The Chinese Sophism

Part I: Kung-sun Lung's Thought

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So far the Nominalists (ming-chia名家) have been studied on only through their character as a school of logicians who represented a very special field among many other schools of pre-Ch'in philosophers. This view on their character has been commonly accepted as a statement of plain truth, but it yet needs to be re-examined whether this view has a solid support in our sources. Fortunately, a work by Kung-sun Lung, so-called leader of li-chien-pai 李奎全派, is still preserved, if not in its whole, in the form that permits us to observe the logic of a discourse, which the present author made use of in an analysis of the thought of Kung-sun Lung who served Ping-yuan-chin 皮鳴玄 of Chao Kingdom as a protégé, in comparison with that of other thinkers. All the five chapters of Kung-sun Lung-tzu 公孫龍子 except the chapter Chi-ju 紫居 are analyzed from a consistent viewpoint, and it is examined what kind of reality consciousnes of Kung-sun Lung was the basis of the epistemology by finger found in this text, together with the question of how to account for the discrepancy between his thought and the casuistry of the sophist described in the chapter T'ien-hsia 天下 of Chuang-tzu. Thus the present author makes an attempt at understanding Kung-sun Lung in connection with other philosophers as well as in his relation to the casuistry of the sophists.