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Late Chosŏn: Critical Reflections on Methods of  
Approach**  
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*How the Confucians related to the  
Buddhist world in Late Chosŏn ?*

**Synthesis of researches and  
Reflections on approach**

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# Recent Studies Reveal :

- A more general phenomenon beyond personal and isolated cases
- Limit of previous studies : depending on ideological, philosophical or literary exchanges
- Limit of previous viewpoints : sclerotic, monolithic and static regards
- Limit of previous approaches : depending on textual documentation

# Amplified and pluri-disciplinary approaches in need

- Object : Contact and exchange provide information about sociocultural dynamism
- Its origins
- Its background and context
- Its indication and parameter

# Why the 18th century ?

- Between the 17th and 19th centuries
- 17th c. : new relationship between State/Society and Buddhist world
- 19th c. : decline of Confucian hegemony, free and detached attitude toward Buddhist world
- 18<sup>th</sup> c. : fundamental and various changes in economic, social and cultural dimensions
- Relationship between Confucian Buddhist relationship and changes in other sociocultural spheres

# Objectif of this presentation

- Drawing a simplified layout through summary of recent studies
- Proposal of tasks and approaches for further studies

# **I. SYTHESIS OF RECENT STUDIES**

# Literati studied or mentionned

강백	1690-1777, 서얼	이의현	1669-1745
김도수	1701-1733, 서얼	이익	1681-1763
김만중	1637-1692	이충익	1744-1816
김정희	1786-1856	이하곤	1677-1724
김창협	1651-1708	정시한	1625-1707
김창흡	1653-1722	정약용	1762-1836
김춘택	1670-1717	정조	1752-1800
박세당	1629-1703	정지윤	1808-1858, 역관
성대중	1732-1809	조귀명	1693-1737
신유한	1681-?, 서얼	채제공	1720-1799
유형원	1622-1673	최창대	1669-1720
이덕수	1673-1744	홍대용	1731-1783
이상적	1804-1865	홍세태	1653-1725, 역관
이언진	1740-1766, 역관		



# Historical, social, cultural contexts

- Buddhism and royal family and court
- Buddhism as female religion in Yangban family
- State's acknowledgement of Buddhists monks' devotions during wars
- Buddhist efforts for resurgence
  - Scholarly promotion
  - Contribution to book production
  - Absorption of Confucian value and practice
  - Approach to Confucian literati

# Historical, social, cultural contexts

- Monasteries as open space
  - Artistic attractions
  - Place for sightseeing, meeting, studying
  - Pilgrimage for government officials
- Exchanges between people from different social status, yangban and other classes

- Relationship between local administration and monasteries
  - Exploitation, cooperation and support
- → Monks and monasteries' usual existence in many spheres of society and culture

# Personal contexts

- Political ordeal or alienation
- *P'ungniu* 風流 mind/taste
- Master disciple relationship
- Family relationship
- Request for writings

# Kind of monks in contact

- Collapsed yangban family
- Having a Confucian grounding
- Renowned for ascetic achievement or scholarly attainment

# Positive attitudes for Buddhist world

- Non-dogmatic
  - Self-reflection,
  - Critical & pragmatic mind,
  - Acknowledgment of subjectiveness
  - Extensive learning
- Comprehensive understanding of Buddhism & profound understanding of Confucianism
  - Acknowledgment of Buddhist fundamental value
  - Search for spirit of primitive Confucianism and deeper understanding of Zhu Xi's thought
- Concern about after death or invisible world

# Positive attitudes for Buddhist world

- One of the ways for self-perfection
- Particular literary style in sūtra
- Concern about history of Buddhism
- Personal experience and internalisation
  - Recognition through personal exchange and experience
  - Adoption of Buddhist eye as his own not as other's
- Disillusion about Confucianism
  - Buddhists for comparison with Confucians
  - Buddhism for social criticism

# Other benefits from Buddhist world

- Space for study, leisure and meeting
- Rituals for ancestors' peace
- Support for book production



# Roles as Confucian for Buddhist world

- Criticism
  - Irrational, illogic ideas, ex. : idea of Samsara
  - Scholarly monks' desire for fame
  - Coexistence of critical and positive attitudes
- Social education for monks
  - Confucian education and socialization
- Support for Buddhist activities
  - Writing, compilation, book production
  - Rituals for ancestors

# In 18th c. Chosŏn, probably

- Closeness and variety in relationship between Buddhism & Confucianism : more dynamic
- Significant role and place of the Buddhist world in personal and social dimension
- Buddhism was more ubiquitous

## **II. PERSPECTIVE FOR TASKS AND APPROACHES**

# Relevant texts in *Munjip ch'onggan*

김낙행 金樂行	1708 ~ 1766	윤광소 尹光紹	1708 ~ 1786
김원행 金元行	1702 ~ 1772	윤기 尹愔	1741 ~ 1826
김이안 金履安	1722 ~ 1791	윤행임 尹行恁	1762 ~ 1801
김익 金煜	1723-1790	윤행로 尹衡老	1702 ~ 1782
김재찬 金載瓚	1746-1827	이가환 李家煥	1742 ~ 1801
김종수 金鍾秀	1728 ~ 1799	이광정 李光靖	1714 ~ 1789
김종후 金鍾厚	1721 ~ 1780	이덕무 李德懋	1741-1793
남공철 南公轍	1760 ~ 1840	이동급 李東汲	1738 ~ 1811
박윤원 朴胤源	1734 ~ 1799	이만수 李晩秀	1752 ~ 1820
박제가 朴齊家	1750-1805	이만운 李萬運	1736 ~ 1820
박준원 朴準源	1739 ~ 1807	이민보 李敏輔	1717-1799
서명응 徐命膺	1716 ~ 1787	이복원 李福源	1719 ~ 1792
서형수 徐滢修	1749 ~ 1824	이상정 李象靖	1711 ~ 1781
성해응 成海應	1760 ~ 1839	이서구 李書九	1754-1825

송덕상 宋德相	1710 ~ 1783	이선 李愔	1735 ~ 1762
송명흠 宋明欽	1705 ~ 1768	이언진 李彦璘	1740 ~ 1766
송문흠 宋文欽	1710-1752	이영익 李令翊	1738 ~ 1780
송치규 宋稹圭	1759 ~ 1838	이이순 李頤淳	1754-1832
송환기 宋煥箕	1728 ~ 1807	이인상 李麟祥	1710 ~ 1760
신광수 申光洙	1712 ~ 1775	이종휘 李種徽	1731 ~ 1797
신작 申綽	1760 ~ 1828	이헌경 李獻慶	1719 ~ 1791
안석경 安錫倣	1718 ~ 1774	임희성 任希聖	1712-1783
안정복 安鼎福	1712 ~ 1791	정범조 丁範祖	1723-1801
오희상 吳熙常	1763 ~ 1833	정종노 鄭宗魯	1738-1816
위백규 魏伯珪	1727-1798	최흥원 崔興遠	1705 ~ 1786
유도원 柳道源	1721 ~ 1791	홍양호 洪良浩	1724-1802
유득공 柳得恭	1748 ~ 1807	황경원 黃景源	1709 ~ 1787
유언호 俞彦鎬	1730 ~ 1796	황덕길 黃德吉	1750-1827
유한준 俞漢雋	1732-1811	윤광소 尹光紹	1708 ~ 1786

- A majority of (representative) confucian literati were not indifferent toward or in touch with the Buddhist world !

# Extended notion of literati/intellectual

- Officials in active service
- *Yangban* and collapsed *Yangban*
- *Sööl*
- *Chungin*
- Learned common people

# Extention of materials

- Other *munjip* :
  - *Munjip ch'ongsŏ*
  - Non-Sadaebu *munjip* or writings
- Other documents, ex. *Komunsŏ*
- Materials from Buddhist side
- Materials from history of art and archeology :  
Images, objects, etc.



# Review of notions and visions

- Notions of ‘religion’ and ‘religious culture’
  - Non monotheistic, non confessional notion
  - Knowledge, representation, practice
- Historical, sociological, anthropological approaches
  - Multilayered society and culture
  - “Deep description” (Clifford Geertz)
  - Implicit meanings and structures beyond explicit discourses

- Structure of investigations
  - Factors for contact
  - Factors for interaction
  - Modes of interaction
  - Modes of relationship
- Personal and social evolution
  - Observation of person's whole life
  - Observation of sociocultural changes upon long term

# Conclusion

- Not only to re-establish certain historical facts about the relationship between these two traditions
- but more generally because a better understanding of the coexistence and exchanges between different traditions may help shed light upon the cultural plurality of Chosŏn society, a plurality that served to stimulate its social and cultural dynamism

“A rose by any other name  
would smell as sweet”

Shakespeare