

# King Chongjo's Politics in the Conflicts between Confucianism and Catholicism in the 18th Century Korea

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is twofold: first, to understand the political configuration and the intellectual climate in which Catholicism encountered Confucianism by the religion debates in the reign of King Chongjo(正祖 r 1776-1880). Second, we will look into the King Chongjo's role of coping with the problem of the refusal of Confucian mourning rituals(祭祀) and the religious conflicts among the intellectuals.

There are many works about the 'Clash of Civilizations' between one specific form of European Catholicism and one particular school of Korean Neo-Confucianism. Those works can be divided into two groups; 1) Catholic standpoint which regarded it as 'regional persecution' and 'political suppression(Yi Manche ed., 1984 ; Charles Dallet 1987),' 2) Confucian viewpoint which looked upon it as a 'History of Western Encroachment' or an 'Imperialistic Aggression'(Shin Bokryong 1997). The role of King Chongjo who was in the critical position, however, has not come to light yet. How did he think the new Catholic civilization? What is his reaction to the Korean Catholic literati' violating actions against Confucian traditions?

Chinsan Incidence(1791) was one in which the refusal of Confucian mourning rituals among Korean Catholic literati was highlighted as a acute dispute. It enforced Catholic literati elite to make a choice between keeping the religious life or a political compromise. In fact, the refusal of Confucian mourning rituals was shocking like "pricking the eyes" for the Confucian Koreans(Charles Dallet 1987, 330). Choson Confucian literati who were familiar with the polytheist tradition(Kim SeukKun 1998) and the filial-centric social ethics were shocked culturally by the monotheism of Catholicism and God-centered ethics. As a result, so many literati who accepted Catholicism from the point of the coincidence with[合儒] or extension of[補儒] Confucianism cannot but renounce Catholicism. For example, while Yun Chich'ung (尹持忠, 1759-1791) and Kwon Sangyon(權尙然), who brought about Chinsan Incident, took the path to martyrdom, Yi Sunguun(李承薰,1756-1801) and Chong Yagyong(丁若鏞), the leaders of the Namin faction(南人), compromised politically and

became the apostates. So, what were their grounds for which the different Confucian literati elite defended? Were their choices inevitable? What is the political implication of their choice?

I will first examine the power relations and the political position of the Namin faction in the second half of eighteenth century, the period of which Catholicism spreaded into the Korean scholar class, let alone the commoner class. It was the time when King Chongjo appointed a few literati elites of the Namin which had kept at a distance from political core. He gave an equal opportunity to all men for office in his reign in the name of Tangpyung(蕩平). But some people of the Noron faction who opposed his Tangpyung policy prosecuted the Namin scholars for their beliefs of Catholicism. In this process, the political configuration of that time was revealed.

Secondly, I will survey the important 'Western Incidents' in the King Chongjo's reign; 'Myongdong Catholic Meeting Incidence'(1785), 'Songgyungwan Study Group Incident'(1787), 'Chinsan Yun Chichung's Incidence'(1791), 'Pyongtaek Yi Sunghun's Incidence'(1792). The King's reactions revealed the intellectual's climate concerning the 'Western Learning' and his ruling style when it came to the conflicts and debates between the hard-liners and the moderates regarding these Catholic incidences, .

Thirdly, I will scrutinize King Chongjo's utterances and actions to the challenges of Catholicism. As is generally known, the debates on Catholicism in the eighteenth century continued violently so long and the aftermath of it was so serious, as seen in the martyrdoms of 1791, 1801. My argument is that King Chongjo's ruling style led Catholicism debates into political persecutions. He has been regarded, in the most existing works, as an generous and tolerable to Catholicism. In those works, King Chongjo was the defense line against Anti-Catholicism attacks during his reign, but after his sudden death, Pyokpa, the polical rivals of the Namin, took retaliatory action in the name of the 'Western Learning'(Kang Jaeon 1990, 172-174; Kum Changt'ae 1993, 44-51, Chong Seokjong 1994, 351).

Of course, King Chongjo had a great interest in the 'Western Learning' and protected some scholars of the Namin against political attacks. But he took the measures which created distrust among his subjects in order to weaken their power. He often drove the tactics of 'divide and rule,' so called "like cures like(以熱治熱)." The relationship of his subjects grew worse. The leaders of the Noron, for example, said to those of the Namin

in the public places, "I will not live with you under a sky(不俱戴天)." The Namin, to make things worse, were unexpectedly divided into two groups; pro-Catholicism and anti-Catholicism. The distrusts and attacks among the Namin scholars made themselves irreconcilable, and became one cause of the martyrdoms of 1801.

## 2. Political situation and debates of Catholicism in the second half of eighteenth century

### 2.1 King Chongjo's Tangpyung Policy and the political position of Namin

King Chong-jo tried to succeed to King Youngjo(英祖 r.1724-1776)'s good policies while escaping from the negative political legacies. One of the good policies inherited from King Youngjo was Tangpyung(蕩平) policy. Tangpyung, according to King Chongjo, signifies the ideal in which king's virtue and peace may prevail, and which may be able to mediate struggling parties by a fair-mindedness king without partisan politics(ARKJE 0/9/22 庚寅). In reality, King Youngjo and King Chongjo put it into practice by a fair personnel management policy.

But King Chongjo discriminated his own Tangpyung policy from King Youngjo's. According to King Chongjo, King Youngjo regarded Tangpyung as the policy of keeping balance among factions in office, and of choosing moderates who were not factional(緩論蕩平 Wanron Tangpyung). But King Chongjo understood Tangpyung in 'total harmonious cooperation.' He not only apportioned the key positions to able men but also stressed his subjects' righteousness in royalty(*Uri: the raison d'etre*')(峻論蕩平 Choonron Tangpyung). He stated: "You should not misunderstand the true meaning of Tangpyung. [...] The 'total harmonious cooperation'(大同), another name of true Tangpyung, could be accomplished when the men who kept their righteousness in royalty participate in national administration. I'm saying now Tangpyung of righteousness, not Tangpyung of confusion."(ARKJE 0/5/16 丙戌).

On the one hand, 'total harmonious cooperation,' according to King Chongjo, is the ultimate political goal which Sage-kings in *San-Tai*(三代: the three dynasties or ages of Chinese antiquity: Hsia, Shang[Yin], and Chou) pursued. On the other hand, King Chongjo needed to assemble the righteous and able men who gave their supports to king's reform policy. For this, he proclaimed that he would respect the factions' platforms and value the honor the famous families which impaired reputation in the whirlpool of political strifes. He retrieved his subjects' honors by

recovering the government offices for Yun Seonkeo(尹宣舉) and Yun Chung(尹拯) who were the two leaders of the Soron faction(小論) in 1881(6/12/3 乙丑), for Heo Cheok(許積) who was the leader of the Namin Faction[濁南] in 1795(19/10/12 己丑), and for Park Seungjong(朴承宗) who was the leader of Bukin(北人) in 1799(23/9/19 甲戌).

The reign of King Chongjo could be divided into three periods: 1) the period of coalition Cabinet the Noron with the Soron(1777-1883), ② the period of coalition Cabinet the Namin with the Noron(1788-1793), ③ the period of Noron-grasping Cabinet(1793-1880)(Park Hyunmo 2001, 187-188). Seo Myongson(徐命善) of the Soron and Chae Jaegong(蔡濟恭) of the Namin, and Hong Naksong(洪樂性) of the Noron led each period respectively.

The second period, headed by Chae Jaegong, is the most important in the light of Catholicism debates. Most people of the Noron and the Soron criticized Tangpyung policy and strongly hindered King Chongjo's choosing people of the Namin in important positions. The Noron and Soron especially opposed the appointment of Yi Gahwhan(李家煥) and Chong Yagyong(丁若鏞) who were in the King Chongjo's favor. The politicians of the Noron and Soron accused Yi Gahwhan and Chong Yagyong for implication in Catholicism under the Chae Jaegong's patronage. King Chongjo, nevertheless, put Chae into the important positions and carried out his reform policies. Chae was a top leader of the Namin who won the confidence of King Youngjo after the middle period of King Youngjo. King Chongjo, as soon as he acceded the throne, appointed Chae as the Punishment Minister(刑曹判書, 0/3/26 丁酉) and the Commissioner of Kyujanggak(奎章閣提學, archival library of the Choson dynasty)(1/4/9 甲辰). After visiting the China as an envoy to present a memorial and thanks to the emperor(謝恩兼陳奏使, 2/3/3 癸亥), Chae advanced Chief Director of the Office for the Deliberation of Forbidden Affairs and State Tribunal (判義禁府事 5/5#/29 辛未) and the Military Affairs Minister(兵曹判書, 5/12/28 丙申).

King Chongjo moved Chae Jaegong to the Third State Councilor(右議政) in February 1788 in spite of the Noron's strong oppositions. It was the first time that the Namin appointed as a State Councilor since the Sukjong(肅宗)'s reign(1674-1720). Yi Hyunyeung(李顯永) of the Noron criticized him saying "Chae, merely a base man(鄙夫) who occupied the important position with a trick, looks down on people"(5/9/29 戊辰). Seo Myongson of Soron also checked on the ground saying that "Chae is a right-handed man of Hong Kukyoung(洪國榮)" who had conspired against

the king in the early years of King Chongjo(6/1/5 壬寅). Chae was reproached, in addition to, his misdeeds by Kim Munsoon(金文淳)(5/7/20 庚申). There was also Yi Gap's demand for banishment of him (6/1/5 壬寅), Jung Jaesin(鄭在信)'s criticism memorial(7/3/25 丙辰), Yi Nochoon(李魯春)'s accusing memorial(8/6/6 己丑) was well as others.

Peoples' criticisms and oppositions against Chae Jaegong reached the peak, when King Chongjo appointed him as the Third State Councilor without Personnel Ministry's recommendation(12/2/11 甲辰).

Officials of Royal Secretariat(承政院) including Cho Yundae, Hong Inho, Sim Pungji, Yun Haengwon, and Nam Hakmoon refused the royal messages containing the new appointment and asked the king to hear their voices. Speaking Officials(言官) of the Special Councilors Office(弘文館) such as Shin Daeyun(申大尹), Yi Woojin(李羽晋), Kim Heechaе(金熙采) also petitioned to withdraw the royal message with a joint memorials to the king. But the king ordered to burn the memorials(12/2/11 甲辰) and put a ban on talking or writing about the problem(12/2/12 乙巳). King Chongjo put faith in Chae Jaegong to the end saying "I will not abandon him although he deceived me!"(16/11/9 甲辰).

As a result, King Chongjo, with a Chae Jaegong's devotional help, could push away the reforms such as the "Joint-sales" decree in 1791(辛亥通共) which allowed unlicensed merchants to operate in the capital alongside the Six shops(15/1/25) and the construction of Soowon Hwa-Castle(20/8/19). Above all, Chae worked off the king's old grudge in winter 1795 with the posthumous conferment of honors for The Prince of Mournful Thoughts(思悼世子, Prince Sado), the father of the king, who felt victim of political strife in King Youngjo's reign(19/1/17 更子).

However, the debate on conferring honors posthumously to The Prince Sado was so heated that the Namin violently confronted the Noron. As soon as Chae was appointed as Chief State Councilor(領議政) in 1793, he stressed that "the families and the relatives of foes occupied all the official posts." He advocated that "in order to clear The Prince Sado of a false charge, we should find out right now the names of the foes who falsely implicated him."(17/5/28 己未). This impeachment was so strong that even King Chongjo "sweated in the back and chilled his blood"(17/5/28 己未). In particular, the leaders of the Noron including Kim Chongsoo(金鍾秀), Second State Councilor(右議政), felt a big crisis(17/8/9 己巳).

Kim Chongsoo claimed that Chae Jaegong's impeachment, in the name of 'Heaven's Punishment,' came out of a conspiracy to upset the National Consensus(國是). He said that Chae, mobilizing ten thousands of people in Kyoungsang Province, "will break out rebellion." Therefore, Kim declared, "I will not live with him under a sky(不俱戴天)" while he counterattacked Chae on the ground that he was implicated in Yi Duksa(李德師) and Cho Jaehan(趙載翰)'s rebel in 1776(17/5/30 辛酉)

The extreme distrust and alertness between the Noron and the Namin can be found in the Noron's attacks against Yi Gahwan. At that time King Chongjo, considering Yi Gahwan as a next top leader of the Namin, appointed him as the Chief Officer of Supreme Headquarter(都總管) in Spring 1797(21/4/25 乙未) and Mayor of Capitol Hansong(漢城府判尹) in Winter 1797(21/12/2 丁酉). And King Chongjo increased posthumously the court rank of Yi's father and grandfather(23/4/27 乙卯) after Chae Jaegong's death in winter 1799 for picking Yi to the core post.

Politicians of the Noron criticized Yi Gahwan, Yi Sunghun's uncle, by the reason of Catholicism. Shin Hunjo, Director of the Inspector-General Office called Yi Gahwan, Kwon Cheolsin(權哲身), Chong Yagchong(丁若鍾) for the heads of Catholicism which "is as dangerous as yellow bandit(黃巾賊) and the White Lotus Sect(白蓮教)"(23/5/25 壬午). Yi Byongmo of the Noron, Second State Councilor, censured that Yi is "the boss of the group who followed the perverse teachings"(23/5/5 壬戌). So, Catholicism became the target of the Noron for attacking the Namin implicated in the 'Western Learning.' It is interesting that the period a few Namin, such as Chae Jaegong and Yi Gahwan, advanced in core posts is coincident in times which the Noron attacked with the most severe critics on the Namin's 'Heterodox Learning.'

How then could Confucian scholars accept Catholicism? What was the King Chongjo's understanding about the new Catholic civilization?

## 2.2 'Sungkyunkwan Study Group Incident' and the Publicization of Catholicism

The disputes on Catholicism in the reign of King Chongjo unfolded with the momentums such as the 'Myongdong Catholic Meeting Incidence'(明禮坊事件;秋曹摘發事件,1785), the 'Songgyungwan Study Group Incident'(泮會事件,1787), the 'Chinsan Yun Chichung's Incidence'(珍山事件;辛亥邪獄,1791), 'Pyongtaek Yi SungHun's Incidence'(平澤事件,1792).

The 'Songgyungwan Study Group Incident' in 1787' is very important because it shows not only the character of Catholicism debates at that time but also King Chongjo's attitude for it. The Incident was began accidentally with the discontent and grudge of a few scholar in the Namin. The Namin was disrupted when King Chongjo raised some people in the Namin for important posts as a Tangpyung policy. The people who were favor of the king, Chong Yagyong for example, had the ties of blood and the marriage line and also was implicated in Catholicism.

According to Yi Kigyong, a student of Songgyungwan and the same fellow of the Namin as Chong Yagyong, Chong Yagyong and Yi Seunghun had been meeting to read Catholic books at a house outside the Songgyungwan, the national university of Choson. They were under the pretext of engaging in some friendly poetry writing competition. Rather than writing poems, however, they had been reading more Catholic books and preaching Catholic doctrine to their fellow students (Yi Manchae ed. 1984, 113).

Yi Kigyong read Jesuit book with Yi Seunghun at the start. He found "some good points as well as vicious points" in the book. But he stopped reading the books before finishing it, when he read that "God is superior to any earthly ruler, you should not hold any memorial service except for the Lord of Heaven"(15/11/13 甲申). He tried at first to talk his colleagues out of their infatuation with Catholicism. But his colleagues such as Yi Seunghun and Chong Yagyong, so far from giving heeds to his advices, "despised and slandered him with a grudge"(15/11/13 甲申). When he failed to heed his advice, Yi Kigyong turned to another student, Hong Nagan who was a member of the Namin too. After hearing of it, Hong insisted that they should memorialize the government to condemn those heretics. But Yi Kigyong, instead, circulated the letter about 'Catholic Study Group' to the students of Songgyungwan(Baker 1983, 313-314).

As rumors of the 'Catholic Study Group' spread among students of Songgyungwan, Yi Kyungmyung, a junior official at the Censorate, reported that Catholicism "was flourishing and was even spreading beyond the capital to distant villages." According to Yi, "even the ignorant peasants and the stupid countrymen, copying the Catholic books in Korean language and reading them by rotation, are serving to death it just like a deity." Yi, therefore, insisted that the government take immediate action to block further growth of that dangerous religion before it was too late (12/8/2 辛卯).

Yi's report sparked to discuss Catholicism problem in the council before the king. King Chongjo asked the responsible chief officials of the Border Defense Commend(備邊司) "what Catholicism was and what were its problem?" Yi Songwon, the Second State Councilor, answered "I don't know that religion exactly, but harsh suppression is needed."

In this place, Chae Chegong, the Third State Councilor, informed King Chongjo that he had read *T'ien-chu shih-ï*(天主實義; "True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven," by Matteo Ricci) and that it constituted a serious menace to Confucian morality. According to Chae, "due to the logic of a Heaven and a Hell, a number of people in villages were deceived easily. It is an absurd statement that 'Jesus, a descendant of the Lord of Heaven, made the blind man open his eye and the lame man walk straight just when Yao and Shun(堯舜) did in China"(12/8/3 壬辰). Chae pointed out Catholic doctrine of "three kinds of father" as the disroyal and unfilial attitude[無君無父] as following:

They contained some good points, such as their teachings that "the Sovereign on High(上帝) watches over the affairs of men, and ascends and descends on the left and the right of people." Nevertheless, the small merits of the book should not be outweighed by the evils such as transgressing moral ethics and laws. The most vicious point is that they worship Jade Emperor(玉皇) first, the creator of all creatures(造化翁) second, and their father third. What a unfilial attitude of this! And it is disroyal in that, I heard, they elect the man who has no sexual desire as the king calling him a noble spirit. If it is not forbidden right now, who knows it's evil influences upon this country? it is, though criticizing Buddhism, a sect of Buddhism, in that they believe the doctrine [concerning Heaven and Hell) after borrowing it from Buddhism(12/8/3 壬辰).

Chae's statement is representative of the Korean Neo-Confucian reaction to Catholicism. He didn't display concern for arguing the truth or falsity of Catholic statements about the existence of God, divinity of Jesus Christ, or the immortality of mans soul. He was more concerned with moral consequences of those beliefs. Catholicism, he argued, led men to slight their responsibilities to their parents and superiors. That reason alone made it unacceptable to a Confucian moralist. Chae, however, didn't think it wise to severely punish individual adherents. It was his opinion that harsh measures werent the most effective way to eliminate evil ideas(Baker 1983, 317).

King Chong-Jo said that “in my opinion, if we concentrate on promoting the Confucian Way and Right Learning, the heterodox doctrine like it disappeared by itself after arising[自起自滅]. So burn all the Western books in the country while making the men have the sound mind(人其人火其書)!" He apparently assumed that an inadequate elucidation of the Confucian tradition had misled a few immature students into overlooking the excellency of Confucianism. King Chongjo instructed, in accordance with Chae's advice, that "there is no need for assuming it serious in court"(12/8/3 壬辰).

There have been the various types of heresy such as Lu Chiu-yüan School(陸學), Wang Yangming School(王學), Buddhism(佛道), and Taoism(老道)," King Chongjo said, "China did not issue a ban for heterodoxy." "Confucianism(右道) have not been nevertheless weaken until now. But these days the abuses of Catholicism are so serious. What is the reason?" "The root causes of Catholicism infiltration," according to King Chongjo, "was that Confucian scholars did not read the Old Classics." "Nowadays the Literary Style(文體) of the literati is very crude because they give thoughts only to memorize the famous clauses and phrases for preparing the State Examination(科舉)."" "Besides, “so-called literati are indulging themselves in reading the novels without studying the Old Classics"(12/8/3 壬辰).

King Chongjo criticized all literati on the surface, but he aimed at the Confucian scholars of the Noron who used "crude Literary Style" and read the "eccentric novels" in reality. In other words, he alluded that the scholars of the Noron were unqualified to censure the scholars of Naman for Catholicism. This shows his ruling style, so-called "like cures like(以熱治熱)." He inflicted the penalties on the convicts of all factions, while bestowing the prizes on the good conductors of all factions(17/4/16 戊寅; Park KwangYong 1984, 318, 235). For example, he countervailed the Catholicism problem of the Namin with the "Crude Literary Style" of the Noron when 'Songgyungwan Study Group Incident'(1787), 'Chinsan Yun Chichung's Incidence'(1791) occurred. On the other hand, he praised the pristine Confucianism(原始儒學) tradition of Namin as well as the Chu Hsi's Neo-confucianism tradition of the Noron(Park Hyunmo 1999).

### 3. 'Politician' King Chongjo's Reaction to The Catholic Incidences in 1791 and 1792

#### 3.1 'Chinsan Incidence' and the refusal of confucian mourning rituals

The problem of Catholicism, having been cool off in the court for a while owing to the tolerant policy of King Chongjo and Chae Jaegong, was highlighted again as a serious issue in 'Chinsan Yun Chichung's Incidence'(1791). We could reflect, in the 'Chinsan Incident', intellectuals' attitude for the religion, the difference between Confucian Catholic and Catholic Confucian, and the political danger which could be born in the political accusation against a scholar for his learning and faith.

Chinsan Incident(1791) is the first martyrdom which the Scholar-official Catholics, Yun Chich'ung(尹持忠, 1759-1791) and his Catholic cousin Kwon Sangyon(權尙然, ?-1791), who lived at Chinsan county in Cholla Province, were punished with death for their refusal to perform proper mourning ritual. When Yun's mother died, Yun and Kwon did not make a tablet for his mother and burned all ancestral tablets in their possession and buried the ashes, in accordance with their Catholic faith(15/10/23 甲子).

These literati's realization of faith was so shocking that many scholars having interest in 'Western Learning' threw Catholicism away. According to *Ta Ming lu*(大明律), the head of heresy which deludes the world and deceives the people should be put to death by hanging. The laws also say that anyone who deliberately destroyed his parent's ancestral tablet with his own hands should be treated the same as someone who rebels against the throne.

The actions, more than anything else, such as the refusal of Confucian rituals and the demolition of ancestral tablets could not be tolerated for any reason in the Confucian atmosphere. Then, what were the motives in doing that? How could they abandon the Confucian symbols in accordance with the Catholic Commandment? Let's hear Yun's utterance on the basis of historical records.

It was, according to Yun, at a middle men(中人) Kim Pomu's home in Seoul that he got *T'ien-chu shih-i*(天主實義) and *Ch'i K'e*(七克), when dropped in at the Myongdong residence of Kim in 1784 the winter. Before Kim Pomu's arrest(1785 Spring), Yun had borrowed *T'ien-chu shih-i* and *Ch'i K'e* from him and made copies of those works for his own personal use before returning them. After reading them roughly, Yun could grasp the points; "He is the Father of all us and Creator who made the heaven, the earth, the ghosts, and men." He left Seoul and returned to his home in a village at Chinsan county in north Cholla province. There he assiduously studied his two Jesuit books and discussed their contents

with his maternal cousin, Kwon Sang'yon. At last Yun decided to make the commitment to Catholicism, after three years of meditation and reflection on Catholic teachings(Baker 1983, 310).

"After knowing the Lord of Heaven as my father," Yun interrogated, "I could not help to obey His order." He especially could not keep the custom of bowing to the wooden ancestral tablet any more, because it is, in his judgment, idol worship forbidden in Catholicism. It was so distressing for Yun to keep the tablet in his house that he buried it.

According to Yun, "if one's parents were actually present in those wooden ancestral tablets, then Catholics would be obligated to show respect for the tablets. But those tablets were made of wood. They have no flesh and blood relationship with me. They did not give me life nor educate me [...] How can I dare to treat these man-made pieces of wood as though they were actually my mother and father?" (15/11/7 戊寅, English translation is Bakers article 1999). Yun argued further that it was foolish to place food and drink before a block of wood, even if a soul were present in it. He pointed out that "the soul was not a material good, no matter how delicious the wine or nutritious the meats. Furthermore, even the most filial son did not try to serve his parents food and drink when they were asleep. If people cannot eat while they sleep, how much more foolish is it to offer food to our parents when they are dead?" Kwon also said the same words.

According to interrogator Chong Minsi, Governor of Cholla province, Yun and Kwon "did not distorted their faces with pains of bleeding and tearing their bodies" when they were examined in the government office. "They just said the Lord of Heavens teachings in every word." Yun said, "I cannot but keep the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven at the risk of my death, although violating the command of king and parent"(15/11/7 戊寅).

Yun's attitude and defense, adopted from the Western insistence on the irrational and superstitious character of Confucian rituals, clashed with the Confucian concern for the symbolic and ethical significance of the rite. Yun kept insisting that he had done in accordance with truth. But the Governor, Chong Minsi kept insisting that Catholic teachings were immoral and their social consequences were so serious like Chae Jaegong as mentioned. Yun turned a deaf ear to the advice and warning of the Governor. On December 3, 1791, Yun and Kwon were beheaded for their faith. In sum, Yun and Kwon were the religious men who believed that religious truth was more important than social ethics, and

they converted Confucianism to Catholicism after interpreting the Catholic doctrine in the Confucian viewpoint.

Comparing attitudes of Yun and Kwon with those of Yi Sunghun and Chong Yagyong, we may find some differences between Confucian Catholics and Catholic Confucians. Yi Sunghun who brought with him Catholic books from a trip to Peking with his father in 1784 for the first time and was interrogated in the Office for the Deliberation of Forbidden Affairs and State Tribunal(義禁府) in 1791. In the interrogation, he insisted that he is not a Catholic on the grounds that, firstly, he burned or destroyed books and things which received as gifts by westerner, for example Original Geometry(幾何原本), Shuli chingyun(數理精蘊), and a telescope(視遠鏡). Secondly he stated that "he submitted the written promise to criticize the heterodox learning already." He began to read the Catholics books, according to Yi, in order "to criticize with its weak points. People don't believe and follow his teachings unless he believe and practice faithfully ahead for himself, even though it is heterodoxy learning and heresy. How can I teach its doctrine after criticizing it?"(15/11/8 己卯)

Chong Yagyong, another Catholic Confucian, also adopted Catholicism in the viewpoint of learning. In the Self-criticism Memorial of 1797(自明疏), Chong said that "I read the Catholic books while in my youth. In those days, there were a kind of intellectual fashion[風氣] that someone who had the extensive knowledges of cosmology, western calendar, agriculture, irrigation facilities, surveying techniques, and experiment methods won the respects of all. So I longed for it."

He was captivated, according to Chong, by "the story of life and death" and by the maxims that "Do not compete against each other!" and "You should not make a boast of yourself!" Especially he regarded it as "a sect of Confucianism" because its maxims was similar to Confucian moral demands. He, in other words, approached the Catholicism hoping to solve the curiosities such as Western advanced technology and the life after death(21/6/21 庚寅).

Chong, however, threw Catholicism away because of it's prohibition of Confucian mourning rituals:

The phrase, "Do not perform Confucian mourning rituals" was not in the books I read. Even though beasts such as a wolf or an otter would surprise to hear that. This is same that Galbek(葛伯) who had neglected the rituals

born again. Anyone who knows a filial duty cannot help deploring it and nipping the wrongdoing in the bud. The Chinsan Incident, nevertheless, was took place in this country. How can I get very angry! And I had hated it like a foe and censured like a rebel since the Chinsan Incident 1791(21/6/21 庚寅).

In other words, Korean Catholics's refusal of Confucian mourning rituals, in Chong's opinion, is worse than a brute like Galbek(葛伯), and so could not tolerate for him. In this point, Chong is contrast with Yun Chichung who took the path to martyrdom interpreting social convention in viewpoint of religious doctrine when he found contradiction between Catholic doctrine and Confucian convention. Chong, who approached Catholicism in the light of "the extensive knowledges" regarding it as "a sect of Confucianism," remained in Catholic Confucian: he took the Confucian convention instead of Catholic doctrine. Here we may know the difference between the Confucian Catholic and Catholic Confucian.

It is worth noticing, in Chong's Self-criticism Memorial, the words, "the books I read" "while in my youth." The books being read in his youth, according to Chong, such as T'ien-chu shih-i(天主實義) or Sheng shih ch'u jao(聖世추요, "The Teachings of the Church in Everyday Language," by Fr. Joseph de Maille) were not so dangerous. But Chong found the dangerous contents, "forbidden the mourning rituals" in the book borrowing from Yi Seunghun, such as {등본} and Chen tao tzu cheng(眞道自證, "The true way is self-evident," by Fr. Emericus de Chavagnac)(15/11/13 甲申).

The teaching of Catholicism was changed as time went by, and so there was a important difference in the contents of between the former and the latter. How can we understand the gap of Catholic teaching? Let's inquire into the rites controversy in Catholicism.

The Jesuits missionaries(entry into China in 1583), who paid deference to Chinese culture, appealed to the bureaucrats and literati, including the emperors, from the end of the Ming through the early of the Ch'ing dynasty. They adopted Chinese words for God, virtue, human nature, and soul(Vincent Cronin 1957 ; Shin Bokryong 1997, 81). This is an important reason why Confucian scholars of Choson, Chong Yagyong and Yi Seunghun and Yun Chichung could embrace the Western Learning without serious resistance.

The missionaries of the Dominicans (entry into China in 1631) and the Franciscans (entry into China in 1633), however, began to censure the Jesuits for their concessive attitude regarding the traditions like Confucian mourning ritual for their ancestors and a memorial rite for Confucius temple (祀孔) as the superstitious beliefs. According to the Dominicans and the Franciscans, "Confucius may not be in the Heaven because he didn't know the absolute being, an angel, immortality of the soul, and reward and punishment after death." They argued that "the ancestors of Chinese didn't know the TRUTH and be baptized, so they are not in the Heaven." Therefore "it is just idol worship forbidden and superstitious belief to bow, burn incenses and dedicate food to their ancestors and Confucius who are not in Heaven (M. Hay 1957, 127-130 ; Choe Kibok 1982, 65).

The rites controversies became much more heated when J.B. Morales, Dominican missionary accused the Jesuits for the problem of the Chinese rituals in the Vatican in 1642. The Pope, Clement I (r 1700-21) regrettably issued the edict to "forbid the idol worship" like the mourning ancestor ritual in 1704. Then, Chinese Emperor K'ang-hsi (康熙帝, 1662-1722) began to suppress and expatriate the Catholic missionaries from the China (Choe Kibok 1982, 65-75; Kang Jaeon 1990, 85-87). So to speak, the Catholic prohibition of the Confucian rituals in Choson was stressed after those rites controversy.

### 3.2 'Pyongtaek Yi SungHun's Incidence' and King Chongjo's Expeditious Measures

In the 'Chinsan Incidence' 1791, King Chongjo gave direction, "Do not touch the incidence in Office of the Inspector-General (司憲府) and leave it in the hands of Governor" (15/10/16 丁巳). King Chongjo, instead, ordered to "punish talkative trouble-makers" noticing the words "letters going around in Songgyungwan" in the report of Office of the Inspector-General (15/10/16 丁巳). He tried to stop expanding Catholic problem in his court, and blamed the attitude of Anti-Catholic persons who censured Catholicism. The political discontent of someone who set aside in the Namin, King Chongjo understood, is the main motive of 'Catholic Debates.' He thought that Anti-Catholic persons acted under the political conspiracy to break through Chae Jaegong-centered Cabinet in the middle of King Chongjo's reign.

One of the "talkative trouble-makers," King Chongjo indicated, was Hong Nagan (洪樂安), a member of the Namin and a minor official in the Royal

Secretariat. He sent a long letter(長書) to Chae Jaegong who was not only a senior official in King Chongjo's court but also the highest ranking member of their Namin. Hong wrote in the letter that state should punish the Catholics with penalty, after pointing that "most Confucian literati, including his friends of the Namin, were infected with Catholicism in the capital." "Now the persons who believed it are beyond count like the salt in a saltpond, because the court censured only the doctrine without punishing the believers." He insisted in his private letter that "authority must put them to death and make their house sites the pond like the rebellions" before the Catholic cancer spread further and threatened both the Namin and the entire government(15/10/23 甲子).

King Chongjo handled negatively the matter of "long letter of Hong." "I can't believe all the rumors"(15/10/23 甲子). The reason why King Chongjo acted negatively to Hong's letter is in that he regarded it as a kind of factional strife. "What is the real motive of Hong Nagan's letter? Why didn't he tell you directly? There must be a hidden motive behind the Hong's letter. Many people fight boldly against the political enemy in our country. I use the word, 'trap' in the Royal response to Office of Censure-General. Please stop fighting!"(15/10/25 丙寅).

In King Chongjo's view, Anti-Catholic persons in the Namin such as Hong Nagan, Mok Manjung, and Yi Kigyong attacked Chae Jaegong under the pretext of censuring Catholicism owing to support of the Noron. So King Chongjo proclaimed 'Protecting Orthodox Learning and Excluding Heterodox Learning'(衛正斥邪) while responding the Anti-Catholic challenges:

Enhancing "Orthodox Learning"(正學) and excluding "Heterodox Learning(邪學) is what I desire. [...] The incident of Hong's letter is an extraordinary misdeed! It is as clear as the light for him to aim at the Second State Councilor, Chae Jaegong. [...] I'm waiting something though determining to punish Hong until it comes out. How can I say to exercise my authorities in our country if I don't punish Hong(16/2/14 癸丑).

In the proclaiming of 'Protecting Orthodoxy and Excluding Heterodoxy,' on the one hand, King Chongjo emphasized to enhance "Orthodox Learning" by way of leveling up the scholastic ability. King Chongjo, on the other hand, took pains to prevent Catholic dispute from escalating into factional strife through blocking the attack of Anti-Catholic and the Noron. He placed emphasis more on 'Protecting Orthodoxy' than

'Excluding Heterodoxy' because if the court overemphasize the latter, it can be escalated into intra-party conflict(15/10/23 甲子).

The phrase, "I'm waiting" revealed that he took the expeditious measures(權道) in Catholicism Incident. King Chongjo took the expeditious measures when he worked his old grudge for The Prince Sado(思悼世子). He counterattacked the his rivals all at once after "waiting for" conspiracy evidence to come out(Park Hyunmo 1999, 40-41). The opportunity to counterattack to Anti-Catholics and the Noron was seized in 'Pyongtaek Yi Sunghun's Incidence' 1792.

'Pyongtaek Incidence' was occurred when Kwon Wi(權瑋), a Confucian scholar who lived at Pyongtaek county in Kyongki Province, sent out the letter to the student on Songgyungwan censuring Yi Seunghun for his 'misdeed.' Yi Seunghun, according to Kwon Wi, hadn't worshiped Confucius temple since he governed the Pyongtaek as the Magistrate(平澤縣監). As the rumor spreaded among students, Sungkyungwan authorities struck Yi's name off the list of Confucian students(青衿錄). Kwon Wi, with the tacit support and cooperation of the Noron, Kim Munsun(金文淳) for example, reproached Yi Seunghun who was a member of the Namin for Catholicism aiming at Chae Jaegong's resigning as the Second State Councilor. Kwon and Kim expected that the king would respond negatively to the rumor as in case of Hong Nagan's letter or Chae's temporal resignation on the account of the political responsibility at the most.

But King Chongjo, contrary to Kwon's expectations, appointed Kim Heechae(金熙采) as a Royal Emissary for Inspection(按穹御史) and said to him: "you should start investigation in detail without delay because it is very important. First of all, make clear, by asking anyone such as literati, Confucian students, people who saw or heard it at first-hand, whether Yi Seunghun did worship at a Confucius temple or not. And then, bring to light, by way of hearing public opinion, what is the exact conventional ritual of Pyongtaek in repairing the Local Confucian School(鄉校). Lastly, clarify it is true or not that Kwon Wi sent the letter in revenge for his dropping out in the Promotion Examination(陞補試)"(16/2/28 丁卯).

King Chongjo grasped the sequences of the 'Pyongtaek Incidence' as well as the hidden motive of Kim Munsoon and Kwon Wi. So the king entrusted not the official of the Punishment Board(刑曹) which was in the Noron's command but Kim Heechae who have a kinship(從弟夫) with Yi Seunghun and a member of the Namin with power to investigate it.

After 15 days, Kim Heechae reported that the rumor of 'Yi Seunghun's refusal of attending Confucius temple' was fabricated by Kwon Wi, and distorted by the complex factors as following: 1) the conflicts between the New Confucian Scholar Group and the Old Confucian Scholar Group in Pyongtaek, 2) Kwon Wi's private grudge against Yi Seunghun, and 3) a Petty Town Official distorting the facts in the interrogation:

1) Yi Seunghun, as a new Magistrate of Pyongtaek, did not meet anybody of the New Confucian Scholar Group(新儒) who had been enemies with the Old(舊儒). Yi put the ban on The New Group's unfair suit in law, so The New Group had a grudge against Yi. 2) Kwon Wi, the man notorious for his goings-on, fabricated and spreaded the rumor about Yi's actions with his friends, Hong Byongwon and Cho Sangbon. Before this, Kwon had been released from the office since he was reprimanded by Yi for his levying improper taxes. [...] 3) Yi Chongkil, a Petty Town Official, distorted the contents of letter like the phrase "did not bow(不拜禮)" in the interrogation(16/3/14 癸未, Numbers added).

The next day, King Chongjo punished the leaders of the Noron who had attacked Chae Jaegong by reason of neglecting their judicial duties for the factional interest. Kim Munsoon, Sim Hwanji(沈煥之), Yi Myuneung(李冕膺) of the Noron, respectively the Minister, a vice-Minister, and an official of the Punishment Board were sent in exile on a remote island, Kumgapdo(金甲島) in Cholla province(16/3/15 甲申).

King Chongjo said: "Officials, being faithful to their duties, should have impeached the Kwon Wi, [...] licking other's heel only for his private interest without his own principle. But Kim Munsoon, as the Minister of Punishment Board, was busy trying to shift his responsibility to others and kept silent still disregarding my indication with a clumsy excuse. What is deplorable of this! [...] I cannot help trying to use my Royal Sword(太阿) to these factional groups(16/3/15 甲申).

#### 4. Conclusion: Unhappy Encounter of Western-Eastern Learning and King Chongjo's Responsibility

The peculiarity of the Catholicism disputes and problems of King Chongjo's ruling style can be summed as following:

First, the Catholicism disputes in the King Chongjo's reign began with private letters and rumors among literati and took a new turn by Scholar-officials' memorials which were presented in political motives(Kim

Hongwoo 1991, 65). In other words, the Catholicism dispute be said to have been started accidentally by the misunderstandings and political conflicts among the persons of the Namin. In the Namin faction, Anti-Catholic group divorced the Pro-Catholic group not for the ideological difference but for the personal grudges between them. For example, Hong Nagan and Yi Kigyong of Anti-Catholic group said respectively that "we are utterly helpless with a deep-rooted rancor"(15/11/3 甲戌) and "I became estranged from my friends," let alone Chae Jaegong. "I can't stand my unbearable loneliness any longer"(15/11/13 甲申).

The immense political persecution under the color of religions in 1801, about three hundreds people including the Chinese priest Chou Wenmo(周文謨), was started in "private struggle" of alienated persons such as Yi Kigyong, Hong Nagan, Mok Manjung, and others. It ended tragically by way of being made political capital of the Noron.

Second, King Chongjo did not take a chance to scrutinize Catholicism exactly in a state level. He tried to stop expanding Catholic problem in his court seeing that there was a political conspiracy behind Catholicism disputes. For this, we can say that he had a holy horror of the public debate. By the way, Catholicism dispute, had begun with the private letters and rumors in Songgyungwan and showed that the public debate was vulnerable to political conspiracy and tactics. In reality, it was quite possible to degenerate in factional strife. But if King Chongjo fully treated the problem of Catholicism in public space, was there any possibility to avoid the "historical error throwing away the Western knowledge of science and technology let alone Catholicism?"(Yi Wonsoon 1986, 17-18).

King Chongjo, on the contrary, shut off the opportunity to debate seriously on Western Learning patching the matter up in the political engineering level. He used several tactics to set apart Anti-Catholic group from the Noron. He counterattacked them all at once after waiting for conspiracy evidence to come out in Incidence 1792. But he, the other hand, was afraid of changing the social issues into the political struggle because he, in my opinion, had a kind of 'trauma' to factional strife from the Incidence of The Prince Sado. As the result, Catholicism, after several immense persecutions, was admitted officially in Korea May in 1886.

Finally, let's think over the unhappy meeting of Confucianism and Catholicism quoting a message of Vatican in 8 December 1939:

Some heterodoxy rites of the East, as known well, are just rituals for filial piety, patriotism, and social life. [...] The memorial rite for Confucius temple is to be regarded not as the regional purpose but as following tradition. It is proper for men to bow to the wooden ancestral tablet and the portrait of the deceased, to express their reverence humanly in the Confucian memorial temple or in the school(Yi Sungbae 1986, 488).

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