wrote:
Poetically portraying Yan Hui’s *jingjie* as the embodiment of sagely freedom, Zhu reminded the young scholar that true freedom was not found in the ascetic life of Buddhism but in the simple life of Yan Hui and of the sages. Cheng Hao also many a time called attention to Yan Hui’s *jingjie* in his poetry; “His whole life was spent in the narrow lane, yet Yan Hui was joyous,” Cheng remarked. He also presented Yan’s life as a preferable choice to the life of fame and affluence:

古來興廢機浮渙  
退居陋巷顔回樂  
不見長安李白愁  
From of old, rise and fall have been like floating bubbles.  
Retreating to the narrow lane, Yan Hui rejoiced,  
Not showing the worries of Li Bai in Chang-an. 

By juxtaposing Yan Hui and Li Bai, Cheng stressed that a humble but joyful life of moral cultivation was better than the life of a literary giant with a perturbed spirit.

*Louxiang danpiao* epitomized a way of sagely learning that demanded great determination and strength. Zhang Jun 張浚 (1097-1164), a student of Cheng Yi, asserted Yan Hui willfully chose to adopt such way of living in order to learn and follow the “*dao* of self-nurturing” demonstrated by the sages. Likewise, in the poem presented to the young son of the Jiangxi school poet Wang Ge 汪革 (1071-1110), the Southern Song Neo-Confucian Lü Benzhong 呂本中 (1084-1145) advised the young man to not be impoverished in the *dao* though he may live in the narrow lane and eat from the bamboo and gourd dishes. As a sign of self-content living, *louxiang danpiao* became a goal in
the Neo-Confucian cultivation. The simple life of louxiang danpiao was deemed superior to wealth and fame\textsuperscript{20}; and, as Zhen Dexiu 眞德秀 (1178-1235) described, the unchanging joy under such circumstance was seen as an indication of one’s attainment of humaneness.\textsuperscript{21} Indeed, these discussions reveal intricate intertwining of the philosophical and poetic discourses of Yan Hui’s jingjie, and how they supported and strengthened each other.

The Confucian Cultural Icons

Also commemorated by Neo-Confucians was the exemplary living of the cultural icons, especially that of the famous Confucian-minded recluses in history. Yi Hwang’s list of ten popular Neo-Confucian poetic themes includes the accounts of the sage-kings and renowned Confucians, but also four acclaimed recluses: a famous Eastern Han eremite, Yan Guang 嚴光 (fl. 41), fishing in the Tong River, Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234) living in a thatched hut, Tao Qian returning to Chestnut Village to farm, and a Northern Song poet-recluse, Lin Bu 林逋 (967-1028), singing the praise of plum blossoms in Gu Mountain.\textsuperscript{22} In honouring their lives, Neo-Confucians affirmed life in seclusion devoted to quiet cultivation of self was superior to success in the political world. The Southern Song Neo-Confucian Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127-1206), for instance, described the reclusive life of Zhuge Liang and Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 BC)—the former’s life in a thatched hut and the latter’s lowering of the curtain and not gazing at the garden for three years—as that comparable to Yan Hui’s life of louxiang danpiao. Without seeking profit, both of them pursued the fulfillment of their intent, and subjected themselves to rigorous process of self-cultivation before embarking on public service;
and their eremitic life, Yang asserted, was the source of their exceptional moral integrity. Such whole-hearted attention on equipping oneself, he argued, lacked in later generations who first acted before learning.\textsuperscript{23}

The Neo-Confucian reverence for eremitism needs to be considered in light of the changing view of reclusion in the Song. Murck has shown us how the socio-political, economic, and ideological transformations of the Song brought about a drastic shift in the Confucian literati’s attitude towards reclusion.\textsuperscript{24} Social unrest and political turmoil, coupled with hitherto unseen rapid urbanization and booming market economy, weakened the power of the central government, making the court an undesirable place for many literati. As a result, relying on the economic support from their own estates, many began to prefer a quiet and safe life in their own homes to a stressful and dangerous life in the political world. The ancient wisdom of Confucius resounded widely: when the time is not favourable, stay away from politics.

It would be erroneous, however, to assume that the Confucian celebration of eremitism as a social phenomenon only emerged in the Song. As Vervoorn’s study of early Chinese eremitic tradition reveals, some of the recluses revered by the Song Neo-Confucians—for instance, Zhuge Liang and Yi Yin 伊尹 (1648-1549 BC)—had been esteemed as role models within the Confucian circle dating back to the Han dynasty.\textsuperscript{25} But the Song understanding differed from the earlier one at least on three grounds. First, while the earlier Confucian discussion on eremitism arose as a part of junzi discourse, the Song discussion proceeded from the discourse of sagehood: that is to say, Neo-Confucians were interested in exploring reclusive life as a form of sagely living. True recluses, they believed, were those who followed the way of sagehood. Second, while the
eremites respected by earlier Confucians were almost exclusively political figures, the Song accounts also include poets such as Tao Qian and Lin Bu whose main contribution was literary and not political. Valuing the individual becoming of sage over the public political success, Neo-Confucians sought the example of sagely reclusion not only among political figures but also literary figures. Third, such changes in the nature of reclusion transformed eremitic living into a personal lifestyle choice. Reclusion, as much as it was a moral statement, also became a stylistic statement; and this new development elevated the “appearance” of reclusion to a place of great importance, reflected in the unprecedented growth of personal space for reclusion—mostly in the form of literati gardens—where stylized eremitic life unfolded. The emphasis on the poetic quality of sagely reclusion was essential for making this lifestyle a depictable and hence an imaginable one. Therefore, concerning Zhuge Liang, it was the poetic representation of his life in the thatched hut—not his outstanding political career—that Neo-Confucians remembered. The experience and imitation of “Kongming 孔明 (Zhuge Liang)’s thatched hut” became an important pursuit among Neo-Confucians, for, as Zhu Xi described, it embodied the freedom of the body and mind. Reclusive living of these eremites became a popular theme in Neo-Confucian poetry and painting, celebrated together with the life of the sage-kings and Confucian exemplars.

*The Song Neo-Confucian Masters*

The Neo-Confucian fascination for the poetic representations of sagely living was also demonstrated in the discussion of the forerunners of their own philosophical movement. The identification and propagation of the poetic *jingjie* of the Song Neo-
Confucian masters was a momentous development—an act of acknowledging the Neo-Confucian contribution in the overall poetic discourse of sagely *jingjie*. It placed Neo-Confucians in the position of successor, entitled to transmitting and continuing the sagely living of the sage-kings, early Confucians, and cultural heroes.

With regards to Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073), the architect of Neo-Confucian cosmology and the teacher of the Cheng Brothers, later Neo-Confucians poetically commemorated two particular accounts of his life, namely his garden with untrimmed grass and his deep affection for the lotus. The *Jin si lu* 近思錄 (Reflections on Things at Hand) tells us that Zhou did not cut the grass growing outside his studio window, because he believed the grass had feelings just like he himself. In the garden filled with overgrown plants, Neo-Confucians saw the love of life and the world in which all things form one body, and they praised it as the poetic manifestation of his moral achievements. A great admirer of the lotus, Zhou is also famous for his short essay “*Ai lian shuo* 愛蓮說 (On the love of the lotus),” in which he expressed the moral insights gained from contemplating on the flower. His profound connection with and great admiration for the lotus was also seen as the expression of his sage learning, and the image of Zhou musing on the lotus became a popular theme in Neo-Confucian poetry and painting.

Then there was Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077), an eclectic philosopher and a free-spirited poet whose theoretical and literary works greatly influenced the development of Neo-Confucian philosophy and poetry. Shao’s idyllic life in his cottage, the “Nest of Peace and Joy (*Anle wo* 安樂窩),” is described in the collection of his poems, the *Yichuan jirang ji* 伊川擊壤集 (Collection of Beating on the Ground at Yichuan). His
carefree and joyous living was greatly admired, and his “Nest of Peace and Joy” became a model of ideal Neo-Confucian dwelling, a Neo-Confucian poetic territory. Cheng Hao viewed Shao’s life in the Nest as a prime example of Neo-Confucian sagely living which embodied the “moment of ultimate joy,” and later Neo-Confucians borrowed the expression “Nest of Peace and Joy” to describe their personal dwellings and places for Neo-Confucian reclusion.

Of the Cheng Brothers, Cheng Hao was more famous for his carefree nature and his poetry. Both brothers studied under Zhou Dunyi, and their experience of learning was later poetically rendered by Cheng Hao: “After seeing Zhou Maoshu, we returned home singing of the wind and toying with the moon (yinfeng nongyue 吟風弄月). This is the meaning of “I am with Dian.”” Clearly alluding to the story of Zeng Dian—“enjoying the breeze and returning home singing”—Cheng established an explicit connection between the two events, thereby presenting his relationship with Zhou as a continuation of the earlier bond between Confucius and his disciples. It was more than just a borrowing of poetic expression; the poetic resemblance meant that the Neo-Confucians were able to share in the poetic sagely jingjie of the early Confucian masters which justified them as the legitimate transmitters and interpreters of the long-lost art of sagely living. Cheng Hao’s yinfeng nongyue showed the possibility of recovering sagely living, and it was received as a poetic embodiment of Neo-Confucian jingjie. “Singing of the wind and toying with the moon” became a standard Neo-Confucian expression for describing ideal Neo-Confucian living filled with the joy of self-contentment. This joy did not just come from simple enjoyment of nature, but, as many Neo-Confucians argued,
was rooted in realizing and experiencing the profound existential-ontological bond that binds all things.\(^{37}\)

In addition to *yinfeng nongyue*, Neo-Confucians also venerated *banghua suiliu* 傍花隨柳—“nearing the flowers and following the willow”—as another poetic manifestation of Cheng Hao’s sagely living imbued with joyful idleness. The line comes from Cheng’s famous quatrain “Impromptu Composition 偶成”:

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Clouds clear and wind light in midday,
I stand by the flowers and follow the willow,
I look across the river;
Bystanders do not understand the joy of my heart.
They will say that I seek to be lazy like young people.\(^{38}\)
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Chen Xianzhang remarked *banghua suiliu* expressed sagely idleness, a quality that the ancients possessed and was no longer found in the busy life of his contemporaries. He believed joyful idleness—a leisurely attitude towards learning and living—needed to be recovered and reintroduced into the life of true Confucians, following the example of Cheng Hao.\(^{39}\) Cheng’s leisurely enjoyment of flowers and willow came to be viewed as a mark of “true joy,” unaffected by harsh circumstances.\(^{40}\)

*Banghua suiliu* also came to be deemed as an important didactic method in Neo-Confucian learning.\(^{41}\) According to Huang Zhongzhao 黃仲昭 (1435-1508), it represented ideal Neo-Confucian meditation through which one can experience moral and spiritual renewal and the transformation one’s self and the world.\(^{42}\) Zhuang Chang 莊昶 (1437-1499) argued that it revealed the importance of actual experience in sagely learning; that sagehood cannot be attained through textual study alone but must be based on
physical practice. It is this emphasis on practice, Zhuang asserted, that distinguished sagely knowledge from the Buddhist and Daoist counterparts.\textsuperscript{43} Evolving into a popular Neo-Confucian poetic theme, “nearing the flowers and following the willow” became a frequent expression in the poems written by Neo-Confucians.\textsuperscript{44} It also inspired artistic creativity: the Yuan poet-painter Zhu Derun 朱德潤 (1294-1356) noted his own practice of \textit{banghua suiliu} aided him to perceive the world in a new light.\textsuperscript{45} Cheng’s poetic \textit{jingjie} was also commemorated by Neo-Confucians who wrote matching poems in response to his well-known quatrain.\textsuperscript{46} The act of matching a poem was not only a poetic experiment but, more importantly, a means of communing with the author of the poem one was matching. The significance of responsive poems in the merging of philosophical, poetic, and political \textit{jingjie} will be examined in detail in our discussion of Neo-Confucian Wuyi \textit{jingjie}. On the whole, \textit{yinfeng nongyue} and \textit{banghua suiliu} often appeared in pair in Neo-Confucian writings as poetic representations of Cheng Hao’s sagely living.\textsuperscript{47} And Last but not least, there was Zhu Xi, the great synthesizer of Neo-Confucian thought, who lived and taught at Wuyi Mountains. “Wuyi’s Nine Bends Stream (\textit{Wuyi jiuzi} 武夷九曲)” and Zhu Xi’s “Wuyi Retreat (\textit{Wuyi jingshe} 武夷精舍)” were later honoured as his poetic \textit{jingjie} by Neo-Confucians. The complex development of Wuyi Nine Bend discourse will be the subject of in-depth investigation in the ensuing chapters of this dissertation.
Integrated Vision of Neo-Confucian Poetic Jingjie

Although for the purpose of analysis we classified the poetic representations of sagely living into four groups—the sage-kings, Confucius and his disciples, the Confucian cultural icons, and the Song Neo-Confucian masters—in actual usage the examples from all four categories joined together to form the larger Neo-Confucian poetic discourse of sagely jingjie. Song Ne 宋訥 (1311-1390) wove together the breeze, flowers and willow, the untrimmed grass, the moon and the wind, and the happily singing young men to paint the picture of true joy[^1] , and Hwang Chun-ryang 黃俊良 (1517-1563) did so by drawing on the poetic representations of Yao and Shun, Confucius and Yan Hui, Zhuge Liang and Fan Zhongyan, Zhou Dunyi and Cheng Hao, and Shao Yong and Zhu Xi.[^2] All in all, the forging of the poetic connections between the sage-kings, early Confucians, famous recluses, and Neo-Confucian masters led to the poetic constitution of sagely living,[^3] the development which was closely related to the construction of Neo-Confucian genealogy.

The images were arranged in sequence that closely followed the orthodox understanding of the “correct” transmission of sage learning—the idea of daotong 道統, the Succession to the Way or the Transmission of the Way—, and when strung together, they turned into a poetic narrative of Neo-Confucian lineage which affirmed and strengthened the Neo-Confucian claim to legitimacy. Collectively these poetic representations came to signify the archetypes of sagely living, and the building blocks for constructing Neo-Confucian poetic identity. Many Neo-Confucians creatively adapted them by borrowing the expressions to describe their own life experience, sharing in the
poetic experience laid out in them, and creating similar living space for themselves—all spurred by the effort to imitate the exemplary sagely living.\textsuperscript{51}

In this whole discursive development, we see the Neo-Confucian attempt to arrive at a more concrete understanding of sagehood. What does sagely living look like? To answer this question, they turned to the poetic representations which painted for them an ideal Neo-Confucian mode of living, frugal and secluded, yet unpretentious and joyful. It was believed that the \textit{xin jing} of the sages and worthies embodied in the images could be experienced through reflective meditation on the images: “thinking of the saying ‘nearing the flowers and following the willow’ would make peaceful and harmonious \textit{xin jing} flow like mist,” said Sŏ Chong-t’ae 徐宗泰 (1652-1719).\textsuperscript{52} The poetic representations of sagely living played a vital role in the discursive construction of sagely \textit{jingjie}. Important to recognize is the interaction between the philosophical and poetic discourses of sagely \textit{jingjie}. The experience of sagehood exemplified in the various representations of sagely living was both philosophical and poetic. This means when we engage in the didactic, allegorical, or even environmental ethical reading of Zhou Dunyi’s untrimmed garden or Cheng Hao’s joyful appreciation of the breeze, we also need to recognize them as the poetic modes of sagely living and the poetic representations of sagely \textit{jingjie}.

As part of \textit{jingjie} discourse, the poetic mode of sagely living pursued by Neo-Confucians was fundamentally territorial in nature. The poetic representations we have examined render the territory in which sagely living unfolded, capturing both the natural and built spaces and places and the individuals’ presence in them. The sage-kings’ palace of thatched roof and earthen steps, Yan Hui’s narrow lane, and Shao Yong’s Nest of Peace and Joy all represented their personal territories, marked out from the rest of the
world, where they cultivated themselves. The events highlighted did not denote the highpoints of philosophical and cultural accomplishments in the life of these individuals, but rather their simple and joyful daily life in their own environments. Such poetico-territorial conception transformed sagely jingjie into a depictable, memorable, and therefore, liveable experience, inviting a deeply personal encounter with the sages through the sharing of experience—something that iconic portraiture and narrative representations could not deliver. Indeed, we can say it was the territorial envisioning of sagehood—sagehood conceived as a territory to be reached, seen, and entered, to be sought and created, and to be occupied and maintained—that called for the detailed descriptions of sagely territory. The discourse of poetic sagely jingjie mapped out the territory of Neo-Confucian sagehood, the territory on which sagely abodes were built for the family of sages. In fact, the discussion of sagely territory and sagely architecture went hand in hand, contributing to the complex discursive development of sagehood and Neo-Confucian identity.

One particular example that illustrates this development is the Neo-Confucian exploration of the “Pavilion in the Air 空中樓閣” and its connection to Shao Yong. It began with Cheng Hao who on one occasion stated: “Shao Yaofu [Shao Yong] was like the pavilion in the air.” Cheng, however, did not provide any explanation of their correlation, leaving the task of interpretation to the later scholars. Zhu Xi, for instance, expounded the pavilion in the air represented Shao’s ability to penetrate and extend in all directions, and the harmonious orderliness of his spiritual expanse which Zhu contrasted with Zhuangzi’s unfettered spiritual expanse. The image of the pavilion in the air incited creative interpretations, including Kang Paeng-nyŏn’s “Record of the Pavilion in
the Air 空中樓閣記,” which innovatively interlaces the philosophical and poetic discussions of sagehood by exploring their territorial and architectural connections.

Though lengthy, Kang’s record is an excellent illustration of the richness and subtlety of the Neo-Confucian territorial discourse.

On what does heaven lean on? It leans on earth. To what does earth adhere? It adheres to heaven. On what do heaven and earth depend? Heaven through qi and earth through form (xing 形) depend on each other. Hence, heaven becomes heaven, and earth becomes earth, and the myriad things become myriad things. What is it that is not qi? What is it that is not form? What is it that does not lean on? What is it that does not adhere to? What is it that stands alone between the two without leaning on or adhering to, yet extends in all directions? What is it that is called qi xiang 氣象, or that which is above qi but below form? It is called the Pavilion in the Air. No one knows what lies above or below it. No one knows what lies to its right or left.

Ah, there is a nest called Peace and Joy. There is another nest called Action. Which of these two is the Pavilion in the Air? It is the former. When the owner put his foot on the site, he saw only the origin of brightness. He did not cut holes, nor did he paint. He did not gather together lumbers and stones, nor did he set up a building plan. Yet the building has the Great Ultimate as its foundation, the original qi as its ridgepoles and beams, the Six Classics as the yardstick, Yao and Shun as the compasses and carpenter’s square, humaneness and propriety as its outer walls, and righteousness and principle as its moat. It is protected by the Five Elements and opened and closed by yin and yang. Outside, there are no cracks; inside, there is not a speck of dust. Its height is limitless, and its depth bottomless. Its foundation is not attached to the ground. To its left and right, there is no obstruction of cliffs or shores. Its territorial boundary (jingjie) has no limit of land. Warm, it is the dwelling place of humaneness. Dignified, it is the residence of righteousness. Wide, it is the great abode of all under heaven. Square, it is also like the walls of the Son of Heaven. To its side lies the Half-mu Pond. At its front stands the Gate of Virtue. At its rear soars the Mountain of Humaneness. Facing it is the Stream of Wisdom. Therefore, it is the dwelling place of the heavenly king. It is guarded by the officers—ears and eyes. The ghosts and spirits stay in its outer city, and no part of the sage stays outside of it.

Its thirty-six palaces glow in the luxuriant spring light, the eight windows resound with the tinkling of jades, and the four corners are clear. The
breeze moves through the poplar and willow, and the moon shines over the parasol tree. How free and easy! How bright and gleaming! The surface of the water is the heart-mind of heaven. Above and below, the birds fly and the fish leap freely. Enjoying playful leisure and carefree contentment; sometimes looking over the book of Fuxi, sometimes pouring the drink of Great Harmony, sometimes reclining at the table and chanting, and sometimes beating the ground and singing. How can this joy be measured? It has the height of heaven, the depth of earth, and the circumference of sun and moon. It is as long as yin and yang, and bends and stretches like the ghosts and spirits. Inside the garden by the steps, there is nothing but lush forests. Looking back, there is the past of hundreds and thousands of years. Looking ahead, there is the future of ten thousands and hundred thousands of years. …

Who rode the moon and visited this pavilion? It was Wang Shenzhi 王勝之 alone. Who led the snow and roamed about in the pavilion? It was Wang Tianyue 王天悅 alone. Who presented this pavilion and named it? It was Cheng Bochun [Cheng Hao] alone. Who is the owner? It is Master Kangjie [Shao Yong] alone. 55

In this vision of cosmological scale, Kang creatively combines together various elements of Neo-Confucian thought to render the Pavilion in the Air as an example of sagely territory and architecture. Cosmo-ontological concepts, moral principles, and exemplary figures became the building blocks of the pavilion and its surroundings, creating a perfect setting for sagely living filled with joyful leisure. The strong poetic impression that runs through the entire account once again highlights the poetic nature of sagely living promoted by Neo-Confucians.

The conception of sagehood as a form of poetico-territorial living reflected the Neo-Confucian conviction that sagehood was and had to be grounded in real life experience. In this sense, sagely living was not to be at odds with everyday life of the literati, but one that nicely blended in with the literati lifestyle in the Song; the poetic sagely living had to be grounded in the poetic living of the literati in general. The poetico-territorial identification of the sages and worthies, in other words, can be viewed
as an extension of an older discursive development which began during the Tang: namely, the integration of the discourses of territory and individuality, best exemplified in the development of *hao*, a personally chosen pseudonym which often was the name of one's place of abode. The formation of the poetic discourse of sagely *jingjie*, therefore, was a development in tandem with the larger evolution of the literati culture.

On the whole, the construction of poetic sagely *jingjie* augmented and reflected the shift in the understanding of sagehood in the eleventh century: sagehood was no longer a sign of rulership but of a fulfilled life. Neo-Confucians endeavoured to revive sagely living within the bounds of everyday life, and, as we discussed in this chapter, the revival of sagely living entailed the revival of sagely territory—the entire poetico-territorial discourse of sagehood points to this goal. The establishment of Neo-Confucian academies and shrines throughout China and Korea was not only an institutional expansion but also an expansion of sagely territory: Yi Sik 李植 (1584-1647)’s record of Kŏn-am Academy 創巖書院, for instance, illustrates the interconnectedness of the revitalization of Neo-Confucian learning and that of Zhou Dunyi’s studio and Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends.\(^56\) The discursive revival of sagely territory brought about a drastic transformation in the way Neo-Confucians perceived and interacted with the world. Most importantly, in this process the poetic representations of sagely *jingjie* evolved into something “according to” which Neo-Confucians came to see and live their world.\(^57\) Or as Ricoeur would say, they came to function as “semantic innovations”—spoken first and then seen—through the interpretation of which Neo-Confucians came to understand themselves and the world they inhabited.\(^58\) The complex process of poetic territorialization and the resultant transformation of the physical landscape and the
literati’s life will be examined in our investigation of Wuyi Nine Bends discourse in Part III, but first let us turn to the geopolitical discourse of Neo-Confucian jingjie.

1 For the studies on the Neo-Confucian understanding of literature, see Han Jing Tai, *Lixue wenhua yu wenxue sichao* 理学文化与文学思潮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), and Shi Mingqing 史明庆, *Lixue wenhua yu Nan Song shixue* 理学文化与南宋诗学 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006).
2 Zhu Xi, *Zhu Xi jingjie* 諸葛(avg)-si, 100.18b-19a.
5 Yi Tong-gŭp 李東汲 (1738-1811), *Man-gak chae chip* 晚覺齋集 (The Collected Works of Man-gak chae), 1926, 1.10a-14b ch’a Kwŏn Song-gye ch’un hŭng si 次權松溪興詩.
6 Luo Rufang 羅汝芳 (1515-1588) argued if one has not experienced the transformative power of sagely jingjie, one still remains in the ‘jingjie of old days.’ See *Ming ru xue an*, 34.17a-b Canzheng Luo Jinxin xiansheng Rufang 參政羅近溪先生汝芳.
8 [SKQS] Mo Di 墨翟 (479-381 BC), *Mozi* 墨子 (Master Mo), 1.15a-b san bian 三編. For the discussion on the connection between mao ci tu jie and joy, see [SKQS] Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government), 218.38b-39a Tang ji 唐紀. Also see Wang Shouren 王守仁 (1472-1528), *Yangming xiansheng ji yao* 陽明先生集要 (The Essential Writings of Yangming), compiled by Shi Bangyao 施邦曜. Li xue bian mulu 理學編目錄, juan 3 da Gu Dongqiao shu 答顧東橋書乙酉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 219.
9 Yi Sŏk 李穡 (1328-1396), *Mokŭn ko* 牧隱稿 (The Collected Works of Mokŭn), 1626, 5.5b-7a ch’uk Ûn chae ki 答隴齋記.
10 Yi I, *Yulgok chŏnsŏ* 野鷗子, 23.50b chŏng ka che sam 正家第三.
11 For the literary responses to the aesthetic and moral living of the sage-kings, see Im Hun 林薰 (1500-1584), *Kalch’on chip* 宋川集 (The Collected Works of Kalch’ŏn), 1665, 3.19a-20a Namhun chŏn ki 南薰殿記. Also see Sŏng Yŏ-sin 成汝信 (1546-1632), *Pusa chip* 潮查集 (The Collected Works of Pusa), 1775, 1.5b-6a a yu il ka, o chang chang sip ku 我有一歌, 五章章十句.
Un 24 藻 Neo the reinterpretation of sagely reclusion in the Song dynasty. Yang’s argument was repeated by the Yuan late Warring States minister and a famous merchant and politician of the late Warring States period)’s lowering of Dong Zhou respectively)’s the reclusive life of Yan, Dong, and Zhuge when he said “Yu and Ji (the founding emperors of the Xia and Zhou) respectively)” of the Book of Changes), 3.20a

Hwang Chung(22 31.25a 21 (1566), 2

Also see [SBCK] Yi Hwang Chang Hyŏn (1501-1570), T'oegye chip 退溪集 (The Collected Works of T'oegye), 1968, 2.37b-39a

Hwang Chunggō ku che hwa sip p’ok chŏng sa 黃仲舒求議十幅丁已。[23] SKQS Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127-1206), Chengzhai Yi zhu 騰齋易傳 (The Chengzhai Commentary on the Book of Changes), 3.20a-b. In his discussion on the politics of advancing, Yang highlighted Yan Hui, Dong Zhongsu, and Zhuge Liang as those who understood the importance of moral cultivation. Noteworthy is how Yang reversely temporality by describing the life of earlier historical figures in light of the reclusive life of Yan, Dong, and Zhuge when he said “Yu and Ji (the founding emperors of the Xia and Zhou respectively)”s louxiang of Yan Hui, Yi Yin and Lü Buwei (a renowned Shang dynasty prime minister and a famous merchant and politician of the late Warring States period)’s lowering of Dong Zhongsu’s curtain, and Guan Zhong and Yue Yi’s (a famous Spring and Autumn period politician and a late Warring States military general) Zhuge Liang’s ‘thatched hut.” This account is an excellent example of the reinterpretation of sagely reclusion in the Song dynasty. Yang’s argument was repeated by the Yuan Neo-Confucian Li Jian and the Ming Neo-Confucian Pan Shizao. See [SKQS] Li Jian 孫思邈 (13-14th c.), Xue Yi ji 孫易記 (The Record on Learning the Book of Changes), 1.88b-89a. Also see [SKQS] Pan Shizao 潘士藻 (cir. 1598), Du Yi shu 孫易述 (Explanations on Reading the Book of Changes), 3.4b-5a.


26 Liu Fang identified the emphasis on choice as a key feature of the Song understanding of reclusion. His study shows the Song reinterpretation of Yan Guang’s reclusive life and its relation to the overall “remodelling of the model scholar.” See Liu Fang 刘方, “Yan Guang de zai suzao yu Song dai yinshi dianfan de chonggou sanye gongxingzhuang,” Renditions 4 (spring, 1975), p. 11.

27 Zhu Xi, Huai-an ji, 41.40a-b. Similar account was repeated in [SKQS] Xiong He 熊禾 (1247-1312), Wuxuan ji 勿轩集 (The Collected Works of Wuxuan), 1.11a-12b ba Xie Chuntang shi zi hou xu 衆謝春堂詩義後序. The Southern Neo-Confucian Gao Side discussed the importance of following the example of “Kongming’s thatched hut.” See [SKQS] Gao Side 高斯得 (cir. 1127-1276), Chitang cun gao 奉堂存稿 (The Remaining Writings of Chitang), 6.12b ti Qian Ke ze qian xue an 題錢可則笑雪庵.

28 During the Yuan dynasty, the image of “Kongming’s thatched hut” was widely circulated among Neo-Confucians. See [SKQS] Liu Xun 劉爚 (1240-1319), Yin ju tong yi 意居通議 (A Comprehensive Discussion on Reclusive Living), 10.7b-8a yi shi 義詩. Also see Hu Zhu 胡助 (cir. 1331), Chunbaizhai lei gao 纯白齋類稿 (The Classified Writings of Chunbaizhai), 6.4b Kongming Caolu tu 孔明草廬圖. The Ming scholar Li Guangdi 朱光第 (1642-1718), Rongcun ji 榕村集 (The Collected Works of Rongcun), 33.10a-13b zan 見. The Ming scholar Yang Shiqi 楊士竒 (1365-1444), Dongli 东里集 (The Collected Works of Dongli), xu j vol. 22.10b-11a cheng ti ju xing yin xiang hou 程提舉行吟像後.

29 Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-Ch’ien. Reflections on Things at Hand, 302.

30 See note 12 for Chang Hyon-gwang’s poetic discussion of Zhou Dunyi’s overgrown garden. Song Ne expounded Zhou’s garden as a manifestation of true joy. See note 14.

31 Yi Hwang’s poems on the ten paintings with Neo-Confucian themes include one on Zhou Dunyi musing on the lotus. See note 22. O Yu-bong’s poem also includes a similar discussion. See note 13.

32 Shao’s life in his Nest has been studied by Xiaoshan Yang in connection with poetry’s role in the construction of Tang-Song literati’s private space. See Yang (2003), 197-242.

33 Cheng Hao described Shao Yong’s poetry as an “expression of the moment of ultimate joy (xingrong zhi le shi 形容至樂時).” See Lü Nan, Er Chengzi chao shi 二程子詩 (104a-b).

34 The Yuan Neo-Confucian Xie Yingfang referred peaceful Neo-Confucian reclusion as a life in the “Nest of Peace and Joy,” and the Ming dynasty Chen Xianzhang used the expression to describe his own dwelling. See [SKQS] Xie Yingfang 謝應芳 (1296-1392), Guichao gao 龜巢稿 (The Writings of Guichao), 4.61b-62b shu cun ge wei zhao Pengnan fu 水村歌為趙彭南賦, and 13.5a-7a gu chushi Cunxun Chen gong xingzhuan 故處士存心陳公行狀. Also see Chen Xianzhang, Chen Baisha ji, 8.72b-73a ting Li Shen zhi shuo lu hu ping sheng chi ge 聽李深之說錄謬屏聖池歌.

35 Zhu Xi, Er Cheng yi shu 二程伊書, 3a.

36 See [SKQS] Xu Qian 許謙 (1269-1337), Baiyun ji 白雲集 (The Collected Works of Baiyun), 3.5b-7a hui pan xian wei qi 回潰縣尉啟. Also see [SKQS] Lü Kun 吕坤 (1536-1618), Shenyin yu zhai 喪吟話齋 (A Selection of Sighing Words), shang, 25b-26a.

37 The Ming Neo-Confucian Zhuang Chang 莊昶 discussed the philosophical implications of yinfeng nongyue. See [SKQS] Zhuang Chang 莊昶 (1437-1499), Dingshan ji 定山集 (The Collected Works of Dingshan), 10.14a-b zu yue ba 醉月吧. For the Neo-Confucian discussion of yinfeng nongyue as an aesthetic mode of reclusive living, see [SKQS] Huang Zhen 黃震 (1213-1281), Huang shi ri chao 黃氏日抄 (The Daily Record of Mr. Huang), 88.23a-b Qingyuan yin ju ji 清源隱居記, and 94.1b daizhong biao Yan shi shang Fanggui bian 代中表嚴氏上芳桂扁.

38 [SKQS] Lü Zuqian 吕祖謙 (1137-1181), Song wen jian 宋文鑑 (The Literary Mirror of the Song), 28a ou cheng 偶成. English translation by Wing-tsit Chan. See Wing-tsit Chan, “Neo-Confucian philosophical poems,” Renditions 4 (spring, 1975), p. 11.
sagely living. See the Ming poets Tang Zhichun and Hu Yan, we also see the r

Confucius, Yan Hui, Zeng Shen, Zi Si, Mencius, Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Tao Qian, Zhou Dunyi, Lin Bu

of multiple figures.

See note 14. The interlacing of various representations of sagely living was also used by Xiong He. See

The compound poems composed by Yi Hwang and Ŝ Yu-bong also make reference to the poetic jingjie of multiple figures. See notes 13 and 22. Yi Hwang’s poem brings together Yan Hui, Zeng Xi, Yan Guang, Tao Qian, Zhou Dunyi, Lin Bu, Cheng Hao, Zhu Xi, Zhide Liang, and Shao Yong; and Ŝ Yusong’s Confucius, Yan Hui, Zeng Shen, Si Zi, Mencius, Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi. The Southern Song poet Chen Zhu, in his description of Tao Qian’s sagely living, drew on the poetic jingjie of Yan Hui, Zeng Xi, Cheng Hao, and Shao Yong. See [SKQS] Chen Zhu 黃庭堅 (1265), Bentang ji 孟庭堅 (The Collected Works of Bentang), 49.1a-2b younanxuanj 丷悠然軒記. In the poetry of the Ming poets Tang Zhichun and Hu Yan, we also see the reference to multiple poetic representations of sagely living. See [SKQS] Tang Zhichun 唐之淳 (1350-1401), Tang Yushi shi 唐之淳詩 (The Poetry of Tang Yushi), 3.23b-25b Pizhou ba jing 南州八景. [SKQS] Hu Yan 胡堅 (1361-1443), Yian wen 御選文 (The Writings of Yian), xia.62b-64b cun jú shì shì shou 村居即事十首.

Chen Xianzhang discussed banghua sui liu ju 竿花隨柳句. In the poetry of the Yuan scholar Chen Yaodao 陳堯道, 7.42b Cheng Minzheng 程敏征 (1445-1500) and Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470-1559). [SKQS] Yu xuan Song Jn Yuan Ming si chao shi 選宋金元明四朝詩 (Imperial Collection of Poems from the Song, Jin, Yuan, Ming Four Dynasties), yu xuan Yuan shi 選元詩, 36.35b Chen Yaodao 陳堯道, chun ri tian yuan za xing 春日田園雜興. Yu xuan Song Jn Yuan Ming si chao shi, yu xuan Ming shi 選明詩, 120.31b-33b Cheng Minzheng 程敏征. yu sui you ying dong bie ye za xing ji gu jiu shou 乙酉歲東別業雜興裏九首. [SKQS] Yu xuan li dai shi yu 選選歷代詩餘 (Imperial Collection of Poems throughout History), 59.26a-qa qing qing chao man 善清朝漢.

Chen Xianzhang, Chen Baisha ji, 6.53a ci yun ting shi jian shi 兯雲聽時事記. and 7.64a ci Zhuang Dingshan qing jiang za xing 次韻定山清江雜興. and 8.63a-b zui ci Kangjī xiansheng xiao pu feng chun
Kim Chip and Hwang Chong-hae employed the expression “banghua suiliu” to describe their own experiences of enlightenment. See Kim Chip 金集 (1574-1656), Sindok-chae yugo 慶獨齋遺稿 (The Posthumnous Writings of Sindok-chae), 1710, 2.28a-b ch’a Ku san to chung 次龜山道中. Hwang Chong-hae 黃宗海 (1579-1642), Huch’ŏn chip 晚靜堂集 (The Collected Works of Huch’ŏn), 1713, 1.9a ch’un ch’ŏp 春帖.


53 Zhu Xi, Er Cheng yi shu, 7.2b.

54 Zhu Xi, Zhuzi yu lei, 100.4a.


56 Yi Sik, T’aekdang chip, 12.25b-26b Kŏn-am Sŏwŏn sang ryang mun 劍巖書院上樑文.

57 Merleau-Ponty’s distinction between “seeing” and “seeing according to” or “seeing with” offers an important insight into the way images affect and shape our world. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting (Evanston, Ill. Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 126.

II.3 The Geopolitical Discourse of Neo-Confucian Jingjie

The Neo-Confucian discourse of jingjie also involved the discussion of geopolitical territoriality. Too often the study of jingjie in the Neo-Confucian context has been limited to the investigation of its philosophical dimension, as in the study of Fu Changzhen in which jingjie is explored as a quintessentially philosophical problem concerning the relationship between “heaven and human,” “individual and group,” and “principle and desire.”¹ The geopolitical investigation of Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse, however, is also indispensable, because, as we will see, Neo-Confucians themselves envisioned the effect of sagely learning in terms of territorial revival, not only in the philosophical and poetic sense but also in the geographical and political sense.

The geopolitical revival of sagely jingjie signified multiple levels of development. First of all, it meant the restoration of the sagely kingdom—the reinstating of the sagely regime and the recovery of the territory of the ancient sage-kings. The Song Neo-Confucians’ newly found hope of sagehood was accompanied by the ardent desire to restore the Middle Kingdom to her sagely stature once again. Such a political position of Neo-Confucianism is often overlooked in favour of the philosophical discussion which characterizes the movement as a turn towards self and a journey of personal moral cultivation. However, as Yu Yingshi noted, the Neo-Confucian concern for inner personal revival was never separate from its concern for outer political revival.² The ancient ideal of wai wang nei sheng 外王內聖 (kingly without, sagely within) resonated strongly in the Neo-Confucian teachings. Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077), for instance, warned against the severance between the Learning of the Way 道學 and the art of politics 政術, which he identified as the problem of the Song government.³ The Ming Neo-Confucian Wang
Yangming, famous for his intuitive approach to the issues of human morality, was also an active military advisor.\(^4\)

The overriding anguish over the loss of the sagely kingdom, or the kingdom of the sages (\textit{shengren zhi guo} 聖人之國), and the urgent need for its restoration are found in the writings of the Song Neo-Confucians. Cheng Yi remarked that following the time of the sage-king Shun, the kingdom of the sages underwent moral and cultural degeneration due to the infiltration of “barbarian” customs.

In the capital of the sages, morals and manners were rich. In the kingdom of the sages, decrees and laws were protected. Tang 唐 and Wei 魏 were the capitals of the sages. Although manners (\textit{feng} 風) changed, decrees and laws were still present. Since the time of Shun, the kingdom of the sages became infiltrated with the manners of barbarians, and subsequently decrees and laws also perished. After the three generations, those with lofty ideals desired to restore the rule of the ancient kings but were not able to do so, because they were not equipped with decrees and laws. Therefore, if decrees and laws are still available, it won’t be difficult for someone to take them and put them into action.\(^5\)

Despite the long absence of sagely rule, Cheng believed that the kingdom of the sages can be revived once the decrees and laws of the sages are made known, and that the sage learning of Neo-Confucians precisely illuminated and expounded these ancient political and moral principles. Zhu Xi also praised King Xuan of the Zhou for recovering the territory of King Wen and King Wu 復文武之境土 from the “barbarian” rule and emphasized the real political value of the land of the sages:

Because of the land (\textit{tian} 田) of the ancient kings, we saw the abundance of carriages and horses. It was through the seriousness of statutes and laws that the country saw the resurgence of its strength. What is called “land” here is none other than ordinary (\textit{xunchang} 寻常) land.\(^6\)
By stressing its ordinariness, Zhu called attention to the geopolitical significance of the territory of the sages, not delimiting the discussion to a moral or symbolic one.

The Confucian criticism of foreign presence, of course, was not a new phenomenon. The Confucian reformers of the Tang—including Han Yu, the most fervent advocate of Confucian China—were fully convinced that the root cause of the social and moral problems of their time was the unwelcomed and detrimental foreign influences. After the eventual fall of the Tang, the Song Neo-Confucians repeated the similar message and attributed the fall of the Tang to its unchecked blending of the Chinese and foreign peoples and cultures. Politically weak, the Song was under the constant threat of attack from the powerful northern kingdoms, and under such circumstance anti-foreign protectionist political outlook naturally emerged. Especially after the defeat by the Jurchen kingdom Jin in 1127, which cost the Song the northern half of its territory, antagonism towards the foreign exacerbated. The Middle Kingdom now lost control of the Yellow River region, the area that belonged to the Chinese since the time of the sage-kings.

It is in this historical context that we see the Neo-Confucian discourse of sagely jingjie coming into view. The restoration of sagely jingjie now had not only an ideological and cultural implication but also a clearly political motivation. The restoration of the sagely kingdom became a pressing political issue, the focus of dynamic intellectual discussions. Upholding the government of Yao, Shun, and the Three Kings as the ideal example of sagely rule, Neo-Confucians endeavoured to realize once again the “Golden Past,” the “Confucian utopia”—as Julia Ching called it—, wherein a “perfect human order” was found.
The eagerness to bring back the sagely kingdom was demonstrated in the various Neo-Confucian reform measures inspired by the model of the rule by the sage-kings. A primary example of this was the effort to reinstate the well-field system and feudalism based on the *Rites of Zhou*, which was seen to be the key step towards the restoration of sagely government. The most enthusiastic advocate of this view was Zhang Zai who believed the territorial reform—the revitalization of the well-field system—which demands equal division and distribution of land to be the task of foremost import on the road to the sagely kingdom. Although emphasized to a lesser degree, Zhang’s view was shared by many Neo-Confucians who favoured the return to the simpler feudal system of the Zhou. Jaeyoon Song’s study has shown the Southern Song Neo-Confucian effort to revive the Zhou model of government, particularly its practice of the political autonomy of regional states, each governing what is within its own territorial bounds. Others, such as the Cheng Brothers, urged a political reform based on the practice of humaneness, and Zhu Xi, who regarded feudalism and well-field system to be unsuitable for his contemporary world, proposed other reform policies based on the political ideas of the sage-kings. Although not directly a part of the Neo-Confucian movement, the reforms of Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) were also attempts to resurrect the sagely government of antiquity, the measures inspired by his interpretation of the *Rites of Zhou*.  

In addition, continuing Han Yu’s anti-foreign rhetoric, the Song Neo-Confucians highlighted the cultural and political bifurcation between the Chinese and the “barbarian” (*hua yi* 華夷) and argued that the recovery and maintenance of such dualism was needed to restore the fortunes of the Middle Kingdom. The Cheng Brothers and Zhu Xi, for instance, interpreted the China-foreign relation as the age-old geopolitical opposition
between the inside and the outside (nei wai 内外). Such territorial discourse was continued by later Neo-Confucians, including Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1418-1495) who attributed the success of the sage-kings to their ability to demarcate and preserve geopolitical boundaries—jingjie—which separated the Chinese from the barbarians. Yet the hope of many for the recovery of the lost territory and influence of the sages was shattered once again when the Song fell in the hands of the Mongols in 1279.

The fall of the Song, however, did not mark the end of the Neo-Confucian geopolitical discourse of sagely jingjie. Although sagely jingjie as the territory of the ancient sage-kings was not immediately attainable, the teachings of the sages and Confucius continued to thrive. After all, what was important was the transmission of sage learning, sagely jingjie as an ideological territory which transcended the physical limitations of space and time. The Ming Neo-Confucian Hu Guang 胡廣 (1369-1418) clearly pointed this out when he said:

People say Confucius should be pitied for having had no land, but I do not agree with this. A man has a hundred mu of land, and a great man a hundred li of land. The kings have the four borders (jing) as their land, and the Son of Heaven has nine provinces as his land. Confucius, however, has ten thousand generations as his land. Therefore, Mencius said, “From the beginning of human race, there has been none like Confucius,” and it certainly has not been surpassed.

Hu renders the achievement of Confucius in territorial terms and illustrates the grandeur of the domain of his influence, exceeding that of mere control over physical land.

Yet the reality, at least as it appeared in the eyes of the Song Neo-Confucians, did not seem to reflect such far-reaching and dominating power of Confucian learning. Zhu Xi and other Neo-Confucians lamented the sorry state of the Confucian school in the Song and the increasing dominance of the Buddhist and Daoist teachings—the situation manifested
spatially in the profusion of Buddhist and Daoist establishments in the mountains throughout China. Reacting to this Neo-Confucians felt it was their urgent mission to reclaim the territory of Confucians in the Chinese landscape, and Zhu Xi, in particular, responded by restoring and establishing Neo-Confucian academies wherever he went.

The complex ideological battle and its territorial manifestation pertaining to the Neo-Confucian institutional expansion in the Song were examined by Walton in her essay “Southern Sung academies and the construction of sacred space.” Her study shows the growing territorial awareness of the Southern Song Neo-Confucians which led to vigorous territorial contentions against the existing Buddhist and Daoist establishments. She identified the organic bond between landscape and person, the idea which became very influential in the Southern Song, as the primary reason for the sudden rise in the Neo-Confucian territorial enthusiasm.

The heightening of territorial sensibility, however, was also closely related to the proliferation of the Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse. It should be noted that Neo-Confucians understood and viewed their institutional growth as the expansion of Confucian jingjie. Just as they were eager to distinguish the philosophical jingjie of the Buddhist and of the Neo-Confucian, they also showed great interest in differentiating the geographical jingjie of the two. The Southern Song Neo-Confucian Sun Zixiu 孫子秀 (1212-1266), for example, compared the relationship between the Neo-Confucian and Buddhist institutions to that between “ice and charcoal” and exerted great effort in demolishing the deserted Buddhist temples and building the shrines for the sage-kings in their place. Indeed, as Chaffee expounded, the Neo-Confucian academy movement resembled a “crusade against Buddhism and Daoism,” an overtly political measure “to counter the threat of those
heterodox religions whose temples numbered in the thousands and which undermined the social bonds of father-son, ruler-subject, and husband-wife on which civilization had been erected." The much celebrated revival of White Deer Grotto Academy, for instance, illustrated the clearly political intention of Zhu Xi—the restoration of the historic Confucian academy which was more symbolic than practical, because the “revived” academy did not even function as a school. Overall, the academies planted in various mountains came to represent small Neo-Confucian territories or jing in themselves, punctuating the Neo-Confucian presence throughout the country, and such spatial changes were interpreted as the territorialization of Neo-Confucian jing, the “opening up” of Neo-Confucian jingjie that transformed the geopolitical jingjie at large. The geopolitical discourse of jingjie, in other words, helped communicate the idea of ideological and institutional expansion and division in territorial terms. The result of Neo-Confucian territorialization was the subversion of existing geopolitical order and the establishment of a new one, the vision of the world governed by the sagely principles.

With the advancement of Neo-Confucianism, especially after its inauguration as the dominant political ideology, various schools of Neo-Confucian thought emerged. As the division within Neo-Confucianism grew, so did the need to effectively articulate and explain the relationships among various schools. In this context, we see jingjie discourse once again coming into play to communicate territorially the diversity within Neo-Confucianism. The formation of cliques or factions (dang 党) was, in fact, encouraged by Zhu Xi who argued gentlemen should not only create factions but also endeavour to make them thrive. Especially in Chosŏn where severe Neo-Confucian factional strife was witnessed, jingjie came to represent the intellectual and political domain of different
schools or factions: for example, the distinction between the T’oegye and Yulgok schools was expounded as the difference of jingjie, with each of them holding its own territory. In this discursive framework, one’s affiliation with particular school or faction was interpreted as a territorial act, as entering a territory or staying within the bounds of a territory. The effort to differentiate between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and the fierce struggle to identify and purge heterodox ideas from within Neo-Confucianism were seen as attempts to claim and defend the territory of true sagely learning. Jingjie was also used to signify the overall circumstances or situation of a school or faction, as in the expression “the jingjie of our faction 吾黨之境界.”

Besides these developments of institutional discourses, the expression jingjie was also employed to describe the personal estate of the Neo-Confucian literati, marking the bounds of individual’s control and ownership over space. “One’s own jingjie” or “the jingjie of one’s home” 自家境界 represented an area kept away from outside intrusion, a territory that not only belonged to but also was expressive of one’s person. Personal jingjie became the territorial basis and manifestation of literati’s individual identity, making the search for and creation of personalized jingjie a task of vital importance. The construction and expression of Neo-Confucian individual identity, however, was greatly influenced by the examples set by the sages and Neo-Confucian masters. The attempt to emulate their sagely living led to the physical imitation of their personal jingjie, the movement clearly illustrated in the expansion of Wuyi jingjie, which evolved into a popular territorial expression of Neo-Confucian individual and communal identity. In fact, as we will see in the following chapter, the geopolitical territorialization of Neo-Confucianism displays an intimate connection between institutional and private territorial expansion. Educational
space and living space were closely tied to each other, as the academy also accompanied living quarters for teachers and students. Such spatial integration reflected the reconciliation of living and learning, the principal goal in Neo-Confucian cultivation.

On the whole, jingjie discourse facilitated the envisioning of various modes of Neo-Confucian collectivity, encompassing the empire, Neo-Confucian institutions, and individual Neo-Confucian estates. These multiple forms of space, power, and identity were connected together through the shared territorial imagination of jingjie. Neo-Confucian learning taking place in the scenic academy has often been idealized as the reflection of the Neo-Confucian “humanistic” attitude towards nature, distinguished from the “Daoist immersion in nature” and the “Buddhist use of it as a means to the realization of universal emptiness (śūnyatā) and enlightenment (prajñā).”\(^\text{24}\) This chapter has shown, however, the deep political undercurrent that ran through the Neo-Confucian development. Indeed, as Tucker has demonstrated, even the profoundly personal and seemingly inactive Neo-Confucian practice of quiet sitting (jing zuo 靜坐) had the potential to channel political activism, such as the forceful opposition against tyranny.\(^\text{25}\)

In the geopolitical discourse of sagely jingjie ardent desire to recover and reclaim political agency can be sensed, the agency that was threatened by foreign infiltration and was undermined by the highly centralized government. The restoration of the sagely kingdom, therefore, signified not only the Han ascendancy in the political realm but also the return to the feudal system in which local governments and local literati can take a more active role in political decision making. The newly found political agency was to be exercised in the government but also in schools and homes, in other words, wherever one
found oneself to be in, and its practice was territorially manifested in the creation of various levels of Neo-Confucian geopolitical *jingjie* discourse.

**Part II. Concluding Remark**

The discourse of *jingjie* played a vital role in the construction of Neo-Confucian knowledge of sagehood: it defined and delimited the field of inquiry, differentiated the domain of Neo-Confucians from the domains of others, and interpreted and structured the modes of interaction taking place within the domain. The discursive homologies constituted sagely *jingjie* as a multi-layered discourse in which the geopolitical, philosophical, and poetic intersected and worked together to create a sagely territory that became the basis and goal of the Neo-Confucian movement. The territorialization of sagely *jingjie* established Neo-Confucian order and identity, eventually mapping out the world in which the many faces of sagehood became a reality.

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Chŏch'on yuko

Maenggyŏn

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Works of Kyŏm transformed the whole
opening up of tranquil
shuyuan ji
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schools in the former Buddhist sites, see ibid., 91.12b
gong xing zhuang

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See Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, Er Cheng yi shu, 2b.49a-b. Also see [SKQS] Zhu Xi, Yu zuan Zhuzi quan shu (The Imperial Compilation of the Complete Works of Master Zhu), 27.20a.

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[SKQS] Qiu Jun, Daxue yan yi bu, 87.12a-b.

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Sun Zixiu 孫子秀 (1212-1266). See Huang Zhen, Huang shi ri chao, 96.15-6 anfu xian mo shaoqing Sun gong xing zhuang 安撫顯謨少卿孫公行狀. For more records on the construction of Neo-Confucian schools in the former Buddhist sites, see ibid., 91.12b-13b ti Chang zhou xian xue ji hou 答權孟堅文後.

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Ibid.: 58.

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For the discussion of Neo-Confucian academy as jing, see [SKQS] Yu Ji 盧集 (1272-1348), Dao yuan xue gu lu 道園學古錄 (The Garden of the Way Record of Learning from the Ancients), 8.10a-13a Lanshan shuyuan ji 藍山書院記.

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For the discussion of Neo-Confucian academy as jing, see Yi Hwang, T’oeuye chip, 42.31b-35a Yongbong sówôn ki 崇陽書院記. For the discussion of tranquil jing in the opening up of a Neo-Confucian hall as the opening up of tranquil jing. See Ku Pong-nyóng, Paektong chip 柏潭集, 3.5b-6a Sanyang Chonsŏng tang kam che 山陽尊性堂感題. Yu Un-ryong explained that the establishment of a Neo-Confucian shrine transformed the whole jing. See Yu Un-ryong 柳雲龍 (1539-1601), Kyŏm-am chip 謙庵集 (The Collected Works of Kyŏm-am), 1742, 2.13b-17b myo kal myŏng 墓碣銘.

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Zhu Xi, Hui-an ji, 28.33b

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Sin Ik-hwang 辛益模 (1672-1722), Kûkchae chip 克齋集 (The Collected Works of Kûkchae), 1862, 4.27b-32a tap Kwon Yôhaeng 東海贊行. For the discussion of self-content living in one’s personal jingje, see Sim Yuk, Chôch’ŏn yuko, 31.32a yŏ Tungok 興谷.

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Hyŏn Sang-byŏk 허성백 (cir. 1700), Kwanbong yugo 冠峯遺稿 (Posthumous Writings of Kwanbong), n.d., 10.13a-16b che Hoegok Sin mungong 答 тек온申公文.

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For the discussion of jingje as personal property see Yi Sang-jŏng, Taesan chip, 7.18a-b tap Kwon Maenggyŏn 李孟根, and 8.22a-23a tap Kwon Hŭi-wŏn 李惠元, and 26.39b-41a tap Kim To-ŏn 柳克齋. For the discussion of self-content living in one’s personal jingje, see Sim Yuk, Chŏch’on yudo, 31.32a yŏ Tungok 興谷.

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Part III. The Discursive Development of Wuyi Nine Bends Jingjie

Now equipped with the results of a general analysis of the Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse, we turn to examine a specific discursive development. The most elaborate and expansive manifestation of Neo-Confucian jingjie discourse is seen in the discourse of Wuyi Mountains and its Nine Bends—Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie (Wuyi Jiuqu 武夷九曲)—whose development in both China and Korea we will try to reconstruct in the remainder of this dissertation. We will examine the formation and expansion of Wuyi jingjie as a geopolitical, poetic, and philosophical territory, and its vital contribution in the overall development of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism.

III.1 The Chinese Development

III.1.a The Geopolitical Discourse

The Wuyi Mountains, located in Fujian province, have long enjoyed great fame for both scenic beauty and religious significance. As for the former, Wuyi boasts of its gracefully eroded rock mountains whose precipitous surface is covered with Neolithic caves housing mysterious boat-shaped coffins—known as the Hanging Coffins—, and the Nine Bends Stream which, as the name suggests, makes nine curves as it runs through the mountain range.¹ As for the latter, Wuyi has been an important Daoist sacred site. Two different accounts regarding the Daoist origin of the mountain have been passed down to us. According to Ge Changgeng 葛長庚 (b. 1194, a.k.a. Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾), a renowned Southern Song Daoist master, Wuyi was named after the two immortals Kengwu 鐵武 and Kengyi 鐵夷, the sons of the famous immortal Jian Keng 錦織, who resided in the Wuyi mountain range during the time of the sage-king Yao.² The Ming
Daoist Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 (1359-1410), in his *Wuyi shan zhi* 武夷山志 (Records of the Wuyi Mountains), stated that the mountain range was considered to be the dwelling place of the Daoist deity Lord Wuyi 武夷君, whence the mountain derived its name. The two stories, despite their differences, clearly highlight Wuyi’s Daoist connection and trace its origin to a mythical time and people. Throughout history numerous Daoist temples were built on Wuyi: one notable example being the Wuyi Palace 武夷宫, which was established in the seventh-century for the purpose of offering imperial sacrifices to the Daoist deities. Of course, like most mountains in China, Wuyi also became the home of many Buddhist monasteries belonging to various sects. All in all, the remains of over sixty Daoist and Buddhist sites have been located throughout the mountain, although only few have survived to this day.

With the emergence of Neo-Confucianism in the eleventh-century, however, the dynamics of Wuyi as a geopolitical territory began to transform. As many influential Neo-Confucian scholars made the mountain the base for their living and teaching—Zhu Xi being the most important one—Wuyi came to be recognized as the cradle of Song Neo-Confucianism. The Neo-Confucianization of Wuyi jingjie came suddenly in the Southern Song period. Almost none of the Northern Song accounts of Wuyi mention the mountain’s connection to Confucian tradition. In fact, the Northern Song saw the proliferation of literature affirming Wuyi’s special Daoist heritage. Yang Yi 楊億 (974-1021)’s *Wuyi xin ji* 武夷新集 (New Records of Wuyi) highlights the mountain’s extensive Daoist and Buddhist legacy, and the imperial publication *Taiping yu lan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Overview of the Taiping Era) and the geographical gazetteer *Taiping
huan yu ji 太平寰宇記 (Gazetteer of the World during the Taiping Era) from the Northern Song both bring attention to the mountain’s Daoist history and the mystical stories of immortals.⁶ Even in personal writings the reference to Wuyi conveyed clear Daoist association: as in the Northern Song poet Li Fu 李復 (jinshi 1079)’s account of viewing a painting of Wuyi which the author described as a Daoist jingjie.⁷

The Southern Song Neo-Confucianization of Wuyi Jingjie

Wuyi’s Neo-Confucian transformation began when You Zuo 游酢 (1053-1123) and Yang Shi 楊時 (1053-1135), the two eminent students of the Cheng Brothers, went to Fujian and made Wuyi their home. Cheng Hao himself upon hearing of their move declared: “My teaching has moved south!”⁸ Indeed, their years of teaching at Wuyi led to the steady growth of Neo-Confucian thinkers in the region, slowly transforming Wuyi into the centre of Neo-Confucian learning. Wuyi became home to both Min and Huxiang Schools of Neo-Confucianism; the founders of both schools, Luo Congyan 羅從彦 (1072-1135) and Hu Anguo 胡安國 (1074-1138), were based there, and the latter even took up the personal pseudonym the “Old Man of Wuyi 武夷翁” and later became known as Master Wuyi 武夷先生. By around 1100s Wuyi became replete with many esteemed Neo-Confucian teachers, including Hu Hong 胡宏 (1105-1155) and Hu Xian 胡巽 (1085-1162)—the son and nephew of Hu Anguo—one, Liu Mianzhi 劉勉之 (1092-1146), and Li Tong 李侗 (1093-1163), and it was under the guidance of these teachers that Zhu Xi came forth, the native of Wuyi region.
Zhu Xi spent most of his life in Wuyi. After a brief official career, he returned to the mountain to devote himself fully to writing and teaching. It was in his Wuyi Retreat (which later became Wuyi Academy), established in 1183, he produced an enormous amount of writings and a long list of students and became the great synthesizer of Neo-Confucian thought. As Zhu Xi’s fame increased, he and his retreat became the epitome of Neo-Confucian presence in Wuyi—the identification of Zhu Xi as “Zhu Wengong of Wuyi” shows the firm connection between the person and the mountain. 9

Zhu Xi’s reputation attracted an unprecedentedly large number of Neo-Confucian adherents to Wuyi. According to the Southern Song scholar Li Xinchuan 李心傳 (1167-1244), during the time of Zhu Xi the literati from all over the empire flocked to Wuyi in search of Neo-Confucian learning, making Wuyi bustle with activity like a market place. 10 In the mountain long celebrated as a sacred site in religious Daoism, Neo-Confucians eagerly made their presence known. As Han Yuanji 韓元吉 (1118-1187) noted:

He [Zhu Xi] and his students used to tuck their books under their arms and go out to chant old poems and drink wine. … But Zhu Xi was a Confucian … unlike those who sequester themselves in the mountains and valleys, clothing themselves in air and eating fungus in order to imitate the prevalent customs of the Daoists. 11

Han called attention to the difference between the Neo-Confucian and Daoist behaviours and portrayed how the life of Zhu Xi and his students in Wuyi bore a resemblance to the ancient community of Confucius and his disciples.
That Zhu’s new Neo-Confucian establishment posed a challenge to the Daoist authority in Wuyi was described by Lu You 陸游 (1125-1210), a distinguished Southern Song poet and a close friend of Zhu Xi. In his poem on Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat, Lu wrote:

先生結屋綠巖邊  Master built a thatched house by the cliff,
讀易懸知屢絕編  Where he continuously reads and contemplates on the Book of Changes.
不用采芝驚世俗  One needs not pick mushrooms to surprise the worldly.
…                     …
有方為子換凡骨  If you wish to transform yourself completely,
來讀晦菴新著書  Come and read Zhu Xi’s new works.12

Clearly differentiating the two philosophical traditions, Lu even made a case for the superiority of Neo-Confucian learning to the Daoist search for immortality, alluded in the act of picking mushrooms.

However, it is unclear whether Zhu Xi himself envisioned the transformation of Wuyi into an exclusively Neo-Confucian jingjie. From his writings one gets the impression that Zhu Xi was quite indifferent about the Daoist presence in Wuyi and certainly did not harbour any desire to expel the Daoist institutions from Wuyi. As a matter of fact, Zhu Xi’s writings on Wuyi contain somewhat extensive Daoist references, including his detailed account of the legend of Lord Wuyi and even the poetic expression of his wish to meet with the Daoist deity.13 Zhu Xi’s explicit discussion and recognition of Wuyi’s Daoist connection became a problem for later Neo-Confucians who wanted Wuyi to be a Neo-Confucian sacred territory, clearly separated from the Daoist and Buddhist domains. Whatever Zhu Xi’s vision of Wuyi was, for many Neo-Confucians Wuyi came to represent the Neo-Confucian geopolitical jingjie par excellence. Even though the complete Neo-Confucian takeover of the physical Wuyi never occurred, symbolically and discursively Wuyi became Neo-Confucian as demonstrated in the
accounts of numerous people who came from everywhere to be a part of this Neo-
Confucian jingjie. Wuyi was recognized as an “extraordinary jing, one that is rarely
found in the human world.” As the Southern Song poet Lou Yue 楼鑰 (1137-1213)
described Wuyi jingjie characterized the true Confucian territory, the territory the ancient
sage-kings created the Middle Kingdom to be:

All the mountains of Wuyi are not the jing of the dusty human world, but
the gate of the eight provinces of ancient China. Satiated with outstanding
people, many scholars came from there both in the past and the present. …
There the wind of Confucianism (ru feng 儒風) is most exuberant.

The Neo-Confucian living in Wuyi came to represent a kind of ideal Confucian
communal living which had long been lost but was revived again. The yearning for ideal
community attracted many literati to Wuyi, who hoped finally to fulfil the dream of
sharing their life with other like-minded men—the aspiration of the literati of all
generations. Zhu Xi himself, in fact, also benefitted from such communal living. On top
of his personal genius and hard work, Zhu Xi also had a group of like-minded men, the
fellow inhabitants of Wuyi, to support him. One of them was Lü Zuqian with whom Zhu
Xi co-authored the Jin si lu 近思錄 (Reflections on Things at Hand). There was also
Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133-1180), who travelled all the way from Yuelu Mountain in Hunan
to Wuyi to seek Zhu Xi’s companionship. These intellectual exchanges and
collaborations played a paramount role in the development of Zhu Xi’s philosophy and in
the overall cultivation of his person, and it was such mutually edifying communal living
that the Neo-Confucians of many generations came to seek in Wuyi.

Numerous accounts of people settling in Wuyi in search for Neo-Confucian
learning testify to the rapid expansion of the Neo-Confucian territory in the Southern
Song. Following the example of Zhu Xi, many moved to Wuyi, including the three most illustrious disciples of Zhu Xi, Cai Yuanding 蔡元定 (1135-1198), Liu Yue 劉爚 (1144-1216), and Zhen Dexiu. Liu Yue, for instance, built his Cloud Manor Mountain Villa 雲莊山房 in Wuyi and there devoted himself to sagely learning and moral cultivation. Liu described his Wuyi living as an experience of cong you 從遊 with Zhu Xi, which can be interpreted as both “joining in wandering with” and “learning from” Zhu Xi. The same expression is also found in Pan Zhi 潘植 (1161-1219) and Pan Bing 潘柄 (1168-1239)’s account, the two brothers who followed Zhu Xi in Wuyi. As we earlier saw in the territorial discourse of you 遊, cong you also territorially articulated the experience of Neo-Confucian living and learning, making Wuyi learning and living a territorial act both in the physical and intellectual sense.

The Min zhong lixue yuanyuan kao 闽中理学淵源考 (Study of the Source of the Learning of Principle in Fujian) includes the accounts of many who emulated learning and living in Wuyi exemplified by Zhu Xi. We are told of Lin Deyu 林得遇 (jinshi 1175) who one day with great determination sold his property and came to Wuyi seeking to study with Zhu Xi. In Wuyi while listening to the master’s lecture on the Analects, Lin was suddenly enlightened (dun wu 頓悟) and could understand the meaning of principle. There was also Chen Sima 陳司馬 (12th c.) who, following the example of Zhu Xi, built his own abode “Cloud Nest 雲窩” in the fifth bend of the Nine Bends Stream. The theme of number “nine”—alluding to the Nine Bends—also became important in the construction of Neo-Confucian identity, as many Neo-Confucians began to create personal names that expressed and strengthened their affinity to Wuyi. For
instance, Cai Shen 蔡沈 (1167-1230), son of Cai Yuanding, who never took office and devoted his life wholly to the promotion of Zhu Xi’s learning in Wuyi, adopted the zi of the Master of Nine Peaks 九峰先生, and You Jiuyan 游九言 (1142-1206), whose name literally means “Nine Words,” took up the name to express his devotion to “writing about Wuyi’s winding stream and his cloud-covered dwelling in its midst.” All in all, Neo-Confucian living in Wuyi for the most part seemed ideal, as was the case for Liu Jiong 劉炯 (jinshi 1199) who resigned from office and retreated to Wuyi with the hope of finding the joy of a carefree and content life. Yet we also learn that life in Wuyi after all was not all that perfect. Cai Fa 蔡發 (1089-1152), who settled in the south side of Wuyi, suffered multiple destructions of his house by burglary, flood, and fire. But undeterred by these catastrophies, he remained in Wuyi dedicating his life to learning and teaching.

In 1195 Zhu Xi’s teaching was declared unorthodox by the Song court. The ensuing period of censure, which lasted until 1209, transformed Wuyi into the stronghold of Cheng-Zhu learning where staunch devotees congregated in support of Zhu Xi and his teaching. Among those who arrived at Wuyi during this time were aforementioned Liu Yue and You Jiuyan, and also Ye Weidao 葉味道 (jinshi 1220), who due to his allegiance to Cheng-Zhu learning was barred from an official career. The influx of Neo-Confucians into Wuyi during the period of sanction further strengthened Wuyi’s standing as the geopolitical centre of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. The result of this political change was the forging of even stronger connection between Wuyi living and Neo-Confucian learning; as Chen Zhu 陳著 (1214-1297) noted learning the works of the early Song Neo-Confucian masters became inseparable from “immersing oneself in the clear
water of Wuyi’s Nine Bends Stream.”\textsuperscript{25} Zhu Xi became an eternal presence in Wuyi, even considered by some as a Neo-Confucian immortal who forever changed the landscape of Wuyi\textsuperscript{26}; and Wuyi became firmly established as the most sacred site of Neo-Confucianism, “Zhu Xi’s cave of principle 暝翁理窟” as Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283) called it—“the longer your stay in the mountains and waters of Wuyi, the deeper your learning would become.”\textsuperscript{27} In the years that followed the end of censure up to the fall of the Song, the Wuyi Retreat underwent a series of transformations. In 1244 Zhu Xi’s younger son Zhu Zai 朱在 (cir. 1250) and grandson Zhu Jian 朱鑑 (13th c.) rebuilt the Wuyi Retreat, which was later renamed Ziyang Academy 紫陽書院. Aided by the support from the government—mainly in the form of land grant—the academy further expanded following the construction of additional buildings in 1261 and 1268.\textsuperscript{28}

\textit{The Rise of Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and Wuyi Jingjie in the Yuan}

The fall of the Southern Song in 1279 drastically transformed the socio-cultural dynamics of the Middle Kingdom. The succeeding Mongol empire Yuan dynasty greatly limited the political mobility of the Han literati, and resisting the foreign regime many Chinese intellectuals retreated from the political scene to the mountains. This new political environment transformed Wuyi to become one of the important sites of political resistance, particularly accommodating the followers of Neo-Confucian learning who opposed the Yuan rule. Already towards the end of the Song, there was a steady increase in the number of Neo-Confucians settling in Wuyi seeking refuge from mounting political turmoil. The eventual fall of the Song and the establishment of the Yuan
accelerated the process, further augmenting already prominent Neo-Confucian population in Wuyi.

Many, including the eminent Yuan Neo-Confucians Xiong He 熊禾 (1247-1312) and Chen Pu 陳普 (1244-1315), moved to Wuyi during this transitional period. These new occupants found in Wuyi an ideal place for peaceful retirement living, a place with beautiful landscape, friends, and comfortable retirement abode, as Xu Ji 徐幾 (cir. 1260) described. But there was also a shared understanding among the residents that their reclusion was a political action of resistance against the Mongol regime. They were the ones who refused to give in and serve the “barbarian” sovereign, like Du Ben 杜本 (1276-1350) who after coming into conflict with a powerful pro-Mongol eunuch retired to Wuyi and devoted himself to teaching and writing following the steps of Zhu Xi. In this new historical context, Wuyi jingjie became a geopolitical territory in tension with the Yuan government and its supporters. At the same time, the preservation and transmission of the civilization handed down from the ancient sages took on a greater political significance, and the promotion of sage learning became an urgent historical and political mission. You Yingxiang 游應翔 (cir. 1280s), who moved to Wuyi during this period, clearly outlined the study and promotion of sage learning revived by Zhu Xi as the special calling of his and later generations of Neo-Confucians living in Wuyi.

The untiring efforts poured into advancing the teachings of Zhu Xi eventually led to the important development of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy in the Yuan. Successive Mongol rulers began to incorporate more Chinese advisors and customs into their administration. After years of advocacy, in 1313 during the reign of Emperor Buyantu Cheng-Zhu learning was inaugurated as state ideology and the discontinued civil service
examination was instituted once again. In the process of creating Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, the geopolitical discourse of Wuyi jingjie played a vital role, particularly with regards to the construction of Neo-Confucian genealogy.

It is important to note that daotong was interpreted by Neo-Confucians as not only a person to person transmission but also a spatial transmission. In tracing the geographical map of the succession of sage learning, the Yuan Neo-Confucians envisioned Wuyi to be the continuation of all earlier sites of Neo-Confucian learning. Dai Liang 戴良 (1317-1383) described that the Neo-Confucian learning of the heart-mind was transmitted from the Lian Stream濂溪 and Luo River洛水—the two waters where Zhou Dunyi and the Cheng Brothers were based respectively—to Wuyi. In a similar account Liu Guan 柳貫 (1270-1342) compared the transmission of sage learning to the flow of water and explained that Wuyi received and channelled the water from the fountainhead of the Lian and the Luo. The continuous flow of water down to Wuyi, of course, is a metaphoric conception, because the three places are geographically too far apart to have any immediate connection. However, by forging an imaginative spatial connection between the previous sites of Neo-Confucian learning and Wuyi, the Yuan Neo-Confucians demonstrated Zhu Xi as the only rightful heir of the teachings of Zhou Dunyi and the Chengs, reinforcing the orthodox understanding of Neo-Confucian genealogy. Regarded as the extension of the Lian and Luo waters, the serpentine stream of the Nine Bends came to represent the only legitimate home of sage learning. Indeed, as Yuan Jue 袁桷 (1266-1327) remarked, the Nine Bends of Wuyi became the home of daotong, where the spirit of antiquity prevailed just like in the bygone days.
At the same time, the advancement of Zhu Xi’s teaching as the official state ideology meant that Wuyi jingjie no longer just delimited the home of Neo-Confucian learning but also the ideological centre of the state, even the world. The Yuan geographical gazetteers identify Wuyi as the most outstanding place in the empire, and Xiong He’s account aptly captures the reason behind Wuyi’s unmatched eminence:

There are thirty-six famous mountains in the universe (宇宙 yuzhou), yet on earth there is none as prominent as Wuyi. Since the time of Confucius and Mencius, for over a thousand and five hundred generations, there has been no one who could match the reputation of Wengong (Zhu Xi) in the [learning of] the Way.37

Xiong makes a clear connection between the unrivalled distinction of Wuyi and that of Zhu Xi. The novelty of Wuyi, however, did not just rest on the fact that the great philosopher once resided there. Wuyi jingjie itself was believed to be imbued with special powers which set it apart from other mountains. First of all, it had an extraordinary composition. Begotten from the primordial qi 元氣 and saturated with Zhu Xi’s dao qi 道氣 (the qi of the Way), Wuyi boasted the most excellent physical and ontological make-up.38 Secondly, as such, Wuyi was believed to possess a special capacity in aiding the cultivation of self. Clearing the heart-mind, purifying the turbid qi, and opening up the obstructed intent, Wuyi jingjie promoted and illuminated the dao.39 Firmly rooted in ancient lineage and emanating superior cosmological power, Wuyi jingjie geographically and politically marked the ascendancy of the Zhu Xi School in the Yuan. It was also during the time of Yuan the orthodox form of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism was introduced to Koryŏ. The discourse of Wuyi jingjie, just as it was in the Yuan, played a seminal role in the establishment of Zhu Xi orthodoxy in Korea, the development we will later examine in detail.
Yet despite the vigorous efforts of the Yuan Neo-Confucians to transform Wuyi into the most excellent Neo-Confucian jingjie, they could not completely eradicate Wuyi’s Daoist heritage. In fact, the Daoist discourse of Wuyi jingjie continued along with the Neo-Confucian discourse. The Nine Bends of Wuyi was compared to the mystic mountain Penglai, and the jing of Wuyi, as described by the Yuan poet Sa Dula, was believed to be filled with gods and immortals, a place of Daoist reclusion and congregation. Even in the Ming we see the continuation of Wuyi’s Daoist discourse in the ways in which Wuyi was spoken of as a Peach Blossom Spring and a place where the secrets of immortality were taught. More importantly, the Daoist institutions in Wuyi continued to remain, perpetuating the mountain’s legacy of Daoist spirituality. The sustained Daoist discourse of Wuyi makes us realize that the Neo-Confucian claim of Wuyi jingjie, as much as it was based on the actual Neo-Confucian expansion in the mountain, it also was an ideological and symbolic gesture to establish Wuyi as the centre of their political and intellectual movement. Unfortunately, the crux of the Neo-Confucian Wuyi jingjie, the academy founded by Zhu Xi, met destruction by fire during a series of military confrontations that eventually led to the fall of the Yuan. The academy was rebuilt in the Ming on its former ruins, but it never regained the grandeur of its former days.

Wuyi as a Site of Neo-Confucian Pilgrimage in the Ming

Neo-Confucian orthodoxy in the Yuan, however, did not bring about any drastic sociopolitical changes. The reinstated civil service examination certainly did not do much to promote sociopolitical mobility, as there was no system in place to appoint and
promote successful candidates to government service. Despite the reforms, the government for the most part was still run by the powerful Mongol aristocrats, who sought to preserve and advance their own political interests.

It was only during the Ming that we begin to witness substantial social consequences of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. Upholding Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism as the state ideology, the Ming court vigorously promoted state-wide Neo-Confucianization. Various levels of Neo-Confucian institutions expanded rapidly throughout the country, and Zhu Xi’s commentaries on the *Four Books* became the basis of the official educational curriculum, studied meticulously by all educated literati. In this new sociopolitical context, the role of Wuyi *jingjie* came under reevaluation. In the absence of the foreign ruler, Wuyi was no longer needed as the foothold of political resistance. Wuyi also fell from its fame as the exclusive centre of Zhu Xi learning, now that the entire country became its home. The work of interpreting and promoting the teachings of Zhu Xi was taken from the group of devoted Wuyi residents into the hands of the government. In other words, Wuyi lost its former significance as a site of political activism and a symbol of Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy.

The result of these changes led to the sudden decline in the number of Neo-Confucians settling in Wuyi. The destruction of Ziyang Academy at the end of the Yuan dynasty and its delayed restoration further contributed to the waning Neo-Confucian presence in Wuyi. Primarily due to unsettling political circumstances, it was not until 1448—eighty years after the founding of the Ming—that the former site of Wuyi Retreat underwent any major restoration. The long absence of the academy meant that Wuyi could not function as a centre of education. But despite the loss of a once great student
population, in the early Ming some evidence of Neo-Confucian presence in Wuyi can be found. According to the *Min zhong lixue yuanyuan kao*, in the early days of the Ming the followers of the Cheng-Zhu School continued to gather in Wuyi’s Cloud Valley, studying, discussing, and revering Zhu Xi. Among them were people like Lan Ren 藍仁 (1315-1400) and Wu Zhongli 呉中立 (jinshi 1571) who refused government office and spent their life in Wuyi studying and teaching. We also learn that some Ming literati made Wuyi their retirement home. Qiu Xi 丘錫 (cir. 1355), for instance, upon retiring from public office, built a thatched house in Wuyi and there spent his senior years. In his poem entitled “On Official Teng’s Painting of Wuyi Academy,” Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) tells us the story of Official Teng who later in his life settled in Wuyi. In the preface to the poem, Hu writes: “Official Teng moved to Wuyi and built a house there. Everyday he gathers with two or three like-minded literati, and they spend their days chatting and boating.” Yet despite these sparse accounts, compared to the instances of Neo-Confucian reclusion in Wuyi we saw in the Song and the Yuan, the numbers in the Ming were noticeably reduced.

To account for the abrupt decline in the popularity of reclusion in Wuyi, we also have to consider the general attitude towards ascetic living during the Ming. In the Yuan literati reclusion was regarded as a highly honourable act, owing mainly to its particular political situation. The literati attitude towards reclusion in the Ming, however, differed from that of the Yuan. By and large, it was deemed as a less favourable choice since the overall atmosphere encouraged the literati’s active social and political participation in building the prosperous Han Chinese empire again. This did not mean the ideal of reclusion vanished altogether. Instead, what we see is the revival of the idea of the
“reclusion in the court,” which valued the possession of ascetic heart over actual physical reclusion. As Zhang Xianyi 張獻翼 (cir. 1537) appropriately expressed what mattered was “dwelling in ancestral temple and court but not changing the qi of living on ‘a bamboo dish of rice and a gourd dish of drink’ or on ‘mushrooms and vegetables’; wearing an official headdress and jade pendant yet not forgetting the heart of yellow cap and coarse dress.”49 In other words, what was esteemed was the internal spirit of reclusion but not necessarily the external expression of it—echoing the Jin poet Wang Kangju 王康琚 (cir. 400)’s distinction of a “lesser recluse 小隱” and a “great recluse 大隱”: “A lesser recluse hides in mountains or marshes; a great recluse hides in court and market.”50

However, despite the decline in the number of Neo-Confucian settlements in Wuyi, the Ming saw a dramatic increase in the number of Neo-Confucian pilgrimages to Wuyi. The growth of Neo-Confucian tourism was closely related to the unprecedented explosion of tourism industry throughout China. Political stability led way to overall economic growth, and the Ming government’s particularly liberal economic policies had a huge impact on boosting various local industries, including tourism. Many lower-level governments were directly involved in promoting local tourism. The government-sponsored publications of maps and local gazetteers featuring notable scenic spots helped attract visitors from far away places, in turn invigorating the local economy. The rapid expansion of tourism gave rise to the copious production of travel writings which became fully established as an independent literary genre in the Ming.51

In this cultural context, Wuyi evolved into a popular destination in Neo-Confucian pilgrimages. Wuyi’s transformation from a centre of learning to a historic site
was facilitated by the government’s decision to build a shrine in the place where Wuyi Retreat and later Ziyang Academy used to stand. When the long-awaited restoration finally came about in 1448, what was constructed was not an academic institute but a temple, the Temple of Zhu Wengong 朱文公祠, dedicated to venerating Zhu Xi and his four most eminent disciples, Huang Gan, Cai Yuanding, Liu Huolun, and Zhen Dexiu. The temple was renovated and expanded in 1518, and this time, with a generous support from the state, more buildings, a walled enclosure, and a hundred mu of land were added. The new and improved compound was renamed Wuyi Academy 武夷書院, a somewhat misleading name since its primary purpose still remained offering timely sacrifices to Zhu Xi and his disciples. We know that one of Zhu Xi’s descendents was appointed as the resident manager to oversee the sacrifices and maintain the property, and from this we get the sense that what was called Wuyi Academy was probably close to an ancestral temple dedicated to honouring the Neo-Confucian master. The academy, however, seemed to have preserved some educational function. Though much reduced in size, when the Chosŏn literatus No In 魯認 (1566-1622) visited the site in 1599, there was a group of about twenty literati gathering daily at the academy for lecture and discussion. But it certainly was not a major educational centre, no longer playing the role of innovative leader in Neo-Confucian scholarship. Many Ming travel accounts to Wuyi include the description of visits to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Academy and Cai Shen’s Nine Peaks Academy 九峰書院, the two representative Neo-Confucian institutions in Wuyi at the time. But the historic value of the two sites outweighed their academic stature.

As Wuyi lost its standing as the frontier of Neo-Confucian learning, its historic importance became more and more emphasized; it was celebrated as a vital part of Neo-
Confucian heritage, an importance piece of Neo-Confucian historical memory.

Educational travel or pilgrimage became an indispensable part of Neo-Confucian learning in the Ming, and Wuyi became a destination all literati should visit at least once in their life time. The early Ming Neo-Confucian recluse Hui Zheng 諱鉦 (14th c.)’s account tells us his education as a youth involved trips to venerable sites. Following his father, Hui visited Wuyi where he sought the vestiges of Zhu Xi. The two also travelled to Mount Lu and stayed in White Deer Grotto Academy by the Lian Stream—another important Neo-Confucian site—and passed by Chaisang, the home of Tao Qian. The Ming scholar Wu Kuan 吳寬 (1435-1504) poetically expounded the importance of a visit to Wuyi in Neo-Confucian learning:

千載宋儒眞可學  The Song Confucians, whose influence will last a thousand generations, truly deserve to be imitated.
一時秦即謾爲師  Do not learn from the Qin officials who only lasted for a moment.
公餘爲我尋遺蹟  If you would stay here and search for their traces with me,
應踏扁舟入武夷  Please board the flatboat and enter Wuyi.

As in the cases of Hui and Wu, we find that in many descriptions of the literati’s journey to Wuyi, the purpose of the visit is clearly outlined: to see Zhu Xi’s home—Nine Bends Stream and Wuyi Academy—and to pay homage to the great master. Most Neo-Confucians prior to making the trip were already well-acquainted with the appearance of Wuyi through paintings and prints. Accordingly, in reading about the Ming literati’s visit to Wuyi, we often come across expressions such as this by Xie Su 謝肅 (cir. 1370):

武夷曾向丹青見  In the past, I have seen Wuyi in paintings.
今日經逰意豁然  Today as I journey through it, I suddenly understand the artistic conceptions.
The Jade Maiden Peak emerges through the clouds like flowers.

Singing the boat song, the Confucian Immortal passes the winding stream.57

Following Zhu Xi’s example who wrote the much celebrated poem “The Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends,” it became a common practice among the visiting Neo-Confucians to compose a boat song, often matching the original poem by Zhu Xi, or to simply recite Zhu Xi’s poem while cruising down the stream on a bamboo raft.58 The significance of these matching poems will be examined in detail in our discussion of Wuyi’s poetic jingjie.

In the years that followed, we see the steady decline of Wuyi’s fortune as a sacred Neo-Confucian site. The transformation from a jingjie to be occupied to a jingjie to be remembered and occasionally visited meant that the geographical jingjie of Wuyi, long deprived of political influence, could only gradually deteriorate through time. The growing popularity of the Lu-Wang School in the latter half of the Ming posed a further challenge to Wuyi’s reputation and the orthodox standing of Zhu Xi’s teaching. In fact, we learn of the physical disintegration of Wuyi Academy and the occasional government intervention to hold back the process of deterioration. The Qing poet Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1618-1683) tells us when he visited Wuyi in the mid-1600s, the Academy was in ruin and the whole estate covered with wild grass.59 Wuyi Academy received another makeover in 1644, probably not long after Shi’s visit, and again in 1687. The last time it underwent major renovation was in 1717 during the reign of Emperor Kangxi. The remains we see today are of the buildings from the Kangxi period.60 Cha Shenxing 查慎
行 (1650-1727)’s poem on Wuyi Retreat describes the state of Wuyi Academy in the Qing, and how its grandeur was a memory of distant past.

早時蒙養地       A place of learning in youthful years,
晚節宦游途       A destination of official journey in late years.
風雨一精舍       A retreat in wind and rain,
溪山雙畫圖       The stream and the mountain were both captured in the painting.
居常鄰道院       Staying in the nearby Daoist courtyard,
交不廢緇徒       I befriend respectable monks and priests.
識者觀其達       Those who understand can see its greatness.
何曽累大儒       How could it once have been filled with great Confucians?

The Expansion of Wuyi Jingjie

So far we have traced the historical development of Wuyi jingjie: namely, its establishment as a Neo-Confucian ideological and political territory and its transformation into a mnemonic and symbolic territory. From the series of changes we have examined above, one might get the impression that Wuyi jingjie depreciated in importance, particularly after it lost its privileged status as an academic centre. This, however, would be only one side of the complex territorial development of Wuyi jingjie. In order to see the fuller extent of Wuyi jingjie’s discursive formation, we have to go beyond the physical borders of the Wuyi Mountains.

In the minds of Neo-Confucians—particularly those who came after Zhu Xi—, Wuyi represented more than just a specific geographical space; it was where sagely learning was brought back to life, and where sagely living once again became a reality. Wuyi jingjie came to signify the ideal environment—both in the sense of perfect and model environment—for sagely learning and living, and as such Wuyi became the plumb line against which other jingjie were measured and evaluated. Many, in order to
demonstrate the authority and legitimacy of other Neo-Confucian jingjie, tried to draw connection to Wuyi, and as a result the imitation and expansion of Wuyi jingjie became an enormous endeavour among Neo-Confucians. The belief in the “organic relationship” between outstanding environment and great scholars which became popular since the Southern Song caused many to believe certain features of Wuyi jingjie had a direct impact on the production of eminent scholars like Zhu Xi. This meant in order to ensure the continuous generation of excellent scholars, Wuyi jingjie had to be expanded and recreated, that is, beyond the physical borders of the Wuyi Mountains.

We can see ample evidence of the expansion of Wuyi jingjie throughout China. Already in the Southern Song, the heart of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat compound, Renzhi Hall (the Hall of Humaneness and Wisdom), began to be replicated throughout the country. The name “ren zhi” is probably one of the most generic names for the main hall in Confucian institutions, and it is important to note that this trend began with Zhu Xi and his Wuyi Retreat. Wuyi’s Renzhi Hall came to be celebrated as the ideal place for Neo-Confucian cultivation and nurturing of self. The name of the hall also instigated discussion among those who sought to expound its philosophical significance. In his “Record of Renzhi Hall,” Chen Chun (1153-1217) offered a philosophical explanation of humaneness and wisdom, tracing back to the saying of Confucius “the wise find joy in water, and the humane in mountains.” Such joy, he argued, was the joy sage learning restored to one’s life.

Following the example of Zhu Xi, many Southern Song Neo-Confucians began recreating Renzhi Halls in their own surroundings. We are told of the Southern Song scholar Wei Hou (13th c.) who built a studio and named it Renzhi Hall, and who did
so with a clear intention of imitating Zhu Xi. In his account of Wei Hou, Yao Mian 姚勉 (jinshi 1253) even quoted Zhu Xi’s poem on Renzhi Hall and traced the origin of Wei’s studio to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat.\(^65\) Zhu Xi’s student Du Zheng 度正 (jinshi 1190) noted how the creation of Renzhi Hall came out of an effort to reconstruct the ideal setting for sagely living, the place where Neo-Confucians could “bathe in the river, enjoy the breeze, and return home dancing and singing.”\(^66\) Renzhi Halls continued to spread in the Yuan. Many believed having a hall that bore the mark of Zhu Xi in one’s own quarter not only reflected but also augmented one’s devotion to sage learning: as the Yuan scholar Shu Di 舒頔 (1304-1377) remarked the building of Renzhi Hall showed one’s eagerness to follow the examples of the sages and one’s seriousness towards study.\(^67\)

Then, there was Guanshan Studio 觀善齋 (Studio of Observation and Admiration), another building in the Wuyi Retreat complex which became widely imitated among Neo-Confucians. The early Yuan Neo-Confucian Liu Jiangsun 劉將孫 (b. 1257) remarked that in constructing Guanshan Studio one was sharing the spirit of not only Zhu Xi but also of Zhuge Liang who built a thatched house for his reclusive living. The building of the studio, Liu stated, revealed one’s willingness to emulate the sagely living exemplified by the sage-kings and Yan Hui.\(^68\)

At times, instead of replicating a section of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat, new names that reminded people of Wuyi were conferred to buildings used by Neo-Confucians, such as Wuyi Hall 武夷堂 which was built in Xiancheng prefecture near Fu Mountain where Zhu Xi and his students stayed for awhile to escape from persecution during the period of sanction. To commemorate Zhu Xi’s stay, the locals later built a hall and named it “Wuyi” to convey the idea that Zhu Xi once made the place his home.\(^69\) The reverberation of
name was deemed as the expansion of Wuyi itself. Even though the buildings did not share much architectural resemblance, through the sharing of the names they made manifest their connection to Zhu Xi and his Wuyi Retreat.

Aside from reconstructing the Wuyi Retreat, some also turned to locating and recreating Wuyi and its Nine Bends in their own surroundings. We are told of the Yuan Neo-Confucian recluse Jian Huang 建黃 (14th c.) who, for some unknown reason, did not settle in Wuyi but instead transformed his surroundings into another Wuyi. He called his own abode the “Jian Stream 建溪”—another name of Wuyi’s Nine Bends Stream—and when asked about its meaning replied:

There are lots of outstanding mountains and waters, but they are not known to people. This is because even though mountains and waters are outstanding, they become known to the world through people. The Jian Stream is known to us because Master Ziyang [Zhu Xi] explicated the dao there. Succeeding Queli Street 閭里, the Jian Stream is the stream of the learning of the dao which continues the Lian and Luo Rivers and connects to the source of Zhu and Si Rivers 洙泗. … The literati of our faction read Ziyang’s books, remember Ziyang’s teachings, long for his place, and miss his person. What can we do about this? The Jian Stream runs like a branch of the Milky Way which came down and became the stream of nine bends. Beckoning Ziyang who is now distant, together with him let us call out the fisherman and leaning on the boat sing outloud!²⁰

Queli Street and the Zhu and Si Rivers both refer to the places where Confucius delivered his teachings. In other words, Jian Huang’s account reveals his understanding of Wuyi Nine Bends as the new home of sage learning and Zhu Xi as the proper successor of Confucius and the Northern Song Neo-Confucian masters. His deep longing for Zhu Xi and Wuyi became the motive behind identifying his own living space as the Nine Bends. We see the similar practice continuing in the Ming and the evolution of the Nine Bends into a widely imitated landscape type. For example, the Ming Neo-Confucian Zheng Qian
鄭潛（cir. 1377）and the poet Gao Qi 高启 (1336-1374) identified their habitats as Jiannan’s Nine Bends 建南九曲 and Shanyuan’s Nine Bends 剡原九曲 respectively after recognizing their resemblance to Wuyi’s Nine Bends, and both composed poems imitating Zhu Xi’s “Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends.” These developments demonstrate Wuyi’s expansion beyond its physical boundary, the further territorialization of Wuyi. The replication of Renzhi Hall and the identification of Nine Bends were both signs that the geopolitical jingjie of Wuyi was widening—Wuyi’s spillage over its physical limits onto the rest of China.

Interestingly, such spreading out of Wuyi became particularly prominent in the Qing when Wuyi’s fortune seemed to be at its lowest. The practice of identifying Nine Bends jingjie continued, and “Little Wuyi” emerged throughout the empire. An important development in the Qing was Wuyi jingjie’s infiltration into the garden culture, making Wuyi an essential component of the literati’s private space. If previous efforts of recreating Wuyi jingjie relied more on association—that is, identifying places that resembled Wuyi—, the collaboration with landscape architecture transformed the recreation of Wuyi jingjie into a more active undertaking, involving a conscious reshaping of the land. Many Qing literati took Wuyi as an inspiration in designing their gardens, but chief among the many examples of Wuyi garden constructions—and certainly the most influential—was the imperial garden of Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735-1796).

The Qing emperor built two impressive gardens, one in the northern capital Beijing and one in the southern capital Nanjing. Each of these gardens contained a section which imitated the first of Wuyi’s nine bends: namely, Shanyang First Bend
Study 山陽一曲精廬 in Beijing’s Mt. Xiang and Wuyi First Bend Study 武夷一曲精廬 in Nanjing’s Mt. Qixia. Recreating Wuyi jingjie in the imperial gardens entailed great symbolic significance. In both cases, the first bend served as the representative of and the entrance to the Nine Bends. From the many poetic records found in the imperial collection, we learn that Wuyi jingjie was replicated to promote moral transformation of self and to facilitate the first-hand experience of Wuyi.  

Emperor Qianlong’s poem on Wuyi First Bend Study underscores that the garden was designed to recreate the jingjie of Wuyi.

名山初歩未云深
峯有神姿泉有音
比似武夛纔一曲
許多奇境自兹尋
The opening path into the great mountain; it cannot be called deep.
The peaks have divine appearance, and the fountains resounding voice,
It resembles the first bend of Wuyi,
Whose many wondrous jing can be sought here.

Another poem by the emperor describes the features of Shanyang First Bend Study, including a meandering pond imitating Wuyi’s Nine Bends Stream, probably big enough for a boat ride.

山陽築小墅
近隰得池便
階下臨漪影
廊廻抱溜涓
印心含藴藉
觸目喜澄鮮
設以武夛喻
方開一曲船
Building a small villa in Shanyang,
It is easy to make a pond from the nearby swamp.
The bottom of the steps meets the traces of ripples,
And the corridor circles around the flowing stream.
Understanding in the heart, yet not revealing it,
The eyes rejoice in the pure and the fresh.
Creating it to resemble Wuyi,
I will set sail in the first bend.

These accounts express how the desire to make Wuyi jingjie readily accessible gave rise to creative architectural adaptations even within the palatial compound.
Another important development we see in the Qing expansion of Wuyi is the evolution of Rainbow Plank Bridge into a prominent feature of Chinese literati garden. Wuyi’s Rainbow Plank Bridge, despite its name, is not a bridge but a line of manmade hollows along the mountain’s rocky cliff containing Neolithic wooden coffins. [Plate 3]. According to the legend, these coffins—or “planks”—used to be part of a bridge that connected the world of mortals and of immortals. In the time of the first emperor of the Qin, when Lord Wuyi and other immortals feasted on the mountain’s Screen Pavilion Peak, mortals could join them through the bridge which was later disconnected. The Qing literati, however, perhaps to express their hope of reconnecting with the immortals, but mostly due to their unfamiliarity with the real Wuyi Mountains, envisioned it as a physical bridge in the shape of a rainbow, comparable to the single arch bridge in Western architecture. In their attempts to introduce Wuyi into the private sphere, Rainbow Bridges were constructed, and the bridge became a recognized component of the Qing literati garden. Various records show that the Qing literati believed with confidence that their arch-shaped Rainbow Bridge was the replica of what was found in Wuyi; as the poem on Nine Bends Bridge reads:

合是武夛最深處  It is just like the deepest part of Wuyi.
便當屢步踱虹橋  I must climb the Rainbow Bridge again and again.78

One of the most celebrated examples of Rainbow Bridge is found in Suzhou’s Lion Grove Garden (*Shizi lin* 獅子林), first built in 1350 in the late Yuan period. Many changes were made to the garden since its inauguration, but overall it has been known as a superb example of Chinese rock garden, featuring carefully built artificial rock mountains, paths, and caves. The garden also contains a Rainbow Bridge [Plate 4], which
was depicted by the famous Yuan painter Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301-1374)—who also was responsible for the garden’s rock arrangements—as one of the sixteen sceneries of Lion Grove Garden. The Paintings of Lion Grove Garden 獅子林圖, regarded as one of the representative works of the artist, have not survived. We know, however, that the paintings were still extant during the time of Qianlong from the poetic descriptions dedicated to them. The Qing poems expound how Ni Zan captured Lion Grove Garden’s Rainbow Bridge as the imitation of Rainbow Plank Bridge found in the first bend of Wuyi.79

It is not clear whether the initial owners had the intention of recreating a part of Wuyi jingjie in this elaborate Suzhou garden. But when we consider that the building project was first initiated by the Buddhist Master Tianru 天如法師 (b. 1263) who dedicated the garden to his late master Monk Zhongfeng 中峰和尚 (1263-1323), the chance of its Rainbow Bridge having a Neo-Confucian connection seems rather slight. Although Ni Zan himself did discuss Wuyi’s Nine Bends and its Neo-Confucian and Daoist legacies in his personal writings, with regards to the design of Lion Grove Garden, no such connection was laid out by the artist and garden architect.80 Instead, it would be more fitting to assume that the Qing literati’s newly found interest in Rainbow Bridge led to the particular interpretation and appreciation of the bridge in the Yuan dynasty garden. The discursive echoing of Wuyi’s Rainbow Bridge was also felt in the Qing Neo-Confucian academies, as the expression “Rainbow Bridge” emerged as a popular name for the educational institution.81

Another notable development in the Qing was the celebration of Nine Bends outside the bounds of Neo-Confucian establishment. Much like the adaptation of
Rainbow Bridge, Nine Bends became an important architectural theme in the literati gardens, particularly in the design of bridges. The widely popular Nine Bends Bridges, which zigzag nine times across the water surface and usually leads to a pavilion, can be seen in many Qing dynasty gardens [Plates 5 & 6]. The Qing also saw the emergence of numerous Nine Bends villages which are still found scattered throughout China.

Whether these developments had any direction relation to the expansion of Wuyi jingjie is disputable, since any association with number nine—one of the lucky numbers in Chinese culture—also denoted good fortune and not necessarily a reference to Neo-Confucian development. We can, however, certainly speculate a possible connection, especially in light of various manifestations of Wuyi jingjie’s expansion we have examined in this chapter.

The geopolitical development of Wuyi jingjie shows us that marking of the bounds, creating and claiming of spatial territory, was an integral part in the development of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. In this process, the discourse of jingjie helped define spatially the domain of the philosophical and political movement, marking the space physically with buildings and, more importantly, with names, staking a claim that theirs was a Neo-Confucian territory clearly separated from the Daoist and Buddhist domains. It was through discursive repetition—through imitation and adaptation—that Wuyi jingjie expanded, starting from within Wuyi, spreading beyond its physical boundaries, even finding a foothold in the private spaces of the literati, and thus becoming a pattern.

The result of such repetition was the transformation of Wuyi jingjie into a shared territory, a shared home, which was personally inhabited. The act of dwelling was not
only an expression of their commitment to the great master, but more importantly a means of communicating with him—communication as resonance and not as “exchange of meaning or information.” Through dwelling Neo-Confucians remembered and became part of Zhu Xi and his teachings, and such resonance, manifested discursively and territorially, became the basis on which Neo-Confucian identity was built. In the sharing of home, Neo-Confucians found their communal self. Wuyi jingjie became a communal territory where Neo-Confucians throughout history could anchor their sense of belonging. It enabled them to “live and enter into correspondence with” the founders of the Neo-Confucian movement and the generations of adherents. This sense of belonging was essentially geopolitical, but also, as we shall see in the chapters that follow, aesthetic and philosophical.

[Plate 3] Mt. Wuyi’s Rainbow Plank Bridge
[Plate 4] Rainbow Bridge in Suzhou’s Lion Grove Garden\textsuperscript{86}

[Plate 5] Weiyang Nine Bends Bridge in Henan Province\textsuperscript{87}
[Plate 6] Nine Bends Bridge in Backyard Flower Garden (Houhua yuan 後花園) in Shanghai 88
The Song scholar Lin Xiyi referred to Zhu Xi as "Immortal Ziyang" and the experience of Neo-Confucian Wuyi living, see the accounts of Liu Fu 劉処 (cir. 1200s), Zhang Xun 張震 (cir. 1184), Jiang Mo 江默 (jinshi 1169), and Chen Kongshuo 陳孔默 (jinshi 1175) Kongshuo 陳孔默 (jinshi 1199) brothers. *Min zhong lخue yuanuan kخ*, 20.16b Liu Yueqing xiansheng Fu 建寧府紫芝書院記. Also see ibid., 18.10a-11b Zhang Ziwen xiansheng Xun 張子文先生. Ibid., 20.9a-b Xianling Jiang Deng xiansheng Mo 建寧府紫芝書院記. Also see ibid., Min zhong liخue yuanuan kخ, 17.2a-b Xiuxuan Chen Beishan xiansheng Kongshuo, xiong Kongshuo 修撰陳北山先生孔碩 兄孔碩.


25 The Song scholar Lin Xiyi referred to Zhu Xi as "Immortal Ziyang 紫陽仙" and the experience of Wuyi living as singing the Boat Song of the Nine Bends and learning from Immortal Ziyang. [SKQS] Lin Xiyi 林希逸 (1235), *Zhu xi Yanzhi shi yi gao xu ju* 竹溪養齋十一藁續集 (The Continuation of the Eleven Writings of Zhu Xi Yanzhi), 2:14, 2:14, 4:14-15 Cao xiong shen ju xiao gao 題建安曹兄深居小藁.


27 The Song scholar Lin Xiyi referred to Zhu Xi as "Immortal Ziyang 紫陽仙" and the experience of Wuyi living as singing the Boat Song of the Nine Bends and learning from Immortal Ziyang. [SKQS] Lin Xiyi 林希逸 (1235), *Zhu xi Yanzhi shi yi gao xu ju* 竹溪養齋十一藁續集 (The Continuation of the Eleven Writings of Zhu Xi Yanzhi), 2:14, 2:14, 4:14-15 Cao xiong shen ju xiao gao 題建安曹兄深居小藁.


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30 [SKQS] Song Lian 宋濂 (1310-1381) and Wang Yi 王昶 (1321-1373), *Yuan shì 元史* (The History of the Yuan), 193.6.
Xianzhang described Daoist learning at Wuyi. Chen Xianzhang, through the Ages), juan 411.1b ti shan shui tu of Guifeng), shang.12b

Yanyuan), 14.9a

Cunfu Studio),

38

15.27a

Nine Spirits Mountain Villa),

32

35

15.27a

Wuyuan zhou cong jian Hui

30a

le quan zhai ji

Wuyi sh

1355),

1304),

le quan dian

182.197.54.2,

chong jian Wuyi shuyuan shu 重建武夷書院疏 by Xiong He 熊禾 (1247-1312). Original text: 宇宙間三十六名山，地未有如武夷之勝，孔孟後千五百餘載，道未有如文公之尊。

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1328

1342),

1355),

1383),

1727) and Chu Dawen 車大文 (1665-1743), Shanxi tong zhi 山西通志 (General Gazetteer of Shanxi), 212.42b-44b zuo an kan shan tu xu 指客商山圖序 by Li Weixin 李惟馨 (cir. 1328-1389).

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Zhang Zonghan zhou guo Wuyi

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55 [SKQS] Wu Kuan 吳觀 (1435-1504), *Jia chang ji* 寶藏集 (The Collection of Writings Hidden at Home), 4.6a-b song Xiang Chongren zhi Jianyang 项崇仁知建陽.


57 [SKQS] Xie Su 謝肅 (cir. 1370s). *Mi-an ji* 密庵集 (The Collected Works of Mi-an), 1398, 3.20b you Wuyi 遊武夷.


59 [SKQS] Shi Runzhang 施潤章 (1618-1683). *Xue yu tang wen ji* 學餘堂文集 (The Collected Writings from Xueyu Hall), 15.1a-3a Wuyi you ji 武夷遊記.

60 For more Qing accounts of Wuyi, see [SKQS] Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709). *Bao shu ting ji* 曝書亭集 (The Collected Writings from Baoshu Pavilion), 18.10a-13b and 23.1b-2a.


62 For example, in order to justify and grant authority to Dufeng Academy in Zhejiang province, it had to be mentioned that “Zhi Xi came here and loved its mountains and waters like Wuyi.” See [SKQS] Ji Cengyun 孫曾筠 and Shen Yiji 沈翼機, *Zhejiang tong zhi* (The Complete Annals of the Great Qing), 1784, 203.18b-19a Dufeng shu yuan 德翁書院.

63 Walton discusses the “organic relationship” between landscape and scholars and its connection to the construction of Neo-Confucian sacred spaces. See Walton (1998), 37. For more discussion on how mountains and rivers produced excellent scholars, see [SKQS] Qiu Yunxiao 錢雲霄 (cir. 1544). *Shan zhong ji* 山中集 (Writings from the Mountains), xu 1a-2b Shan zhong ji xu 山中集序.


65 [SKQS] Yao Mian 姚勉 (jinshi 1253). *Xue po ji* 雪坡集 (The Collected Works from the Snow-Covered Slope), 36.3b-7b Renzhi tang ji 仁智堂記.


67 [SKQS] Shu Di 舒鸂 (1304-1377). *Zhensu zhai ji* 鯤素齋集 (The Collected Works from the True Simplicity Studio), 1.19a-21a Renzhi tang ji 仁知堂記.

68 [SKQS] Liu Jiangsun 劉將孫 (b. 1257). *Yang wu zhai ji* 養吾齋集 (The Collected Works from the Self-Nurturing Studio), 27.4a-b Guanshan zhai ming 養吾齋銘.

Examples of Nine Bends Village (Jiuku cun) are found in 1) Dingnan Prefecture in Jiangxi Province, 2) Jianan City in Shandong Province, 3) Changqing District, Wuzhuang Village in Shandong Province, 4) Linyi City, Hedong District, Jiuku Prefecture in Shandong Province, 5) Zhaoyuan City, Fushan Prefecture in Shandong Province, 6) Dongguan City, Daojiao Prefecture in Guangdong Province, 7) Zhongjiang County in Sichuan Province, 8) Sanming City, Youxi County in Fujian Province, 9) Shaoxing County, Huatang Prefecture in Zhejiang Province, 10) Jiaxing City in Zhejiang Province, 11) Xingtai City, Zhongshan Prefecture in Shandong Province, 6) Dongguan City, Daojiao Prefecture in Guangdong Province, 7) Zhaoyuan City, Shandong Province, 2) Jianan City in Shandong Province, 3) C...

Image source: http://www.ynkp.cn/showinfo.asp?id=21753

Image source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/13132509


Image source: http://blog.eastday.com/fjj5581/art/263920.html
III.1.b The Poetic Discourse

Earlier we have examined the poetic discourse of Neo-Confucian sagely jingjie—how sagely jingjie represented the poetic territories embodied by the sages and worthies from the past. Important figures in Neo-Confucian discourse came to be associated with particular poetic jingjie representative of their personal and moral character, and for Zhu Xi it was Wuyi’s Nine Bends and his Wuyi Retreat. Zhu Xi’s Wuyi jingjie was regarded as the continuation and even culmination of earlier Neo-Confucian poetic jingjie, as suggested in the compound poems on Neo-Confucian poetic territories where Zhu Xi’s Wuyi appears at the end of the list, almost like a concluding note.1 As far as orthodox understanding was concerned, Zhu Xi was recognized and venerated as the transmitter of the correct teaching, the one who systematized sage learning by weaving together various earlier ideas of the Northern Song Neo-Confucian thinkers. It was believed Zhu’s rightful succession to sage learning was also poetically manifested, particularly through his demonstration of sagely living in Wuyi. Many, in fact, considered Zhu Xi’s life in Wuyi as the utmost example of Neo-Confucian sagely living and showed great enthusiasm in participating in the poetic jingjie of Wuyi, the practice that had a huge impact on the formation of Neo-Confucian poetic identity.

Among Zhu Xi’s numerous poems on Wuyi, two were particularly influential in constituting the poetic jingjie of Wuyi: namely “The Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends (Wuyi jiu qu zhao ge 武夷九曲櫂歌)” and “Miscellaneous Poems on Wuyi Retreat (Wuyi Jingshe za yong 武夷精舍雜詠).” As long compound poems consisting of ten and twelve stanzas respectively, they provide the most comprehensive description of Wuyi’s Nine Bends and the Retreat: the former poetically captures the beauty of each of the nine bends,
and the latter includes the detailed background information of the retreat’s construction and the description of the twelve sites within the retreat complex. The poems were significant in poetically claiming Zhu Xi’s ownership of Wuyi jingjie. The idea that a place can be occupied by writing about it—the embodiment of space “in words”—emerged in the mid-Tang and continued to influence the subsequent development of poetry in China. Zhu Xi’s poetic memorialization of Wuyi, in other words, reinforced his status as the owner of both physical and poetic jingjie of the mountain, and it was the poetic possession that guaranteed his lasting presence in Wuyi especially after the physical destruction of the retreat.

Many Neo-Confucians became acquainted with Wuyi through these poems. Both for those who personally visited Wuyi and for those who never managed to do so, Zhu Xi’s poems became the gateway into Wuyi jingjie, poetically creating Wuyi in the minds of Neo-Confucians. The prominence of Zhu Xi’s poetic vision in shaping the overall impression of Wuyi was felt even in his own time: the Southern Song topographical compilation Fang yu sheng lan (A View of the Scenic Spots) cites Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems as the recognized source of knowledge of the Wuyi Mountains. In what follows we will look at the two poems, and how through them Zhu Xi’s poetic jingjie of Wuyi was experienced and joined by Neo-Confucians.

**Neo-Confucian Response to Zhu Xi’s Poetic Jingjie**

In the preface to “Miscellaneous Poems on Wuyi Retreat,” we find Zhu Xi’s account on his own experience and thought regarding the construction of the retreat. The long preface is followed by twelve short poems, each dedicated to a specific location in
武夷精舍雜詠
武夷之溪東流凡九曲，
而第五曲為最深，蓋其
山自北而南者，至此而
盡，聳全石為一峯，拔
地千尺。上小平處，微
戴土生林木極蒼翠可
玩，而四隤稍下，則反
削而入，如方屋帽者，
舊經所謂「大隱屏」
也。屏下兩麓，坡坨旁
引，還復相抱。抱中地
平廣數畝，抱外溪水隨
山勢從西北來，四屈折
始過其南，乃復繞山。
東北流亦四屈折而出。
溪流兩旁丹崖翠壁林立
環擁，神剜鬼刻，不可
名狀。舟行上下者，方
左右顧瞻錯愕之不暇，
而忽得帄岡長阜，蒼藤
茂木，按衍迤靡，膠葛
蒙翳，使人心目曠然以
舒，窈然以深，若不可
極者，即精舍之所在
也。直屏下兩麓相抱之
中，西南向爲屋三間
者，仁智堂也。堂左右
兩室，左曰隱求，以待
棲息；右曰止宿，以延
賓友。左麓之外復前
引，而右抱中又自爲一
塢，因疊石以門之，而
命曰石門之塢，別爲屋
_miscellaneous_poeems_on_wuyi_retreat.png_Miscellaneous_Poems_on_Wuyi_Retreat
The Wuyi Mountains’ stream flows east in nine bends, and the fifth bend is the deepest. There the mountain from north to south meets its culmination where a whole rock shoots high up to form a peak rising one thousand chi above the ground. Climbing on to its small piece of flat land, [one sees] a forest growing on a thin layer of soil. When the trees reach their full green, it is delightful. Its four plains are a little low, but they join towards the cliff, like a roof-shaped cap. Ancient records have called it the Screen of Great Recluse (Da yin ping 大隱屏). The two forests at the foot of the Screen stretch out in an up-and-down motion, and coming around they form a circle. Inside the circle is a several-mu of flat and wide land. Outside the circle, following the mountain, the stream flows from northwest which after winding four times passes the south side of the mountain and returns to coil around the mountain. The northeast current also winds four times and exits. Both sides of the flowing stream are surrounded by numerous red and green cliffs, cut out by gods and chiselled by spirits. It is an indescribable sight. Those who travel up and down on boat turn left and right to look in admiration. There is no end to their astonishment. Then they suddenly discover the flat ridges and tall mounds, the green vines and luxuriant trees, which spread out in profusion, intersecting and shrouding each other. [This sight] causes the human heart and eyes to open up in easiness and to rest in the inexhaustible great depth, and that is where the Retreat is located. Inside the circle formed by the two forests under the vertical Screen, there are three buildings facing southwest—that is the Hall of Humaneness and Wisdom (Ren zhi tang 仁智堂). The Hall has left and right rooms: the one on the left is called Secluded Pursuit (Yin qiu 隱求) for staying in seclusion; the one on the right is called Visitor’s House (Zhi su 止宿) for accommodating guests and friends. The exterior of the left forest continues to extend, and inside the right circle there is a natural dock. Therefore, after piling up rocks to make a gate, I named it the Stone Gate Dock (Shi men wu 石門塢). Making another room in the middle as a group residence for those staying for learning, I named it the Studio of Observation.
其中，以俟学者之群居，而取《学记》相观而善之义命之曰「观善之齋」。石门之西少南，又为屋以居道流，取道书真诰中语，命之曰「寒棲之館」。直觀善前山之顚为亭，回望大隱屏最正且盡，取杜子美詩語名以「晚對」。其東出山，背臨溪水，因故基為亭，取胡公語名以「鐵笛」，說具本詩注中。「寒栖」之外，乃植楥列樊以斷兩麓之口，掩以柴扉，而以武夛精舍之扁掲焉。经始於淳熙癸卯之春，其夏四月旣望堂成而始来居之，四方士友来者亦甚衆，莫不歎其佳胜，而恨它屋之未具，不可以久留也。釣磯、茶竈皆在大隱屏西。磯石上帄在溪北岸，竈在溪中流，巨石屹然可環坐八九人，四面皆深水，當中科臼自然如竈，可爨以瀹茗。凡溪水九曲，左右皆石壁，無側足之徑，唯南山之南有蹊焉，而精舍乃在溪北，以故凡出入乎此者，非獨艇不濟。總之為賦小詩十有二篇，以紀其實。若夫晦明昏旦之異候、風烟草木之殊態，以至於人物之相羊、猿鳥之吟嘯，and Admiration (Guan shan zhai 觀善齋) after the righteous mandate written in the Record of Learning (學記), “to mutually observe and admire.” To the west and a little south of the Stone Gate, I built another house for resident Daoists, and taking from the words of the Daoist text True Admonishments (真誥), I named it the House of Humble Perching (Han qi guan 寒棲館).

At the mountaintop facing the Studio of Observation and Admiration is a pavilion, which is the most suitable place for gazing at the Screen of Great Recluse. So taking from the words of Du Zimei [Du Fu]’s poem, I named it Evening Encounter (Wan dui 晚對). To its east a mountain soars and at its back is a stream. On the old foundation, I built a pavilion, and borrowing the words of Master Hu named it Iron Flute (Tie di 鐵笛) as explained in the commentary on the poem. Outside the House of Humble Perching, I set up a line of fence to separate the mouth of the two forests and closed it with a wooden gate on which I wrote the inscription “Wuyi Retreat.” I started the construction in the spring of the guimao year of the Chunxi reign (1183), and in the fourth summer month of that year the watch hall was complete and I began to dwell in it. Literati and friends who came from everywhere were numerous. There was none who did not praise its outstanding beauty, and they regretted other buildings were not complete because they could not stay for long. The Angling Rock (Diao ji 釣磯) and Tea Stove (Cha zao 茶竈) are all located to the west of the Screen of Great Recluse. The Rock is on the north bank of the stream, and the Stove in the middle of the stream. It is a huge towering rock and eight to nine people can sit on it. Its four sides are surrounded by deep water, and in its middle is an empty hole, naturally resembling a stove, which can be used for boiling tea. The stream winds nine times. To its left and right are rocky cliffs, without a path on which to place the foot. Only in the south side of the South Mountain is there a footpath. The Retreat, however, is in the north side of the stream. Therefore, all those who come in and out of the Retreat cannot cross the stream without the fishing boat. In short, I compose twelve little poems to record these details. Like the changing moments of darkness and brightness, dusk and dawn, the different appearances of winds and mists, plants and trees, down to the free wanderings of humans and things, the cry and howling of gibbons and birds, within a span of a day without one’s knowing ten thousand things transform without being exhausted. Among the literati who share similar interests as
則有一日之間，恍惚萬變而不可窮者。則好之士其尚有以發於予所欲言而不及者乎哉。

精舍
琴書四十年
幾作山中客
一日茅棟成
居然我泉石

The Retreat
With my qin and books for forty years,
Many times I have been the traveler of the mountain.
One day when the thatched hut is complete,
I will dwell among my springs and rocks.

仁智堂
我慙仁智心
偶自愛山水
蒼崖無古今
碧澗日千里

The Hall of Humaneness and Wisdom
I am ashamed by the heart of humaneness and wisdom
Which joins with the natural love of mountains and waters.
The green cliffs stay the same through the passing of time.
The green river flows a thousand li each day.

隱求齋
晨窓林影開
夜枕山泉響
隱去復何求
無言道心長

The Studio of Secluded Pursuit
The morning window opens to the shadow of forest.
The night pillow echoes the sound of mountains and springs.
Once gone into reclusion, why seek a return?
Without words, the heart of the Dao is profound.

止宿寮
故人肯相尋
共寄一茅孫
山水為留行
無勞具鷄黍

Visitor’s House
Old friends agree to seek each other,
And together they visit the thatched house.
Mountains and waters become a long journey.
Without labouring we have chicken and millet.

石門塢
朝開雲氣擁
暮掩薜蘿深
自笑晨門者
那知孔氏心

The Stone Gate Dock
As the morning breaks clouds and mists surround.
As the evening falls creeping plants penetrate deeper.
The laughing gatekeeper,
How would he know the mind of Confucius?
觀善齋
The Studio of Observation and Admiration
負笈何方來
Carrying a box of books, whence did you come
今朝此同席
And sit together here with me this morning?
日用無餘功
You work hard daily until no effort remains.
相看俱努力
When I see it, there is complete endeavour.

寒栖館
The House of Humble Perching
竹間彼何人
Who is he standing among the bamboo?
抱甕靡遺力
Carrying an urn in the arms is not a waste of one’s strength.
遙夜更不眠
A long night but not asleep,
焚香坐看壁
You burn the incense and sit and gaze at the wall.

晚對亭
The Pavilion of Evening Encounter
倚笻南山巔
Leaning on a staff I climb to the peak of the South Mountain
卻立有晚對
Where I have an immediate encounter with evening.
蒼峭矗寒空
The towering green cliff is cold and empty.
落日明影翠
The setting sun illuminates the green shadows.

鐵笛亭
Iron Flute Pavilion
山前舊有奪秀亭，故侍郎胡公明仲嘗與山之隐者劉君兼道游涉而賦詩焉。劉少豪勇游侶使氣，晚更晦迹，自放山水之間，善吹鐵笛，有穿雲裂石之聲，胡公詩有，“更煩横鐵笛，吹與衆仙聴”之句。亭既廢久，一日與客及道士數人尋其故址，適有笛聲發於林外，悲豎回響，巖石皆震。追感舊事，因復作亭以識其處，仍改今名。

There used to stand Dazzling Beauty Pavilion before the mountain. The Assistant Minister Master Hu Mingzhong 胡明仲 (Hu Yin 胡寅 1098-1156; Hu Anguo’s nephew) together with Wuyi’s recluse Liu Jiandao 劉兼道 often roamed about the mountain and wrote poems. Liu was rather brave and travelled with a gallant spirit. In the dark night, he would let loose himself amid the mountains and waters and play the iron flute which had the sound that could penetrate the clouds and split open the rocks. In Master Hu’s poem there is a phrase: “At night the disturbing sound of the long iron flute was played for all immortals to listen.” The pavilion was destroyed long ago. One day, together with visitors and a few Daoists, we searched for its ruins. At that time the sound of the flute was heard outside the forest. The sorrowful mood began to resound, and the rocks began to shake. Inspired by the past event, I built another pavilion where I think the pavilion used to stand, and changed its name to the current one.
| 何人轟鐵笛 | Who is rumbling the iron flute |
| 噴薄兩崖開 | Bursting open [the mountain] into two cliffs? |
| 千載留餘響 | Its echo lingers for a thousand generations, |
| 猶疑笙鶴來 | Making one wonder if the cranes of reed-pipe playing immortals have arrived. |

| 釣磯 | Angling Rock |
| 切成蒼石棱 | Cut into the edge of a green rock, |
| 倒影寒潭碧 | Your inverted reflection in the cold pond is green. |
| 永日靜垂竿 | The whole day quietly drooping the fishing rod, |
| 兹心竟誰識 | Who would know this heart? |

| 茶竈 | Tea Stove |
| 仙翁遺石竈 | An immortal left a stone stove |
| 宛在水中央 | Almost in the middle of the water. |
| 飲罷方舟去 | After finishing the drink, he departed on a double-boat. |
| 茶煙裊細香 | The smoke from the tea curls upwards in delicate fragrance. |

| 漁艇 | Fishing Boat |
| 出載長烟重 | I come out when the full stretch of mist is thick, |
| 歸裝片月輕 | And return home when the half moon shines gently. |
| 千巖猿鶴友 | The gibbons and cranes of a thousand peaks are my friends. |
| 憂絕棹歌聲 | The sound of the boat song greatly saddens me. |

The poem was greatly admired by Neo-Confucians, and many wrote matching poems in honour of Zhu Xi. Beginning in the Southern Song we see the Neo-Confucian poetic response to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat poem. The matching poems varied in their degree of resemblance. Some, like the twelve matching poems by Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127-1216), faithfully followed the structure—albeit not the rhyme scheme—of the original poem. Others, like Yuan Shu 袁樞 (1131-1205)’s nine poems on Wuyi Retreat, only partially adapted Zhu Xi’s twelve poems and showed more creativity by writing
poems longer than the original ones. More importantly, these matching poems presented Wuyi as a poetic jingjie—a “unique jing 異境,” as Xia Liangsheng 夏良勝 (cir. 1521) called it, which opened up in response to Zhu Xi, the great person.

All in all, the matching poems played a vital role in facilitating interactions among Neo-Confucians and in poetically forging the Neo-Confucian network, particularly highlighting the connection to Zhu Xi. The account of the Song Neo-Confucian Sun Yingshi 孫應時 (1154-1206) demonstrates the social function of the Wuyi Retreat matching poems. Sun, a Zhejiang native who studied with Lu Jiuyuan in his early years, later developed a great interest in Zhu Xi’s teachings. In his letter to a friend, he expressed his wish to move to Wuyi and seek learning from Zhu Xi, and how he often harboured the thought of “carrying his book boxes to Wuyi.” In 1183 Sun presented to Zhu Xi his matching poem to the Wuyi Retreat poem, and after receiving a positive response from the master, he was admitted as one of Zhu’s Wuyi Retreat disciples.

The story tells us of the importance of matching poems in the literati exchanges, including those of Neo-Confucians. The act of matching a poem by someone else was a sign of friendship or of the desire for friendship. The practice, which emerged as a part of poetic exchange among the Tang-Song literati, displayed an open acknowledgement of taking someone else’s poem as a model to be followed. On a similar note, the Neo-Confucian imitation of Zhu Xi’s poems represented the recognition of Zhu Xi as a poetic role-model, as well as the hope of establishing a relationship with him. What is significant in the case of matching Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat poem was that many of those who read and imitated the poem came after Zhu Xi’s time; that is to say, the matching of
the poem became for Neo-Confucians an important means of expressing their personal tie to the late master.

For many Neo-Confucians Zhu Xi’s poem became a channel to their first encounter with Wuyi Retreat. Before having the chance to visit the site, they became acquainted with it through the poem and other writings. Such poetically mediated experience was described by Neo-Confucians as wandering about (you 遊) in the Wuyi Retreat. The experience of poetic or aesthetic you is an important indication that Wuyi Retreat was regarded and experienced as a poetic—and not just geopolitical—territory. As a poetic territory, Wuyi Retreat represented a kind of mnemonic and ludic space, a space that could be recalled and visited, which was shared among Neo-Confucians. It also meant that Wuyi Retreat became a site of deeply personal experience, the “heart’s true jingjie 我心真境界” as the Southern Song Neo-Confucian Bao Hui 包恢 (1182-1268) called it. The poetic discourse of jingjie transformed Wuyi into an onto-phenomenological site, a spiritual home of Neo-Confucians.

The Neo-Confucian imitation of the Wuyi Retreat poem continued throughout the Yuan and Ming dynasties, but it was the other poem “the Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends” that gained greater popularity and was certainly more widely imitated.

武夷九曲櫂歌

In the mid-summer of the jiachen year of the Chunxi reign (1185), while leisurely dwelling in the Retreat I playfully composed ten poems on the boat song of Wuyi. I presented them to friends, and together we shared a laugh.

The Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends

On top of Mount Wuyi are immortals and gods, And at its foot a cold stream runs winding and clear.

武夷山上有仙靈

山下寒流曲曲清
欲識個中奇絕處
If you wish to know the rare and astonishing places
in its midst,

櫂歌閒聽兩三聲
Leisurely listen to two or three boat songs.

一曲
The First Bend
一曲溪邊上釣船
Boarding a fishing boat at the bank of the first bend,
幔亭峰影蘸晴川
The reflection of Curtain Pavilion Peak is dipped in the
cloudless river.
虹橋一斷無消息
There is no word from the disconnected rainbow bridge.
萬壑千巖鎖翠煙
Ten thousand ravines and thousand cliffs confine the
green mist.

二曲
The Second Bend
二曲亭亭玉女峰
The upright and graceful Jade Maiden Peak in the second
bend,
插花臨水為誰容
Wearing a flower and standing by the water, for whom did
you adorn yourself?
道人不復陽臺夢
The Daoist priest does not return to the
dream of the terrace,
興入前山翠幾重
And excitedly enters the mountain before him shrouded in
layers of green mist.

三曲
The Third Bend
三曲君看架壑船
In the third bend you will see the boats inserted into crevices.
不知停棹幾何年
No one knows how many years have passed since the rowing
ceased.
桑田海水今如許
In the swiftly changing world of today where a mulberry field
turns into the sea,
泡沫風燈敢自憐
What is the use of self-pity when life is like bubbling foams
and a lamp before the wind!

四曲
The Fourth Bend
四曲東西兩石巖
Both the east and west sides of the fourth bend are rocky
cliffs.
巖花垂露碧
The cliff flowers are dripping dews like green hairs.
金雞叫罷無人見
The Golden Rooster cried but no one has seen it.
月滿空山水滿潭
The moon fills the empty mountain, and the water
fills the pond.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>五曲</th>
<th>The Fifth Bend</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>五曲山高雲氣深</td>
<td>In the fifth bend, the mountain is tall, and the clouds are thick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>長時煙雨暗平林</td>
<td>The lingering mist and rain cast a shadow on the quiet forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>林間有客無人識</td>
<td>In the forest there is a guest whom no one knows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>數乃聲中萬古心</td>
<td>In the sound of the boat song, there is the heart of ten thousand ages.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>六曲</th>
<th>The Sixth Bend</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>六曲蒼屏遶碧灣</td>
<td>In the sixth bend, the Green Screen encircles the curve of emerald water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>莖茨終日掩柴關</td>
<td>The bramble gate of the thatched house is shut all day long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>客來倚棹巖花落</td>
<td>As the guest leans on the oar, the cliff flowers fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>猿鳥不驚春意閒</td>
<td>Gibbons and birds are not startled. The spring air is idle.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>七曲</th>
<th>The Seventh Bend</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>七曲移舟上碧灘</td>
<td>In the seventh bend, I drift the boat up the green beach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>隱屏仙掌更回看</td>
<td>As I look back I can see Recluse’s Screen Cliff and Immortal’s Palm Cliff once more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>卻憐昨夜峰頭雨</td>
<td>How lovely is last night’s rain over the mountain peak,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>添得飛泉幾道寒</td>
<td>Making the waterfall several times cooler!</td>
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<tr>
<th>八曲</th>
<th>The Eighth Bend</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>八曲風煙勢欲開</td>
<td>In the eighth bend, winds and mists clear up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鼓樓巖下水瀠洄</td>
<td>At the foot of Drum Tower Cliff, the water swirls around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>莫言此地無佳景</td>
<td>Don’t say there is no beautiful scenery in this place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自是遊人不上來</td>
<td>From here on ordinary travelers cannot advance.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>九曲</th>
<th>The Ninth Bend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>九曲將窮眼豁然</td>
<td>Almost reaching the ninth bend, the eyes suddenly open up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>桑麻雨露見平川</td>
<td>Through mulberry and hemp, rain and dew, emerges a peaceful river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>漁郎更覓桃源路</td>
<td>The fisherman once again seeks the road to Peach Blossom Spring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>除是人間別有天</td>
<td>Besides this there is another realm in the human world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The poem was Zhu Xi’s rendition of a boat song—a genre of folk song popular since the Southern Dynasties which became the source of inspiration for many poetic creations—and was frequently matched and creatively adapted by the Neo-Confucians of many generations. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to call it the signature poem of Neo-Confucians; it was the most popular poetic expression of Neo-Confucian Wuyi jingjie, particularly among those who followed the Cheng-Zhu learning. The reason for its popularity is not hard to understand. Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat underwent major transformations throughout history. Especially after the destruction by fire at the end of the Yuan, the initial architectural compound was lost, and the reconstructions that followed did not attempt to restore the original layout of the buildings. The loss of Wuyi Retreat explains the decrease in the number of Wuyi Retreat matching poems from the Ming on. In comparison to the frail wooden architecture which could not stand against the test of time, the natural features of Wuyi, particularly its Nine Bends, continued to remain; even after the destruction of Wuyi Retreat, Wuyi’s Nine Bends endured as a reminder of Zhu Xi’s presence in the mountain. Moreover, compared to the Wuyi Retreat poem, which contained personal account of specific sites within the architectural compound, the Nine Bends poem was easier to imitate and adapt because for the most part it contained the poetic description of the scenic beauty of each of the nine bends.

Beginning in the Southern Song, the poem began to be matched by Neo-Confucians and poets. For example, there is the Southern Song poet Fang Yue 方岳 (1199-1262)’s matching poem which also features matching rhymes. The title “Again matching Master Hui’s Boat Song 又和晦翁擢歌” indicates it was Fang’s second time matching Zhu Xi’s poem, even though the earlier work has not survived. We also see the
emergence of other poems with the title “the Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends.” Even though clear reference to Zhu Xi was not mentioned by their authors, in their format—each stanza devoted to the description of each bend—they reflect Zhu Xi’s influence.

The number of matching Nine Bends poems greatly increased in the Ming. The promotion of the Cheng-Zhu learning as the new state ideology resulted in the production of several generations of literati well-versed in Zhu Xi’s writings, including poetry. This new breed of literati developed a special love for Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem and showed an unprecedented zeal in its imitation. From Lu Mengzhao 陸孟昭 (jinshi 1451), Huang Zhongzhao 黃仲昭 (1435-1508), Cheng Ji 程蛙 (1469-1537), Zheng Shanfu 鄭善夫 (1485-1523), to Qiu Yunxiao 邱雲霄 (cir. 1544), the list of the Ming dynasty Nine Bends matching poems is extensive. In fact, the matching of the Nine Bends poem appears to have been a popular poetic play, even a poetic competition, among the literati. We are told of the Ming scholar-official Chen Changqing 沈長卿 (cir. 1620) who endeavoured to follow the example of Zhu Xi in his personal life. In his retirement, he composed a matching poem to Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem which made other scholars click their tongues in admiration. His matching poem unfortunately has not survived, but his account reveals that the Nine Bends matching poems, as much as they were prevalent, were also used as a measure of poetic competence, often compared against each other to assess who possessed greater poetic creativity.

Some even ventured to raise the creative bar higher by imaginatively reworking the original poem. These playful but serious imitations include Cai Zhe 蔡哲’s “Fisherman’s Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends 武夷九曲漁歌” and Cao Wenhui 曹文晦’s “Woodcutter’s Song of Nine Bends 九曲樵歌.” In the preface to the poem, Cao writes:
In the past Master Zhu [also known as Kaoting] composed the “Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends.” Since my youth I have loved the poem and often recited. Recently I climbed the Tongbai Mountain Range 桐柏嶺. The road was winding, and there were nine turns. So following the example of Zhu Xi, I composed the “Woodcutter’s Song of Tongbai Nine Bends.” Surely I do not dare to compare it to the one by the ancient worthy. If by any chance it causes you to knit your brows, please ignore it as silliness.  

Cao’s modest presentation of the poem reveals not only his intention to imitate the great master’s poem, but also his attempt to personalize the experience. Likewise, more and more literati began writing poems about Nine Bends jingjie other than that of Wuyi. Gao Qi’s “Yanyuan Nine Bends 剜原九曲” and Zheng Qian’s “Boat Song of Jiannan Nine Bends 建南九曲櫂歌” are all examples of creative adaptation which express the authors’ effort to localize and personalize the poetic experience of Nine Bends jingjie.  

The imitation of the Nine Bends poem continued into the Qing. Cha Shenxing, for instance, composed the “Boat Song of Jian Stream 建溪櫂歌” with the intention of having it sung by the boatman; we do not know, however, whether his artistic vision was carried out or not. We even have an example of poetic adaptation from the early twentieth-century. The “Boat Song of Qing Stream’s Nine Bends 青溪九曲櫂歌” published in 1934 features a collection of poetic lines written by Ming-Qing and Republican era scholars, arranged in the manner of the original poem by the Neo-Confucian master. Zhu Xi’s poem inspired the poetic imagination of the Chinese literati for many centuries, and that of the Korean literati as we shall see later on.

These various poetic responses throughout history presented Wuyi as a poetic jingjie set apart from the rest of the world and from mundane life. Echoing Zhu Xi’s somewhat Daoist rendition of the mountain, the writers of the matching poems also captured Wuyi as “the territory not belonging to humans 非人境,” “the territory of
Neo-Confucians also charted new poetic territories of Nine Bends through poetic identification and description, thus expanding the Neo-Confucian poetic domain. But as much as it was a literary phenomenon, the expansion of poetic territory also involved a personal inner transformation. As Zheng Yue 鄭岳 (1468-1539) noted Wuyi’s Nine Bends jingjie became for many the “forest and hill in one’s own bosom 胸中元自有林丘,” the poetic jingjie in one’s heart, and it was such poetic internalization of Wuyi jingjie that allowed for its long-lasting influence.

The poetic territorialization of Nine Bends jingjie also came hand in hand with geographical territorialization, which we discussed in the previous chapter. Perceiving the world through the poetic discourse of Wuyi Nine Bends, Neo-Confucians envisaged their place in the new reality opened up by Zhu Xi’s poetry and poetically occupied and took part in it by responding to it in words. The poetic action also instigated physical action and led to the physical transformation of the environment; what began as the occupation of poetic territory effectuated the occupation of physical territory. In this “dialectical movement between perception and action,” the body-subject responded to and engaged in the environment, both poetic and physical.  

Artistic Expressions of Wuyi Jingjie

The discussion of Wuyi as a poetic jingjie, however, will not be complete without taking into consideration the development of artistic representations of Wuyi. The inseparable relationship between poetry and painting in the development of Chinese
aesthetics has been studied by many scholars, and it certainly was also true for the formation and expansion of Wuyi’s poetic jingjie.

Early records of the paintings of Wuyi Mountains date back to the eleventh century. Writing in the Northern Song, the poet Li Fu expressed his experience of viewing a painting of Wuyi at a friend’s place. The painting, he described, lacked details but captured the mountain as a home of immortals. In the Southern Song we read that the eminent scholar official Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140), a Fujian native, borrowed and studied the painting of Wuyi before embarking on a trip to the mountain. On another occasion, Li received from his friend a painting of Wuyi for viewing, executed on a six-fu wide silk scroll. Zhu Xi also wrote a preface to the “Painting of Wuyi 武夷圖” in which he laid out the history and topography of the mountain. In his poem “Travelling in Wuyi’s Nine Bends on Boat 泛舟遊武夛九曲,” the Southern Song poet Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) remarked Wuyi was just like what he had seen in painting.

But overall the Song records of Wuyi paintings are scarce. It is from the Qing texts—thanks to the meticulous work of many documentists—that we find information about some of the Song dynasty Wuyi paintings. At least three paintings from the Song were still extant during the Qing: the Painting of Wuyi’s Nine Bends 武夷九曲圖 by Liu Songnian 劉松年 (cir. 1155-1218), the Painting of Wuyi Mountains 武夷山圖 by Ai Shu 艾淑 (cir. 12th c.), and the Painting of Wuyi 武夷圖 by Yan Wengui 燕文貴 (967-1044), all by established artists in the Song. We do not have the details about what these paintings actually looked like, except for the one by Yan Wengui, which was said to have displayed fine brushwork but also lack of strength. Luckily a copy of Yan Wengui’s
painting was made by the Qing artist Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), which has survived and is now housed in Beijing’s Palace Museum.\(^\text{39}\)

It was in the Yuan that a sudden increase in the production of Wuyi paintings occurred, and the clear connection between the production of Wuyi paintings and the expansion of Neo-Confucianism began to emerge—the connection we do not find so readily in the Song. The paintings of Wuyi were now seen as the visual portrayal of the traces of Zhu Xi\(^\text{40}\)—the poetic representations of the mountain permeated with Zhu Xi’s *dao qi* 道氣.\(^\text{41}\) The images of Wuyi also represented the vision of Neo-Confucian reclusion in Wuyi, and the growing popularity of Wuyi reclusion was accompanied by an increase in the demand for Wuyi paintings. The image of Wuyi’s mountains and waters, as the Yuan Neo-Confucian Tang Yuan 唐元 (1269-1345) noted in his poem “The Ink Painting of Wuyi Mountains 武夲山水墨圖,” portrayed a place filled with immortal Confucians, a perfect abode for Neo-Confucian hermits.\(^\text{42}\) The paintings were specially treasured by Neo-Confucians who were physically distanced from the mountain and who used the paintings to partake in an imagined Wuyi reclusion: Du Ben 杜本 (1276-1350) tells us how before finally settling in Wuyi he used to gaze at the painting of Wuyi and sing the boat song by Zhu Xi as a way to cultivate himself and participate in the larger Neo-Confucian communal living.\(^\text{43}\) All in all, Neo-Confucians recognized painting as an important medium for aiding the personal experience of Wuyi living: as Wang Feng 王逢 (1319-1388) stated “To immerse and swim in the truth of the sages, and to taste the *Dao*’s fatty meat, allow me to paint and enter the hermit’s home in the painting!”\(^\text{44}\)

The growing importance of Wuyi paintings in the Yuan was intimately related to the increasing Neo-Confucian reverence for Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems. The poems, in fact,
became a major source of artistic inspiration for many paintings of Wuyi. For example, we learn that the painting of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat was in circulation among Neo-Confucians, which most likely provided the visual illustration of the twelve sites mentioned in Zhu Xi’s poem.\(^{45}\) But it was the Nine Bends poem that provided a real impetus for the artistic expression of Wuyi. The poem was highly esteemed among the Yuan Neo-Confucians, and the calligraphy of the poem written by Zhu Xi himself was treasured as a precious item.\(^{46}\) Thanks to the poem, the image of singing and cruising down the Nine Bends Stream surfaced as an important new theme in the paintings of Wuyi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>借題武夷九曲圖</th>
<th>On the Painting of Wuyi’s Nine Bends</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>一曲溪邊一曲仙</td>
<td>By the stream’s first bend stands the immortal of the first bend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>櫂歌遺響有誰傳</td>
<td>Who will transmit the lingering echo of the boat song?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西風吹入無聲畫</td>
<td>The west wind enters the soundless painting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>來上江東子靜船</td>
<td>From the east of the river quietly comes a boat.(^{47})</td>
</tr>
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This poem by Wang Lansi 王蘭思 (cir. 14\(^{th}\) c.), which draws attention to the transmission of the boat song, and another poem on the Painting of Wuyi’s Orchid Valley Cliff 蘭谷圖 by Wang Yi 王沂 (cir. 14\(^{th}\) c.),

| 拂圖武夷忽在眼 | … Opening the painting, suddenly Wuyi is before my eyes. |
| 櫂歌激冽動長林 | The boat song powerfully moves through the deep forest. |
| … | …\(^{48}\) |

reflect the influence of Zhu Xi’s poem on the creation and appreciation of Wuyi paintings in the Yuan. A good example that illustrates the incorporation of boating theme is the “Painting of Boating in Wuyi 武夷放櫂圖” by the famous Yuan painter Fang Congyi 方從義 (1654-1712) which fortunately has lasted to this day [Plate 7].\(^{49}\) Another significant development we see in the Yuan is the production of the group of nine paintings of Wuyi,
each painting dedicated to each of the nine bends, an example being Chen Zhongren 陳仲仁 (14th century)’s “Nine Paintings of Wuyi’s Nine Bends 武夷九曲圖九.” This new arrangement, which became very popular in the succeeding periods, resembles Zhu Xi’s poetic arrangement. In locating the paintings of Wuyi, however, we have to look beyond the works whose titles reveal a clear reference to Wuyi. The poetic descriptions of the paintings tell us that many paintings of Wuyi were included among those whose titles lacked any mention of specific location, such as the “Painting of Mountains and Waters.” Among them were Shen Simin 沈思敏 (cir. 14th c.)’s “Painting of Mountains and Waters 山水圖” and Chen Zhiqing 陳直卿 (cir. 14th c.)’s “Painting of Cloudy Mountain 雲山圖,” both of which, according to the poems based on them, were clearly paintings of Wuyi.

Such unprecedented enthusiasm for Wuyi paintings has to be viewed in the context of the overall development of Neo-Confucianism in the Yuan. When we consider the popularity of Neo-Confucian reclusion in Wuyi and the transformation of Wuyi into the ideological centre of the state after the declaration of Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy, we realize the sudden increase in the demand for Wuyi paintings was an expected development. Together, poetry and painting rendered the poetic jingjie of Wuyi, the jingjie which was not found on earth but was “opened up or revealed from heaven 武夷九曲自天開.” It was this revelatory quality—the heart of the Chinese landscape poetry, art, and architecture—which lay at the base of the poetic and aesthetic experience of Wuyi jingjie. Such an experience of Wuyi as a poetic jingjie was also recorded by Bu Chen 步陳 (cir. 17th c.) who described his dream journey to Wuyi through a painting as a voyage into a “pure jing 清境,” located outside the material world.
In the Ming the popularity of Wuyi paintings reached its historic high, and the connection between the appreciation of the paintings and the veneration of Zhu Xi became more evident. In particular, we see the production of the “Painting of the Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends 武夷九曲棹歌圖” which was directly inspired by and functioned as the visual illustration to Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem. The most notable, and certainly the most extensive, example of this new development was Xu Yuanzuo 徐遠左 (cir. 1333-1395)’s publication Wuyi jiu qu zhao ge tu 武夷九曲棹歌圖 (The Paintings of the Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends) which featured images and poetic lines—written by eight poets—dedicated to each bend. The lines from Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem marked the beginning of the poetic description which were followed by the poetic lines of seven Song writers, Fang Zhuo 方斫 (1165-1172), Liu Yuangang 留元剛 (cir. 1215), Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140-1207), Ge Changgeng 葛長庚 (a.k.a Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾, b. 1194), Han Yuanji 趙元吉 (1118-1187), Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140), and Fu Yong 傅雍 (cir. 12 th c.). Xu Yuanzuo’s work was very influential and became the precursor to similar compilation efforts in the Qing. The book clearly demonstrates the Ming literati’s conscious effort to forge together the poetic discourse of Wuyi jingjie. By piecing together previously unrelated poetic materials under the title of Zhu Xi’s poem, and by skilfully weaving together textual and visual information, the author built together a somewhat systematized presentation of Zhu Xi’s and Wuyi’s poetic jingjie. Such discursive construction evinced not only the supremacy of Zhu Xi’s poetic vision—at least when the vision of Wuyi was concerned—but also the important marriage of poetry and painting in creating the poetic discourse.
The Ming accounts also reveal a heightened awareness of Wuyi paintings’ connection to Zhu Xi. For many literati, the viewing of Wuyi painting was an occasion to reflect on Zhu Xi and his teachings: Liu Ji (1311-1375), for example, remarked the viewing of a Wuyi painting inspired in him admiration for the mountain and reverence for Zhu Xi. The inseparable relationship between Zhu Xi and Wuyi painting was wonderfully expounded by Tang Wenfeng (cir. 1414) in his preface to Zhu Gongbo’s Painting of Wuyi.

Its every grass and every tree is illuminated by his light. Its every fountain and every rock is bathed in his fragrance. His stay, even the mountain clouds rejoiced over it. His departure, the gibbons and cranes were also saddened by it. It was a good fortune not for Zhu Xi but for the mountain. Master Zhu’s seventh descendent Zhu Gongbo lived at the foot of the mountain. He is now an official in Xin-an and left his hometown. After a long time of not seeing its drifting mist and dampened emerald cliffs, he took silk and painted the longing for his former residence. He asked for my opinion, so I wrote on its left corner: “Your painting is not about yearning for the mountain, but longing for your ancestor. Zhu Xi’s Dao and the mountain are equally enduring. Zhu Xi’s fame and the mountain live together. Looking at the mountain is just like keeping the ancestor in your heart. Therefore, you do not just look at the mountain but also think about your ancestor and his poetry.”

Tang put forth the painting’s dual purpose of bringing to light both Zhu Xi and Wuyi, and how it as a medium effectively established and bolstered the connection between the two. His linking of Wuyi painting with Zhu Xi’s poetry is also significant, as it reveals viewing of the painting fundamentally involved reflection on Zhu’s poetry as well. Overall, the development of Wuyi paintings in the Ming testifies to the important discursive formation, namely the convergence of Zhu Xi’s personal and poetic jingjie, the development closely related to and should be considered together with the imitation and adaptation of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poetry and the expansion of Wuyi jingjie beyond its borders.
The popularity of Wuyi paintings in the Ming was greatly aided by the unprecedented growth in market economy which brought about widespread commercialization of art. Wuyi paintings became an object of popular consumption, sold widely in the market together with other paintings of famous mountains. The images of Wuyi were adapted into different forms for more daily usage: the fan paintings of Wuyi, for instance, were in wide circulation. Wuyi even became a popular theme in rock collection, a prevalent pastime activity of many literati. The famous Ming rock enthusiast Mi Zhongzhao’s collection included a rock named “Little Wuyi,” a rock from Chouchi in Gansu province which resembled Wuyi and featured mountain peaks, ridges, caves, and gullies. Moreover, as was the case in the Yuan, the images of Wuyi were widely used in paintings with generic titles. The extensive pictorial encyclopedia projects in the Ming also helped further the dissemination of Wuyi images. The San cai tu hui (Illustrated Compendium of the Three Powers) and the Tu shu bian (Compilation of Images and Texts) both included woodblock prints of Wuyi, and the reproduced images travelled far and wide.

The Ming also saw a surge in the production of Wuyi gazetteers, designed to present classified information on Wuyi to their readers. As Wuyi arose as a number one destination in Neo-Confucian pilgrimages, the demand for travel literature quickly increased. Wuyi gazetteers were published for those planning a trip to the mountain, but also and perhaps mostly for the people who couldn’t travel there in person. The publications provided them with detailed information about the mountain, including its historical background, illustrations of various sites, and poetic and prosaic accounts. At least four Wuyi gazetteers published in the Ming have been identified: the Wuyi shan zhi
武夷山志 (The Record of Wuyi Mountain) by Qiu Yunxiao 邱雲霄 (cir. 1544), and the Wuyi shan zhi by Jiang Tenghuan 江騰鯤 (cir. 1585), the Wuyi zhi lüe 武夷志略 (The Summary Record of Wuyi Mountain) by Xu Biaoran 徐表然 (cir. 1619), and the Wuyi shan zhi by Zhong Zhongru 衷仲孺 (cir. 1643). Of the four, only the works of Xu Biaoran and Zhong Zhongru have survived, and both showcase the illustrations of each bend, and the poems that go with them. The images include labels of various sites, as we see in the illustration of the third bend in the Wuyi zhi lüe. [Plate 8] These publications made a huge contribution in visually framing and representing Wuyi jingjie, a clear development from the earlier work by Xu Yuanzuo.

Yet as much as the images of Wuyi became an indispensable part of the Ming literati’s life, their extensive commercialization and mass-production began to raise concerns among some literati. “How can carved images imitate the Screen Cliff of Wuyi?” asserted Peng Sunyi 彭孫貞 (1615-1673). 63 The prints were deemed inadequate when it came to transmitting the true vision and spirit of Wuyi. In reaction to the consumptive attitude, the literati like Tang Wenfeng began to call for a “proper” appreciation of Wuyi paintings—that it should not be limited to an aesthetic appreciation of the beautiful scenery but should inspire active engagement with and remembrance of Zhu Xi. On the whole, the poetic images of Wuyi infiltrated Ming society through and through and became a vital visual identity of the literati class, serving as an important ligament in the socio-cultural body by channelling and maintaining social interactions among literati.64

The developments we saw in the Ming were continued and furthered in the succeeding Qing dynasty. The Yu ding li dai ti hua shi lei 御定歷代題畫詩類 (The
Imperial Compendium of Poems on Paintings through History) added on Xu Yuanzuo’s list of poems in the _Wuyi jiu qu zhao ge tu_ the poetic lines by seven Yuan and Ming writers. An anonymous publication of the collection of Wuyi poetry, _Wuyi shi ji_ 武夷詩集 (The Collection of Wuyi Poetry), including numerous matching poems throughout history, has also been located. The publication of Wuyi gazetteers also continued. At least four new ones came forth in the Qing: the _Wuyi zhi_ 武夷志 (The Record of Wuyi) by Li Yingqiao 李應橋 (cir. 1645), the _Wuyi tu zhi_ 武夷圖志 (The Record of Wuyi Paintings) by Hai Jing 海靖 (cir. 1645), the _Wuyi jiu qu zhi_ 武夷九曲志 (The Record of Wuyi’s Nine Bends) by Wang Fuli 王復禮 (cir. 1718), and the _Wuyi shan zhi_ 武夷山志 (The Record of Wuyi Mountain) by Dong Tiangong 董天工 (cir. 1703-1771). Dong Tiangong’s publication, in particular, is recognized as the most extensive endeavour in the literature of its kind. Drawing widely from previous writings, it totals in twenty-four volumes, containing numerous images and texts of great historical significance. Besides these examples, the state-sponsored publications also joined in the collection and publicization of information on Wuyi. The Qing emperors’ publication zeal which led to massive imperial compilation projects is reflected in the imperial compendia of information on local geography, including detailed knowledge of the Wuyi Mountains. [Plates 9-10] The fervour towards Wuyi paintings we saw in the Ming subsided a bit in the Qing, but the production and exchange of Wuyi paintings continued among the Qing literati. More importantly, the poetic discourse of Wuyi poetry and paintings persisted. The experience of Wuyi’s poetic _jingjie_ remained a territorial one: it was compared to a
“dream journey” or, more fittingly, a “spiritual journey (wo you 卧遊)” into the poetic territory of Wuyi and of Zhu Xi.⁶⁹

Wuyi Jingjie as Intersubjective Poetic Discourse

The development of Neo-Confucian Wuyi poetry and art brings to light the construction of the poetic discourse of Wuyi jingjie. Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems and the various Neo-Confucian poetic responses to them were not only works of poetry but also poetic discourse—all poetry is essentially “poetic discourse.”⁷⁰ As a poetic discourse, Wuyi poetic jingjie influenced the constitution of subjectivity. The experience of Wuyi poetic jingjie brought the Neo-Confucian literati into Zhu Xi’s poetic territory, and there finding a home for themselves, they transformed it into their own personal poetic territory. The entry into the poetic jingjie of Wuyi, in other words, changed the way the literati envisioned themselves and their world; it affected the formation of their identity and subjectivity. But as much as it was intimately personal, the poetic territorialization of Wuyi jingjie was also a profoundly communal phenomenon. Wuyi as a poetic territory became the basis of “mass subjectivity”⁷¹ which permeated all domains of social life, creating both closely personal and broadly communal experience.

It is in light of this dynamic interplay between subjectivity and communality that we come to the understanding of the intersubjective quality of the poetic discourse of Wuyi jingjie, which not only promoted the creation of individual poetic territory, but also the sharing of it. Wuyi as a poetic territory gathered people and forged social dynamics that often transcended temporal and spatial boundaries, creating bonds between the Neo-Confucians of past and present generations. The playful reinterpretations and reworkings
of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems illustrate how Wuyi jingjie as an intersubjective poetic discourse helped relate lived experiences of Zhu Xi and later Neo-Confucians. Such sharing of poetic discourse brings to the fore the social dimension of poetry and art and demonstrates that Wuyi poems and paintings were not only “representations of interaction” but also “occasion for interaction.”

The incremental growth of the poetic discourse of Wuyi jingjie over time, involving the participation of many, suggests that the poetic territorialization of Wuyi jingjie was fundamentally an intersubjective process, the outcome of which was the formation of Neo-Confucian community through the sharing of collective poetic sentiment. In this we see the simultaneous production and articulation of Neo-Confucian subjectivity and ideology, woven together to create the larger fabric of Neo-Confucian discourse.

[Plate 8] Illustration of Third Bend in the 《武夷志略》

The second line is a reference to a story in the Zhuangzi about Zigong’s conversation with an old farmer who preferred to water his field with the water he drew from the well and carried in an urn than using a machine which can do the same job more easily and effectively. See Watson (1971), 134.

The second line can also be translated as: As the evening falls, the hermit’s abode becomes deep and serene. *Bi luo* 萍蘆 can be translated in both ways. The last line is a reference to Analects 14:40. “Zilu stopped for the night at Stone Gate. The gatekeeper said, Where are you from? Zilu said, From the household of Confucius. The gatekeeper said, The one who knows there is nothing that can be done but keeps on trying?” Translation from Burton Watson, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 102.

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He Qiaoxin’s record indicates that the Ming literatus Lu Mengzhao composed a poem following the rhymes of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends poem. See [SKQS] He Qiaoxin 何喬新 (1427-1502), Jiao qiu wen jī 楫舟文集 (The Collected Works of Jiaoqiu), 13.24a-25b jin xi xiao ye ji 錦溪小墅記. Also see Huang Zhongzhao, Weixuan wen ji, 10.14a-15a you Wuyi jiujia jian yong Wengong xiansheng yun fù zhao ge shi shou 遊武夷九曲借用文公先生謳悼歌十首. Cao Xuequan, Shi câng lǐ dài shì xuàn, 477.14b-15a he Wengong jiu qu zhao ge 和文公九曲悼歌 by Cheng Ji 程鈺 (1469-1537). Zheng Shanfu, Shào gu jū, 8.6b-7b Wuyi qu ci Hui weng ge shi shou 武夷曲次和文公悼歌十首. [SKQS] Qiu Yuxiao 邱雲霄 (cir. 1544), Zhi shan jì 止山集 (The Collected Works of Zhishan), 2.24a-6b he zhao ge shi shou 和謳歌十首.

[SKQS] Zhu Gui 朱珪 (cir. 1400s), Ming ji lu 名蹟錄 (The Records of Famous Achievements), 5.6-8a mei xi shuo 梅溪說.

Zhang Yuzhang, Yu xuan Song Jìn Yuán Ming si chao shì, yu xuan song shi (御選明詩 (The Imperial Collection of Ming Poetry), 5.6-8a Wuyi jiu qu zhao ge shi shou 九曲悼歌十首 by Cao Wenhui 曹文晦 (Ming dynasty, 1368-1644). Ji Cengyun and Shen Yiji, Zhejiang zhi tāng shǐ ji (The Book of the Liang Brook), 2.24a-6b jiu qu qiao ge shi shou 九曲棹歌十首 by Cai Zhe 蔡哲 (cir. 1338).

Original Text: 責考亭朱子作武夷九曲棹歌, 少小愛之誦甚習. 余曾憐樸讓路遊亦有九折, 因仿之賦樸伯九曲船歌. 固不敢較先賢, 萬一效颦胡為其飾也.

Gao Qi, Da quan ji, 5.16a-17b yanyuan jiu qu 武夛九曲. Zheng Qian, Chu an lei gao, 2.23b-25b Jiannan ji qu zhao ge 建南九曲棹歌.

Cha Shenxing, Ying ye tang shì jì, 44.9b-11a Jian xi zhao ge ci 茅亭記 (Qing Emperor Kangxi, 1711-1799) and Jiang Pu 賈朴 (1697-1757). The book is in the collection of Beijing’s National Library.

From Huang Zhongzhao’s matching poem. See note 21.

Zhu Cunli, Zhao shi tie wàng shàn hù 11.67a.

[SKQS] Zheng Yue 鄭岳 (1468-1539), Shanzhai wen jī 山齋文集 (The Collected Writings of Shanzhai), 6.14a-b jing Wuyi zu yu bu ji you huai zui he ji zhuo 武夷阻雨不及遊憐然有懷遊和作.


Li Fu, Yu shui ji, 5.20b-21a Yu Qiao Shuyan tong pan 與橋叔彥通判.

[SKQS] Li Gang 李鋼 (1083-1140), Liang xi ji lǐ shēng (The Collected Works from the Liang Brook), 6.7b Chong-an zai xian shi Wuyi shan tu yu ji 承安在宣示武夷山圖記.

Ibid., 13.16a Chong-an ling Zhu Miao gong dao song shi Wuyi tu yi cheng jiu ju 崇安令朱道公遙示武夷圖因成絶句.

Zhu Xi, Hui-an ji, 67.44b-45b Wuyi tu xu 武夷圖序.

Li E, Song shi ji shi, 45.20a-b Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) fan zhou you Wuyi jiu qu 泛舟遊武夷九曲.

See [SKQS] Aixinjueluo Hongli 歡新覺羅弘曆 (Qing Emperor Gaozong, 1711-1799) and Jiang Pu 賈朴 (1708-1761), Yu zhí lì shàn qùng qu ding ben 御制樂善堂全集本 (The Imperial Collection of Leshan Hall), 21.1a ti Liu Songnian Wuyi jiu qu tu yi wen zhi Cai xiansheng 崇安變年武夷九曲圖聲聞之蔡先生. See [SKQS] Zhang Zhao 張照 (1691-1745) and Liang Shizheng 梁詩正 (1697-1763), Shi qu bāo ji 史冊寶笈 (The Treasured Book of Stone Dyke), 34.6b. See [SKQS] Sun Yueban 孫岳頤 (1639-1708), Yu dîng pî wên zhài shu huă pú 御定佩文齋書賞附 (The Imperial Edition of the Peiwenzhai Collection of Calligraphy and Painting), 99.9b-10a.

After evaluating the work, the Qing connoisseur Sun Chengge concluded if the artist focuses too much on detail, the work will be deficient in the literati’s fengyun 風雲, or “airy resonance.” [SKQS] Sun Chengge 孫承禎 (1592-1676), Geng zì xiăo xiă ji 唐子 lucr記 (Summer Reflections in the Year of Gengzi), 8.4a-b Yan Wengui shanshui juan 燕貴山水卷.
The understanding that an excellent view or site is revealed from heaven is a common one in Chinese aesthetics. For instance, we recall Xu Youren’s painting, "武夛壘圖卷" (cir. 1339), which records the same content but identifies the author as Xu Dazuo (c. 1333-1352), Yuan wen lei (The Classified Writings of Yuan), 53.81a Fang Fanghu Wuyi (The Complete Investigation of Painting Matters), 7.28a Chen Zhongren 陳仲仁 (14th c.). Also see [SKQS] Bian Yongyu, Shi gu tang shu hua hui kao 式古堂書甽彙考 (The Collection of Calligraphy and Paintings in the Hall of Imitating the Ancients), 53.81a Fang Fanghu Wuyi zhaoguo tu shi bing sheng chang guan (1645-1712)’s painting is entitled “Fang Yan Wengui Wuyi die zhan tu juan 武夷文貴武夷雲山圖.” See Xu Bangda 徐邦達, “Lin Yan Wengui Wuyi diezhang tu juan 临安文貴武夷雲山圖,” Gugong bowuyuan yuankan 故宫博物院院刊 4 (1995): 44. Also see Kang Sin-ae (2007): 10.

According to Shen Menglin’s record, Shen Simin’s painting depicted the Nine Bends of Wuyi. See [SKQS] Shen Menglin 沈夢麟 (cir. 1339), Hua xi ji 花谿集 (The Collected Works from the Flower Valley), 2.23b-24a Shen Simin shanshui tu shi 詩僧山水圖, Liu Guan’s poem on Chen Zhiqing’s painting also reveals it was a painting of Wuyi’s Nine Bends. See [SKQS] Liu Guan 柳貫 (1270-1342), Liu Daizhi wen ji 柳體制文集 (The Collected Writings of Liu Daizhi), 6.14b-15a ti Chen Zhiquing yu shang tu 領陳直卿雲山圖。Shen Menglin, Hua xi ji, 3.53b-56a jiang shan sheng lan Chen Canyi suo fu 江山勝覽陳參議索賦. The understanding that an excellent view or site is revealed from heaven is a common one in Chinese aesthetics. For instance, we recall the Ming garden architect Ji Cheng’s famous saying in the Yuan ye: “even though it is made by men, a garden is revealed from heaven.” See chapter I.3, note 53.


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Peng Sunyi’s account records the boys in the market selling an armful of paintings of famous mountain, including those of Wuyi. See [SBCK] Peng Sunyi 彭孫贻 (1615-1673), Ming zhai ji 茅斋集 (The Collected Works of Mingzhai), juan 23, yu Qian Tangshi Qinggong guan shi shang Wuyi tu juan 與錢塘施清供觀市上武夷圖卷.

Xu Tong’s poem on the small landscape painting on Mr. Xing’s fan shows it was a painting of Wuyi. See [SKQS] Xu Tong 徐儼 (cir. 1580-1637), Man ting ji 番亭記 (The Collected Works from the Screen Pavilion), 14.26a ti Xing gong shan mian xiao jing ji huai Wei Qin 題興公扇面小幅寄懷惟秦. The Shi qu bao ji also records the Ming publication of fan paintings in which was included Zhao Zuo 趙左 (1573-1644)'s painting of Wuyi’s Nine Bends 武夷九曲圖. See Zhang Zhao and Liang Shizheng, Shi qu bao ji, 4.18b-20a Ming ren hua shan si ce ce ping yu tu 茅山扇四冊 世俗圖 suggests it was a painting of Wuyi. See [SKQS] Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634-1711), Xiang zu bi ji 香祖筆記 (The Notes of Early Flowers), 3.22a-b. Wang quotes an anecdote from Chen Kan 陳巖 (b. 1586)’s Qi shi ji 奇石記 (The Record of Rare Rocks). Both Chen Kan and Mi Zhongzhao 米仲詵 (1570-1628) were renowned Ming rock collectors.

Zhang Yining’s poem on a shanshui painting suggests it was a painting of Wuyi. See [SKQS] Zhang Yining 張以寧 (1301-1377), Cui ping ji 翠屏集 (The Collected Works from the Emerald Screen), 2.7b ti shanshui tu 題山水圖. Wuyi paintings also had more descriptive titles. The “Painting of Quiet Forest in the Misty Rain 平林烟雨圖,” for example, was a painting of Wuyi landscape—the title inspired by Zhu Xi’s poetic description of Wuyi’s fifth bend. That Zhu Xi’s poetic lines served as an artistic inspiration is significant. See [SKQS] Lin Bi 林弼 (cir. 1360), Lin Dongzhou ji 林登州集 (The Collected Works of Lin Dengzhou), 23.6b-7a shu ping lin yan yu tu 書平林煙雨圖.


See note 58.

The paintings of Wuyi were exchanged as gifts among the Ming literati, and the bound of exchange was not limited to the Neo-Confucian circle only. The renowned Ming dynasty Buddhist Master Liang Lianchi (Lotus Pond)’s account shows that he received a painting of Wuyi’s Nine Bends as a gift when he was ill. He remarked that the viewing of the painting gave him a chance to think about the ancients and made him joyful. See Lianchi da shi 蕭子和 蒲池大師 (1535-1615), Zhu chuang sui bi 竹窗隨筆 (Jottings by the Bamboo Window) (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2005), 35-36.

Chen Bangyan 陳邦彥 (1678-1752), Yu ding li dai ti hua shi lei 御定歷代題畫詩類 (The Imperial Compendium of Poems on Paintings through History), 28.14a-17b. Added to the list were Yuan dynasty’s Zhao Youshi 趙友士, Ye Xijian 葉西澗, Xiao Zhihe 蕭子和, and Ming dynasty’s Zhou Bin 周彬. Wang Shizhen 王士禎, Li Duo 李鐸, and Dong Qichang 丁其昌 (1555-1636).

Anon. (Qing dynasty), Wuyi shi ji 武夷詩集 (The Collection of Wuyi Poetry). The book is in the collection of Beijing’s National Library, item A01825.

Fang yu hui bian 方興彙編, shan chuan dian 山川典, Wuyi shu bian 武夷書傳 181.197.1.

Cha Shexing’s account shows us how the paintings of Wuyi were presented and viewed in the literati’s gathering. See Cha Shexing, Jing ye tang shi ji, 40.15b-16a Pingyang taishou Kong Yizhong liu shi shou shi 平陽太守孔義忠六十壽詩. Wuyi paintings also continued to be produced in the Qing. See [SBCK] Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1731-1815), Xibao xuan shi ji 憲抱軒詩集 (The Poetry Collection from the Xibao Studio), juan 10 ti hua 詩畫 (畫谷高廬寺閣...).
Bu Chen described the viewing of Wuyi painting as a dream journey. See note 54. Writing a poem on the painting of Wuyi’s Nine Bends was spoken of as an experience of wo you which brings one to the poetic landscape and to the former times. See Aixinjueluo Hongli and Jiang Pu, Yu zhi le shan tang quan ji ding ben, 21.1a ti Liu Songnian Wuyi jiu qu tu yu wen zhi Cai xiansheng. See Antony Easthope, Poetry as Discourse (London: Methuen, 1983), 19.

Maffesoli introduced the concept in his discussion of “imaginal world,” which he describes as the “cause and effect of “mass subjectivity.” Here it is used to highlight the territorial unfolding of culture. See Maffesoli (1996), xvi.


III.1.c The Philosophical Discourse

The philosophical implications of Wuyi ājingjie ā have already been touched upon in our discussion of the geopolitical and poetic discourses. In particular, we have looked at the instrumental role of Wuyi ājingjie ā in the construction of the Neo-Confucian understanding of daotong, which outlined the philosophical lineage of Neo-Confucian thought. We have also examined how the poetic experience of Wuyi ājingjie ā made possible deeply personal encounter with Zhu Xi and his teachings. Such poetic experience became an essential part of Neo-Confucian learning, particularly in the conception and practice of Neo-Confucian cultivation of self; it was believed that the personal poetic encounter with the sages and great teachers would lead to the transformation of one’s self. These discursive developments demonstrate the inseparability of geopolitical and philosophical construction, and of poetic and philosophical reflection.

The Neo-Confucian philosophical exploration of Wuyi ājingjie ā began in the Southern Song. As already discussed, the features of Wuyi Retreat became the subject of philosophical contemplation: for instance, the reflection on the combined virtue of humaneness and wisdom was inspired by the visit to the Hall of Humaneness and Wisdom.¹ But Neo-Confucians also meditated on the natural features of Wuyi ājingjie ā or more specifically on the features of Wuyi ājingjie ā captured and described in Zhu Xi’s poem “The Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends.” The philosophical reflection on the poetic ājingjie ā of Wuyi was of great import in the overall development of the Cheng-Zhu thought, especially concerning the debate over the role of poetry in sage learning.
Poetry was an indispensable component of Neo-Confucian philosophical discussion. Among the early Neo-Confucian thinkers, Shao Yong stood out for his fondness of using poetry to communicate philosophical messages. Even though not all of Shao’s poems contain overtly philosophical content, he often made use of poetic forms to deliver and expound his highly complex theory of forms and numbers; for instance, in “A Poem on Observation of Things 観物吟,” Shao presents a synopsis of his cosmological view, outlining the process through which all things came into being.\(^2\) But perhaps his most significant contribution with regards to the Neo-Confucian discussion of poetry would be his declaration that poetry is not an end in itself. Shao repeatedly asserted that his poetry did not stem from his love of poetry. “It is not that Yao-fu [Shao Yong] loves to sing poems,” but “there is poetry when Yao-fu fully realizes his nature”—Shao writes in his “Poems of Identical Beginning and Ending Lines 首尾吟.”\(^3\) In stating thus, Shao clearly distinguished poetry as a natural outcome and extension of one’s philosophical enlightenment and moral cultivation from poetry inspired by “mere” love of literature.

Similar view was echoed by the Huxiang School of Neo-Confucianism, particularly by Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133-1180) who made a distinction between “scholar’s poetry 學者之詩” and “poet’s poetry 詩人之詩,” the former identified as having limitless flavour which can be discovered through prolonged immersive reading (han yong 涵泳).\(^4\) When explicating the relationship between wen 文 and dao 道, wen’s didactic function and the inseparable relationship between personal moral cultivation and literary competence were emphasized.\(^5\)

Zhu Xi, who was in close contact with the members of the Huxiang School, suggested a more organic interpretation of wen-dao relation, comparing dao to the “root
and trunk” and wen to the “branches and leaves,” and in so doing stressing dao’s supremacy. He was critical of the popular view represented by Su Shi that proposed there was an inherent mutually affecting connection between wen and dao (wen yi guan dao 文以貫道), and was not in full agreement with Zhou Dunyi’s idea which elucidated wen as the vehicle of dao (wen yi zai dao 文以載道). As his tree metaphor suggests, for Zhu there was a clear difference in hierarchy in their relation; wen-dao relation was not a simple reciprocal or form-content association, but a relation of relative importance in which dao reigned and wen depended. Such insight was more prominently expressed when the study of poetry was concerned. As Fuller showed us, Zhu Xi treated poetry “not as a primary mode of response to events but as merely what is left over, … shift[ing] its place from the root to the branch.” But at the same time in his groundbreaking reinterpretation of the Book of Songs (Shijing 詩經), Zhu recognized the uniqueness of poetic text, that the writing and reading of it involved “feelings and emotions,” which was not the case for other Classics. Pointing out the importance of historically sensitive contextual interpretation of poetry, he argued the proper way of reading poetry must take into account its musical quality; chanting, which involved musical articulation of poetry, therefore, was the correct manner of reading and appreciating poetry, the way the sages intended. As such, the goal of poetic reading did not lie in critical scrutinization of text but in the grasping of overall meaning (da yi 大意). Of particular relevance to our territorial discussion of poetic discourse is Zhu’s comparison of poetic text to a “city” and the chanting process to a “journey” in the city.

It is like a person entering a city. He must roam about the blocks and streets, and see the houses and pavilions, carriages, horses and people one by one. But the people of today only gaze at the city from outside.
The territorial implication of poetic experience was made clear, underscoring the importance of direct personal engagement with poetic text, one that is comparable to leisurely movement through space.

But while Zhu Xi acknowledged the distinctive nature of poetic text and, therefore, the need for special literary and aesthetic mode of appreciation, poetry continued to be used by many Neo-Confucians as a medium for communicating philosophical ideas, including Zhu Xi himself. Numerous poems were written with clear didactic intention and were valued precisely for their philosophical content and less for their poetic creativity; indeed, one can characterize them as philosophical writing in poetic form. The emphasis on instructive function, however, did not undermine the expressive and descriptive quality of poetry. As we have already seen in several examples, poems conveying personal sentiments were written by Neo-Confucians, surely in much greater number than instructive poems, largely because poetry had long served as a principal mode of personal expression and social interaction among the literati.

For the sake of methodical evaluation and study of Neo-Confucian poetry, the poetic works of Neo-Confucian thinkers have often been categorized into “philosophical poems 哲理詩” and “non-philosophical poems 非哲理詩,” the former group appreciated for its didactic content and the latter for its aesthetic quality. Such division is most manifest in the modern scholarship on the subject where the chasm between the philosophical and non-philosophical is accentuated, and more favourable attention on the philosophical poems is demonstrated.11

A closer look at the Neo-Confucian poetic development, however, indicates that the situation was not so obviously bifurcated. Neo-Confucians themselves were certainly
aware of the philosophical tendency in their poetic creation and did attempt to set apart the so-called “philosophical poems” from the rest of the poetic works by producing extensive commentaries on them and regarding them to be an inextricable part of the canonical body. But the actual determination of what qualifies as philosophical or non-philosophical poem was a much more complex issue which involved rigorous hermeneutic debate. Comprehending and expounding the subtle relationship between philosophy and poetry was a serious philosophical and literary problem as it concerned not only the interpretation of Neo-Confucian poetry but also the question of meaning itself—how meanings are produced, how far one should dig to get to them, and the role of author’s intention in the meaning-producing and meaning-seeking process. At the centre of this hermeneutic debate, we find the philosophical discourse of Wuyi jingjie.

The Philosophical Construction of Wuyi Jingjie

When tracing the Neo-Confucian responses to Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem, we notice that the attitude towards and understanding of the poem underwent several major transformations. As examined earlier, already in the Southern Song the poem enjoyed great popularity and was widely matched and imitated by Neo-Confucians. Zhu Xi’s poem contained scenic description and open reference to Wuyi’s Daoist heritage. In his other writings, Zhu also explicitly discussed Wuyi’s connection to the legend of Lord Wuyi, even sometimes speaking of the immortal in reverential terms. The Southern Song responses to the Nine Bends poem echoed these Daoist references, and if the connection to Neo-Confucian philosophy was indicated, it was expressed only subtly as we see in Fang Yue’s matching poem. All in all, the Southern Song Neo-Confucians did
not consider the Nine Bends poem as a “philosophical” work nor as a representative work of Neo-Confucian poetry. The list of notable Neo-Confucian poetic works in the Xing li qun shu ju jie 性理群書句解 (Notes and Explanations on the Books on Nature and Principle), an important Southern Song Neo-Confucian compilation, does not include Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem. All the poetic entries in the Xing li qun shu ju jie were accompanied with detailed line-by-line commentary, demonstrating that the systematic study of Neo-Confucian poetry was well under way in the Southern Song.

Without doubt the most venerated and studied of all Neo-Confucian poems was Zhu Xi’s “Feelings inspired while living in the study (Zhai ju gan xing 齋居感興).” Perhaps next to the poems in the Book of Songs, it might be the most commented work of poetry in the Confucian literary history, for which numerous commentaries and matching poems were written throughout history. In this ambitious work of twenty long poems, Zhu Xi laid out the foundation of his philosophy—covering the origin of things, the rise of civilization, the reign of the sage-kings, the origin of morality and nature, and the emergence of Confucian learning. In fact, Zhu himself made use of the poem in his teaching, distributing it among students and encouraging them to comment on it and openly criticize it. The wide production of commentaries, therefore, was to be expected.

Already in the Southern Song the poem was in circulation as an independent volume, distinguished from the rest of Zhu Xi’s poetic works. It was greatly admired by the followers of Neo-Confucian learning, quoted widely as an important reference text, copied, studied, and matched by students. The poem became an indispensable part of Neo-Confucian education: as Hu Ciyan 胡次焱 (jinshi 1268) remarked the poem was “like the covering of cotton and silk, and the flavour of grains—something that cannot be
without even for a day for nourishing the hungry and cold student.” We also see the beginning of the commentary practice in the Song. Besides the annotations provided in the Xing li qun shu ju jie, single-volume commentaries emerged, including Cai Mo 蔡模 (1188-1246)’s Gan xing shi zhu 感興詩註 (Commentary on the Inspired Poem), He Ji 何基 (1188-1268)’s Gan xing shi jie 感興詩解 (Explanation of the Inspired Poem), and Chen Ji 陳紀 (jinshi 1187)’s Zhuzi Gan xing shi kao ding 朱子感興詩考訂 (Study of Master Zhu’s Inspired Poem). Cai Mo’s work, in particular, as the earliest extant work of its kind became a great influence for later interpretations.

It was in the Yuan that the commentary writing on Zhu Xi’s poetry really gained its momentum. Extensive commentaries on Zhu Xi’s “Inspired” poem were produced, primary examples including Hu Bingwen 胡炳文 (1250-1333)’s Wengong gan xing shi tong 文公感興詩通 (Comprehensive Study of Wengong’s Inspired Poem), Cheng Shideng 程時登 (1249-1329)’s Gan xing shi jiang yi 感興詩講義 (Explanation of the Inspired Poem), and Liu Lü 劉履 (cir. 1379)’s commentary in the Feng ya yi 風雅翼 (Assistance to Ballads and Hymns). Of them Hu Bingwen’s work, which quotes from a wide range of previous studies on the poem, clearly demonstrates the complexity of scholarship involving the study of Zhu Xi’s poetry.

The commentary zeal we see in the Yuan was a part of a larger movement—the large-scale canonization of Zhu Xi’s works. As the Cheng-Zhu learning rapidly evolved into a mainstream ideology, the construction of the unified and systematic body of written work accompanied by commentary became an imperative task. The study of Zhu Xi’s poetry became an essential component in the formation of the canonical body and
the creation of orthodoxy. As Hu Bingwen indicates in the preface to his commentary, Zhu Xi’s “Inspired” poem was believed to have the power to “illuminate the Transmission of the Way (daotong), denounce heterodoxy, correct the heart-mind of people, and abolish unorthodox teachings. In the six-hundred-and-thirty characters are found the principle of heaven and earth and myriad things, the heart-mind of the sages and worthies and antiquity, and the transformation of myriad affairs both ancient and present.”

It was precisely in this historical context that Yuan Neo-Confucians revisited the Nine Bends poem. Calling into question the previous understanding, the reinterpretation of the poem began based on the new assumption that all written works of Zhu Xi embodied Neo-Confucian message and hence were markedly distinct from simple literature. As a result, the poem, which was earlier deemed as containing no particular philosophical connotation, was now seen to convey philosophical implications; the task of the interpreter was now to decipher the hitherto unidentified meanings and to prove that the poem indeed had an instructive purpose and significance.

This interpretive shift is most visibly shown in Chen Pu’s commentary on the Nine Bends poem. A prominent Neo-Confucian scholar and adamant Song loyalist, Chen retreated into a mountain after the fall of the Song, following the steps of many litéarti who refused to serve the Yuan court. A renowned teacher whose students numbered in several hundreds, he was fully in tune with the transformations happening within the Neo-Confucian circle. Even though he did not settle in Wuyi, like many Neo-Confucians of his time Chen firmly believed in the unique authority of Wuyi and endeavoured to promote it as the centre of Neo-Confucian learning.
His understanding of the inseparable relationship between Zhu Xi and Wuyi was expounded in his preface to Xu Heng 許衡 (1209-1281)’s study of the Great Learning:

Since the beginning of heaven and earth, Fujian has been a place of greens and bamboos. Beginning in the Tang there was heard the sound of reading books, and after three hundred years of reading, Zhu Xi was born. The Transmission of the Way was there. The heart-mind could not but be there. … The transmission of the Four Books began at the foot of Wuyi, passing through the Huai River and the Yellow River. It went all over China and even to [the distant frontiers like] Junyong, Yanmen, and Yumen. It went everywhere the sun and moon illuminate, and the frost and dew fall.

Clearly for Chen Pu Wuyi was no ordinary mountain. It represented the fountainhead of the Cheng-Zhu learning whose transformative power travelled far and wide, from the Middle Kingdom to the four corners of the world. Such understanding of Wuyi also affected his reading of Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem. Believing that the poem must embody deeper philosophical meanings, Chen embarked on writing a commentary on it, which later came to be regarded as his most original scholarly contribution.

Chen’s vision of the poem as a whole was plainly explained in his remarks on the opening stanza: “Zhu Wengong’s Nine Bends, it simply is a sequence of entering the Way. It was a carefully planned conception and not just about the mountains and waters of Wuyi.” In stating thus, Chen clearly distinguished Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem from a work of shanshui poetry on Wuyi landscape. Following this initial setup, he proceeded to interpret the rest of the poem as a roadmap of Neo-Confucian cultivation. According to him, each of the nine bends represented a stage or level in the cultivation process. The first bend describes the starting of the learning journey, and the second bend an instruction on avoiding women and courageously advancing in the journey towards the Way. The third bend teaches the pursuer of sage learning not to be swayed by honour or
shame. The fourth bend describes the *jing* of joy (*bu yi yue hu zhi jing* 不亦悦乎之境), the state of the heart-mind freed from desire, the fifth bend the entering of the heart-mind of the sages but not yet attaining full illumination, and the sixth bend the reaching of tranquility in which one sees all as favourable *jing* (*he shun zhi jing* 和順之境). The seventh bend represents an outstanding *jing* (*sheng jing* 勝境) that can be reached through incessant effort, the eighth bend a step away from enlightenment and hence the need for a final thrust, and finally the ninth bend a sudden enlightenment and penetration of all things, which is compared to the entering of sagely domain (*sheng yu* 聖域).

The interpretation seems far removed from what the words in the poem appear to tell us. Chen’s reading of the poem has been criticized by the modern scholar Wang Su who accused him of recklessly distorting and misrepresenting the original intention of Zhu Xi. What is interesting, however, is that Chen’s interpretation did not seem to have caused dispute or debate among Neo-Confucians, at least during this time. In fact, it was welcomed with great enthusiasm and was regarded as an ingenious work of scholarship. The Yuan Neo-Confucian Liu Gai 劉槻 (*jinshi* 1484) praised Chen’s commentary for revealing the implied moral meanings of the Nine Bends, helping those who have set their hearts on the path to sagehood. An anonymous poem entitled “Wuyi’s Nine Bends, the order of entering the Way (*Wuyi jiu qu jin dao ci di* 武夷九曲進道次第)” also highlights the influence of Chen Pu’s interpretation on the Neo-Confucian poetic response to Zhu Xi’s poem.

On the whole we can observe two major hermeneutic principles in Chen’s interpretation. First, he regarded the whole poem as a case of allegory wherein the words imply or refer to something other than their surface meaning. In his attempt to forge a
moral lesson from what was written as a shanshui poem, Chen decontextualized many of the references in the poem. For instance, the description of Jade Maiden Peak in the second bend was interpreted as an advice on avoiding lustful sexual relationship which hinders the literati from whole-heartedly seeking the Way. In other words, the feminine reference in the name of the peak “Jade Maiden” was used as an opportunity to discuss the danger of enticement and distraction. The result of such decontextual reading was an overt philosophization of the poem which translated the poem into a carefully concealed moral lesson waiting to be decoded.

Second, in interpreting the overall structure of the poem, Chen employed the jingjie discursive framework. From his repeated reference to jing, it becomes apparent that he envisioned the nine bends as nine jing, or nine poetico-philosophical territories. Here the connection to the Chan Buddhist use of jingjie discourse is noticed, where spiritual attainment is rendered in different jing or poetico-spiritual territories. Following the same rhetoric, Chen expounded the nine bends as nine poetico-philosophical territories, progressing through various stages and finally culminating in the reaching of sagely territory or domain. This hermeneutic process joined the philosophical and poetic jingjie discourses of Wuyi and transformed Wuyi into a poetico-philosophical territory. Wuyi jingjie was now no longer just descriptive and expressive; it also was intellectually and morally meaningful. The writing of commentary completely transformed the dynamic of the poem, drawing from it the map to sagely jingjie which outlined the proper steps or stages to it. The vertical ordering of nine jingjie—the creation of hierarchical progression—suggests that the journey to sagely jingjie was a carefully constructed and controlled process.
Chen’s creative interpretation, however, seems to be incongruent with Zhu Xi’s own understanding of poetic text, based on which the Nine Bends poem should be read with feelings and emotions, and its musical quality recognized. Zhu, who was keenly interested in recovering poetry’s connection to folk song, very likely wished to have the “Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends”—a poetic adaptation of a popular genre of folk song—sung or chanted. Chen Pu’s critical breakdown of the poetic text and his excessively philosophical reading of it, therefore, seem to be in contradiction with Zhu Xi’s principles of poetic interpretation. While Zhu suggested only overall meaning should be drawn from poetic text, Chen assigned meaning to every word—even taking it out of context—to construct the picture of the progression of moral cultivation.

The emergence and popularity of Chen Pu’s commentary should be considered in the overall context the Yuan Neo-Confucian development, in particular, the formation of orthodox understanding. In the process of determining “valid” and “correct” knowledge, commentary writing became essential, as it ascribed “richness, density and permanence to the text” and kept the text “in circulation.”\(^{31}\) Chen’s commentary, in other words, contributed to the construction of the Neo-Confucian discourse of Wuyi jingjie and the bolstering of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. It hermeneutically demonstrated that the ascendancy of Wuyi jingjie was not only geopolitical and poetic but also philosophical, and that it was the intricate interplay of the three discourses that transformed Wuyi jingjie into the sacred home of Neo-Confucian learning.

As the first commentary on the Nine Bends poem, Chen Pu’s work became very influential. The profusion of commentary we saw for the “Inspired” poem, however, did not happen for the Nine Bends poem. In fact, Chen’s commentary is the only one we hear
of from the Yuan. The reason for its scarcity is not hard to understand. Writing a commentary on the Nine Bends poem was a difficult one that required much creative imagination to turn a *shanshui* poem into a philosophical poem, even if it meant arriving at far-fetched interpretations.

The production of Neo-Confucian commentaries on Zhu Xi’s poetry continued in the Ming. The “Inspired” poem stayed at the centre of attention as numerous publications dedicated to the poem continued to pour out.\(^\text{32}\) The idea remained strong that Neo-Confucian poetry, which focuses on clarifying principle (*li*), differs in essence from “poet’s poetry,” which aims at transmitting the poetic sentiment (*qing*).\(^\text{33}\) Many, like Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357-1402), considered Zhu Xi’s “Inspired” poem to be the best example of Neo-Confucian poetry, because it “made clear the principle of life, showed the Way of heaven and earth, and advanced the education of people.”\(^\text{34}\)

But while the didactic approach to poetry continued, scepticism towards overridingly philosophical use of poetry also began to emerge within the Ming Neo-Confucian circle. Many began to think that the role of “poetic sentiment” in poetry had to be acknowledged—poetry, after all, was poetry—, and started to question allegorical reading of poetry. This we see in the changing attitude towards and resurfacing of the Daoist or mystic references in Neo-Confucian poetry, which can be seen in Wang Yangming’s poem on Wuyi:

有輿飛度萬峰雲
有輿飛度萬峰雲
A carriage flies past ten thousand peaks and clouds.

回首滄波月下聞
回首滄波月下聞
Turning the head, I listen to the blue waves under the moon.

海上真為滄水使
海上真為滄水使
On the sea there really is the Messenger of Blue Water.

山中又遇武夷君
山中又遇武夷君
In the mountain I once again meet Lord Wuyi.\(^\text{35}\)
When asked if Wang’s allusion to the Messenger of Blue Water and Lord Wuyi symbolized anything, Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水 (1466-1560) laughed and replied “it pretends to be a wild escape from the world.”

On the whole, Ming Neo-Confucians became more lax about the suggestions of other religious traditions in poetry and certainly tried less to offer philosophical explanations for them.

Such a “relaxed” hermeneutic environment became a matter of concern to those who still firmly held onto the interpretive trend we saw in the Yuan. The continuation of the totalizing hermeneutic effort can be seen in the second commentary on the Nine Bends poem by the Ming Neo-Confucian Liu Mengchun 劉孟純 (cir. 1490). As an official instructor (jiao yu 教諭), Liu was in charge of educating students at a county-level academy in Xiuning 休寧, Anhui 安徽 province. Unfortunately, his work has not survived, even though we know that it was still available in the Qing. But based on others’ accounts, we can infer the general nature of his interpretation. Cheng Minzheng 程敏政 (1445-1499), who knew Liu in person and often sought him for literary advice, gives us a first-hand account of the circumstances surrounding the publication of the commentary. Under the journal entry titled “After copying Official Instructor Liu’s Commentary on the Boat Song of Wuyi 書劉教諭所註武夷棹歌後,” Cheng writes:

A commentary on Master Hui-an’s Boat Song of Wuyi—in the book, the current Official Instructor of Xiuning County, Liu Mengchun (zi: Nanhai 南海) states what he himself has discovered. When Master Hui-an himself began teaching This Way, in his every word there was none that did not imply the Way, let alone his poetry! Instructor Liu has devoted himself to the study of [Master Hui-an’s poetry], and is different from those in the world who discuss poetry. At one time, Shen Jizu 沈繼祖, the Censor, impeached Instructor Liu on ten charges, and his commentary on the poem was included in the list of charges. He considered Instructor Liu’s explanation of the last sentence of the last poem to be an inappropriate
view for an official to hold. Ah! It is such a misfortune for the commentary. After a hundred generations, carefully savouring the meaning of the poem, Instructor Liu has revealed the heart-mind of Master Hui-an. But whatever one keeps will be lost. Only the heaven and earth remain! For this I cannot stop sighing over and over. After copying the book, I returned it.\textsuperscript{39}

Cheng’s account tells us that Liu’s interpretation of the Nine Bends poem was based on the similar hermeneutic premise as Chen Pu’s—that every word of Zhu Xi expounds the Way, and hence the task of the interpreter is to decipher the implied meaning of the poem. But unlike Chen Pu’s earlier commentary which received a warm welcome, Liu’s work became a source of trouble and was eventually censored by the authority. The ban perhaps explains why the book failed to gain wide readership, and why it became a rare find. All in all, Liu’s commentary does not seem to have differed drastically from Chen’s earlier work, at least in its spirit. Both works were an outcome of deep personal reflection, and both attempted to extract didactic implications from the poem. The circumstances surrounding the censoring reveal the tightened hermeneutic control in the Ming and the growing antipathy towards interpretive ingesis—reading the meaning into the text. Also important to note is the fact that it was the interpretation of the last line of the poem—“Yet this is the other realm in the human world 除是人間別有天”—that the authority found most problematic. Even though we do not know what that interpretation was, it signals the beginning of an important hermeneutic debate in the Chosŏn regarding the explanation of the last line of the Nine Bends poem which we will examine later on. All in all, what we see in the Ming is the active government regulation of Neo-Confucian scholarship and the problematization of forced and even “invented” interpretation of the key texts.
In the Qing the production of commentaries on the “Inspired” poem continued, as we see in the publication of Wu Yueshen 吳曰慎 (cir. 1669)’s *Gan xing shi yi* 感興詩翼 (Assistance to the Inspired Poem).\(^{40}\) The discussion of the uniqueness of Zhu Xi’s poetry, its distinctiveness from Daoist and Buddhist poetry, also persisted.\(^{41}\) But the commentary tradition on the Nine Bends poem seems to have subsided in the Qing. Maybe it had to do with the fact that Wuyi ceased to be the sacred symbol of Neo-Confucianism it was in the Yuan. Maybe it had to do with the slow decline of the Cheng-Zhu learning. Although the writings of Zhu Xi remained the standard curriculum for the civil service examination, other schools of Neo-Confucian thought appeared and enjoyed growing popularity. Many literati, in fact, became more and more critical of the Cheng-Zhu learning, especially of its orthodox understanding. We, however, find a vibrant discussion of the philosophical discourse of Wuyi *jingjie* in Chosŏn Korea where the Cheng-Zhu learning continued to thrive even when its fortune began to wane in China.

The hermeneutic development surrounding the Nine Bends poem reveals simple categorization of Zhu Xi poetry into “philosophical,” “emotional,” and “descriptive”—as was suggested by Zheng Xiuqing\(^{42}\)—does not reflect the fluid relationship between poetry and philosophy, their interaction and contention, we have examined in this chapter. Overall, the unfolding of the philosophical discourse of Wuyi *jingjie* illustrates how the discourse of territorial distinction and progression affected the hermeneutic envisioning of Wuyi as a poetico-philosophical territory.
Confucian Chen Zhu also wrote a poem about the independent volume of Zhu Xi’s *Jiankang zhi* (The Inspired Poems of Master Zhu Wengong). See "17 ŏ munhak nonjip (Essays of Old Learning), zhongshang.21b.

Zhu Xi’s student Cai Yuanding had a great admiration for the poem and studied its origin and Zhu Xi’s discussion of the legend of Lord Wuyi is found in [SKQS] Zhu Xi, *Hui-an ji*, 76.44b-45b Wuyi tu xu 武夷圖序. Zhu even expressed his yearning for Lord Wuyi in the poem “Missing the Immortal.” See [SKQS] Zhu Xi, *Hui-an ji*, 6.23a-26b Yungu er shi liu yong 聲谷二十六詠. See the stanza on “huai xian 懷仙.”


For a study on the Huixiang School’s understanding of poetry, see Shi Mingqing (2006), 85-109.

Zhu Xi, *Zhu shi yi le*, 139.37a-b.

For a study on the Huixiang School’s understanding of poetry, see Shi Mingqing (2006), 85-109.


See, for example, Zhao Fan’s poem on the Hall of Humaneness and Wisdom. [SKQS] Zhao Fan 刘黻 (1143-1229), *Chun xi gao* (Chunxi Manuscripts) (1174-1189), 16.2a Renzhi tang 仁智堂.


Shao Yong, *Ji rang ji*. 20.1a-26a shou wei yin 首尾吟. For the English translation of a selection from the poem, see Wing-tsit Chan (1975): 9-10.

[SKQS] Sheng Ruizi 盛如梓 (13th c.), *Shuzhai lao xue cong tan 庶齋老學叢談* (Shuzhai’s Collected Essays of Old Learning), zhongshang.21b.

[21] Cai Mo 蔡模 (1188-1246)’s commentary has been published in Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., Xiao shi ji qi ta er zhong 孝詩及其他二種 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937). It is found in part 2 under the title “Wengong Zhu xiansheng gan xing shi 文公朱先生感興詩.” Just for more information, GJITSJC records that the Southern Song Neo-Confucian Cai Rukui 蔡汝揆 (12-13th c.) published a commentary with the same title as Cai Mo’s. This is a mistake of confusing Cai Rukui with Cai Mo. See [GJITSJC] Li xue hui bian 理學彙編, jing ji dian 輿籍卷 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937). It is found in part 2 under the title “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhao ge 朱文公武夛櫂歌.”

[22] Hu Bingwen’s commentary is found in the Rare Book Collection of the National Library of China. Hu Bingwen 胡炳文 (1250-1315), Yunwu 孫承恩 (1652-1736), Chen Pu 陳普 (1244-1315)’s commentary has been published in Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., Xiao shi ji qi ta er zhong 孝詩及其他二種 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937). It is found in part 3 under the title “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhao ge 朱文公武夛櫂歌.”

[23] For the biography of Chen Pu, see Zheng Fangkun, Quan min shi hua, 5.67b-71a Chen Pu 陳普. Also see [SKQS] Gu Sili 孫承恩 (1665-1722), Yuan shi xuan 元詩選 (Collection of Yuan Poetry), 3.2.1a-2b Chen Pu Shi tang yi ji Chen Pu’s rhapsody on the Great Ultimate. See [SKQS] Chen Yuanlong 陳元龍 (1652-1736), Yu ding li dai fu hui 業定歷代賦輯 (Imperial Collection of Rhapsodies through the Ages), bu yi 8.36b-38b tai ji fu 太極賦.

[24] For the study of Chen Pu, see Zheng Fangkun, Quan min shi hua, 5.67b-71a Chen Pu 陳普. Also see [SKQS] Gu Sili 孫承恩 (1665-1722), Yuan shi xuan 元詩選 (Collection of Yuan Poetry), 3.2.1a-2a Chen Pu Shi tang yi ji Chen Pu’s commentary has been published in Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., Xiao shi ji qi ta er zhong 孝詩及其他二種 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937). It is found in part 3 under the title “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhao ge 朱文公武夛櫂歌.”

[25] For the biography of Chen Pu, see Zheng Fangkun, Quan min shi hua, 5.67b-71a Chen Pu 陳普. Also see [SKQS] Gu Sili 孫承恩 (1665-1722), Yuan shi xuan 元詩選 (Collection of Yuan Poetry), 3.2.1a-2a Chen Pu Shi tang yi ji Chen Pu’s commentary has been published in Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., Xiao shi ji qi ta er zhong 孝詩及其他二種 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937). It is found in part 3 under the title “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhao ge 朱文公武夛櫂歌.”


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[33] Chen Pu’s “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhao ge,” 6. The poem is included in Za shi 孤詩 (Miscellaneous Poems), a collection of three Chinese poems, also featuring two poems by Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678-740) and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824). This hand-copied book is a Kyujanggak Collection 3452-1. 2.

[34] For the biography of Chen Pu, see Zheng Fangkun, Quan min shi hua, 5.67b-71a Chen Pu 陳普. Also see [SKQS] Gu Sili 孫承恩 (1665-1722), Yuan shi xuan 元詩選 (Collection of Yuan Poetry), 3.2.1a-2a Chen Pu Shi tang yi ji Chen Pu’s commentary has been published in Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., Xiao shi ji qi ta er zhong 孝詩及其他二種 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937). It is found in part 3 under the title “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhao ge 朱文公武夛櫂歌.”

[35] For the biography of Chen Pu, see Zheng Fangkun, Quan min shi hua, 5.67b-71a Chen Pu 陳普. Also see [SKQS] Gu Sili 孫承恩 (1665-1722), Yuan shi xuan 元詩選 (Collection of Yuan Poetry), 3.2.1a-2a Chen Pu Shi tang yi ji Chen Pu’s commentary has been published in Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., Xiao shi ji qi ta er zhong 孝詩及其他二種 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937). It is found in part 3 under the title “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhao ge 朱文公武夛櫂歌.”
The "Inspired" poem was an important part of Neo-Confucian education in the Ming. Big stone steles containing the inscription of the poem were set up in the school compounds for students to venerate. See [GJTSJC] Fang yu hui bian 方舆彙編, zhi fang dian 職方典, Qiong zhou fu bu 琼州府部, Qiong zhou fu xue xiao kao 琼州府學校考, ben fu 本府 1377.169.2.

36 Ibid., 37.32b-40b Yangming xiansheng mu zhi ming 阳明先生墓誌銘 Gan quan Zhan Ruoshui xuan 甘泉湛若水撰 (1466-1560).

37 The Qian qing tang shu mu 包括 Liu Mengchun’s commentary on the Nine Bends poem (劉孟純注 朱文公詩). See [SKQS] Huang Yuji, Qian qing tang shu mu, 32.10b.

38 Cheng Minzheng asked for Liu Mengchun’s advice on poetic composition. See [SKQS] Cheng Minzheng 程敏政 (1445-1499), Huang dun wen ji 煌墩文集 (The Collected Writings of Huangdun), 38.22a-b ti Nanshan shang mei lian ju shi hou 题南山賞梅聨句詩後.

39 [SKQS] Ibid., 38.21b-22a shu Liu jiao yu suo zu huyi Zhao ge hou. 原文: 晕庵先生詩《詩言志》一卷,今休寧教論南海劉君孟純述其所自得者也。晦庵先生身斯道以啓來學,故凡有言皆所寓,況是詩哉。劉君可謂篤學而異於世之言詩者矣。當時御史沈繼祖劾先生十罪,此詩亦在論列中。昏指其末章尾句以義不當也。詩之不幸若此。而劉君乃惓惓百世之下味其詞思以發先生之心。則人之所存其相去何啻霄壤哉。吾於是為之三嘆不能已。書其後而歸之.

40 A copy of Wu’s Gan xing shi yi is found in the General Ancient Books Collection in the National Library of China, Beijing. The text is also found in Xu Chengyao 徐承尧, She shi xian tan 斋事闲谈 (Idle Talks on Matters of Anhui) (Hefei: Huang shan shu she, 2001), 55-56.

41 The Qing scholar Zheng Fangkun’s critical evaluation of Zhu Xi as a poet examines how Zhu distinguished his poetry from Daoist and Buddhist poetry. See [SKQS] Zheng Fangkun, Quan min shi hua, 4.29a-34b Zhu Wengong 朱文公.

III.2 The Korean Development

The official history of the Chosŏn attributes the introduction of Neo-Confucianism to An Hyang 安珦 (1243-1306), a Confucian official from the late Koryŏ who in 1289 while on a diplomatic mission to Yuan China was exposed to the Cheng-Zhu learning. He greatly admired this “new” teaching and brought the personally copied Zhuzi quan shu 朱子全書 (The Complete Works of Zhu Xi) to Koryŏ and began studying and delivering lectures on the book upon his return.¹ The detailed examination of the transmission of Neo-Confucianism to Korea and the philosophical and sociopolitical transformations that ensued is beyond the scope of this chapter. Much scholarly work has already been done on these topics, including the seminal study by Martina Deuchler, The Confucian Transformation of Korea, in which the author investigates various social and ideological changes Korea experienced after embracing the Cheng-Zhu Neo-learning.

In the discussions that follow we will examine the discursive formation of Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie and its connection to the Neo-Confucian territorialization of Korea. The discourses of jingjie, as discussed earlier, were very much in effect in the peninsula, due to the use of the Chinese written language. Like the Chinese, the Koreans incorporated different discourses of jingjie in their geopolitical, philosophico-religious, and aesthetic conceptions, and creatively expanded on the Chinese development. The study of jingjie in the Korean scholarship, however, has concentrated largely on the theoretical investigation of Chinese literature and art, often paying homage to Wang Guowei’s theory of jingjie. Only recently have we begun to see the effort to understand jingjie as a shared conceptual framework used and explored both in China and Korea.²
A good example of the integrated development of *jingjie* discourses is found in
the discursive construction and expansion of Wuyi Nine Bends in Korea, which
demonstrates not only the Korean adaptation of *jingjie* discourse but also its contribution
in the formulation of indigenous ideas and expressions of Neo-Confucianism. Since the
1980s the Korean development of the Wuyi Nine Bends tradition received much
scholarly attention, especially among Korean scholars who regarded it as an excellent
expression of the Neo-Confucianization of Korea and explored its integrated
development. But all in all systematic investigation of the theoretical basis underlying
the development has been lacking, and the importance of *jingjie* as a lynchpin connecting
the various discursive formations has been overlooked. Yet, as was the case in China, the
driving force behind the creation and expansion of Korean Wuyi Nine Bends was the
discursive unfolding of *jingjie*, which produced a multi-layered territorial knowledge of
Neo-Confucianism, intersecting the geopolitical, poetic, and philosophical discourses. In
the following chapters we will examine the construction of each of these discourses and
their dynamic interactions.

### III.2.a The Geopolitical Discourse

The Korean literati came to learn about the Wuyi Mountains primarily through the
writings of Zhu Xi. By the fifteenth century—about a century after An Hyang’s time—
the Cheng-Zhu learning became firmly rooted in the Chosŏn society and the connection
between Zhu Xi and Wuyi secured. In the minds of the Chosŏn literati, Wuyi was seen as
a quintessential Neo-Confucian *jingjie*, a geopolitical territory of the Cheng-Zhu School.
Presenting Wuyi as a Neo-Confucian *jingjie*, the fifteenth-century Neo-Confucian Cho
Wi 曹偉 (1454-1503) stated that it was the interaction between jingjie and person, more precisely, the interaction between Wuyi the jingjie and Zhu Xi the person, that mutually benefitted each other and made both become outstanding. A similar argument was repeated by Yi Haeng 李荇 (1478-1534), who also believed Zhu Xi’s learning and Wuyi’s landscape aided each other to achieve greatness.

But while many Chinese Neo-Confucians could visit this wonderful jingjie of Zhu Xi, for most Korean Neo-Confucians the pilgrimage to Wuyi was a nearly impossible task. Separating them from Wuyi was not just the physical distance but also the strict travel restrictions across the border. The diplomatic relations between Ming-Qing China and Chosŏn Korea were largely determined by the tributary system. This meant that cross-border exchanges had to take place under the umbrella of tributary relation which dictated that embassies be sent to and from China and Korea several times a year. Even the trade of goods was subjected to this formal diplomacy, and merchants travelled with envoys. Non-official visits to China were carefully regulated, making it difficult for ordinary Korean literati to embark on a personal journey across the border. As Sim Ŭn-gwang 沈彦光 (b. 1487) noted the “politics divided the jingjie of Hua and Yi 政為華夷境界分.”

Under these historical circumstances, Wuyi became a place of deep longing for Korean Neo-Confucians who learned of its glorious days from the writings of Zhu Xi and others, yet could not see or visit the place in person. Yi Hwang, for instance, lamented being born too late to have the opportunity to learn from Zhu Xi himself in Wuyi. Chŏng Ku 鄭逵 (1543-1620)’s account vividly captures Korean Neo-Confucians’ yearning for Wuyi:
Wuyi as a mountain is extraordinarily excellent, elegant, and beautiful. Surely it has been the most superb mountain under the heaven. Therefore, it was also entrusted as the home of Master Zhu’s Learning of the Way, making ten thousand generations admire it like the Zhu and Si Rivers and Mount Tai. Indeed, it has become a place unparalleled in the universe. Being born a little too late, I cannot carry my clothes and cane and go there, nor can I wash my cap strings in the stream of the Nine Bends. How unfortunate is this?9

For many such deep longing for Wuyi could only be satisfied in dream, as the frequent accounts of dream journey to Wuyi testify. “In my whole life, I have dreamed of Wuyi’s sky,” said Pak Se-ch’ae.10 The profound personal experience of dream journey to Wuyi was recounted by Yi Kyŏng-sŏk 李景奭 (1595-1671):

In my dreams I often see Wuyi, the old place where Master Zhu lived. Coming through the grotto, I ask where Jade Maiden Peak is. Someone points to me that it is just outside the mouth of the grotto. The layout of the house and its door, the shape of its waters and rocks, are before my eyes to this day. … In dream my spirit drifts away into Wuyi. The Master’s Retreat can be clearly seen. I thoroughly appreciate the hidden dwelling in the beautiful landscape. The clear river coils around and passes by the jade grotto. The beautiful Jade Maiden Peak rises to the sky. To this day whenever I think about this dream my heart is greatly inspired.11

Similar account by Paek Kwang-hun 白光勳 (1537-1582) describes his dream journey to Wuyi Retreat in which he imagined himself practicing quiet-sitting in the Hall of Humaneness and Wisdom.12

Wuyi and its Nine Bends became the epitome of Zhu Xi and his teachings in the minds of the Chosŏn literati: “A current that started from Wuyi’s water” is “the living water of Zhu Xi, transmitted till now,” said Yu Hŭi-ch’un 柳希春 (1513-1577).13 “He studied and transmitted Wuyi 學傳武夷,” remarked Kwŏn Sang-ha 權尙夏 (1641-1721) regarding the life of his teacher Song Si-yŏl 宋時烈 (1607-1689).14 But the Chosŏn literati were also aware of Wuyi’s Daoist heritage. Zhu Xi’s own account elucidated the
mountain’s connection to Daoist legends, and various geographical gazetteers brought in from China were also circulated in the Chosŏn. Although less common, we do find some examples of Chosŏn Neo-Confucians making explicit references to Wuyi’s Daoist connection, like Yi Hae 李瀣 (1496-1550), elder brother of T’oegye, who described Wuyi as a site of learning for those seeking immortality. Wuyi was also spoken of as a site of refuge, a safe haven in the time of political turmoil. Recognizing the Chosŏn literati’s knowledge and even acceptance of Wuyi’s Daoist legacy is important. Too often in the Korean scholarship, Wuyi is characterized as an exclusively Confucian landscape, fundamentally set apart from the Buddhist and Daoist counterparts. But as we already examined, Wuyi’s connection to Neo-Confucianism had to be discursively constructed, and certainly was not a result of “natural” attribution as some have argued. The Neo-Confucian territorialization of Wuyi in China involved political and ideological struggles, and, as we will see, the discursive expansion of Wuyi in Korea also was an outcome of intricate and sometimes even fierce contentions.

The inability to access the Wuyi Mountains in China did not deter Korean Neo-Confucians from trying. In fact, it instilled in them even greater desire for Wuyi, prompting them to seek Wuyi living in their own surroundings. The Chosŏn literati spoke of Wuyi as Zhu Xi’s jingjie—“Zhu Xi made Wuyi his own jingjie,” noted Ch’ae Chi-hong 蔡之洪 (1683-1741) and aspired to own “Wuyi-like jingjie,” where they could devote themselves to sage learning. As early as in the mid-fifteenth century, Wuyi jingjie began to be reconstructed. Prince Anp’yŏng 安平大君 (1418-1453), the third son of King Sejong 世宗 (r. 1418-1450), was a man of many talents, famous for his love of learning and his skills in calligraphy, painting, and music. In order to gather and interact
with like-minded literati, he built Mui Retreat (Wuyi Retreat 武夷精舍) outside the northern gate of the capital Hanyang. It is said famous literati throughout the country streamed to the retreat where they held scholarly and literary discussions.²⁰

The endeavour to recreate the experience of Wuyi living was also felt in the emergence of various places bearing the name of Wuyi. Throughout the peninsula Mui Mountains began appearing, and some of these even had Cloud Valley 雲谷—the name of the place in Wuyi where Zhu Xi settled—making their connection to Wuyi even more apparent.²¹ Many literati made these mountains their home. Sŏ Sŏng-gu 徐聖敟 (1663-1753), who lived in Mt. Mui’s Cloud Valley, even wrote poems to memorialize his life in the mountain, following the example of Zhu Xi.²² “Mui” was also used as a name for other natural features, such as Mui Nine River 武夷九江, Mui Sandbar 武夷汀, and Mui Grotto 武夷洞.²³ Mui Grotto, in particular, became the hub of Neo-Confucian gathering where renowned sixteenth-century Neo-Confucians Yi I 李珥 (a.k.a Yulgok 粟谷, 1536-1584), Song Ik-p’il 宋翼弼 (1534-1599), Ch’oe Rip 崔岦 (1539-1612), and Ch’oe Kyŏng-ch’ang 崔慶昌 (1539-1583) held poetry gatherings.²⁴

Besides the borrowing of name, people also sought the likeness of Wuyi in the Korean landscape. Mount Suyang 首陽山’s rock grottos and streams were said to resemble those of Wuyi,²⁵ and Mount Hwa 花山 was known as “Mui” among the locals.²⁶ The resemblance to Wuyi was most pronounced in the description of Neo-Confucian academies. Bearing the likeness of Wuyi was seen as the physical justification and validation of the academy as a rightful successor of Wuyi and its Retreat. The search for any sign of similarity, therefore, became a task of vital importance for legitimizing
and bolstering the status of the academy. Numerous accounts of the Korean Neo-
Confucian academies emphasize their physical connection to Wuyi. Ugye Academy
牛溪書院 and Oksan Academy 玉山書院 were regarded as Wuyi by the
contemporaries, and Mugye Academy 武溪書院 was said to compete with Wuyi in
their likeness. Tobong Academy 道峰書院 was described as the Wuyi in the East, and
Sŏkmun Retreat 石門精舍 the Wuyi East of the Ocean.

Such discursive development was more than just an allusion to the birthplace of
Neo-Confucianism, but an active recreation and personalization of Wuyi. Furthermore,
it was an attempt not only to continue but also to “revive” the former glories of Wuyi.
The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians were well aware of the declining fortune of Wuyi in China.
“The old White Deer Grotto is covered with overgrown weeds, and the mountain wind
and rain reduced Wuyi Retreat to ruins. This shame is shared by our faction,” remarked
Yi Chŏng-nip 李廷立 (1556-1595). That is to say, the Korean reconstruction of Wuyi
jingjie was a deliberate attempt to reinstate the authority of the Cheng-Zhu learning and
to do so through the territorial reclaiming of the Neo-Confucian domain. The recovery
and expansion of the Neo-Confucian territory became an even more urgent task after the
fall of the Ming in 1644. The establishment of the Qing dynasty was seen as the
“barbarian” conquest of the Middle Kingdom, leaving Chosŏn to be the only remaining
defender and heir of sage learning.

The endeavour to restore and invigorate sagely jingjie was most strongly felt in
the creation of numerous Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie in Korea. For instance, Chŏng Sik
鄭栻 (1664-1719), a Neo-Confucian and Ming loyalist, after the demise of the Chinese
dynasty retreated to Mui Grotto in search for reclusive living; “Now is not the time of
Great Ming. As literati can we seek fame and wealth?” said Chŏng. He spent his senior years there, constructing Mui Nine Bends 武夷九曲, Mui Retreat 武夷精舍, and Reclining Dragon Thatched Hut 臥龍庵, and honouring Zhu Xi and Zhuge Liang as his guides. The recreated Wuyi jingjie was deemed as the perfect site for realizing the sagely living exemplified by the sage-kings, Confucius, Yan Hui, and the Song Neo-Confucian masters. The sagely jingjie was now found in the land of Chosŏn.

The Expansion of Nine Bends Jingjie in Korea

The Korean adaptation of Wuyi was most visibly manifested in the extensive proliferation of Nine Bends jingjie. Although a similar discursive development was witnessed earlier in China, it was in the Chosŏn when we see its widespread application that transformed Chosŏn into the land of Nine Bends. Numerous Nine Bends jingjie have been located throughout the Korean peninsula—twenty-two sites have been reported within North Ch’ungch’ŏn province alone. The earliest recorded example of the indigenous adaptation of Nine Bends jingjie is Unmun Nine Bends 雲門九曲, established by Pak Ha-dam 朴河淡 (1479-1560) in 1536. Not much later, T’oegye and Yulgok—the founders of the two most influential schools of Neo-Confucianism in Chosŏn—settled in what later came to be identified as Tosan Nine Bends 陶山九曲 and Sŏktam Nine Bends 石潭九曲, the latter also known as Kosan Nine Bends 高山九曲. Following the example of Zhu Xi and the two pillars of Korean Neo-Confucianism, the ardent search for Nine Bends began among the Chosŏn literati, who combed through mountains and waters to seek out the Nine Bends, the place they could call their “own jingjie.”
In most cases, the formation of Nine Bends *jingjie* involved the discovery of the feature of Nine Bends in the existing landscape and the labeling of it as Nine Bends, hence not entailing much physical alteration of the actual landscape. But the act of appellation engendered fundamental discursive transformations by redefining the territory and giving it a new Neo-Confucian identity. Nine Bends *jingjie* in Korea unfolded over a wide expanse of land, covering the distance of 4 km to 40 km, and often included already renowned scenic sites and even the land belonging to Buddhist establishments.\(^\text{39}\) The identification as Nine Bends undermined the former connections and identities of the land and transformed it into a Neo-Confucian territory. The act of naming was often enough to bring about a profound change in the way people interacted with their environment, as, for example, the story of the founding of Sŏgye Nine Bends 西溪九曲 illustrates. During the reign of King Kwanghae 光海君 (r. 1608-1623), Prefect Yi of Koesan 槐山 retreated to Sŏgye. Finding that the place resembled Wuyi, he named it Nine Bends and built several houses in the fifth bend where he lived until death.\(^\text{40}\) Yi’s decision to inhabit the fifth bend was certainly inspired by Zhu Xi’s example, showing us the identification as Nine Bends led to modifications of people’s behaviour and of the physical site. In other words, the act of labeling paved the way to the territorialization of Nine Bends through inhabitation. The Chosŏn literati were conscious of the Neo-Confucian transformation of the land. As Hong Yang-ho 洪良浩 (1724-1802) noted:

> Ever since Master Zhu revealed Wuyi’s hidden beauty, those among Eastern people who own famous places generally call it using the number nine. Only Yŏngnam’s Tosan and Haenam’s Sŏktam are the outstanding ones. Is it only the place that is outstanding? It is through people that they became manifest.\(^\text{41}\)
In creating their personal Nine Bends, the Chosŏn literati did not think that they were constructing poor imitations of Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends. Quite the contrary, many of them firmly believed that their Nine Bends equaled, even exceeded, Wuyi in both physical beauty and spiritual potency, and such confidence was displayed in Sŏng Yŏ-sin 成汝信 (1546-1632)’s account of Kŭmch’ŏn Nine Bends 琴川九曲. In the preface to his Nine Bends poem, Sŏng writes:

In China there is the Wuyi Mountains whose altitude is three hundred ren and whose circumference is more than a hundred li. As for the large towering mountains, it has thirty-six. Its both banks are steep cliffs, and rarely human footsteps reach them. A clear stream of Nine Bends flows in its midst. By the stream, there is Wuyi Retreat, the place where Master Zhu Xi cultivated himself in seclusion. He wrote the Nine Bends poem which has become widely known in the world.

As for the outstanding beauty of Kŭmch’ŏn Nine Bends, how can it be any different from the immortal’s dwelling place Wuyi? But because a place is known by the name of the person who dwells in it, not having some like Master Zhu to write about its charm, the outstanding place has been buried, and so far no one has talked about it. After carefully examining the site, I realize its source looks like Fangzhang 方丈, one of the three immortal mountains. The First Emperor of Qin and the Han Emperor Wudi both tried to see it but were not successful, and hence the mountain is considered to be mystical and otherworldly.

It is not just Wuyi that has ten thousand ravines and thousand cliffs, and a jade-colour stream that rushes through and passes before the pavilion on a towering rock. Such towering rocks are also found in the famous streams and mountains of Yŏngnam province.

The fragrant grass of the Ch’ŏng River 萬川—can it be not enough for the parrots of Hanyang? The fountainhead of Kŭmch’ŏn (or Kŭm River 琴川) starts from the source: gathering, it becomes the Ch’ŏng River 萬川; flowing down, it becomes the South River 南江 (or Nam River); and running, it becomes the Kŭm River 琴川. Now that the Kŭm River’s Nine Bends actually originates from the source of ten thousand ravines, when compared with Wuyi’s stream, which forms Nine Bends after flowing through a thousand layers of rocks, how can it be any lesser? Today I name this place the Nine Bends stream and also sing this intention in a Nine Bends poem.42
The explanatory preface is followed by Sŏng’s poem on Kŭmch’ŏn Nine Bends in which he identifies and describes each of the nine bends. Sŏng’s account clearly reveals the desire to present the Korean Nine Bends not as a replica of Wuyi but as a unique landscape feature which competes in greatness with Wuyi, waiting to be discovered.

It is also important to note that the creation and celebration of Nine Bends was often a communal activity, not only an outcome of individual inspiration and decision, but something that involved the recognition and contribution of many individuals. The connection to communal living, in fact, was an essential aspect of this development as many Nine Bends settlements were used not only for personal dwelling but also for teaching and social gatherings. The evidence of collective effort can be observed in the setting up of Kok-un Nine Bends 谷雲九曲. Kim Su-júng 金壽增 (1624-1701), the founder of the site, got members of his family involved in the project, which led to the publication of the Kok-un Nine Bends album, featuring a painting of the place and the Nine Bends poems written by his son, son-in-law, nephew, and himself.43 The communal impact of Korean Nine Bends, particularly its connection to the formation of Neo-Confucian communities and political factions, is most visible in the discursive development surrounding Tosan Nine Bends and Kosan Nine Bends, the details of which we will examine in the later chapter. In both cases, Nine Bends jingjie served as the basis of philosophical and political communities, as the geographical and symbolic centres of the political factions.

In all these examples of Chosŏn dynasty Nine Bends, the intimate relation between geopolitical and poetic expansion can be observed. The Nine Bends jingjie which emerged in the Chosŏn were both physical and poetic sites, much like Zhu Xi’s
Wuyi Nine Bends. The poetic declaration and commemoration were an indispensable part in the making of Nine Bends jingjie. There were no physical boundaries being set to delineate the area of Nine Bends. It was the words in the poems that drew the line and transformed a previously unnamed space into a Nine Bends jingjie. Similar interaction between geopolitical and poetic jingjie has also been noted in the Korean development of the Eight Views of Xiaoxiang 瀟湘八景, the poems and paintings of which were introduced from China to the peninsula during the late Koryŏ period and developed into a generic landscape type, giving rise to many sites of Eight Views (p’alg’yŏng 八景) throughout Korea.\(^4^4\) The development of both Nine Bends and Eight Views illustrates the poetic transformation and interpretation of the Korean landscape, the localization of the poetic influence from China.

The expansion of Nine Bends jingjie in Korea became most prominent in the sixteenth century when the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism reached the height of its influence.\(^4^5\) On the whole, even though the formation of Nine Bends jingjie did not lead to drastic reconfiguration of the physical environment itself, it did bring a fundamental change in the way the Chosŏn literati viewed and interacted with their environment. When they saw their world in light of the Neo-Confucian discourse of Wuyi Nine Bends, they began to discover signs that revealed the potential of Wuyi in their own land. It was more than a discovery of affinity but rather of proof, the proof that reassured them that Chosŏn indeed was the next Wuyi, the new home of the Cheng-Zhu learning. Numerous Nine Bends jingjie scattered throughout Korea are the literati’s visible confessions of faith and hope in Chosŏn as the true keeper of Zhu Xi’s teachings.
The Story of No In: The Korean Infiltration into Chinese Wuyi

Despite the geographical and political barriers that separated the Korean literati from the birthplace of Neo-Confucianism, there was one person who overcame all the odds and dramatically found a way into Wuyi. No In 魯認 (1566-1622), the only Korean literatus to experience the life at the Wuyi Academy, became a celebrated cultural hero of the Chosŏn dynasty. The detailed stories of his adventures in Japan and China are found in his diary, the Kŭmgye ilgi 錦溪日記 (Kŭmgye’s Diary), and also in the collection of his writings, the Kŭmgye chip 錦溪集 (The Collected Works of Kŭmgye), both of which were widely read by the Chosŏn literati.

Born in 1566 in South Chŏlla province’s Hamp’yŏng 咸平 prefecture, No passed the chinsa (ch. jinshi) examination in 1582 and began working as a record-keeper of local ice storage (pinggo byŏlche 冰庫別提) in 1585. When the Imjin War broke out in 1592, No joined the army and fought the invading Japanese force under the command of Military General Kwŏn Yul 權慄 (1537-1599). But in 1597, during the second Japanese invasion, while spying on the Japanese army, No was arrested and taken to Japan as a captive. After a failed escape attempt in 1598, he came to know a Chinese merchant Lin Zhenxi 林震虩, who in fact was an undercover agent sent by the Fujian Military Governor Jin Xuexi 金學習. Lin helped No and other Chosŏn captives escape from Japan by secretly boarding them onto the ship bound for China. In 1599 No and his company reached Fujian, and upon arrival No met with Jin and requested to be sent back to Chosŏn. It, however, took a long time for his appeal to be granted. After repeatedly submitting his appeal to various levels of the Ming government, and eventually a memorandum to the
Emperor Shenzong (1572-1620), his wish was finally granted. He travelled to Beijing, where he was given an imperial horse and a team of escorts to accompany him to the border, and in January 1601 reached Hanyang, the capital of Chosŏn.

The details of his spectacular journey cannot be discussed here, but it was during his stay in Fujian that he had the chance to interact with the Chinese literati and even the opportunity to attend lectures at the Wuyi Academy. Although he could not speak Chinese, No was able to communicate with the Chinese officials and scholars through writing. His talent in poetry, in particular, helped him gain access to the Fujian elite circle at the time. Hearing that an official from Chosŏn, a former captive who made a dramatic escape from Japan, was in town, many literati came to see him to learn about the situation in Chosŏn and Japan and the Chinese involvement in the fight against the Japanese invasions. The Chinese were also intrigued by his somewhat peculiar behaviour. Believing that the Japanese had put his parents to death after his arrest—when in fact they passed away while he was in Japan—No subjected himself to three-year mourning, refusing to eat meat or engage in entertainment. Impressed by his filial piety, his Chinese host gave him a set of white mourning clothes which he wore during his stay in China.

The words about him spread quickly, and a crowd of literati gathered around him. No’s collection of writings include twenty-one poems he received from some of them, including the poems by the members of poetry groups active in the region at the time, such as Xu Huobo 徐火勃 (1563-1639), a member of the Jin-an Seven 晋安七子, and Chen Jianfu 陳薦夫 (1560-1611), a member of the Sweetgrass Mountain Poetry School 芝山诗派. Some of these literati were also students at the Wuyi Academy, and they introduced No to Xu Jideng 徐即登 (cir. 1601), a leading Cheng-Zhu scholar lecturing
there at the time, who allowed No to attend their daily lectures and participate in
discussions.

No’s account shows us a glimpse of the life at the Wuyi Academy at the turn of
the seventeenth-century. We learn that students numbering about twenty—much reduced
in size from the earlier community—gathered daily for lecture, discussion, and tea
ceremony.48 We also learn about the intellectual position of the academy from Xu’s
“Correct Principles 正論,” which was inscribed on the wooden screen erected outside the
Hall of the Illumination of the Way 明道堂.49 No’s presence at the academy sparked
interesting discussions about the development of Neo-Confucianism outside China. In
these intellectual exchanges No clearly portrayed Chosŏn as the country that faithfully
followed the teachings of Zhu Xi. When asked repeatedly about his practice of three-year
mourning, he answered he was simply following the mourning rituals prescribed by Zhu
Xi, and that the people of Chosŏn, both young and old, rich and poor, without exception
all abided by the same principles.50 His Chinese audience was skeptical and showed No
the entry in the Da Ming yi tong zhi 大明一統志 (Cohesive History of the Great Ming),
which describes Chosŏn as an un-Confucian state where “people bury their deads in
valleys and water or in an urn, where people worship the Buddha and revere shamans,
and … where men and women hold hands and walk together in bright daylight.”51 No
fervently defended his case and argued that from time immemorial Korea had been a land
of Confucian learning, no different from China. He emphasized the cultural link between
Korea and China, arguing Tangun 檀君, the legendary founder of Ko Chosŏn, came into
power about the same time as Yao, and since King Wu of the Zhou sent Kija 箕子 to the
peninsula, the Way of the Sages (or Our Way 吾道) had been known to Koreans.
Supporting his argument with historical examples, No showed that Koreans quickly learned the teachings of Confucius and his disciples and had been faithful followers and promoters of Confucian learning. That is why, he asserted, throughout history Korea had been known as “Little China 小中華” and one should not consider Korea as a land of barbarians.

What is more, he even claimed that the people of Chosŏn surpassed the Chinese in their enthusiasm for the teachings of Zhu Xi. They devotedly observed the rites of capping, matrimony, funeral, and ancestor worship set by Zhu Xi, which the Chinese had been negligent in following. No also criticized the Ming literati’s leniency towards other religions, especially towards Buddhism, which according to the teachings of the Song Neo-Confucians, was heresy—the ideas that needed to be uprooted in order to realize sagely kingdom. He disapproved of the open interaction between Neo-Confucians and Buddhist clergies in the Ming, and informed his Chinese company that such behaviour would not be condoned in Chosŏn where Buddhist institutions were kept under tight control and the monks barred from civil life.

After returning to Chosŏn, No passed the Special Military Examination (kwŏnmu kwa 勸武科) and eventually became the Naval Governor of Hwanghae province. But even after his death in 1622, the story of No’s adventure, especially his entry into Wuyi jingjie, continued to inspire Chosŏn Neo-Confucians. In the many eulogies dedicated to him, they praised No for being an excellent representative of Chosŏn and her literati. It gave them great pride that No not only entered Wuyi jingjie and interacted with its scholars, but also impressed them by urging them to revive to the original spirit of the Song Neo-Confucians. They believed No’s actions boosted the image of Chosŏn as a true
Neo-Confucian state, a new home of the Cheng-Zhu learning, even in the eyes of the Chinese. More importantly, No’s account represented the Korean infiltration into the Chinese Wuyi jingjie discourse. The story of Wuyi jingjie changed from the narrative of foreign people to that of the people of Chosŏn; now in the midst of Chinese Wuyi, the voice of a Chosŏn literatus was heard. Such discursive interjection and transformation justified the Korean literati to be the new participants and even owners of Wuyi jingjie, contributing to the expansion of Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie throughout the peninsula.

*Political Factions and Nine Bends Jingjie*

The numerous Nine Bends jingjie scattered throughout Korea functioned as the geopolitical basis of Neo-Confucian factions. The explosion of private academies, its connection to factional development, and the government’s effort to curtail partisan politics which resulted in a series of notorious literati purges have been studied by many and hence need not be repeated here. One essential detail that has been neglected, however, is the important correlation between the expansion of Wuyi jingjie and the proliferation of private academies. According to historical records, many of these private academies were deliberately set up within the bounds of Wuyi jingjie. In his “Record of Yong-am Academy 龍岩書院記,” Yi Tŏk-su 李德壽 (1673-1744) explains the establishment of the academy was inspired by the presence of local Mui Mountain; founding an academy dedicated to Zhu Xi in the mountain that bore the name of Wuyi only seemed befitting. Wuyi jingjie also became the home of Confucian shrines, the development clearly delineated in Yun Ki 尹昞 (1741-1826)’s account:

In our prefercture (Namp’o)’s Sin-an township, there is a village called Cloud Valley, a mountain named Mui, and a river named Chu River 朱川.
Therefore, the local Confucian literati were inspired and suggested to build a shrine for Master Zhu. … When my term as prefect began in May, I heard the previous prefect agreed to build a shrine for Master Zhu in Sin-an at the foot of Mui Mountain, because of the matching of their names … saying it cannot be without a shrine for Master Zhu. 57

Next to Zhu Xi’s shrine, the locals also built a shrine dedicated to Paek Yi-jŏng 白頤正 (1247-1323), the Koryŏ Neo-Confucian who played a seminal role in the dissemination of Zhu Xi’s teachings in the early years. These accounts reveal that Wuyi jingjie functioned as the site of and also the rationale for the construction of academies and shrines. The architectural addition was deemed necessary to complete the recreation of Wuyi jingjie. It was not a coincidence, therefore, the three provinces which saw the thriving of private academies—Kyŏngsang, Chŏlla, and Ch’ungch’ŏng provinces 58—also had the most number of Wuyi jingjie.

The presence of Wuyi jingjie complete with academy and shrine, as we learn from Yun’s account, was a source of great pride for the local community. The local literati worked towards the realization of the project by lobbying the local government and even towards gaining recognition and support from the central government. To the prestigious private academies were granted charter from the court, which included financial support in the form of land and labour. The government’s good intention of endorsing private education later led to serious problems. Empowered by the monetary support, private academies drastically grew in number, creating a deep chasm between public and private education, and the competition and contention between the two emerged as an issue of critical importance. The special exemption from military tax given to the members of private academies caused further dispute and criticism for increasing the financial burden for the local and central governments.
Moreover, increasing politicization of private academies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and their transformation into the breeding ground for factionalist movement made it even more urgent for the government to curb the uncontrolled sprawling of private academies. The competition among Wuyi 內糾 began to emerge, with different factions expanding their political territory through the construction of more private academies while attempting to shrink and undermine that of the others. This happened as the establishment of academies and shrines in Wuyi 內糾 became closely tied with the enshrinement of the factional leader. The supporters of Noron faction, for instance, appealed for the government support of their academies and shrines built for the purpose of venerating Zhu Xi and the leader of their faction, Song Si-yŏl. In the 1778 memorandum appealing for government charter for Imjang Academy 臨漳書院 in Yŏnch’ŏn 漣川 prefecture, the adherents of Noron faction in Kyŏnggi province wrote:

Yŏnch’on’s Imjang Academy is the place where Master Zhu is enshrined. The place is called Changju 漳州 (ch. Zhangzhou, where Zhu Xi served as a magistrate), its water Nine Bends, and there also is a village named Hu Mui 後武夛 (After Wuyi). Therefore, the local literati purchased a portrait of Master Zhu and set up an academy to pay respect to it. Next to Mui, there also is Hwayang Valley 華陽谷 and to its left Kuryong Mound 九龍墟 (Nine Dragon Mound). The upright official late Master Munjŏng Song Si-yŏl was most excellent since Master Zhu in both virtue and scholarship. Moreover, since Hu Mui’s Hwayang Valley does not differ in name from Sŏwŏn 西原’s Hwayang Grotto 華陽洞 (Song’s home), and Hwayang Valley’s Kuryong from Okch’ŏn 沔川’s Kuryong Village 九龍村 (Song’s birthplace), we respectfully appeal our intention of jointly enshrining him and ask for the special grant of permission.

The followers of Song based their reason for co-enshrining Zhu and Song on the nominal association found in the local geography. The request, however, was rejected. What is worth noting is when Imjang Academy was first established in 1711, which enshrined
only Zhu Xi at the time, charter was given to the academy. The clearly political attempt to elevate the stature of Noron faction sixty-seven years later was thwarted by the state. Similar appeal was made in 1779 by the literati of Hamp’yong 咸平 prefecture in Cholla province for the approval of co-enshrining Zhu Xi and Song Si-yŏl in the shrine formerly dedicated to Zhu only. The shrine was built at the foot of Chayang Mountain 紫陽山 (ch. Ziyang), close to Mui Stream 武夷溪, but again the request was declined.

Various attempts were made by kings to regulate the expansion of private academies and shrines, but they were always met with great opposition. It was a very sensitive political issue, which was often seen as a direct challenge against certain powerful factions within the court. Yet some were successful in curtailing the power of the rural literati and in scaling down their territorial base, private academies and shrines. King Yŏngjo 英祖 (r. 1724-1776)’s attempt in 1738 led to the forced closure of more than two hundred academies, and finally in 1864 the regent Hŭngsŏn Taewŏn-gun 興宣大院君 (1820-1898)’s sweeping reform struck a fatal blow, rescinding all privileges of private academies, banning the establishment of new academies, and shutting down all private academies except forty-seven major ones. These drastic measures reveal the government’s realization of the threat posed by the geopolitical territorialization of factional Nine Bends jingjie and the need to keep it under control for the maintenance of the strong central government.

It should also be noted that the expansion of Nine Bends jingjie was an integral part of this geopolitical development. Just as Wuyi Nine Bends in China represented an intellectual home and political hub for Zhu Xi’s followers, Nine Bends jingjie in the Chosŏn—especially those of famous Neo-Confucian scholars—came to be viewed as the
home of the founder’s philosophical and political legacy. In particular, T’oegye’s Tosan Nine Bends and Yulgok’s Kosan Nine Bends became two competing centres of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism, the physical and symbolic sites of the two most influential Korean Neo-Confucian schools. For the followers of the two philosophers, the two Nine Bends became their intellectual birthplace and the fellow members of their school their family. Even after the death of the founders, the two Nine Bends jingjie continued to expand, both physically and politically, as their adherents grew in number. In this process, competition emerged as both schools tried to outdo each other in proving their superiority. The discursive formation and contention of Tosan and Kosan jingjie was a complex one which integrated geopolitical, philosophical, and poetic discourses, and the details of this development will be examined in a separate chapter.

The expansion of Nine Bends jingjie in Korea continued until the early twentieth-century, even during the period of Japanese annexation. In this long tradition the intricate unfolding of geopolitical discourses of jingjie can be observed, which played a critical role in the overall expansion of Neo-Confucianism in Korea. The popular tendency in the existing scholarship, however, has been to regard the development of Nine Bends as an expression of Neo-Confucian “realistic functionality,” in contrast to the Buddhist and Daoist “transcendental spirituality,” based on the belief that the Neo-Confucian engagement with and experience of life and nature were both firmly grounded in practical concerns alone. This kind of approach focuses on generalizing and characterizing Neo-Confucianism based on the assumption that all philosophical traditions possess and reflect a certain set of understandings uniquely their own. While I do not disown the distinctiveness of each philosophical system, interpreting the
development of Nine Bends only as an “expression” of some inherent philosophical understanding seems to be too simplistic a view; certainly it does not take into account the convoluted political implications of creating new Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie in Korea. But as we examined in this chapter, Chosŏn’s transformation into the land of Nine Bends was a geopolitical discursive development. Fuelling the creative reinterpretation of the environment was the effort to gain legitimacy and power and to shape Chosŏn into an ideal Neo-Confucian state, the territory of the sages.


4 The jingjie discourse is prominently used in Cho Wi’s account. See Cho Wi 조위 (1454-1503), *Maegye chip* 梅溪集 (The Collected Works of Maegye), 1883, 4.9a-10b Hwanggan Kahangnu chungsu ki 黃澗駕鶴堂重修記.

5 Yi Haeng 李荇 (1478-1534), et al., *Sindong tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* 新增東國輿地勝覽 (Revised Survey of the Geography of Korea), 1969, 16.27a-b Hwanggan hyŏn 黃開縣.

6 For information on Sino-Korean tributary relations, see Donald N. Clark, “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations under the Ming,” *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part II,
天下將必大亂
26 (Jan. 1999): 23

Sim Ön-gwang 沈彦光 (b. 1487), Öz’ onchip 漁村集 (The Collected Works of Öz’on), 1572, 5.17b

chung chap rok 亂中雜錄

from now on

改茖亭高會此何如

却攀危磴風生腋

煙霞身世獨閒居

晩年頤養更無餘

敬呈聾巖大人案下

poem presented to Yi Hyŏn

hwa chʻungbyŏl changnyul, kyŏngchŏng Nong

14

pan mu tang

13

Okpong si chip ha

居領略窮

人指之正在洞口

7.19a

11

10

丈之下

學藏修之所

23b Mui chi pal

9

8

mang Changbaek san

7


Sim Ön-gwang 沈彦光 (b. 1487), Öz’onchip 漁村集 (The Collected Works of Öz’on), 1572, 5.17b

mang Changbaek san 望長白山.

7

Chŏng Ku Yi Hwang, Sim Ŭn Sŏng Hyŏn Yi Man

See

Cho Kyŏng-nam described Wuyi as a place of political refuge. In the words of the Ming military general Lü Yingzhong 呂應鐘, Cho writes: “All under heaven will be in great disarray. I also desire to enter Wuyi from now on. 天下將必大亂. I also desire to enter Wuyi from now on. 天下將必大亂. 我亦從此欲入武夷山中矣.” See Cho Kyŏng-nam 趙慶男 (1570-1641), Nan chung chap rok 亂中雜錄 (Miscellaneous Record during the Wars), 1964, 3 kyesa ha 奉己下.

Ch’ae Chi-hong 蔡之洪 (1683-1741), Pong-am chip 鳳巖集 (The Collected Works of Pong-am), 1783, 12.35a-36b Pong-am ch‘ongsa kī 凤巖精舍記

In your late years you take care of yourself more completely. The bookshelf is filled with the classics of immortals and Taoist books. Wandering in the hills and valleys, your nature is truly elegant, the life spent in the mist, you leisurely dwell alone. Together climbing the dangerous stone steps, the wind makes me sweat. Together boating in the clear pond, the water splashes onto my outer robe. Suddenly entering Wuyi and drifting along the Nine Bends, How about meeting on the lofty Screen Pavilion Peak?

In your late years you take care of yourself more completely. The bookshelf is filled with the classics of immortals and Taoist books. Wandering in the hills and valleys, your nature is truly elegant, the life spent in the mist, you leisurely dwell alone. Together climbing the dangerous stone steps, the wind makes me sweat. Together boating in the clear pond, the water splashes onto my outer robe. Suddenly entering Wuyi and drifting along the Nine Bends, How about meeting on the lofty Screen Pavilion Peak?

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成俔

Yi Man-bu 李萬敷 (1664-1732), Siksan chip 息山集 (The Collected Works of Siksan), 1813, purok ha 附錄下, 6a-10a man sa 挽詞 by No Kye-wŏn 盧啓元 (1695-1740).

Song Hyŏn 松idad (1439-1504), Yongjae ch’ŏnghwag 鳳巖集話 (Miscellaneous Sayings of Yongjae), 1525, 2.
For the list of Mui Mountains, see Kyujanggak local gazetteer collection, Cholla province, Hampyong
County, Sunch’ang, mountains and rivers [山川]. Ibid., Ch’unghoe province, mountains and rivers
[山川]. Mui Mountain is also found in South Kyongsang province, Kosong County.
22 Sŏ Sŏng-gu 鈞承(1633-1735), Nulhôn chip 諸軒集 (The Collected Works of Nulhôn), 1898, si 詩,
Ungok sip o kŏng 营谷十景, and Ungok ki 营谷記.
23 For the record on Mui Nine River, see Kyujanggak local gazetteer collection, Cholla province, pavilions
恵亭; on Mui Sandbar, ibid., Cholla province, famous sites 名勝; on Mui Grotto, ibid., Kyongsang
province, ancient city walls 古城.
24 Ch’oe Kyong-ch’aang 崔慶昌 (1539-1583), Kojuk yugo 孤竹遺稿 (The Posthumous Writings of Kojuk),
1683, Kojuk siip husŏ Pak Se-ch’aee 孤竹詩集後叙 朴世采. Mui Grotto is located in Tamyang County 潭陽郡. For more information on the grotto, see Song Si-yŏl, Songga taech’ŏn, 214.15a-17a Kim Sak-chu
hyŏngje poksu chŏn 金象川兄弟復讎傳.
25 Cho Pok-yang 趙復陽 (1609-1671), Songgok chip 松谷集 (The Collected Works of Songgok), 1705,
1.5a song Chŏng silang yegyŏng anjŏl Haesŏ 送鄭侍郎禮頌按節海西.
26 Yi Hyŏn-il 李玄逸 (1627-1704), Kal-am chip 來庵集 (The Collected Works of Kal-am), 1909, purok
5.3lb manjang Ch’ae’a P’aeng-yun 鹽亭 蔡弘鵬.
27 For the account on Ugye Academy, see Yun Sun-ji 尹順之 (1591-1666), Haengmyŏngjae siip
漢溪齋詩集 (The Poetry Collection of Haengmyŏngjae), 1725, 1.18a-b k‘wa Ugye sŏwŏn 過牛溪書院. For the
account on Oksan Academy, see Pak In-ro 朴仁老 (1561-1642), Nogye chip 蠡溪集 (The Collected
Works of Nogye), 1831, 3.13a-b tongnak tang 獨樂堂. Also see Yi An-nul 李安訥 (1571-1637), Tong-ak
chip 東岳集 (The Collected Works of Tong-ak), 1640, 11.24b-25a Ch’ya Yi Chwa-rang sa ho mucchuk san
chi un 次李佐郞 謝惠墨竹扇之韻.
28 Sŏng Sam-mun 松三問 (1418-1456), Sŏng Kŭnbo chip 成謹甫集 (The Collected Works of Sŏng Kŭnbo),
1758, 1.21b Ch’ya Muuge su ch’ang si un 次武溪酬唱詩話.
29 Cho Kwang-jo 鄭光祖 (1482-1519), Ch’ŏng-am chip 靜庵集 (The Collected Works of Ch’ŏng-am), 1681,
purok 附錄, 4.20b-21a che Tobong sŏwŏn Ch’oe Rip 題道峯書院 崔壳 (1539-1612). Yi Chae 李載
(1657-1730), Mil-am chip 密庵集 (The Collected Works of Mil-am), n.d., 13.24b-26b Sŏknum chŏngsa
chungsu ki 右門精舍重修記.
30 The personalization of Wuyi is an important development. Kim Suhang, for instance, described
Sunch’ang’s Chŏm’am Village as Kim In-hŭ 金麟厚 (1510-1560)’s Wuyi. See Kim Su-hang 金壽恒
(1629-1689), Mungok chip 文谷集 (The Collected Works of Mungok), 1699, 4.20a-b Sunch’ang Chŏm-am
ch’on 潭昌鮑巖村.
31 Yi Chong-nip 李廷立 (1556-1595), Kye-ŭn yugo 溪隱遺稿 (The Posthumous Writings of Kye-ŭn), 1708,
15b-17a Ch’ŏngsong tang sang yang mun 獨松堂上樑文. Original text: 白鹿之舊洞蕪沒, 溪風嵐雨, 吳Empresa
之精舍頹傾. 興國黨之同墓.
32 Yi Min-bo 李敏輔 (1720-1799), P’ungsŏ chip 豐聲集 (The Collected Works of P’ungsŏ), n.d., 13 myo
Kal 茅堂, Chŏs’a chung Chip’Young Chŏng kong myo kal myŏng 穀土贈詩平鄭公墓碑銘.
33 Chŏng Sik 鄭栻 (1683-1746). The collection of his written works, Myŏng-am chip 明庵集 (The
Collected Works of Myŏng-am), is found in the Kyujanggak Collection.
34 For the discussion of sagely living in the Korean Wuyi, see note 22.
35 For detailed information on the Nine Bends sites in North Ch’ungh’ŏn province, see Lee Sang-ju
이상주, Ch’unghuk ū kugok kwa kugok si—Sŏn-in ū kil ū llae hansı wa chayŏn sok uro: Ch’unghuk hak
yŏngu ch’onggŏ 5 九曲的景觀和景物—씀인의 길을 따라 한시와 자연속으로: 九曲輔景觀5
Ch’unghuk kaebal yŏngguwŏn pusŏl Ch’unghuk hak yŏnguso, 2007. Elsewhere, seeing the widespread
Nine Bends jingje 衛洲 as a defining feature of Korean landscape, Lee proposed the establishment of “Special
Area of Nine Bends Culture and Tourism 九曲文化觀光特區.” See Lee Sang-ju, “Kugok munhwa
kwangwang tükku wa ku kugok sŏch’ŏngjatul ū hangmae ‘九曲文化觀光特區와
For No’s account on his experience at the academy, see Kŭmgye chip, 4.24a-36a wŏndang sŏngch’ŏn 院堂升殿.

For the content of the “Correct Principles,” see Kŭmgye chip, 2.7b-8b Myŏngdo tang mok pyŏngp’ung chŏngnon 明道堂木屏正論.

Kŭmgye ilgi, March 29 and April 6.

Ibid., April 11.

Ibid., May 4.

For examples of the eulogies dedicated to No, see Yu Sŏng-ryong 柳成龍 (1542-1607)’s account in Kŭmgye chip 5.2b-3b, Chŏng Chon-jung 崇存中 (1721-1798)’s in 5.3b-5a, Cho Ki-bok 趙基復 (1773-1839)’s in 5.16b-17b, Cho Hŭi-il 趙希逸 (1755-1838)’s in 5.1b-2b, Yi Man-su 李晚秀 (1752-1820)’s in 5.5a-7a, Yi Hyŏng-dal 李亨達 (cir. 1750)’s in 5.13a-14b, and Yi Hong-t’aek 李宏宅 (cir. 18th c.)’s in 7.11a-b. There were eulogies issued by organizations, such as the one by the National University 太學 7.6b-7b, and by the Chŏlla province Confucian Association 全羅道疏會 7.7b-8a.


Yi Tŏk-su 李德壽 (1673-1744), Sŏdang saje 烏堂私載 (The Personal Records of Sŏdang), n.d., 4.21a-22b Yong-am sŏwŏn 龍岩書院記.

Yun Ki 尹悌 (1741-1826), Mumyŏngja chip 無名子集 (The Collected Works of the Anonymous), 4 i Kim Úng-ch’ŏn chu’l kayo sa po kam yŏng chang 金應天查看更多歌謠事報監督箋, i Paek Ijae sawŏn 十義家 sawŏn sap o kam yŏng chang 以自聰睿院事報監督箋, and i yŏngdang sawŏn sa in yŏng che kaeng po 以院堂院事因營督要報. Original text: 本縣之新安面.有異谷之里.而山號武夛.水名朱川.故一邑儒士興.會議營建朱夫子影堂.爾時任縣監創議建朱夫子影堂於新安面武夛山下.盖以其地名之相合也.…謂不可無朱子祠院.

Yŏng-ho Ch’oe’s study shows the private academies in these provinces accounted for almost seventy percent of the total number. See Yŏng-ho Ch’oe, “Private Academies and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea,” in Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn, edited by JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Martina Deuchsler (Harvard-Hallym University Culture Series on Korean Studies, 1999), 27.

For more information on the politicization of private academies, see ibid., 41.


Chosŏn wango sillok, Sukjong 諞宗 50, 37th year 1711, September 20, second article.

Ilŏng rok 日省錄 (The Diary of the Kings), Chŏngjo 正祖, 3rd year 1779, July 27th. For another example, see Ilŏng rok, Chŏngjo 正祖, 21st year 1799, August 30.

The reforms instigated kingdom-wide protest, and numerous appeals were made for the re-establishment of academies and shrines. See, for instance, the repeated appeal for the permission to re-establish Sohyŏn Academy. Chosŏn wango sillok, Kojong 高宗, 15th year 1878, March 11, and 21st year 1884, February 13.

III.2.b The Poetic Discourse

Zhu Xi’s poetry was introduced to Korea in the late Koryŏ along with other writings of his. The poetic works of Zhu Xi were highly esteemed by the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians who believed the study of the master’s poetry was an integral part of the overall cultivation of the literati. The integratedness of poetic and moral cultivation and the vital role of Zhu Xi’s poetry in this learning process were expounded by King Chŏngjo 正祖 (1752-1800), one of the most ardent royal supporters of Neo-Confucianism in the Chosŏn.

Among today’s poetry, in shaping the kind of literati this generation needs, there is none like Master Zhu’s poetry which has all that is required. Chanting it ceaselessly, it will dissolve the dregs in the heart-mind and activate the circulation of blood. Peaceful and honest heart-mind will naturally be born, and evil and indolent intent will not rise. Nearby one can serve one’s parents. Far away one can serve one’s sovereign. Therefore, being able to be inspired, to see, and to gather in such a manner, this is the poetic education of the ancient kings.¹

Of particular importance were Zhu Xi’s “Inspired” poem and Wuyi poems, which were seen as his representative poetic works, greatly effective in advancing sage learning.² As was the case in China, the Nine Bends poem and the Wuyi Retreat poem became the two most celebrated of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems in the Chosŏn. The educational benefits of the two poems were explained by King Chŏngjo as follows:

If one wants to experience the wonder of the revelation and concealment of substance (ti) and function (yong), read the Nine Bends poem. … If one wants to know the benevolent men’s love of mountains and the wise men’s love of waters, the joy of soaring eagles and leaping fish, and the harmonious airs of the spring wind and the loveliness of the propitious rays and clouds, read the Wuyi Retreat poem.³

Frequently recalled and narrated in the personal time of reflection and also in the public setting of literati gathering,⁴ the reflective recitation of the two poems became an
essential part in the daily cultivation of many Korean Neo-Confucians, including T’oegye, who made chanting of the Nine Bends poem a necessary component in his teaching.⁵

These poems were believed to convey the poetic jingjie of Wuyi, of Zhu Xi, and of his teachings, which was described as an “outstanding jing 勝境,”⁶ a “true jing 真境,”⁷ and a “spiritual jing 靈境.”⁸ The poetic jingjie of Wuyi transcended temporal and spatial boundaries—“the delight of Wuyi’s jing is not affected by the distance of ten thousand years,” noted Song Si-yŏl.⁹ Poetically contrasting the achievements of Zhu Xi and Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139-1192), another influential Southern Song Neo-Confucian whose teachings the Cheng-Zhu school was critical of, Han Wŏn-jin 韓元震 (1682-1751) remarked: “Looking back, even though Xiang Mountain 象山 (Lu’s dwelling place and also his personal pseudonym) is lost in brambles and overgrown trees, for thousand generations there will be no end to Wuyi’s spring.”¹⁰ As a poetic territory, the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians could access Wuyi through poetic engagement.

Although Master Zhu’s generation is far gone and his place also distant, when I read his books and recite his poetry and imagine his leisurely life and remaining traces, suddenly a hundred generations become morning and evening, and ten thousand li becomes a short step.¹¹

These words of Sin Ik-hwang 申益愰 (1672-1722) illustrate that the poetic connection transformed the experience of Wuyi into an immediate and personal one, overcoming the temporal and spatial separation and enabling him to wander in the poetico-spiritual territory of Wuyi and Zhu Xi.

One of the ways to personalize the experience of Wuyi jingjie was by matching Zhu Xi’s poems. Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems were widely matched by the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians. Sŏ Kŏ-jŏng 徐居正 (1420-1488)’s matching poem to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Retreat
poem written in the mid-fifteenth century is one of the earliest examples. But it was the Nine Bends poem that received more attention and eventually became a principal model of poetic creation. The matching and imitation of the Nine Bends poem was so prevalent in the Chosŏn that it evolved into an established poetic style, giving rise to what Kim Mun-chie identified as the “Nine Bends Song type poetry 九曲歌系詩歌.” The poem was matched in whole—as we see in the matching poems by T’oegeye, Pak Min-su 朴敏樹 (1501-1577), Kim Pu-ryun 金富倫 (1531-1598), Chŏng Ku 鄭逵 (1543-1620), Yi Kwang-jŏng 李光庭 (1552-1627), Kwŏn Wi 權暐 (1552-1630), and Chŏng Chong-no 鄭宗魯 (1738-1816), and also in part—as in the examples by Yi Ŭn-jŏk 李彦迪 (1491-1553) and Sŏ Sa-wŏn 徐思遠 (1550-1615), but in both cases the form and rhymes of Zhu Xi’s original poem were repeated.

The most notable feature in the poetic development of Wuyi jingjie in Korea was the creative adaptation of Zhu Xi’s poem to celebrate the Korean Nine Bends jingjie. A large number of Nine Bends sites in the Chosŏn had poems dedicated to them, and often times the poems were written after Zhu Xi’s rhymes. Pak Ha-dam 朴河淡 (1497-1560)’s “Song of Unmun Nine Bends 雲門九曲歌,” Sŏng Yŏ-sin 成汝信 (1546-1632)’s “Kūmch’on Nine Bends Poem 琴川九曲詩,” Yi Hyŏng-sang 李衡祥 (1653-1733)’s “Sŏnggo Nine Bends 城皋九曲,” Yun Pong-gu 尹鳳九 (1681-1767)’s “Kaya Nine Bends 伽倻九曲,” Yu Hŭng-sŏn 柳興善 (1875-1951)’s “Yuch’on Nine Bends 柳川九曲,” and Chŏng Pŏm-jo 丁範祖 (1723-1801)’s “Un-am Nine Bends 雲巖九曲” are examples of the poems that praise the scenic beauty of the Korean Nine Bends, while borrowing the poetic style first set by Zhu Xi. The composition of Korean Nine Bends poetry
sometimes entailed group effort: the most celebrated example being the creation of “Kosan Nine Bends Poem 高山九曲詩,” the poetry project initiated by Song Si-yŏl and involved the total of ten people, each writing a verse for this ten-stanza poem.\(^{18}\) Other Nine Bends poems were composed as a kind of poetic travelogue, recording the journey in the form of the Nine Bends poem.\(^{19}\)

Also matched and adapted were the Nine Bends poems written by fellow Chosŏn Neo-Confucians. Especially, the poems of famous Neo-Confucian masters, such as T’oegye’s “Twelve Songs of Tosan 陶山十二曲” and Yulgok’s “Song of Kosan Nine Bends 高山九曲歌,” were deemed worthy of emulation and had a huge influence on later poetic works, the development we will examine in detail in the last chapter.\(^{20}\) Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems also inspired the rise of various other poetic creations, including some descriptive poems on Wuyi and its Nine Bends\(^{21}\) and playful reworkings of the Nine Bends poem that we see in Ch’ae P’aeng-yun 蔡彭胤 (1669-1731)’s “Tŏk-am Woodcutter’s Song 德巖樵歌” and Kim Hyo-wŏn 金孝元 (b. 1532)’s poem “Nine Cliffs 九折壁.”\(^{22}\)

In all these poetic examples, Wuyi’s Nine Bends was celebrated as a Neo-Confucian poetic territory which one could enter, wander, and live in. In the poetic jingjie of Wuyi, the Chosŏn literati sought to experience the sagely living and the joy it accompanied. They believed the unswerving joy of the sages was found in the leisurely and frugal living of “playing in the mountains and waters of Wuyi, and living on coarse rice and water.”\(^{23}\) Through poetry they could enter Zhu Xi’s “territory of poetic sentiment
情境，“spiritually wander 神遊 in Wuyi’s midst,” and “leisurely swim and immerse in Wuyi’s billows 優游涵泳武夷瀾.”

The Poetic Jingjie of Wuyi in Paintings

The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians also believed that paintings of Wuyi, combined with poetry, could aid in the poetic experience of Wuyi jingjie. The popularity and impact of Wuyi Nine Bends paintings in the Chosŏn far exceeded what we saw in China. The physical separation from Wuyi certainly elevated the importance of visual images as the primary means through which the Chosŏn literati came to be acquainted with the mountain’s physical appearance. The active use of paintings in the poetic experience of Wuyi can be regarded as one of the distinguishing features of the Chosŏn Neo-Confucian culture.

As Zhu Xi’s learning grew in popularity, so did the demand for the images of Wuyi. Authentic Chinese paintings of Wuyi were rare finds, and only a few fortunate ones could get a hold of them, like Kim Sŏng-il 金誠一 (1538-1593), who in 1577 brought back a scroll painting of Wuyi Nine Bends 武夷九曲之圖 from a diplomatic mission to Beijing. These valuable paintings from China were copied by the Chosŏn artists. T’oegye’s student Yi Tam 李湛 (1652-1715), whose art collection included a Chinese painting of Wuyi Nine Bends, hired an artist to copy the painting and presented it to his teacher as a gift. A copy of the same painting was also found in the collection of the later Neo-Confucian Chŏng Ku.

Most people, however, relied on the woodblock print illustrations found in imported books from the Ming for the images of Wuyi, such as the Wuyi zhi 武夷志 (The
Record of Wuyi) and the *Hai nei qi guan* 海内奇觀 (Outstanding Views within the Country). Compared to paintings, these woodblock illustrations contained much more succinct and coarse representations of Wuyi, highlighting only the key features of the mountain and its various sites in black and white. Nevertheless, these books enjoyed wide circulation in the Chosŏn, and their illustrations of Wuyi had a huge impact on shaping the Korean imagination of Wuyi. The illustrations in the *Wuyi zhi* were used as the model for the Korean representations of Wuyi: Im Sang-dŏk 林象徳 (1683-1719), for instance, had an artist paint nine paintings of Wuyi based on the images found in the book, each painting depicting one of the Nine Bends. The paintings, along with the calligraphy of Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem and T’oegye’s matching poem, were made into a ten-panel screen.

While it was more common to employ a professional hand, some literati decided to personally render the images of Wuyi. An Myŏng-ha 安命夏 (1682-1752) and Kim Che-ŏn 金濟彥 (cir. 1800s) each replicated a painting of Wuyi Nine Bends 武夷九曲圖, and Yi Man-bu 李萬敷 (1664-1732) even copied multiple images from the *Wuyi zhi* and made an illustrated album called the *Mui chi ryak* 武夷志略 (A Summary of the Record of Wuyi), which included illustrations of the Nine Bends and descriptive labels of various sites. In fact, making of such personalized Wuyi albums seemed to have been prevalent in the Chosŏn. The albums, which combined the copied paintings, Wuyi poems, and a personal preface, were greatly cherished and even passed down from generation to generation. Chŏng Chong-no, for instance, owned a Wuyi album put together by his grandfather that had a painting of Wuyi Nine Bends, Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem, T’oegye’s matching poem, and a personal postscript. Chŏng treasured
the album and often recited the poems from it. Other Neo-Confucians, such as Chŏng Ku and Chŏng Kyŏng-se 鄭經世 (1563-1633), compiled their own versions of the Muici 武夷志 (Record of Wuyi); the one by Chŏng Ku featured a painting of Wuyi Nine Bends and Zhu Xi’s Wuyi poems, and Chŏng Kyŏng-se’s a painting of Wuyi Nine Bends, Zhu Xi’s “Record of Wuyi Retreat 武夷精舍記” and the Nine Bends poem, and T’oegye’s matching Nine Bends poem. Yi Sŏn 李選 (1632-1692) assembled his father Yi Hu-wŏn 李厚源 (1598-1660)’s paintings of Zhu Xi’s portrait and Wuyi Nine Bends, personal praise of the portrait, Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem, T’oegye and Chŏng Kyŏng-se’s postscripts, and created the Angji rok 仰止錄 (The Record of Utmost Admiration) in honour of his father.

The artistic representation of poetic Wuyi jingjie was not limited to imitation only. Inspired by the images of Wuyi Nine Bends, the visual representations of Korean Nine Bends began to emerge, advancing a more creative adaptation of the poetic Nine Bends discourse. In the seventeenth century, we see the shift in focus from the depiction of Chinese Nine Bends to that of Korean Nine Bends. Cho Se-gŏl 曺世傑 (b. 1635)’s “Painting of Kok-un Nine Bends 谷雲九曲圖” and Kwŏn Sin-ŭng 權晨應 (cir. 1756)’s “Painting of Hwayang Nine Bends 華陽九曲圖” are good examples of Korean Nine Bends paintings from the period, which, as the Chosŏn literati described, captured a “good jingjie 好境界,” an “imaginary jingjie 幻境界,” fit for spiritual wandering. These Korean Nine Bends paintings, as Yun Chin-yŏng’s study shows us, led the way to the development of the Real Landscape Paintings (chin’gyŏng sansu 真景山水) in the eighteenth century, an important breakthrough in the history of Korean
art; what started as the imitation of Wuyi later turned into indigenous poetic and artistic expressions of the Chosŏn literati culture.

In the years that followed, the production of Korean Nine Bends paintings continued to grow, keeping up with the geopolitical and poetic expansion of Nine Bends jingjie throughout Korea. The result was further indigenization of the poetic discourse of Nine Bends. At the same time, the desire for creative reinterpretation of Chinese Wuyi Nine Bends also increased. Compared to the earlier attempts, these later representations paid little attention on portraying Wuyi as a real geological and cultural site. Instead, the mountains and waters were rearranged in the shape of taiji and other abstract patterns, and Wuyi Nine Bends became increasingly imaginary. Especially after its incorporation into the folk painting tradition, the image of Wuyi Nine Bends became even more simplified and dramatized. The folk adaptation often featured literal translation from the textual into the visual: for example, rendering the Jade Maiden Peak in the shape of a lady. These developments transformed Wuyi into an eccentric and unreal place, an “imaginary landscape” or a “dream landscape” as Ch’oe Chong-hyŏn called it. It is important to note that even these images of Nine Bends were almost always accompanied by related poems, together creating and expanding the poetic jingjie. On the whole, the changing visual representations reveal the Chosŏn literati’s endeavour to own and claim the poetic territory of Wuyi Nine Bends.

*The Korean Experience of Wuyi Jingjie in Paintings*

The images of Wuyi Nine Bends were created and viewed for the purpose of advancing one’s moral cultivation. As we already discussed in the chapter on the Neo-
Confucian poetic discourse of sagelyjingjie, the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians developed a
number of educational painting themes for them to work on in their pastime in order that
their artistic exercise would also be a moral exercise.⁴² These painting themes—for
example, Zhou Dunyi’s garden with overgrown grass, and Cheng Hao nearing the
flowers and following the willow—were thought to illuminate the ways to flourish in
virtue and arrive at principle. As Chang Hyŏn-gwang 張顯光 (1554-1637) expounded
such artistic exploration was considered a vital part of overall sagely learning: “Even in
minor affairs and small skills, we must seek the affairs of all sages and worthies with the
intention of investigating all things to the full.”⁴³ Hanyong涵泳 (literally, immersing and
swimming), a mode of Neo-Confucian learning generally used to describe deep personal
interaction with the text and the author, also came to denote an aesthetic mode of
engagement with the painting, facilitating the access of aestheticjingjiefound in the art
works.⁴⁴ The two most popular artistic themes for the Chosŏn literati were “the Life of
Confucius聖蹟圖” and “Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends武夷九曲圖.” The educational
benefits of personally executing the painting of Wuyi Nine Bends have been noted by
many scholars, including Song Si-yŏl who pointed out such artistic endeavour would help
inspire common scholars.⁴⁵

The experience of poetic Wuyijingjie also came through the viewing of the
painting, the event that brought Zhu Xi, his teachings, and his life closer to the viewer.
The painting and the poem became a gateway to what was temporally and spatially
distant, and the viewing of Wuyi Nine Bends painting freed the literati from their
physical bounds and transported them to the time and place of Zhu Xi.⁴⁶ “Unknowingly
my body is surrounded amidst the mountains of Wuyi, enveloped in the lingering
fragrance of the Way and Virtue” — these words of Chŏng Ku capture the feeling of joyous liberation the painting of Wuyi Nine Bends created. The immediacy of this poetic experience was expressed in T’oegeye’s account:

There are numerous paintings of Wuyi in circulation today. In the past when I was in the capital, I sought several copies and had someone to copy them for me. But the original paintings were coarse and incomplete and did not capture the fullness of Wuyi. My friend Yi Chung-gu recently sent me a painting of Wuyi. Viewing it, my eyes were filled with clouds and mist. The wondrous Nine Bends were fully portrayed, and around my ears I could suddenly hear the boat song. Ah! My friend and I, we each hire a boat under the Curtain Pavilion Peak, and rest the oar at the Stone Gate Dock. Ascending to the Hall of Humaneness and Wisdom, we leisurely listen to the lecture during the day and retreat with all other students, singing and mingling at the Studio of Secluded Pursuit.48

Such personal experience of Wuyi painting was identified as “spiritual wandering 臥遊” in Wuyi jingjie; T’oegeye, for instance, remarked how the painting of Wuyi Nine Bends allowed him to wander spiritually in the poetic territory of Wuyi while he was battling illness in the mountain villa.49

But as much it was educational and invigorating, this poetic experience was also playful. The images of Wuyi Nine Bends were to be playfully enjoyed 可玩, because the viewing of them created great pleasure. The painting was considered a particularly excellent medium for joining in the sagely joy of Zhu Xi.

The joy of the Master! How can a common person like me imitate it? Therefore, I use the painting to playfully enjoy it. The hearts must come together and the spirits meet without my knowing. What I gain from it, isn’t it profound?51

These words of Yi Sang-jŏng 李象靖 (1710-1781) highlight the ludic nature of the experience and show us how the aesthetic engagement with the painting led to deeper spiritual communion with Zhu Xi.
Because of these benefits, the poems and paintings of Wuyi Nine Bends became a favoured gift item exchanged widely among the literati. Together the poem and the painting were thought to have the ability to uplift and comfort one’s spirit, and hence were commonly presented to those suffering from illness. The therapeutic benefits of the painting of Wuyi, in particular, have been noted by T’oegye and Song Chun-gil 宋浚吉. The albums of Wuyi Nine Bends were also frequently exchanged, and among close friends personal calligraphy of the poem was requested and given as a sign of friendship. The painting of Wuyi Nine Bends was also used as an official diplomatic gift from Ming to Chosŏn. In 1537 the Ming court sent twenty paintings of Wuyi Nine Bends to Chosŏn, which King Chungjong 中宗 (1488-1544) ordered to have made into two sets of ten-panel screen.

The widespread use of Nine Bends poems and paintings illustrates the importance of the creation and appreciation of the poetic jingjie of Wuyi and Nine Bends in constructing and maintaining the social and cultural life of the Chosŏn literati. The poetic and artistic imitation and adaptation of the Nine Bends discourse was most prominent in the mid-Chosŏn, roughly from 1550 to 1700, during which the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian ideology enjoyed almost unchallenged supremacy. The production of Nine Bends poems and paintings, however, continued to the end of the Chosŏn into the nineteenth century. The reason for its prolonged influence is two-fold. For one the Cheng-Zhu learning remained a powerful ideological and political force, even in times its fortune was threatened by opposing ideas. For another, through the process of territorialization Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie became an essential part of the geopolitical and poetic landscape of Korea, as a result, becoming an enduring source of inspiration for
poetic and artistic creations. As was in China, the poetic discourse of Wuyi jingjie became carefully woven into the fabric of Korean literati’s individual and social identity. It helped transcend the historical and cultural barriers between the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians and the Song Neo-Confucian masters, and at the same time assisted the former in their search for personal and homegrown expressions of Neo-Confucian spirituality.

[Plate 11] The Painting of Kok-un Nine Bends 谷雲九曲圖 by Cho Se-gŏl 曹世傑 (b. 1635)
The First Bend, Panghwa Stream 傍花溪

[Plate 12] The Painting of Hwayang Nine Bends 華陽九曲圖 by Kwŏn Sin-ŭng 權晨應 (1728-1787)
The Ninth Bend
[Plate 13] The Painting of Wuyi Nine Bends

[Plate 14] The Painting of Wuyi Nine Bends
The Second Bend
1. Chŏngjo 正祖 (1752-1800), Hongjae chŏnsŏ 弘齋全書 (The Complete Works of Hongjae), 1799, 182.4.4.8.10b-13b ch’inch’an sŏ 親撰序. Original text: 由今之時, 造今之士. 莫如學夫子之詩而實有所得. 於詩歌經論之際, 消融汙漬, 動盪血脈, 易直子諒之心油然生. 非師情摯之志無以作. 紳之可以事父, 遠之可以事君. 可以親於斯, 可以誅於斯. 可以尊於斯, 而先王之詩敎. The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians admired Zhu Xi’s “Inspired” poem and Nine Bends poem. Ch’oe Yu-ji 崔飲之 (1603-1673), for instance, recited them daily and believed they revealed the process of advancing in the dao. He also wrote commentaries on the poems and made them known. See Hong Yang-ho 洪良浩 (1724-1802), Yi gyoe chip 耳溪集 (The Collected Works of Yi Gyoe), 1843, 31.1a-5b Kanho Ch’oe kong moyo kalmyŏng 良湖崔公墓碣銘.

2. The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians admired Zhu Xi’s “Inspired” poem and Nine Bends poem. Ch’oe Yu-ji 崔飲之 (1603-1673), for instance, recited them daily and believed they revealed the process of advancing in the dao. He also wrote commentaries on the poems and made them known. See Hong Yang-ho 洪良浩 (1724-1802), Yi gyoe chip 耳溪集 (The Collected Works of Yi Gyoe), 1843, 31.1a-5b Kanho Ch’oe kong moyo kalmyŏng 良湖崔公墓碣銘.

3. See note 1. Original text: ... 遠之可以事君. 可以親於斯, 可以誅於斯. 可以尊於斯, 而先王之詩敎. The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians admired Zhu Xi’s “Inspired” poem and Nine Bends poem. Ch’oe Yu-ji 崔飲之 (1603-1673), for instance, recited them daily and believed they revealed the process of advancing in the dao. He also wrote commentaries on the poems and made them known. See Hong Yang-ho 洪良浩 (1724-1802), Yi gyoe chip 耳溪集 (The Collected Works of Yi Gyoe), 1843, 31.1a-5b Kanho Ch’oe kong moyo kalmyŏng 良湖崔公墓碣銘.

4. Song Nŭng-sang’s account reveals how Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem was recalled and recited in both personal and public occasions in the life of the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians. See Song Nŭng-sang 申念相 (1710-1758), Unpyŏng chip 远坪集 (The Collected Works of Unp’yŏng), 1807-1827, 1.11b-12a mo ch’un ki màng yu 嘉慶元年, and 8.2a-b yu Yongdam Bulchido ki 遠達儒不知廟記. The Nine Bends poem was often recited on a boat trip. See Yi Tong-ho 李東標 (1654-1700), Na-ŭn chip 鳴隱集 (The Collected Works of Na-ŭn), 1880, 1 yu Baengmagang rok 靜白馬江緑.

5. Chŏng Sa-sŏng 鄭士盛 (1545-1607), Chihŏn chip 心田稿 (The Writings of the Heart-Mind), 1821, nyŏnbo 年譜 2b.

6. Pak Sa-ho 朴思浩 (b. 1786), Simjun ko 心田稿 (The Writings of the Heart-Mind), 1828, 3 tap Chu Kusan 趙南山書.

7. Kim In-hu 金鍾厚 (1510-1560), Hasŏ chŏnchip 河西全集 (The Complete Works of Hasŏ), 1802, 1.11a-b Mui san pu 武夷山譜, Chŏng Chong-no, Ipcchae chip, 6.13b-14b ka yu Mui to pyŏng sajok simun il kwŏn 有武夷圖並事蹟詩文一卷. Kwŏn Man 欽萬 (b. 1688), Kangjwa chip 江左集 (The Collected Works of Kangjwa), 19c., 4.13a-b man Yi Chang-yŏng 楊李掌令.


9. Song Si-yŏl, Songja taechŏn, 1.16b-17a yŏ Yi Sasim 裕李士深.

10. Han Wŏn-chin, Namdang chip, 1.2b-3a tohwa ŭi pal ch’ingsin 桃花依舊發精神.


12. Sŏ Kŏ-jŏng 徐居正 (1420-1488), Saga chip 四佳集 (The Collected Works of Sagacho), 1705, 4.6b-7b Chu Munjong Mui chŏngsa to 朱文公武夷精舍圖. The poem was also matched by Yi Yu-jang, who also followed Zhu Xi’s original rhymes. See Yi Yu-jang 李士深 (1625-1701), Kosan chip 松山集 (The Collected Works of Kosan), 1775, 1.21a-22b ch’a Mui chap yong 武夷詠歌. Also see Chŏng Chong-no, Ipcchae chip, 6.7a-8a kyŏng ch’a Mui chŏngsa chap yong un 敬次武夷精舍詠歌韻.


15 Yi Ön-jŏk 李彦迪 (1491-1553), Hoejae chip 昇齋集 (The Collected Works of Hoejae), 1641, 1.5b ch’a Chu Mungong Mui ogok un 次朱文公武夛五曲韻. Sŏ Sa-wŏn 徐思達 (1550-1615), Nakhae sŏnjaeng munji 業齋先生文集 (The Collected Writings of Nakhae), 1843, 1 sŏn yu yong Mui ilgok un 船遊用武夛一曲韻.


18 For the background of the project, see Song Si-yŏl, Sŏngja taechŏn, 89.12b-13b yŏ Kwŏn Ch’ido 與權致道.

For the completed poem, see Yi I, Yulgok chŏnsŏ, purok sokp’yŏn, Kosan kugok si 高山九曲詩.

19 For example, see Cho Hŏn’s poem on his trip to Yulwŏn and Yi Se-gu’s poem on his trip to Todam, both of which describe the scenic beauty of the sites while matching the form and rhyme scheme of Zhu Xi’s poem. Cho Hŏn 崔憲 (1544-1592), Chungbong chip 仲峰集 (The Collected Works of Chungbong), 1748, 1.10a-11b yu Yulwŏn, ch’a Mui toga un 題原原. 次武夛耀歌韻. Yi Se-gu 李世龜 (1646-1700), Yang-wa chip 陽琶集 (The Collected Works of Yang-wa), 17th c., 1 kyŏngbo Mui kugok un ki Todam chi yu ku su 歌步武夛九曲韻記島澤之遊九首.

For examples of the matching and adaptation of the Chosŏn Nine Bends poems, see Chŏng Chong-no, Ipchae chip, 6.14b-17a kyŏng ch’a Tosan chap yong 歌次陶山雜詠, and 6.24a-25b kyŏng ch’a Kosan chap yong 歌次高山雜詠. Chŏng Chong-no, Ipchae chip, 3.12a-14a ch’a Un-am O sirang kijung un, pyŏng po ki kugok sipchŏl pongjigung 次雲巖禹儒郎寄贈詠. 並步其九曲十絕奉呈. For a related study, see Chang Chung-soo 竽錞流, "‘Hwanggang kugok ka’ úi ch’angjae paeyŏng mit kusŏng pansik ‘黃江九曲歌’의 창작 배경 및 구성 방식,” Sijo hak nonch’ong 시조학논총 21 (2004): 241-269.

For examples of descriptive poems of Wuyi, see Sin Ik-sang 申翼相 (1634-1697), Sŏngjae yugo 星齋遺稿 (The Posthumous Writings of Sŏngjae), n.d., 5 ko si 古詩, chak Mui kugok si, t’ar āngang kyŏk towpŏn ro 次武夛九曲詩, 喧鴻魚更宴桃源路. Kim In-hu, Hasŏ chŏnjip, 1.11a-b Mui san pu 武夛山脈.

22 Ch’a P’aeng-yun 蔡彭胤 (1669-1731), Hŭi-am chip 惠庵集 (The Collected Works of Hŭi-am), 1775, 14.12b-13b Tŏk-am ch’ogga, kyŏng hwa Mui toga sip chang un 德巖樵歌, 歌武夛耀歌十章. Kim Hyŏ-wŏn 金孝元 (b. 1532), Sŏnggo kugok 甁窩集 (The Posthumous Writings of Sŏng-ŏm), n.d., 1.4a-5a Kujŏl pyŏk, ch’a Chuja Mui toga sipsu un 九折壁. 次朱子武夛耀歌十首韻.

23 The expression comes from Sin Chŏng-ha 申清夏 (1681-1716)’s account of the life of his teacher Kim Ch’ang-hyŏp. See Kim Ch’ang-hyŏp, Nam-am chip, pyŏlch’i 別集 2.24b-25b mun-in Sin Chŏngha 門人申清夏.

24 Song Si-yŏl, Sŏngja taechŏn, 85.15a-b tap Kim Kunp’yŏng 答金景平.

25 Ibid., 112.8b-9a tap Pak Hakkye 答朴學季.

26 Yu Hŭi-ch’un, Mi-am chip, 1.10a-b sa Chang Kyŏng-sun-kyŏn ka Hoe-am si 謝張景順見暇暇詩詠.


28 Yi Hwang, T’oegye chip, 11.7b-8b tap Yi Chunggu 答李仲久.

29 Chŏng Ku, Han-gang chip, 9.3a-b sŏ Mui chi pu T’oegye Yi sŏnjaeng pal Yi Chunggu ka chang Mui kugok to hŭ 歌武夛志附退溪李先生跋李仲久家藏武夛九曲圖後.
姜亯愛
寄示有源

52 庹乎可以髣髴焉
51 50 49 峯下
君仲久

原作文本:

48

47 46 事小技

45

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43

42

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Pong

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36

35

sŏ Mui chi hu ch'ŏng Kim Che

34

33

kugok toga hu chŭng Kim Che

32

1.17b

31

Ibid., 11.7a

Ibid., sok chip

30

The

29

Yi Sang-dŏk 林象德 (1683-1719), Noch’on chip 老村集 (The Collected Works of Noch’on), 1735,

1.17b-18b kyŏng hwa Mui toga sip chang 武夛九曲圖跋．

28

An Myŏng-ha 安命夏 (1682-1752), Songwa sŏsensaeng munji (The Collected Works of Songwa), n.d., 5 mo Mui kugok to sŏ 武夛九曲圖序．Chŏng Chong-no, Ipchae chip, 25.38b-39a sŏ Mui kugok toga hu ch'ŏng Kim Che-ŏn 書武夛九曲圖歌後贈金濟彥．

27

Yi Man-bu, Siksan chip, 9.20b-27b Mui chi riak 武夛志略．

26

Chŏng Chong-no, Ipcchae chip, 6.13b-14b ka yu Mui to pyŏng sajŏk simun il kwŏn 書武夛九曲圖歌後贈金濟彥詩文一卷．

25

Chŏng Ku, Han-gang chip, 10.22a-23b Mui chi pal 武夛志跋．Chŏng Kyŏng-se, Ubok chip, 15.20b-21a sŏ Mui chi hu 書武夛志後．

24

Yi Sŏn 李選 (1632-1692), Chiho chip 芝湖集 (The Collected Works of Chiho), 1856, 6.28a-29a Angji rok pal 仰止錄跋．

23

Kim Ch’ang-hyŏp described Kok-un Nine Bends Painting as a “good jingjie.” See Kim Ch’ang-hyŏp, Nong-am chip, 25.4b-6a kugok to pal 谷雲九曲圖跋．Cho Kwì-myŏng compared the painting of Hwayang Grotto to “imaginary jingjie．” See Cho Kwì-myŏng 趙鍾鉉 (1692-1737), Tonggye chip 東溪集 (The Collected Works of Tonggye), 1741, 6.24a-b che hwa ch’ŏp 題圖詩，Ch’ae Chi-hong spoke of the experience of spiritual wandering 詠遊 the Painting of Hwayang Nine Bends creates．See Ch’ae Chi-hong, Pong-am chip, 1.17b kăn ch’á Kim Suwŏn Hwayang kugok hwa ch’ul si un 譁次全水席華陽九曲畫出時．

22

Yun Chin-yŏng 尹椿映， "Chosasīside kugok to ŭi suyong kwa chŏngae 朝鮮時代 九曲圖의 受容과 展開，" Misul sahak yŏngu 美術史學研究 254 (Jun. 2007): 23．

21


20

See Yun Chin-yŏng (1998): 82．

19

According to Ch’oe, these Korean paintings represented Wuyi Nine Bends as an imaginary landscape, a dream landscape, markedly different from the Korean landscape．See Ch’oe Chong-hyŏn 崔鍾鉉， "Chuja ŭi Mui kugok to 朱子的武夛九曲圖，" Silhak ssangyŏngu 實學史論叢 14 (Jun. 2000): 720．

18

Yi Hwang, T’oegeye chip, 2.37b-39a Hwang Chung gŏ ku che hwa sip p’ok 黃仲撫求題畫十幅．

17

Chang Hyŏn-gwang, Yŏhŏn chip, sok chip 續集, 9.39a-44a kyŏngmo rok 敬和錄．Original text: 雖在末事小技，必求諸聖賢事業上，以表窮格之意．

16

Yi Saek, Mok-in ko, 31.8a-b che Un-gye kwŏn 題隱溪巻．

15

Song Si-yŏl, Songja taechŏn, 51.37a-b yŏ Kim Yŏnji 金延之．

14

Song Si-yŏl enjoyed viewing the painting of Wuyi because it enabled him to reach beyond his physical body and experience the birthplace of the Chong-Zhu learning in person．See Song Si-yŏl, Songja taechŏn, 2.5b ki si Yuwŏn 寄示書源．

13

Chŏng Ku, Han-gang chip, 10.22a-23b Mui chi pal 武夛志跋．Original text: 不覺此身周旋於隱屏鐵笛之間．

12

Yi Hwang, T’oegeye chip, 43.21a-22a Yi Chunggu ka chang Mui kugok to pal 李仲久家藏武夛九曲圖跋．Original text: 世傳武夛圖多矣，余昔在京師，求得數本，時在名畫執來，由其元本略略，傳亦未盡．吾友李君仲久，近寄一本來，滿目真偽．精妙曲盡，耳邊忽聞歌吹矣．噫．吾與吾友，復不得同時賞鏡亭亭山下，又遊於石門塢前．獲聞仁智堂．日侍講道之餘，退而與諸門人，詠歌周旋於隱求觀善之間．

11

Ibid., sok chip 續集, 6.38a-b tap Kim Kyŏng-am 答金景巖．

10

Ibid., 11.7a-b tap Yi Chunggu 答李仲久．

9

Yi Sang-jŏng, Taesan chip, 45.33a-34b Mui kugok to pal 武夛九曲圖跋．Original text: 然後先生之樂．

8

府乎可以髣髴焉．於是而按圖徐行，必有心繚神會而不自知者．其所得又不更深矣乎．

7

The Mui chi was exchanged among Korean Neo-Confucians as a gift item．See Sŏ Sa-wŏn 徐思遠 (1550-1615), Nakchae chip 業齋集 (The Collected Works of Nakchae), 1843, 3 sang Han-gang Chŏng sŏnsaeng 上寒岡鄭先生．
Song Chun-gil discusses the therapeutic function of the painting of Wuyi Nine Bends, which he received from his brother during his illness. See Song Chun-gil 宋浚吉 (1606-1672), *Tongch'undang chip* 同春堂集 (The Collected Works of Tongch’undang), 1687, 10.21b-22a yŏ Yi Sasim 裏李士深.

Ki Tae-sŭng requested from T’oegeye personal calligraphy of Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem. See Ki Tae-sŭng 奇大升 (1527-1572), *Kobong chip* 高峯集 (The Collected Works of Kobong), 1988, wangbok sŏ 往復書, 1.18a-b so ch’ŏpcha 小貼子.

Chosŏn wangjo sillok 中宗, kwŏn 85, 32nd year May 1.


A collection of the National Museum of Korea. Image source: http://blog.daum.net/kimsh78594/12291638


A Collection of the National Museum of Korea. Image source, see note 39.
III.2.c The Philosophical Discourse

The unravelling of the “correct” interpretation of Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem became a serious philosophical problem, especially in the Chosŏn, where an array of divergent readings arose. Chen Pu’s commentary, which reached wide circulation by the mid-sixteenth century, sparked what evolved into a prolonged intellectual debate, lasting for several centuries. The commentary enjoyed great popularity and was copied extensively by the Korean literati. The hand-copied versions often contained wrong characters and missing characters, and the authentic and complete edition was in great demand.¹ The commentary played a momentous role in shaping the Korean understanding of the poem. Chen’s interpretation was adopted by many, including the influential scholar and royal tutor Kim In-hu 金麟厚 (1510-1560), who echoed the commentary’s view in his poetic response to Zhu Xi’s poem:

君看九曲武夷歌
When you read the Song of Wuyi Nine Bends,
進學工夫不在他
The way of advancing in learning does not lie outside of it.
次第分明須默會
The clearly laid out order must be realized in person.
桑麻雨露總中和
Mulberry and hemp, rain and mist come together in harmony.²

Maintaining that “poetry and the Way are not different, and both originate from nature and emotion 詩道非他本性情,”³ Kim interpreted the Nine Bends poem as a philosophical analogy in poetic form.

One of the first Korean Neo-Confucians to voice doubts about the commentary’s interpretation was T’oegye. In his letter to Ki Tae-sŭng 奇大升 (1527-1572), T’oegye revealed his struggle to grasp the true meaning of the poem intended by Zhu Xi.

In leisure I often read the Wuyi zhi and see there were many who matched the Boat Song of Wuyi. But it seems there hasn’t been any who went deep into the meaning intended by the master. I also once read the commentary

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on the Boat Song published and printed by Liu Gai [i.e. Chen Pu’s commentary], which interpreted the Nine Bends poem from the beginning to the end as learning the order of entering the Way. I am afraid the original intention of the master was not so limited. Recently Mujang Pyŏn Sŏng-on 卞成溫 (1540-1614) who once studied with Kim Hasŏ 金河西 (i.e. Kim In-hu 金麟厚) came from afar to see me and showed me a regulated poem by Hasŏ, which was entirely based on the commentary’s reading. I don’t know what your general view is. I also once matched the Boat Song, and knowing that I am not worthy of writing it, I have been hiding it from people around. I now present it to you and hope you would appraise and comment on it. In it the ninth bend has two verses. The one in which I used the commentary’s understanding is the older version. Later after mulling over the meaning of “seeking again 更覓” and “besides 除是,” I thought it was not so, and hence wrote another verse. I don’t know of the two which to keep and which to let go.  

What perplexed him the most was the interpretation of the ninth bend, which was also the source of trouble for Liu Mengchun, the Ming commentator of the poem. The ninth bend of Zhu Xi’s poem,

Almost reaching the ninth bend, the eyes suddenly open up.  
Through mulberry and hemp, rain and dew, emerges a peaceful river.  
The fisherman once again seeks the road to Peach Blossom Spring.  
Besides this there is another realm in the human world.

was expounded by Chen Pu as follows:

This kind of scenery is not easily found in the human world. Master has been criticized because of the [last two lines]. It is because those who said so did not understand, but I alone came to realize its wonder. Suddenly attaining penetrating knowledge, there is no obstruction. Daily living is bountiful, and myriad things are all principle. Although leisurely entering the sagely domain, one does not run counter to the ordinariness of people’s daily living. How can it be like leaving the people and severing the connection to the world and engaging in lofty matters that are difficult to attain? What is called the Way is only this. All those who abandon this and seek the Way are heresies and evil teachings, the theories that deceive people and delude the world. The absence of heavenly principle, the decline of the sages, worthies and gentlemen, are all due to not keeping this in the heart.
Chen’s account indicates that the last two lines of the poem, particularly its reference to “Peach Blossom Spring” and “another realm 別有天”—which conventionally denote paradisiacal places in the Daoist tradition—, became a target of criticism in the late Southern Song and early Yuan, causing debates in the Neo-Confucian circle. The problematization of the last two lines continued, and the reference to “another realm” was later identified as one of the six faults of Zhu Xi by the Ming scholar Shen Jizu 沈繼祖 (1573-1620). Chen Pu, however, argued such criticism was based on the lack of deep understanding, and interpreted the whole poem as a carefully designed philosophical analogy.

T’oegeye was not satisfied with Chen’s reading of the verse, which, in his eyes, failed to adequately explain the words of the poem. He argued the last verse of the poem clearly calls for an exploration of what lies beyond the Nine Bends, as suggested in the fisherman seeking again the road to Peach Blossom Spring and the affirmation of the existence of another realm besides this place. The commentary, however, presents the ninth bend as the culmination of learning journey and does not discuss what lies beyond. Quite the contrary, it suggests the pursuit of another transcendental realm—implied in “leaving the people and severing the connection to the world”—contradicts the true way and should be regarded as an unorthodox understanding. T’oegeye asserted such reading “conceals” the poetic text and deceives the reader when the words of the poem clearly “encourage the traveler to seek and enter the jing of Peach Blossom Spring like the fisherman 勸遊人勿如漁人尋入桃源之境.” If Chen Pu interpreted the last two lines as a warning and hence as what should not be followed, T’oegeye saw it as an invitation and suggestion to be followed. T’oegeye, however, did not believe the search for Peach
Blossom Spring signified the search for immortality. Emphasizing that Zhu Xi pointed out this other realm is found in the “human world,” he explained the seeking and entering of the jing of Peach Blossom Spring, as outlined in the poem, differed fundamentally from the Daoist and Buddhist search for the Way in “empty void and distant darkness.”

In my humble opinion, this verse by Master Zhu originally only represented scenery, and the whole jing of Nine Bends only meant outstanding mountain and peaceful river. … In the first two lines of the verse he plainly narrates what he sees. And the last two lines tell us not to regard this jingjie as the ultimate destination and that we must seek until we arrive at the wondrous place of true fountainhead, for there must be yet another one in the ordinary human world.

Following this he concluded that at the beginning the poem did not have the meaning of advancing in learning, and that such a reading was a result of the commentator’s forced interpretation. The poem was originally intended as a poetic description of scenic beauty, he asserted, and supported his argument with matching poems by the Chinese literati in which Wuyi was represented as a scenic spot, not as a philosophical analogy. He claimed the poem in itself features the language of scenic description 景致之語; while it also contains implied meaning 託興寓意, it certainly is not the kind prescribed in the commentary.

Important to note in T’oegye’s discussion is his use of jingjie discourse. If for Chen Pu the Nine Bends represented the nine successive poetico-philosophical territories or stages, for T’oegye it strictly was a poetic territory, a poetic jingjie; the Nine Bends, Peach Blossom Spring, and “another realm” represented a poetic territory that was to be sought and entered. That is to say, while both Neo-Confucians saw the poem as a portrayal of certain jing or jingjie, their divergent discursive emphases led them to
completely different conclusions—one highlighting the vision of hierarchical progression and the other the vision of aesthetically affected life.

The understanding of the Nine Bends poem as a representation of poetic territory was more thoroughly developed by Ki Tae-sŭng. In his correspondence with T’oegye, Ki made an even more drastic shift towards the poetic discourse regarding the interpretation of the poem. If T’oegye still maintained Zhu Xi’s poem as a Confucian work differed in essence from the Daoist and Buddhist poetic work, Ki tried to separate philosophical discussion from poetic discussion and argued the Nine Bends poem was simply a poem, with no connection whatsoever to philosophy.

I believe the ten verses of Master Zhu’s Nine Bends poem are about the poetic stirring by the object (因物起興) which expresses the heart’s delight. The meaning they imply and the words they declare are both clear and lofty, harmonious and profound, unassuming and free, sharing in liveliness with the disposition 氣象 of bathing in the Yi River. How could furtively chosen order of entering the Way have been secretly described into the Nine Bends poem with the intention of fooling people with hidden meaning? I am afraid the concerns of the sages and worthies were not so strange.11

With these words Ki explained the poem as the outcome of poetic inspiration and openly rejected the commentary’s didactic approach. He further expounded that the process of writing the poem involved the merging of “the territory encountered 所遇之境” and “the meaning felt 所感之意”; it was the amalgamation of true jing and true yi, he argued, that gave birth to Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem.12 Moreover, he renounced the possibility of the poem having both poetic and philosophical objectives.

If there was the intention of describing scenery and also the intention of explaining the learning of the Way, then it would be like having two hearts 二心. While reciting it, one would lose the correctness of nature and emotion. As for advancing in learning, a little difference would lead to a thousand li of fault.13
In other words, to him the two approaches—poetic and philosophical—were fundamentally incongruous and hence could not be reconciled. The verse on the ninth bend, therefore, was interpreted by him as the poetic depiction of “truly clear, quiet, and vast jing,” which marked the peak of the journey along the Nine Bends Stream of Wuyi, and those who were not content with it could proceed to seek the jing of Peach Blossom Spring.14

Ki’s complete dismissal of philosophical reading, however, infuriated those who agreed with the basic premises of Chen Pu’s commentary. One of the most outspoken critics of T’oegye’s and Ki Tae-sŏng’s interpretations was Cho Ik 趙翼 (1579-1655), who after carefully examining the correspondences between the two scholars came to the opposite conclusion.15

With regards to the commentary [by Chen Pu], Hasŏ (Kim In-hu) shared similar opinion, T’oegye had doubts, and Kobong (Ki Tae-sŏng) openly denounced it. I do not understand why their opinions were so divergent, and especially cannot comprehend Kobong’s theory. … As I see in this poem, from the beginning till the end, there is none that it’s not analogy. When compared with the process of learning, there is none that does not coincide. How can Liu’s commentary (i.e. Chen Pu’s commentary) be wrong?16

Cho founded his reason for defending the commentary’s position in Zhu Xi’s preface to the poem.

In the preface Master Zhu himself said that the poem was composed playfully to present to fellow travelers and that together they shared a laugh. If it were not for implied meaning, how can it be called playful composition? For what reason did they laugh? From of old there are many poets who sang of mountains and waters. Have you seen anyone who called his work a playful composition and laughed about it? From this we can see that it had implied meaning is without doubt.17
Particularly critical of Ki Tae-sŭng’s view, Cho went into great detail to point out the problems he saw.¹⁸ Countering Ki’s remark that encoding a special philosophical message into the poem would be “strange,” Cho replied:

In it [the poem] we see the intention and insight of the sages and worthies. Why call it strange? Even in the words of Confucius and Mencius, there are many places where analogies were used to discuss wondrous things. Is it that strange, and can it be called a problem? I think Ki did not inquire deep into the intention of the sages and worthies.¹⁹

Cho asserted if the poem had any meaning, it must be about the “learning of the Way (daoxue),” because “in the actions of the sages and worthies, there was none that did not correspond to righteousness and principle.”

In all his life, Master Zhu considered the promotion of the learning of the Way as his duty. His poetry explains none but this. It is clear if it explains anything, it must be about the learning of the Way (daoxue) and not others. When compared to the process of learning, the poem matches it successively. Then why say it must not explain daoxue but something else?²⁰

He, therefore, condemned Ki’s understanding that to have both poetic and philosophical approaches to the poem would be to have “two hearts.” Cho found in Ki’s interpretation an example of lax moral and denial of the principles in Zhu Xi’s teachings,²¹ and after an extensive analysis, he reached the conclusion that of the three scholars only Kim In-hu grasped Zhu Xi’s intention.

In 1638, after twenty years of research and contemplation, Cho completed his own commentary on the poem, “Explanation of the Ten Poems of Wuyi’s Boat Song 武夷櫂歌十首解.”²² Based on the same hermeneutic premise as Chen Pu’s, the commentary interprets the poem as the order of advancing in the Way 進道次第, and describes the nine bends as nine jingjie, the nine philosophical territories or stages one
must undergo in the learning process. As for the interpretation of the ninth bend, Cho
tried to solve the syntactic ambiguity Chen Pu left unexplained.

[The last two lines] tell us that the ninth bend is the culmination of the
immortal jìng. If the traveler gets bored with its ordinariness and searches
for Peach Blossom Spring, he would lose it. It is like a student of the Way
who says the Way is not in daily living, and desires and seeks strange and
extraordinary matters, thereby deviating from the Way. The meaning of
chu shì 除是 is the same as “only 唯是.” Only in the human world are
there another heaven and earth and Peach Blossom Spring which can be
sought. To say there is no such meaning would be an unorthodox teaching,
empty and preposterous saying. 23

Chu shì 除是, which was translated as “besides this” by T’oegye and Ki Tae-sŭng, was
taken to a completely opposite direction and interpreted as “only,” making the last line of
the poem “Only in the human world is there another realm 除是人間別有天.” In this new
interpretation, the movement outward—the exploration beyond the Nine Bends—is
denied, and instead a closed, internal system of learning is set forth. All together Cho’s
commentary cogently presents the poem as a case of philosophical discourse of jìngjie
and, at the same time, undermines the poetic discourse T’oegye and Ki Tae-sŭng put
forward.

Cho’s refutation of T’oegye’s interpretation, in particular, had larger political
repercussions, sparking off a hermeneutic dispute between the Eastern faction (Tong-in
東人) and the Western faction (Sŏ-in 西人), the division that came to overshadow the
political and philosophical scene since the sixteenth century. Cho, an avid member of the
Western faction, endeavoured to promote the teachings of Yulgok and Sŏng Hon 成淵
(1535-1598), the two philosophical pillars of the faction. When his proposal to venerate
the two scholars in the Confucian Shrine was rejected, he even resigned from his office as
the Minister of the Left 左議政, publically displaying his disappointment towards the
Generally the members of the Western faction recognized and respected the philosophical authority of T’oegye, the leader of the Eastern faction, but Cho’s open criticism of T’oegye’s interpretation of the Nine Bends poem signaled a direct challenge to the philosophical foundation of the opposing faction.

After the split of the Western faction into the Old Learning faction (Noron 老論) and the Young Learning faction (Soron 少論)—the former advocating a return to strict Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy, and the latter a more moderate adaptation of it—, Cho’s argument was picked up by the leader of the Old Learning faction, Song Si-yŏl. Regarding the interpretation of the last two lines, Song remarked:

> Deserting this [the ninth bend] and seeking another jing is heresy and evil theory, and not the great middle and right way of the sages and worthies. … Abandoning this where else can one find true jing? Following T’oegye’s interpretation, the meaning of the ninth bend is not expounded. Following Kobong’s, little meaning is expounded and much is constrained. It does not mean that there is another realm in the human world, but that there is no better jingjie. How can there be no place for people to go? In my humble opinion, the earlier worthies made a mistake, and this fault cannot be forgiven.²⁴

Song was not afraid of giving a harsh verdict to T’oegye, even explicitly labelling his idea as heresy and evil theory as detrimental as the teachings of Buddhism and Daoism.

Another affiliate of the Western faction to uphold the similar view was Yi Tan-ha 李端夏 (1625-1689). A contemporary of Song Si-yŏl, Yi was greatly impressed with Song’s reading of the poem, especially with his idea that Peach Blossom Spring denoted the Nine Bends. “This understanding of Wujae (Song Si-yŏl) surpasses that of T’oegye and Kobong,” Yi remarked, and proceeded to build a sensible connection between Peach Blossom Spring and the Nine Bends:
Mulberry and hemp were also planted by the people of Peach Blossom Spring. This place [the Nine Bends], therefore, is Peach Blossom Spring. Arriving there [the ninth bend] one should not seek the road to Peach Blossom Spring again. Though it might not appear so, the Nine Bends is limitless. The eyes might be opened but only seeing mulberry and hemp and not seeing the peach blossoms, one advances further and seeks the spring of peach blossom. Though it does not exceed the bounds of the Nine Bends, its jingjie has different degree of depth.25

Yi, however, was not so quick to dismiss the poetic approach to the poem. Instead, he recognized that underlying the delicate hermeneutic problem of the Nine Bends poem was the contest between poetic jingjie and philosophical jingjie, and rather than choosing one over the other, Yi presented them together side by side.

After completely surveying the Nine Bends, the eyes suddenly open to mulberry and hemp, rain and dew, covering the peaceful river. This is the clear, quiet, and vast jing 清幽夛曠之境. And comparing it to the order of sage learning, it is the beautiful and great jing 美且大之境. Advancing one more step and discovering the another realm, that is the great and transformative sagely domain 大而化之聖域.26

The expression “clear, quiet, and vast jing” was first used by Ki Tae-sŭng to describe the ninth bend in the poem. Instead of disproving Ki’s poetic discourse, as Cho had done, Yi agreed that the poem did represent a poetic jingjie. But he upheld the possibility of espousing both poetic and philosophical readings, which Ki denounced, and asserted that the poem also embodied a philosophical jingjie, the “beautiful and great jing” and the “great and transformative sagely domain.”

Yi Tan-ha’s reconciliatory measure, however, was not widely received as most people remained on divided fronts. The members of the Western faction, especially the Old Learning division, held onto strictly philosophical reading of the poem, closely following the ideas first expressed in Chen Pu’s thirteenth-century commentary. The philosophical interpretation also made its way into the matching poems. For instance,
Ch’ae Chi-hong 蔡之洪 (1683-1741), an associate of the Old Learning faction, repeated the philosophical discourse in his matching poem to Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem, clearly outlining the instructive meaning in each verse and explaining the whole poem as an instruction on the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy 正統.27 As such, the philosophical discussion of the Nine Bends poem further promoted the conception of Wuyi as the symbolic centre of Neo-Confucian learning and its role in constructing the idea of the “transmission of the Way (daotong 道統)” or the “great transmission (datong 大統).” On the whole, the philosophical interpretations of the poem reflected the two important hermeneutic principles widely used at the time: namely, as Han Wŏn-jin aptly put it, the delineating of “the difference in jingjie 境界之別” and “the order of succession 先後之序.”28

The accusation of heresy was a harsh one to swallow for the followers of T’oegye. Yi Hyŏn-il 李玄逸 (1627-1704), a leader of the T’oegye school in the seventeenth century, embarked on a systematic critique of the philosophical reading of the poem. He condemned Chen Pu’s commentary for drawing wrong conclusion based on false analogy,29 and blamed Liu Gai for praising the commentary, especially his equating of the Nine Bends poem to the “Inspired” poem in philosophical significance.30 His most comprehensive evaluation of the commentary is found in the Suju kwan kyu rok 愁州管窺錄 (Record of Limited Views of Suju), a collection of Yi’s critical reflections on the teachings of early Neo-Confucian scholars in both China and Korea. In it Yi points out the importance of clearly distinguishing “explicit language” from “implicit language.”

I believe the words of the sages and worthies contain implied words with symbolic meaning, but also plain words that speak directly. The implied words should be elucidated for their hidden meaning, but plain words
should not be subject to weighty and strained interpretation. If, contrary to the original intention of the sages and worthies, one forcibly fabricates a theory that is divorced from reality, even though it yields abundant precious flowers, it only is subjective opinion of the interpreter. How could it have anything to do with the original intention of the sages and worthies? Chen’s commentary on Wuyi Boat Song explains the words, and I know for certain that it was not the original intention of Master Zhu. Why do I say this? All the words the master wrote everyday were plain and clear, making it easy for people to understand. His discussion of the order of entering the Way was all written in the commentaries on the Classics. … What then is the point of using poetry to discuss it in deep and implicit words? After repeated reflection on the meaning of the poem, I conclude it simply is about leisurely poeticization, expressing the delight of mountains and rivers, of cruising the peaceful and quiet scenery on a wooden raft. How can it be like as Chen Pu argued? Working out of fragments of words that are vaguely analogous, how can one draw false analogy and say the whole poem’s general idea derives from it?31

Compared to the earlier arguments against the commentary, Yi’s analysis focuses more on the problem of language. According to him, the error of the commentary lies in the blurring of the distinction between plain and implied languages, an interpretive blunder Zhu Xi himself warned against. Referring to Zhu’s approach to writing and literature, he stressed that the master opposed the drawing of far-fetched analogies: Zhu Xi, for instance, was critical of the moral interpretation of Qu Yuan 屈原 (340-278 BC)’s poem “Sorrow of Parting (li sao 離騷), and the allegorical reading of the Spring and Autumn Annals. In short, Yi asserted Chen Pu’s commentary advocated exactly what Zhu Xi tried to denounce.32

T’oegeye’s reading of the poem continued to have authority among the followers of his philosophical tradition, including Yi Sang-jŏng 李象靖 (1711-1781) who reiterated T’oegeye’s view in his debate with Kwŏn Ch’i 權炤 (18th century) over the meaning of the poem. Rejecting the allegorical interpretation of the poem, Yi argued “overall it is a work
of observing the objects, encountering jing, releasing the inspiration, and expressing the meaning. At first, there was no meaning of the order of entering the Way.” But when Kwŏn Ch’i compared Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem to Li Bai’s poetry on the basis that both were inspired by scenery and expressed leisurely sentiment, Yi quickly came to defend the philosophical distinctiveness and superiority of Zhu Xi’s poem. Just like T’oegye, who, while denying the commentary’s interpretation still maintained that Zhu Xi’s poetic work had to be distinguished from other Buddhist and Daoist poetic works, Yi problematized Kwŏn’s treating of the Nine Bends poem as a simple poetic work, equal in value to other works of poetry.

Li Bai’s poetry describes the transcendental beauty of nature. It simply is the work of poet’s intent, exhibiting the strong intention of self-flaunting and the thought of bitterness, blandness, and quietude. From the perspective of learning, he called the place of his standing lofty and wondrous and did not communicate it to others. Taking the scenery set before him and transforming it into other strange matters outside heaven and earth, his was the egoistic view and useless learning of the Chan Buddhists. I am afraid it cannot be discussed together with the wonder of sharing the goodness with the people which the master [Zhu Xi] realized through learning.

That is to say, for Yi, as was for T’oegye, Zhu Xi’s poetry still remained a reflection of his personal moral cultivation; its meaning was just not as contrived as Chen and others had suggested.

So far we have identified the two hermeneutic directions regarding the interpretation of the Nine Bends poem—namely, the poetic and philosophical discursive unfolding of jingjie—and examined how the two main schools of Korean Neo-Confucianism were divided on this hermeneutic conundrum. But it should also be noted that a clear-cut division could not always be drawn as many developed and held onto
their personal views. For instance, Pak Se-ch’ae 朴世采 (1631-1695), who on the whole shared the views of the Western faction and later became the leader of the Young Learning faction, agreed with Cho Ik’s and Song Si-yŏl’s interpretation of chu shi as “only” and believed the last line of the poem expressed “another realm is found only in the human world.” But at the same time he also agreed with Ki Tae-sŏng’s radical poetic approach and found Chen Pu’s commentary to be an overly stretched interpretation. 35 We are also told that Yi Hyŏn-il’s student An Myŏng-ha 安命夏 (1682-1752) hung “Ten Paintings of Wuyi Nine Bends Sage Learning 武夷九曲聖學十圖” on his wall and meditated on it. 36 The title of the painting suggests it was not a generic landscape painting of Wuyi, but rather an example of the conceptual painting of Wuyi Nine Bends popular in the seventeenth century, which depicted the Nine Bends as the nine stages of sage learning. 37 One interesting example of this genre is the “Painting of Wuyi Nine Bends” [Plate 13], which, instead of mountains and waters, shows a labyrinth made up of nine squares of the same size forming a larger square, with an entrance and an exit. With the philosophical meaning of each bend inscribed in each square, the painting functions as a visual representation of the Nine Bends as a philosophical territory, corresponding with the philosophical interpretation of the poem. That An Myŏng-ha reflected on the conceptual painting of the Nine Bends, while his teacher Yi Hyŏn-il critically disputed Chen Pu’s commentary, once again highlights that personal interpretive preference played a significant role in the understanding of the poem, not just one’s affiliation to a particular school.
The Korean Neo-Confucians envisioned Wuyi Nine Bends not only as a geopolitical and poetic territory, but also as a philosophical territory to be explored and entered. That Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem represented jingjie was easily agreed upon. But when they tried to explain just what kind of jingjie it was, their opinions diverged. The contentious relationship between poetic jingjie and philosophical jingjie—their opposition and interaction—underlying the hermeneutic debate surrounding the Nine Bends poem challenges the simple categorization of Neo-Confucian poetry into poetic and philosophical types. In it we see the struggle to understand the nature and structure of meaning found in poetry and the discursive construction of knowledge that came as a result. More recently Jean-Charles Jambon attempted yet another philosophical interpretation of the Nine Bends. Regarding the Nine Bends as a philosophical trope or pattern, simultaneously representing “musical verses (chants)” and “twists and turns leading to a new view (méandres),” he argued the Nine Bends represented a process of cultivating oneself wherein the inner and the outer worlds come together. Although he did not envision “nine” as the number of distinct stages but rather as a sign of continuation, Jambon’s reading of Nine Bends as a journey of self-cultivation resonates with the earlier philosophical interpretations of Wuyi Nine Bends jingjie as a journey of sage learning. Together these approaches demonstrate the continuous impact the images and discourses of Nine Bends have on inspiring philosophical imagination and on illuminating the nature and process of learning and personal moral cultivation.
Yi Chŏng’s account shows us the difficulty of accessing the authentic edition of the commentary, and the many errors included in the hand-copied versions. See Yi Chŏng 李楨 (1512-1571), Ku-am chip 龜巖集 (The Collected Works of Ku-am), 1902, 1.34b-37a Ungok hwi ŭm si hu sik 雲谷徽音詩後識.

Kim In-hu, Hasŏ chip, 6.26b-30a 吟示景范仲明 ʻum si Kyŏngbŏm, Chungmyŏng. Kim also reiterated Chen’s view in another poetic response. See ibid., 10.19b 吟示景范仲明 ʻum si Kyŏngbŏm, Chungmyŏng.

Kim In-hu, Hasŏ chip, 6.26b-30a 吟示景范仲明 ʻum si Kyŏngbŏm, Chungmyŏng.

Yi Hwang, T’oegey chip, 16.49b-51b tap Ki Myŏng-ʻŏn 答奇明彦. Original text: 混閒中, 賞詠武夛志. 見當時諸人和武夛櫂歌甚多, 似未有深得先生意者. 又嘗見劉槻所刊行櫂歌詩註. 以九曲詩首尾. 為學問入道次第. 窃恐先生本意不如是拘拘也. 近有茂長卞成溫. 嘗學於金河西云. 遠來相見. 見示河西所作武夛律詩一篇, 亦全用註意. 不知公尋常看作如何. 又澆渴和櫂歌. 極知廢棄. 而不敢有隱於左右. 今錄寄呈. 望賜訂評. 其中第九曲有二絕. 其一用註意者. 舊所作也. 向來似是. 其更覓除是等語意. 似不為然. 故又別作一首. 不知於此兩義. 何取何舍. The following are the two versions of the last verse. Ibid., 1.34a-35b han kŏ tok Mui chi, ch’a kugok toga un, sip su 閒居讀武夛志 次九曲櫂歌韻 十首. The earlier version:

Arriving at the ninth bend, I am disappointed

How can the true fountainhead only be this river?

Rather than going beyond rain and dew, mulberry and hemp.

I ask once again the sliver of sky in the mountain.

The later version:

At the ninth bend the mountain opens up, and there is only vast expanse.

The smoke from the village drifts over the long river.

Please do not say this is the end of the journey.

The following is the two versions of the last verse. Ibid., 1.34a-35b han kŏ tok Mui chi, ch’a kugok toga un, sip su 閒居讀武夛志 次九曲櫂歌韻 十首.

The earlier version:

九曲來時卻惘然
真源何許只斯川
寧頡雨露桑痲外
更問山中一線天

The later version:

九曲山開只曠然
人煙墟落俯長川
勸君莫道斯遊極

The following are the two versions of the last verse. Ibid., 1.34a-35b han kŏ tok Mui chi.
妙處應須別一天
Such wondrous place must also be somewhere else.

For a study on T’oegeye’s matching poem to Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem, see Li Wuwei 李无为, “Tuixi ci yun Zhuzi《Wuyi zhao ge》wenti.”

1. Chen Pu’s “Zhu Wengong Wuyi zhaoge,” 6. Original text: 此語非人間所多得者，公曾以此詩自題。蓋言人所不知，而己所獨得之妙，豁然貫通，無所障礙。日用偽然，萬事皆理。雖能入聖域，而未志非百姓日用之常，夫豈離人絕世，而有甚難行之事哉。所謂道者，不過若是而已。若舍此而求道，則皆異端邪說。禍民惑世之論，天理之所無，聖賢君子之所屏絕。不以留之胸中者也。


성나라의 천자

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III.2.d Integrated Discursive Development: Kosan Nine Bends vs. Tosan Nine Bends

The study of principle (lixue), literature (wenzhang), and leisurely wandering (you)—the three coexist and mutually manifest. The study of principle nurtures nature (xing), literature talent (cai), and leisurely wandering poetic sentiment (qing).¹

These words of the Ming dynasty scholar Jiang Nanjin 江南錦 (Ming, before 1643) identify philosophical, literary, and social pursuits that formed the three bases of the tripod supporting and constituting individual Neo-Confucian literatus and overall Neo-Confucian community. In the development of Neo-Confucian Nine Bends, we also see the merging of the philosophical, aesthetic, and political discourses. It was through the process of dynamic discursive weaving that various Nine Bends jingjie became constituted, including Kosan Nine Bends and Tosan Nine Bends, the two most prominent Nine Bends jingjie in Korea. As the territorial bases of the Yulgok and T’oegeye schools, the two Nine Bends were recognized and celebrated as “outstanding jing 絕境,” the two homes of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism.² The philosophical difference between the two schools was envisioned as the difference in jingjie. For instance, in his discussion of the Four-Seven debate between T’oegeye and Yulgok—the seminal philosophical dispute in Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism regarding the relationship between li and qi—Sin Ik-hwang 申益愰 (1672-1722) commented how a certain scholar Hwang “while following T’oegeye, in reality did not leave the jingjie of Yulgok 正是雖從退溪, 而實不離栗谷境界者也.”³ The philosophical viewpoint and factional standing, in other words, were framed as an issue of jingjie, and the relationship between the two schools was translated in territorial terms.
In what follows we will examine the discursive development of Kosan and Tosan Nine Bends *jingjie* and their competitive relationship. While the two masters made their dwellings in Kosan and Tosan, it was not until much later that these sites became fully established as Nine Bends *jingjie* by their followers, who used the discursive construction of the Nine Bends as a means to respond to the political dilemma they were facing and to create a collective discourse on which anchor their faction. Their development was closely tied in with the construction of the discourse of legitimacy, the bolstering and advancing of each school’s philosophical and political authority, and the eventual staging of each school as the proper heir of *daotong*, the transmitter of the orthodox Way.

*The Discursive Construction of Kosan Nine Bends*

In 1576, after a failed attempt to mitigate factional strife, Yulgok resigned from his post and retreated to Haeju 海州, Sŏktam 石潭 in Hwanghae province where he spent the next several years writing and teaching. There he established Ŭnbyŏng Retreat 隱屏精舍 in the fifth bend of Kosan 高山 (Ko Mountain)’s Nine Bends Stream, the project which was completed in 1578. The background of the construction of the retreat was recorded in the collection of his writings:

A branch of Suyang Mountain extending westward becomes Immortal’s Trace Peak (Sŏnjŏk pong 仙迹峯). About ten li west from the peak is Chin-am Mountain. A river runs between the two mountains, which stretches out in forty li, makes nine turns, and enters the sea. Each bend has a pool, deep enough for boating. Because it resembles Wuyi’s Nine Bends, it was named Nine Bends. Kosan’s Sŏktam 石潭 is also located in the fifth bend. A stone peak bows before it, and the master built his retreat in its midst. Taking the name of Wuyi’s Screen of Great Recluse, he called it Screen of Recluse (Ŭnbyŏng 隱屏), showing his admiration for Kaoting. The retreat was located to the east of Ch’ŏnggye Hall. The master composed the Song
of Kosan Nine Bends, imitating Wuyi’s Boat Song. Through this the scholars far and near were brought closer.\(^4\)

The “Song of Kosan Nine Bends 高山九曲歌,” composed in 1577, is considered to be a landmark literary accomplishment of the Chosŏn dynasty. Unlike most Nine Bends poems, which were written in literary Chinese and followed the jueju format of Zhu Xi’s original work, Yulgok’s poem was written in Korean language in the form of sijo 時調, a poetic genre developed in the late Koryŏ and flourished in the Chosŏn.

Yulgok’s intention of imitating the life of Zhu Xi was clearly laid out in the opening verse of the poem.

高山九曲潭을 사람이 몰으든이 Kosan’s Nine Bends River hasn’t been known to people,
誅茅卜居하니 벗님에 다 오신다 But as I build a thatched hut and settle in it, friends all come and visit.
어즘어 류夷를 想像하고 Ah, I shall imagine Wuyi and learn from Master Zhu.
學朱子를 하리라

Clearly, Yulgok’s building of the retreat was prompted by his desire to emulate Zhu Xi’s life in Wuyi Nine Bends and follow his steps. In fact, in order to augment Zhu Xi’s presence in his Kosan Nine Bends, next to the retreat Yulgok also set up a shrine dedicated to Zhu Xi, and there also venerated two Chosŏn Neo-Confucian masters, Cho Kwang-jo 趙光祖 (1482-1519) and T’oegye.\(^5\) The poem as a whole, however, does not convey strong philosophical message but instead focuses on describing the scenic beauty of each of the nine bends and the joy of retired living.\(^6\)

Kosan Nine Bends was celebrated within Yulgok’s circle. Yulgok’s student Pak Yŏ-ryong 朴汝龍 (1541-1611), who with his teacher frequented the site, later settled in the fourth of Kosan Nine Bends following the example of Yulgok.\(^7\) The scholars who
visited the site reflected on Kosan’s resemblance of Wuyi and Yulgok’s admiration for Zhu Xi. The connection to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends was also emphasized in Ch’oe Rip崔笠 (1539-1612)’s “Record of Kosan Nine Bends River高山九曲潭記,” written in memory of Yulgok twenty-five years after his death:

Master Zhu lived in Fujian’s Wuyi Mountain where fascinating Nine Bends Stream is found. He [Yulgok] lived in Haeju’s Ko Mountain amid the Nine Bends of mountain and river. Even though there is ten thousand li of distance eastward and southward, our Way has one vein that connects them together.

But despite such significance, Kosan Nine Bends did not seem to have been as illustrious as the followers of Yulgok hoped. Yi Tan-sang李端相 (1628-1669), for instance, pointed out even though Yulgok was “Master Kaoting [Zhu Xi] of east of the sea,” it was a great shame of Chosŏn Neo-Confucians that the academy in Kosan Nine Bends did not do justice to his eminence.

It was not until the late seventeenth century, about a century after Yulgok’s death, that serious interest in Kosan Nine Bends was rekindled. The discursive expansion of Kosan Nine Bends came at a critical juncture in the history of the Western faction, at the peak of the factional politics during the reign of King Sukjong肅宗 (1661-1720). In 1674 the Western faction, which had had upper hand in the political scene, lost its leadership to the Southern faction for the first time. The resulting shuffling of the court had devastating effects on the members of the Western faction, including the exile of its leader Song Si-yŏl. The Southern faction’s control, however, was short-lived and ended with the return of the Western faction in 1680. After enduring much suffering, the returning members of the Western faction were not very forgiving towards their adversaries. Song Si-yŏl demanded severe punishment and almost complete banishment of the opposing party.
from the political scene. But Song’s student Yun Chŭng 尹拯 (1629-1714) and other younger members of the Western faction leaned towards more lenient handling of the situation, even encouraging some level of cooperation with the opposing faction. The political debate regarding the handling of the Southern faction split the Western faction into two—the Old Learning and Young Learning groups.

It was at this particular moment in the history of the Western faction, plagued by both external and internal strife, that the discourse of Kosan Nine Bends was recalled by Song Si-yŏl. In order to mobilize and revitalize his faction and to once again consolidate and assert its orthodox position, Song Si-yŏl, now the leader of the Old Learning faction, decided to revive, even reconstruct, the discourse of Kosan Nine Bends. He saw in it the perfect opportunity to not only promote his faction’s interest but also distinguish orthodoxy from heterodoxy. In his letter to Kim Su-hŭng 金壽興 (1626-1690) written in 1688, Song reveals it was the political rivalry with the Southern faction that renewed his interest in Kosan Nine Bends.

Among the followers of T’oegye, there is none who does not praise Tosan’s mountain and stream and proclaim it throughout the world. Only Haeju’s Kosan Nine Bends, the place where the old master cultivated himself in reclusion and wandered in delight, is now buried and reduced to ruin. Having become almost unrecognizable, one can only sigh in extreme sorrow. That this Nine Bends profoundly resembles Master Zhu’s Wuyi is a strange matter. Nowadays the paintings of Wuyi circulate widely in our country. Following this painting, I wish to paint Kosan’s Nine Bends and circulate it among our fellow scholars.11

Compared to Yi Tan-sang, who while proclaiming Yulgok as Zhu Xi of Chosŏn also saw him as the successor of T’oegye in the learning of nature and principle in the East,12 Song focused on the difference between Tosan and Kosan, T’oegye and Yulgok. He was perturbed by Tosan’s greater fame and the sorry state of Kosan. Unlike T’oegye’s Tosan
Academy, Kosan’s Retreat never became established as a major centre of learning although Yulgok’s teaching became the philosophical and political foundation of the Western faction. Song, therefore, thought it was his mission to promote Kosan, interestingly not through the physical restoration of the site but through the publication of an album, in other words, through the production of discourse.

As an initial and critical step, Song embarked on the translation of Yulgok’s *sijo* into literary Chinese, into a *jueju* poem. His translation faithfully captures the original meaning of the poem, as we see in the translated version of the first verse:

| 高山九曲潭 | Kosan’s Nine Bends River |
| 世人未曾知 | Hasn’t been known to people, |
| 姑茅來卜居 | But as I build a thatched hut and settle in it, |
| 朋友皆會之 | Friends all come and visit. |
| 武夷仍想像 | I shall imagine Wuyi |
| 所願學朱子 | And learn from Master Zhu. |

The Chinese translation of Korean folk songs began with the introduction of Chinese writing and was practiced throughout the Three Kingdoms and Koryŏ periods. With the absence of alternative writing system, this meant capturing the meaning of orally transmitted literature in Chinese writing. The invention of Korean writing in the mid-fifteenth century, however, did not put a halt on the translation practice. Instead, as literature in Korean writing began to be produced, the nature of the task shifted to translating from one written language to another, eventually developing into an important literary phenomenon in the late Chosŏn. Many reasons can be found for the continued allegiance to Chinese writing, but fundamentally it was due to the literati’s refusal to give up what came to define them as a class, *mun* 文—education and culture based on Chinese writing. In the eyes of Chosŏn literati, the newly devised Korean writing did not
qualify as mun. As Sin Hŭm 申欽 (1566-1628) remarked “the sound of China becomes writing (mun) through speaking. The sound of our country becomes writing through translation”\(^{14}\); translation, in other words, was a necessary procedure in transforming “sound” (Korean writing) into “writing.” The literati believed once transformed into mun, the indigenous writings of Korea would have longer and stronger impact and reach out to wider readership in many years to come, echoing the saying by Confucius “if the language lacks patterning (wen), it will not go far 言之無文，行而不遠.”\(^{15}\) The late Chosŏn literati’s attempts to translate works of sijo and folk songs into literary Chinese, as Kim Myŏng-sun’s study shows, bridged the gap between Chinese poetry and Korean poetry.\(^{16}\) In the same way, Song Si-yŏl’s translation of the “Song of Kosan Nine Bends” into literary Chinese transformed the poem from “sound” to “writing,” from a song to mun—the shared heritage of all literati. As far as publication was concerned, it was deemed appropriate to present the poem as a work of mun.\(^{17}\)

Once the translation work was complete, Song proceeded to the next step—the writing of matching poem based on Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends poem. In his letter to Kim Su-hang 金壽恒 (1629-1689), Song bares his intention of writing a group matching poem entitled the “Poem of Kugok Nine Bends 九曲詩” following the rhymes of Zhu Xi’s poem.

I have a copy of the “Song of Kosan Nine Bends” composed by our late master. It has a few words by Ch’oe Tonggo 崔東皋 (Ch’oe Rip 崔巖, 1539-1612) at the bottom and was calligraphed by Kim Nanch’ang 金南窓 (Kim Hyŏn-sŏng 金玄成, 1542-1621). Its [Kosan’s] Nine Bends by chance corresponds with Wuyi, and we, who follow his [Yulgok’s] teachings, cannot help but praise his words. Therefore, recklessly without considering my own ability, following the saying that the incompetent first begins, I respectfully matched the opening verse of the Wuyi poem. I ask you to carry on and match the first bend’s rhyme and also assign the remaining
verses to refined brothers. In this way matching the ten verses of the Wuyi poem, it will perhaps be a great event. As for the painting, Chidang (Kim Su-hŭng) is already taking care of it. I am sending you the “Song of Kosan Nine Bends” with Chŏngja. When you read it, you should be able to imagine the master’s delight and the beauty of the mountain and water.18

Thus Song initiated the project by matching the first verse and began the search for worthy participants. Song also wrote to his student Kwŏn Sang-ha 權尙夏 (1641-1721), expressing his idea of making a printable album consisting of the painting of Kosan Nine Bends, the original poem by Yulgok, the Chinese translation of the poem, and the matching poem.19 But unfortunately Song did not get to see the completion of the project. He died the following year, committing suicide on imperial order after getting into trouble for criticizing the court’s decision to install the crown prince. After his death, the project was continued by Kwŏn but not without problem. Lee Sang-won’s study shows there were subtle and not so subtle disputes over the selection of contributors for the matching poem, particularly regarding some earlier chosen participants’ political allegiance to the Old Learning faction.20 After much struggle, eventually in 1709, twenty-one years since Song began the project, the album was completed. The final list of ten people were Song Si-yŏl, Kim Su-hang, Song Kyu-ryŏm 宋奎濂 (1630-1709), Chŏng Ho 鄭澔 (1648-1736), Yi Yŏ 李畬 (1645-1718), Kim Su-jŭng 金壽増 (1624-1701), Kim Ch’ang-hŭp 金昌翕 (1653-1722), Kwŏn Sang-ha, Yi Hŭi-jo 李喜朝 (1655-1724), and Song Chu-sŏk 宋疇錫 (1650-1692), all of whom were dedicated affiliates of the Old Learning faction.

The matching poem as a whole brought together the poems of Zhu Xi and Yulgok and joined their poetic territories. The description of the fifth and the ninth bends especially stresses Kosan’s resemblance to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi jingjie.
In the fifth bend, cloud and mist are thick.

Wuyi Retreat is in its forest.

In straw sandals leisurely walking by the stream with a staff,

Who would know the heart of singing the wind and the moon?

In the ninth bend, the snow on Mun Cliff is white.

Its strange form is completely hidden in the age-old mountain and river.

The traveller disrespectfully says there is no good scenery,

And is not willing to seek this wondrous place.  

The references to Wuyi Retreat in the fifth bend and the traveller who cannot appreciate the beauty of the ninth bend both clearly allude to Zhu Xi’s poem, once again highlighting the connection between Wuyi and Kosan.  

The publication of the album contributed to raising the awareness of Kosan Nine Bends and reaffirming Yulgok’s status as the intellectual foundation of the Old Learning faction. The poems and images of Kosan Nine Bends began to proliferate and became a vital part of the political, philosophical, and poetic discourse of the Western faction. Numerous matching poems of Kosan Nine Bends began to emerge, echoing the similar message of daotong. For instance, Yi Ha-jo 李賀朝 (1664-1700), a brother of Yi Hŭi-jo and student of Song Si-yŏl, wrote a poem on Kosan’s scenery matching the rhymes of Zhu Xi’s poem, and Kwŏn Sŏp 權燮 (1671-1759), who wrote an appeal to the court criticizing its taking of Song’s life, once again translated Yulgok’s poem into literary Chinese and wrote a matching poem. The paintings of Kosan Nine Bends also appeared in great number, eventually developing into a popular theme in Korean landscape painting. These paintings, combined with the calligraphy of the poems, were circulated widely among the members of the Western faction and the literati in general.
But more importantly for our discussion, the album project helped transform Kosan Nine Bends into a Neo-Confucian jingjie. In the years that followed the publication of the album, we see the growing discussion of Kosan Nine Bends as a personal jingjie of Yulgok, which was geographical, poetic, and philosophical at the same time. Kosan was described as a “quiet jing separated from wind and dust,”25 and Sŏktam Academy as a jing bearing Yulgok’s presence.26 The painting of Kosan Nine Bends was regarded as an artistic portrayal of the “jing of spiritual transformation 神化之境,” “a gate of sagehood 聖門,”27 and a “dream jing 夢境” of the literati.28 Through the experience of viewing one could imagine wandering in the poetic territory captured in the painting,29 and other Nine Bends, including Hwayang Nine Bends 華陽九曲 and Okkye Nine Bends 玉溪九曲, were seen as jing created after Wuyi and Kosan.30

However, although the jingjie of Kosan Nine Bends was seen as the territorial manifestation of Yulgok’s philosophical achievements, Yulgok’s poem the “Song of Kosan Nine Bends” was not interpreted as a philosophical analogy of progressive jingjie as we saw in Chen Pu’s interpretation of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends poem. The Old Learning scholars like Song Si-yŏl appreciated the poem for its poetic and political value, and not for its implied educational meanings. But the didactic approach to Nine Bends poems did not go away, but surfaced again in modern scholarship in the form of critical literary analysis. Hwang Chin-sŏng, for instance, saw Yulgok’s poem as an example of Neo-Confucian philosophical poetry, a “song that points to the Way 指道歌” and at the same time expresses the wonder of “attaining the Way 得道歌.”31 Lee Sang-won explored the poem’s “dual”—instructive and poetic—structure, and Kim Sang-jin its connection to Yulgok’s qi-monism.32 These studies attributed much meaning to the
structure of the poem and attempted to find implied philosophical meanings in the poetic text, thus echoing the struggles the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians faced regarding the interpretation of Wuyi Nine Bends poem.

The discursive construction of Kosan Nine Bends *jingjie* established philosophical and literary continuity from Zhu Xi to Yulgok, clearly delineated intellectual lineage by way of discursive lineage, and ultimately proved the legitimacy of the Old Learning faction. For the followers of Yulgok, Kosan Nine Bends became a shared *jingjie*, the territorial basis of a common bond, and created and strengthened a sense of solidarity among the members of the Old Learning faction. The group effort in the composition of a compound poem, extending over two decades, helped create an image of united philosophical and political front, the *jingjie* from which the members of the Young Learning faction were excluded. At the same time, the dissemination of poetry and painting led to the discursive expansion of Kosan Nine Bends *jingjie* and the bolstering of the Old Learning faction’s claim over it. It should be noted that the Young Learning faction also regarded Yulgok as their intellectual father and Kosan Nine Bends as his *jingjie*; the founder of the faction, Yun Chŭng, admitted Kosan as the Wuyi of Chosŏn. But Song Si-yŏl and his Old Learning faction acted more quickly and first laid claim to Kosan Nine Bends discourse, using it to their advantage. The political function of Kosan Nine Bends *jingjie* was once again manifested in 1885 when the *Inmyorok* 寅卯錄 (The Record of 1854-1855), a book containing the writings of the Old Learning faction scholars and various Kosan Nine Bends poems, was published in response to the Young Learning faction’s publication of Yun Chŭng’s writings. While highlighting Yulgok’s link to Zhu Xi, the *Inmyorok* also solidified Song Si-yŏl’s standing as the founder of the
Old Learning faction, honoured his dedication to Kosan Nine Bends and his life in Hwayang Nine Bends, which he established following the steps of the earlier masters.

_The Discursive Development of Tosan Nine Bends_

T’oegye Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501-1570)’s great admiration for Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends has already been pointed out. He often read the _Wuyi zhi_, wrote a matching poem to Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem, and tried to seek Wuyi-like _jingjie_, where he could spend the later years of his life writing and teaching.³⁵ From his writings we learn he had spent years in search for the right place to settle. Upon retiring from political life, T’oegye retreated to Tosan 陶山, located in North Kyŏngsang province, and there built his retreat and school Tosan Study Hall 陶山書堂. He was closely involved in the planning and design of the building, and the project which took five years was completed in 1561. After his death, his students expanded the site and set up Tosan Academy 陶山書院 in honour of their late teacher, and the academy was chartered in 1575.³⁶

T’oegye’s account of Tosan residence is found in his “Miscellaneous Poems on Tosan 陶山雜詠,” clearly written after the example of Zhu Xi’s “Miscellaneous Poems on Wuyi Retreat.” In the preface he discusses the importance of finding a place suitable for oneself and resting in it—like Yan Hui who made the narrow lane his home—, and calls this process “the encounter between person and _jing_ 使斯人而遇斯境.”³⁷ The long and descriptive preface is followed by eighteen short _jueju_ poems which highlight the eighteen sites within his Tosan complex. T’oegye also wrote his much celebrated “Twelve Songs of Tosan 陶山十二曲,” twelve verses of _sijo_ which poeticize his
reclusive living in Tosan. The detailed background of its composition is found in T’oegye’s own postscript to the poem:

“Twelve Songs of Tosan” was written by the old man of Tosan. Why did he write this? The songs of our Eastern country are mostly obscene and therefore not worth speaking about. Even the “Song of Confucian Academicians (Hallim pyŏlgok 翰林別曲)” and the likes, though came from the mouths of skilful writers, are arrogant and dissolute, unsightly and roguish, all not appropriate for gentlemen. Recently, Yi Pyŏl 李鼈 (cir. 1513)’s “Six Songs 六歌” has been circulating widely. Although better than others, I resent its cynical view and lack of gentleness and sincerity. This old man does not understand music and also detests listening to vulgar music. While living in idleness and recovering from illness, whenever my emotion and nature were inspired I expressed them in poetry. But today’s poetry, unlike ancient poetry, can only be chanted and not sung. Should one want to sing it, it must be composed in everyday language. Because of the nature of our language’s syllable, it can only be this way. Therefore, imitating Yi’s Six Songs, I earlier composed two Six Songs: one about intent 志 and the other about learning 學. I wish to have children learn and sing this day and night, and listen to it while leaning on a table. Also making them to sing and dance to it, maybe it can cleanse vulgar and shameful things, and stirring and harmonizing, both singers and listeners would be mutually benefitted.

As the record indicates “Twelve Songs of Tosan” was based not on the conventional Nine Bends poetry but on the sijo of “Six Songs” written by Yi Pyŏl. Like Yulgok, wishing to have the song sung and not just chanted, T’oegye adopted sijo as the medium of his choice. Written with the purpose of instructing children, instead of laying out weighty philosophical lessons, the song underscores the importance of learning,

The thunder can split the mountain,
The deaf man cannot hear;
The noon sun can burn white in mid-heaven,
The blind man still will not see.
Men like us, keen-eared, clear-eyed healthy males,
Should not be like the deaf and blind.

and invites the singer-reader to the path of sage learning.

The men of old never saw me,
I never saw the men of old.
Though I never saw the men of old,
The paths they trod still stretch ahead.
If the paths they trod still stretch ahead,
Should I not tread them too?\textsuperscript{40}

The song became widely popular, and, as was intended by T’oegye, was taught to children and enjoyed by the literati.\textsuperscript{41} It also inspired later poetic creations, and was calligraphed and imitated by many.\textsuperscript{42} Sin Kwang-su 申光洙 (1712-1775)’s “ Twelve Songs of Cold Cliff Hall 寒碧堂十二曲” and Kim Chae-ch’an 金載瓚 (1746-1827)’s “Twelve Songs of Musan 巫山十二曲” are examples of later adaptations.\textsuperscript{43}

T’oegye’s Tosan attained great fame, and even though it was not a Nine Bends, it still was compared to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi. Kwŏn Kyŏng 權璟 (1604-1666), who visited the Tosan Academy in 1660, remarked just as Wuyi became known to the world through Zhu Xi, Tosan would also become illustrious through T’oegye.\textsuperscript{44} Comparing the paintings of Wuyi and Tosan, Cho Tŏk-lin 趙德鄰 (1658-1737) asserted only Tosan succeeded Wuyi’s legacy. Playful viewing of both paintings “suddenly opened up a new jing before his eyes 目境怳然若新,” and he could hear both the Boat Song of Wuyi Nine Bends and the Twelve Songs of Tosan resounding in his ears.\textsuperscript{45} Indeed, as Yi Man-un 李萬運 (1736-1797) and O Kwang-un 吳光運 (1689-1754) noted, the Way of Master Zhu was found in Tosan, the home of sage learning in the Korean peninsula.\textsuperscript{46}

The discursive transformation of Tosan into Nine Bends jingjie took place in the 1800s, the process intimately linked to the restructuring and empowering of the T’oegye school. The development of T’oegye’s Southern faction took a markedly different course from that of Yulgok’s Western faction. From its beginning the Southern faction had been most active in the rural area, amassing its power by producing and influencing the literati.
at the local level. Its brief seizure of power and eventual expulsion from the central political scene in 1684 caused it to turn even more to the rural base for continued survival and support. The retreat brought lasting changes to the Southern faction. In particular, the merging of community development and factional expansion gave rise to numerous clan villages established and run by the members of the faction, which became the centres of T’oegye’s learning. Most of these clan villages concentrated in Yŏngnam 嶺南 region along the Naktong River 洛東江, the home to the key members of the Southern faction including Yi Hwang, Cho Sik 崔植 (1501-1572), Cho Mok 姜穆 (1524-1606), Kim Sŏng-il 金誠一 (1538-1593), Yu Sŏng-nyong 柳成龍 (1542-1607) and others; hence, the T’oegye school came to be known as the Yŏngnam school. While operating under the umbrella of the Southern faction, these clan villages also promoted the philosophical and political views of their founders, creating diversity within unity.47

It was in this particular developmental phase in the Yŏngnam school that the discourse of Nine Bends came to take effect. The first person to initiate the discussion of Tosan Nine Bends was Yi I-sun 李頤淳 (1754-1832), the ninth generation descendent of T’oegye.48 He was a member of Chinsŏng Yi clan 真城李氏, T’oegye’s own clan, that settled in the area surrounding the Tosan Academy.49 A dedicated student and ardent promoter of T’oegye’s teachings, Yi revised and published T’oegye’s writings and showed keen interest in increasing the fame and influence of Tosan. He emphasized Tosan was “not an otherworldly jingjie 不是為他境別界” but a “mountain of T’oegye’s family,” the sacred centre and geographical base of the Yi clan.50 At the same time, Yi recognized Tosan as the site of true sage learning in Chosŏn, the one that continued the
The world refers to Tosan as Wuyi. Wuyi is in Fujian, and it is where Master Zhu dwelled. Tosan is in the corner of the East Sea, and it is where my ancestor Master Munsun 文純 (T'oegye) stayed. As for physical separation, there is the distance of over ten thousand li. As for temporal separation, there is the distance of over five hundred years. But the two mountains achieved equal fame for the same reason Yang Hengshu 楊恒叔 (17th c.) gave [in the Record of Wuyi]: a place becomes outstanding through people. As for the excellence of the place, [Wuyi and Tosan] are not far from each other. In the two masters’ miscellaneous poems—the twelve poems on Wuyi and the eighteen verses on Tosan—there is none that does not correspond. Both mountains can also be boated. Therefore, the Collected Works of Tosan has a matching Nine Bends poem and also a matching Boat Song poem. [Tosan] features Seven Platforms and Three Bends. Even though it is not called Nine Bends, it is implied, and one can certainly imagine so. When I look at the waters of the Naktong River, from Ch’ongnyang 清凉 to Un-am 雲巖, within fifty li of our jing, there are many famous areas and outstanding jing. The Tosan dwelling in its midst dominates and connects what is above and below and becomes one fascinating place. Examining and selecting what forms a bend and is most excellent, I categorized them following the example of Wuyi Nine Bends. Yi asserts although T’oegye himself did not refer to Tosan as Nine Bends, it was “implied” and could be thus “imagined.” Tosan’s similarity to Wuyi, according to him, laid sufficient grounds for the former to be considered as an example of Nine Bends jingjie. Yi then went on to determine nine different bends within Tosan, situating Tosan Studio in the fifth bend in keeping with the location of Wuyi Retreat. The resemblance of the two Nine Bends, he argued, proved the interconnectedness of Neo-Confucian learning—“one vein of Our Way 吾道一氣脈” running through all. His intention was clear—so that through the identification and poeticization of Tosan Nine Bends, “those who tread this jing later would know this mountain [Tosan] is not far from Wuyi” and “its Nine Bends equals in beauty to that of Wuyi.” Yi described the scenic beauty of
Tosan Nine Bends in his poem “Wandering in Tosan Nine Bends 遊陶山九曲,” and through the matching of Zhu Xi’s rhymes, he once again highlighted the correlation between Tosan and Wuyi.

Following Yi I-sun’s lead, more members of Chinsŏng Yi clan joined in the celebration of Tosan Nine Bends. Yi Ya-sun 李野淳 (1755-1831) made an even more obvious attempt to link Tosan and Wuyi in his poem “Tosan Nine Bends 陶山九曲.” In addition to the matching of Zhu Xi’s rhymes, his discussion of the second bend’s resemblance to Wuyi’s Jade Maiden Peak and the reference to Peach Blossom Spring in the ninth bend further augmented the connection between the two mountains. Another clan member Yi Ka-sun 李家淳 (1754-1832), who wrote two poems “T’oegye [or T’oe Stream] Nine Bends 退溪九曲” and “Tosan Nine Bends,” also stressed their similarity and stated that in Tosan the sound of the boat song was once again heard. Soon, the discussion and celebration of Tosan Nine Bends spilled beyond the boundary of Yi clan as many others, remembering the great master T’oegye, took part in this discursive expansion.

Cho Sul-do 趙述道 (1729-1803) and Kŭm Si-sŏl 琴詩述 (1783-1851) matched Yi Ya-sun’s Tosan Nine Bends poem, and at the end of the poem Cho even added his thoughts of the last two lines of Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends poem, which upheld T’oegye’s interpretation and denounced the view of Chen Pu’s commentary. Yi Chong-hyu 李宗休 (1761-1832) wrote two poems “T’oegye Nine Bends” and “Tosan Nine Bends,” perhaps following the example of Yi Ka-sun, and Ch’oe Tong-ik 崔東翼 (1868-1912) another “Tosan Nine Bends” following the rhymes of Zhu Xi’s poem.
What is important to note in this development is even though these poets wrote about Tosan Nine Bends, their conceptions of the actual sites of the nine bends differed significantly. That is to say, unlike Yulgok’s Kosan Nine Bends, which had fixed sites chosen by its founder, the choices of nine bends in Tosan were made by the writers themselves in keeping with their poetic imagination. The discrepancies of the sites, however, did not seem have mattered. This was because the construction of Tosan Nine Bends was primarily discursive; it was the discursive transformation of Tosan into a Nine Bends jingjie that they wished for, the transformation that established and strengthened its link to Wuyi and legitimized Tosan as the rightful successor of Wuyi. As Kang Jung Suh’s study shows it was only in the late nineteenth century that the Nine Bends of Tosan became fixed and physically settled by the members of the Yŏngnam school.

Another aspect of this discursive development was the Chinese translation of T’oegye’s “Twelve Songs of Tosan.” Prior to Yi I-sun’s construction of Tosan Nine Bends, selected verses of the poem had been translated into literary Chinese by Nam Ha-jong 南夏正 (1678-1751), Hong Yang-ho 洪良浩 (1724-1802), and Kim Yang-gün 金養根 (1734-1799). The translation of the whole poem was carried out by Kang P’il-hyo 姜必孝 (1764-1848), who consulted with Yi I-sun and Yi Ya-sun regarding the matter. He wrote:

The old version of Master T’oegye’s “Twelve Songs of Tosan” is only a song, which has sound but no poetry. I came across its colloquial version, and daring to imitate Song Munjŏng (Song Si-yŏl)’s example of translating the “Song of Kosan Nine Bends,” I matched the lyrics with the rhymes of the Wuyi Nine Bends poem. I hope the literati of the world would forgive this preposterous fault and dismiss it as a sign of sincere respect and admiration.
Expressing the subtle competition between the two schools, Kang suggests what Song Si-yŏl had done with Yulgok’s poem should also be done with T’oegye’s poem. His communication with the members of the Yi clan, who were involved in the compilation and revision of T’oegye’s writings, shows the translation of sijo into literary Chinese was an integral part of the discursive construction of Tosan Nine Bends, as was the case for Kosan Nine Bends.

Even though the Southern faction did not proceed to making a Tosan Nine Bends album, the poetic celebration of Tosan and its Nine Bends continued to grow and even inspired the composition of popular song the “Song of Tosan Nine Bends 陶山九曲歌” by Yi Yu-wŏn 李裕元 (1814-1888). The artistic representations of Tosan Nine Bends, however, did not seem to have become prevalent. Instead, the paintings of Tosan and its academy 陶山圖 were produced by the members of the Southern faction, along with the paintings of Wuyi Nine Bends. These paintings embodying the poetic jingjie of Tosan helped communicate and expand the philosophical and political bounds of T’oegye’s teachings and his Southern faction. The discursive expansion of Nine Bends in Yŏngnam region was not limited to Tosan only. The similar development that transformed Tosan into a Nine Bends also led to the creation of Oksan Nine Bends 玉山九曲 and Wŏnmyŏng Nine Bends 源明九曲, dedicated respectively to Yi Ŭn-jŏk 李彦迪 (1491-1553) and Chŏng Ku 鄭逑 (1543-1620), the two important scholars of the Yŏngnam school. Ultimately, the discursive creation of multiple Nine Bends transformed Yŏngnam into a Neo-Confucian territory, the home of sage learning.
The discursive making of both Kosan and Tosan Nine Bends was crucial to the building and strengthening of the Yulgok and T’oegye schools. In the transformation of the two scholars’ personal jingjie into communal jingjie, we see the workings of territorial discourse and their contribution in the formation of Neo-Confucian collectivity. The competition between Kosan and Tosan reveals the struggle to lay claim to Wuyi, the ultimate territory on which the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy was built. It was the connection to that territory that the Chosŏn Neo-Confucians sought for the claim of legitimacy, as demonstrated in the subtle contention between the two competing jingjie. Once created, Kosan and Tosan Nine Bends became the geopolitical, poetic, and philosophical bases of factional development. The factional identities of the two schools were defined territorially through the demarcation and expansion of distinct Nine Bends jingjie, and such bolstering of territorial identities was seen to be a necessary measure in securing the wellbeing of the factions. In this process of marking out the territory, the discourse of jingjie once again played a seminal role, as it had done so for thousands of years.

1 Jiang Nanjin 江南錦 (Ming, before 1643), Ni qiao shu wu wen ji 狮嶠書屋文集 (The Collected Works from the Lion Bridge Study) (Taipei: Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin), 4.1a-2b dong you ji xu 東遊記序. Original text: 理學也，文章也，游也，三者可以相有而互發焉。理學之事與性，文事與才，而游之事與情。
2 Yi Kan, Oe-am yugo, 15.1a-b Oe-am chŏngsa kae ki che t’oji mun 魏巖精舍開基祭土地文.
3 Sin Ik-hwang, Kûkchae chip, 4.27b-32a tap Kwŏn Yŏhaeng 答權汝行.
4 Yi I, Yulgok chŏnso, 34.7a-b nyŏnbo ha 年譜下, chak Êbyŏng chŏngsa 作隱屏精舍. Original text: 首陽山一支。西走爲仙於峯。峯之西數十里。有真巖山。有水出兩山閒。流四十里九折而入海。每折有潭。深
可運舟。偶與武夛九曲相仿。故號名九曲，而高山石潭，又類在九曲。且有石頭拱揖於其前，先生築精舍於其間。故武夛大屢恩之義，顯之曰屢恩。以寓宗仰考亭之意。精舍在聽溪堂之後。先生作高山九曲歌，以擬武夛悼歌。自是近遠學者益盛。

5. Ibid., 35.48b pukon sam附錄三，haengsang行狀。
7. Pak Yo-ryeong 박유령 (1541-1611), Song-ae chip松崖集 (The Collected Works of Song-ae), 1776, 3.2a-b nyŏnbo年譜和4.3b-7a haengsang行狀。
8. Chŏng Hong-myŏng 정弘溟 (1592-1650), Ki-am chip기암집 (The Collected Works of Ki-am), 1653, 12.16a-b man sul漫述。

9. Ch’ŏe Rip崔嶺 (1539-1612), Kan-i munjip簡易文集 (The Collected Works of Kan-i), 1643, 9.31b-34a Kosan kugok tam ki高山九曲潭記. Original text: 朱子居閩之武夛山。則有九曲洞天。公居海之高山。則有九曲瀧川。豈東南萬里。吾道一氣脈。自相貫通而然歟。
10. Yi Tan-sang 이탄상 (1628-1669), Chŏnggwangjae静觀嘉年 (The Collected Works of Chŏnggwangjae), 1682, 14.10a-b yŏnki haesŏ Kim Ansa 김안사奉寄海西金按使。
11. Song Si-yŏl, Songjia taejŏn, 53.51a-b yŏ Kim Kiji 김기지與起之。Original text: 則退門諸子於其溪山小可名狀處。奮不衰者猶操揚。以傳於世矣。獨海州高山九曲。是老先生藏修遊賞之處。而埋沒荒廢。殆不可追寻。極可憐惜。況此九曲。冥會於朱子武夛。此尤異事。今武夛圖。頒傳於箋。欲依此圖。以畫高山九曲。以傳於士友間。
13. Song Si-yŏl, Songjia taejŏn, şupyo studying, 7.23b-24b Kosan kugok ka pŏn mun高山九曲歌翻文。
18. Song Si-yŏl, Songjia taejŏn, 56.26b-27a tap Kim Kuji 答金久之。Original text: 家有高山九曲歌。是主人老先生所作。而下有崔東皝數件文字。皆金閔書筆也。其九曲。偶與武夛相符。吾道一體脈。不可無譯文。故不偽者猶不自偽。安依假者先手例。故步武夛首韻。欲誠下執事。步一曲韻後。仍請於文雅當儒。而其餘則謂其可命者命之。以邀武夛十絕。則庶全一區之勝事矣。若其繪事。則止重大爺。已任之矣。九曲歌。今附正字行。幸一觀覽。則可以想見先生之學及山水勝槪矣。
19. Ibid., 89.12b-14b yŏ Kwŏn Ch’ido 곰진奇道。
"중세" 李野淳

3.2b 54

是深有望焉爾

武夛九曲之例而分之

20a sŏ choŋje Ku chi ka chang Mui Tosan to ch'ŏp hu 白從弟久之家載武夛陶山圖帖後

For a study on the political philosophy of the T'oegye school in late Chosŏn, see

Sin Kwang Yu To, Peter H. Lee, ed. (1995) -

Ibid. Original text:

Yi I also wrote a matching poem to Z


Yu To-won had children singing the “Twelve Songs of Tosan,” and Cho Ho-ik enjoyed listening to it in his leisure time. Yu To-won 柳道源 (1721-1791), No-ae chip 蘆翠集 (The Collected Works of No-ae), n.d., 8.15b-20a lho ch'osa Kim kong myogal myŏng 伊湖處士金公墓銘. Cho Ho-ik 敬好益 (1545-1609), Chisan chip 芝山集 (The Collected Works of Chisan), 2002, purok 附錄. 1.12a-b nyŏnbo 年譜.

Sŏng Hae-ŭng 成海應 (1760-1839), Yŏn-gyŏng-jae ch'ŏnjip 坤經集全集 (The Complete Works of Yŏn-gyŏng-jae), n.d., sok chip 濁集. 16 chŏng Tosan sip-i kok hye陶山十二曲後

Sin Kwang-su 申光洙 (1712-1775), Sŏkpuk chip 石北集 (The Collected Works of Sŏkpuk), 1906, 1.9b-1 1a Hanbyok-tang sip-i kok 寒碧十二曲. Kim Chae-ch' an 金載禎 (1746-1827), Haesŏk yugo 海石遺稿 (The Posthumous Writing of Haesŏk), n.d., 2.12b-14b Musan sip-i kok 武山十二曲.

Kwŏn Kyŏng 權璉 (1604-1666), Tae-ui chip 臺溪集 (The Collected Works of Tae-ui), 1894, 1.25a-30a Chŏng-ryang san rok 還清潦山錄.

Cho Tŏk-lin 趙德鎰 (1658-1737), Okch'ŏn chip 王川集 (The Collected Works of Okch'ŏn), 1898, 8.29b-30a sŏ chongje Ku chi ka chang Mui Tosan to ch'ŏp hu 白從弟久之家載武夛陶山圖帖後

Yi Man-un, Muhŏn chip, 7.13b Sach'ang sŏdang ki 敦昌書堂記. Yi Man-bu, Siksan chip, purok 附錄, ha by, 4b-5a man sa 指揮.

For a study on the political philosophy of the T'oegye school in late Chosŏn, see Sŏl Sŏk-kyu 宋錫圭, “Chŏson hugi chŏngguk kwa T'oegye haek'ap'ŭi ch'ŏngguk ch'ŏnhung cheokch'ung kwa p'umjeol (政治哲学)의 정치철학 (政治哲學), T'oegye haek'ap" 외계학 17 (2008): 81-123.

Hwang Chun-ryang 黃俊良 (1517-1563)’s poem “Singing of the T’oege Stream [T’oege] 詠退溪” refers to the stream as having nine bends: “The cold stream of nine bends is clear to the ground 九曲寒溪剗地清.” But the discussion of Tosan as Nine Bends did not emerge until the nineteenth century. See Hwang Chun-ryang, Kŭmgye chip, oe chip 外集, 2.19b yŏng T’oege 詠退溪.


Ibid. Original text: 計曲次韻. 以識其處而述其事. 使後之詣斯境者. 有以見芝山之與武夷. 不甚相遠. 有如是也. 而又能修達陶山詩. 以載九曲形勝. 而與武夷詩前後匹美. 則尤稱非然山之幸也耶。余以是深有寄焉爾

Yi Ya-sun 李野淳 (1755-1831), Kwangroe munjip 龍掀文集 (The Collected Writings of Kwangroe), n.d., 1.25a-26a Tosan kugok 陶山九曲. Yi also wrote a matching poem to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends poem. See ibid., 1.23b-24b ch’a Mui kugok toga un sip su 武夷九曲掉歌韻十首.

Yi Ka-sun 李家淳 (1754-1832), Hugye munjip 後溪文集 (The Collected Works of Hugye), 1963, 3.2b-3b T’oege kugok 退溪九曲 and 3.4a-5a Tosan kugok 陶山九曲. For Yi’s matching poem to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi Nine Bends poem, see 3.1b-2 yŏng ch’a Chuje Mui kugok un 歌次武夷九曲韻.

Cho Sul-do 趙述道 (1729-1803), Man-gok chip 晚谷集 (The Collected Works of Man-gok), n.d., 2.33b-38a Yi Kŏnjip ch’a Mui kugok un u chak Tosan kugok si yo yŏ hwa ch’a un kak ki 李健之武夷九曲韻又作陶山九曲詩要余之和之九曲詩却奇. Kŭm Si-sŏl 琴詩述 (1783-1851), Mech’on chip 梅村集 (The...
Collected Works of Mech’on), n.d., 2.2a-3a kūn ch’a Kwangroe Yi chang Tosan kugok un 謹按廣羅李大夫陶山九曲調.

56 Yi Chong-hyu 李宗休 (1761-1832), Ha-am munjip 下庵文集 (The Collected Writings of Ha-am), n.d., 2.8a-12a kye Tosan kugok yo yŏ ch’a hwa mong chol po chŏng 溪陶山九曲要選和忘尙步呈.

57 Ch’oe Tong-ik 崔東翼 (1868-1912), Ch’ônggye chip 晴溪集 (The Collected Works of Ch’ônggye), 1923, 2.1a-2a úi Tosan kugok yong Mui toga un 憶陶山九曲用武尙權歌調.


59 The complete list of Tosan Nine Bends is found in Yi Man-yŏ 李晚輿 (1861-1904)’s O ka san chip 晉家山詩 (Record of Our Family Mountain). Yi’s list of the nine bends of Tosan includes: the first bend—Un-am 單巖 (Cloud Cliff); the second bend—Pi-am 鼻巖 (Nose Cliff); the third bend—Wŏlch’on 月川 (Wŏlch’on Village); the fourth bend—Punch’on 沙川 (Punch’on Village); the fifth bend—T’ak-yŏng-am 汾川 (Strap Washing Cliff); the sixth bend—Ch’ŏnsa 川砂 (River Sand); the seventh bend—Tansa 丹砂 (Red Sand Village); the eighth bend—Kosan 孤山 (Lone Mountain); the ninth bend—Ch’ŏngnyang 清涼 (Ch’ŏngnyang Mountain). See Kang Jung Suh 姜正瑞, “Chosŏn hyu’s poem 朝鮮李曙的詩歌 Tosan kugok ŭi sŏlchŏng kwa kyŏngyŏng úi han kungmyŏn. Hugye Yi I-sun úi Tosan kugok úl chungsim ŭro 謹次廣瀨李丈的詩歌與陶山九曲的形成和影響的韓國派後溪陶山九曲要予追和忘拙步呈 4 (June 2009): 283-316.


61 Kang P’il-hyo 姜必孝 (1764-1848), Hae-un pyŏlgo 海隱別稿 (Other Writings of Hae-ŭn), n.d., 1 Tosan sip-i kok 陶山十二曲. Original text: 退老先生陶山十二曲舊本 只是歌曲 有聲而無詩 必孝就其飄錄印本 敢依高斯九曲索文正翻文例 依永爲詞 以附於武夷九曲 世之聰子幸恕其曆夝之罪 而敢數其著墓之謠云.

62 Yi Yu-wŏn 李裕元 (1814-1888), Im ha p’ilgi 林下筆記 (Jottings in the Forest), 1999, 38.70 Tosan kugok ka 陶山九曲歌.

63 Hŏ Hun 許薰 (1836-1907), Pangsan chip 防山集 (The Collected Works of Pangsan), 1910, 18.30a-b Tosan sŏwŏn pu sŏlui pango yu mun 陶山書院復設位版告以下. For a study on the Southerners’ use of the paintings, see Yu Chunyŏng (1981).

64 For Yi Chong-hyu’s poem on Oksan Nine Bends, see note 56. For Yi Ka-sun’s poems on Oksan Nine Bends and Wŏnmyŏng Nine Bends, see Yi Ka-sun, Hagye munjip, 3.5a-6a Oksan kugok 玉山九曲 and 3.6a-7a Wŏnmyŏng kugok 源明九曲. For a study on the discursive development of Oksan Nine Bends, see Lee Soo-Hwan 이수환, “Yi Ĭn-jŏk munhak úi ch’angjak hyŏnjang kwa yujŏk 李彦迪 浴血的創作 현장과遺蹟,” Taedong hanmun hak 大東漢學 29 (2008): 45-73.
Conclusion

*Jingjie* as an idea and expression was explored and used widely by historians, thinkers, and poets of pre-modern China and Korea. Developing through over two millennia, the term came to be associated with various meanings and uses—including territory, spiritual realm, and poetic landscape—and its multifariousness has been a challenge in modern scholarship, which, for the most part, has focused on identifying and expounding its “essence” and “true meaning.” This study, however, has shown that the multiple meanings and uses of *jingjie* can be better accounted for when we investigate its evolution as the development of a discourse, and not of loosely related concepts. More specifically, we learned that the discursive formation of *jingjie* was closely linked to the evolution of various modes of territoriality, intersecting geopolitics, religion-philosophy, and art.

In Part I we examined the discursive development of *jingjie* as geopolitical, philosophico-religious, and poetic territory. The changing geopolitical imaginations of territoriality can be seen in the discursive formations of *jingjie*. The evolving meanings of *jing(jie)*—from the tattooed political subjects in the Shang, the geopolitical frontier in the Zhou, the boundary of the state in the Warring States period and of the empire in the Han, and to the prefectural, institutional, and private territory in the later dynasties—demonstrate that the discourse of *jingjie* was important for mapping out the geopolitical world that grew in complexity. The shift from the people-based itinerant political power to the land-based sedentary political power, and the rise of empire based on external and internal organization of land and compartmentalization of political power are made evident in *jingjie*’s discursive development.
Jingjie evolved into philosophico-religious discourse of territoriality after it was employed to communicate the Buddhist ideas of spiritual reality and enlightenment. Jingjie was used to translate the idea of territoriality in the spiritual context. More specifically, the term came to denote the domain of senses and the experience of enlightenment, the latter understood as the act of crossing to the other shore. The translation into jingjie helped build stronger ties between the two ideas, most prominently displayed in Chan Buddhism’s merging of the phenomenal world and spiritual world to create the “territory of the mind.”

The poetico-territorial discourse of jingjie was fully constituted by the Tang. In this new expressive and interpretive framework, poetic creativity came to be viewed as a territorializing act aimed at the production of poetic territories, which were defined, delineated, and mapped out through the process of aesthetic division and enclosure. The construction of poetic territories encompassed the territorialization of both poetic knowledge and geographical knowledge: that is to say, jingjie as a poetico-territorial discourse affected not only poetic composition and criticism, but also the interaction with and inhabitance of physical surroundings. Recognizing jingjie’s connection to poetic territoriality—something that has been overlooked in the study of jingjie based on theory of poetic imagery—helps us to appreciate the many spatial modes of aesthetic experience associated with Chinese poetic arts.

It is important to recognize that different layers of this discursive formation developed in parallel. Contrary to some modern attempts to elevate the philosophical and aesthetic over the geopolitical, the three modes of jingjie discourse existed simultaneously and affected each other; together they produced multifaceted and
integrated visions of territoriality that shaped the views of the world and the lives of people. In all three modes of jingjie discourse, we can observe the unfolding of horizontal and vertical territorialization. As a force of horizontal territorialization, jingjie divided the world into mutually existing but competing domains: it drew the line between the Chinese and non-Chinese, empire and frontier, illusion and enlightenment, the inner mind and the outer world, and the aesthetic and the mundane. As a force of vertical territorialization, jingjie stratified the world into ranked categories: it established social and political echelons, stages of spiritual learning, and levels of poetic competence. Stretching out horizontally and vertically, the discourse of jingjie carved out geopolitical, spiritual, and cultural spaces, identities, and powers.

The discursive mode of jingjie was very productive, and its ramifications were strongly felt in the development of Neo-Confucianism in China and Korea. In Part II we investigated the Neo-Confucian discourse of sagely jingjie. Criticizing the Buddhist view of jingjie, Neo-Confucians asserted that correct understanding can only be grasped through the study of the life and teachings of Confucian sages and masters, crystallized in the expression the “jingjie of the sages”—the philosophical, poetic, and geopolitical territory of the sage-kings.

Jingjie discourse helped render Neo-Confucian learning into a territorial undertaking. Sagehood was conceived as the reaching, seeing, entering, seeking, creating, and occupying of the moral and spiritual territory of the sages. Neo-Confucians endeavoured to emulate the moral jingjie of Confucian sages and worthies, particularly that of Yan Hui, characterized by joyous living and laborious learning. Jingjie also served
as an important conceptual and interpretive framework for constructing and explaining key philosophical concepts, including the heart-mind. The nature and operation of the “jingjie of the heart-mind”—an ontological territory found in both individual human and heaven and earth—became the subject of a centuries-long debate among Neo-Confucians. The territorial vision of Neo-Confucian philosophy affected by jingjie discourse was represented visually in the conceptual diagrams which mapped out the path of learning and the composition of principal ideas.

Sagely jingjie also signified the poetic territory of the sages. The poetic discourse of jingjie transformed sagehood into a mode of aesthetic living and being that could be experienced and shared. The effort to identify the sagely poetic territory eventually led to the development of a group of highly standardized poetico-territorial identifications of the key figures in Neo-Confucian thought, including the sage-kings, Confucius and his disciples, cultural icons, and the Song Neo-Confucian masters. These representations of sagely jingjie highlighted the individuals and the natural and built environments they inhabited—the poetic territory in which sagely living unfolded. Together they poetically constructed and rendered the genealogy—daotong or the Transmission of the Way—and, therefore, also legitimacy and identity of the Neo-Confucian movement.

The discourse of jingjie in the Neo-Confucian context also encompassed the issues of geopolitical territoriality: sage learning was believed to bring about “territorial restoration,” not only in the philosophical and literary sense but also in the geopolitical sense. Academies and shrines spatially charted out the territory of the Neo-Confucian movement, and such institutional growth was interpreted as the expansion of sagely territory. Jingjie discourse was also used to explain the division within Neo-
Confucianism. The formation of various schools and political factions was seen as a result of further demarcation of *jingjie*, with each school or faction occupying its own territory. In this interpretive model, one’s association with a particular school or faction was seen as a territorial act: as entering a territory or staying within the limits of a territory. Many Neo-Confucians also transformed their personal abodes into an ideal sagely territory, a space fit for the life of moral cultivation, and in this development *jingjie* came to signify not only the bounds of private property but also spatial statement of one’s moral and aesthetic values.

In Part III we investigated the discursive development and expansion of Wuyi Mountains and its Nine Bends Stream—the place, because of its association with Zhu Xi, that came to be celebrated as the most excellent example of Neo-Confucian *jingjie*. We traced the evolving geopolitical discourse of Wuyi Mountains in China from the Song through Qing. In the Song Wuyi *jingjie* came to represent the Neo-Confucian domain in conflict with the Daoist and Buddhist ideological fronts, and in the Yuan it became a geopolitical territory in tension with the Mongol regime and its supporters. Under the Ming’s state-wide Neo-Confucianization, Wuyi emerged as a site of Neo-Confucian pilgrimage.

Wuyi, however, also emerged as a Neo-Confucian poetic territory. Two poems by Zhu Xi—“The Boat Song of Wuyi’s Nine Bends” and “A Miscellaneous Poem on Wuyi Retreat”—were particularly important for constructing the poetic *jingjie* of Wuyi. We examined the efforts of various Neo-Confucians to access the poetic territory captured in Zhu Xi’s poems by writing matching poems and by visually and architecturally
reconstructing Wuyi jingjie in their own personal spaces. These attempts facilitated the pursuit of sagely living beyond the physical borders of Wuyi, bringing together the geographical and poetic expansion of Wuyi jingjie. The poems and images of Wuyi were also circulated through the publication of travel writings, enabling those who could not physically travel to wander in the poetic territory of Wuyi, and becoming an important part of the literati’s shared cultural memory.

Zhu Xi’s poems also helped transform Wuyi into a philosophical territory. We examined the hermeneutic development surrounding the Nine Bends poem, more specifically, how the philosophical discourse of jingjie was used to generate out of the landscape poem a roadmap of sage learning. Such an interpretive approach was best represented in the Yuan scholar Chen Pu’s commentary on the Nine Bends poem, which explains the poem as a case of allegory that reveals the nine stages (jingjie) of Neo-Confucian cultivation. Chen’s philosophical reading of the poem resonates with the hermeneutic trend of his time when the full-scale canonization of Zhu Xi’s works was in progress. In this context, jingjie discourse came to play an important role of creating a hierarchical order and philosophical voice in the poetic text, thereby increasing its textual authority. The poetico-philosophical exploration of Wuyi jingjie also had great political implications. What started as a hermeneutic debate grew into a political debate, the contention between Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and heterodoxy. In the effort to build a unified Neo-Confucian thought, philosophical interpretations of the Nine Bends poem became regulated and even censored, particularly under the tightening of hermeneutic control in the Ming.
After being introduced to Koryŏ in the fourteenth century, Neo-Confucianism penetrated deeply into various facets of Korean society and culture, and eventually became inaugurated as official ideology in the succeeding Chosŏn dynasty. The discourse of sagely jingjie also saw a momentous development in Korea. The Ming discourse of Wuyi’s Nine Bends jingjie was continued and expanded in the Chosŏn, and the attempts to overcome physical and cultural distance led to creative indigenous discursive development. After the fall of the Ming, the Chosŏn literati came to see themselves as the only remaining defenders and rightful heirs of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, and their land as its new home.

Interweaving the geopolitical, poetic, and philosophical modes of jingjie, the Chosŏn literati creatively reworked the discourse of Wuyi. They created numerous Nine Bends jingjie throughout the peninsula—through both physical and discursive constructions—and inhabited them as homes and schools. These Nine Bends jingjie were also celebrated as poetic territories. Poems and paintings were produced to underscore their connection to Zhu Xi’s Wuyi and to reveal the founders’ dedication to sage learning.

The transformation into the land of Nine Bends reinforced the cultural affinity between the Ming and Chosŏn, but it also bolstered Chosŏn’s political and cultural independence and even superiority over Ming. This was achieved through the appropriation but also through the intervention of the Chinese discourse of Nine Bends jingjie. The story of the Chosŏn literatus No In’s dramatic entry into China’s Wuyi jingjie and his exemplary performance in Wuyi Academy came to represent the Korean intervention into Chinese discourse and confirmed the belief held among the Korean literati that Chosŏn indeed was the “true” Wuyi.
The discussion of Wuyi as philosophical territory was also taken to a new height in the Chosŏn. Rigorous hermeneutic debate over the interpretation of Zhu Xi’s Nine Bends poem took place, as the two major schools of Korean Neo-Confucianism—the T’oegye and Yulgok schools—became divided on the issue. At the centre of their contentious philosophical exchanges was the dynamic exploration ofjingjie as interpretive framework, mainly regarding whether to read the poem as a discourse on poetic territory or philosophical territory—that is, as a representation of scenic beauty or as an instruction on the process of moral cultivation. Serious questions about author’s intention and the relationship between poetry and philosophy were raised, enriching the Neo-Confucian thought and developingjingjie as a critical mode of discourse.

*Jingjie* discourse was also used to communicate factional differences. The competition between the T’oegye and Yulgok schools was territorially manifested in the competition between Tosan and Kosan Nine Bends. The discourse of Nine Bendsjingjie proved particularly valuable in the task of reinventing the Neo-Confucian lineage that legitimized each faction’s philosophical and political position. The Nine Bends poetry gatherings and projects involving the members of these factions demonstrate the interconnectedness of the poetic, philosophical, and politicaljingjie discourses, and highlight their fundamental connection to issues of territoriality.

Taken as a whole, this dissertation presentsjingjie as a productive mode of discourse that was used and reworked throughout China and Korea’s pre-modern history. The many layers of meaning that accrued over time reveal rich and complex imaginations of territoriality that were vital for constructing various forms of collectivities, ideas, and
subjectivities. The discursive development of *jingjie* illustrates that territorality is written on many levels, intersecting the political, spiritual, and aesthetic, and that through the continuing process of discursive rewriting—through mapping and remapping—our world in all its fullness is created and inhabited.

Recently, in his stimulating essay “The failures of contemporary Chinese intellectual history,” Benjamin Elman criticized the widespread use of Western theories in the study of Chinese intellectual history and called for the need to acknowledge and explore “the relative autonomy of discursive formations and their internal evolution.” I believe the present study’s main contribution lies precisely in responding to the need that Elman saw: that is, exploring *jingjie* as an indigenous discursive tradition and tracing its evolution through its own context and history.

Although it was a historically and culturally rooted phenomenon, the dynamic unfolding of *jingjie* discourse also offers insight into the general workings of the human world. *Jingjie* highlights the fact that our very being—both social and individual—is a territorial act, both outward expansion and upward extension. We live and exist by opening up and occupying multiple territories: the countries, cities, and houses we physically inhabit and the ideas, values, and sentiments we spiritually and intellectually inhabit are all territorial extensions and expressions of our being. By drawing lines we mark out a place we call home, by excluding and including we form a group of people we call family, by aligning the trajectory we identify a goal as a destination. *Jingjie* makes us aware that we are essentially territorial beings, continually endeavouring to meaningfully locate and understand our place in this world.
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