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**Contacts, échange et coexistence entre ‘orthodoxe’ et  
‘hérétique’ : Un regard socio-culturel sur la relation des  
confucéens avec le monde bouddhiste de la Corée au  
XVIIIe siècle**

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***The relationship of Confucian  
scholars with the Buddhist world in  
the 18<sup>th</sup> c. of Korea***

Synthesis of researches and  
Reflections on approach

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# Contents

- Images constructed by ideas
- Case studies
- Preliminary reflexion on factors of plurality

# Image of a social class in question

- Very long history (for about ten centuries until the 14th c.) of coexistence of diverse religious traditions
- Sudden appearance of a social class (intellectual) isolated in one tradition and impervious to the others, from the 15th to the 19th c. (Chosŏn period) ?
- The culture of litterati class : exclusively Confucian ?

# Constructing factors ?

- A idealized / constructed image of this social class by 2 constructing factors ?
- Confucian historiography : exemplary (moral and political) history
- Monotheistic and rational notion of « religion » : « it is a religion only when an experience is confirmed through a confession of faith ».

# Recent Studies Reveal :

- Socio-cultural changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> c.
- Confucian Buddhist dynamics : A more general phenomenon beyond personal and isolated cases
- Cases of literati who show esteem for the other traditions as much as for Confucianism
- Cases of literati, while keeping their Confucian conviction exclusive, interested too in Buddhism and Taoism

# Recent Studies Reveal :

- 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 ?

- In the 16<sup>th</sup> c. : generalization of Confucian culture (ideology and practices) in the center and provinces
- 17th c. : new relationship between State/Society and Buddhist world
- 18<sup>th</sup> c. : fundamental and various changes in economic, social and cultural dimensions
- 19th c. : decline of Confucian hegemony, free and detached attitude toward Buddhist world

# Objectif of this presentation

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

# **SYTHESIS OF RECENT STUDIES**

# Studied or mentionned literati : 27

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

- Since the 15th c.
  - Buddhism, royal family and court
  - Buddhism as female religion in *yangban* family
- Since the 17th c.
  - State's acknowledgement of Buddhists monks' devotions during wars
- Relationship between local administration and monasteries
  - Exploitation, cooperation and mutual support

# Historical, social, cultural contexts

- Buddhist efforts for resurgence
  - Scholarly promotion
  - Contribution to book production
  - Absorption of Confucian value and practice
  - Approach to Confucian literati
- Monasteries as open space
  - Artistic attractions
  - Place for sightseeing, meeting, studying
  - Pilgrimage for government officials

# Historical, social, cultural contexts

- Exchanges between people from different social status, *yangban* and other classes
- → Monks and monasteries' usual existence in many spheres of society and culture

# Literati's personal contexts

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

# Kind of monks in contact

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

# Positive attitudes toward 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 toward Buddhist world

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

# 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

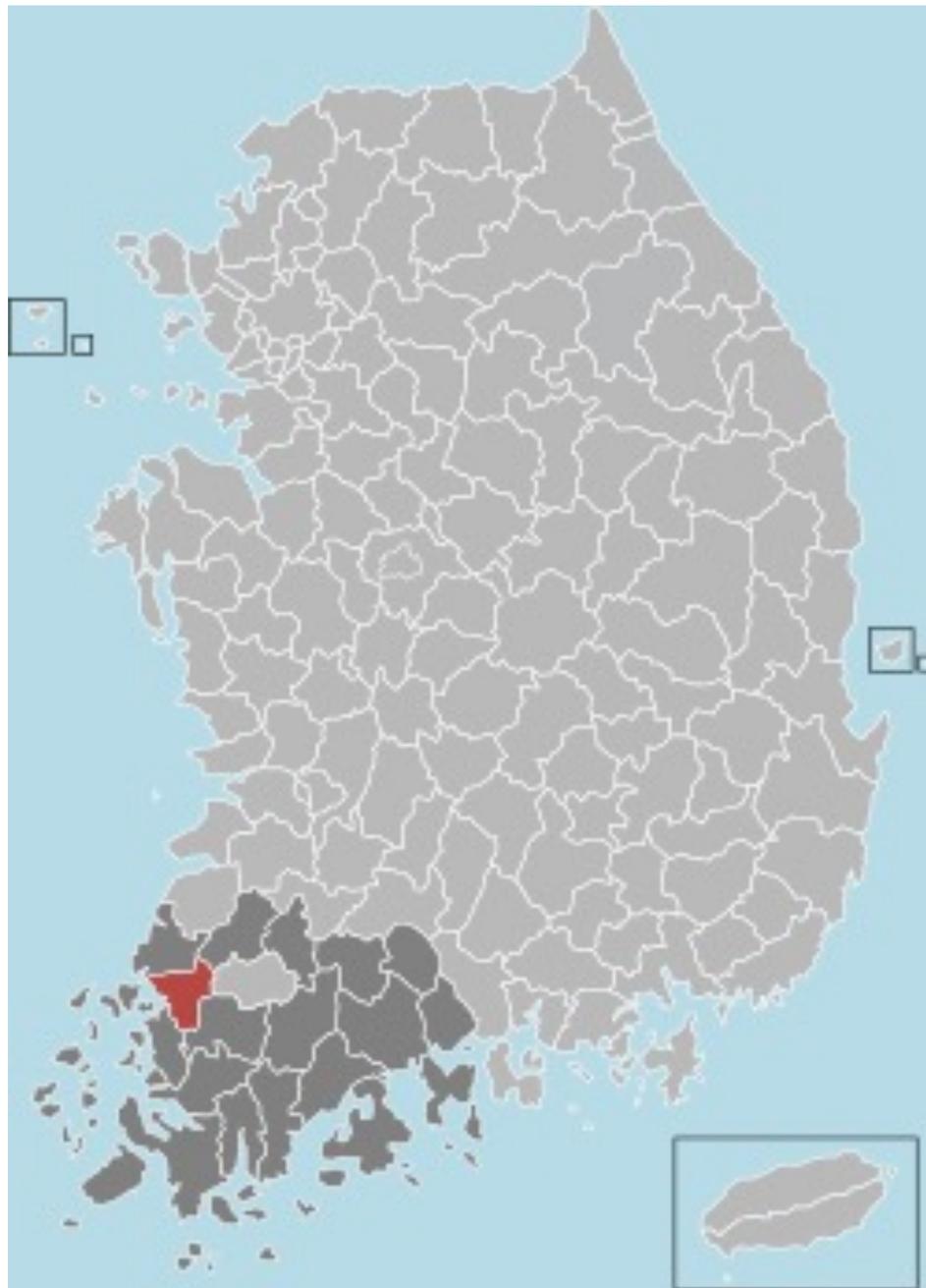
- Criticism
  - Irrational, illogic ideas, ex. : idea of Samsara
  - Scholarly monks' desire for fame
  - Coexistence of critical and positive attitudes
- Social education for monks
  - Confucian education and socialization
- Support for Buddhist activities
  - Writing, compilation, book production
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

# Case of a rural Confucian scholar

- Yi Chun 李濬 (1686-1740)
- Hamp'yŏng district in the Chŏlla province
- His journal *Tojae ilgi* 導哉日記 (1717 – 1731)
- Having applied many times for public service without success
- Properties barely sufficient to sustain his family
- Diverse medical and religious practices



# Diverse religious practices

- Being faced with uncertainty of life or with death
- Divinations based on the *Book of Changes of the Zhou* 周易.
- Praying to the spirits of nature (明神 : the sun, the moon, mountains, flows or areas of water)
- Buddhist rituals for deads

# Buddhist rituals for deads

- Conducted in parallel with the Confucian rites
- Constant presence of Buddhist monk in Confucian families (in a clan community)
- Positive attitude toward Buddhist rite (*ch'ōndo chae* 薦度齋, « Guidance service for the souls of the deceased (in a good place) »)
- A Confucian scholar accepted Buddhist rituals which were admitted and practices by his society.

# Factors of plurality

- Observation : Complementarity & porosity
- 3 closeness in social / global level :
  - Historical closeness (understanding based on prejudice from history)
  - Closeness in spirituality
  - Closeness in group organization
- 2 closeness in personal level :
  - Closeness in space
  - Closeness in a particular social situation