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Pi Xirui's 皮錫瑞 Study on *I-Ching* 易經

in the book *Jingxue lishi* 經學歷史

(Words: 3086)

摘要

皮錫瑞作為今文學家，經學成就斐然。其治經雖然不以易學見長，但卻獨具特色。目前，學者潘斌、李銘偉、金小方等，對皮氏易學的研究側重在易學內容的論述，研究視角比較宏大。金小方總結皮氏在易學方面的成就之一，便是在《經學歷史》中梳理出《易》在各時段的發展情況。本文選取了這一角度進行研究，意在從更聚焦的一點，探索皮氏易學的特點。

本文將《經學歷史》中皮氏對《易》的記錄與論述進行匯總、釐清。由這些材料總結出皮氏易學有三個主要特點。一是他對孔子的尊崇在其易學觀點中非常突出。由此他強調《易》作為傳世教材，在教育方面的重要作用。二是皮氏作為今文學家，既重視《易》的義理研究以及如何將其經世致用，也並未忽視《易》的象數研究。三是在易學方面，他的門戶之見淡了許多。對於古文派、宋學派的易學能公允地看待，分別提出他們的優勢與缺陷。

可見，皮錫瑞的易學觀念雖是立足今文學派，但卻開闊包容。他對於其他學派易學的批評，也不能被簡單被歸因作他對今文學派的維護。其易學思想最核心的內容還是明經、尊孔，進而名正言順利用經學參與政治與國家的治理。

1. Introduction

Pi Xirui was a great and talented scholar on Confucian Classics in Qing Dynasty. Zhou Yutong commented on Pi's study that "Although Pi's study on classics was shaped by *Jinwen* school 今文學派, his opinions were quite justice, which were not so arbitrary like Kang Youwei's idea, or not so weird like Liao Ping's idea¹" and that "Although his works were not

¹ Wu Yangxiang 吳仰湘, *Pi xirui de jingxuechengjiu yu jingxuesixiang* 皮錫瑞的經學成就與經學思想 (Changsha:Hunan daxue chubanshe, 2013), p. 9. The original text is, '皮氏治經宗今文，但持論平允，沒有康

creative but conservative, just like contemporary *Jinwen* scholars, his methods to study classics were quite clear. And he was very good at collecting and organizing previous researches.² Pan Bin, a modern scholar, believed that Pi's study on classics was aimed at putting learnings in classics into effect, to address issues in society and to save his country. These comments had great influence on later scholars, and most scholars agreed with Zhou. Modern scholars, such as Pan Bin, Li Mingwei and Jin Xiaofang, paid attention on Pi's study of *I-Ching* 易經. Jin Xiaofang concluded there are four Pi's main achievements on Yi studies: to tease out thirty points from *I-Ching tonglun* 易經通論 in his book *Jingxue tonglun* 經學通論; to organize the development of *I-Ching* in *Jingxue lishi* 經學歷史; to do textual research on *I-Ching* part in *Hanpei yinjingkao* 漢碑引經考; to write explanatory notes for *Yilin zhengwen* 易林證文 (written by Jiao Yanshou in Han Dynasty)³.

The passage wants to have a more specific view rather than just general one, so focused on the second achievement: the development of *I-Ching* in *Jingxue lishi*. It is because *Jingxue lishi* is Pi's most famous and representative works, and has been nominated as the first book about the history of Confucius Classics. But he was not a professional historian, so the records of history were not objective enough, always mixed with his own attitudes towards classics. That is why the scholar Wu Yangxiang thought "Pi's *Jingxue lishi* was a work stating his own opinions by dint of the history of Confucius Classics rather than a book discussing the history of Confucius Classics." But because of this, we can see his unique views on *I-Ching* study from his in words in *Jingxue lishi*. As a result, the passage aims to analyze his records and comments of *I-Ching* in *Jingxue lishi* in order to find main features of Pi's study on the Yi-ology 易學.

2. The development of I-Ching in Jingxue lishi

Jingxue lishi was one of Pi's famous works, finished in his later life. In that period, there was no complete and systematic works about history of Confucius Classics, so *Jingxue lishi*

有為那樣的武斷，也沒有廖平那樣的怪誕。’

² Wu Yangxiang, *Pi xirui de jingxuechengjiu yu jingxuesixiang*, p. 9. The original text is, ‘他的著作內容，雖沒有很偉大的創見，如同時幾位著名的經今文學大師；但學術門徑很清楚，善於整理舊說。’

³ Jin Xiaofang 金小方, *Lun Pi xirui yixueyanjiu jiqi zai qingdaijingxue de diwei* 論皮錫瑞易學研究及其在清代經學中的地位, *Chuanshan Xuekan* 船山學刊, 3(2022), pp.78-86.

was very creative and enlightening. Just as Zhou Yutong said in the preface of the book: “Now I introduce Pi’s *Jingxue lishi* to everyone, not because it is thorough perfect without any problems but because it deserves careful study when we suffer from lacks of history works about Confucian classics.⁴” In the book, Pi divided the history of Confucian classics into ten eras. They are the beginning era of Confucians classics, the spreading era of Confucians classics, the flourishing era of Confucians classics, the golden era of Confucians classics, the declining era of Confucians classics, the separated era of Confucians classics, the unified era of Confucians classics, the changing era of Confucians classics, the weakening era of Confucians classics, and the revival era of Confucians classics respectively⁵. Pi listed and organized the development of classics, and showed their differences and changes in every era. Nearly all Confucians classics were involved in the book. Wu Yangxiang commented the book as a representative and significant work bringing all classics together.⁶ *I-Ching*, as a main and important book of Confucians classics, runs through the whole book. Pi recorded its development and derivative works in all ten eras. Those information about *I-Ching* spread in different eras so it is difficult to find the continuity. Hence, the passage collected information together to organize and analyze them. The results are as follows.

In *JingXue lishi*, the development of *I-Ching* in ten eras can be classified. Its development in first to eras can be put together, because at this stage Pi paid great attention to prove the close relationship between *I-Ching* and Confucius. In the beginning era, Pi thought although Fuxi invented the eight trigrams and King Wen overlapped the eight trigrams into sixty-four hexagrams, *I-Ching* has not been a classic until Confucius composed the hexagram and line statements for it. Pi also credited some parts of *Ten Wings* 十翼, such as *Tuan* 彖, *Xiang* 象, and *Wenyan* 文言 to Confucius. He believed these passages revealed and explained the real idea and deep meaning of *I-Ching*. After that, *I-Ching* has become a classic to teach later

⁴ Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞, *Jingxue lishi* 經學歷史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), p. 11. The original text is, ‘我現在介紹皮著《經學歷史》於讀者，並不以為這本書是萬分完善，毫無可議；在現在經學史這樣缺乏的時候，無論如何，這本書是有一讀的價值的。’

⁵ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, The original text is, ‘經學開闢時代’, ‘經學流傳時代’, ‘經學昌明時代’, ‘經學極盛時代’, ‘經學中衰時代’, ‘經學分立時代’, ‘經學統一時代’, ‘經學變古時代’, ‘經學積衰時代’, ‘經學復盛時代’.

⁶ Wu Yangxiang 吳仰湘, *Pi xirui jingxue lishi bingfei jingxuezhuzuo* 皮錫瑞《經學歷史並非經學著作》, *Shixue Yuekan* 史學月刊, 3(2007), pp.5-11. The original text is, ‘一本貫通群經、創發大義的代表性著作’.

generations rather than a book only for divination and prediction⁷. The main point of this idea is that *I-Ching* became one of classics when Confucius edited it and the hexagram and line statements were both written by Confucius. In other words, *I-Ching* was from Confucius. In the spreading era of Confucian classics, Pi did not discuss a lot history facts of how Confucian classics spread or analyze the dissemination of *I-Ching* systematically. He still focused on the relationship between *I-Ching* and Confucius and their disciples, especially on which disciple inherit *I-Ching*. He cited the words from Taoqian: “Gongsun inherited *I-Ching*, because he was a spotless and subtle Confucian scholar”⁸, and words from Zhu Yi: “Among Confucius’s disciples, only Zixia learned all six classics. Ziruo inherit *I-Ching*...”⁹ Then, during the Warring States Period, Pi emphasis the significance of Mencius and Xunzi who inherited classics. He believed Mencius was proficient in Five Classics, and Xunzi inherited and spread *I-Ching*, *The book of Songs* 詩, *The Book* 書, *The Book of Rites* 禮, *The Book of Music* 樂.¹⁰ Pi believed Mencius and Xunzi’s studies of *I-Ching* were the lineal studies. He said: “No matter Jin wen or Gu wen school, both were inherited from Lu. Although there were some branches, they were not so different in fact.”¹¹ Hence, in the first two eras Pi’s idea about *Yi-ology* focused on how Confucius had great influence on *I-Ching* and how the *I-Ching* passed in among Confucius disciples.

Then, in the flourishing era, the golden era and the declining era, Pi listed the development of *I-Ching* in the Han Dynasty and found with the development of Confucius classics different schools of *I-Ching* emerged. He cited *Shiji* 史記 that : “At the reign of Wu Emperor in Han Dynasty, scholars such as Zhao Wan and Wang Zang learned Confucian Classics... Tian Sheng living in Zi Chuan inherited *I-Ching*.”¹² In the reign of Wen Emperor, the government began to set up official post for learned scholars (only for scholars’ study on

⁷ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 19. The original text is, ‘《易》自伏羲畫卦，文王重卦，止有畫而無辭；亦如《連山》、《歸藏》止為卜筮之用而已。《連山》、《歸藏》不得為經，則伏羲、文王之《易》亦不得為經矣。’

⁸ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 48. The original text is, ‘陶潛《聖賢群輔錄》雲：“顏氏傳《詩》，為諷諫之儒；孟氏傳《書》，為疏通致遠之儒；漆雕氏傳《禮》，為恭儉莊敬之儒；仲良氏傳《樂》，為移風易俗之儒；樂正氏傳《春秋》，為屬辭比事之儒；公孫氏傳《易》，為潔靜精微之儒。’

⁹ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 50. The original text is, ‘孔門自子夏兼通《六藝》而外，若子木之受《易》’.

¹⁰ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 55. The original text is, ‘孟子通五經。是荀子能傳易、詩、禮、樂、春秋’.

¹¹ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 58. The original text is, ‘凡今古學之兩大派，皆魯東家之三四傳。雖云枝葉扶疏，實亦波瀾莫二’.

¹² Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 69. The original text is, ‘《史記·儒林傳》曰：“今上即位，趙綰、王臧之屬明儒學，而上亦鄉之。於是招方正賢良文學之士。自是之後，…言《易》，自菑川田生’.

The Book of Songs at that time). And in the reign of Wu Emperor, Yang He became the official who studied on *I-Ching*.¹³ Then, different branches of *I-Ching* studies were all awarded to official post. They were Shi Chou, Meng Xi, Liangqiu He, Jing Fang. However, Pi did not agree with the behaviour to set up so many officials. In the golden era, the school of image-numerology in *I-Ching* studies became popular, and Pi showed approval to this study. *I-Ching* spread out some works, such as *Yi Wei* 易緯, *Zaiyi Mengshi Jingfang* 災異孟氏京房, and *Yi shuo* 易說. Shi's school of *Yi-ology* involved He Figure and Luo Weft. At the end of the Han Dynasty, Zheng Xuan gave explanatory notes for Confucian classics, including *I-Ching*. According to Pi, Zheng Xuan's notes for *I-Ching* were based on Fei's study which belonged to *Gu Wen school* 古文學派. Zheng's works became popular but at the same time Shi's, Meng's Liangqiu's, and Jing's studies were neglected¹⁴. Xun Shuang and Yu Fan, two contemporary scholars of Zheng Xuan, both gave explanatory notes for *I-Ching*, but they chose to consult different schools: Xun concentrated on Fei's study of *I-Ching*, and Yu believed in Meng's views on *I-Ching*. Wang Bi, another representative scholar of *I-Ching* later than Zheng Xuan, also composed works to note *I-Ching*. His study was based on Fei's study too, but showed totally different ideas. He abandoned images and numerology, but paid attention to meaning-pattern in *I-Ching*. His study was greatly influenced by Laozi and Zhuangzi.

Next, in the separated era and the unified era, Pi noticed the different schools of *I-Ching* between the Southern Dynasties and the Northern Dynasties. He quoted the preface of *Beishi rulinzhuan* 北史儒林外傳 that: "In the Southern Dynasties, scholars followed Wang Bi's study on *I-Ching*...; and in the Northern Dynasties, scholars focused on Zheng Xuan's study."¹⁵ Later in the unified era, *Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義 was composed to unify different studies on Confucian Classics. Its *I-Ching* part was mainly based on Wang Bi's study, and unfortunately Zheng Xuan's study on *I-Ching* disappeared gradually. Some works related to *I-Ching* were composed at this time. Shi Zheng wrote *Zhouyi koujue* 周易口訣,

¹³ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 73. The original text is, '《儒林傳》贊曰：武帝立五經博士，《書》唯有歐陽，《禮》後，《易》楊，《春秋公羊》而已'.

¹⁴ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 64. The original text is, '於是鄭《易注》行而施、孟、梁丘、京之《易》不行矣'.

¹⁵ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 153. The original text is, '《北史儒林傳》序曰：『江左，《周易》則王輔嗣，《尚書》則孔安國，《左傳》則杜元凱；河、洛，《左傳》則服子慎，《尚書》、《周易》則鄭康成；《詩》則並主于毛公，《禮》則同遵于鄭氏』'.

but Pi Xirui thought it was too short to express great meanings of *I-Ching*. Li Dingzuo composed *Zhouyi jijie* 周易集解 in which included many thoughts from ancient scholars, such as Xun Shuang and Yu fan, so that later learners could acquire the studies of *I-Ching* in Han Dynasty from this book.

The Changing of Confucian classics is a turning point on the development of classics. There are great changes in many Confucian classics, including *I-Ching*, so Pi gave this period a lot of space to explain the variation in *I-Ching*. *I-Ching* in the Song Dynasty was influenced by Daoism. Chen Tuan, a Daoism priest, composed Nature Figure and Nurture Figure according to special rules in Daoism. After three generations, his study was inherited by Shaozi who was good at numerology of *I-Ching*. But Pi thought the numerology should not be the mainstream of *I-Ching* study.¹⁶ Chengzi also believed the numerology should not be the most important part, so he paid great attention on real meanings and principles of *I-Ching* and finished his book *Yi zhuan* 易傳. He taught his study to Zhu Xi. Zhu Xi added nine figures of He and Luo at the preface of *Zhouyi benyi* 周易本義. He wanted to combined images with meanings. But the figures were not those in the Han Dynasty, but just black and white points just like images in Daoism. As a result, Pi did not think it was worth studying on Nature and Nurture theory.

After this era, Confucian classic stepped into the weakening era. Zhu Xi's study on *I-Ching* became highly recommended. Pi did not mention any other works about *I-Ching* in the period.

In the revival era, Pi gave recognition to the study of *I-Ching*, because scholars noticed the significance to learn from studies in Han Dynasty. There were some works finished under the orders of emperor, such as *Zhouyi zhezhong* 周易折中 in the reign of Kangxi Emperor, and *Zhouyi shuyi* 周易述義 in the reign of Qianlong Emperor. Wang Yinglin collected and edited Zheng Xuan's *Yi zhu* 易注. He is the pioneer of Ancient-works collection. Hu Wei wrote *Yitu mingbian* 易圖明辨 to point out the problems about *Hetu* 河圖 and *Luoshu* 洛書.

¹⁶ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 223. The original text is, ‘宋道士陳搏乃本太乙下行九宮之法，作先天後天之圖，託伏羲、文王之說而加之孔子之上。三傳得邵子，而其說益昌。邵子精數學，亦《易》之別傳，非必得於《河》、《洛》。程子不信邵子之數，其識甚卓。《易傳》言理，比王弼之近老氏者，為最純正。朱子以程子不言數，乃取《河》、《洛》九圖冠於所作《本義》之首……此皆百喙不能解者。是以先天後天說《易》者，皆無足觀’.

After the reign of Jiaqing and Daoguang, scholars traced to the old *I-Ching* schools of Yu Fan and even of Meng Xi in order to follow studies in the Han Dynasty.

3. Features of Pi's views on I-Ching

As mentioned before, Pi showed his own features on the study of Confucian classics in *Jingxue lishi*. He also did that on his views on *I-Ching*.

3.1 Jin Wen school with great worship to Confucius

Pi Xirui was a scholar believing in Jin Wen school. The standpoint of his study on *I-Ching* was based on the Jin Wen school. First, he tried his best to prove the value of *I-Ching* came from Confucius and *Gua ci* 卦辭 and *Yao ci* 爻辭 were composed by Confucius. He believed if Confucius did not have direct relationship with *I-Ching* and only wrote *Ten Wins*, Confucius could not be considered as an educator but only a scholar good at giving explanatory notes.¹⁷ Pi emphasized the educational meaning of *I-Ching* and believed that Confucius edited *I-Ching* with a view to teach later generations. This could reflect in the order of Six or Five Confucius classics when he mentioned them. He always put *I-Ching* after *The book of Songs, The Book, The Book of Rites, The Book of Music*. This order was put forward by Jin Wen scholars. They believed it was a reasonable order to learn classics because *I-Ching*'s meanings were more difficult to understand than *The book of Songs, The Book, The Book of Rites*. Pi said: "*I-Ching* was used to do divination or prediction, but its subtle meanings were too difficult to understand for those beginning learners."¹⁸ More than that, he showed strong worship to Confucius, so he was discontent with those scholars who respect Fuxi and King Wen more than Confucius, such as some scholars in Song Dynasty.

But Pi's argument was not reasonable enough. His materials also were inability. That was why Zhang Taiyan retorted his theory so intensely. Zhang said: "If *Gua ci*, *Yao ci*, *Tuan*, and *Xiang* were all composed by Confucius just as Pi's opinion, how could it be reasonable? Confucius wrote *Gua ci* and *Yao ci*, then explained them by himself to compose *Tuan* and

¹⁷ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 26. The original text is, '孔子作六經之旨：孔子所作之《易》，以為止有《十翼》；則孔子于《易》，不過為經作傳，如後世箋注家'.

¹⁸ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 36. The original text is, '樂正崇四術以訓士，則先王之《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》其設教固已久。《易》雖用於卜筮，而精微之理非初學所可語；《春秋》雖公其記載，而策書亦非民庶所得盡窺'.

Xiang. As a result, Pi's proposal was a mistake."¹⁹ Zhang's standpoint was based on *Gu Wen* school. He placed more value on history facts which was Pi's shortcoming, because Pi did not notice the significance of history evidence.

3.2 Attitude towards Image-numerology and Meaning-pattern study of *I-Ching*

Because Pi is a scholar from *Jin Wen* School, he thought the meaning of *I-Ching* was the mainstream of study on *I-Ching*. Others schools, such as Jing Fang who used disasters and anomalies to explain *I-Ching*, were just branches. Wang Bi's study focused on explaining the subtle and great meanings of *I-Ching*. From this aspect, Pi gave his approval to Wang Bi. But Wang Bi ignored the images and numerology aspects of *I-Ching*, his works was not complete. Pi commented that Wang Bi only noticed the meanings and principles. It did not accord with Han scholars' style.²⁰ In the Song Dynasty, Chen Tuan and Shao Zi came to the other end. They paid attention on images and numerology part of *I-Ching*, but neglected its meanings and principles. Pi definitely disagreed with their opinions. And they mixed big part of Daoism into their studies that also was disapproved by Pi. Cheng studied on the meanings of *I-Ching* again and focused on Confucianism. Pi thought his works was purer than Chen and Shao's studies. From here, it is obvious that Pi liked the meaning-pattern study more than Image-numerology one. But he was not stubborn on only the meaning-pattern study. When Zhu Xi combined images with meanings, Pi thought Zhu created a small unified period for Confucian classics. In short, Pi attached importance to both image-numerology study and meaning-pattern study of *I-Ching*. Pi admitted the original use of *I-Ching* was for divination and prediction and he was influenced by thoughts in Han Dynasty. As a result, he believed the Chenwei study of *I-Ching*, although he knew they were just branches of *Yi-ology*.

3.3 Attitude towards Different Schools

Pi's book *Jingxue lishi* was always be criticized, because some scholars thought Pi did not have fair views on different schools, such as *Gu Wen* School and Study in Song Dynasty. But

¹⁹ Jin Xiaofang, *Lun Pi xirui yixueyanjiu jiqi zai qingdaijingxue de diwei*, pp.78-86. The original text is, '一本貫通群經、創發大義的代表性著作'若所云即是卦、爻下辭，彖、象當何所指？若以《彖傳》、《象傳》當之，是自作卦、爻，自以彖、象說解，其謬一也'.

²⁰ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 163. The original text is, '王弼《易注》，空談名理，與漢儒樸實說經不似'.

the passage thinks he keep relatively fair views on *I-Ching*. Wang Bi's study was based on Gu Wen. Pi agreed with his attention on the meanings and principles of I-Ching, but disagreed with that Wang consulted too much from Laozi. We can see Pi's criticism on Wang Bi not because Wang was from *Gu wen* school, but because mixed Daoism thinking into Confucian classics. In Pi's opinion, Zheng Xuan's study on I-Ching also mainly based on Gu Wen school. When *Wujing Zhengyi* chose Wang's notes rather than Zheng's notes, Pi said: "people blamed that the book did not distinguish the real study from fake study, just like did not see the different between colours of red and purple. It showed Pi's approval to Zheng's study on *I-Ching*.

As for Song Dynasty, Pi definitely did not agree with study style of scholars in Song Dynasty. Pi thought they doubt Confucian classics and lose the real meaning of classics. And Pi was discontent that they indulged in mind and thought, and ignored the practical use of classics into society. But Pi had a relatively reasonable eye for I-Ching study in Song Dynasty. He approved Cheng Yichuan's study on *I-Ching*, and praised Cheng as "had grand vision" and "very pure study on *I-Ching*" Pi said "If people used Nature and Nurture Figure to explain I-Ching, their studies were not worth to read." He said those words not because he had discrimination about scholars in Song Dynasty, but because Nature and Nurture Figures were derived from Daoism. It would be more precise to describe his idea as his support to Confucius and Confucius's idea rather than his discrimination to scholars in Song Dynasty. The deep reason was his worship to Confucius and wanted to keep *I-Ching* as Confucianism classics. But at that time, real study of *I-Ching* was lost. That was why he agreed with Zhu Xi's opinion. Zhu Xi thought *Zhou li* 周禮 was quiet worth to learn, but *I-Ching* and *The Book* were not good enough.²¹

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Pi Xirui's study on *I-ching* was based on the view of *Jin wen* school. But he still had a relatively fair eye to collect and tidy up the development of *I-Ching* in different

²¹ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue lishi*, p. 240. The original text is, '朱子论疏，称《周礼》而下《易》、《书》，非于诸疏功力甚深，何能断得如此确凿'.

schools, such as *Gu wen* school and studies in Song Dynasty. He emphasized both meanings and images of *I-Ching*. His criticisms to some studies on *I-Ching* are derived from his worship to Confucius and Confucian Classics. If we only consider Pi's opinion as his partiality and support to *Jin wen* studies, it will be too superficial. And it is not a reasonable judgment to Pi.

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