AFFIRMING ‘CIVILIZATION’ IN EXILE: CHŎNG YAGYONG (1762-1836)

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the work of Tasan Chŏng Yagyong (1762-1836), one of the most influential premodern Korean scholars, as that of an exile. I especially question how Tasan’s long years of exile and the anti-Western socio-intellectual atmosphere of the times led him to reformulate his later thought on multiple levels, including the way he perceived his contemporary society and identified himself. Exile to remote areas was among the most frequent forms of punishment meted out to disfavored scholar-officials in Chosŏn-dynasty Korea (1392-1910). Indeed, the sentence of exile was a way for Confucian rulers to perform monarchic virtue, and the prospect of exile was an ever-present possibility for even the most successful political figures.

Existing scholarship on Tasan, caught up in a search for indigenous origins of Korean modernity, focuses heavily on what are seen as “modern” elements in this premodern intellectual’s writings. However, my analysis of Tasan’s writings during banishment, and the transformation of his ideas in exile, shows the ideological and social continuity of the times. Revisiting the key issues of center and periphery, the discourse of orthodoxy, and intellectual tolerance at the time, I argue that Tasan wanted to restore himself as a “civilized” Confucian scholar-official. Although this study focuses on Tasan’s exile experience and the reshaping of his thought in the early nineteenth century, it also stretches to the colonial period (1910-1945) when Korean scholars acknowledged Tasan’s achievements and published a collection of his writings for the first time. Their recovery and celebration of Tasan’s scholarship, predicated on an analogy between Tasan’s experience of exile and their own colonized situation, was a way of
coping with, even resisting, colonial oppression. This helps us understand how and why Tasan appealed to modern scholars.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

Existing studies on Korean history consider Chŏng Yagyong (丁若鏞, 1762-1836), also known as Tasan (茶山), as a major intellectual of Chosŏn Korea (1392-1910).¹ These studies have been heavily influenced by research on the modernization of Korea, which has asked by whom and how this process was initiated. In this vein, the implicit methodology for reading Tasan’s work has been to emphasize the underlying modernity in his texts. While emphasizing Tasan’s scholarly achievement and nascent Korean “modernity” in his thought, historical studies of Tasan to date have neglected the influence long years of exile had on his thought.

This study argues, by contrast, that Tasan’s personal plight, seventeen years of banishment on accusations of being a Catholic, as well as the anti-Western political and ideological atmosphere at that time, had a significant impact on his later thinking. The goal of this study, then, is to use Tasan’s exile as a window into understanding this early nineteenth-century Chosŏn intellectual’s perception of society and himself, and also the appreciation of him by Koreans under Japanese colonial rule in the twentieth century. In short, I argue, we can better understand and explain the trajectory of Tasan’s thought by reading his works as those of an exile. This chapter briefly discusses the issue of Practical Learning (sirhak 實學), which is a word that is indelibly connected to Tasan, and problematizes existing studies. Then it provides my own position on this issue, and moves on to why it is important to read Tasan’s work as that of an exile. Outlines of the chapters in this dissertation will follow.

¹ Tasan is a pen name (ho 號) of Chŏng Yagyong (丁若鏞).
To anyone familiar with the name Tasan, the first word to come to mind when thinking of him would likely be the problematic term Practical Learning. Practical Learning has been one of the common themes of modern historical research on the second half of the Chosŏn period. There are already plenty of works on Practical Learning, so I will limit my discussion on the topic as much as possible.\textsuperscript{2} The late Chosŏn period, especially the nineteenth century, has been the object of intense scholarly scrutiny because it was in this period that Western powers started to involve itself in Korea. It has been regarded as an age when the tension of transition from the premodern to the modern period reached its peak. In the late nineteenth century, foreign countries pressured Chosŏn Korea to open her ports to foreign trade, which was met with resistance. Replacing China, Japan emerged as the most powerful country in East Asia and increased the pressure. Chosŏn finally opened her ports to the world in 1876, but could not avoid thirty five years of Japanese colonization (1910-1945). After colonizing Korea, Japan claimed to have modernized Korea. As a result of this history, the birth of “modern” Korea and the role of foreign powers in this process became important topics in the discourse of post-liberation Korea.

When Japan colonized Korea and justified this colonization by emphasizing that the colonization brought modernization of Korea, Korean nationalists framed the period from the early seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century as a time of

\textsuperscript{2} Donald L. Baker, “The Use and Abuse of the Silhak Label: A New Look at Sin Hu-dam and His Sŏhakp’yŏn,” Kyohoesa yŏn’gu 3 (1981): 183-254; Hallim taehakkyo Han’gukhak yŏn’guso, eds., Tasi, sirhak iran muŏt in’ga (Again, what is sirhak) (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2007). For earlier scholarship on sirhak, see Ch’ŏn Kwanu, Han Ugŭn, Yi Ŭrho, and Yun Sasun’s works. A series of collections of early works has been published from Yonsei University to make it easy to access them. See Yŏnse taehakkyo kughak yŏn’guwŏn, Yŏnse sirhak kangjwa Vol.1-4 (Seoul: Hyean, 2003).
budding native Korean modernity. They argued that Chosŏn scholars not only pursued study of the Confucian classics, but also developed their interests in day-to-day life. The fact that Chosŏn envoys to China eagerly and actively sought foreign knowledge, including technology and European books translated into Chinese, was used to support the assertion. When the envoys returned to Korea they introduced this new information to Chosŏn society, and in modern times these late Chosŏn scholars’ diversified interests are referred to as Practical Learning (*sirhak* 實學). The term Practical Learning has been used for decades, but for two main reasons it is not fully defined yet. First, the diachronic usage of the term makes it difficult to define. One constant usage was that Chosŏn Confucians believed they were conducting practical, as opposed to a “empty” (*hŏ* 虛), studies. During the early years of the Chosŏn dynasty, practical learning centered on writing persuasive diplomatic documents to justify the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty and attain China’s approval. Mid-Chosŏn scholars, however, thought that restoring the original meaning of the Confucian classics was more practical than the art of writing. Further still, in the late Chosŏn period scholars altered the direction of practical learning once again and sought not only the sages’ true meaning, but also the best way to improve people’s lives. In summary, other than not being futile, there was never a consensus on the definition of Practical Learning.

Second, although in the twentieth century many individuals, both scholars and laypersons, accepted “Practical Learning” as a suitable term to refer this late-Chosŏn

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3 As we will see in detail in Chapter Five, post-liberation Korean nationalists in the late twentieth century suggested seeing this period as time of Korean nationalist’s resistance against Japanese colonialists. Both the colonized Korean intellectuals and the twentieth-century nationalists, however, used Japanese imperialists’ modernity framework to understand Korean society. In other words, rather than refuse the framework they accepted it and tried to tell Korean history in their own way.
scholarly trend, this term cannot be used without conflating distinct parts. As Donald Baker and Mark Setton point out, so-called Practical Learning scholars in the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty had neither shared doctrines nor a single scholarly lineage. Furthermore, they did not identify themselves as belonging to a “Practical Learning School” (sirhakp’a 實學派) as such. Thus, it is arguable whether sirhak and its English translation, Practical Learning, can properly be used to refer to the late Chosŏn academic trend with which they are associated. As there is not yet an established alternative, however, I will use these terms following the academic convention with the caveat that I am using the term only as a matter of convenience and not a description of the content of Practical Learning.

Tasan shared his writings with his fellow scholars, but his scholarship was not fully appreciated in his time. It was modern Korean scholars who excavated him as a symbol of an immanent Korean modernity, and many existing studies describe Tasan as the one who successfully integrated Practical Learning into a complete form. However, examining Tasan’s scholarship in terms of modern thought is also ill-fated. He had some ideas for social change in his early years, but, as we will see in following chapters, he modified these ideas during his periods of exile, and these modifications cannot be adequately explained by the characteristics of “modern” thought. How then can we explain this transformation? The argument that Korean people were developing modern ideas by themselves before Japan colonized Korea has colored our view of nineteenth-

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When Tasan lived, the period from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, Chosŏn was going through an identity crisis resulting from encounters with new neighbors. First of all, the Manchu control of China (1644) played an important role in threatening the existing world order that Chosŏn intellectuals had worked within. Most Chosŏn intellectuals at that time were Confucian universalists. For them, Confucianism was the only ideology to explain things. They often culturally identified themselves with Confucianism, which put China at the center of the world. Thus, in the course of constructing the identity of Chosŏn, the most important Other in the eyes of Chosŏn Confucian scholars was China, while other countries were relatively neglected in many ways. Also European civilization made its way into Chosŏn society via China in the form of translated books and other products. In this fluid moment, some Chosŏn intellectuals expanded their interests from studies of the Confucian classics to Western Learning, which included Western religion, geography, technology, and so on. With the untimely demise of King Chŏngjo (正祖, r.1776-1800), however, the tolerant atmosphere toward learning Western culture, including Catholicism, quickly dissipated on the Korean Peninsula, and scholars’ academic orientation was centered once more on orthodox Neo-Confucianism.

5 In reaction to Benedict Anderson’s emphasis on the internal similarities in imagining a community, arguments which prioritize distinguishing self from “excluded others” have been made. See Ronald P. Toby, “Three Realms/Myriad Countries: An ‘Ethnography’ of Other and the Re-bounding of Japan, 1550-1750,” in Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 15-45.
As we will see in Chapter Two, Tasan was exiled on accusations of being a Catholic. Tasan’s exile and his work are both objects of this study and methods for illuminating nineteenth-century Chosŏn society, which began to show signs of decline after a cultural renaissance in the eighteenth century. A key term I use in examining Tasan’s work is “civilized exile,” with a focus on the changes in his thought during and after his periods of exile. Civilization might have various definitions, but in nineteenth-century Korea it meant (Neo-) Confucian civilization. “The civilized” and “the barbarian,” are important constructs for understanding Chosŏn intellectuals’ epistemology. Once a person adopts Confucianism, the person is not barbarian any more. However, in Tasan’s case, as we will see in later chapters, because Tasan always identified himself as a Confucian scholar and yet was charged for not conforming to Confucianism, the dichotomy of the civilized and barbarian became complicated. In this study, then, I use “civilized (hwa 華)” to mean someone who has acquired advanced knowledge in the (Neo-) Confucian classics and other fields, such as practical learning and technologies, within the Confucian framework, and served as a model for other people. In other words, a “civilized exile” is someone who is able to serve as a member of the elite of the society through his extensive knowledge, despite his status as an exile.

Why, then, have I chosen “civilized” over “Confucian”? This is because of the complexities of Tasan’s personal history. By describing Tasan as “civilized,” and not Confucian, I intend to show the breadth and advancement of his knowledge, and avoid the debate as to whether or not Tasan was a Catholic. It is not my intention to conclude that Tasan had not been a Catholic. Aside from those who officially accepted Catholicism as their religion and were martyred, most, if not all, Chosŏn yangban considered
themselves to be Confucians. In Tasan’s case, he wrote a memorial to King Chŏngjo in 1797 to clarify his stance. He first confessed that he had been interested in Western books, i.e., Catholic literature, and argued that after learning that Western books contained heretical ideas he kept his distance from them. When there was a Catholic purge in 1801, Tasan could escape death only because he argued that he kept himself aloof from other Catholics, and his political rivals could not find counterevidence. Tasan, who officially apostatized from Catholicism and yet was branded as a wicked Catholic, had to establish and reconfirm his status as an orthodox Confucian, and thus someone who was civilized. I will discuss this term, “civilized” further in Chapter Three.

Examining Tasan’s writings as those of an exile provides historical insight into how this “civilized” scholar of nineteenth-century Chosŏn perceived and pursued civilization in his exile. It also helps us to understand trenchant Korean issues, such as the persistence of Chosŏn ideology and society; yangban in the center and periphery; and colonized Korean intellectuals’ encounter with modernity. Against the prevalent view that Chosŏn experienced a significant break from Neo-Confucian epistemology by the turn of the nineteenth century, I argue that the transformation of this Chosŏn member of the elite during his exile shows the continuity of both the ideology and society of the time, at least until the early nineteenth century. Responding to studies that emphasize the

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6 Yangban is the ruling elite of Chosŏn.

7 Yŏyudang Chŏnsŏ (hereafter YC) 1:9:42b-46b, “Memorial to the throne to explain oneself and resign as Sixth Royal Secretary ( tongbusŭngji 同副承旨 ) (Pyŏnbangsa tongbusŭngji so).” For multivolume works, I indicate volume number followed by page number. For example, Chŏngjo sillok 1.2 means Chŏngjo sillok Fascicle (卷) 1, Page 2. Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ, however, consists of seven parts (集). So I indicate YC 1:2:3 to mean Part 1, Fascicle 2, and Page 3. Unless noted otherwise, the page numbers of Tasan’s works are from Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ edited by Chŏng Inbo and An Chaehong in the 1930s. I discuss more on the publication of Tasan’s collection in Chapter Five.
differences between Tasan’s thought and that of Zhu Xi, Mark Setton asks whether Tasan “transcend[s] the boundaries of Neo-Confucianism.” My question is in line with Setton’s, but I want to extend considerations of Tasan’s political situation: was Tasan in a position to be radical and different from his contemporaries in the first place? Attempting to prove that Tasan did not remain within the framework of Neo-Confucianism is as problematic as examining him as a Practical Learning scholar: neither approach questions the validity of the standard of modernity, and focuses on proving whether or not Tasan had “modern” elements in his thought.

Analyzing Tasan’s transformation as an exiled intellectual contextualizes yangban in terms of center and periphery. Throughout his exile, Tasan developed multiple identities. One of the self-perceptions that he evolved during his exile was as a provincial intellectual as well as a local scholar. Precisely because he was an exile, maintaining the status of yangban was one of Tasan’s important concerns and influenced his family politics. As Edward Wagner shows, many yangban experienced downward social mobility in the late Chosŏn period. Yangban developed various strategies to cope with this and maintain their social status, and Tasan, a condemned yangban, had to alter his views to survive his exile and restore his former status as a scholar-official in the capital, as well. By exploring this facet, we can distinguish yangban according to the space they resided in and the socio-political status they held, rather than over-generalize Chosŏn yangban as a homogenous ruling group.

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8 Setton, Chŏng Yagyong: Korea’s Challenge to Orthodox Neo-Confucianism, 2.

9 Yangban resided across the country. However, Tasan was anxious about his displacement.

Finally, focusing on Tasan’s situation and his perspective as an exile shows how and why Tasan appealed to twentieth-century colonized Korean intellectuals, who were also exiles in their own way. One of the ways they established Tasan was to publish the first collection of his writings, around the centenary of his death, in addition to contributing articles to newspapers and magazines. To be clear, I do not intend to argue Tasan’s influence on later scholars. Rather, I want to underscore the motivations behind modern Korean scholars’ revival of Tasan and their presentation of him as one of the most important scholars of nineteenth-century Korea.

There have been a number of Korean studies of exile.\(^1\) By reexamining Tasan’s

banishment and the transformation of his ideas, I will contribute to the critical scholarship on late Chosŏn intellectual history and the history of ideas. Along with politically disfavored intellectuals’ thought and the key issue of center and periphery, I will shed light on the practice of punishment by exile, and intellectuals’ concerns about social status and family politics. Ultimately, this leads to a rethinking of state ideology, the discourse of orthodoxy, and intellectual tolerance at the time.

**Sources and Structure**

This study draws primarily from personal writings in the most comprehensive version of Tasan’s writings, *The Yŏyudang Collection* (與猶堂全書 *Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ*). Chŏng Inbo (鄭寅普, 1893-?) and An Chaehong (安在鴻, 1891-1965) edited and published the collection from 1934 to 1938. This collection consists of thousands of articles, essays, and poems. Tasan is most famous for his scholarship on the Confucian classics, but in examining his ideas and self-perception as an exile, I focus on his personal writings, such as poems and letters, as well as writings on statecraft (*kyŏngse*...)
經世) and practical knowledge. Along with Tasan’s own writings, I employ various kinds of official records of the royal court, relevant legal codes and other Chosŏn exiles’ writings, as well as the theoretical literature on exile. To examine colonized Koreans’ perspective on Tasan, I use works of 1930s Korean intellectuals, who unearthed Tasan.

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction. Chapters Two through Four explore Tasan’s writings to see his self-perception and understanding of Chosŏn society. Chapter Two provides an overview of Tasan’s career, political situation, and the issue of Catholicism; and examines Tasan’s transformation in his first exile to Haemi (1790) and second exile to Changgi (1801). Because exile was so common for officials, it is not necessarily the case that people perceived themselves as distinctive on that basis alone. Tasan’s first exile lasted only for ten days, and as such was not so different from the ordinary travel of a yangban. The situation, however, was drastically different by the time Tasan was charged with being a Catholic and banished to Changgi. While Tasan was exiled to Changgi after the Catholic Purge of 1801, he perceived himself as a mediator between the local people and the authorities. He observed ordinary people’s lives and offered solutions to their difficulties. Tasan also observed the culture of that area and introduced local details in his poetry. In this chapter, I also discuss how the Chosŏn court employed officials for the civilization and moralization of local areas through demotion and the punishment of exile.

After interrogation in the capital, Tasan was transferred to Kangjin in the eleventh month of 1801. Chapter Three analyzes Tasan’s thought focused on being a “civilized” scholar while he was exiled in Kangjin from 1801 to 1818. Banished scholars did not have political power, but they had intellectual power. I argue that for Tasan the idea of
being civilized was a breakthrough provided by his exile, and that, as he revealed in his letters, by writing on the Confucian classics Tasan declared that although he was exiled he was still civilized. This led to the question who Tasan’s (expected) audience was. Tasan’s political rivals, the Patriarch faction (*noron* 老論) were in power, and because of that it was one of his main audiences, and Tasan distinguished between the Patriarchs and himself in terms of center and periphery.

Chapter Four continues examining Tasan’s self-perception with a discussion of the notion of the peripheral scholar. While he was exiled in Kangjin, Tasan perceived the region as a cultural and political periphery, and was nostalgic about the capital as the center of Confucian civilization. Tasan revealed his anxiety about living as an exile in a remote village, and yearned for a chance to restore his former social status at the center. He did not mean to distinguish himself from his yangban contemporaries in the capital. Tasan thought that gaining a scholarly reputation was the best way to restore his family’s former status, which resulted in cognitive dissonance in his ideas: For the general audience, contrary to the conventions of the time, Tasan maintained that Confucian scholars could engage in any occupation. However, he strongly advised his sons to focus on the classics. From this disjuncture, we see that in his public discourse Tasan wrote about ideals, rather than reality. Tasan studied and wrote persistently on his findings, but even after his release and his return home, to the vicinity of the capital, he still occupied the political periphery until he was *discovered* by later scholars in the twentieth century.

Chapter Five examines how Tasan’s perspective as an exile appealed to twentieth-century colonized Koreans. Japan colonized Korea for thirty five years (1910-1945), and it was colonized Korean intellectuals who finally published a collection of Tasan’s
writings for the first time in history. Although the punishment of exile was abolished in the 1890s, these colonized Koreans were internally exiled living under the control of Japanese authorities. I introduce what I mean by exile in the post-1890s, and suggest that Tasan’s exile was critical to his appeal to the colonized Korea. I argue that they were exiles in their own right, and Tasan’s appeal to them was intimately tied to their hope of surviving their own exile.

In the concluding chapter, I summarize my findings on Tasan reimagined as an exile. Although modern scholarship has emphasized Tasan as a modern figure, after reading Tasan’s works through the lens of exile I argue that the exile experience in Kangjin enabled Tasan to identify himself as a civilized exile and also a scholar on the periphery of civilization. Both identities led Tasan to affirm “civilization.” He wanted to restore himself to the center of Chosŏn society as a civilized and official just like many other yangban. Colonized Korean scholars discovered Tasan, a long forgotten intellectual, and by doing so they validated innate modern civilization of Korea in their exile.
In preparation for the discussion of thought during his Kangjin exile, in this chapter I explore topics such as the definitions, legal tradition and conventional practice of exile in Korea, especially during Chosŏn dynasty, which will help the reader understand my engagement in later chapters with Tasan’s perception of his position as an exile. Then we will see the political situation in late eighteenth-century Chosŏn, the issue of Catholicism and Tasan’s stance on the religion, and the process of civilization and moral improvement through the punishment of exile.

Tasan achieved a literary licentiate degree (*chinsa* 進士) in 1783, at the exceptionally young age of twenty-two *se*, and passed the higher civil service examination and entered government service in 1789. He, however, was exiled three times over the course of his career. He was exiled to Haemi in 1790, but released shortly after that. His second exile, to Changgi, (1801) was followed by the last one to Kangjin (1801-18). Tasan’s first and second exile show not only how his life changed through his exile, but also how much the significance of being exiled could vary around the turn of nineteenth century Chosŏn society. Compared to his first exile, Tasan considered his second and third exile, and even his demotion, much more serious because they were related to issue of Catholicism, a heresy (*sahak* 邪學). Analyzing the situation around his demotion and second exile, we see that the Chosŏn state used these treatments not just to punish its subjects, but to civilize Chosŏn society. The Chosŏn court intended to use the disdained Tasan to civilize local areas. Tasan understood his role and cooperated to
achieve this goal. This will help us with the theme of next chapter, Tasan as a civilized scholar.

**Legal Tradition and Practice of the Punishment of Exile**

Before exploring Tasan’s exile and his thought, we need to know the regulations and practices of exile as punishment in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Chosŏn. Discussing the characteristics of Chosŏn exile will not only help to understand the nature of Tasan’s exile and contextualize his work, but it will also create a bridge to the question of why Tasan appealed to later Korean scholars. In this section, I will address multiple dimensions of exile, including its history, definition, degrees of punishment, necessity, accompaniment, and the impact of social status on the conditions of exile. It is important to note that, even though I focus on male elites’ exile, the makeup of exiles was much broader than this. In terms of social status, exiles in the Chosŏn period came from the entire range of social strata including commoners and so-called “base people” (*ch’ŏnmin*). Women were punished by exile, too.

Koryŏ (高麗 918-1392), the dynasty immediately preceding Chosŏn, followed the Tang legal code (*Tangli shuyi* 唐律疏義), and the Chosŏn dynasty also initially adopted the legal code of its own contemporary Chinese dynasty, the Ming Code (*Daminglü* 大明律). But there were problems in applying Chinese law to Korean society. First of all,

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15 For example, *Chŏngjo sillok* 4.36 (kyŏngo), 1777/09/08.

16 Kim Nanok, “Koryŏ sidae yubaegil” (Road to exile in Koryŏ dynasty), *Yŏksa pip’yŏng* 68 (2004): 201. For exiles in the Koryŏ dynasty, see Kim Nanok, “Koryŏ chŏn’gi ŭi yubaehyŏng” (Exiles during the first half of Koryŏ dynasty), *Han’guksa yŏn’gu* 121 (2003): 55–82.
the customs of China and Korea were different, and, as a result, the Korean clerks had to modify certain rules in order to apply Chinese law to Korean cases. Second, the clerks had trouble understanding the Ming code, which heavily relied on technical terms. Basing their decisions on trial and error, the Korean judiciary made necessary changes and translated the Ming Code into idu (吏讀), the scribal language that Korean clerks used at the time. The translated work was entitled *The Great Ming Code Directly Explicated* (*Taemyŏngnyul chikhae* 大明律直解, hereafter, ‘*Chikhae*’) and promulgated in 1395. Koreans started using the *Chikhae* in the field and soon found that application required repeated amendments. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Chosŏn court synthesized the Ming Code and Korean native legal traditions to promulgate its own legal code, *The Great Code of State Administration* (*Kyŏngguk taejŏn* 經國大典). The *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* declares at the very beginning of its “Laws on Penal Affairs” section (*hyŏngjŏn* 刑典) that in applying its rules it would follow the *Ming Code*. Because of this rule Chosŏn judicial clerks had to refer to the Chinese Code for specific regulations. Whenever they saw the necessity, Chosŏn kings issued either royal commands (*sugyo 受敎*) or decrees (*yunŭm 綸音*) that served as the new standard. As judicial precedents

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17 Unlike modern Korean society, a judiciary of Chosŏn was not separated from administrative officials. Civil officials, such as local magistrates, usually served as judiciaries to investigate crimes and judge criminals.


19 After several amendments, it was compiled in 1481. Han’gukhak munhŏn yŏn’guso, ed., *Kyŏngguktaejŏn* (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1983).

20 Interestingly, however, this did not lead to a revision of the original *Chikhae*. Until the mid-eighteenth century, the clerks had compiled the additional rules separate from the *Chikhae*. The conventional view on the *Ming Code* is that it was the primary model for Korean law, including
accumulated, King Yŏngjo (英祖, r. 1724-1776) ordered the compilation of all the ordinances and royal commands since *The Great Code of State Administration* had been enforced, and published them as *The Amended Great Code* (*Sŏktaejŏn 續大典*) in 1746. “The Laws on Penal Affairs” in *The Soktaejŏn* also starts with a section titled “applying rules,” which stipulates that, in accordance with *The Great Code of State Administration*, the judiciary should apply the Ming code, but when there are regulations in *The Great Code of State Administration* or *The Amended Great Code*, these regulations take priority over the Ming code.\(^{21}\)

What was the punishment of exile, and why was it needed? Due to the long history of exile as punishment, there are variations regarding its stipulations and practice. Along with the revision of law codes, the Chosŏn court developed its own rules and practices for exile. Since the time setting of this study is from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, we will focus on stipulations and practices in force during this period. Exile is one of the traditional punishments employed, following the Chinese modern Korean criminal laws, which were compiled in 1905. But in a recent study Kim Pakch’ŏl argues that the Ming code never held absolute status in Korean legal system. According to Kim, in the earlier period penalty decisions were made according to both Chosŏn conventions and the regulations in *The Great Ming Code Directly Explicated*. By the eighteenth century, he continues, the Koreans gave more weight to their native judicial precedents, placing less importance on *The Great Ming Code*. Kim Paekch’ŏl, “Chosŏn hugi yŏngjodae pŏpchŏn chŏngbi wa Soktaejŏn ŭi p’yŏnch’an” (Modifying legal codes and compiling Soktaejŏn during Yŏngjo reign), *Yŏksa wa hyŏnsil* 68 (2008): 212–16.

\(^{21}\) Kyujanggak, *Taejŏn t’ongpo yŏn ha* (Compiled Great Code Vol. 2) (Seoul: Seoul taehakkyo kyujanggak, 1998), 197. *The Great Code of State Administration* and *The Amended Great Code* were separate volumes, and the Korean judiciary had to look up both Codes to reach a verdict. This problem was solved when King Chŏngjo promulgated *The Compiled Great Code* in 1785. This code includes all the regulations in *The Great Code of State Administration* and *The Amended Great Code*, as well as ordinances issued since the above codes had been promulgated. This new code collates amendments and ordinances following each original rule from *The Great Code of State Administration*. 
The Great Ming Code defines five routine punishments (ohyŏng 五刑): the death penalty (sa 死), exile (yu 流), penal servitude (to 徒), beating with a heavy stick (chang 杖), and beating with a light stick (t’ae 苔). Capital punishment was for the worst crimes, such as rebellion, but the punishment of exile was second only to the execution. With respect to its need, by sending criminals into exile, instead of punishing them with death, kings could practice one of the main Confucian virtues: benevolence.

Yu Chaehŭng forged King Yŏngjo’s old seal, which Yŏngjo had used before coming to the throne. Yu’s conspiracy became known and ministers asked Yŏngjo to impose a severe punishment on Yu. Yŏngjo replied, “Gao Yao advised King Shun to kill the offender, but Shun said that forgiving was the Way of a ruler.” Instead of killing Yu, Yŏngjo sentenced him to exile in a remote place.

22 The punishment of exile existed until the Kabo Reform (1894-96) amended Chosŏn penal code and abolished exile and penal servitude, which were replaced with imprisonment. Modern Korean criminal law does not have punishment of exile.

23 Gao Yao (皋陶) is a Chinese legendary figure who assisted the legendary sage king Shun to adjudicate legal matters.

24 King Shun is a legendary ancient Chinese king.

25 Yŏngjo sillok 54.22 (muin). King Yŏngjo had this conversation on the sixteenth day of the ninth month of 1741. Korean people adopted the Western calendar in late 1895, and applied the Gregorian calendar from January 1, 1896. Prior to this date, they used a lunar calendar. In this study pre-1896 dates are given according to the lunar calendar, as they were in primary sources. For pre-1896 dates I mark them as “the seventh day of the third month of 1790” or “1790/03/07” instead of “March 7, 1790” to indicate that I am following the lunar calendar.
As we see above, by taking the sage king Shun as a model and reducing the sentence from death to banishment, Yŏngjo built up his royal image as a benevolent ruler.²⁶ Being benevolent, and thus tolerant toward convicts, was not limited to Yŏngjo’s ruling, however. For example, King Chŏngjo reduced the penalty of death to that of exile, or from exile to monetary redemption when the convicted person had elderly parents.²⁷ When an aged parent was in a critical condition, even serious offenders were allowed to visit their hometown.²⁸ Further, King Chŏngjo considered setting different rules for those exiles who had old parents to support.²⁹ The court concluded that having special rules for these exiles was not proper, but this debate foregrounds how much Confucian kings wanted to show their benevolence and also to use reduced sentences for this purpose. Regarding the role of the punishment of exile modern scholars point out that it also helped to avoid great bloodshed in the course of political conflict, such as literati purges.³⁰

²⁶ For a detailed study on Chosŏn kingship and their use of the image of sage king, see JaHyun Kim Haboush, A Heritage of Kings: One Man’s Monarchy in the Confucian World (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

²⁷ Chŏngjo sillok 33.31 (pyŏng'o), 1791/10/05.

²⁸ Two brothers were exiled and at the news of their mother’s illness the Councilor of the Left (chwaŭijŏng 侧議政) requested that King Yŏngjo temporally release one of them. Yŏngjo reasoned that the mother’s love for her two sons was the same, so he commanded that both brothers be allowed to go home on furlough and take care of their mother. Yŏngjo sillok 10.7 (pyŏng'o), 1726/07/16.

²⁹ For example, Chŏngjo sillok 50.39 (kyesa), 1798/12/04.

³⁰ Sim Chaeu, “Chosŏn hugi hyŏngbŏl chedo ŭi pyŏnhwa wa kukka kwŏllyŏk” (Changes in punishment system and the state power in late Chosŏn), Kuksagwan nonch’ong 102 (2003): 113. Sim Chaeu shows that in the eighteenth century, as the political conflict became severe, the rate of exile verdicts increased.
Then, how were convicts assigned to their place of exile? The court banished exiles to every province: Minor offenders were sent to the capital city of a province or to an inland area, where the living environment was relatively favorable. Severe offenders were banished to distant towns on the coast or, even worse, to islands. In the eye of those who adjudicated these felons, an island was an ideal place of exile because of its geographical remoteness, potential danger along the way of getting there, hardships in living there, and the difficulty of escaping from such a place. However, the hostile environment of islands became an issue. In 1726 King Yŏngjo commanded that unless the king granted royal permission the court should not send offenders to insalubrious places, such as Hŭksan Island. He warned against purposefully sending exiles to insalubrious places, but had to withdraw his command only a couple of days later when a subject pointed out that deciding punishment on compassionate grounds could harm the legal system. Before long the court resumed sending exiles to islands despite these considerations.

Regarding the punishment of exile, the Chosŏn court varied the degree of punishment by establishing three specific distances for each degree of severity. In *The Great Ming Code* the maximum was 3,000 li (1,000 miles) from the place in which criminals lived, and for less serious offenses, 2,500 li (830 miles) and 2,000 li (660 miles) were stipulated. But because Korea’s territory was much smaller than that of China, the

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31 Yŏngjo sillok 9.29 (imin, 1726/03/10) and 9.30 (musin, 1726/03/16).


Chosŏn court amended the rules in 1430. According to this amendment, the distances were 900 li (251 miles), 750 li (210 miles), and 600 li (168 miles). Exceptions were made to this amended rule, however, in cases where the court deemed it necessary to punish criminals harshly. For example, King Chŏngjo sentenced one offender to exile 3,000 li from his home—the most severe punishment in the original code. Chŏngjo noted that the preceding king had instructed that exiles of 3,000 li be abolished, and although he imposed the punishment for this criminal it was an exception and should not be set as a precedent. Following this royal command, the State Tribunal (Ŭigŭmbu 義禁府) arranged for a lengthy detour so the offender would actually have to travel 3,000 li, even though his final destination was not, nor could it be, that far away from his home. Because the State Tribunal also emphasized that this was an exceptional punishment, we know that they realized how harsh this punishment was. In an attempt to downplay its severity, they claimed that the punishment was not too harsh because the place of exile, Tanchŏn, was an inland town, not an island.

*The Great Code of State Administration* does not specify the distance that exiles should cover per day. Examining mid-Qing Chinese exiles, Joanna Waley-Cohen writes that the average distance an exile in Qing China was expected to cover per day was 50 li

34 *Sejong sillok* 48.19-20 (kabin), 1430/05/15. And *Sejong sillok* 50.37-38 (chŏngmi), 1430/12/11.

35 Regarding the traditional units of measurement, scholars of China and Korea have differing opinions. Ziang Yonglin writes that a Ming unit of one li is 1/3 miles, while Sun Joo Kim writes that the Chosŏn unit of one li is approximately 0.45 kilometers, or 0.28 miles. In this study, I follow Kim’s research and calculate one li as 0.28 miles. Jiang Yonglin, *The Great Ming Code/Da Ming Lu*, xxxi; Sun Joo Kim, *Marginality and Subversion in Korea: The Hong Kyŏngnae Rebellion of 1812* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2007), xiii.

36 King Chŏngjo’s *Illsongnok (The Record of Daily Reflections)* 1776/10/06 (kapchin).
Meanwhile, exploring Chosŏn Korean exile cases from the 1830s to the 1840s, Kim Kyŏngsuk speculates that convicts were expected to go 80-90 li (22-25 miles) per day, but the actual distance was decided by the social status of the exile. Kim suggests that banished officials traveled only 30-50 li (8.4-14 miles), while the rules on distance were applied more strictly to ordinary exiles. On certain occasions, the timeline for arrival at the place of exile was set in order to make the punishment more severe. For example, when a Fourth Censor of the Office of Censor-General (chŏngŏn 正言; Sr.6) infuriated Yŏngjo by siding with a banished official, Yŏngjo decided that the censor had made an impertinent remark unbefitting a subject, and punished him by not only sending him to an island, but also requiring that he cover the same distance in half the time.

The life of an exile showed wide variation. It began from the moment of travel heading to the place of exile. Once a convict was sentenced to be exiled, even for relatively minor offences he was expected to serve his sentence away from his native province. Exiles did not necessarily begin their travel from the capital, and depending on a convict’s circumstances, such as economic ability or political situation, he could make the journey on horseback, while other exiles traveled by foot. When the place of exile was assigned, government officials escorted the convict to the place. The rank of officials


39 The Chosŏn court conferred eighteen court ranks on its government officials. The highest was Sr.1 and others followed it in the order of Jr.1, Sr.2 down to Jr.9.

40 *Yŏngjo sillok* 40.27 (ŭlch’uk), 1735/04/25.
escorting a convict was also relevant to the exile’s social status. For an exile who held a high rank office prior to his conviction, a relatively high-ranking officer was designated as his escort.\(^{41}\)

When the exile arrived at his destination, the magistrate of that area was charged with providing accommodations for the exile and keeping him under surveillance. The exile was counted as part of the penal colony’s population, and he was obliged to assemble at the magistrate’s court for a roll call (\(chômgo\) 點考) once or twice a month. This was to prevent exiles from leaving their place of banishment. In applying this rule, however, the authorities were sometimes lenient towards yangban offenders. As we see in following Tasan’s writing, there were people who thought such manner was ideal. In his *Reflections on Governing the People*, Tasan suggests that when the local magistrate checked on an exiled nobleman, he should dispatch a low-ranking official to the exile’s house, rather than summon the offender to the government office. Tasan also writes that the low-ranking official’s report on what he observed from outside the exile’s house should substitute for the roll call, such that summoning yangban exiles once every couple of months should be sufficient.\(^{42}\) What was his ground to suggest that the authorities should have treated the banished yangban with greater generosity? He did not elaborate on this, but we can speculate about the reason: while exiles from other social strata might attempt to flee, yangban exiles were expected to remain in the area until they were freed.

The exiles were geographically displaced and alienated from their acquaintances, and lived in solitude, not only as outsiders, but also as criminals. The local magistrates

\(^{41}\) For more, see Kim Kyŏngsuk, “Chosŏn sidae yubaehyŏng ŭi chiphaeng kwa kŭ sarye” (The practice of exile in Chosŏn dynasty with examples).

appointed local residents to provide exiles with accommodations. But because there was no subsidy, feeding exiles became a burden on the local people. Yangban exiles, who did not have any labor skills, were a particular nuisance for their host families and the towns in which they lived.\(^{43}\) In order to relieve the economic distress of host villages the central authorities put forth efforts to distribute exiles evenly. Along these lines, exiles were transferred from one area to another in cases of natural disaster, or when there were too many criminals in one town.\(^{44}\) Although the punishment of exile was a mild punishment compared with death penalty, it was still a harsh punishment because the exiles’ livings were not guaranteed and they were supposed to rely on people’s kindness for their livelihoods. Does this mean that all Chosŏn exiles were destitute? Aid from his family back in his hometown and rich relatives near the place of exile were variables. But to fully answer this question we need to explore how the punishment of exile was executed in real life.

Regarding the periods of exile, although lifelong exile was stipulated,\(^ {45}\) it was not expected to be observed as time passed.\(^ {46}\) We see cases in which King Chŏngjo handed out sentences for “one year of exile”\(^ {47}\) or “indefinite exile,”\(^ {48}\) and the fact that Chŏngjo

\(^{43}\) The fact that exile did not entail labor as a punishment was the biggest difference between Chosŏn and China. In China, the punishment of exile was to send the criminals to distant places and make them serve certain term of labor services. In Chosŏn, penal servitude (tohyŏng 徒刑) was the punishment with labor, and sometimes it involved relocation as well.

\(^{44}\) Chŏngjo sillok 14.18 (ŭlmi), 1782/08/23; Chŏngjo sillok 17.24 (pyŏngsul), 1784/03/01; Chŏngjo sillok 22.34 (kihae), 1786/09/29.

\(^{45}\) Pŏpchech’ŏ, Taemyŏngnyul chikhae (The Great Ming Code Directly Explicated), 39.

\(^{46}\) Even in the sixteenth century lifelong exile was not strictly observed.

\(^{47}\) Chŏngjo sillok 33.31 (pyŏngo), 1791/10/05.

\(^{48}\) Chŏngjo sillok 41.39 (kyemyo), 1794/11/19.
distinguished the duration of exile—not only short term exile but also lifelong exile—implies that lifelong exile was no longer the norm. While serving their time, some convicts were relocated, either closer or farther to their native places based on factors like his good behavior or a natural disaster in the place of exile. Even better for convicts than sentence reduction, there was amnesty, which did not require minimum term of banishment prior to it. Royal pardons were granted for three main reasons. The first reason was relief of the people who were suffering from a natural disaster. Being Confucian, Chosŏn kings interpreted natural disaster as a sign of Heaven’s displeasure with them, and believed they could restore heavenly favor by way of benevolent behavior. Thus when the disaster was an epidemic, instead of simply relocating the exiles to another area as it had done in other instances, the central government set exiles free. The second reason was to include their subjects in the commemoration of a happy event. For example, at the birth of a prince in 1790, King Chŏngjo issued a decree (yunŭm 纜音) that, to return the favor of Heaven and the people, he would release criminals, reduce taxes, and offer a special civil service examination. As a result of the decree and as an indicator of his sincerity, 1,154 people were released. The third reason was the kings’ humanitarian consideration for the conditions of exile. A place’s remoteness, the insalubrity of the environment, and the number of years served were considerable reasons to grant royal pardons at some point. For instance, in 1744 King Yŏngjo reviewed records of those who were exiled to islands for a long period of time and pardoned many of them.

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49 Chŏngjo sillok 30.61-62 (kyeu), 1790/06/24.

50 Yŏngjo sillok 60.6 (ûlyu), 1744/08/11.
One of the variables that determine a banished official’s exile experience was the commonness of the punishment and the chance of amnesty as well.\textsuperscript{51} The punishment of exile did not necessarily mean the convict’s life would be destroyed, and many scholar-officials were punished by exile at least once throughout their career lives. Furthermore, a convict could one day be released and, not only that, could be appointed as an official. Official records indicate that King Chŏngjo commanded some exiles to be pardoned on account of lacking talented people in the court.\textsuperscript{52} This was made possible by the fact that so many officials were sentenced to exile, and being exiled did not hurt the person’s credentials or qualification to be appointed for a post again. This development gave Chosŏn yangban exiles a unique social status because it opened up the possibility of return to their former positions. A banished official who had served in the royal court could especially benefit from the possibility of his reappearance in the central government because local officials and intellectuals were eager to engage with him especially when they thought the convict would be released from exile in near future. It has been pointed out that Chosŏn yangban of both the capital and the provinces had reciprocal obligations to help each other.\textsuperscript{53} The dynamics between the capital and provinces also contributed to this phenomenon.

\textsuperscript{51} Sim Chaeu examines fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Korean scholars whose collection of writings are housed in the government archive, Kyujanggak, and argues that about 1/3 of them experienced exile. Since scholar-officials’s exile was so common, it is suggested that the punishment of exile was a warning rather than a punishment. Sim Chaeu, “Chosŏn chŏn’gi yubaehyŏng kwa yubae saenghwal” (Punishment of exile and exile life in the first half of Chosŏn dynasty), Kuksagwan nonch’ong 92 (2000): 199–222.

\textsuperscript{52} For example, Chŏngjo sillok 9.30 (pyŏngo), 1780/03/27.

\textsuperscript{53} Chŏn Kyŏngmok, “Chosŏn hugi kyŏnghwa sajok kwa chibang yangban ūi kyoryu: Sŏul ūi Pannam Pak-ssi wa Chŏlla-do Puan-hyŏn ū Puan Kim-ssi rŭl chungsim ŭro” (Mutual exchange between yangban in the capital and provinces in late Chosŏn: focusing on Pannam Pak family in the capital and Puan Kim Family in Puan, Chŏlla Province), in Han’guksa e issŏsŏ chibang kwa
Yi Sŏngim’s recent study on the exile of Yi Mun’gŏn (李文楗 1494-1567) supports this. Yi Mun’gŏn, a former official in the Office of Editor (p’an’gyo 判校; Sr.3) of the Diplomatic Correspondence Office (Sŭngmunwŏn 承文院), was banished from 1545 and died at his place of exile in 1567. Yi Sŏngim divides 22 years of Yi Mun’gŏn’s exile into three periods, and analyzes various gifts and conveniences that Yi Mun’gŏn received from local magistrates and yangban in each period. In the first year (from the tenth month of 1545 to the ninth month of 1546) of his exile, Yi Mun’gŏn received gifts 535 times. In the middle year (from the first month of 1556 to the twelfth month of 1556), the number decreased to 269. Yi Sŏngim argues that in the early years people expected Yi Mun’gŏn to return to the central government soon, and offered gifts to please him. However, as Yi Mun’gŏn had been exiled for more than ten years, people started to doubt whether he could recover his former status, and brought him gifts less frequently than before.

Exile life was also affected by the political environment. The dynasty transformed Korea into a law-governed country, and even a royal decree could not be cited as a precedent unless it was promulgated as code. For this reason Chosŏn officials were

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_Yi Sŏngim, “Ŭnmi rhan kŏrae nŭn ŏttŏkke yangban sahoe rŭl chit’aenghaenna: sŏnmul kyŏngje ka yangban’ga e kajyŏda chun pit kwa ŏdum” (How did private exchanges sustain yangban society: light and shade that gift culture brought to yangban family), in Chosŏn yangban ŭi ilsae ng (The life of Chosŏn yangban), ed. Kyujanggak Han’gukhak yŏn’guwŏn (P’aju, Kyŏnggido: Kŭlhangari, 2009), 164–65._

_Yaemyŏngnyul chikhae (the Great Ming Code Directly Explicated) Vol.28, Hyŏngnyul (Laws on Penal Affairs 刑律), Tanok (Judgment and Imprisonment 斷獄), “Tanjoe inyulnyŏng” (Citing the code in deciding punishment 斷罪引律令). Pŏpchech’ŏ, Taemyŏngnyul chikhae (The Great Ming Code Directly Explicated), 512–13._
required to cite the law when deciding punishment for a criminal. However under the
name of balancing between governance by law and benevolence, officials had room for
negotiating the severity of punishments. *The Great Ming Code* and its Korean counterpart,
the *Chikhae*, both have an article on officials’ exonerating the guilty or implicating the
innocent. The existence of this article paradoxically shows that even the judiciary
sometimes fabricated their verdict.⁵⁶ Officials who did not have power to judge a case
could influence the decision of punishment or release of certain a criminal by initiating
and concluding the discussions on these. Officials’ personal bias—either sympathy or
animosity—was often related to the political factions they belonged to. If the convict was
affiliated with a winning faction, or favored by a powerful man, he had more chance to be
treated nicely in his exile.

The reputation that the banished official had built before and during his exile was
another variable that determine exile experience. Chosŏn exiles had a certain degree of
freedom because, unlike many modern societies, the Chosŏn court imprisoned criminals
for the purpose of interrogation rather than for punishment.⁵⁷ When the authorities
punished a criminal with exile, in many cases they assigned the offender to a region, and,
instead of putting him in a prison in that area, let him live in one of the local houses.⁵⁸

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(The Great Ming Code Directly Explicated)*, 505–07.

⁵⁷ Prison was also used as a death cell.

⁵⁸ Wirianch’i (圍籬安置 exile hedged in by a thorny fence), one form of exile, was an exception
to this rule. If someone was sentenced to wirianch’i, the convict was confined to a certain place
and hedged in by a thorny fence. But even then, it was close to a house arrest, not incarceration.
For more on wirianch’i, see Chi Ch’ŏrho, “Chosŏn chŏn’gi üi yuhyŏng” (Punishment of exile in
The exiles could travel within the region and exchange ideas and materials with people.\textsuperscript{59} Also, if they could afford a courrier, they could correspond with people in other areas, including other exiles.\textsuperscript{60} Corresponding with other scholars to discussing scholarly matters was a good way to show that the exile was knowledgeable and to gain scholarly fame.

Likely because of the long term, an exile’s family could join the convict in the place of exile.\textsuperscript{61} However, we can surmise that in reality female family members were often not allowed to accompany the exile, because Kings Sejong (世宗, r. 1418-50) and Chŏngjo each granted special royal permission in 1449 and 1790, respectively, so that an exile’s family could live with the convict at the place of exile.\textsuperscript{62} While Sejong acknowledged that the regulation for exiles being accompanied by family was already enacted and yet not obeyed, Chŏngjo said that he had not known this rule, further stating that he had not heard of a primary or secondary wife leaving home to join her husband at his place of exile or penal servitude. The king understood that the enactment of this rule showed an ideal ruler’s spirit of generosity, and commanded that judges be reminded of

\textsuperscript{59} Taking advantage of this freedom, some exiles visited other provinces without permission from the authorities, or even escaped from their places of exile. For example, in 1731 there was a discussion of local magistrates illegally granting exiles a leave of absence or letting them escape. Yŏngjo sillok 29.29 (kimyo), 1731/05/15.

\textsuperscript{60} For example, while Tasan and his brother were both in exile, they exchanged letters on various topics, from their scholarly writings to family matters.

\textsuperscript{61} Article 15 of “Laws on Punishments and General Principles (mingli 名例)” in The Great Ming Code stipulates, “In all cases of committing crimes punishable by exile, the offender’s wife and concubines shall accompany him.” Jiang Yonglin, The Great Ming Code/Da Ming Lu, 26. The Great Ming Code Directly Explicated of Korea also allows the families of exiles to accompany him to the banishment place. Pŏpchech’ŏ, Taemyŏngnyul chikhae (The Great Ming Code Directly Explicated), 65–66.

\textsuperscript{62} Sejong sillok 125.5 (musul), 1449/07/20; Chŏngjo silliok 31.10-11 (mujin), 1790/08/20.
this ordinance. Why then did the number of the exiles who were accompanied by family, especially female family members, diminish as time passed? Did Chŏngjo’s command change the convention? In her study of a seventeenth-century Chosŏn scholar’s exile, Kim Kyŏngsuk suggests that yangban women began staying home and sending their husbands into exile alone because of the Neo-Confucian transformation of Chosŏn society and concern for family honor.63

A discussion during Chŏngjo’s reign, however, shows that it was not just a matter of Confucian female virtue. In 1792, the Office of the Inspector General (Sahŏnbu 司憲府) reported to the king that an exile had already lived with his secondary wife for years, and asked the king banish the governor (pangbaek 方伯) and local magistrate (suryŏng 守令) of the area for not properly supervising the criminal. The king granted royal permission for the local officials to be exiled.64 This shows that, above all things, the exile was expected to repent for his sins. By living with his secondary wife in exile, the criminal could be blamed that despite his situation of being a convict he was not practicing propriety. And the local authorities were punished because they failed to surveillance the convict for that matter. All of these aspects show that Chosŏn exiles,


64 Chŏngjo sillok 36.27-28 (kapchin), 1792/11/09.
especially banished officials, held a highly ambiguous position, and thus their exile lives varied widely.

**Exile in Haemi: Early Years of Tasan**

From the late fifteenth century onward, the Chosŏn court witnessed frequent and major factional divisions, and the reigns of Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo were no exception. In eighteenth-century Chosŏn, the lineup of factional competition had broken into the dominant Patriarch (*noron* 老論), the Southerner (*namin*), and the Disciple (*soron* 少論) factions, who were competing against each other. As the Patriarch faction gained more power over other factions, King Yŏngjo (r. 1724-76) attempted to balance the power between different factions and strengthened the kingship by recruiting men of ability from all factions (*t’angp’yŏngch’ae* 蕩平策). His successor, Chŏngjo also appointed officials from all factions, but the factional struggles did not cease and the Patriarchs remained relatively stronger than others. For example, many Patriarchs did not support Crown Prince Sado, Yŏngjo’s son, as a future king and kept questioning his qualifications. Meanwhile many members of the rival Southerner faction (*namin* 南人) were more sympathetic to the Crown Prince, but due to lack of political power they could not protect him. After series of political disputes Crown Prince Sado forfeited his status

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and met his death in 1762, being punished by his own father.\textsuperscript{67} This incident led another split: the Expediency group (\textit{sip’a 時派}), who sympathized with the crown prince, and the Principle group (\textit{pyŏkp’a 僚派}), who supported Yŏngjo’s judgement on the crown prince. What is important is that even within a faction people differed in their opinions regarding political issues. The Expediency group consisted of most Southerners and Disciples and some Patriarchs, and the Principle group was mainly composed of Patriarchs. When Chŏngjo succeeded Yŏngjo, the Expediency group often supported his policy while the Principle group developed and adhered to their own view.

Tasan’s father, Chŏng Chaewŏn (丁載遠, 1730-1792), was affiliated with the Southerner faction, especially the Expediency group. After the Sado incident he retreated to Mahyŏn, Kyŏnggi Province, to mourn Crown Prince Sado’s death, and Tasan was born there in 1762.\textsuperscript{68} Meanwhile Sado’s son survived the political turmoil and succeeded Yŏngjo as King Chŏngjo (正祖 r.1776-1800). To balance out the Patriarch faction, the new king intentionally appointed members of other factions. In 1776 Chŏngjo appointed Chŏng Chaewŏn to the post of Assistant Section Chief in the Ministry of Taxation (\textit{hojo chwarang 戶曹佐郞}, Sr.6), an official post in the capital. To serve in the central government, Chŏng Chaewŏn moved into the capital with his family.

Tasan studied in the capital, passed the classics licentiate examination (\textit{saengwŏngwa 生員科}) in 1783 to become a \textit{saengwŏn} (生員), and started studying at

\textsuperscript{67} Regarding this incident and power game around it, see Haboush, \textit{A Heritage of Kings: One Man’s Monarchy in the Confucian World}.  

\textsuperscript{68} Chŏng Kyuyŏng, ed., \textit{Saam sŏnsaeng yŏnbo I (The chronology of Tasan's life I)} (Seoul: Chŏngmunsa, 1984), 1. Chŏng Kyuyŏng is a descendant of Tasan, and he documented this chronology in 1921. This has been considered as a reliable source which fills in the gap in Tasan’s self epitaphs.
the Royal Confucian Academy (Sŏnggyun’gwan) to prepare for the civil service
examination. Tasan’s scholarship was noticed by King Chŏngjo soon after his admission
to the academy so that the king had Tasan lecture on the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸) to
the king himself in 1784. Tasan, however, was able to pass the civil service examination
(*taegwa* 大科) only in 1789.69 Passing the examination, Tasan was appointed a Selected
Civil Official (*ch’ogye munsin* 抄啓文臣), a post in the government archives. It was a
prestigious position that King Chŏngjo had created in 1781 to educate selected young and
talented civil officials of rank under Sr.3. The chosen people studied at the archives
instead of conducting official business, and when they finished their training the court
assigned them based on their achievements. Thus being appointed to the position meant
that the person’s scholarship was recognized by the king.

Tasan’s early career progressed favorably, ironically evidenced by his exile to
Haemi. On February 29, 1790, following his position at the government archives, Tasan
was appointed to the post of Third Diarist of the Office of Royal Decrees (*Yemun’gwan
kŏmyŏl* 藝文館 檢閱, Sr.9). Because a number of people questioned whether this
appointment was fair or not, Tasan refused to serve and went home.70 As he had left the
court for days without permission, on the seventh day of the third month of the same year,

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69 In 1789, Tasan passed the civil service examination, winning second place in *kapkwa* (甲科).
King Chŏngjo ordered Tasan into exile at a seashore location.⁷¹ Eventually, Tasan was exiled to Haemi (海美), Ch’ungch’ŏng Province.⁷²

On his way to the place of exile, Tasan composed a poem titled “In obedience to a royal command of exile to Haemi, I compose this poem when leaving the capital.”⁷³ In this piece Tasan wrote that “withdrawing his appointment certificate and casting me away to a periphery… the royal heart is seemingly angry, but it has true affection for me.” This poem shows that although he was exiled Tasan remained optimistic, and for this we can conjecture a number of reasons. First of all, because exile was a common punishment for officials at the time, Tasan could consider it as accumulating experience rather than serious change of his fate. Second, because Tasan’s offense was relatively minor, he had more chance to be released soon. Lastly, although this is more speculative than previous two, amicable relations in the royal court also led him be optimistic about his future.

Tasan had been favored by King Chŏngjo, and his political faction was gaining more power in the court. Therefore he could expect that there would be a favorable discussion for his release in near future. In sum, even as he was heading to his place of exile, Tasan did not greatly worry about his future, and we do not find any evidence that he thought this punishment would last for life.

⁷¹ Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi, 1790/03/07. Chŏngjo 14.3.7.
⁷² The distance between the capital and Haemi is approximately 86.8 miles (310 li). It took four days for Tasan to get the place of exile.
⁷³ Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ (Hereafter YC) 1:1:37a, “In obedience to a royal command of exile to Haemi, I compose this leaving the capital” (pongji chŏk Haemi ch’ultomunjak 奉旨謫海美出都門作). Tasan dated this as the 1790/03/10.
A text that reveals Tasan’s exile life in Haemi and its influence on his thought is “Jotting down following the articles of Kyŏmjewŏn (Che Kyŏmjewŏn chŏlmok hu).”\footnote{YC 1:14:42a-b, “Jotting down following the articles of Kyŏmjewŏn” (Chekyŏmjewŏn chŏlmok hu 題兼濟院節目後). Tasan did not specify the date of this piece. Many Tasan’s writings are undated, or incompletely dated. In his Yŏyudangjip ŭi munhŏnhakhŏk yŏn’gu, a bibliographical study on Tasan’s work, Cho Sŏngŭl suggests dates for Tasan’s each work as much as possible. I will note his suggestions as needed.}

*Kyŏmjewŏn* is a policy that Tasan designed while he was serving as the Magistrate of Koksan (*Koksan pusa* 谷山府使, Jr.3) from 1797 to 1799. The word, *kyŏmche* (兼濟) in the title means to help both parties, i.e., the exiles and the local people. Tasan explained that as he witnessed that the exiles in Koksan led precarious lives and the local people suffered to provide accommodation for the convicts, he established *kyŏmchewŏn* and dozens of rules to support both sides. The text consists of three parts: Tasan’s own exile experience at Haemi, the condition and emotion of exile in general, and Tasan’s solution to improve the situation regarding exile. At the beginning of this piece, Tasan wrote that he was exiled to Haemi and pardoned after ten days.\footnote{Chŏngjo commanded to free Tasan on the 19th day of the third month of 1790. *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi*, 1790/03/19.} He mentioned that he had been worried and depressed for eight or nine days because he missed his hometown and parents, and it was during this exile that he noticed the hardship of the exiles. Despite this, it is hard to think that he actually suffered during his exile in Haemi. According to Tasan’s description in the text, his life in Haemi was not much different from an ordinary yangban’s travel: Tasan enjoyed the scenery and composed poems while associating with local elites. Neither Tasan nor his acquaintances expected that Tasan would spend much time away from the court, and people, including local magistrates of the region, offered Tasan a hospitable reception and even sent him gifts such as meat and grain. Thus when
Tasan wrote that he was concerned and depressed in Haemi it is doubtful whether he was discussing his own overall feelings or general feelings that exiles would have. All in all, his exile in Haemi was a common experience that any Chosŏn official might have, and it did not profoundly affect his view of his future. When he was released Tasan returned to the capital, and served in the royal court again.

**Encounter with Catholicism**

The issue of Catholicism provides historical context for Tasan’s works. When Tasan’s family moved to the capital in 1776, the new environment offered the fourteen-year-old Tasan a rich intellectual milieu not only of the Confucian classics, but also of new trends as well. Among many, meeting Yi Kahwan (李家煥, 1742-1801) and Kahwan’s nephew, Yi Sŭnghun (李承薰, 1756-1801), influenced Tasan’s thought significantly. Yi Kahwan was a great-grandson of Yi Ik (李稷 1681-1763), a leading Confucian scholar. Tasan borrowed Yi Ik’s works from Yi Kahwan and Yi Sŭnghun. Impressed by Yi Ik’s scholarship, Tasan considered Yi Ik as his master throughout his life, and decided to intensively study the Confucian classics. Another remarkable encounter was with Yi Pyŏk (李槻, 1754-1785) who, in 1784, introduced Tasan to Catholicism, which later twisted his political fate. Tasan recorded that from 1787 he had studied Catholicism for four or five years, but stopped studying it when the state prohibited the religion in 1791.

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76 YC 1:16:1b, “A short version self epitaph” (chach’an myojimyŏng kwangjungbon 自撰墓誌銘壙中本). Tasan left two autobiographical inscriptions commemorating his sixtieth birthday. His excitement to learn Yi Ik’s scholarship is recorded in both versions.

77 YCI:16:3a.

78 YCI:16:1b.
One of the distinctive characteristics of the introduction of European civilization in Chosŏn is that Korean scholars studied European civilization on their own initiative, rather than under the influence of an influx of European missionaries, merchants, and gunboats. The Jesuits in Beijing published Matteo Ricci’s *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (*Chŏnju sirŭi* 天主實義, 1603), the first Catholic catechism in literary Chinese. After visiting Ming China three times as a Korean envoy, Yi Sugwang (李晬光, 1563-1628) introduced this book in his encyclopedic work, *Chibong yusŏl* (芝峰類說, 1614), though this was long before any Catholic missionaries entered Chosŏn. Other Chosŏn envoys brought back translated European books and other materials from China, too. In 1631 Chŏng Tuwŏn (鄭斗源, 1581-?) brought Matteo Ricci’s works on the calendar, along with other Western technology. The items that Korean envoys brought back shows that the Koreans’ interests were not limited to Catholicism, but also extended to Western Leaning. Not all Chosŏn scholars had positive views about Western Learning, but many scholars gathered and studied it on their own. Because this new knowledge became fashionable, by the eighteenth century Chosŏn literati had not only developed diverse interests in the foreign thought but also formulated critiques of European culture.

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79 There is disagreement regarding the Korean’s active role. Yamaguchi Masayuki downplays this uniqueness of Chosŏn Catholic church because of the “subordinate relationship of cultures between Korea and China.” Yamaguchi Masayuki (山口正之), *Chōsen seikyōshi: Chōsen kirisutokyō no bunkashiteki kenkyū* (The history of Western religion in Chosŏn: A cultural historical study of Chosŏn Christianity) (朝鮮西教史: 朝鮮キリスト教の文化史的研究) (Tokyo: Yūzanka 雄山閣, 1967), 172–175. Quoted in Jai-Keun Choi, *The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea: An Examination of Popular and Governmental Responses to Catholic Missions in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (朝鮮キリスト教の文化史的研究) (Cheltenham, Soul, Bangalore, Cebu: Hermit Kingdom Press, 2006), 28. In my opinion, although China had influenced on Korean culture significantly, it does not devalue Korean people’s role in the process because there was no direct evangelistic efforts. Western civilization was *actively acquired* by the Chosŏn scholars rather than *passively received* through foreigners who came to Chosŏn.
including Catholicism. Even King Chŏngjo and his ministers discussed the advancement of Western Learning at the royal court.\textsuperscript{80} Mainstream Chosŏn scholars, however, defined themselves in relation to their understanding of Confucianism, and considered European traditions peripheral.

When Korean Catholics gathered at Kim Pŏmu’s (金範禹) place to hold a mass in 1785, the state found out about it the next year, and punished them. Western Learning became an issue again in 1788, when Yi Sŏngwŏn (李性源, 1725-1790), Councilor of the left (Chwaŭijŏng 左議政, Sr.1) suggested prohibiting Western Learning, and Chŏngjo replied that it was no different from existing issues, such as Buddhism or the teachings of Wang Yang-ming. In Chŏngjo’s view, while heretical ideas might seem to be thriving, they would disappear when orthodox Confucianism spread. He thought that converting the Catholics into ordinary Confucians and burning their books would be enough to stop the spread of Catholicism.\textsuperscript{81} Because Chŏngjo was relatively tolerant towards Catholicism, the religion might not have attracted the full attention of the Chosŏn authorities if it had not interfered with Confucianism, the state ideology of Chosŏn, in the 1790s.\textsuperscript{82}

What was happening in Korea and also in other countries at that time to make Catholicism such a crucial issue? Compatibility between Catholicism and Confucian

\textsuperscript{80} Chŏngjo and Yi Kahwan discussed how much the Western calendar was advanced. Chŏngjo sillok 5.17 (ŭlsa), 1778/02/14.

\textsuperscript{81} Chŏngjo 12.8.3 (Imjin). Year of 1788.

\textsuperscript{82} As I mentioned above, it is arguable when the Chosŏn society was Confucianized. However, Neo-Concuaianism was surely established as state ideology by the mid-fifteenth century through the examination system, etc. By the time of Tasan, Neo-Confucianism was surely adopted in the social and political system of Chosŏn. Orthopraxis was considered important, and the central government controlled it.
ancestor worship was at the center of this problem. The conflict between the two surfaced as the mainstream of European missionaries in China had changed. The early Jesuit missionaries in China, like Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and his followers, presented Catholicism as a belief system compatible with Confucianism. In Confucian societies, ordering the family was the basis of ordering the society, and thus mourning and ancestor worship were rituals of great political significance. Proper Confucian mourning rituals and ancestor worship were considered an expression of descendants’ extended filiality, and were also directly related to pursuing orthodox Confucian scholarship (chŏnghak 正學). Ricci and his followers understood the centrality of ancestor worship to Chinese practice, and therefore allowed Confucian ancestor worship. However, after Niccolò Longobardi (1559-1654) replaced Ricci in Beijing in 1610, the Jesuits’ tolerant attitude dwindled. Catholic authorities had debated this for a long time. Finally, despite, or perhaps because of, the political importance of ancestor worship in Confucianism, Pope Benedict XIV (1740-59) issued a bull, Ex quo singulari in 1742 to prohibit the ancestor worship and also any further discussion of it.83 This led to the Rites Controversy in both China and Korea.84

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Chosŏn intellectuals did not know about the papal bull for decades. It was only in 1790 that Yun Yuil (尹有一, 1760-1795), a Chosŏn Catholic, visited China to deliver a letter from Chosŏn Catholic leaders to a European missionary and to query if Confucian ancestor worship was allowed. Alexandre de Gouvea, Bishop of Beijing, answered that the Vatican had prohibited it. On Yun’s return from China Chosŏn Catholics learned about the papal doctrine. Until then Chosŏn people saw Catholicism as a peripheral culture which was not completely incompatible with Confucianism. However, with the no-tolerance policy toward ancestor worship, Catholicism posed a major threat to the bases of Confucian ideology of state and family. Learning of the papal prohibition, people who were interested in Catholicism split into two groups: many yangban perceived Catholicism as heresy, and turned their backs on Catholicism. And yet there were people who observed the papal bull and abolished ancestor worship in their own practice. The decision was made individually, but the result evolved into a power struggle between political factions.

The Chosŏn court had witnessed factional conflicts, and sometimes debates between factions became historic incidents that switched the political mainstream in the royal court. The question of Catholicism reignited the debate in the court in the late eighteenth century. Although not all the Southerners were Catholics, relatively more Southerners than members of any other faction were engaged in Catholicism at the time. In Chŏngjo’s reign, more and more Southerners started to hold important positions in the court, and their political rivals, the Patriarchs, began to hold in check the Southerners’ involvement in Catholicism and used it as political fodder. It was a power struggle not

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85 Han’guk kyohoesa yŏn’guso, Han’guk ch’ŏnju kyohoesa 1 (The history of Korean Catholic church Vol.1) (Seoul: Han’guk kyohoesa yŏn’guso, 2009), 290–92.
just between political factions, but also between the throne and his ministers. From 1791 to 1801, two events occurred to significantly change the course of the Catholicism in Korea: the Chinsan incident (1791) and demise of King Chŏngjo (1800), which brought a resulting full-scale persecution of Catholics in their wake after 1801. In 1791, two Southerners Yun Chich’ung (尹持忠, 1759-1791) and Kwŏn Sangyŏn (權尙然, 1751-1791), refused to observe the Confucian mourning rituals and burned their ancestral tablets, in order to comply with the papal rule. When their relatives and others learned what they had done, however, their belief became “visible.” The incident became a major criminal case because Yun was a yangban who had passed the literary licentiate examination (chinsagwa 進士科), and was consequently supposed to be a guardian of Confucian moral and values, and yet he had abandoned what many regarded as the most important of all Confucian rituals. The Chosŏn government regarded Yun’s and Kwŏn’s behavior as a direct challenge to state orthodoxy, decided that Catholic doctrine was

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86 This incident of 1791 is known as the Chinsan incident (Chinsan sagŏn) or Sinhae persecution (Sinhae pakhae), after the name of the place and year, respectively. Later, Chosŏn court learned that Japanese Catholics had rebelled, and used it against Chosŏn Catholics. Chŏngjo sillok 43.4 (pyŏngjin), 1795/07/07.

When King Chŏngjo discussed how to rule on the Chinsan incident, he referred to an incident of 1758 (Yongjo 34) in which people of Hwanghae Province demolished shrines and abolished worships. Chŏngjo sillok 33.54-55 (chŏngch’uk; 1791/11/06) and Chŏngjo sillok 33.56-57 (kimyo; 1791/11/8). The record in Yŏngjo sillok indicates that four women were punished because they asserted that they were incarnations of Buddha, and blinded commoners of Hwanghae. Yŏngjo sillok 91.30 (kyemyo), 1758/05/18. A brief account of the fifth month 1758 in Kukchobogam (國朝寶鑑 Exemplars of the Chosŏn Dynasty) provides more information of it. It shows that an enchantress asserted that she was an incarnation of Buddha and following her words people demolished shrines. Kukchobogam 64:18a-18b. Because Chŏngjo referred both incidents as heterodox (sahak), some existing studies suggest that the 1758 incident was an early Catholic case. However, I could not identify any records noted Catholicism in that year.

87 Chŏngjo sillok 33.42-43 (sinyu), 1791/10/20, and Chŏngjo sillok 33.55-56 (muin), 1791/11/07.
heretical, and strictly prohibited the religion. The two Catholics were executed soon, but other believers went underground rather than apostatize. Thus, Yun and Kwŏn’s incident and the resulting sense of insecurity led the state to extreme concern over orthodoxy, which triggered Catholic persecution, and for decades many people were doomed to punishment on the charge of being Catholic.

The political situation in Korea gave it spin. Under the political rivalry, the Patriarchs denounced certain Southerners as heretics because they were suspected as Catholics, and the Southerners did their best to defend against the accusation. King Chŏngjo tried to protect the Southerners and let them function as the counterpart of the Patriarchs, but the Patriarchs tenaciously criticized the Southerners. The Patriarchs’ attack became more severe, and their condemnation was not limited to the Southerners’ fascination with Catholicism, but expanded to encompass all Western books and knowledge. Finally, in 1795, Chŏngjo had to issue a royal message on the Southerners’ alleged heresy. In this message, the king called to mind two important facts: First, Western books, which were the origin of Western Learning in Chosŏn, had been imported for a couple of hundred years following the lead of the government. Second, a Patriarch reported in the early eighteenth century that he had met European missionaries

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88 Chŏngjo sillok 33.56 (kimyo), 1791/11/08.

89 Sunjo’s heir, King Hŏnjong (r.1834-1849) issued a royal message to expel heterodox (ch’ŏksayunŭm 斥邪諷音) in 1839. He addressed this to sanyŏ (士女). Sanyŏ can be interpreted as scholars and their wives, or scholars’ wives. This shows that Western Learning attracted male intellectuals at the beginning, but as time passed its religion, Catholicism, appealed to both male and female. Hŏnjong sillok 6.16-19 (kyŏngin), 1839/10/18. Hŏnjong was only twelve years old when he published this message, and Sunjo’s wife, Queen Regent Sunwŏn from Andong Kim family, was behind the scene.

90 Hongjae chŏnsŏ 弘齋全書 34, “ch’ŏksa hakkyo 斥邪學校,” (1795).
in China and discussed Catholic doctrines with them.\(^{91}\) Based on the fact that both the Patriarchs and the Southerners had been interested in Catholicism for some time, Chŏngjo concluded that the Patriarchs’ critique of the ‘heretic’ Southerners was not convincing.\(^{92}\) It did not, however, end the controversy on Catholicism.

Unfortunately for Tasan, he was at the center of this turmoil for a number of reasons. First of all, he had been immersed in Catholicism. As Tasan admitted in his self-epitaph, he had first learned about Catholicism in 1784 from Yi Pyŏk (李蘗, 1754-1786), who played a significant role in proselytizing Christianity among Koreans. Thereafter, Tasan had engaged in studying the foreign religion for several years.\(^{93}\) Secondly, Tasan was guilty by association because his family and marriage-based relatives were deeply involved in spreading Catholicism into Chosŏn society.\(^{94}\) Tasan’s eldest brother, Yakhyŏn (丁若鉉, 1751-1821), was married to Yi Pyŏk’s sister. Yi Sŭnghun, the first Korean who was baptized, was also related to Tasan by marriage, because Tasan’s second elder

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\(^{91}\) This refers to Yi Imyŏng (李麟命, 1658-1722), an eminent Patriarch. Yi visited China in 1720 as an envoy, and met European missionaries to communicate with them by writing (p’iltam) and received books on Western technology as well as Catholicism. Korean people had their own script, Han’gŭl, but classical Chinese was the main medium of communication for male yangban. In fact, classical Chinese functioned as lingua franca in East Asia, and Koreans can exchange ideas with Chinese or Japanese by writing in classical Chinese letters.

For accepting Western knowledge, see No Taehwan, “Chŏngjo sidae sŏgi suyŏng nonŭ wa sŏhak chŏngch’aek” (Discussion and policy on Western Learning during Chŏngjo reign), in Chŏngjo sidae ŭi sasang kwa munhwa (The thought and culture in Chŏngjo reign), by Chŏng Okcha et al. (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1999), 205.

\(^{92}\) Chŏng Okcha, Chosŏn hugi Chosŏn chunghwa sasang yŏn’gu (Seoul: Ichisa, 1998), 244–45.

\(^{93}\) YC 1:16: 3a-3b.

\(^{94}\) Paying attention to the importance of kinship network in Chosŏn society, Jai-Keun Choi examines the Southerners who converted to Catholicism and shows how the marriage connection influenced Catholic evangelization in Korea. Jai-Keun Choi, The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea: An Examination of Popular and Governmental Responses to Catholic Missions in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty (Cheltenham: Hermit Kingdom Press, 2006).
brother, Chŏng Yakchŏn (丁若銓, 1758-1816), had married Yi Sŭnghun’s sister. After his baptism at a church in Beijing in 1784, Yi Sŭnghun returned to Korea and baptized many other people. Chŏng Yakchong (丁若鍾, 1760-1801), Tasan’s third elder brother, selected and translated the Chinese catechism into vernacular Korean, entitled The Essentials of Catholic Doctrine (Chugyo yoji 主敎要旨). By doing so, he enabled commoners, who were not able to use literary Chinese, to learn Catholicism. Also, Yun Chich’ung, who had burned his ancestral tablets in 1791, was Tasan’s matrilateral cousin.

Thirdly, power games between political factions made it seem that Tasan was more involved in Catholicism than he actually was. Tasan constantly claimed that although he had studied Catholicism when he was young, he had renounced its teachings upon learning of the Pope’s prohibition of ancestor worship. Despite his repeated denial, the Patriarchs kept trying to implicate Tasan in Catholicism and brand him as a Catholic along with his siblings and acquaintances. As a result, Tasan’s political career was interrupted and ended through demotion, resignation, and exile from that point on.

**Punishment: Exile and Demotion**

Tasan was favored by King Chŏngjo as an official, but this did not save him from being charged as a Catholic. In 1795 there was turmoil around Zhou Wenmou (周文謨, 1752-1801), the first Chinese Catholic priest who came to Chosŏn to proselytize. The state attempted to capture him, but failed. Meanwhile, the Patriarchs criticized the Southerners, such as Tasan and Yi Kahwan, for being Catholics. Chŏngjo tried to resolve the crisis by imposing lenient punishments on the alleged Catholic Southerners. Being

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95 Zhou Wenmou, entered Korea at the end of 1794 and died a martyr in 1801. Sunjo sillok 2.46 (sinmyo), 1801/03/15.
accused as a Catholic, Yi Kahwan resigned his post as Minister of Works (Kongjo p’ansŏ 工曹判書, Sr.2). Chŏngjo then appointed him to the Office of Proofreading (Kyojôngch’ŏng 校正廳), but Kahwan refused to accept the appointment. Finally Chŏngjo sent him to Ch’ungju (忠州), in Ch’ungch’ŏng Province, as the magistrate (moksa 牧使, Sr.3). The king also demoted Tasan from Fifth Royal Secretary (ubusŭngji 右副承旨, Sr.3) to Superintendent of Posts (ch’albang 察訪, Jr.6) in Kŭmjŏng (金井), another town in Ch’ungch’ŏng Province. At that time more and more people in Ch’ungch’ŏng Province were indulging in Catholicism. Among the districts of the province, Ch’ungju was known as badly contaminated, and in Kŭmjŏng, especially, many government employees were Catholic. Demoting them to these areas was not only punishing them, but also giving them a chance to clear their name.

Both the king and Tasan understood the gravity of his demotion of Tasan. On the day of the demotion, King Chŏngjo issued a royal message. In this he wrote “I assign former Royal Secretary [Tasan] Chŏng Yagyong to Superintendent of Posts in Kŭmjŏng. He shall head to his new location right away, and ponder upon how to cross the Han

96 Chŏngjo sillok 43.12 (kapsul), 1795/07/25; YC 1:15: 21b-22a.
97 Superintendent of Post served at posthouses in charge of aiding official travel and official document delivery.
98 Chŏngjo sillok 43.12 (kapsul), 1795/07/25.
100 Focusing on the period from 1791 to 1801, Don Baker suggests that Tasan’s main strategies were seeking King Chŏngjo’s favor and protection, writing on and practicing orthodox Confucianism, and severing ties with other Catholics. Don Baker, “Tasan Between Catholicism and Confucianism: A Decade Under Suspicion, 1791-1801,” Tasanhak 5 (2004): 78–79.
River alive.”101 Before analyzing this royal message further, seeing what Tasan wrote on his demotion is in order. Although Chŏngjo sounded stern, Tasan thought that the king was actually protecting him and expressing concern about his safety. Tasan shared the royal concern, and as he was heading to Kŭmjŏng he composed a poem in which wrote, “I learned of Western Learning, but did not know the real meaning of it. Yet I am afraid that I am on my way to long exile.”102 When he writes that he did not really know Western Learning, Tasan conveys an attempt to claim that although he was exposed to this foreign thought he was not really committed to it. Another interesting point in this poem is that Tasan wrote that he was en route from capital to his place of exile, not to a new post. Tasan wrote elsewhere that being sent to Kŭmjŏng was exile.103 By taking his demotion as exile he expressed the uncertainty of his political as well as physical future, but in neither place did Tasan elaborate on why he considered this demotion as exile.

Regarding this issue, a clue is in what Chŏngjo said: “ponder upon how to cross the Han River alive.” It is noteworthy that in sending Tasan to Kŭmjŏng the king mentioned life and death. The king’s remark indicates the gravity of Tasan’s fault and the danger he faced, and implied that the king himself accepted Tasan’s demotion as more critical than a simple reassignment. Why did Chŏngjo and Tasan view the demotion so seriously? Comparing exile and demotion as punishments for officials helps us understanding the reason. In principle both were penalties, and the biggest difference was,

101 Ibid.

102 YC 1:2:26a, “Following royal command I head to Kŭmjŏng to be a Superintendent of Post. I compose this crossing Tongjak Ferry in evening” (有嚴旨出補金井道察訪 晩渡銅雀津作). Tasan composed this poem on the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month of 1795.

103 YC 1:17:3a, “Cho T’aesŏ’s grave mark” (Cho T’aesŏ myop’yo 曹台瑞墓表). Tasan composed this piece in spring 1800.
of course, the severity: exile was much severer punishment. Unlike banished officials in China, who were often employed in inferior positions in their places of exile as part of China’s imperial expansion and colonization, Chosŏn exiles did not receive any official post no matter how eminent they were before they were punished. Thus demotion was a punishment with relative privilege—official status and prestige including income, power, and authority. Other than that, demotion and the punishment of exile have similarities especially because, as we see above, by Tasan’s time the punishment of exile was both very common and often quite short. Both were punishment through dislocation, and entailed uncertainty about the future. Also both confronted the person in question with the issues of center and periphery.

Chosŏn society had an established legal system, but the gravity of the offense and the degree of punishment did not always coincide. The circumstances, including political situation, were taken into consideration in judgment, and also royal preferences were another variable because kings had the right to make final decisions. Despite the differences between exile and demotion, when the state punished officials the standard of making judgment was not always clear. The issue of heresy, like Catholicism, could even cost a man’s life. King Chŏngjo and Tasan understood the seriousness of the situation. Considering the importance of this matter and King Chŏngjo’s attitude toward the Southerners, including Tasan, Tasan’s demotion was a reduced penalty from exile.

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104 See Chapter Three in Waley-Cohen, Exile in Mid-Qing China: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758-1820.

105 With Tasan’s demotion, another example of this is that Tasan was exiled, not demoted, to Haemi when he was absent himself from his office.
Both the king and Tasan knew that the lenient punishment was a temporary expedient, not the solution.

Chŏngjo’s royal message shows the king’s concerns about Tasan, but the king’s reasons for demoting Tasan were more complicated than that. The royal heart had two main motives to demote Tasan to Kŭmjŏng. His first motive was more apparent than the second: it was to punish him by removing him from the capital, the center of Chosŏn Confucian civilization, and from the royal court, the core of political power. The second motive was revealed in Chŏngjo’s words to Tasan, “ponder upon how to cross Han River alive.” What did Tasan need to do to rescue himself? Although neither the royal message nor Tasan’s writings fully explain on this, Tasan’s long version of the self-epitaph recorded that the king intended him to enlighten (hyoyu 喻) the people of Kŭmjŏng and prevent the spread of Catholicism. One of Tasan’s tasks in Kŭmjŏng was to civilize and correct the heretics, i.e., the Catholics, and to restore Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. Regarding the royal commands issued to Tasan and Yi Kahwan, the Veritable Records of King Chŏngjo shows that Chŏngjo planned to give them a chance to make atonement for their wrongdoing. On another occasion, Chŏngjo instructed that the people of the time were losing orthodoxy (chŏnhak 正學), and the best way to reduce the harm was to restore orthodoxy by studying the Confucian classics. He continued that controlling heresy, including Catholicism, was not an exception from this. Tasan’s demotion to the Superintendent of Posts in Kŭmjŏng was not only a punishment for Tasan, but also a

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107 Chŏngjo sillok 43.12 (kapsul), 1795/07/25.

chance to be a model Confucian again. Tasan knew that Chŏngjo’s intention was to make him teach and straighten out the people of Kŭmjŏng.\textsuperscript{109} Since the two Catholics burned their ancestral tablets in 1791, Chosŏn people of conventional views had understood Catholicism as a religion that ignored the importance of rulers and fathers (\textit{mugun mubu} 無君無父). Patriarchal structures were crucial to sustaining Chosŏn society, and what Tasan had to do in Kŭmjŏng was to “civilize” people, i.e., to make the heretics abandon their Catholic faith and observe Confucian rituals such as ancestor worship. Here I use “civilize,” not “Confucianize,” acknowledging that the local people already had accepted Confucianism. As I wrote in the Introduction, I use “civilize” to indicate the degree of advancement. A civilized man should be advanced with his knowledge and be able to guide other people.

Was Tasan good enough to carry out the duty? It is in order to ask who was qualified as be a “civilized person” and able to transform others in the first place. Orthodox Confucians who never indulged in Catholicism were perfect exemplars of the civilized man. Also, Confucian scholars who had once engaged in Catholicism could be considered civilized if they officially apostatized from Catholicism and pursued orthodox Confucianism again. Tasan was charged with being a Catholic, but being knowledgable in Confucianism, passing the civil service examination, and, most of all, denying the accusation, Tasan was a useful resource to restore orthodoxy in the view of King Chŏngjo.

But this was not enough. Along with inducing the people of Kŭmjŏng to abandon Catholicism, a goal Tasan had to achieve was to show that he had corrected his own

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{YC} 1:16:7a, “The Long version of self-epitaph.”
thought. Regarding this, two works Tasan wrote while he served at Kŭmjŏng are good texts to look at: “Record of Study at Sŏam” (Sŏam kanghakki 西巖講學記) and “Record of Emulating T’oegye” (Tosan sasungnok 陶山私淑錄).\(^{110}\) As I mentioned earlier this chapter, Tasan admired Sŏngho Yi Ik (李灐, 1681-1763) for his scholarship. In the Fall of 1795 Tasan wrote to Yi Samhwan (李森煥, 1729-1814), one of Sŏngho’s descendants, and suggested that they should spread Sŏngho’s thought.\(^{111}\) Hearing about this, other scholars in that area joined the two. They stayed together at Ponggok Temple (鳳谷寺) in Sŏam (西巖), Ch’ungch’ŏng Province, for ten days. While studying and proofreading Sŏngho’s *Manuscript of [Korean] Family Ritual (Karye chilsŏ 家禮疾書, 1731?)* they studied mourning clothes, funeral rites, and so on under the supervision of Yi Samhwan. Tasan also recorded the content of their discussion.\(^{112}\)

Besides the group study at Sŏam, Tasan conducted daily study for himself. In Winter 1795 he obtained a half copy of *The Collected Writings of T’oegye (T’oegyejip 退溪集, 1599)* from his neighbor, and read it every day. The author, T’oegye Yi Hwang (李滉, 1501-1570) was known to scholars both in Korea and overseas as someone who had transformed Zhu Xi’s scholarship, and was revered as one of the greatest Korean

\(^{110}\) T’oegye is a penname of Yi Hwang (李滉, 1501-1570), one of the most eminent Chosŏn Confucian scholars. Tosan is the name of a private school that T’oegye established in 1560 to teach younger generation.

\(^{111}\) Yi Samhwan’s record on this is titled “Ponggok kyosŏgi” (鳳谷校書記), and Tasan included this piece as part of his “Sŏam kanghakki,” *YC* 1:21:28a-b.

\(^{112}\) *YC* 1:21:23a, “Record of Study at Sŏam.” Sŏngho’s *Karye chilsŏ* is a modification of Zhu Xi’s *Family Rituals (Jia li)*, which is a booklet on how to properly perform the Confucian rituals of four ceremonies: capping, marriage, funerals and ancestor worships.
Neo-Confucian scholars. Every morning, before starting his official business Tasan read one of T’oegye’s letters in the collection. During the daytime Tasan recorded the piece he had read earlier that day and wrote down his thoughts on it, reflecting on his own behavior.

When he was reassigned to the central government at the end of 1795 Tasan collected these pieces under the title “Record of Emulating T’oegye” (Tosan sasungnok 陶山私淑錄). Among these the piece in which Tasan reflected on T’oegye’s letter to Yi Chunggu (李仲久, 1510-1575) is noteworthy. In this letter T’oegye writes that he was embarrassed to learn that a copy of his writings had reached Chunggu. T’oegye first made the excuse that the piece was a joke and thus not entirely logical, and continued that it was no use regretting his imprudence. Reading this, Tasan reflected upon his own flaws: when he had an idea he had to write it down, and also could not help but showing what he had written to other people. The problem is that he did so even before considering whether what he had written was completed to a certain degree, or whether he was close to the person or not. He diagnosed that because of the hurried process his writing style became vulgar and he could not protect his reputation. It eventually cost him other people’s respect. Apparently while he was demoted, he regretted that he was so

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113 For example, see Abe Yoshio, “Yamazaki Ansai no shushigaku to Li Taikei,” in Nihon shushigaku to Chōsen (Japanese Neo-Confucianism and Korea) (Tōkyō: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1965), p.229-283.

114 YC 1:22:1a, “Record of Emulating T’oegye.” Yi Hwang founded Tosan Academy (Tosan sŏdang 陶山書堂) in 1561 to study the Confucian classics and teach the younger generation.

115 YC 1:22:5b-6a “Record of Emulating T’oegye.”

116 Yi Chunggu’s original name is Yi Tam (李湛), and T’oegye used his alias in this letter.

117 YC 1:22:5b “Record of Emulating T’oegye.”
indiscreet as to show his works to others at random. Tasan did not specify the titles or kinds of writings that he regretted, and the silence shows that he was speaking about his works on Western Learning, especially Catholicism.

In Kŭmjŏng Tasan edified local people with moderate and yet firm policies, and restored ancestor worship. His contribution to reinforcing orthodox Confucianism was recognized by other officials, and he was able to survive the accusation of being a Catholic. At the end of 1795 Chŏngjo ordered Tasan to return to the royal court. However, Tasan was incriminated again when King Chŏngjo appointed Tasan Sixth Royal Secretary (tongbusŭngji 同副承旨, Sr.3) in the second month of 1797. Many officials opposed this appointment on the basis that Tasan was a Catholic. Soon after that Tasan submitted a memorial to decline the new appointment to a government post. In this famous “Memorial to the throne to explain myself and resign as Sixth Royal Secretary,” Tasan denied the allegations and officially apostatized Catholicism. Tasan appealed to the king that he had been involved in Catholicism for only a short time, but more importantly, he had “corrected” his thought and concentrated his interests on Confucianism. He continued that he had kept the creed at a distance ever since, and thus he was falsely accused. Chŏngjo reconized that this memorial was well written, but his ministers did not stop accusing Tasan of being a Catholic. The king insisted on his appointment as Sixth Royal Secretary, but Tasan did not yield to the command. In the

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118 Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi Chŏngjo 19:12:20 (chŏngyu).

119 YC 1:9:42b-46b, “Memorial to the throne to explain oneself and resign as Sixth Royal Secretary” (Pyŏnbangsa tongbusŭngji so).

120 Chŏngjo sillok 46.51-52 (kyŏngin), 1797/06/21.

121 Ibid.
intercalary sixth month of 1797, Chŏngjo designated Tasan the Magistrate of Koksan (Koksan pusa 谷山府使, Jr.3) in Hwanghae Province. This time Tasan accepted the appointment. After serving in Koksan for almost two years, Tasan returned to the capital in the fourth month of 1799. Soon after that Tasan was appointed Third Minister of the Ministry of Punishments (hyŏngjo ch’amŭi 刑曹參議, Sr.3), but he was dismissed from his position on the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month of 1799, because his past haunted him again. Under the political pressure Tasan returned to his birthplace, Mahyŏn in Kyŏnggi Province.

As Tasan wrote in his self epitaph, he expected that King Chŏngjo would appoint him to the civil bureaucracy again. But his wish was not realized because Chŏngjo died on the twenty-eighth day of the sixth month of 1800. Chŏngjo’s death significantly changed the political landscape in the court. His ten-year-old son, who is known by the posthumous temple name Sunjo, ascended the throne on the fourth day of the seventh month. And King Yŏngjo’s wife, who was from a family allied with the Patriarch Faction, became the new Queen Regent, Chŏngsun (1745-1805). The boy king Sunjo (r.1800-1834) was powerless to balance out the different factions, and the Queen Regent Chŏngsun brought pressure upon the Southerners and other Catholics. On the tenth day of the first month of 1801, Chŏngsun issued a proclamation to prohibit Catholicism. She first defined the primary function of the state as civilizing (kyohwa 敎化) its people, and

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122 Winter 1799 Sin Hŏnjo (申獻朝), Censor-General (Taesagan 大司諫, Sr.3) brought up the issue of Tasan and Catholicism.

argued that Catholicism had turned the people into beasts or barbarians. Chŏngsun commanded that all Catholics should be punished as rebels while reenforcing the law of using five families as one unit to dispel this false teaching and keep people under surveillance.\(^{124}\)

As the Catholic hunt was going on, Chŏng Yakchong, Tasan’s third elder brother, attempted to transfer and hide his books on Catholicism and letters with other Catholics, but this was discovered by soldiers.\(^{125}\) The materials showed that he had played a significant role in spreading Catholicism, and he was arrested. It led to a Catholic purge on a great scale.\(^{126}\) Along with many other Southerners Tasan and Yi Kahwan, who had been demoted with Tasan years before, were imprisoned in the State Tribunal (Ŭigŭmbu 義禁府) for interrogation. Because Tasan had apostatized from Catholicism, the authorities could not find conclusive evidence of his involvement. Tasan’s conversion, on the contrary, was supported by Yakchong and other Catholics’ correspondence in which they wrote that Tasan should not know what they were doing. When the Chosŏn court could not argue that Tasan had joined in heretical activities, it applied collective prosecution, a principle that incriminates anyone who has certain sorts of relationships

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\(^{124}\) This is called the five-house-unit (oga t'ong ji pŏp 五家統之法). The basic idea is five houses become a unit and watch each other to implement government policies. Han Myŏghoe (韓明澮, 1415-1487) suggested this system and it was adopted by King Sŏngjong in 1485. Sunjo’s successor, King Hŏnjong (r.1834-1849) also used the law of five-house-unit to hunt out Catholics.

\(^{125}\) It was the nineteenth day of the first month of 1801.

\(^{126}\) It is referred as Persecution of 1801 or Sinyu Persecution. JaHyun Kim Haboush draws our attention to the fact that Chŏngsun promulgated the persecution of Catholics in her name, while the abolition of public slavery, which showed the ruler’s virtue, was done in in the name of King Sunjo. Haboush interprets that Chŏngsun did so concerning the ruler’s trope. JaHyun Kim Haboush, ed., Epistolary Korea: Letters in the Communicative Space of the Choson, 1392-1910 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 6 and 32.
with the criminals. Tasan was charged for being a brother of Chŏng Yakchong and a
cousin of Yun Chich’ung.\textsuperscript{127} Chŏng Yakchong was executed and Yi Kahwan, died in
prison.\textsuperscript{128} Tasan, however, was able to escape death, and was exiled to Changgi (長鬐),
Kyŏngsang Province on February 27, 1801.\textsuperscript{129}

Sentencing the punishment of exile, not death, was a deliberate act that allowed
Queen Regent Chŏngsun to reduce the scale of execution, and thus show dynastic
benevolence. Also she could use the exiles in upholding Confucian doctrines. Queen
Regent Chŏngsun took a stronger position on issues of Catholicism than King Chŏngjo
had done, but she did not exclude the possibility of civilizing those people. In his
memorial (1797) to resign as Sixth Royal Secretary (tongbusŭngji), Tasan had written
“Knowing that I had become a barbarian (i 夷), [King Chŏngjo] wanted me to be
civilized (ha 夏); knowing that I had become a beast, [the king] wanted me to be a
human.”\textsuperscript{130} Tasan’s choice of language reflects the fact that Catholics were considered as
less civilized or even barbarian, and thus regarded as a target of civilization. As Anne

\textsuperscript{127} Sunjo sillok 2.36 (sinmi), 1801/02/25. Under the collective prosecution, the criminals’ close
relatives could be executed, exiled, or enslaved. Because of this, many Southerners were
punished even though they themselves were not involved in Catholicism.

\textsuperscript{128} Sunjo sillok 2.30-31 (chŏngmyo), 1801/02/21. Yi Kahwan, also had renegaded, was charged
for not kept his nephew, Yi Sŭnghun, from obtaining Catholic books in China and disffusing
Catholicism into Chosŏn society.

\textsuperscript{129} Tasan recorded that he was imprisoned on the ninth day of the second month, but according to
Sunjo sillok, it was the tenth day. Tasan was sentenced to exile at Changgi on the twenty-seven
day of the second month. Ŝŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi, 1801/02/27 (kyeyu). From the capital to Changgi, it
is about 70 mile (860 ăi). Tasan was discharged from prison on the twenty-seventh day of the
second month and arrived at Changgi on the ninth day of the third month. YC1:4:4b, “Farewell at
Sŏgu” (Sŏgobyŏl), and YC 1:4:5b, “Twenty-seven poems at Kisŏng” (Kisŏng chapsi isipch’il-su).

\textsuperscript{130} YC 1:9:43a, “Memorial to explain on the accusation and to resign Sixth Royal Secretary of the
Royal Secretariat” (Pyŏnbangsa tongbusŭngji so).
Bullard shows in her study of exiles in New Caledonia, French Communard exiles had a double position: they were both subjects of moralization and agents of civilization.\textsuperscript{131} Despite differences between the French exiles and Korean exiles, the dual roles were expected for banished Chosŏn scholars, too. As Chŏngjo had in 1795 and 1797 with Tasan’s demotion, Queen Regent Chŏngsun expected the yangban exiles to stop the spread of heresy and to promote orthodox Confucianism in their places of banishment.

We can think of the main sources of the confucianizing process in Chosŏn at two levels: space and status. In other words, the capital and yangban were the foundation of Confucian civilization in Chosŏn. Because scholarship and life style in the capital and periphery had developed at different paces, a yangban from the capital was regarded as culturally superior to the rest, especially for access to new trends, and, thus, able to play a significant role in spreading orthodox Confucian culture.\textsuperscript{132} The banished scholar-officials were, as we see above, able to maintain their political or academic reputation, and engage with the local people to civilize and correct them. And that was exactly what the state expected them: to morally regenerate and exemplify Confucian civilization. Korean exiles did not hold official positions like their counterparts in China, but implicitly they were expected to behave well. It was related to the possibility of pardon, and because of this the boundary between demotion and exile was blurred. According to his self-epitaph, when he was exiled to Changgi Tasan spent his time writing books on


\textsuperscript{132} Talking about center and yangban, one of the important concepts we must consider is \textit{sallim} (山林), eminent yangban in local area. We will discuss on this in Chapter Three.
the classics and composing poems. But his life in Changgi was interrupted by an unforeseen occurrence. As the persecution of Catholics continued, one Chosŏn Catholic, Hwang Sayŏng (黃嗣永, 1775-1801), attempted to contact Catholic authorities in China, and the Pope, Pius VII, to get them to intervene in the Catholic purges in Korea. The Chosŏn government learned about this on the fifth day of the tenth month of 1801, and Hwang Sayŏng’s plan came to naught. Because Hwang’s behavior was literally an act of treason, this failed mission made Korean Catholics even more vulnerable to criticism than before. As a result, more Southerners were deprived of their positions under the charge of being Catholics. Hwang Sayŏng was Tasan’s nephew-in-law, and Tasan, who was serving his time in Changgi, was summoned to the capital for another round of interrogation. Tasan denied involvement, but in the eleventh month of 1801 he was sentenced to transfer to Kangjin, a far more remote place than Changgi. Meanwhile, the Patriarchs expanded their political base in the court, and revered orthodox Neo-Confucianism as a way to defeat the heresy. In sum, the consequence of Catholic persecution was reinforcing Confucian indoctrination as well as prohibiting Catholicism. How these changes reformulated Tasan’s thought? In following chapters we will explore

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135 *Sunjo sillok* 3.43 (*musin*), 1801/10/05.

136 According to Ŭigŭmbu nojŏnggi (Itinerary of State Tribunal 義禁府路程記), which records the number of travel days from the capital, Kangjin was eleven days away from the capital, while Changgi was nine and a half days. National Library of Korea, call number: M 古 1-2006-233.

137 This is one of the reasons why many scholars evaluate the nineteenth century as a moment of waning for Chosŏn dynasty.
Tasan’s perception as a Chosŏn exile who was civilized and at the same time marginalized being on the periphery.
Chapter 3. A “Civilized” Scholar

Experiencing Catholic agitation, the idea of Confucian orthodoxy held sway in the central court once again in the early nineteenth century, and in the process the Expediency group in the Southern faction, to which Tasan belonged, lost their power in the royal court. How did these changes influence Tasan’s thought? Tasan recanted Catholicism in writing, but he could not avoid being exiled. In the eleventh month of 1801 Tasan was sentenced to the most severe exile, and sent to Kangjin, a village in Chŏlla Province, in the southernmost area of the Korean Peninsula.

In this chapter I analyze the works Tasan wrote in Kangjin to show that he was trying to prove that he was a “civilized” scholar. Why and how did he do so? Tasan had mastered Confucian knowledge to pass the civil service examination, and his surviving works give us no reason to think that he denied being a Confucian even when he was indulging in Catholicism. However, the accusation and the sentence of exile show that it remained an urgent problem for him to clear his name as an orthodox Confucian. To achieve this goal, Tasan devoted himself to studies of the classics as well as ritual scholarship (yehak), and he borrowed the authority of the sages to support his ideas. Although he was exiled and lost his previous political eligibility, he envisioned himself as a yangban, a member of the ruling elite of the society, and through his scholarship he affirmed his orthodox Confucianism.

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138 Sunjo sillok 3.52 (muin), 1801/11/05.
139 Kangjin was about 800 li south of the capital.
Exile lives were carried on in various ways,\(^{140}\) and Tasan’s life in Kangjin was not that favorable in the beginning because he was accused of being a heretic. Examining Qing Chinese exiles, Waley-Cohen points out that exiled scholars and officials had considerable prestige if their former positions were eminent.\(^{141}\) This also was true for many Chosŏn exiles, but Tasan could not have such privileges above because he was branded as a Catholic, and because his political faction was losing influence at court. Tasan articulated this point in his “In compassion for convicts” (hyulsu恤囚).\(^{142}\) He first pointed out that convicts were exiled because their crimes were not bad enough for them to be executed. Tasan suggested that people should treat the exiles with benevolence, and lamented that in reality when the political situation became unfavorable even a former high official received mistreatment. People who had a close friendship with the convict mistreated him even worse than other people to prove that they were not close to him. Tasan observed that the higher the former position, the poorer the reception. This piece suggests that his old friends and the people of Kangjin mistreated him. In fact, when he

\(^{140}\) Kim Kyŏngsuk’s study on Chosŏn exile gives an interesting example. On his way to the place of exile Yi P’irik (李必益, 1636-1698) had to cover many more miles than the law prescribed because he was a yangban, but not an official. When he arrived his destination, however, the life there was favorable because the local magistrate shared his political views. When he arrived at the house where he would stay, the owner of the house welcomed him. People even arranged a secondary wife for Yi. The second wedding did not happen because his primary wife joined him at the place of his exile right before the event. Apparently although Yi was exiled, his family was able to come with servants. For more on the historical background and exile life of Yi P’irik, see Kim Kyŏngsuk, “17-segi huban yusaeng Yi P’irik ŭi yubae saenghwal (Yi P’irik, a seventeenth-century Confucian’s exile life),” Han’guk munhwa 38 (2006): 271-301.


\(^{142}\) YC 5:25: 23a-32b, “In compassion for convicts” (hyulsu恤囚), Six Articles in the Code of Punishments (Hyŏngjon yukcho刑典六條), Reflections on Governing the People (Mongmin simsŏ) Vol.10.
arrived at Kangjin he had to stay at a bar, because people in that area feared Catholics and he could not find a host family. Later he moved into a petty official’s house, and then to a small Buddhist temple. After several years of drifting life, he was offered a place to live by one of his maternal-side relatives. He moved into “Tasan Thatched Cottage” in 1808, and had resided there until he was released from the exile in 1818. Previous studies of Tasan have presented him as focused on his prestigious positions—favored by King Chŏngjo, studying Western science, and known for his scholarship, for example—and neglected the fact that he was deprived as an exile. In this chapter I want to emphasize that being accused as a Catholic, Tasan had to earn the restoration of his reputation, and focused on how he could achieve that goal.

Tasan’s view as an exiled elite is revealed in following poem:

…What I hope is before I am too old
to return home and be an old man on the riverside to exert myself in books
to wait for a long time afterwards.

… If I fortunately earn the name of a Confucian
I will be content with my aging and ugliness.
I would lead a recluse life and tend my backyard
I do not have to decline [the appointment of] government office.

…Should not associate with barbarians (蠻隄)…

143 Chosŏn elite saw Buddhism as another heresy, but they often stayed at a Buddhist temple for their study. Recently Chŏng Min introduced that Tasan used Zen riddles when he taught Buddhist monks. These materials of course are not included in the Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ. Chŏng Min, “Tasan ŭi sŏn-mundap,” Munhŏn kwa haesŏk 45 (2008): 13-31.

144 Tasan’s hometown is near the Han River (yŏlsu 列水).
This poem shows three goals that Tasan had: to be freed, to achieve the name of a Confucian through his scholarship, and to hold government office again. The most urgent task was, of course, being discharged from his exile, and for that he had to prove that he was civilized.

How can we distinguish the “civilized” and the “Confucian” in this project? Being “civilized” was a matter of degree. In this study I use this term not just as a dichotomy between civilized and barbarian, but as a way to emphasize the degree of advancement in Confucian scholarship. In Chosŏn society, even people in the lower social strata could be Confucian. By arguing that Tasan wanted to prove that he was a civilized exile, I want to emphasize that Tasan was not only Confucian but also very advanced in his scholarship, and good enough to be a paragon in his own eyes. One of the identities that he had was as a Confucian leader, and this influenced his envision in exile.

To Become an Official Again

Tasan wanted to become an official again, and it was important for him because of the way he perceived the role of a Confucian scholar (sa 士) and how he carried it out. Chosŏn yangban did not agree on the ideal life for a Confucian scholar: some thought that they should pass the civil service examination and pursue (high) government office, while others thought that they should not take the examination and lead simple life of the “recluse” in their home communities seeking for Confucian scholarship.146 “Eremitic

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145 YC 1:5:14a, “Staying at Pūn mountain cabin with Hakka on the last day of a year. Feeling sad at night I compose this and show it to my son” (Chang Hakka che Pūnsanwŏn such 'iseje jejiya simsŏch'och 'och 'ang sorisŏngp 'yŏn sia). Tasan marked only the date, not the year. But from the order of poems arranged before and after this piece, this poem seems to be composed on the 31st day of the twelfth month of 1805.

146 According to Lee Woo Sung [Yi Usŏng] sallim denounced the corrupted civil service examination system, but they participated in politics following Confucian morality. Lee Woo
subjects” (ilmin 遺民) is the general term used to refer to scholars with the latter orientation; eremitic scholars in the mid-Chosŏn period were called recluse scholars (sallim 山林, scholars in “the mountains and forests”). 147 Recluse scholars gave up public service, and yet they still built their reputation through their established scholarship and embodiment of Confucian virtue, and had informal influence, via their writings and intellectual networks, on other yangban, including those who held office. When they rose to prominence, the royal court often employed them for the government offices to have their assistance on statecraft as well as to strengthen its legitimacy. Because the recluse scholars vowed not to take office, even when they were called to serve at the court, they


A related but different concept is remnant subject (遺民). Wai-ye Lee distinguishes the eremitic subjects and remnant subjects as follows: while the eremitic subjects can be simply following a familiar ideal in the Chinese tradition, the remnant subjects are expressing their disappointment with moral, social and political issues. Wai-ye Lee, “Introduction,” in Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature, ed. Wilt L. Idema, Wai-ye Li, and Ellen Widmer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 7-8.
had to decline the offer at least a couple of times before accept it. They were also supposed to resign after a short period in office and return to their places in the provinces and resume the scholar’s quiet life. From the late sixteenth century to the early seventeenth century scholars such as Chŏng Inhong (鄭仁弘, 1535-1623), Kim Changsaeng (金長生, 1548-1631) and Yun Hyu accepted offices by royal appointment even though they had not been successful in the examinations. These recluse scholars developed public opinion and became the most respected masters of a certain school or faction. Being respected, and sometimes idealized, recluse scholars emerged as a new power in mid-Chosŏn, but this did not last long. Their involvement with intensified factional strife of the seventeenth century cost their reputation. Furthermore, as King Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo emerged as sage kings in the eighteenth century the status of sallim was reduced. \(^{148}\)

Tasan’s exile life in Kangjin was similar to that of the recluse scholars in terms of pursuing scholarship without holding government office, but Tasan did not intend to withdraw from the world as the recluse scholars did. It was not just because the recluse scholars were losing their fame. One of Tasan’s most important identities was being a

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\(^{148}\) JaKyun Haboush argues that compared to Chinese emperors who emphasized their sacred lineage, Korean kings accentuated their Confucian cultivation to present themselves as sage kings. Haboush, *A Heritage of Kings: One Man’s Monarchy in the Confucian World*, 1-2. For the relationship between the kings and sallim in terms of authority, see Kim Paekch’ŏl, *Chosŏn hugi Yŏngjo ŭi t’angp’yŏng chongch’i: Sotkaefon ŭi p’yŏnch’an kwa paeksŏng ŭi chaeinsik* (P’aju, Kyŏnggi-do: T’aehaksa, 2010), 28-47.

Yi Sŏngmu gives a couple more reasons why the recluse scholars lost their fame. As King Chŏngjo stabilized his position as the ruler, he declared that the recluse scholars were not useful, and replaced them with newly appointed young office holders, such as Selected Civil Official (*ch’ogyo munsin*). Besides, scholars in the provinces accepted new academic trends slower than their counterparts in the capital. To make things worse, in the nineteenth century the Patriarchs, especially powerful capital-based aristocrats, monopolized office. The recluse scholars were occasionally appointed to office, but generally their political status was not as high as before. Yi Sŏngmu, *Chosŏn sidae tangjaengsa 2 (History of factional strife during Chosŏn dynasty 2)* (Seoul: Arûmdaun nal, 2007), 238-40.
scholar, and from his standpoint a scholar had a public obligation to be a good administrator.

In his “Treatise on Five Studies,” Tasan criticized different types of studies that Chosŏn scholars were wrongly pursuing. In the first part of the treatise Tasan found fault with Chosŏn scholars who called themselves hermits and did not take up public roles or participate in public affairs. He recalled that the sages had warned people against the tendency for secluded and strange behavior, and based on that he asserted that a scholar’s role was to serve society. Pointing out that withdrawal from the world was regarded as an indication of their sagehood only when the act was contrary to morality, Tasan also found Zhu Xi a good example. He argued that even though Chosŏn scholars said that they respected Zhu Xi as an ideal Confucian, they practiced their roles differently from him. Tasan dwelled on how Zhu Xi entered government office when he was summoned by the king, and how he retired to a hermitage when he was dismissed.

Tasan regarded Zhu Xi’s behavior as devotion to his emperor, and encapsulated Zhu Xi’s practice of being a scholar as follows. First, Zhu Xi studied the Six Classics and the Four Books to understand the sages’ teaching. Second, when he attended to the emperor Zhu Xi corrected the emperor’s mistakes and debated the ways in which a ruler should run the state. Third, as a local magistrate Zhu Xi assisted the emperor in alleviating people’s suffering. In sum, Tasan argued that Chosŏn scholars should try to serve the king and make people’s lives prosperous, rather than withdraw from the world. 150

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149 *YC* 1:11:19b-20a, “the first treatise on five studies” (*Ohangnon il* 五學論一). This is not dated, and it is conjectured that Tasan wrote this while he was an official.

This argument reappeared in other places. Tasan criticized people who thought that studying anything other than benevolence and righteousness (*inŭi 仁義*), or principle and material force (*igi 理氣*) was study of miscellaneous matters (*chaphak 雜學*). In his view, a true Confucian’s study should include governing the state, lifting people’s burdens, repelling barbarians, increasing the size of people’s property, and being skilled in military and literary arts.\(^{151}\)

Another site to look at is his letter that he wrote in tenth year of his exile to Yakchŏn, his brother who was exiled to Hŭksan Island then.\(^{152}\) Tasan had lost the use of his left leg because of a stroke, and lamented that the rest of his life would not be long. However, he confessed, he could not stop paying attention to worldly things as Zhu Xi had done and regretted it. Here Tasan seems to imply that he would regret this later, too, but apparently being an ideal Confucian scholar and focusing on worldly matters was more important for him. In 1814, again, Tasan maintained that Confucian scholars should put their knowledge in practice for others. He was critical of *sallim* scholars saying that unlike Mencius, who discussed the feeling of compassion to spread benevolence throughout the world, Chosŏn *sallim* focused on the discussion itself and did not pay attention to the practice of the virtues.\(^{153}\)

As an exile, Tasan’s political future was uncertain, and no one knew whether he would hold office again. But Tasan never compromised his view regarding the concept of the ideal Confucian scholar throughout his protracted exile. Why was he so determined?

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\(^{151}\) *YC* 1:12:8a, “Treatise on secular scholars” (*Sogyuron*).


\(^{153}\) *YC* 1:19:30b-31a “Reply to Yi Yŏhong” (*Tap Yi Yŏhong*). This is written before the tenth month of 1814.
First, he thought that holding office meant more than the individual’s success. It was conducting the Confucian social role. We see that when he discussed this matter, he mentioned Zhu Xi and other sages as examples who participated in governance. What did Tasan achieve by referring to the sages as ideal Confucian scholars and suggesting that Chosŏn Confucians should do the same? By arguing that his contemporaries should emulate these sages, Tasan was able to justify his position regarding the issue of engagement and withdrawal from the world. Second, he regarded such desire as the Confucian gentlemen’s exclusive aim. Tasan categorized people’s main desires into two: wealth (pu 富) and nobility (kwi 貴). Generally speaking, gentlemen (kunja 君子) were those who worked in the royal court, and they desired nobility. Meanwhile petty men (soin 小人) were those who cultivated the land, and they desired wealth.\textsuperscript{154} Nobility is an ambiguous concept, but since Tasan suggested that in dealing with nobility a king should fairly assign gentlemen for office, we can see that by nobility he meant fame, political power, and such. In Tasan’s view, holding office was something for which only a gentleman could wish, and thus he was not ashamed to reveal his desire. And yet, he considered righteousness as important as anything else. When his son proposed that he apologize to his political rivals and ask for their mercy, i.e., his release, Tasan strongly rejected the suggestion saying that he would choose righteousness over life.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{YC} 2:2:32b-33a, \textit{Commentary on the Book of History (Sangsŏgohun)} Vol.2.

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{YC} 1:21:6b-7a, “Reply to my son Hagyŏn” (Tap Yŏna). Tasan wrote this on the third day of the third month of 1816.
To be Freed

It is well known that Tasan left an enormous amount of work. In these writings he covered various themes from the Confucian classics to methods to improve daily life. Then, who was Tasan’s (expected) audience? Did he circulate his works as much as he could? If not, why did he write a voluminous body of works, and yet limit their circulation? Previous studies emphasize that Tasan argued Chosŏn people should compose poetry of Chosŏn (Chosŏn-si) in order to assert that Tasan had “national consciousness.”156 But, as Kim Sanghong aptly points out, we need to remember that even when he described commoners’ life in his poems he chose to record them in literary Chinese, the language for male yangban, over vernacular Korean, as the medium of his record.157 Considering that many yangban left works in vernacular Korean as well, Tasan’s choice shows who his intended audience was.158 Tasan’s works, not only those on the Confucian classics or statecraft but also poetry, were written for yangban, especially those in the capital.

Another site to look into to learn Tasan’s audience is Tasan’s letters and family precepts (kagye 家諭) addressed to his sons. In these the most explicitly intended audience was his sons, but they were not the final audience. In his letter to his sons, Tasan wrote that they should read his writings, and wondered whether they did not read

156 Chin Chaegyo, Yijo hugi hansi úi sahoesa (Social history in late Chosŏn poems in Chinese characters) (Seoul: Somyŏng ch’ulp’an, 2001), 276.

157 Kim Sanghong, Tasan Chŏng Yagyong munhak yŏn’gu (A study of Tasan’s literary works) (Seoul: Tandae ch’up’anbu, 1985), 381.

158 Tasan’s maternal ancestor, Kosan Yun Sŏndo (尹善道, 1587-1671), composed a series of traditional three-stanza Korean poems, entitled “Ŏbusasisa” (漁父四時詞, 1651), in Korean. Kim Manjung (金萬重, 1637-1692), wrote a novel, Kuunmong (九雲夢, 1687), in Korean while he was exiled.
his works, anyone in later generations would read them.\textsuperscript{159} In this same letter, Tasan revealed the ambition to have his writings be shown to a wider audience, not just a local audience. This might be because the capital and the local areas had developed at different paces, and by the nineteenth century the discrepancy had become even bigger. Thus, to be fully appreciated by other scholars the works had to be circulated in the capital city. Yangban in the capital city was the group to which Tasan had belonged. The Patriarchs, who took the initiative in punishing Tasan, were important members of it, and also it was they who could form the public opinion for his release. If it was not realized in his life, Tasan hoped, his sons would pass down his writings to later generations.\textsuperscript{160}

By answering who was his audience, we also get clues as to why he had to write: Tasan did not just practice the intellectual’s privilege, but also struggled to record his own “history” by himself.\textsuperscript{161} Soon after arriving at Kangjin, Tasan wrote a letter to his children, “To my two sons” (“Kiia,” 1802), in which he clearly indicated that he wanted his sons to collect, edit and preserve his writings in book form. He was concerned that if no one did the work his writings would not be known to later generations, and, as a result, people would evaluate him based solely on the indictment (\textit{taegye 壹啓}) and interrogation report (\textit{ogan 禁案}). These reports were official documents, but because Tasan’s political rivals dominated related offices when Tasan was interrogated, Tasan

\textsuperscript{159} \textit{YC} 1:18:5a-b, “Family precepts to my two sons” (\textit{Siija kagye}), 1808.

\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{161} Christopher D’addario points out that the exiles construct history to justify and order their experience both to themselves and to their audience. He argues that “these texts of exile often anticipated and wrote for a specific public moment, deserves particular emphasis.” Christopher D’addario, \textit{Exile and Journey in Seventeenth-century Literature} (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10-11.
was afraid that the voice in these documents was biased. He understood that his writing could be wrong or seemed wrong, and such negative evaluation could risk his already uncertain future, but he chose to write to prove that he was an orthodox Confucian.¹⁶²

The history of political factional struggle in the Chosŏn court is crucial to understand why Tasan decided to write. Political factions in the central court had dominated and then lost power in turn. The Principle group of the Patriarchs was still powerful in the reign of Chŏngjo, and the king appointed the Expediency group of the Southerners to seek balance between factions. When he passed away leaving a young successor behind, the Principle group could gain more political power than before because the new Queen Regent’s family was affiliated with them. The Principle group of the Patriarchs once again oppressed the Expediency group of the Southerners, and accusing them of being Catholics was one of the most effective ways to achieve the goal. As a result not only Catholicism but also Western knowledge, such as science and mathematics, was under attack. Southerners who had been exposed to Western knowledge were questioned to see whether their ideas were Confucian or not, and they had to justify themselves.

The Southerners were under severe attack and lost many important men at that time, but Tasan could hope for a better future. Even though, or maybe because, the Patriarch faction held sway at the court at the beginning of the nineteenth century (and for a long time thereafter, although Tasan could not know that), Tasan had to prepare for later—when his faction, the Southerners, regained power in the bureaucracy. Under the circumstances, writing was not only an expression of his thought, but also a necessity to

¹⁶² As we see below, he was very selective in choosing to whom circulate his manuscripts.
restore his name as a scholar and regain his former political eligibility. In addition to this, he had more free time during his exile. As a result, most of his major works date from the years of his exile in Kangjin.

**Being Careful**

Tasan was very careful regarding the content, quality and circulation of his writings because an exile’s writing was a double-edged sword and could have a negative effect. Written evidence was an important factor to judge a case, and it also determined the life or death of Tasan’s brothers. Being exiled for his thought Tasan was under surveillance no less than other exiles, and if he gave his political rivals the pretext, it could cost his life. In the meantime the Patriarchs, Tasan’s political rivals, reversed royal decisions of his release while still trying to frame him as a heretic. In this difficult situation, despite his desire to be recognized by scholars in the capital, Tasan did not hurry. He understood that the wide circulation of his texts would be possible only when the dominating faction in the royal court was favorable toward him. Also, to succeed, his writings had to be flawless. Tasan needed feedback on his works, but he was discreet in showing them to others, and limited the circulation. For example, when he showed his works on the Confucian classics to Munsan Yi Chaeŭi (文山 李載毅, 1772-1839), Tasan requested Munsan not to show Tasan’s writings, even a word or a half phrase, to other people. Tasan warned him that if other people found fault in Tasan’s writings, it would harm both Tasan and Munsan.  

Hong Kilchu (洪吉周, 1786-1841), who associated with

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163 This letter is not collected in the Yŏyudang Collection. This is part of “Questions and answers with Tasan” (Tasan mundap 茶山問答) compiled in the Munsan Collection (Munsanjip 文山集) 11:22a-26b; quoted from Chŏng Yagyong and Yi Chaeŭi, *Tasan kwa Munsan ŭi insŏng nonjaeng (The debated between Tasan and Munsan on the human nature)*, ed. Silsihaksya kyŏnghak yŏn’guhoe (Seoul: Han’gilsa, 1996), 126. Munsan visited Tasan in 1814, and since then they had
Tasan, also recorded that Tasan wrote hundreds of books, but did not show them to other people. As his “Family precepts as parting gift for Hagyu” (Sin Hagyu kagye, 1810) shows, Tasan expanded the cautiousness to his family. He advised his sons to be careful with their writings and gave very specific guidelines on that: they should question whether their letters were written well enough to avoid any ill fate or humiliation. He suggested revising their letters many times so that even if they lost their letters in the market and other people found them, people could not criticize them for the contents. Why did he advise them this way? Letters in Chosŏn period were not only personal, but also semi-public in nature. Even for letters from one individual to another, the audience was not limited to the addressed recipient. Either the sender or recipient, if not both, could copy the letter by hand and show it to other people. Because “private” letters could be circulated among a wider audience Tasan had to ask his sons to be careful with their letters. Another device Tasan suggested was to check up on the letters that they had at home every ten days and discard them if necessary so that people could not find fault exchanged letters. Because Munsan visited Tasan in Spring 1815 and return to the capital in the third month of 1815, Yi Ponggyu, who translated this letter into Korean, suggests that this was written before the third month of 1815.

164 Hong Kilchu, *A sequel to the Brimming Thought after Sleeping* (Suyŏ nanp’ilsok 睡餘瀾筆續) 4:115.

165 *YC* 1:18:13b-14a, “Family precepts as parting gift for Hagyu” (Sin Hagyu kagye 睦學遊家誡).

166 Regarding such correspondence culture in Chosŏn dynasty JaHyun Kim Haboush points out that by doing so they created “the ‘in-between’ space between public and private.” JaHyun Kim Haboush, *Epistolary Korea: Letters in the Communicative Space of the Choson, 1392-1910* (Columbia University Press, 2009), 8. Hwisang Cho’s recent work examines the letters of T’oegye School’s and shows that letter was not just a communication tool but a major textual means. Hwisang Cho, “The Community of Letters: The T’oegye School and the Political Culture of Chosŏn Korea, 1545-1800” (Columbia University, 2010).
with the letters.\textsuperscript{167} He asserted that this was how a Confucian gentleman should behave. When a person had to be this cautious with his letters, it is not hard to guess how much caution was required when one wrote a book. Unlike convention in Chosŏn society, in which a scholar’s works were collected and published by his descendants after his death, Tasan edited and organized his works by himself so that they were ready for publication.\textsuperscript{168} Apparently he had asked his sons to do the work, but he could not wait for that. Because Tasan selected his writings to be in his collection, it is not surprising that there is no obvious influence of Catholicism in his writings.\textsuperscript{169}

Tasan’s cautiousness also revealed in the way he avoided referring to not only Catholicism but also matters which would remind people that he was involved in the religion. In his later works, Tasan often referred himself as “Yong 鏞” instead of “Yagyong 若鏞,” his first name. For instance, his preface to \textit{Four Commentaries on Mourning Rituals (Sangnye sajŏn 喪禮四箋)}, 1811, his first major work in Kangjin, notes the author as Chŏng Yong.\textsuperscript{170} Much later Tasan left two versions of self-epitaphs (\textit{chach’an myojimyŏng 自撰墓誌銘}) and in both he introduced himself as Chŏng Yong.

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{YC} 1:18:13b-14a.

\textsuperscript{168} We will discuss the publication and circulation of writings further in Chapter Five.

\textsuperscript{169} In his \textit{Reflections on Governing the People (Mongmin simso)}, for example, Tasan referred to \textit{Tasan’s Daily Selection (Tasan ilch’o 茶山日鈔)}, \textit{Record of Tasan (Tasannok 茶山錄)}, and many others that we have not found. An Pyŏngjik suggests possibility that some of these never existed, but used only for the sake of reference. An Pyŏngjik, “Mongmin simso koi,” in \textit{Chŏng Tasan yŏn’gu ǔi hyŏnhwang (The current state of study on Tasan)}, ed. Han Ugŭn et al., Taewu haksul ch’ongsŏ (Seoul: Munŭmsa, 1985), 57. It is possible that Tasan self-screened and discarded these works because of the contents.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Four Commentaries on Mourning Rituals (Sangnye sajŏn 喪禮四箋)} was completed in 1811, but this preface was written in 1804.
first, and then explained that his real name was Yagyong. As to the reason of this abbreviation, which is rare in Chosŏn custom, Chŏng Sŏkch'ong, a modern Korean historian, gives hearsay information: One of Chosŏn customs was that people of the same generation of a clan shared a character in their first names. For Tasan and his brothers, the shared character was “yak 若,” and since the brothers were known as people involved in Catholicism, the designation of “yak” could remind people of Catholicism. Thus, Tasan avoid using the character as much as he could. Although there is no written evidence to support this speculation, it seems reasonable.

Tasan’s attitude towards Western science is another site to see his cautiousness. Previous studies use Tasan’s knowledge of the Western science as proof that Tasan was open to new and also practical knowledge. However, when he discussed a matter of Western knowledge he intentionally hid the foreign origin and provided a reference from Confucian books whenever possible. This was not a sudden development in the nineteenth century. For example, even in Chŏngjo reign, Yi Kahwan, a Southerner, was also charged with being a Catholic, and was in trouble. He mentioned the theory of air (ch‘ŏngmonggisŏl 清蒙氣說) in his “Plan for astronomy” (ch‘ŏnmunch’ae 天文策). The theory of air was problematic in Confucians’ eyes because it equated air with material force (ki 氣), and as a result the material force was understood as matter rather than a principal part of every living thing, as Zhu Xi had suggested. King Chŏngjo took

171 YCl:16:1a and 1:16:2b. Both were written around his sixtieth birthday in 1822.

172 Ch’a Munsŏp et al., “Chwadam hoech’o: Han’guk kŭnse munhwa ŭi t’ŭksŏng” (Characteristics of modern Korean culture), Tongyanghak 16, no. 1 (1986): 463.

173 Chŏngjo sillok 43.4 (pyŏngjin), 1795/07/07; YC 1:15:20a-20b, “An epitaph for Yi Kahwan” (Chŏnghŏn myojimyŏng).
Yi’s side and protected him by arguing that the theory of air was suggested by Shu Xi (束皙) of Jin China (晉, C.E. 265-420). Regarding this dispute, Tasan went one step further and reminded Yi that he should have given a reference to the *History of Former Han* (漢書), which covers Chinese history from B.C.E 206-C.E. 25. Tasan maintained that Yi should have emphasized that the theory had been accepted by other Confucians for many generations, and clarified that it was irrelevant to Catholicism.

When he could not find a matching Chinese reference, Tasan provided an obscure reference instead. For example, in explaining how to calculate the area of each shape, he mentioned that *Kiha* (幾何) was a book which shows how to measure the area of basic shapes. However, there is no book known as *Kiha* in Tasan’s time, and it has been suggested that the *Kiha* might refer to *Kiha wŏnbŏn* (幾何原本, 1607), the Chinese translation of *Euclid’s Elements*. The speculation is convincing because Tasan’s second elder brother, Chŏng Yakchŏn (1758-1816), studied this book in the 1780s, and Tasan could have had access to it as well.

Another example is Tasan’s articles on medical science. Analyzing Tasan’s works on medicine, Sin Tongwŏn finds that Tasan reproduced prescriptions from Western

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177 *YC* 1:15:39a-39b “An epitaph for my second older brother” (*Sŏnjungssi myojimyŏng*).
medical books, and deleted parts that people could recognize as excerpts from European books. In sum, Western Learning was not banned, but Tasan was careful not to show that he had access to the Western books by replacing Western references with Chinese, or hiding the Western origin of a certain idea. By doing so, Tasan protected himself from further accusation.

One important exception of hiding the Western origin is a crane that Tasan designed at King Chŏngjo’s command. King Chŏngjo bestowed a copy of *Illustrations and Explanations of Wonderful Machines* (*Kigi tosŏl* 奇器圖說, 1627) on Tasan, and commanded him to produce a crane. The book was written by Jean Terrenz (Deng Yuhan 鄧玉函, 1576-1630), a Jesuit missionary, to introduce Western mechanics to Chinese readers. Unlike Tasan’s other European sources, which were hard to identify, the title of this book was clearly mentioned in his writing on how he developed this project. Tasan made this exception probably because it was a royal grant by King Chŏngjo, and regarding this people could not blame Tasan for studying Western knowledge. Is it a coincidence that among Tasan’s works the one most explicitly acknowledged for its Western origin is a book granted him by the king? Why did he put so much effort into finding equivalent Confucian sources for other Western knowledge? It was, rather than Confucian universalism or the limit of his understanding, his method to communicate with his contemporaries without putting himself in danger. When he dealt with Western

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179 Tasan explained the crane in his “*Kijung tosŏl*” (起重圖說). *YC* 1:16:4a-4b, and *YC* 1:10:21a-26a.
knowledge he chose to stay within the framework of orthodox Confucianism to protect himself.¹⁸⁰

**Affirming Confucian Ideas**

Tasan’s devotion to the study of Confucian classics during his exile is notable. If one argues that a banished yangban, especially a former official, hoped for his release and attempted to identify himself as a Confucian by devoting himself to the classics, it may seem to be a matter of course. But in reality former yangban exiles pursued various interests during and after their exile. In his study of Chosŏn literature, So Chaeyŏng finds that exile writings comprises almost one third of Chosŏn literature.¹⁸¹ This implies that many exiles sublimated their hardship in literature, as we see in the case of Yi Hakkyu (李學逵, 1770-1835).

Yi Hakkyu might be less famous than Tasan, but he was so well recognized as a writer that he was ordered by King Chŏngjo to write and edit books for the court. Yi was not only Tasan’s contemporary, but also, as Yi Kahwan’s nephew, arrested in 1801 along

¹⁸⁰ This hostile atmosphere toward Western knowledge lasted for some time as we see in Kim Kyŏngsŏn’s (金景善, 1788-1853) Yŏnŏn chikchi (燕轅直指), a record of visiting China from 1832 to 1833. In the Introduction to this book, Kim noted that he quoted many parts from famous records of previous envoys, such as Kim Ch’angŏp (金昌業, 1658-1721), Hong Taeyong (洪大容, 1731-1783), and Pak Chiwŏn (朴趾源, 1737-1805). Yŏnŏn chikchi 1:1a-1b, “Yŏnŏn chikchi sŏ.” Kim Kyŏngsŏn explained that because he collected format and information from above records he titled his work as Yŏnŏn chikchi (燕轅直指), as in chikchibang (直指方), the collection of medical prescriptions. Although Kim wrote that he did so because their accounts were extensive and detailed, it is arguable whether or not he spoke the truth. As Yi Ihwa points out, in Yŏnŏn chikchi Kim Kyŏngsŏn wrote that his P’iltamnok (筆談錄) contained written communication with Chinese scholars in detail, but the P’iltamnok is neither included in Yŏnŏn chikchi or found separately. It is possible that he attempted to hide his own view on the Western culture that he encountered on his way. See Yi Ihwa, “Haeje,” in Kugyŏk yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip X: Yŏnŏn chikchi (서울: Minjok munhwa ch’ujinhae, 1982), 14.

¹⁸¹ So Chaeyŏng, Chosŏnjo munhak ŭi t’amgu (Study on Chosŏn literature) (서울: Asea munhwasa, 1997), 137.
with Tasan and Yi Kahwan. Yi was framed for being a Catholic, too, and had been banished until 1824. In his exile Yi had corresponded with Tasan, but as his Nakhsaeng chŏnjip (洛下生全集) shows, his main interest was literature.\textsuperscript{182} Despite the similarities between him and Tasan, he did not put much effort on the classics.

Meanwhile, Tasan left a large corpus of poems, following the convention of the Chosŏn elite, but he recorded that he did not like composing poems. According to him, before his exile he did not take trouble for poetry, and during exile he stopped composing poems because he was ashamed of writing sorrowful and miserable poems.\textsuperscript{183} Most of the hardship he described in his works was the suffering of commoners, rather than his own.\textsuperscript{184} In other words, instead of dwelling on his own misfortune, he found joy in studying the classics and tried to establish himself as a civilized man, a paragon of Confucian virtue.\textsuperscript{185}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{182} Yi Hakkyu, \textit{Nakhsaeng chŏnjip (the Nakhsaeng Collection)}, ed. Han’guk hanmunhak yŏn’guhoe, 3 vols. (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1985).
  \item \textsuperscript{183} \textit{YC} 1:18:6a. Tasan noted that he wrote this piece in summer 1808 after moved into the Tasan Thatched Cottage. Although the Yŏyudang Chŏnsŏ contains many poems, there is no poem written from 1811 to 1818.
  \item \textsuperscript{184} \textit{YC} 1:18:10b “Family precepts for my two sons” (Siija kagye 示二子家戒). As we see in \textit{YC}1:7:40a-42b, “Reciprocating Du Fu’s twelve poems” (Hwadusi sibisu 和杜詩十二首), sometimes Tasan mentioned, or, even going further, composed poems modeling the works of renowned exiled Chinese literati, such as Du Fu (杜甫, 712-770) and Qu Yuan (屈原, 339 B.C.E.-278 B.C.E.). But the number of these is not great compare to the whole volume of his poetry. He composed these in 1808 in Tasan Cottage. He points out that people mentioned in Du Fu’s poetry could hand down their names to posterity even better than being named in history books. After moving into the cottage he was ill and could not write much, and thus he wrote down these poems. He evaluated that the poems as incoherent, and hoped that later when he was inspired better he could revise them. It could be an expression of modesty, but considering the volume of his poems and works on the classics, it seems that Tasan put more emphasis on the classics.
  \item \textsuperscript{185} \textit{YC} 1:18:6a.
\end{itemize}
In examining Tasan’s thought it is important to consider the appellation of the “civilized” at two levels: at the level of both collective cultural entity and individual scholars. The terms, the “civilized” and the “barbarian,” originally designated the level of Confucian development to distinguish China, the origin of Confucian culture, from the rest. Korea, of course, was at first considered (by China, at least) barbarian in the dichotomy of the civilized and barbarian. But as several recent studies argue, late Chosŏn scholars were proud of Confucian development in Chosŏn especially now, when the “northern barbarian” (pukchŏk 北狄) Qing controlled China, and regarded themselves as the true guardian of Confucian civilization.  

In his “Treatise on Tuoba Wei” Tasan also expressed the view that the civilized and the barbarian could transform to each other, depending on the development or decline of the Way (to 道) and governance (chŏng 政). In other words, even though a certain cultural entity had been barbarian it could become a “central kingdom” (chungguk 中國) as the entity advanced in terms of civilization. This shows that Tasan understood there could be multiple centers of civilization, and left the possibility of transformation open for not only Chosŏn but also other civilizational entities.

Because “barbarian” (i 夷) was one of traditional Chinese epithets for Korea, Tasan accepted Chosŏn being called that, but he could not accept his scholarship being

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187 *YC* 1:12:7a-b, “Treatise on Tuoba Wei” (*Ch’ŏkparwiron* 拓跋魏論).

188 For example, in a memorial that the Founder of Chosŏn dynasty, T’aeto (太祖, r.1392-1398) submitted to Chinese court asking to choose a name for the new dynasty, it is showed that the
branded as barbarian, or heterodox to be exact. When individual scholars were named as heterodox it entailed a serious problem. Like cultural entities, individuals also had room for becoming civilized, but at the same time, in a society where Confucianism was a state ideology, once one was named as barbarian or heterodox, one was vulnerable to punishment. Also, compared to the commoners, elites had less room for their heterodox ideas. Being leaders of the society, yangban were expected be model Confucians. Late Chosŏn intellectuals perceived themselves as the guardian of Confucianism. The rise of the Manchu Qing (1644-1912) and the collapse of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) in the mid-seventeenth century were especially crucial in the change of Korea’s self-perception in terms of Confucian civilization. Most Korean scholars thought that although the Qing was politically and militarily strong, its culture was barbarous. Watching the dynastic changes in China, late Chosŏn scholars argued that since Korea had developed Confucian scholarship for a long time, and had make great advancements, Korea was qualified to be the guardian of Confucian civilization on behalf of the collapsed Ming dynasty.

Being self-esteemed they even differentiated Chosŏn Confucianism from Chinese Confucianism. The various Confucian philosophical systems, which are collectively called Neo-Confucianism, emerged in China during the Northern Song dynasty (北宋, 960-1127). Especially important were the work of the Cheng brothers, Hao (程颢, 1032-1085) and Yi (程頤, 1033-1107), and Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130-1200). Their work is often referred to collectively as “Cheng-Zhu” Neo-Confucianism. Confucians of Ming China (明, 1368-1644) accepted many philosophers’ ideas and developed them further. For

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Chinese emperor referred to Korea as Eastern barbarian ( tongi 東夷). T’aejo sillok 2.16 (pyŏngo), 1392/11/29.
example, they appreciated the Ming philosopher Wang Yang-Ming’s (王陽明, 1472-1528) emphasis on innate knowledge (心即理) even though it deviated from Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the classics.\textsuperscript{189} But their counterparts on the Korean peninsula revered Cheng-Zhu scholarship as the standard, and did not regard Wang’s scholarship as orthodox (chŏnhak 正學).\textsuperscript{190} It is not clear when Wang’s thought was introduced into Chosŏn society,\textsuperscript{191} but in his “Discussion of the Record of Teaching and Practicing (Chŏnsŭmnok nonbyŏn 傳習錄論辯),” T’oegye Yi Hwang (退溪 李滉, 1501-1570) wrote on The Record of Teaching and Practicing (傳習錄), an account of Wang’s words and letters, and criticized Wang’s theory of the unity of knowledge and action (chihaeng habil 知行合一).\textsuperscript{192} T’oegye asserted that people knew righteousness only after learning, ...
and action followed righteousness. By saying so he advocated Zhu Xi’s teaching while criticizing Wang’s ideas.\(^{193}\) T’oegye’s scholarship was highly regarded by his contemporaries, and by later Chosŏn scholars, and many people agreed with his view of Wang. Some Chosŏn scholars secretly read Wang’s works, but most scholars sided with the Cheng-Zhu school and criticized Wang’s idea. As a result, Wang’s scholarship was considered heterodox while Cheng-Zhu interpretations were reinforced by being used as the standard in the civil service examination. In sum, being proud of their role as the preserver of the Confucian civilization, Chosŏn intellectuals established their version of orthodox Confucianism in a more rigid way than their Chinese counterpart did, and Zhu Xi’s scholarship was the core of this orthodoxy.\(^{194}\)

The situation regarding the construction of orthodoxy became more complicated by the eighteenth century. For Chosŏn Confucians it was an issue not only conceptual but also very factual. The elite—from the king to the ordinary yangban—attempted to consolidate their positions in the intellectual community in the course of constructing orthodoxy and discussing the interpretation of the Confucian classics. Abiding by the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy, mainstream Chosŏn Confucians revered Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the classics, and to better organize Zhu Xi’s teaching King Chŏngjo commanded the

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\(^{193}\) Yi Hwang, *The T’oegye Collection (T’oegye sŏnsaeng munjip)*, 41:23b-26b, “Discussion of The Record of Teaching and Practicing (Chŏnsumnok nonbyŏn 傳習録論辯).” This article is not dated. T’oegye’s scholarship was also highly regarded by eighteenth-century Chosŏn intellectuals. King Chŏngjo referred to T’oegye as the one who started studying Zhu Xi’s works. *Hongjae chŏnsŏ* 131:11a.

\(^{194}\) Chŏng Okcha argues that Chosŏn scholars developed self-perception from a mini civilizational center (so-junghwa) to a new center (Chosŏn chunghwa) replacing collapsed Ming China. Chŏng Okcha, *Chosŏn hugi Chosŏn chunghwa sasang yŏn’gu*. Chŏng Okcha et al., *Chŏngjo sidae ŭi sasang kwa munhwa* (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1999), 30-34.
Chosŏn royal library to publish books that were related to Zhu Xi’s scholarship. In the entire Chosŏn period, it was in Chŏngjo’s reign that the Chosŏn court published Zhu Xi’s books the most. Collecting Zhu Xi’s annotations of the Confucian classics had an unexpected effect, though. Chosŏn intellectuals noticed that his commentaries were inconsistent at times. As a result, the status of Zhu Xi’s scholarship as orthodoxy was weakened, and his scholarship started to be seen as a scholarship of Song dynasty (songhak 宋學; 960-1279 C.E.) which was a mere counterpart of the scholarship of Han dynasty (hanhak 漢學; 206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.).

King Chŏngjo, who is considered one of the most scholarly kings of the Chosŏn dynasty, also maintained that scholars should not rely on Zhu Xi’s commentaries on the Four Books. Instead, he suggested that Confucians should also read the Six Classics to preserve the sages’ intention. Chŏngjo’s seemingly arbitrary approach to Confucian scholarship becomes more understandable if we remember that he had to accommodate differences between the political factions. Even though the status of Zhu Xi’s ideas in

195 For the reason why King Chŏngjo compiled and published Zhu Xi’s works, Kim Munsik offers a couple of suggestions: The king thought that the ruler should carry on the Confucianism. By publishing books relevant to Zhu Xi he could prove that the ruler was a master, which would make his people revere the king and motivate them to be civilized. The publication was also expected to emphasize the advancement of Chosŏn in terms of Zhu Xi scholarship, and to expand the orthodoxy. Kim Munsik, “Chŏngjo ŭi chujasŏ p’yŏnch’an kwa kǔ ŭiŭi,” in Chŏngjo sidae ŭi sasang kwa munhwa, by Chŏng Okcha et al. (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1999), 113-165.


197 Ibid., 138-149. In Korea Song Learning and Han Learning were not limited only to the ideas of the respective periods. Evidential Learning (kojŏnghak 考證學) of the Qing dynasty (1636-1912), for example, was also regarded Han scholarship in the Chosŏn period. See Yu Ponghak, “Chosŏn hugi kyŏnghwa sajok ŭi taedu wa ‘sirhak’,” in Tasi, sirhak iran muŏt in ga, ed. Hallim taehakkyo Han’ghak yŏn’guso (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2007), 113-114.

198 For discussion of the t’angp ’yŏng policy, see JaHyun Kim Haboush, A Heritage of Kings: One
Chosŏn society was not the same as it had been before, the Patriarch faction extremely revered Zhu Xi’s teaching and intended to set Zhu Xi’s annotations as the standard interpretation of the classics in Chosŏn intellectual society. Meanwhile, the Southern faction tended to criticize Zhu Xi’s teaching more than the Patriarchs, and emphasized the importance of the Six Classics over Zhu Xi’s annotations to comprehend the meanings of the sages’ words. By publishing Zhu Xi’s works and emphasizing the importance of the Six Classics, Chŏngjo attempted to compromise among different political factions’ intellectual inclination and to balance their ideological and political power. In other words, Chŏngjo took an eclectic stance as a way to achieve the harmony (t’angp’yŏng) in the court.

Under the circumstances the orthodox Neo-Confucianism of Chosŏn served as a certain limit for Tasan to develop his thought, especially after the incompatibility between Confucianism and Catholicism was known. Catholicism was not just a matter of heterodoxy, but also a heresy that challenged the established doctrine, Confucianism. In this regard Tasan pursued his study of the classics in two directions: study of Confucian rituals and suggestion of proto-Confucianism.

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199 Concerning the orthodoxy of Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the Confucian classics, skepticism was growing, but it did not shift the paradigm in Chosŏn. Except for a few, such as Pak Sedang (朴世堂, 1629-1703), who was executed for criticizing Zhu Xi’s annotations of the Four Books and whose writings were burnt in 1703, the majority of Chosŏn intellectuals, including sirhak scholars, respected Zhu Xi’s commentaries to some extent, if not entirely. For details, see Deuchler, “Reject the False and Uphold the Straight: Attitudes toward Heterodox Thought in Early Yi Korea.”
(1) Confucian Rituals

Tasan was expecting to be granted an amnesty, and it was urgent for him to clear his name. To do so he had to prove that he was a model Confucian scholar. When his father passed away in 1792, one year after the incident of Chosŏn Catholics burning ancestral tablets, Tasan followed proper, orthodox Confucian mourning ritual. He resigned his office and mourned for two years, observing Confucian procedure, but even that was not enough to clear his name. Being relocated to Kangjin as an exile, Tasan set his mind to writing and worked from morning to night every day. 200 Tasan’s first writing in Kangjin, *Four Commentaries on Mourning Rituals* (喪禮四箋; hereafter, ‘Four Commentaries’) took up the core of the conflict between Confucianism and Catholicism. The sheer volume of the *Four Commentaries* also shows the significance of this work. The *Yŏyudang Collection* consists of seven parts (chip 集). Part Three is entitled “Part on Rites (yejip 禮集)” and has twenty-four volumes. 201 The mourning rituals are the overarching theme from volume one to twenty-two, and the other two volumes also partly deal with it. 202 Tasan himself considered this work significant and recorded that the *Four Commentaries* was the fruit of his pious study of the sages’ works, and that this was his

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200 *YC* 1:18:5b, “Family precepts for my two sons” (*Siia kagye*).

201 *Sangnye sasŏn* consists of four parts: Confucian scholar’s mourning ritual (*sangŭigwang* 喪儀匡), clothing, bedding, and coffin for the dead (*sanggujŏng* 喪具訂), mourning clothes (*sangboksang* 喪服商), and period of each mourning clothes (*sanggibyŏl* 喪期別).

202 Meanwhile ancestor worship is in Volume Twenty-two, capping and wedding rites are in Volume Twenty-three.
masterpiece that should be transmitted to the next generations along with his *Four Commentaries on the Book of Changes* (*Chuyŏk sajŏn* 周易四箋, 1808). 203

Tasan wrote that he expected that his *Four Commentaries* would help its readers trace back to the origin of Confucius’ and Mencius’ thought. 204 But regarding Tasan’s motive for writing on mourning rituals, modern scholars suggest different interpretations. Kim Önjong sees great significance in the fact that Tasan, an accused Catholic, wrote the *Four Commentaries*, 205 while, Martina Deuchler sees no political meaning in Tasan’s work on Confucian mourning rituals. She points out that ritual scholarship (*yehak* 禮學) was at the center of Tasan’s scholarship, and writing on funeral and ancestor worship was a typical start to fulfill human morality, rather than a break with Catholicism. 206

According to Tasan’s family admonitions, which he wrote in 1810, studying the classics had been a long-cherished desire. He had wanted to explore and organize everything in the world since he was in his twenties, and he had kept the same desire until he reached the age of forty, which is 1801 in the Korean way of age counting. It is the same year Tasan was exiled to Changgi and Kangjin. Since he was exiled, he continued, his desire for studying governance and statecraft (*min’gukjisa* 民國之事) had decreased, but his goal in annotating the classics was to examine complicated parts in order to restore the original meaning of the sages. His bad health discouraged him, he said, but he

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203 *YC* 1:18:5b, “Family precepts for my two sons” (*Siia kagye*).

204 *YC* 1:12:36a, “Preface to the *Four Commentaries on Mourning Rituals*” (*Sangnye sajŏn sŏ*).


had recaptured the spirit little by little. Final outcomes also support this statement: the major works that Tasan produced during the first half of his exile are his studies of the classics, including rituals, while his great works on statecraft were completed in the second half, especially from 1817 to 1819.

Tasan’s preface to the Four Commentaries is also noteworthy. Tasan finished the book in 1811, but wrote the preface in the tenth month of 1804. In the preface he argued that although many books on mourning rituals were burnt and the rituals were abolished during the Qin (秦) dynasty, scholars of later generations with insufficient knowledge should not attempt to change the known rituals because that would cause confusion. Tasan continued that he himself was born in a foreign country two thousand years later, but while he was writing the Four Commentaries he ascertained historical evidence in reference to the pre-Qin classics to restore the sages’ intention. This preface shows similarity with his poem of 1805 that I introduced at beginning of this chapter: modestly but confidently Tasan showed his pride as a Confucian scholar with profound knowledge. The temporal closeness between these two pieces implies Tasan’s

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207 YC1:18:13b “Family precepts for Hagyu” (Chŭng Hagyu kagye). This is written in the second month of 1810.

208 This preface is dated as 1804, but recently it was suggested that Tasan revised it sometime later than 1811. Because this preface contains the title of part that Tasan complete later, Kim Porŭm argues that Tasan revised the preface after he completed the sixty volumes of the Four Commentaries in 1811, and did not change the date, 1804. Kim Porŭm, “Yŏyudangiip” ŭi sŏngnip e kwanhan koch’al,” Tasanhak 18 (June 2011): 215. But it also is possible that Tasan had decided the structure of the book in his mind by the time he wrote the preface in 1804 so that he could list all parts in the preface.

209 YC 1:15:35b-36a. In other place, Tasan wrote that in the Spring of second year in Kangjin he read all sorts of works on the scholar’s mourning ritual (sasangnye 士喪禮). YC1:19:19b “With Yun Oesim (Yŏ Yun Oesim).”
motivation for writing on mourning rituals: he had to be known as a civilized Confucian scholar.\footnote{210}{Similarly, examining Tasan’s relationship with Catholicism as well as his poems, Kim Sanghong concludes that Tasan desired to be remembered as a Confucian scholar. Kim Sanghong, \textit{Tasan munhak ūi chaejomyŏng (Reinterpretation of Tasan’s literature)} (Seoul: Tan’guk taehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 2003).}

Deuchler’s argument on the importance of ritual scholarship seems reasonable. But the importance of ritual scholarship does not dismiss the suspicion that Tasan expected a political effect when he chose to write these massive volumes on mourning rituals. Mourning ritual had been one of the topics that Chosŏn scholars debated hotly. The debates had even led to change the political control of the royal court.\footnote{211}{See JaHyun Kim Haboush, “Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea,” in \textit{Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea}, ed. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 46–90.} The way Tasan planned the order of his writings in his collected works hinted that he did considered the political effect. He wrote that he would put his \textit{Lecture on the Book of Songs} (\textit{Sigyŏng kangūi 詩經講義}) at the beginning of the collection of his writings so that King Chŏngjo’s royal comments would be the introduction to his collection.\footnote{212}{\textit{YC} 1:18:5a-b, “Family precepts to my two sons” (\textit{Siija kagye}), 1808.} Also, as Kim Porŭm points out, unlike the organization of other scholars’ collections, he wanted to put the Part on the Classics at the beginning of his collection.\footnote{213}{Kim Porŭm, “Yŏyudangjip ūi sŏngnip e kwanhan koch’al,” 224–226.} As we have seen above, Tasan had been accused of being a Catholic for years before his exile. When he resigned from office and retreated to his hometown, Tasan believed that King Chŏngjo would appoint him to an office. The letters and family precepts that he wrote at the
beginning of his exile in Kangjin shows that he strongly wanted to clear his name.\textsuperscript{214} In sum, the trajectory of his scholarship around the time of turmoil supports the hypothesis that the orientation of his scholarship was formed by his condition—exile. Given the circumstances, writing on the mourning rituals inevitably had a twofold meaning.

I do not mean to argue that all banished officials desired scholarly fame, which was closely related to political power at that time. As we saw in previous chapter, the punishment of exile was rather common by Tasan’s time, and when the political situation was favorable, banished officials could consider their exile as a time to relax. But in Tasan’s case, he was in adverse conditions: the Patriarchs were wielding power in the court and the Southerners were losing ground. As his political future was challenged he faced the danger of being remembered as one who believed in heresy. Tasan was intensely aware of the need to correct his reputation and establish himself among his intellectual colleagues, and desperately wanted to be remembered for his orthodox scholarship. Presenting his knowledge of the Confucian classics and portraying himself as a devout and civilized Confucian scholar who succeeded to the sages’ original teaching was important to achieve that goal.

It may seem a digression from the issue of the rituals into the influence of Catholicism on Tasan’s thought, but one of the most frequently mentioned topics in his

\textsuperscript{214} Regarding Tasan’s desire for other’s recognition, Cho Sŏngŭl’s study is noteworthy. Comparing the Southerners’ (namin) Practical Learning and Japanese kogaku (古学), Cho shows that Tasan and Dazai Shundai (太宰春臺) interpreted a phrase from “Duke Ling of Wei” (衛靈公) in the Analects differently. About “molse 没世” in “君子疾没世而名不稱焉,” Dazai wrote “a gentleman dislikes not winning a reputation even after his death,” while Tasan wrote “a gentleman dislikes not winning a reputation until die” (YC 2: 14:14a). Cho Sŏngŭl comments that this might seem a minor difference in interpretation, but it shows how much Tasan was desperate for achievements. Cho Sŏngŭl, “Kiho namin’ gye sirhak kwa Ilbon kohak ŭi pigyo: Nonno kogimju e nat’anan Chŏng Yagyong kwa Tajai Syundai ŭi kyŏnhae rŭl chungsim ŭro,” Ilbon Sasang 9 (2005): 83.
writings is the concept of the Lord on High (sangje 上帝). Tasan’s concept of sangje is arguably a mixture of Confucian and Catholic ideas, but he used this term to show how human beings achieved a Confucian goal—goodness (sŏn 善)—and this is a big difference between sangje and the Lord of Heaven (ch’ŏnju 天主) of Catholicism.\(^\text{215}\) While ch’ŏnju supposedly creates individual lives and work in the afterlife, Tasan’s sangje does not directly involve in ontogeny, and influences only this world, not the afterlife. Because Tasan’s discussion of sangje remained within the Confucian framework, which postulates that human beings pursue goodness, Kim Hyŏngch’an, a modern scholar, objects that Tasan did not question the fundamental Confucian values, and by doing so Kim implies that this is the limit of Tasan’s thought.\(^\text{216}\) However, we must remember that sangje had been a very traditional issue, of which other Confucian scholars had sought for answers, and by engaging in the discourse from the same perspective with his contemporaries Tasan was speaking to these scholars and participating in the culture of Chosŏn elite.

(2) Proto-Confucianism

Along with his writings on mourning rituals, Tasan’s proto-Confucianism (susahak 洙泗學) was a way to conform Confucianism, and also arguably a strategy for protecting himself. In his writings Tasan often mentioned the term susa (洙泗), the names of two rivers in the region where Confucius taught his pupils, to mean the sage’s teaching. He

\(^{215}\) For the comparison between Confucian sangje and Catholic ch’ŏnju, see Donald Baker, Chosŏn hugi yugyo wa ch’ŏnjugyo ŭi taerip (Conflict between Confucianism and Catholicism in late Chosŏn), trans. Kim Seyun (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1997). Ham Kyujin, Chŏng Yagyong chŏngch’i sasang ŭi chaejomyŏng (P’aju, Kyŏnggido: Han’guk haksul chŏngbo, 2008), 131.

claimed that in his youth the goal of his study was to return to susa with all his might. Tasan expressed his desire to restore the master’s teaching by repeatedly maintaining that contemplation of the original meaning of the sage’s words was important to restore the sage’s Way and governance. Regarding his emphasis on susa, it is argued that Tasan’s inclination toward Han Confucianism shows that he pursued proto-Confucianism. Restoring Confucius’ original intention seems as a matter of course, but it is more complicated than it looks when by doing so one suggests different ideas from Zhu Xi.

Was Tasan’s emphasis on susahak a cautious method of self-protection? Yi Chihyŏng and Yun Sasun believe that Tasan did not pursue Han Confucianism per se, but rather employed Confucius’ authority while he was construing the classics differently from the way they had been understood, especially what was suggested by Zhu Xi. Yun and Yi suggest that borrowing the sages’ authority was a way for Tasan to protect himself from fanatical followers of Zhu Xi. It is true that Tasan promoted the authority of

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217 YC 1:1:15b, “Two poems describing my mind.” Tasan did not mark when he composed these poems. However from the arranged order Cho Sŏngŭl suggests that Tasan wrote this in Spring 1782. Cho Sŏngŭl, Yŏyudangjip ŭi munhŏnhakhŏk yŏn’gu: Siyul mit chammun ŭi yŏndae kojúng ŭl chungsim ŭro (A philological study of Yŏyudangjip), 46.

218 For example, see YC 1:19:35a, “Tap Yi Yŏhong.” Tasan wrote this in the tenth month of 1814. For further discussion on this, see Kim Yŏngho, “Chŏng Yagyong ŭi kyŏnghakkwan,” in Sirhak ŭi ch’ŏrhak (Philosophical foundations of Korean sirhak), ed. Han’guk sasangsa yŏn’guhoe (Seoul: Yemun sŏwŏn, 1996), 337-372.

219 Yi Êrhu, Yi Êrhu chŏnsŏ 1: Tasan ŭi kyŏnghak kwa yŏkhak, ed. Tasanhak yŏn’guwŏn (Seoul: Yemun sŏwŏn, 2000), 46. This part was originally published in Yi Êrhu, Tasan kyŏnghak sasang yŏn’gu (Seoul: Êlyu munhwasa, 1966); Yi Êrhu, Tasan ŭi ihae (Understanding the study of Tasan) (Seoul: Hyŏnamsa, 1974).

his ideas by giving references to the pre-Qin classics. For example, Tasan criticized Zhu Xi’s explanation that equated human nature with principle (li 理). While arguing that Zhu Xi’s concept of principle was influenced by Buddhism, Tasan explained human nature with propensity (kiho 嗜好) arguing that the sages also employed the concept of kiho.

Against the scholars who suggest Tasan had a hidden intention, Kŭm Changt’ae argues that Tasan’s advocacy of proto-Confucianism was based on purely scholarly intentions. Kŭm proceeds from the premise that Tasan considered classical scholarship (kyŏnghak 經學) the foundation of his thought, not just a methodology, to explain the reason why Tasan pursued proto-Confucianism by analyzing his intellectual genealogy. Kŭm argues that Tasan was following his Southerner predecessor, Yun Hyu (尹鑴, 1617-1680), who had annotated the classics differently from Zhu Xi. Taman inherited Yun Hyu’s and other Southerners’ critical view toward Zhu Xi’s scholarship, but the problem was that Yun Hyu was charged as a traitor to Confucian culture (samunnanjŏk 斯文亂賊) and executed for his heterodox ideas. To say Tasan feared such an ill fate, it is in order to ask whether the cultural and political situation that Yun Hyu experienced remained similar in Tasan’s time. Was it really dangerous to have different ideas from Zhu Xi to the extent that to disagree with Zhu Xi one needed to borrow the sages’ authority? Unlike King Chŏngjo, who balanced out factions by emphasizing both Zhu

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222 Setton shows that the critical ideas of Southerners, such as Yun Hyu, Yi Ik, and Kwŏn Ch’ŏlsin, had a significant influence on Tasan’s thought. Mark Setton, *Chŏng Yagyong: Korea’s Challenge to Orthodox Neo-Confucianism*, SUNY Series in Korean Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), Chapter One.
Xi’s annotations and the Six Classics, King Sunjo was powerless, especially in the early years of his reign, and not able to protect the Southerners from the Patriarchs.

Thus Tasan had to protect himself, and there is good evidence in Tasan and Munsan Yi Chaeŭi’s correspondence on human nature. Tasan argued that four feelings were the beginning of four virtues, rather than the four virtues itself. Munsan wrote to Tasan that he followed Zhu Xi’s interpretation and thus disagreed with Tasan. Tasan defended himself by arguing that his interpretation was based on the classics, and noted that by advancing an argument that differed from Zhu Xi he was risking his life. Tasan suggested that Munsan should ponder upon it so that he could eventually be enlightened, and if Munsan still did not find Tasan’s interpretation convincing they should not discuss about this anymore because of what happened to their predecessor (sŏnbæ 先輩). Tasan did not give any specific name as to who the predecessor was, but it is clear that the “predecessor” refers to the scholars who were punished because of their “heretic” ideas, such as Yun Hyu. Studying the Confucian classics, including the rituals, was a politically sensitive issue, and by claiming to restore the sages’ original teaching through proto-Confucianism, Tasan could show the depth and breadth of his scholarship. Also when his ideas differed from those of Zhu Xi, he could develop his own interpretation with

\[YC \text{ 1:19:35a, “Reply to Yi Yŏhong” (Tap Yi Yŏhong). Yŏhong is Yi Chaeŭi’s courtesy name, and Munsan is his penname. Six letters to Munsan are found in this volume. Because this is the only one in which Tasan noted that Yi Yŏhong’s name is Yi Chaeŭi, and also because it appears before other letters, we can conclude that this preceded others. Tasan did not date this letter, but did the second letter as the tenth month of 1814. Tasan and Munsan met in the third month of 1814. Thus this letter must be written between Spring and Fall 1814. For more on their exchange of opinions, see Chŏng Yagyong and Yi Chaeŭi, } \text{Tasan kwa Munsan ŭi insŏng nonjaeng.}\]

\[Munsan was a Patriarch. Despite the turmoil of factional strife, some late Chosŏn scholars exchanged their thought with people affiliated with other faction. This tendency was observed more in the vicinity of the capital, and thus they called “the capital-based aristocracy” (kyŏnghwasa jok 京華士族).\]
authority. This, however, was not perfect protection from other’s criticism. And as a result, Tasan was careful when he revealed his “different” ideas.225

**Conclusion**

The vast corpus of works on the Confucian classics that Tasan produced with his pupils in Kangjin shows how his exile influenced the theme of his works and also how he perceived himself in his exile. Previous studies characterize exile literature by its criticism of and resistance to social issues.226 Regarding Tasan’s literature and studies on statecraft, many modern scholars emphasize that he criticized “premodern” Chosŏn society and read Tasan as an innovative “modern” scholar. But his exile and the socio-political condition of the early nineteenth century played a significant role in shaping his scholarship more than noticed. Tasan thought of himself as a yangban in exile, and for him the most urgent task was to vindicate himself completely and be freed from exile.

To achieve this goal Tasan had to affirm his commitment to Confucianism. Therefore, while being in exile Tasan devoted himself to writing on the Confucian classics, including works on mourning rituals and statecraft. Pursuing the Confucian

225 Regarding Tasan’s view of Zhu Xi, modern scholars’ stances vary. In earlier days scholars emphasize the differences between their thoughts and argue that Tasan was post-Zhu Xi (*tal-jujahakchŏk* 脫朱子學的). Yi Usŏng sticks to this opinion even in 2000. But recently other scholars notice the similarities between the thoughts of Zhu Xi and Tasan, and it is suggested that in his later years Tasan’s attitude toward Zhu Xi evolved into a more favorable one. Thus we need to distinguish in which way Tasan inherited or criticized Zhu Xi. See Han Ugŭn et al., ed., *Chŏng Tasan yŏn’gu uii hyŏnhwang* (*The current state of the study on Tasan*), Taewu haksul ch’ongsŏ (Seoul: Munŭmsa, 1985); Yi Usŏng, “Tasan ŭi kyŏnghak kwa kyŏngsehak ŭi kwan’gye,” *Tasanhak* 1 (2000): 10-18; Tasan haksul munhwa chaedan, “Chwadam: Tasan, chujahak kūrigo sŏhak,” *Tasanhak* 2 (2001): 210-274. For an overview of the debate on the relationship between Tasan, Zhu Xi, and Western Learning, see Paek Minjŏng, *Chŏng Yagyong ŭi ch’ŏrhak: Chu Hŭi wa Mat’eo Rich’i rul nŏmŏ saeroun ch’egye ro* (*Tasan’s philosophy: To a new system of thought going beyond Zhu Xi and Matteo Ricci*). (Seoul: Ihaksa, 2007).

226 So Chaeyŏng, *Chosŏnju munhak ŭi t’amgu* (*Study on Chosŏn literature*), 140-41.
classics was a way to establish himself as an orthodox Confucian and prove that he was civilized. By writing on Confucian rituals he refuted the accusation of being a Catholic and justified his position as a civilized scholar who was abiding by orthodoxy. What is also important here is that he carefully tuned his language so he could protect himself from further accusation, and also communicate with his contemporary scholars. Being sent into exile he chose to remain within the existing discourse framework, and tried to situate himself in it. In sum, through his scholarship, Tasan aimed for cultural and political leadership, and he tried to present himself as a paragon of the Confucian scholar. Only once Tasan restored his name as a civilized scholar could he regain other privileges, such as social and political status.

In Kangjin, Tasan could be more civilized than other men because he had held high offices in the central government, and also his scholarship was far more advanced than others.’ Yet Tasan was deprived because he was charged as a Catholic and exiled. He could not access power or intellectual resources as much as his colleagues in the capital did. Recognizing that he was cut off from the “civilized” capital, he discussed issues that distinguished him, an exiled scholar, from other yangban in the capital. Tasan’s dual position—civilized and deprived at the same time—is an important context to understand his thought. In the following chapter I will explore the other side of Tasan’s position: a peripheral scholar.
Chapter 4. Exile on the Periphery

I am losing all my friends since I was exiled. People have already forsaken me as if I was old straw sandals. My warm feelings toward them dwindle every day as I begin to be estranged and forget them little by little. Still, even as I suffer, traces of delightful association remain vivid in my eyes and heart.227

In his early days in Kangjin, unlike the time he was demoted to Kŭmjŏng, Tasan was officially punished with exile and, thus, relatively isolated. Having trouble to find a host family he had wandered from one place to another for years until he finally moved into the Tasan Thatched Cottage in 1808. He renovated the cottage and accepted more pupils. He settled down, but he was still an exile and his future was uncertain. His relocation raised the issue of center and periphery not only in the geographical, but also in the cultural and political senses. He revealed his anxiety about being an exile on the periphery, and yearned for the life in the capital. This chapter focuses on Tasan’s understanding of center and periphery of Chosŏn society.

Modern scholars who have studied Tasan’s thought, as well as that of other Practical Learning scholars, have emphasized their social reformist ideas. Tasan, especially, has been projected as a former official who devoted himself to relieve the burdens of ordinary people. It is true that he embraced the hardship of ordinary people and suggested how to govern better. But he also modified his reformist ideas during his

227 YC 1:18:10b, “Family precepts for my two sons” (Siija kagye). He wrote this in 1808 at Tasan library.
exile. To understand this seemingly contradictory development in his thought, we should examine his personal writings as well as his works on statecraft. Kim T’aejun suggests that the changes in Tasan’s thought arose because he was a highbred person, and his reform ideas were therefore not thorough. Mark Setton also suggests, in analyzing Tasan’s works, that Tasan’s exile was a watershed, and that he changed from an idealist to a realist and, thus, stopped writing about radical changes. While I agree with Setton, I argue that it was not only his exile per se, but also the change of political circumstances, such as the death of King Chŏngjo and the dominance of the Patriarchs that worked to transform his ideas. In other words, Tasan’s exile affected his view; and he reconsidered his views on social issues because he realized the limitations of his situation and the limits of his capability. Below I will analyze his personal writings, such as letters to his family, family precepts (kagye 家諗) and poems, to examine his family politics on residence and occupation, and expand it to his understanding of Chosŏn society.

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228 For example, Tasan modified his ideas on social status and land reform while he was exiled. Kŭm Chang’t’ae and Cho Sŏngŭl argue that Tasan wanted to reform the system of social status. Kŭm Changt’ae, *Silch’ŏnjŏk iron’ga Chŏng Yagyong* (Seoul: Ikkullio, 2005), 376; Cho Sŏngŭl, “Chŏng Yagyong ŭi sinbunje kaehyŏngnon,” *Tongbang hakchi* 56 (1986): 130. Song Chunho raises an objection and argues that the basis of Tasan’s thoughts on social status was difference (pyŏndŭng 辨等). Song Chunho, *Chosŏn sahoea yŏn’gu: Chosŏn sahoe ŭi kujo wa sŏngkyŏk mit kū pyŏnch’ŏn e kwanhan yŏn’gu* (Study on Chosŏn social history: The structure, characteristics, and transformation of Chosŏn society) (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1995), 9–14. I agree with Song Chunho because Tasan believed that human individuals possessed different capability. Tasan argued that passing the civil service examination and taking up a public office qualified the person as a gentleman, and thus the person could be a leader. Classifying the status of men into high and low categories, Tasan continued that because the posterity of gentlemen had preserved the Way for generations and pursued studies and propriety, even though they had not passed the examinations to be officials they also were noble. *YC* 5:23:1b. “Distinguishing high and low (Pyŏndŭng),” Yejŏn 6-jo, *Mongmin simsŏ.*


Tasan’s letters and family precepts are the main primary sources that we will explore in this chapter. *The Collection of Yŏyudang* contains twenty-six of Tasan’s letters to his sons.\(^{231}\) Tasan did not note dates for some letters. Among those dated, the first was written on the second day of the third month of 1801 while he was heading to exile in Changgi, and the last letter was written on the seventeenth day of the sixth month of 1816.\(^{232}\) Since the collection also contains letters that Tasan did not date, it is possible that he wrote more letters after the seventeenth day of the sixth month of 1816. In Tasan’s time, letters were the main form of communication between people at a distance. Being away from his family Tasan advised and admonished his sons through letters. Naturally the content of his letters covers various issues such as immediate requests as well as long term plans, but his thoughts on being on the periphery appeared repeatedly as a constant theme. Due to the semi-public nature of the letters in his time, Tasan wrote his letters carefully, and still his letters to his sons showed the differences between his thoughts toward the general audience and those for his own family. *The Yŏyudang Collection* also contains nine sets of family precepts, which were written between 1808 and 1810.\(^{233}\) In both letters and family precepts Tasan advised his sons on various topics, but the overarching theme is how to live as an exile’s family.

**A Peripheral Scholar**

In premodern Korea geographical distance from the center—from the king, court and capital—was also a measure of civilizational difference. Chosŏn had a centralized

\(^{231}\) All these are collected in the *YC* 1:21.

\(^{232}\) *YC* 1:21:1a-b and *YC* 1:21:8a-b. The first letter consists of several parts that he wrote on different days. It might indicate that he could not afford a courier as much as he wanted.

\(^{233}\) *YC* 1:18.
government, but Confucian culture developed at different paces depending on the location. The capital city functioned as a center of political power and also new knowledge, while a province was perceived as not only a locality (chiyŏk 地域), but also a periphery (chibang 地方), opposed to the capital city.\(^{234}\) For example, scholars in the local areas had more difficulty to obtain information or new materials than their counterparts in the capital. Ch’oe Han’gi (崔漢綺, 1803-1877), who was known for his wide reading and vast amount of writings on various topics including European science and technologies, wrote that once he had moved into the capital city, he decided to reside within the city for the rest of his life because it would allow him to easily access to new books and knowledge from other countries, such as China.\(^{235}\) Banished officials shared the inconvenience of being on the periphery. While he was in Kangjin, Tasan also had limited access to new knowledge, and his relocation as well as the new environment influenced his self-perception.

Having drifted away from the “civilized” capital, an ideal space, Tasan perceived himself as different from other yangban in the capital. From his rural residence, Tasan was afraid of losing his privileges and prestige as a member of the urban elite. Tasan could communicate with other scholars; but due to the geographical distance and the political disadvantage of being an exile, his influence was far more limited than before.

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\(^{234}\) See Yu Ponghak, “Chosŏn hugi kyŏngwha sajok ŭi taedu wa ‘sirhak’ (The rise of scholars of the civilized capital city and Practical Learning in late Chosŏn),” in Tasi, sirhak iran muŏt in’ga, ed. Hallim taeakkyyo Han’gukhak yŏn’gyuso (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2007), 95–123.

\(^{235}\) Yi Kŏnch’ang, “The story of Ch’oe Han’gi (Hyegang Ch’oejongjŏn)” in Yi Kŏnch’ang’s dispersed draft (Myŏngmidang san’go 明美堂散稿), unpublished; quoted in Yi Usŏng, “Hyegang Ch’oe Han’gi ŭi sahoejŏk ch’ŏji wa Sŏul saenghwal,” in Che 4-hoe Tongyanghak kuke haksul hoeŭi, ed. Sŏnggyun’gwan taeakkyyo taedong munhwa yŏn’guwŏn (Seoul: Sŏnggyun’gwan taeakkyyo taedong munhwa yŏn’guwŏn, 1990), 255–262.
One of his letters to his sons supports this inference. In the letter, Tasan urges his sons to read his books and spread his ideas rather than to perform elaborate ancestor worship for him.\(^{236}\)

Examining how he described his place of exile will help us learn his self-perception. In his writing the image of Kangjin changed as time passed. One of the presuppositions of Chŏlla Province appears in Tasan’s “the Introduction to the *Four Commentaries on Mourning Rites.*”\(^ {237}\) In this piece Tasan described Kangjin as a southern border area of the state of Paekche dynasty (18 B.C.E.-660 C.E.), and noted that its customs were very undeveloped and different from that of the capital city of Chosŏn. The area had been despised not just because it was a locality, but because it was in Chŏlla Province. This reflects the history of the Three Kingdoms. The Silla dynasty (57 B.C.E.-935 C.E.) brought Paekche dynasty and Koguryŏ dynasty (37 B.C.E.-668 C.E.) under its rule in 660 and 668, respectively. Many Paekche and Koguryŏ people chose to serve the Unified Silla dynasty, but there were “remnant subjects” (*yumin* 遺民) who refused to serve the new dynasty and attempted to restore their old dynasty. Their attempts ended in failure, and people of the old territory of Paekche and Koguryŏ received the reputation of being defiant and less developed.

Unified Silla lost its control over the Korean Peninsula toward the end of the ninth century, and again three separate states—Later Paekche, Later Koguryŏ, and Silla—competed with each other. Wang Kŏn (王建, 877-943) unified the three countries and

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\(^{236}\) *YC* 1:18:5b, “Family precepts to my two sons” (*Siija kagye*), 1808.

\(^{237}\) *YC* 1:12:36a, “The introduction to the *Four Commentaries on Mourning Rites*” (*Sangnye sajŏn sŏd*), 1804.
founded the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392). After ruling the new dynasty for more than two decades (r.918-943), Wang Kŏn left Ten Injunctions (siphun 十訓) to advice on how to govern the country. In the eighth injunction he criticized the people of the southwestern area of the peninsula, which had been the territory of (Later) Paekche and would be demarcated as Chŏlla Province later, and warned his successors not to appoint people from this region arguing that they are rebellious.238

As his relocation in Chŏlla Province continued, Tasan did not remain as a mere observer but became a mediator between the people of Chŏlla Province and non-Chŏlla people. Through his writings for the public, he tried to change the prejudice against Chŏlla Province. In the year after he wrote the above introduction, Tasan wrote a series of three essays on Kangjin. Taking the name of Kangjin in the eighteenth century, he entitled the series “Regarding T’amjin (T’amjindae 耽津對),” and developed his arguments in the form of conversation between a person from northern area (pukpang chi 北方之人) and himself.239 In the opening of each essay, the northern man mentioned a specific prejudice against the Chŏlla area and concerned about Tasan’s safety. Hostile climate, ill-natured people, and snakes and centipedes were raised as topics, respectively, and then Tasan delivered what he actually observed to repudiate such stereotypes. When Tasan used the term, “northern area,” in this series, he used this term in a relative sense rather than an absolute sense. In other words, although he wrote “northern,” it did not literally mean the northern area of the Korean Peninsula. Tasan mentioned the northern


239 YC 1:22:19a-20b.
area of the peninsula per se only at the end of the first article, and when he discussed the
location and the length of daylight in different seasons he compared Kangjin and the
capital. Thus the person from the northern area might mean non-Chŏlla people, including
people of the capital city, which is also north of Kangjin.

The first essay is the most detailed and it also provides comparison between
Kangjin and other parts of the country. While discussing the climate and farm products of
Kangjin in the first essay, Tasan defended against the prejudice that Chŏlla was an
insalubrious place. He pointed out that even for these objective matters it was so hard to
refute wrongfully accepted rumors, and finished the first article emphasizing how hard it
was to correct biased views on subjective questions such as the local people’s wisdom
and stupidity, achievements and misdeeds. By doing so he implied that the area had been
a victim of unfair prejudice.240 In the second article Tasan asserted that Kangjin people,
unlike the preconceptions about them being sneaky and hardhearted, were loyal and
benevolent. On the surface he was sharing feelings of Kangjin people and speaking for
them to argue that they were falsely accused.

The space, Kangjin, played a significant role in his self-perception. Despite his
pride in being a civilized scholar, Tasan thought of himself as deprived. Tasan’s deprived
state in Kangjin is highlighted in the set of family precepts that he wrote in 1810,241 in
which he reflected on how civilized Chosŏn was by comparing China and Korea. He
distinguished the capital and local areas of each country, and described China as a land
where culture was so widely developed throughout the country. Thus, even a man who

240 YC 1:22:19a-b, “Regarding T’amjin” (T’amjindae), 1805.

241 YC 1:18:7b-8a. “Family precepts to my two sons” (Siia kagye), 1810.
lived in a remote village could become a Confucian sage. Tasan thought that the cultural advancement of Chosŏn, on the contrary, was geographically limited so that one could witness wild lands if he went out just a few miles from the capital city.

Tasan’s comparison of China and Korea is brief but noteworthy for a couple of reasons. First, Tasan thought that both countries had a civilized capital city. In the Confucian world order, the Confucian center had the following qualities: Confucian scholarship carried on by the Han people in the “Central Plains” (chungwŏn 中原; Ch. zhongyuan) in China. As Chosŏn was incorporated into the Confucian world order, Korean people accepted that China was the center and Korea was one of the “Eastern barbarians” (tongi 東夷) whose cultural development was behind that of China. Thus China had been a main standard for Chosŏn scholars to evaluate how developed their own country was in Confucian terms—the only terms that mattered. Since then, however, Korea had accepted and developed Confucian culture, and also witnessed that non-Han ethnic groups had emerged and replaced existing Chinese dynasties in the Central Plains.

The dynastic change from the Ming to Manchu Qing in the mid-seventeenth century was an appalling development for Chosŏn Confucians because they had regarded the Manchus as barbarians. Perhaps more importantly, they had twice invaded Korea,

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242 Cho Sŏngūl points out that sino-centrism consists of ethnic, geographic, and cultural ideas. Analyzing Tamhŏn Hong Taeyong’s (洪大容, 1731-1783) thoughts he argues that the late Chosŏn scholars, including sirhak scholars, freed themselves from the geographic and ethnic sino-centrism, but remained within the framework of cultural sino-centrism. Cho Sŏngūl, “Hong Taeyong ŭi yŏksa insik: Hwaigwan ŭul chungsim ŭro,” Chindan hakpo 79 (1995): 215–216.

243 The Three Kingdoms accepted and taught Confucianism. Koguryŏ (高句麗, 37B.C.E.-669C.E.) established Great Academy (T'aehak 太學) in 372, and Silla (新羅, 57B.C.E.-935C.E.) instituted National Academy (Kukhak 國學) in 682. Following Han China, Paekche (百濟, 18B.C.E.-660C.E.) raised up Experts in the Five Classics (ogyŏng paksā 五經博士). They also started paying tribute to China.
1627 and 1636-37, bringing great devastation to the northern half of the country. As time passed, however, more and more Chosŏn scholars admitted that the Qing not only had the political upper hand in East Asia, but was also a transmitter of Confucian civilization. The Qing dynasty could not enjoy such absolute authority as past Chinese dynasties had, but by the late eighteenth century it had established a certain degree of authority as a cultural entity. In this context, Tasan’s high evaluation of Qing culture and his pride regarding Korea’s advancement show that he advocated the cultural development of both the Qing and the Chosŏn. A group of scholars shared interests and exchanged their opinions. They associated with each other across their factional affiliation. Because they lived in the capital city or its vicinity, they were called the capital-based aristocracy (kyŏnghwa sajok 京華士族).

Second, what was important for Tasan to gauge the civilizational level of a country was whether civilization had spread thoroughly, and he distinguished the capital and provincial areas for this purpose. Tasan, who in his earlier days had once shared with many other Korean intellectuals the idea that Chosŏn was a mini-civilizational center (so-junghwa 小中華),244 started pointing out underdevelopment in the local areas. That is, Tasan perceived Kangjin and other local areas as important parts of Chosŏn society. Emphasizing his concern about the level of cultural development in the countryside and considering them an important factor in evaluating the civilizational level of the country, he fitted the local areas into the larger frame of Chosŏn Confucian civilization. Tasan had served as a local official before, but he emphasized the importance of local areas only after he was exiled.

244 YC1:8:5b, “Answer on geography” (Chirich’aek), 1789.
Third, Tasan highly evaluated the development of China, but he had not visited the country himself, and his opinion was based on second-hand experience. How should we interpret this? While Chosŏn envoys learned in person about the newest developments in the Qing dynasty, many Chinese books, such as The Four Qing Imperial Collections (Siku Quanshu 四庫全書; completed in 1782) flooded into Chosŏn society. Hence general interest in Qing civilization increased among Chosŏn intellectuals, and a group of scholars even maintained that people should learn from contemporary China. This new trend was named Northern Learning (pukhak 北學). As one of the most well-known Northern Learning scholars, Pak Chega (朴齊家, 1750-1805) writes, the term Northern Learning was taken from the Mencius, and it originally referred to the story of a Chinese man who left his home country and went to the north to learn Confucius’s ideas. While the original Northern Learning aimed to advance Confucian scholarship, the Chosŏn version of Northern Learning targeted the improvement of ordinary people’s way of life as well.

The Northern Learning scholars’ appreciation of Qing civilization was not limited to Confucian scholarship, but to convince their contemporaries why Chosŏn should learn from the Qing they adopted conventional Confucian logic. In his Treatise on Learning from the North (Pukhagū 北學議), Pak Chega stressed the fact that although the

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245 Regarding the emergence of scholars who maintained to learn from the Qing, a modern scholar, Yu Ponghak analyzes that it was a break from the mainstream of Chosŏn intellectual community, which argued to conquest the Qing. Yu Ponghak, Yŏnam Ilp’ a pukhak sasang yŏn’gu (A study of Yŏnam school’s Northern Learning thought (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1995), 14–19.

246 Pak Chega visited China in 1778 as a member of Chosŏn envoy. Returning from China, he recorded his experience, and entitled the writing Treatise on Learning from the North (Pukhagū 北學議). In his introduction to it Pak writes that he took the title from “Tengwengong (藤文公上)” in Mencius.
“barbarian” Manchus had marauded the excellent Chinese civilization of the Ming, they had been successfully carrying it on and even developed it further.\(^{247}\) Another key figure in Northern Learning, Pak Chiwŏn (朴趾源, 1737-1805), also wrote that there was no reason to refuse to learn from the Qing because the Qing civilization was the same Chinese civilization that the Ming had developed. Although the Manchu rulers took over the Central Plains, he argued, not only the major clans and people but also the Confucian scholarship and institutions of China remained the same.\(^{248}\) In his writings, Tasan often mentioned books written by Northern Learning scholars, such as Pak Chiwŏn’s *Jehol Diary* (*Yŏrha ilgi* 熱河日記) and Pak Chega’s *Treatise on Learning from the North*. For example, Tasan emphasized the need to learn from China and to adapt Chinese institutions in the introduction to his *Deathbed Petition for Governing* (*Kyŏngse yup’yo*).\(^{249}\) His high evaluation of Qing China can be seen as the influence of the Northern Learning scholars’ problématique.

The Northern Learning scholars were not the only ones who advocated the Qing civilization. The preceding Southerners also had high regard for the Qing culture, but from a different angle.\(^{250}\) While Northern Learning scholars relied on the Confucian legacy and the eminence of Chinese civilization from the past, well-known Southerners

\(^{247}\) Pak Chega, “Chonjuron” (尊周論) in *Pukhagūi*.

\(^{248}\) Pak Chiwŏn, “Ilisin sup’il” (駭迅隨筆) in *Jehol Diary* (*Yŏrha Ilgi 熱河日記*). Pak Chiwŏn visited China in 1780 and recorded his experience in *the Jehol Diary*.

\(^{249}\) *YC* 1: 12: 42a “Pangnye ch’obon sŏ.” *Pangnye ch’obon* is the original title of *Kyŏngse yup’yo*.

\(^{250}\) Northern Learning scholars and the Southerners were not rivalry per se. Northern Learning scholars refer to those who argued to learn from China, while Southerners was a political faction. Despite factional strife, scholars of similar interests associated with each other across factional affiliation.
averted their thoughts from the matter of cultural superiority. Examining seventeenth-century Southerners, JaHyun Kim Haboush points out that some Chosŏn scholars, especially the Southerners, imagined Chosŏn as a polity “independent of and separated from the larger civilization.” Sŏngho Yi Ik (星湖 李滉, 1681-1763) was one of these Southerners. Sŏngho rejected the distinction between the civilized and the barbarian and thus refused the antipathy against the “barbarian,” including the Qing. By evading the topic of the civilized and the barbarian Sŏngho advocated the sovereignty of East Asian countries over the superiority of the “civilized.”

As we saw in the previous chapter, however, Tasan discussed the matter of the civilized and barbarian, and suggested the possibility of the barbarian’s transformation into the civilized. By showing ideas close to the Northern Learning scholars Tasan translated the spatial differences between Korea and China, and also Kangjin and the capital city into temporality, and understood the development of Confucian civilization in a vertical typology. Paying attention to the spatial differences between China and Korea shows that Tasan was not free from the idea of civilizational hierarchy.

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251 I do not mean that all Southerners refuted cultural sino-centrism. Ch’ae Chegong (1720-1799) and Chŏng Pŏmjo (1723-1801), for example, agreed to the idea. See Cho Kwang, “Pŏnam Ch’ae Chegong ŭi sŏhakkwan yŏn’gu,” Sach’ong 17-18 (1973).


253 Sŏngho is one of Yi Ik’s pennames.


256 Andrew Sartori explains the verticality of the typology as the translation of spatial and the
Lastly, problematizing the unbalanced development of Chosŏn, he targeted the rural areas for further cultural development through maps, roads, infrastructure, etc.\(^{257}\) Tasan’s focus was to know the present situation of Chosŏn correctly and improve it—in terms of both Confucian scholarship and techniques—rather than to claim that Chosŏn was the civilizational center based on the state already achieved.\(^{258}\) In sum, the experience of exile on the periphery expanded Tasan’s previously capital-centered view to a one including marginalized local areas. Tasan argued that Chosŏn and China had equally developed their capital cities, but that the local areas of the two countries showed significant differences in terms of cultural development. Pointing out the underdevelopment of local areas in Chosŏn Tasan emphasized the historicity of civilization and also revealed that he perceived that he was living on a cultural “periphery.”

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\(^{257}\) Functional difference into a temporally ordered hierarchy. Sartori also points out that a civilization incorporates within itself a historicist framework. Andrew Sartori, “Robert Redfield’s Comparative Civilization Project and the Political Imagination of Postwar America,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 51.

\(^{258}\) TC 1:11:11b-12a, “Kiyeron 3.” Tasan did not date when he wrote this treatise. Cho Sŏngŭl suggests that this is written sometime between 1799 and the second month of 1801. Cho Sŏngŭl, *Yŏyudangjip ŭi munhŏnhakhŏk yŏn’gu: Siyul mit chammun ŭi yŏndaes kojung ŭl chungsim ŭro* (A philological study of *Yŏyudangjip*), Yŏnse kukhak ch’ongsŏ 44 (Seoul: Hyean, 2004), 259.
An Exile and His Ruined Family: The Issue of Residence and Occupation

Years later Tasan expanded his discussion of Chŏlla in his “Circular letter to raise a righteous army (ŭibyŏng 義兵) of Chŏlla Province.”\(^{259}\) The people of P’yŏngan Province rebelled in 1812, and although the Chosŏn central government dispatched troops they were not able to suppress the rebels for three months.\(^{260}\) Learning the news of the rebellion, Tasan wrote this circular letter to mobilize a “righteous army” in Chŏlla.\(^{261}\) Tasan developed his argument by mentioning his lack of ability, as many other writers did as an indication of modesty in that time, and yet urged other people to join the army for the great cause. Tasan started this letter by describing Chŏlla Province as deprived compared to other provinces: in comparison with Ch’ungch’ŏng Province it was farther from the capital; and compared with Kyŏngsang Province it had fewer people who rose to offices in the central government.\(^{262}\) He continued that despite these problems Chŏlla Province had been a place of loyal subjects and righteous men, and urged its people to raise a righteous army once again as it had done in the past.

\(^{259}\) YC 1:22:14b-16a, “Circular letter to raise a righteous army of Chŏlla Province” (Chŏllado ch’angūi t’ongmun 全羅道 倡義通文), 1812. Ŭibyŏng is a form of resistance emerged at national crisis. Unlike official army, which was organized and run by the central government, ŭibyŏng was led by local elites, such as yangban or Buddhist monks, who voluntarily participated in. See Michael J. Seth, A History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 147, 255.

\(^{260}\) This is known as Hong Kyŏngnae (洪景來, 1771-1812) Rebellion.

\(^{261}\) Tasan did not raise the righteous army because the government troops subdued the rebel.

\(^{262}\) Tasan wrote that people of the Western region had been oppressed and could not rise to high offices. YC 1:5:1b, “Facing a drink on a summer day” (Haildaeju 夏日對酒). This is written in 1804. Regarding the regional discrimination Sun Joo Kim suggests that it was result of controlling the size of the central elite. Sun Joo Kim, ed., The Northern Region of Korea (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2010), 12.
Being loyal and righteous are important Confucian virtues. Does Tasan’s high evaluation of Chŏlla mean that he perceived the region differently from the traditional view and regarded it as civilized? Although he highlighted the Confucian virtue of Chŏlla people, in his circular letter Tasan asserted that people of the Chŏlla area had not benefitted from Confucian civilization. He even described Chŏlla people as living in a remote countryside (piin 鄉人) and not even good enough to be in the low strata (hayŏl 下列) of Chosŏn society. Thus the circular letter is an expression of not only his righteous indignation, but also the deprived position of Chŏlla people and himself, who lived with them. It does not mean that he transformed into an ordinary local man. He accepted the fact that he was relocated to Kangjin and revealed a sense of belonging to the region, but he identified himself as a member of elite in that locality, someone who eventually would return to the center.

While he exerted himself to defend Kangjin in his official statements, his personal writings carry emphasis on his concern of being on the periphery, and of feeling deprived. Tasan’s transformation into an exile naturally led to concern about the fate of his family, especially his descendants. Before examining Tasan’s thought on exiles and their families, it is in order to look at how Chosŏn yangban controlled the size of the yangban class.

Yangban originally referred to people who passed the civil service examination and became civilian officials (tongban 東班, the eastern ranks) or military officials (sŏban 西班, the western ranks). From the early Koryŏ dynasty (高麗, 918-1392) yangban had distinguished themselves from ordinary people, and by the early Chosŏn period yangban were established as the ruling social status that had access to political and intellectual

\[263\] YC 1:22:15b.
power and privileges.\textsuperscript{264} As time passed, the scope of yangban expanded to the officials’
direct line of descendants, who were eligible for taking the examination and being
appointed to office.\textsuperscript{265} The problem was that the number of yangban rapidly increased by
the mid-fifteenth century,\textsuperscript{266} while government offices did not. As the competition for the
posts became fierce, the privileged weeded out their competitors to protect their own
interests. First, they stripped off half-blooded yangbans’ eligibility to take the
examination. Yangban was a \textit{de jure} open stratum because commoners (sŏin 庶人) were
allowed to take the examinations.\textsuperscript{267} Commoners, however, usually did not have the
economic capability to abandon their work and dedicate themselves to study for years
preparing for the civil service examination.\textsuperscript{268} Meanwhile sŏol (庶孽), the children
between a yangban man and a secondary wife, had relative monetary capability to focus
on study, but they were prohibited from taking the examinations. As a result being a
yangban was \textit{de facto} hereditary, and to sustain the status the descendants needed to pass

\textsuperscript{264} Yi Sŏngmu, \textit{Chosŏn Ch’ogi Yangban Yŏn’gu} (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1995), 395.

\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., 368.


\textsuperscript{267} Terms such as sŏin (庶人) and yangin (良人) were used to refer to the people between
yangban and the base people (ch’ŏnmin 賤民). As Song Chunho distinguishes to become a sŏin
means a yangban lost the privileged status, while to become a yangin means a base people
became a commoner. Song Chunho, \textit{Chosŏn sahoea yŏn’gu: Chosŏn sahoe ui kujo wa sŏngkyŏk
mit kŭ pyŏnch’ön e kwanhan yŏn’gu} (Study on Chosŏn social history: The structure,
characteristics, and transformation of Chosŏn society), 208.

\textsuperscript{268} According to Song Chunho, people prepared for 25-30 years to pass the civil service
examination. Song Chunho, “Chosŏn sidae ui munkwa e kwanhan yŏn’gu” (unpublished, 1975),
p.66; quoted from Yi Sŏngmu, \textit{Chosŏn ch’ogi yangban yŏn’gu}, 59. Yi Sŏngmu points out that
even for commoners who had economic power, it still was not easy to take the examination and
become an official because an examinee from a family which did not have a Jr.9 or higher rank
official (hyŏn’gwan 顯官) for four generations was required to submit three letters of
the examination. Because people who met both requirements of heredity and achievement could pass the civil service examination and become an official, it is pointed out that the Chosŏn yangban class was a mixture of aristocracy and bureaucracy.  

Second, they eliminated those unfit. For example, the primary legal code of the Chosŏn dynasty, The Great Code of State Administration (Kyŏngguk taejŏn 經國大典) stipulates various grounds on which certain yangban descendants would forfeit to take civil service examination. Losing eligibility meant that they could not sustain their yangban status any more. The punishment of a “ruined family” (p’yejok 廢族) was another method to achieve this goal. A ruined family was a former yangban lineage who had lost the privilege of taking the examinations. For instance, when an official was sentenced for banishment, he forfeited his government posts and official ranks (p’umgye 品階). His name was expunged from the list of government officials (sap’an 仕版), and more importantly, his family became a ruined family. It was less severe than the punishment of an “extirpated family” (myŏlchok 滅族), which killed all the male members of the family, but still was a heavy punishment.

In Chosŏn law, the main classification of people was the commoners (yangmin 良民) and the base people (ch’ŏnmin 賤民), but in reality it was yangban and non-

269 Palais, “Confucianism and the Aristocratic/Bureaucratic Balance in Korea.”
270 Yi Sŏngmu, Han’guk ūi kwagŏ chedo (The civil service examination system of Korea) (P’aju, Kyŏnggi-do: Han’guk haksul chŏngbo, 2004), 217. See also Yi Sŏngmu, Chosŏn ch’ogyi yangban yŏn’gu.
271 The Great Code of State Administration was compiled in 1466 and enforced from 1485 after several revisions.
272 As we have seen in the previous chapter yangban have an original definition and an extended definition. Here, following conventional usage, yangban refers to the descendants of officials.
Yangban. Song Chunjo points out that the yangban was formed by social customs, not legal stipulations, and thus the boundary between yangban and non-yangban was relative and subject to change according to circumstances. The status of p’yejok was even more complicated. Since the customary definition of yangban is officials and their descendants, being a p’yejok and losing the eligibility to take the civil service examination significantly threatened their yangban status. Passing the examination and holding office was crucial to enhance their status, but becoming a p’yejok meant that they lost political standing. Although the door seemed to be closed, they could cross back when the criminal was pardoned. The fluidity of p’yejok status caused conflict between Tasan and his sons.

When their father and uncles were exiled or executed, Tasan’s family became a ruined family. Tasan had retreated to his hometown, Mahyŏn, near the capital before he was punished with exile, and while he was exiled to Changgi and Kangjin his sons hid in Mahyŏn. At first his two sons struggled to survive apart from him, and then they were compelled to join their father in Kangjin to fend off future misfortune. As we saw in the previous chapter, the family of an exile could join the offender in the place of exile. However, Tasan dissuaded his sons from moving to Kangjin. When he saw the necessity to have his sons with him for their education, he required them to visit him in turn so that they could maintain their residence in Mahyŏn. This was continued till he was freed from his banishment.

273 Yi Sŏngmu, Chosŏn ch’ogi yangban yŏn’gu, 367.

274 Song Chunho, Chosŏn sahoesa yŏn’gu: Chosŏn sahoe ūi kujo wa sŏngkyŏk mit kŭ pyŏnch’ŏn e kwahan yŏn’gu, 37.
Why did Tasan object his sons’ moving to Kangjin? Nineteenth-century Chosŏn witnessed different levels of development in the capital and local areas, and scholars had already established a preference of the capital to provinces. Tasan himself had witnessed the differences between life in the capital and in Kangjin, and based on his observation he advised his sons where to live.275 Tasan thought that when a scholar-official (sadaebu 士大夫) was dismissed from his post, he should find a place to live in the capital city so as not to lose an eye for high culture (munhwa 文華). For the same reason, he advised his sons to move back to the capital city and associate with good scholars as soon as they could. Tasan instructed them that if they could not afford it, they should grow fruits and vegetables in the vicinity of the capital to accumulate wealth and then move to the capital eventually. He also pointed out that from old times [the noble] family whose fortune had changed fled for safety. They lived deep in the mountains and became similar to deer or rabbits.276 Unlike them, he continued, his sons should try to remain calm and carry themselves like officials, so that their sons or grandsons could aim to take the civil service examination, administer the state and relieve the people’s suffering. In sum, Tasan advised that the place of residence played an important role in determining the fate of the family, and for that reason his family should live near the capital, if not in it. In Tasan’s view, moving to a periphery such as Kangjin and being absorbed in the local culture was another form of extinction as an eminent yangban lineage.277 His advice was

275 YC 1:18:7b-8a, “Family precepts for my two sons” (Siia kagye). He wrote this in Fall 1810.

276 YC 1:18:8a.

very practical, too. If an exile’s family joined the offender in the place of exile, they were allowed to return to their native place when the exile died. Many of these families, however, ended up staying at the place of exile, mainly because they could not afford the expenses of moving and relocation.\(^{278}\)

Tasan’s effort to keep his family’s base near the capital was relevant to his self-perception as a ruined family, and he also thought that the ideal was for yangban residing in one place over generations. In his postscript to Yi Chunghwan’s geography, *T’aengniji* (擇里志, 1751), Tasan argued that yangban should dwell at a same place for generations, and otherwise the person would be like a people of a ruined country. He wrote that his hometown, Mahyŏn, was considerably inconvenient to live in and its customs were not good, but he could not leave the place because of the above reason.\(^{279}\)

Economic pressure also made Tasan and his family concerned about how to earn money. As we saw in the previous chapter banished officials had the possibility to restore their former social status and be appointed to a government office, but the hope did not help them to support themselves in present economic trouble. In many cases reading the Confucian classics and writing about them did not improve one’s economic condition, and to support his family sometimes a man from a ruined family had to be in a lucrative line of work even if it was non-academic. The problem was that the person might be relegated to a lower social status by engaging in less respected occupations for economic

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\(^{278}\) Ch’oe Sŏnghwan reports that his interviewees from Ch’uja Island, which was one of the most hostile places of exile during Chosŏn period, say that they are descendants of exiles. Ch’oe Sŏnghwan, “Chosŏn Hugi Ch’ujeado Yubaein Ül Ch’ui Wa Saenghwal Yangsang,” *Tosŏ Munhwa* 37 (June 2011): 151–188.

\(^{279}\) *YC* 1:14:25a-b, “Postscript to Taengniji (*Pal-Taengniji*).” The date is not known.
Tasan mentioned his financial hardship a couple of times even before his exile. According to him, because his family was so poor when he was preparing for the examination at the Royal Confucian Academy (Sŏnggy'un'gw'an), his female servant once stole vegetables from a neighbor to feed his family. Tasan’s economic condition did not get much better even after he passed the examination and held office. He once had to sell his used books to make some money. In another place, Tasan wrote that an official’s salary was not enough to live in the capital city. To make things worse, he could not receive an official’s salary and supplementary rewards while he was exiled. The material pressure on his family became heavier, and his family had to sell their belongings to keep off hunger. Meanwhile, being banished to a place away from home, Tasan remained helpless and had to depend on his family to supply his necessities. A poem that he composed in 1804 elaborates the economic situation of him and his family. His elder son, Hakka, also known as Hagyŏn, visited him in Kangjin, and from the son’s shabby attire and news on that year’s harvest, Tasan could see that his family was undergoing economic hardship. Tasan was not doing any better: he did not have food for his son, and had to take him to a nearby Buddhist mountain cabin to feed him.

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280 Yi Sŏngmu, Chosŏn ch’ogi yangban yŏn’gu, 395.
281 YC 1:2:23b-24a, “Lament over a squash” (Namgwat’an 南瓜歎), 1784.
282 YC 1:2:10a, “Composed a poem after selling books. Show the poem to Chŏnggok” (Chuksŏyujak pongsı Chŏnggok), 1793/10/01.
283 Introducing Tasan’s unpublished work, “For Yi Sŏnghwa, who is about to leave” (Song Yi Sŏnghwa janggwi sŏ, 1813/06/12), Chŏng Min writes that Tasan argued holding office was not profitable. Chŏng Min, Tasan ŭi chaebalgŏn (Rediscovering Tasan) (Seoul: Hyumŏnisŭt’ŭ, 2011), 332–33.
284 YC 1:4:25b, “Receiving a letter from home in the new year” (Sinnyŏn tŭkkasŏ), 1802.
285 YC 1:5:12b-13a, “Hakka visited me. I took him to Poŭn mountain cabin, and composed this”
Under the economic hardship, what was Tasan’s idea on a scholar’s engagement in labor? Tasan’s ideas about how Confucian scholars should live were not constant. In his treatise of 1799, which was written for a general audience, he argued that a Confucian scholar (sa 士) could become a farmer, merchant, or craftsman, according to the circumstances, and engage in production and exchange of materials.\(^{286}\) This is different from the conventional view of Chosŏn yangban, and it seems more “practical” to the modern eye. However, Tasan’s family strategy, in which he delivered his view of proper occupations for exiles and their descendants, was not so open to diverse occupations. When Tasan learned that his elder son was practicing medicine to support his family, he advised him to stop the practice and, instead, to devote himself to the study of the Confucian classics.\(^{287}\) Interestingly when Tasan learned the news that another son, Hagyu, had started poultry farming, Tasan encouraged him.\(^{288}\) Tasan even advised Hagyu on how to pursue poultry farming, and his advice shows why he supported the idea. Tasan wrote to Hagyu that he should read agricultural books, experiment with various ways to raise the chickens and write a book on the results of his experiments as Chinese scholars had done. He argued that testing different ways and composing poems on its pleasure were how a learned man would raise the poultry. In other words, Tasan supported the poultry farming idea because he thought that it could be the study of a scholar rather than simply

\(^{286}\) *YC* 1:11:5b-6a “Treatise on the system of fields 5,” (*Chŏllon* 5). Tasan wrote this in 1799. For more on the date, see Cho Sŏngŭl, *Yŏyudangjip üi munhŏnhakhŏk yŏn’gu*, 258 and 384.

\(^{287}\) *YC* 1:18:15a, “Family precepts for Hagyŏn” (*Sihagyŏn kagye*) (b). Tasan wrote this in the second month of 1810.

\(^{288}\) *YC* 1:21:21a, “To Hagyu” (*Kiyua 偻遊兒*). This letter is not dated.
a lucrative occupation. And he advised his son to make sure that he conducted himself as a scholar.

Modern scholarship has emphasized Tasan’s knowledge of science to highlight him as a modern figure, and it has been argued that Tasan’s knowledge of medicine was even more advanced than that on science.\(^{289}\) Tasan himself had been interested in medicine and pursued the study, and also wrote a number of books on the subject.

Tasan’s advancement in medical knowledge was recognized by his contemporaries, too. He was summoned to participate in curing King Sunjo and his son, Ikchong (1809-1830) in 1834 and 1830, respectively.\(^{290}\) Curing royal family members could be a lifetime chance for Tasan to receive a reward such as high official rank. Probably because of the political situation in which Tasan’s release and returning government office were repeatedly reversed, Tasan was summoned to the curing only at the last minutes and did not have a chance to prescribe to either of the patients. But these anecdotes show that he was known for his medical knowledge.\(^{291}\) Tasan also developed a vaccine and wrote

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\(^{290}\) Sunjo’s son died on the fifth day of the fifth month of 1830 and received a posthumous title, Ikchong. King Sunjo passed away four years later, on the thirteenth day of the eleventh month of 1834.

\(^{291}\) To became a medical official, people had to pass medical examination (*ūikwa* 醫科), a kind of technical examination (*chapkwa*). Passing the examination guaranteed that one would become a technician official, and the technical official had good chances of being promoted to high posts if he cured the king. However, Medical officials were distinguished from other bureaucrats and subordinated to ordinary yangban bureaucrats. Even though medical official (*ūigwan* 醫官) received a high official rank (*p’umgye* 品階), they were not considered as high as civil service examination passers of the same rank. Although sometimes it was mere formality, when the king passed away the medical team was often at risk of being interrogated. It has been pointed out that frequent discussion of reward and punishment for the medical officials shows their unstable social status. Yi Namhŭi, *Chosŏn hugi chapkwa chungin yŏn’gu: Chapkwa ipkyŏkcha wa kūdŭl ūi*
medical books. He studied Chinese books on vaccination, and developed a vaccine against smallpox with Pak Chega. They introduced it to Chosŏn society and saved many people.  

Tasan also wrote *Medical Treatment for the Measles* (*Magwa hoet’ong* 麻科會通, 1798) while he was the magistrate (pusa 副使) of Koksan. This book was highly evaluated at the time, and Hong Sŏkchu, Tasan’s friend, published it in 1802. Because Tasan was exiled then, Hong had to hide the author’s name and change the book title to *Prescriptions for the Measles* (*Mabang t’onghwi* 麻方統彙), and the publication of the book proves how much the book was needed. There was also a case of forgery. Kim Ho, a modern scholar, doubts the ascription of *Prescriptions for Smallpox* (*Kyŏnghŏm tubang 經驗痘方*), a medical book, to Tasan because although it named Tasan as its author, it promotes old customs that Tasan had criticized in his *Medical Treatment for the Measles*. It is reasonable to conjecture that someone used Tasan’s name to give the book more authority. Being summoned as a royal physician and publishing his medical books show that Tasan’s medical knowledge was highly regarded at that time.

Then why did Tasan, who had extensive medical knowledge, object to his son being a doctor? Practicing medicine was an area traditionally off limits to yangban, and Tasan’s concern for his son was relevant to the matter of social status. Chosŏn society

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292 YC 1:10:12b-13a, “Theory of vaccination” (*Chongdusŏl 種痘說*).

293 Kim Ho, “Kyŏnghŏm tubang haeje (Bibliographical introduction to *Kyŏnghŏm tubang*),” *Seoul taehakkyo Kyujanggak Han’gughak Yŏn’guwŏn* (n.d., http://e-kyujanggak.snu.ac.kr/MOK/CONVIEW.jsp?type=HEJ&ptype=list&subtype=hg&lclass=00&mclass=&sclass=ntype=hj&cn=GR34192_00).
had vertical mobility, and in late Chosŏn period it was more often downward rather than upward. One of the characteristics of the society is that economic power and social status did not always coincide. Lack of wealth often resulted in downward social mobility, while being affluent had limits in upward mobility. What made things even more complicated was the fact that Chosŏn yangban could engage in only limited lines of work to maintain their social status. If one chose a “wrong” line of occupation for economic reasons, or intermarried with a lower but wealthier family, the social status of the person would be lowered.

Low status was the dilemma of being a doctor. Medical doctors belonged to the second social status group, “middle people” (chungin 中人) which emerged in early Chosŏn period as a sub-elite group and formed a social status by late Chosŏn period. It consists of children and descendants between yangban and non-yangban, and technicians (and their families), such as doctors, painters, translators, and low-rank officials at local administration. For the majority of Chosŏn yangban, if not all, pursuing wealth could not be their main goal. Yangban pursued economic gain as long as the behavior did not result in losing their social or political assets. For example, engaging in commerce could bring affluence, but most yangban did not openly pursue commerce, fearing to lose face by

294 Wagner, “The Ladder of Success in Yi Dynasty Korea.”

295 For the economic power and social status in Chosŏn, see Kyung Moon Hwang, Beyond Birth: Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 31–32. Song Chunho points out that economic ability was important and yet auxiliary to maintain yangban status. Song Chunho, Chosŏn sahoea yŏn’gu: Chosŏn sahoe ūi kujo wa sŏngkyŏk mit kŭ pyŏnch’ŏn e kwanhan yŏn’gu, 158.

296 “Middle people” is the literal translation of chungin. Regarding status system in Chosŏn society, see Song Chunho, Ibid., 1–14. For the beginning of chungin group, see Yi Sŏngmu, Chosŏn ch’ogi yangban yŏn’gu, 395.
The medical profession might be lucrative, but because of their low social status physicians were looked down on by yangban.

Under the circumstances, Tasan could not risk his family’s future social status by letting his son engage in a *chungin* occupation. While he forbade his son from practicing medicine, Tasan recommended his half-brother, Yakhoeng (丁若鐄, 1785-1829), to turn his interests from painting to medical books. Yakhoeng was a child between Tasan’s father and Madam Kim, a secondary wife, and belonged to the *chungin* by birth. Pursuing a medical career, thus, did not harm his status, and it was more lucrative than painting.

If the medical occupation was despised by yangban, why was Tasan interested in medical science? It was due to the academic trend at that time. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries scholars became to value wide knowledge, and expanded their interests from the classics to knowledge related to daily life. Tasan studied medical science and practiced it, too, but he did not lose his prestige because he had already

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297 There were scholar-officials who were known for their painting, such as Yun Tusŏ, Tasan’s ancestor on his maternal side, but they were “amateur painters.”

298 *YC* 1:4:32b “Seven reminiscences” (*Ch’ilhoe* 七懷). This poem is not dated. Based on the order of this piece was put, Cho Sŏngŭl suggests that it is written after the twenty-sixth day of the fourth month of 1804. Cho Sŏngŭl, *Yŏyudangjip úi munhŏnhakchŏk yŏn’gu*, 153.

299 *YC* 1:16:35a-35b “An epitaph for my father’s secondary wife, Madam Kim” (*Sŏmo Kimssi myojimyŏng*).


established his social status by passing the civil service examination with his knowledge on the Confucian classics, and also because he did not make money from his medical practice. Tasan noted elsewhere that he wrote medical books because he was concerned that ordinary people died due to lack of good medical books. For example, measles spread very fast, but doctors did not study the disease because the disease broke out only once in several decades and they could not make a fortune by studying it. Contrasting his motive with the doctors’ slackness Tasan explained that he had obtained numerous Chinese medical documents, and because they were neither well organized nor comprehensive he put them together and categorized in his writing to make it a more comprehensive book on the measles. By doing so Tasan clarified that his medical practice was out of Confucian moral obligation, not monetary need.

In the same vein Tasan distinguished his son’s medical practice from that of a high-rank official with virtue and scholarship: When an official was asked to write a prescription, because it was a matter of Confucian morality he would be discreet and selective to grant the request. And people treasured the prescription once they could receive. Tasan’s son, meanwhile, advertised himself as a doctor and prescribed to anybody for a fee. Apparently his son practiced medicine not out of Confucian


304 YC 1:18:15a, “Family precepts for Hagyŏn” (Sihagyŏn kagye) (b). This is written in the second month of 1810.
scholar’s morality, but for economic gain. Since this caused a conflict between economic profit and potential social and political advantage, Tasan gave his son a strict warning: stop his medical practice, or he would not contact him again.

The dissimilar reactions to economic hardship show that Tasan and his sons had different ideas on the chance of regaining their previous social status and political power. Because Tasan’s solution was becoming a good scholar, passing the civil service examination and becoming an official if they could, whenever Tasan encouraged his sons to enter a field other than classical studies he was concerned whether it would harm their reputation as scholars or not. For instance, he preferred silkworm farming to growing and selling fruits, because he thought that although people did not lose their fame by growing and selling fruits, it was close to being a merchant. Silkworm farming, on the other hand, he continued, was not only highly profitable but also appropriate work for a scholar.

Since both birth and achievement were important elements for yangban status, yangban were highly lineage conscious. Yangban strengthened their social status through scholarly fame, examination success, marriage ties, and so on. Within the yangban class, their social status was closely related to whether they or their ancestors had held high government office or not. The prestige of having an exalted ancestor was heritable,

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305 It is possible that Hagyŏn’s motive was not only economic but also political. Learning that his son was practicing medicine, Tasan asked Hagyŏn that if he had attempted to release his father by associating with high officials as a doctor. Tasan judged that such behavior is not only wrong but also impossible. *Ibid.*


although it declined as generations passed, and it became a source of pride and self-esteem for them.  

Enduring a black period, Tasan also assigned great weight to lineage. Tasan referred his sons to the fact that eminent Chinese historical figures such as Qu Yuan and Sima Qian wrote on their ancestors when they were politically challenged, and generalized that from ancient times when a person was faced with a difficulty he would turn to his origins, i.e. his ancestors. He lamented that his four hundred-year-old family, the Chŏngs of Aphae, had collapsed, and asked his sons to compensate for his fault by imitating their ancestors’ virtue. Following this, Tasan dignified his lineage by elaborating on his ancestors’ virtue and bureaucratic achievement. From Tasan’s ancestor in the twelfth generation, Chŏng Chagŭ (丁子伋 1423-87), to the fifth generation, Chŏng Siyun (丁時潤 1646-1713), his ancestors in each generation had passed the civil service examination and held office in the Chosŏn court. But after the political upheaval of 1694 (Kapsul hwan’guk 甲戌換局) the Southerners were losing their political influence in the court, and Tasan’s ancestors also failed to be in the government. The family was still eminent to a certain degree and Tasan’s father, Chŏng Chaewŏn, was appointed to serve in the government by protection (ŭmsŏ 䗛敔).  

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308 Song Chunho, Chosŏn sahoesa yŏn’gu: Chosŏn sahoe ŭi kujo wa sŏngkyŏk mit kŭ pyŏnch’ŏn e kwanhan yŏn’gu, 136–139.

309 YC 1:17:12b, “Trace of family line” (Kasŭng yusa 家乘遺事). This piece is hard to date. Cho Sŏngŭl suggests that Tasan wrote this when he returned to his hometown in 1800, or after his release. Cho Sŏngŭl, Yŏyudangjip ŭi munhŏnhakchŏk yŏn’gu, 302.

310 The system of “protection” enabled high rank officials to perpetuate office holding for a number of their descendants. F. W. Mote points out that the protection was useful for the state, too, because through the system the state recruited people with the norms and skills of officials,
As he implied by listing his ancestors’ distinguished careers, he thought that examination success was important to revive the declining fortunes of the family. From the early days of Kangjin Tasan urged his sons to exert themselves in their studies. He thought that despite the disgrace of being from an exile’s family, and the economic hardship, his sons should lead a yangban’s lifestyle and master the Confucian classics and literary skills, which were indispensable to elite status in Chosŏn society. Tasan repeatedly acknowledged that his family had become a ruined family, and emphasized that despite the fact that they did not have eligibility for public office they should devote themselves to the Confucian classics.³¹¹ His sons lamented that because they did not have a teacher when they had questions about their readings, they could not have answers.³¹² Tasan scolded his demoralized sons, and warned that while prestigious descent groups (ch’ŏngjok 淸族) could be respected even though they did not study, a ruined family did not have such a privilege.³¹³ Tasan urged his sons that in case they had unsolved questions they could seek their answers from him, and also encouraged them that through study they could hope for a better future and also could be known as good scholars.³¹⁴ Tasan persuaded his sons that the only limitation that a ruined family had was eligibility for the examination and holding an office; they still could become a sage, writer, or

³¹¹ YC 1:21:1b-2a “Reply to my two sons” (Tabia) (a), and YC 1:21:3a “To my two sons” (Kiia) (b), for example. Both are written in 1802.

³¹² YC 1:21:2b, “Reply to my two sons” (Tabia) (a). This letter consists of parts written at different dates. This part is not dated, but from its preceding part and following letter we can guess this is written sometime in 1802.

³¹³ YC 1:21:4a-4b, “To my two sons” (Kiia), 1802/02.

³¹⁴ YC 1:21:9a. “Letter to my son, Hagyŏn” (Kiyŏna). He wrote this in 1808.
literatus. Tasan also argued that actually they were in a better position than others to achieve such goals for two reasons: the negative effect of preparing for the civil service examination would not influence them, and because their poverty cultivated their mind and body they could distinguish truth from falsity. He supported his argument by pointing out that because desire for examination success did not hamper a ruined family’s aspiration for study, the ruined family produced many talented scholars. He concluded that if a ruined family did not study they would be abandoned by society; if they exerted themselves to study and were known for their scholarship, people with a discerning eye would admire them and eventually their family would be revived.

Perceiving themselves as being on the cultural and political periphery Tasan often emphasized the importance of study. Interestingly, Tasan also repeatedly bought up the negative effects of studying for the civil service examination (kwagŏ chi hak 科舉之學) elsewhere. Tasan problematized the academic tradition of Chosŏn in five points, and one of them was studying for the examination. Along with this, he had a high opinion of Japanese scholarship pointing out that one of its strengths was not studying for the examination. Tasan argued that Japan was a small country but because it did not have study for the civil service examination its literature was the best among nine Eastern barbarians (kui 九夷) and the country was well governed. He mentioned this matter

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315 YC 1:21:13b, “To my two sons” (Kiyanga) (c). Tasan repeatedly admonished his sons to study harder. This is written on the first day of the first month of 1803.

316 YC 1:21:13b-14a, “To my two sons” (Kiyanga) (c).

317 YC 1:11:22a-23a, “the fourth treatise on five studies” (Ohangnon sa) It is not known when Tasan wrote this piece. Analyzing the structure of Tasan’s self-epitaph Cho Sŏngŭl suggests that it was written later than 1801. Cho Sŏngŭl, Yŏyudangji p'i munhŏnhakchŏk yŏn'gu, 385.

318 YC 1:11:22b, “The fourth treatise on five studies” (ohangnon sa).
again in his letter to his sons and praised Japanese scholarship for not studying for the
examination and, instead, developing humanistic studies.\textsuperscript{319} Tasan once even
distinguished study for the examination (\textit{kŏŏp} 畢業) and ordinary study (\textit{hangmun}
學文).\textsuperscript{320} Tasan asserted that studying for the examination was evil, and advised that if a
man was many times smarter than others he should pursue study for the examination, and
ordinary people should put their efforts into ordinary study. To emphasize how excessive
study for the examination was, Tasan wrote that if one could have transferred his study
for the examination to ordinary study, the person’s scholarship would be on the same
level as that of Zhu Xi.\textsuperscript{321} Tasan also criticized that because passing the examination
completely changed one’s life, it made people rely on pure chance and behave like
madmen.\textsuperscript{322}

Tasan noticed the problems of preparing for the civil service examination, but he
did not change his idea that an ideal scholar should serve the king. In his “Words from
Tasan for his pupils” he wrote that facing critical situations Confucius and Mencius had
wandered to seek public office, and this was because rising in the world was an extreme
form of filial piety. Referring to the fact that respected Korean Confucians, such as
T’oegye Yi Hwang (退溪 李滉, 1502-1571), also took the civil service examination,

\textsuperscript{319} \textit{YC} 1:21:10a, “To my two sons” (\textit{Siia}). It is not known when he wrote this.

\textsuperscript{320} \textit{YC} 1:17:39b, “Words for Pansan Chŏng Such’il” (\textit{Wi Pansan Chŏng Such’il chŭngŏn}). This
writing is not dated. But Since Chŏng Such’il is one of his eighteen pupils in Kangjin, it must be
written after he was exiled to Kangjin.

\textsuperscript{321} \textit{YC} 1:17:40a, “Words for Pansan Chŏng Such’il” (\textit{Wi Pansan Chŏng Such’il chŭngŏn}).

\textsuperscript{322} \textit{YC} 1:5:2a, “Facing a drink on a summer day” (\textit{Haildaeju}), 1804.
Tasan argued that passing the examination was the only way to be able to serve the king. He continued,

People who are descendants of long-standing but ruined families who have to live far away [from the capital] have no intention for advancement. They are only concerned about making a living. …They are looking for an imaginary place [which is supposed to be safe from the fires of war]. They do not know that once they enter the place, their descendants will end up being roes or hares. Even though they can recover easy life and farming, and generate many descendants, when we think [about this], what would be the benefit [of this kind of life]? Remember that you should be in government office by taking the civil examination, and should not yearn for other things.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Tasan gave the example of Zhu Xi to convince people that the role of a scholar was to serve the king. Here, he mentioned Confucius, Mencius and T’oegye to support his argument, and justified why one should be in the government office by arguing that it was also action of filial piety. In Tasan’s view of human beings, filial piety was not only a virtue towards one’s parents but also an essential virtue for being a Confucian gentleman. As the above passage shows Tasan thought that examination success was especially important for a ruined family. Tasan criticized the ills of studying for the examination, but he also realized that the examination was the way of success, and would not be abolished any time soon.

\[323\] YC 1:18:3b-4a. “Words from Tasan for his pupils” (Wi Tasan chesaeng ch’ungôn). This piece is not dated and we can only guess he wrote this in Kangjin.
Throughout his writings to his family and pupils Tasan showed that he expected his release and recovery of his former privileges. He understood Chosŏn as a society where a person’s heredity and achievement were both considered important, and determined that his family should remain as scholars (sa), who were seen as more civilized beings than people in other occupations, and thus able to be in the center. Indeed intellectual power was one of the few that even exiled scholars could exert. In sum, when his “official” idea that yangban could engage in various kinds of occupations conflicted with maintaining his own social status, Tasan put the nobility in front of practicality, and insisted to study to establish oneself as a scholar.

**Conclusion**

Tasan’s release was as deeply related to the factional struggle in the court as his exile had been because it opened the possibility of his return to power. Throughout his exile, there were long debates both for and against his release, but since his political rivals held important posts in the central court Tasan’s exile was extended. In 1803 Queen Regent Chŏngsun commanded that Tasan be freed, but Sŏ Yongbo (徐龍輔 1757-1824), one of Tasan’s major political rivals, opposed this. As a result the Regent reversed the order. In 1810, Tasan’s son, Hagyŏn, struck a gong to stop King Sunjo’s procession and petitioned for Tasan’s release.³²⁴ Because of Hagyŏn’s oral petition (kyŏkchaeng擊錚) the king commanded Tasan’s release, but this time Yi Kigyŏng (李基慶, 1756-
memorialized the throne to reconsider the decision. During the period of Tasan’s exile, there were many amnesties with various reasons, but the amnesties applied to ordinary criminals while people like Tasan were excluded. In his letter to his second older brother, Yakchŏn, Tasan pointed out that corrupt officials, murderers and thieves were all pardoned, but people like Tasan and Yakchŏn were not considered for amnesty for the lame excuse that their names were still in the report (taegye 臺啓) of the censorate (taegan 臺諫). In 1814 there was another attempt to release Tasan. The State Tribunal (Ŭigŭmbu 義禁府) was about to order him set free, but this time Kang Chunhŭm (姜浚欽, 1768-?), then a second censorate, submitted a memorial and opposed it. Finally Tasan’s name was removed from the censorate’s report, and he was ordered to be discharged on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of 1818. He returned to his home town, Mahyŏn, on the fourteenth day of the ninth month.

Tasan wanted to recover his status in the center of Chosŏn, and to regain wide political and scholarly influence. This explains why he wrote such a vast number of books on statecraft—*Deathbed Petition for Governing* (1817), *Reflection on Governing the People* (1818) and *New Book Respectfully Offered* (*Hŭmhŭm sinsŏ*, 1819)—while he was in exile. He expected that his cultural resources would eventually lead him back to the center, and writing was his way of preparing for his return as a scholar-official in the center. In his letter to his sons, Tasan revealed his ambition that his writings should be shown to a wider audience, not just the local audience. If it was not realized in his life, Tasan hoped that his sons would pass down his writings to later generations. For instance,

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325 *YC* 1:20:29a, “Reply to my second elder brother” (Tap-chungssi). Tasan did not date this letter, but because he wrote that he had exerted himself in classical studies for 12 years, this might be written in 1812.
he changed the name of one of his masterpieces, from *Manuscript of Rites of Chosŏn* (Pangnye ch’obon 邦禮紺本) to *Deathbed Petition for Governing* (Kyŏngse yup’yo 經世 遺表, 1817). *P’yo 表* is a writing style that a subject submits to the throne. *Yu 遺* means “to leave.” Thus, the *yup’yo* in the title shows both Tasan’s hope and situation at the same time. It was a book on how to reform statecraft and Tasan did not write it only for private circulation. He wanted to submit his writing to the king, even if it was after his death.

Tasan also wrote to Sin Yŏngno (申永老) that he truly wanted his works to be accepted for state administration and asked for Sin’s help.326

Tasan’s exile offered him a peripheral context: He perceived Kangjin as a cultural and political periphery, and was nostalgic about the capital as the center of Confucian civilization. Tasan also considered himself as a scholar on the periphery of civilization, and wanted to restore himself in the center. Life in Kangjin also enabled Tasan to evaluate the cultural development of Chosŏn society from a different point of view. This is one of the biggest changes that he had throughout his exile. Once he was freed and returned to his home in the vicinity of the capital, Tasan was not geographically peripheral any more, but he still was on the periphery in the political sense. In 1819 and 1823 he was nominated for offices, but because of his personal history his political rivals once again intervened and blocked his appointment to office. In 1827 a similar situation was repeated, and Tasan was never appointed again until his death. Listing all these

326 Hong Isŏp, *Chŏng Yagyong ŭi chongch’i kyŏngje sasang yŏn’gu (Study on Tasan’s thought on politics and economics)* (Seoul: Han’guk yŏn’gu tosŏgwan, 1959), 5. Tasan’s “Words for Sin Yŏngno” is not included in *Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ*. Chŏng Inbo recorded that he received the manuscript from a Sin’s descendant. Chŏng Inbo, *Tamwŏn Kakhaksan’go* (Seoul: Mun’gyosa, 1955), 100–102. We do not know much about Sin Yŏngno. Recently Kim Porŭm suggests that his first name in Chinese characters should be 頤老. Kim Porŭm, “*Yŏyudangjip ŭi sŏngnip e kwanhan koch’al,*” *Tasanhak* 18 (June 2011): 210.
chances in his self-epitaph Tasan revealed his yearning for the political center. Such aspiration sometimes led to internal contradictions in his thought. His family politics did not accord with his public discourse, in which he recognized a wider range of occupations for Confucian scholars. In other words, Tasan delivered different ideas depending on his audience: for a general audience Tasan wrote about ideals, while toward his sons he put more weight on being realistic than ideal.

He wanted to restore his family and himself to the center of Chosŏn society as a civilized scholar-official just like many other yangban. This is not only matter of his self-perception, but also an indicator of how he understood Chosŏn Korea. In the reign of King Sunjo, various changes that King Chŏngjo had pursued were disappearing, and Tasan expected the society would not have a significant reversal in near future. The changes of his thought, thus, should not be simply characterized as conservative. During Chŏngjo’s reign Tasan had planned to reform the society, but based on his assessment of Chosŏn society and observations while on the periphery, he realized that he would not be able to reform society any time soon. What he could do was to distinguish what could be done immediately and what could be postponed until later. The result is his two major works: his *Reflection on Governing the People* (1818) lays out what the local magistrate could do to govern better, while *Deathbed Petition for Governing* (1817) deals with how to reform the state administration later. Tasan was never in the government again, and twentieth-century Korean scholars discovered him at the center of intellectual tradition and invented him as a symbol of Korean modernity. We will discuss this in following chapter.
Chapter 5. From Another Periphery

Chapter Five examines how and why Tasan appealed to twentieth-century colonized Korean intellectuals, who were also exiles in a way. After the Catholic Purge of 1801, Chosŏn scholars continued to revere orthodox Confucianism while denouncing Catholicism, and this anti-Catholic socio-intellectual atmosphere spread to the people of lower social strata. Tasan was freed after long years of exile, but he could not get a chance to serve at the royal court again, and remained politically marginalized. As a result, his works were only published in the 1900s, and until the Korean government first officially recognized his scholarship in 1910, his scholarship had been neglected for decades. Meanwhile, from the late nineteenth century the world powers forced Korea to open its ports, and finally Japan, the newly emerging power in East Asia, colonized Korea in the early twentieth century (1910-1945).

During this period, Korea went through modernization, or Westernization to be exact. The encroachment of the West and Japan was supported by their military forces, and it led the Korean people to reassess the power of Western techniques.327 After a long time of objection to embracing Western techniques, Korea began to change in manifold ways. The problem was who could have the credit for these massive changes. The Japanese colonialists claimed that they contributed to the modernization of Korea in order to legitimize their colonization. In reaction to that Korean nationalists looked for immanent modernity in late Chosŏn scholars’ thought to prove that the modernization of Korea had been on its way before Japanese intervened. Many of them thought that Zhu

327 Japan is an Asian country, but it had adopted Western culture and techniques before its neighbors, and the transformation was useful in colonizing other countries later.
Xi’s Neo-Confucianism was the main reason for the “backwardness” of Chosŏn society and its social ills. Thus in the process of proving the immanent modernity of Korea, they introduced Chosŏn scholars who criticized Zhu Xi’s thought. For example, scholars who followed the approach of Wang Yang-ming of Ming China, and many other individual scholars, including Tasan, were highlighted. Tasan, who died as a former official and exile, suddenly was credited as the scholar who completed Practical Learning and was exalted as a premodern intellectual with modern thought.

In the 1930s, around the centennial memorial of his death, colonized Korean scholars published a collection of Tasan’s writings. Relating to the process of discovering Tasan this chapter explores the very question: how and why colonized Korean scholars in the early twentieth century paid attention to Tasan. I argue that living under the control of Japanese authorities the colonized Koreans were internally exiled. What is the internal exile? Quoting Isidore of Seville, who writes that an exile is someone “outside his ground,” Randolph Starn suggests that exile is “fundamentally a matter of location and defined positions in space.”

Then, how can we define internal exile? Angelika Bammer suggests the concept of internal exiles as “not expelled from but displaced within their native culture.” In his study of the Korean national consciousness around the turn of the twentieth century, Andre Schmid shows that the Korean Peninsula was “tainted by the

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328 Isidori... etymologiarum sive originum libri, V, xxvii, 28 , ed. W.M Lindsay (Oxford, 1911). Quoted from Randolph Starn, Contrary Commonwealth: The Theme of Exile in Medieval and Renaissance Italy (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1982), 1.

Japanese Protectorate”\textsuperscript{330} and “the ostensible home of the nation, had been made impure, unable to function as a true homeland.”\textsuperscript{331} In the same vein, this study uses the term internal exile to refer to colonized Korean intellectuals who resisted Japanese colonialism on the Korean Peninsula. Colonized Korean intellectuals who resisted Japanese colonization were, although they did not directly say this, internal exiles, and Tasan and they had similar strategies as exiles: to recover their political power by writing their own history.

The colonized Korean nationalists were exiles in their own land, and Tasan’s appeal to them was intimately tied to two reasons. Being challenged by imperial power, the Koreans were desperate to demonstrate the advancement of scholarship during the Chosŏn. They regarded Practical Learning as an attribute of modernity, and Tasan’s thought as both critical of Neo-Confucianism and open to new ideas. Thus, in the eyes of colonized Koreans he could stand out even among the newly discovered premodern figures, and become a symbol of immanent modernity. The fact that Tasan had been exiled for political reasons and yet left huge volume of writings was also attractive to the colonized Koreans. Just as Tasan hoped that he could clear his name through his works, colonized Koreans discovered Tasan and published his work to liberate their own (national) history. Emphasizing how advanced Korean scholarship had been in the past, they hoped to prove that Korea was advanced on its own, and that they could survive their own exile.


\textsuperscript{331} \textit{Ibid.}, 252.
This chapter begins by introducing the culture of publishing individual scholar’s collection during the Chosŏn dynasty, and the significance of Tasan being excavated around the turn of the twentieth century. Then it moves on to how the colonized Koreans, including the two editors of the collection of Tasan’s work, understood him. It will show that not only his scholarship but also his exile was critical to his appeal to the colonized Korean intellectuals.

What were the customs for recognizing individual’s achievements and publishing his work during the Chosŏn dynasty? One of Tasan’s colleague Southerner bureaucrats, Ch’ae Chegong (蔡濟恭, 1720-1799), provides a good example. When Ch’ae Chegong passed away, the Chosŏn court officially remarked on his death and achievements.332 King Chŏngjo expressed his condolences in various ways: He composed a funeral oration and granted Ch’ae a posthumous name (siho 謹號), Munsuk (文肅).333 He also specified how to hold his funeral, and ordered Ch’ae’s stipend be given to his family for the next three years. In contrast to Ch’ae Chegong’s death, the news of Tasan’s death did not entail official condolences from the royal court. It was 1910, seventy-four years after his death, that the Korean government conferred a posthumous name on Tasan dignifying his scholarship. On August 19, 1910, Emperor Sunjong (r.1907-1910) of the Great Korean Empire (Taehanjeguk 大韓帝國, 1897-1910) praised Tasan’s statecraft and literary talent, and ordered the posthumous post of the Deputy Director of the Government Archive (kyujanggak chehak 奎章閣 提學; Sr.2) be conferred on him, as well as a posthumous

332 Chŏngjo sillok 51.2-3 (chŏngch’uk), 1799/01/18.
333 The two characters in this posthumous name mean to be learned and to be courteous, respectively.
name. The next day the king granted Tasan a posthumous name, Mundo (文度).\textsuperscript{334} Korea, which had been a Japanese protectorate since 1905, was colonized by Japan only a couple of days later.\textsuperscript{335} Posthumous names and posts had been granted to people of great achievement throughout the Chosŏn dynasty, and it was not that special that Tasan received one. The king ordered posthumous names conferred on twenty five other people that day, and the official record described Tasan’s achievement very briefly and customarily. In other words, although Tasan’s intellectual accomplishment was officially recognized, it did not attract full attention yet. The timing of the conferment shows that Tasan was discovered at the moment of national crisis.

**The Culture of Publishing an Individual’s Collection**

During the Chosŏn period, often it took a long time to publish the collection of an individual’s writings. Many Practical Learning scholars held arguably less important posts, and thus were unknown to their contemporaries, but several of them were recognized and their works were published and widely circulated in late Chosŏn. For example, Pan’gye Yu Hyŏngwŏn (柳馨遠, 1622–1673) completed his *A miscellaneous account of the man from Pan’gye* (*Pan’gye surok* 磬溪隨錄) in 1670, and the book was woodblock-printed in 1770 by order of King Yŏngjo.\textsuperscript{336}

\textsuperscript{334} *Sunjong sillok* 4.12, August 19 and 20, 1910. The two characters mean to be “learned” and to “correct,” respectively.

\textsuperscript{335} On August 29, King Sunjong declared that he would hand over the sovereignty of Korea to Japanese emperor. *Sungjon sillok* 4.18, August 29, 1910.

\textsuperscript{336} In his memorial of 1741, Yang Tŭkchung (梁得中, 1665-1742), a former Royal Secretary (*sŏngji* 承旨), praised Yu Hyŏngwŏn’s study of institutions, and suggested reading Yu’s *A miscellaneous account of the man from Pan’gye* (*Pan’gye surok* 磬溪隨錄) in the royal lecture. Yang also recommended that Yŏngjo should acquire the work from his descendants and spread it throughout the country. Yŏngjo accepted Yang’s suggestion. *Yŏngjo sillok* 53.1112 (muo),
The collection of Ajŏng Yi Tŏngmu’s works was published even faster. Ajŏng’s case was, of course, rather unusual, but it shows how it could be when the political situation was favorable to the political position of the deceased. King Chŏngjo noticed Ajŏng’s literary talent and appointed him as one of the first proofreaders of the government archive (Kyujanggak kŏmsŏgwan) in 1779. When Ajŏng died in 1793, King Chŏngjo ordered the editing and publication of his to recognize Ajŏng’s legacy. His friends and acquaintances raised funds for the publication and the Chosŏn court subsidized it as well. The result came out in the spring of 1796. Honoring Ajŏng’s scholarly fame, Chŏngjo also ordered Ajŏng’s son designated as a proofreader of the government archive when he finished the three-year mourning period.

Tasan, however, was not so fortunate. Tasan was freed from his long exile in 1818, but he was never able to hold office again, and died out of office on the twenty-second day of the second month of 1836. Although modern scholars in Korean studies have high regard for Tasan’s scholarly achievements and admire him as someone who made signal contributions to the development of late Chosŏn scholarship, at the time of his death people did not have any reason to believe that Tasan had left a significant

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1741/02/23. In 1769, Yŏngjo ordered to publish Yu’s work. Yŏngjo sillos 113.19 (kich’uk), 1769/11/11. King Chŏngjo, Yŏngjo’s successor, also highly regarded Yu’s work and used it to support his ideas, such as merging military camps. Chŏngjo sillos 5.63 (sinni), 1778/intercalary 6/13.

337 The rank of this position varies.

338 “Introduction to Ajŏng’s posthumous work (ajŏngyugo sŏ雅亭遺稿序),” in the Collection of Ch’ŏngjanggwan 20:24a. Nam Kongch’ŏl (南公轍, 1760-1840) wrote this Introduction. Both Ch’ŏngjanggwan and Ajŏng are Yi Tŏngmu’s pennames.

339 Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi, Chŏngjo 19.4.3 (kyemyo [kyemi]). Year of 1795.
intellectual legacy behind him, because most of his writings were unknown to the public. In terms of printing an individual scholar’s works, Chosŏn scholars were less active than their counterparts in China and Japan, and because of this the circulation of Korean scholar’s writings tended to much limited.  

But as we saw in previous chapters in Tan’s case these limitations were exceptionally severe. His collected writings had been handed down only in manuscript form until it was published around the centennial memorial of his death. Until then only a small number of his works had been published, but that, too, was only in the first decade of the twentieth century. What happened at the time he was rediscovered and this forgotten scholar’s collected works were published, despite the vast amount of it?

There are three main reasons for the delay of publishing Tan’s works: printing conventions in Chosŏn, Tan’s reputation, and Tan’s isolation due to his political situation. First of all, the Chosŏn custom of publishing an intellectual’s work was one reason for the delay. Unlike their counterparts in Qing China, Chosŏn scholars rarely published their own works. It is true that a number of nineteenth-century Chosŏn intellectuals started publishing their own works, but it was usually the descendants who did the work of collecting, editing, and finally publishing their ancestor’s writings.

340 As Chŏng Min shows in his recent work, Chosŏn intellectuals also demanded new information and materials. Chŏng Min, *18-segi Chosŏn chisig in ū palgyŏn* (Seoul: Hyumŏnisŭtŭ p’ŏbŭllising k’ŏmp’ŏni, 2007). However, Chosŏn elites were not as much interested in developing printing infrastructure as their counterparts in China and Japan.

341 Even with modern printing technology, the publication took years to be accomplished due to fund raising. It started in 1934 and finished in 1938.

Apparently Tasan compiled a list to organize his publishable writings, but he did not publish them in his lifetime.

The second reason is Tasan’s reputation. Chosŏn society had a number of preconditions for publishing an individual scholar’s collected works: high quality of the writings, capability to fund the publication, and favorable public opinion toward the person. In his study of the publication of scholars’ collected writings during Chosŏn period, Kim Yunje argues that toward the late Chosŏn period, one of the new standards for publication was whether the writer had conformed to Neo-Confucian orthodoxy or not. Kim Yunje supports his argument by the fact that it took a long time for many Practical Learning scholars to have their collected works published. The collections of eighteenth-century Practical Learning scholars, such as Yi Ik (李稷, 1681-1763) and An Chŏngbok (安鼎福, 1712-1791), were likewise only published in the twentieth century, 1917 and 1900, respectively. In Tasan’s case, the delay was due not only to his Practical Learning ideas, but also to the accusation of being a Catholic. As we see in Yun Hyu’s (尹鑴, 1617-1680) case, once a scholar was charged with being a heretic, it took much longer until the works could be published. Yun’s collected works were published only in 1927. Tasan was freed from his exile, but he could not hold office again because every

343 During the Chosŏn period, paper was expensive. Usually people printed only dozens of copies, and it was rare to print more than a hundred copies. Kim Yunje, “Chosŏn sidae munjip kanhaeng kwa sŏngnihak (The publication of writing collections in Chosŏn period and Neo-Confucianism),” Han’guksa simin kangjwa 37 (August 2005): 75–95; Nam Yŏng, “Hwalcha inswaesul kaebal ŭi chŏnhusa e taehan chaeinsik: Inswae kisul e taehan nonŭi esŏ Wai nat kwsŭch’on ŭi kŭkpong (A new understanding of the history of type printing technology: To overcome Why Not Question by discussing printing technology),” in Yŏksa esŏŭi chungang kwa chibang: Che 49-hoe chŏn’guk yŏksahak taehoe annae (Ch’ungbuk taehakkyo: Yŏksa hakhoe, 2006), 400–409.

344 Kim Yunje, “Chosŏn sidae munjip kanhaeng kwa sŏngnihak (The publication of writing collections in Chosŏn period and Neo-Confucianism),” 93–94.
time his political rivals opposed to his appointment based on the accusation. His name was not cleared for a long time, and it hindered the publication of his works.

In most cases publication of an individual scholar’s collection were funded by his family and friends, rather than by the government, but the act of publishing was implicitly under government control. People were sometimes punished for publishing their ancestor’s work when the forebear’s reputation was just doubtful. Yi Hyŏnil (李玄逸, 1627-1704), a famous sallim scholar, and his descendants provide us a good example. The beginning of the incident was Cho Sagi’s (趙嗣基, 1617-1694) memorial. In his memorial of 1689, Cho Sagi criticized King Sukchong’s mother.\footnote{Sukchong sillok 20.41 (kapcha), 1689/intercalary 3/27.} Because it was considered improper to mention the Queen Mother’s mistake, Sukchong ordered Cho Sagi into exile.\footnote{Sukchong sillok 20.44 (kisa), 1689/04/03.} Yi Hyŏnil, like Cho Sagi, a Southerner, submitted a memorial and asked that the royal command be withdrawn, but Sukchong did not change his decision.\footnote{Sukchong sillok 21.10 (kapcha), 1689/05/29.} Two years later, Yi Hyŏnil submitted another memorial and asked a pardon for Cho Sagi, but Sukchong refused the request.\footnote{Sukchong sillok 23.36 (sinch’uk), 1691/10/20.} Meanwhile, because he kept asking the king to forgive Cho Sagi, Yi was mired in difficulties. In 1694 the Westerner faction (sŏin 西人) was gaining more power in the Chosŏn court over the Southerners, and the Westerners brought up the issue of Cho Sagi’s memorial again. Yi Hyŏnil, who had advocated for Cho, was also charged with violations propriety, and was punished with
After being relocated a number of times, Yi was sent to his hometown without pardon (panggwijŏnni 放歸田里) in 1699, where he died in 1704. But because he had been considered an offender who had violated the canons of loyalty and propriety (myŏngŭi 名義) and never been pardoned, his name remained on the register of the exiles (chŏkchŏk 謫籍). The court officially pardoned Yi in 1710, but withdrew the royal pardon next year.

About a hundred years later, Yi Hyŏnil’s descendants published his collected works, and the Chosŏn court found out about this. From the viewpoint of the authorities at that time, Yi Hyŏnil still was an offender who had violated propriety with his memorial of 1689. The descendant of Hyŏnil who had published his works thus also became an offender, and the Chosŏn court punished him by sentencing him to exile on an island. The government also ordered at Hyŏnil’s collected works withdrawn from circulation and burned. Tasan’s descendants and pupils thus had good reason to know they could not hurry to publish this former exile’s work. Hwang Sang (黃裳, 1788-1863) and Yi Ch’ŏng (李靑, 1792-1861), who had studied under Tasan in Kangjin and separated after his

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349 Sukchong sillok 26.16 (imsin), 1694/04/05.
350 Sukchong sillok 33.4 (kapchin), 1699.02/04.
351 Sukchong sillok 48.7 (sinhae), 1710/02/16.
352 Sukchong sillok 50.32 (kyeyu), 1711/12/19.
353 Sunjo sillok 13.51 (ŭlsa), 1810/12/25. In 1871, the court granted Yi a posthumous name, Mun’gyŏng (文敬), but two years later retracted it charging Yi as a rebel. Three decades later there was another discussion to pardon Yi Hyŏnil, and the court concluded to restore his title in 1908. Kojong sillok 8.17 (pyŏngo), 1871/03/16; Kojong sillok 10.35 (musin), 1873/11/03. Year of 1873. Sunjong sillok 2.4, January 30, 1908; Sunjong sillok 2.12, April 30, 1908. The dates in Sunjong sillok are given in the Gregorian calendar. For the dates by the solar calendar, I do not provide the sexagenarian name of the day.
release, came across each other in the capital after his death and lamented that their master’s works had not been published yet. However, they could not carry forward the project.

Lastly, due to the unfavorable political atmosphere Tasan was relatively isolated even after his release from exile, and his works remained obscure. His exile was not only his personal predicament, but also part of the process of the Southerner faction losing political power. In this situation he clearly understood the political significance of his writings: although it would not empower him or change any policies soon, it could be used by his political rivals to harm him or other Southerners. Thus, Tasan censored his own writings and deliberately limited the circulation of his works. Only could a small number of people, largely limited to his family, friends and pupils, had a chance to read his manuscripts. Tasan warned his readers, for their own sake, not to show his works to other people. Not only during his exile, but also after his release Tasan was cautious about showing his writings to others. For example, in his letter to Munsan, Tasan asked him not to show his writings, not even a half sentence, to anybody else. Under the circumstances, it was hard to publish Tasan’s work unless there were significant changes in political atmosphere, such as royal acknowledgement of his achievements as a scholar-official.

Discovering Tasan

Tasan’s writings came into the spotlight through three phases: first, in the late 1880s; second, in colonized Korea, especially in the 1930s; and lastly, in post-liberation Korea after 1945. As I mentioned above, Tasan’s writings were not published during the nineteenth century. However, modern scholars often refer to Hwang Hyŏn (黃玹, 1855-
1910) to prove the popularity of his writings in the nineteenth century. According to Hwang’s *Unofficial Record by Maech’ŏn* (*Maech’ŏn yarok* 梅泉野錄), King Kojong (高宗, r.1863-1907) recognized that Tasan’s ideas were outstanding, and in 1885 and 1886 he ordered a transcription of Tasan’s collected works, *Yŏyudangjip*, to be kept in the government archive, the *Kyujanggak*.\(^{354}\) Hwang also wrote that all Chosŏn provincial and local governors possessed copies of Tasan’s *Reflections on Governing the People* (*Mongmin simsŏ* 牧民心書, 1818) and *New Book Respectfully Offered* (*Hŭmhŭm sinsŏ* 欽欽新書, 1822).\(^{355}\) Although Hwang attempted to show that Kojong had valued Tasan’s advanced scholarship, he lacks specific evidence to support his argument. Thus it is necessary to doubt the reliability of the accounts in the book. Born in Chŏlla Province, Hwang passed the classics licentiate examination (*saengwŏnsi* 生員試) in first place, but did not take the civil service examination. Because he had never been in government office, his account of Tasan is very likely hearsay. The *Veritable Record of Kojong Reign* (*Kojong sillok* 高宗實錄) and other official records of Chosŏn court do not document the order by that Hwang asserted, and the above account of Tasan remains historically unsubstantiated.

The *Unofficial Record by Maech’ŏn* covers the period from the first full year that King Kojong ruled (1864) to the year that Japan fully colonized Korea (1910). However, for events that happened during the period from 1864 to 1894, it records only briefly, and often does not provide the date of an event. Hwang Hyŏn spent relatively more ink on


\(^{355}\) Ibid., 33.
Tasan than many other topics, and apparently he described Tasan’s scholarship positively. But even then his record was not always accurate and at times even failed on basic facts. For example, he wrote a couple of times that Tasan had been exiled for nineteen years, while Tasan himself recorded his exile as lasting eighteen years.\footnote{There is a difference between Korean and American counting years. I write Tasan was exiled for seventeen years because he was exiled from 1801 to 1818.} This makes us wonder how he learned about Tasan.

A possible clue is that Hwang Hyŏn was from Chŏlla Province where Tasan was exiled. As I mentioned before, Tasan’s scholarship was relatively unknown, but since exiles were allowed to associate with local people, and also Tasan had pupils, people in Chŏlla Province were more familiar with him than people from other regions. For instance, Ki Chŏngjin (奇正鎭, 1797-1879), a famous Chŏlla Province scholar, acknowledged Tasan’s scholarship in the 1860s. Ki was known for his thorough study of Neo-Confucianism, and Chosŏn Confucians revered Ki as one of the Six Great Masters (Yuktaega 六大家), along with Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk (徐敬德, 1489-1546), Yi Hwang (李滉), Yi I (李珥, 1536-1584). When there was massive popular uprising in 1862 (Imsul millan 任戌民亂 or Chinju millan 晉州民亂) King Ch’ŏlchong (r.1849-1863) requested Chosŏn intellectuals to submit solutions to social decay and popular uprisings. Ki Chŏngjin wrote a memorial “Emulating a plan in the year of Imsul” (Imsul ŭich’aek 壬戌擬策) suggesting that the king should read Tasan’s \textit{Reflections on Governing the People} (1818). In the memorial Ki asserted that all social maladies and the solutions to them were covered in the book. The fact that Ki Chŏngjin learned about Tasan’s work and highly regarded it implies that Tasan was known to scholars in Chŏlla Province. At the same
time, since he recommended reading Tasan’s work to learn how to deal with social issues, Ki’s memorial of 1862 also shows that Tasan was not well known to the whole country at that time.

Compared to late nineteenth-century scholars, however, the twentieth-century Korean scholars were much more interested in Tasan and his scholarship. And the signs of such a change appeared around the turn of the twentieth century. Practical Learning (sirhak 實學) has been one of the popular research themes in Korean history. But as I mentioned in the Introduction, modern scholarship on Korean history has not agreed on the founder of the Korean Practical Learning School (sirhak’a 實學派), or even the definition of Practical Learning.357 Because of this, when we come across the term sirhak in a historical essay, we must ask questions such as whether there was a sirhak school at all, and what is “practical” about it. It has been pointed out that referring to certain late Chosŏn scholars’ scholarship as sirhak is a modern invention. I argue that the intention lying behind this coinage is relevant to why scholars in the early twentieth century found Tasan.

On April 17 and 18 of 1899 Hwangsŏng sinmun (皇城新聞, 1898-1910), a Korean newspaper, carried an article, “Summarizing what Chŏng Tasan, the great master of statecraft of our country” (Aguk ŭi kyŏngjehak taesŏn’saeng Chŏng Tasan Yagyongssi

ūi sosulhan pa rūl chŏgyo hanora), and highlighted Tasan as the master.\textsuperscript{358} It is noteworthy that Tasan was presented as a master of statecraft, because the concept was closely related to the movement of reform and modernize the country, and, thus, make it strong and wealthy. Regarding this Sin Yongha points out that while Tongnip sinmun (獨立新聞, 1896-1899), the first private newspaper in Korean history, employed terms such as “seeking the truth based on facts” (silsa kusi, 實事求是), and “learning the actual state” (silsang hangmun, 實狀學問) to argue that to enlighten Chosŏn people it was important to search for the truth based on facts and historical research, Chang Chi-yŏn emphasized the idea of economics in Practical Learning, and especially Tasan’s thought.\textsuperscript{359}

In spite of their temporal contiguity, Chang Chi-yŏn suggested a more macroscopic view than the Tongnip sinmun on how to modernize Korea. Paek Minjŏng argues that Chang’s article in the Hwangsong sinmun heavily influenced its readers and set the directions of studying Tasan’s scholarship on statecraft.\textsuperscript{360} As Paek argues, Chang Chi-yŏn contributed to guide the study of Practical Learning and Tasan. In 1917 Chang Chi-yŏn serialized 125 articles in The Daily News (Maeil sinbo 每日申報) under the name

\textsuperscript{358} Sin Yongha argues that Chang Chi-yŏn (張志淵, 1864-1912), the editor in chief for the newspaper at that time, wrote these articles. Sin Yongha, “19-segi mal Chang Chi-yŏn ŭi Tasan Chŏng Yagyong ŭi palgul,” Han’guk hakpo 29, no. 1 (2003): 2–21. For more on Chang Chi-yŏn, see Ch’ŏn Kwanu et al, ed., Wiam Chang Chi-yŏn ŭi sasang kwa hwaltong (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1993).

\textsuperscript{359} Sin Yongha, \textit{Ibid.}, 11-12

\textsuperscript{360} Paek Minjŏng, Chŏng Yagyong ŭi ch’ŏrhak: Chu Hŭi wa Mat’eo Rich’i rūl nŏmŏ saeroun ch’egye ro (Tasan’s philosophy: Toward a new system of thought beyond Zhu Xi and Matteo Ricci) (Seoul: Ihaksa, 2007), 409–10.
of “The Origin of Chosŏn Confucianism” (Chosŏn yugyo yŏnwŏn, 朝鮮儒敎淵源). In this series, he suggested that Yu Hyŏngwŏn, Pak Chiwŏn, Yi Kahwan, Tasan, and so on were the statecraft school (kyŏngje hakp’a 經濟學派). As the studies on these scholars accumulated, scholars perceived them as Practical Learning school.

Early-twentieth-century Korean scholars’ appreciation of Tasan shows how they perceived the Chosŏn period. In the Introduction to this study, we saw that Chosŏn scholars used “sirhak” (實學 practical learning) as the antonym of “futile” (hŏ 虛) studies, and what the term referred to changed continuously. Then, in which meaning did modern Koreans use the term? Ch’oe Namsŏn (崔南善, 1890-1957), a modern Korean historian and writer, is the person who used the word sirhak as a modern technical term for the first time. When he used the term in the 1930s, it was the moment that sirhak was defined in the modern sense.

Ironically using the term sirhak in this way was influenced by Japanese scholarship, which had used the term to imply modernity. Japanese scholars had used sirhak (J., jitsugaku) to mean studying things other than the Confucian classics, and

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361 The articles were serialized from April 5 to December 11, 1917.

362 Regarding how Chang Chiyŏn started to group Practical Learning scholars, see Pak Hongsik, “Ilche kangiŏngi Chŏng Inbo, An Chaehong, Ch’oe Ikhan ŭi Tasan yŏn’gu (Chŏng Inbo, An Chaehong, and Ch’oe Ikhan’s study of Tasan during colonial period),” Tasanhak 17 (December 2010): 45–93.

Korean intellectuals adopted the modern meaning of the term to have a Korean equivalent of that.364

After colonial Japan introduced a cultural assimilation (J. dōka; K. tonghwa) policy in the 1920s, Korean intellectuals attempted to discover immanent modernity in Chosŏn era scholarship, and also to prove that Chosŏn had a unique culture. For this reason, Hwang Wŏn’gu argues that the period under Japanese colonialism from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1930s was a period in which Korean people had to rethink the existence of the Korean ethnic group, and sirhak was a useful tool for restoring a sense of Koreanness.365 The issue of modernization played an important role in early-twentieth-century sirhak discourse.366 Korean scholars such as Ch’oe Namsŏn, An Chaehong (安在鴻, 1891-1965) and Chŏng Inbo (鄭寅普, 1893-1950) blamed Confucianism for Korea’s failure in coping with imperialism, and emphasized the new intellectual trends in late Chosŏn scholarship, which they saw as an attempt to reform Confucianism.

Then why was the former exile Tasan suddenly highlighted as the one who most accelerate the development of Practical Learning? Chang Chiyŏn (張志淵, 1864-1921)


366 Following Ch’on Kwanu, Ogawa Haruhisa says that sirhak is self-criticism of Confucianism after witnessing Neo-Confucianism was dogmatized. Ogawa Haruhisa, Han guk sirhak kwa Ilbon (Seoul: Hanul ak’ademi, 1995), 20.
played a significant role in this process. He worked for Kwangmunsa, a publisher, and printed Tasan’s Reflections on Governing the People (Mongmin simsŏ), his New Book Respectfully Offered (Hŭmhm simsŏ), and Taehan kanggyŏk-ko (The Territory of Great Korean Empire 大韓疆域考, 1903), which is an expanded version of Tasan’s Abang kanggyŏk-ko (The Territory of our country 我邦疆域考, 1811). By publishing these works Chang Chiyŏn established the foundation for studying Tasan’s scholarship. And regarding his motive, Ch’ŏn Kwanu suggests that Chang Chiyŏn promoted Tasan as a new hero of Chosŏn because Chang had received a classical education and attempted to succeed to the Practical Learning school. Ever since Chang Chiyŏn’s educational background and personal interests led him to discover and publish Tasan’s works, Tasan became such a popular theme of research during the colonial period. Pak Hongsik explains this as due to a combination of the following factors: in the 1930s there was the Korean studies movement (Kukhak undong 國學運動) to recover unique culture of Chosŏn; the centenary of Tasan’s death (1836); and outstanding scholars, for instance Chŏng Inbo, An Chaehong, Ch’oe Ikhan.

It is true that these three elements created a synergy effect to amplify Tasan’s fame, but what Pak suggests is actually circular reasoning. The three are observed in the

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367 Among Tasan’s works Reflections on Governing the People (1902) has been considered as the first printed. Recently Im Mijŏng suggests that Tasan’s Idamsokch’an, a collection of proverbs of China and Korea, was the first. According to Im, Chi Kyusik wrote in 1891 that he purchased the Idamsokch’an, but Im Mijŏng does not explain why she ruled out the possibility that it was a manuscript. Im Mijŏng, “Idamsokch’an ŭi ibon yŏn’gu,” Tasanhak 18 (June 2011): 239–291.

368 Pak Hongsik, “Ilche kangjŏmgı Chŏng Inbo, An Chaehong, Ch’oe Ikhan ŭi Tasan yŏn’gu,” 49.

369 Ch’ŏn Kwanu et al, Wiam Chang Chiyŏn ŭi Sasang Kwa Hwaltong, 15–44.

370 Pak Hongsik, Ibid., 48.
result, but they are hardly the reasons why Tasan appeared to be a good topic for study. The centenary of one’s death would be meaningful only when the person has already been recognized and appreciated. Pak’s explanation fits better for a question why Tasan’s collection was published in the 1930s rather than why Tasan became one of the main themes of study in the colonial period. Tasan was at the center of a new academic trend to the extent that Yi Usŏng once said that colonized Koreans studied Practical Learning because they found Tasan.371

Why did he appeal so strongly to the colonized Koreans as a subject of study? I argue that the reason why people paid attention to him is related to the national crisis and the fact that he had been an exile who nevertheless attained significant scholarly achievements. As Chosŏn was colonized by Japan, early twentieth century Koreans became internal exiles, which we will discuss shortly, and being exiles was the junction between Tasan and colonized Koreans. In a time of national crisis Korean scholars were looking for a premodern figure who could be characterized as a modern thinker, and what they found was Tasan, an exiled Practical Learning scholar.

**Exile in the Great Korean Empire**

The focus of this project is exile, and in previous chapters we have centered around exile as criminal punishment: punishing an offender through relocation. Korea abolished the use of exile as a criminal punishment in the 1890s, but with the arrival of Japanese colonization other types of exiles remained. Most of them were voluntary exiles for political reasons. First, people who left Korea, their native country, seeking safety or freedom were one example. These diasporic exiles found their shelter abroad, such as the

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community in Shanghai, who established a provisional government there. Second is the internal exile who determined to resist Japanese colonialism and chose to stay in Korea seeking for a way to civilize the Korean people to the level of people of the contemporary powers, and thus to recover the sovereignty of Korea. Many of them were imprisoned more than once while carrying on independence movements, and even for those who did not experience physical imprisonment or banishment, the imposition of a foreign culture caused them to be separated from their native culture. Thus, although it was not quite the “punishment of exile,” it was a type of exile similar to political exile.

Understanding colonized intellectuals as exiles naturally leads us to the next question: were all the Koreans under Japanese colonialism exiles? Based on their attitude toward Japanese colonialism, we can roughly categorize the people on the Korean Peninsula in the 1930s as follows: those who actively resisted; the undecided people; and Korean collaborators with the Japanese. And there were Japanese officials and settlers. The first group falls into the category of the internal exile. The second group consists of both intellectuals and ordinary people. It has been questioned for a long time whether ordinary people of the premodern period recognized the political entity they belonged to. They, of course, fought against foreign invaders, but we cannot assume that they aimed to protect their country, not just family and town. However, with the development of mass-circulation of print media, there were nationwide protests, such as March 1st movement of 1919. The March 1st movement shows that least by the early twentieth century even ordinary people had a form of national consciousness. For Korean collaborators and for Japanese officials and settlers, being a Korean exile was out of the

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question. Jun Uchida’s recent study shows that even the collaborators and settlers were seeking for their own interests and had conflicts with each other in the process. Despite the complexity of their characteristics, their stances and mentalities were far from those of Korean internal exiles. In sum, not all Koreans who remained in Korea were internal exiles, but those who resisted Japanese colonialism and fought for the independence of Korea can be considered as internal exiles.

Colonized Korean intellectuals did not directly identify themselves as exiles. However, An Chaehong and Chŏng Inbo, the editors of the Yŏyudang Collection, emphasized that Korea and Tasan shared a similar fate: enduring political oppression despite of their cultural advancement. Thus, I argue, they implied that colonized Koreans were experiencing their exile.

They did not seek overseas asylum, but instead, they worked to recover their political power, privilege, and legitimacy on the peninsula. As I mentioned in previous chapter, Tasan wrote in classical Chinese expecting that his fellow yangban, especially those lived in the capital, would be his future audience. Similarly, colonized Koreans composed in classical Chinese or vernacular Korean to address to other Koreans. In other words, staying in their old motherland, which became a colony, they appealed to their compatriot in their mother tongue. One of their main tasks was writing Korean history. It was an attempt to refuse a Korean history written by Japanese colonizers, the oppressors, and also a way to show their pride as a civilized and legitimate cultural entity. This also reminds us that Tasan wrote down his family history over thirteen generations and also about himself to show how culturally advanced his family was.

The leaders of the effort to publish Tasan’s work were Chǒng Inbo and An Chaehong, who were two of most renowned Korean scholars at that time.\(^{374}\) They became internal exiles when they decided to participate in Korean independence movements inside Korea, and they also experienced imprisonment. Before discussing how these colonized Koreans perceived Tasan, a brief look at intellectual background of the editors would help us to understand their thought.

An Chaehong was born in 1891 in Kyǒnggi Province. He received classical education as a child, and in the early 1910s he went to Japan, where he attended Waseda University (1911-1914). After graduation he returned to Korea and engaged in journalism and education. In the meantime he traveled to Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenyang where he met with Korean independence activists such as Sin Ch’aeho (申采浩, 1880-1936). Upon returning from his trip, An Chaehong participated in a secret organization from May 1919, and supported Korean provisional government in Shanghai. Soon he was discovered and imprisoned for the first time from November 1919 to 1922.\(^{375}\)

Another editor of Tasan’s collection, Chǒng Inbo was born in 1893 in Seoul. He hailed from an eminent scholar-official family, and received classical education, but did not seek office. When Japan colonized Korea he went to Shanghai and joined independence activists there, such as Sin Ch’aeho and Pak Ŭnsik (朴殷植, 1859-1925). After he returned to Korea he continued to participate in the independence movement and

\(^{374}\) An Hosang wrote this as the one who represented the publication committee of the Sellection of Minse An Chaehong’s Writings. Hosang’s writing was not page numbered. An Hosang, “Kanhaengsa,” in An Chaehong, *Minse An Chaehong Sŏnjip 1 (Sellection of Minse An Chaehong’s Writings 1)*, ed. An Chaehong sŏnjip kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 1981).

was imprisoned several times. When he was not in prison, he worked as a professor and editorial writer for Korean newspapers. Chŏng argued that if Chosŏn wanted to regain its sovereignty it should put outstanding people and groups on the front lines and support them.\(^{376}\) Ten years later he serialized six news articles on Tasan’s life and scholarship in *Tonga Newspaper* (*Tonga ilbo* 東亞日報) from September 10 to September 15, 1934. He entitled the series “Introduction to the only lawyer and statesman, Master Chŏng Tasan,” and introduced Tasan as a person who had pursued a mode of classical studies which was not only about an archaeology of documents, but also about politics and legislation.\(^{377}\)

What is the evidence that these internal exiles perceived Tasan as an exile when they introduced him to Korean society? First, they emphasized that the fate of Korea was similar to that of Tasan. And the title of their collection of Tasan’s work is another clue to their view of Tasan. Regarding the fate of Tasan and Chosŏn, An Chaehong portrayed Confucianism negatively and blamed Chosŏn scholar-officials’ tendency to split into factions for Korea’s plight. He enumerated pioneers in statecraft during the Chosŏn period, and argued that Tasan and Yi Kahwan, who had been demoted and arrested along with Tasan, were ahead of others in statecraft, and that caused them to suffer huge disasters.\(^{378}\)

\(^{376}\) *Tonga ilbo*, February, 13, 1924. “Everlasting internal strife” (*Yŏngwŏn ŭi naehong*)

\(^{377}\) *Tonga ilbo*, September, 14, 1934. “Introduction to the only lawyer and statesman, Master Chŏng Tasan” (*Yuilhan chŏngpǒpka Chŏng Tasan sǒnsonaeng sǒron*).

\(^{378}\) An Chaehong, “Minse p’iltam: Minjung simhwa kwajŏng,” in An Chaehong, *Minse An Chaehong Sŏnjip 1* (*Selection of Minse An Chaehong’s Writings 1*), 405. This is originally printed in Chosŏn in May 1935. The article consists of multiple pieces of writings. This piece is 2-page length and entitled “Our ethnic evils 2” (*uri minjoksŏng ŭi pyŏngp’ye 2*).
An Chaehong’s view of Tasan is even clearer in an article where he lamented the seclusion of Korea and the results of its isolation. He started this article, “Think of Chŏng Tasan and his life which reflect the fate of Chosŏn people,” with the story of Hong Pongju (洪鳳周, ?-1866), Nam Chongsam (南鍾三, 1817-1866), and Yi Sin’gyu (李身逵), who happened to be related to Tasan, Yi Kahwan, and Yi Sŭnghun. After explaining that Hong, Nam and Yi suggested that Chosŏn should trade with the West, and were punished with death, An Chaehong argued that Tasan, Yi Kahwan, and Yi Sŭnghun were great pioneers that appeared in Chosŏn over a century before. He continued that it was beyond hope that Chosŏn society could be reformed and developed in a single day, but if gradual progress could be made to rectify the deteriorating situation, the prestige (myŏnmok 面目) of Chosŏn would be much different. And regarding Tasan’s exile, he asserted that it was a terrible disaster that a group of people, who had been undermining the country and hurting people, cornered well known pioneers and exterminated their entire families.

An Chaehong concluded that Tasan’s fate reflected that of Korean people.379 He repeatedly wrote elsewhere that the fates of Tasan and Chosŏn were similar, and because not only Tasan’s life was unfortunate, but because also his name had not been much known to the general public until the centenary of his death, Chaehong argued that these proved how much Chosŏn society had declined.

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379 An Chaehong, “Think of Chŏng Tasan and his life which reflect the fate of Chosŏn people (Chosŏnmin ŭi unmyŏng ŭl panyŏng hanin Chŏng Tasan sŏnshaeng kwa kū saengae ŭi hoego),” in An Chaehong, Minse An Chaehong Sŏnjip 6 (Selection of Minse An Chaehong’s Writings 6), ed. An Chaehong sŏnjip kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 2005), 360-362. Originally this was printed in Sindonga in October 1934.
Further evidence that the editors of Tasan’s collection perceived him as an exile is the title of the collection. Because of Japanese censorship, these nationalist editors had to conceal their true intention in the title. Here I suggest the title of the collection of Tasan’s works shows that the editors presented Tasan as an exile who had to be very cautious with his behavior. As we saw earlier in this chapter, most Chosŏn scholars did not publish collections of their own writings. Tasan also left the task in the hands of his descendants, but he made a list of the works to be in his collection, and suggested that collection should be called either Yŏlsu chŏnsŏ (洌水全書), Saamjip (俟菴集), or Yŏyudangjip (與猶堂集), using three of his pennames. He used one of the names on the cover of each individual work. It was customary to have more than one penname, and Tasan also had multiple pennames. Yŏlsu is an old name of the Han River which flowed past the Chosŏn period capital city. Tasan’s hometown, Mahyŏn, was close to the Han River, and that was how he had Yŏlsu as his penname. Meanwhile, Yŏyudang was another penname that he took after the name of his place in Mahyŏn. What did Tasan say about the name, Yŏyudang? According to Tasan, before deciding the name for his house he reflected on his own personality. He wrote that other scholars had criticized his character defects, and the two characters, yŏ 與 and yu 猶 would supplement his personality:

When I see Lao Zi’s words, he says that ‘the word, yŏ is like crossing a creek in winter; the word, yu suggests fear of your neighbors in the four directions.’ Alas. Are these two words not the cure for the defects of my personality? Generally, because of the piercing cold a man who crosses a creek in winter does not cross it unless it is unavoidable. Because of
spying upon himself a man who is afraid of his neighbors in the four
directions does not do any action even though it is really inevitable.\textsuperscript{380}

Tasan did not indicate when he wrote this, but he provided some clues: in this essay he
reflected on his life up until his 30s. He also wrote that he had wanted to name his place
as such for six or even years, but was able to do it only after returning to his hometown.
Based on these hints Cho Sŏngŭl suggests that Tasan wrote this sometime between his
resignation in late July, 1799, and exile in Changgi from February, 1801.\textsuperscript{381} In previous
chapters we have seen that when he was charged for being a Catholic Tasan became very
cautious about expressing his opinion on the classics or Western Learning, for instance.
Catholicism was such an important issue at that time, and when he was demoted due to
his relationship with Catholicism, Tasan considered his demotion a form of exile. Thus
even if he had written the above piece before he was sent into exile in Changgi, it is
reasonable to say that the above is one writing of someone who was mentally an exile.
The name Yŏyudang shows that he realized that he was very likely under surveillance,
and thus had to behave carefully.

An Chaehong knew the meaning of Tasan’s different names, and distinguished
them in his writing. He explained that while “Saam (俟菴)” meant to waiting for a future
opportunity, “Yŏyudang” showed Tasan’s concern about his situation, and “Yŏlsu” was a
name of an area near the Han River. He also acknowledged that Tasan had used both
Yŏlsujip and Saamjip as the title of his own collected works.\textsuperscript{382} However, when An

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{380} \textit{YC}.1:13:39b-40a, “A Note on Yŏyudang” (Yŏyudanggi 與猶堂記).

\textsuperscript{381} Cho Sŏngŭl, \textit{Yŏyudanggi 与猶堂記} munhŏnhakchŏk yŏn’gu, 279.

\textsuperscript{382} An Chaehong, “Chŏng Tasan sŏnsaeng yŏnbo” (Chronology of Chŏng Tasan), in An
Chaehong, \textit{Minse An Chaehong Sŏnjip 6} (Sellection of Minse An Chaehong’s Writings 6), 402.
\end{footnote}
Chaehong and Chŏng Inbo published Tasan’s collected works they entitled it Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ (與猶堂 全書). In 1960, when the Literature Compilation Committee (Munhŏn p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe 文獻編纂委員會) published a facsimile edition of the Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ, with additional materials, the committee changed the title to Chŏng Tasan chŏnsŏ (丁茶山 全書). The new title is relevant to a suggestion Hong Isŏp made a year earlier. Hong was Chŏng Inbo’s student, and he wrote one of the major early book-length works on Tasan, A Study of Tasan’s Political and Economic Thought, which was published in 1959 in South Korea. Hong Isŏp points out that Tasan’s scholarship became mature while he was staying in the Tasan Thatched Cottage, and the name, Tasan, is also one of his pennames. Based on this, Hong Isŏp suggested calling Tasan’s scholarship “Tasan studies” (Tasanhak 茶山學). In sum, the change in name to refer to this premodern scholar from Yŏyudang to Tasan shows that as time passed modern scholars emphasized different aspects of Tasan. All the above names were related to his exile in one way or another, but Yŏyudang puts more weight on being cautious as a semi-exile, while Tasan emphasized the maturity and productivity as a scholar.

Conclusion

An Chaehong repeatedly emphasized the similarities between the fate of Korea and of Tasan, and interestingly the strategies that Tasan and these colonized Koreans

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Originally this was published in Sin-Chosŏn 12 (August 1935), and at that time An Chaehong used his penname, Chŏsan huhak (樗山後學).

383 The first book-length work on Tasan is Ch’oe Ikhan’s (崔益翰) Sirhakp’ă wa Chŏng Tasan (Practical Learning School and Chŏng Tasan). It was published in 1955 in North Korea, and decades later published in South Korea, too. Ch’oe Ikhan, Sirhakp’ă wa Chŏng Tasan (Practical Learning school and Chŏng Tasan) (Seoul: Ch’ŏngnyŏnsa, 1989).

384 Hong Isŏp, Chŏng Yagyong ūi chŏngch’i kyŏngje sasang yŏn’gu, 4.
employed were also similar. Colonized Korean scholars’ approach to Tasan has similarities with the way Tasan pursued study while he was in exile: Being colonized and becoming internal exiles, colonized Koreans also lost their political rights. Also being on the periphery of “modern” civilization, they had to prove that Korea had an advanced culture. To achieve this goal one of the tasks they had to accomplish was to record their history from their own perspective.

Many colonized Korean intellectuals were imprisoned due to their resistance to colonial Japan, but even when they were not, they did not have political rights or freedom. An Chaehong realized this problem and emphasized that because the Korean people did not have political power, they did not have political life, and stood outside of politics. Thus, he continued, the only way to distinguish themselves from others was to show how they had developed their thought and principles (chuŭi 主義). In other words, An Chaehong thought that Koreans had to prove how much Korea had advanced prior to the colonization. An Chaehong asserted that the Korean people had became a failure, and yet they should remember that before colonization Koreans had enjoyed cultural advancement as high as any other cultural entities. He emphasized that the Koreans’ failure was a product of the last half century, and they should be proud of the prosperity before that. An Chaehong’s logic and argument remind us how Tasan justified the cultural advancement of his family through his eminent ancestors, as we saw in Chapter Four.

385 An Chaehong, “Chosŏnin ŭi chŏngch’ijŏk punya: kich’i rŭl sŏnmyŏnghi hara,” in An Chaehong, Minse An Chaehong Sŏnjip 1 (Sellection of Minse An Chaehong’s Writings 1), 93. It was printed in Chosŏn on January 21, 1923.
Another similarity between Tasan’s and the colonized Koreans’ strategy to survive their exile is how they mobilized their knowledge to strengthen their positions while they were marginalized. Tasan showed through his writings that he was a knowledgeable and thorough scholar, and by doing so he attempted to prove that he was an authority despite his exile. Colonized Koreans also wanted to show that they knew Korean history better than anyone else. When they realized that Japanese scholars were writing Korean history, An Chaehong tried to convince Koreans that Korean history should be written by none other than Koreans. He understood that the authorship of Korean history would authorize views on the country. Thus he argued that Japanese were fabricating Korean history, and urged Korean people to speak out since silence was evil for them.

Lastly, colonized Koreans also affirmed existing views of what it meant to be “civilized.” Even those who fought against Japanese colonialism could not escape the images of Korea that were projected by Japanese. To defy the Japanese colonialists’ false descriptions of “backward” Korea, they searched for immanent modernity and argued, within the framework that Japanese suggested, how modern Korea really was. The very idea of vindicating oneself made both Tasan and colonized Koreans speaking in the accusers’ vocabulary.

386 An Chaehong, “Chosŏnsa munje” (The issue of Korean history) in Ibid., 156-57. This is an editorial for Chosŏn, and published on August 8, 1926.

387 An Chaehong, “Muŏn: muŏn ŭn kwayŏn widae in’ga” (Silence: is silence really great?), in Ibid., 327. This is printed in Chosŏn on March 6, 1929.

388 In his recent work Kyung Moon Hwang points out that “the path toward the modern era was paved largely by Korean leaders who embraced foreign models and intellectual influences and eventually worked within the framework of Japanese colonial rule.” Kyung Moon Hwang, Beyond Birth: Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 14.
Tasan identified himself as a civilized scholar and affirmed Confucianism, and colonized Koreans validated “modern” civilization of Korea to assert that Korea had been on the path to modernize by itself. Tasan’s interest in various topics caught the eyes of the modern Koreans, but the incomplete problematique colored the colonized Korean’s view of Tasan’s academic achievements.
Chapter 6. Conclusion

Following Japanese scholarship, colonized Koreans concluded that nineteenth-century Chosŏn had failed to modernize, and blamed Confucianism for the failure. Because Tasan accepted Western Learning in the late eighteenth century, they presented him as one who resisted the closed atmosphere of Chosŏn, and promoted Tasan as a precursor of modern thought has been one of the popular themes. How ironic that when Tasan differed with Zhu Xi he referred to the Confucian classics and argued that he had to disagree with Zhu Xi to restore the Confucian sages’ original meaning. In other words, when Tasan had different ideas from Zhu Xi, what he turned to was “original” Confucianism, not a new, or even modern, thought. It shows how exiling yangban as a punishment solidified the Confucianization of Chosŏn society. Political power game often intervened in the entire process of punishment, from accusation to amnesty, but the punishment still had surveillance power, and helped strengthening the state orthodoxy and consolidating the cultural identity of Chosŏn that the authorities had.

This study is not the first to notice that Japanese colonization of Korea affected modern Korean studies. In order to legitimize Japanese colonization Japanese scholarship asserted that Koreans were not able to modernize by themselves, and colonized Korean scholars who resisted the colonialists had to make a counterargument. The influence of Japanese scholarship on Koreans appeared both hiding and highlighting certain elements in Korean history. For example, as Mark Setton points out, despite the fact that factionalism profoundly influenced politics in late Chosŏn, the theme of factional associations was neglected for a long time. Setton argues that because Japanese
colonizers had emphasized factionalism in the Korean court and its negative impact, Korean scholars avoided in depth study of factionalism for decades. They feared that such research would harm the viability of Korean government, and legitimize Japanese colonization of Korea.  

Meanwhile, the process of discovering Tasan was an example of accentuation of certain aspects. To overcome the Japanese colonialists’ claim that they helped Korea modernize, Korean scholars sought Korean intellectuals of the part who had modernity in their thought. Tasan was not a mainstream intellectual at the time of his death, and around the turn of the twentieth century colonized Koreans discovered Tasan to uncover a new Korean history. Instead of social, cultural, or economic development, they discovered and appreciated Tasan in order to prove immanent modernity of Korea, and introduced him into Korean society as one of the greatest intellectuals in Korean history. By doing so, colonized Korean scholars unwittingly accepted the assumption that different cultural entities conform to a universal model of modernization.

Existing scholarship on Tasan acknowledges the tragedy of his life—unfulfilled political life and broken-up family—but does not pay much attention to it. Regarding his exile, facts, such as the places he was sent and how long he served in each place of exile, are known, but how his exile affected his thought has not been much discussed. The facts of Tasan’s exile are simple and clear, but the meaning of exile in his life is more complex.


than it may appear. As we saw in Chapter Five, at first, colonized Koreans saw similarities between exiled Tasan and colonized Korea. However, as the introduction of Tasan evolved into the study of Tasan’s scholarship, previous studies neglected the significance of the fact that Tasan was in exile and in official disgrace. His achievements were emphasized, and the psychological effect of his exile on his perception of the society and his identity was neglected.

One of the variables that determined a banished official’s exile experience was the commonness of the punishment and the chance of amnesty as well. The fluidity of exile as a punishment complicated the meaning of the punishment, the convicts’ self-perception and strategies to survive their exile. Thus, being an exile was not just a status, but also became an actor, a role player. Unlike people from other social status groups, yangban’s exile entailed losing the privileges of the ruling elite. It made criminals define who they were and what their position was in their society. By examining Tasan’s writings focusing of the special moment of his life—exile—this study showed how his perception of Chosôn society and himself as an exile changed over the period of his exile, and presented Tasan’s recuperation from the point of view of his time.

As an exile, Tasan had to identify who he was and how he was tied to Chosôn society. How should we understand the way Tasan studied and annotated the Confucian classics in his exile, and also the reason why he expected examination success for his descendants? It is true that Tasan revealed his self-perception as a scholar on the periphery, but what also appears persistently is his self-image as a bureaucrat. As a banished Confucian scholar-official he showed his interest in moral standards, social welfare, and state policies. He believed that his deprived situation was temporary and that
he would return to the center as an intellectual. Thus studying Confucian classics was an important task for him. As Chŏng Ilgyun points out, it is not only a passive activity of understanding the author’s message, but also an active activity which projects the annotator’s problematization and worldview into his interpretation.\textsuperscript{392} Tasan’s works on the classics is valuable as academic writings, and also proves that Tasan thought Confucianism was universal in nineteenth-century Chosŏn.

Being charged as a Catholic, Tasan faced a double threat: both intellectual and legal/institutional threats. Tasan had to be responsive to the ideological issues he faced and fend off accusations of being a wicked Catholic. Edward Said argues that exiles feel “an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people.”\textsuperscript{393} Despite the differences in time and place, being an exile Tasan felt in a similar way. Regarding the nature of his scholarship, Tasan was open to ideas other than Confucian classics, but to reestablish himself as an advanced Confucian scholar he had to communicate with his contemporaries in their vocabulary. Thus he signified his ideas as much as possible in Confucian terms. Among the traditional branches of learning such as literature, classical studies, historical writing, knowledge of daily life, etc., classical studies was as much \textit{sirhak} for Tasan himself as other forms of study. It was the core of his scholarship, which would let him associate with his contemporary scholars, and, at the same time, functioned as protection from being charged again with being a Catholic.

\textsuperscript{392} Chŏng Ilgyun, \textit{Tasan sasŏ kyŏnghak yŏn’gu (Tasan’s study of the Four Books)} (Seoul: Ilchisa, 2000), 26–28. Chŏng continues that when there were significant historical and social changes more works of classical studies had been produced.

When he was charged with being a Catholic, Tasan argued that he had abandoned the religion when he learned that it was not compatible with Confucianism. However he still ended up being sent into exile, and the exile experience strengthened Tasan’s self-perception as a civilized Confucian scholar. As one who expected to be freed and to have an official post in the central government again, Tasan had to prove that he did not have any moral defects as an ideal Confucian scholar. Tasan showed that he was civilized in the Confucian world through his knowledge and practice of Confucian rituals. As he had done when he was embroiled in the controversy over Catholicism in 1795, and demoted to Kŭmjŏng later, Tasan steadily carried himself as a Confucian leader while he was exiled in Changgi and Kangjin.

Being sent to Kangjin, he also perceived himself as a scholar on the periphery. The relocation of course reduced his influence on others as an intellectual. Also because he observed that Confucian civilization was underdeveloped in this area, he started paying attention to the provinces in evaluating the civilizational level of a county. Because of the underdevelopment, Tasan yearned for life in the capital. His family wanted to join him in Kangjin, but he advised them to stay at least near the capital, if not in it. Becoming an exile Tasan was on the periphery in terms of social status as well. Tasan carefully considered how to react to his experience of exile, and his solution to this was none other than affirming Confucianism. Being deprived, Tasan adjusted his goals and interests to return to the center, and dedicated his time and effort to achieve them through scholarship. As he admitted, Tasan’s major works would not have been written if he had not been exiled. 394 Because of his exile, Tasan was able to refine his thought and

394 YC 1:18:13b-14a, “Family precepts as parting gift for Hagyu (Sin Hagyu kagye 購學遊家誡).”
arguments on the Confucian classics. I do not claim that Tasan’s exile was an outright advantage, but in the event, it was of benefit to his scholarship.

Meanwhile, since Tasan was exiled his sons were not eligible to take civil service examination and be in government service. And yet he urged his sons to devote themselves to Confucian studies, and gave them hope that they or their descendants might be able to take the examination in the future. In sum, his dual self-perception led Tasan to affirm Confucian civilization. This is not surprising, of course, because that was exactly what King Chǒngjo and Queen Regent Chǒngsun wanted when they punished heretics with relatively lenient punishment, i.e. exile instead of death. They wanted the exiles to be a model Confucian and lead other people.

It is not hard to find the issue of inconsistency in Tasan’s thought. And because of this modern scholars suggest various readings of Tasan’s work. For topics such as his view of human nature and capability, and whether he supported the logic of social hierarchy or not, some scholars emphasize that he had reform ideas, while others argue that he supported the social, economic, and cultural system of Chosŏn. Both sides find the basis of their argument from Tasan’s work, and the only difference is the part that they use. Why did Tasan not prevent this when he selected writings for his collection? First, the collection contains writings over decades, and as time passed, the man’s thought also changed. Tasan reflected these changes—not only about his exile, but also social and political changes—that he observed in many different ways, and as a consequence the

395 Sin Yongha, “Tasan Chǒng Yagyong ŭi sahoe sinbun chedo kaehyŏk sasang,” in Tasanhak ŭi t’amgu (Research into the study on Tasan), by Kang Man’gil et al., Taeu haksul ch’ongsŏ (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1990), 75–118; Yi Paeyong, “Tasan ŭi sinbun’gwan e taehan chaegōmt’o (Re-examining Tasan’s view of social status),” Ihwa sahak yŏn’gu 16 (1985): 49–54; Song Chunho, Chosŏn sahoea yŏn’gu: Chosŏn sahoe ŭi kwŏn sŏngkyŏk mit kŭ pyŏnch’ŏn e kwahnan yŏn’gu (A study on Chosŏn social history: The structure, characteristics, and transformation of Chosŏn society) (Seoul: Ichogak, 1995).
modifications caused inevitable contradictions. To understand him better we need to situate his writings in context of what he was experiencing at that time, and see how his thought changed. Second, his ideas evolved because Tasan wrote on both current reality and ideas for reform. Pak Ch’ansŭng suggests that when we examine late Chosŏn scholars’ view of society and economics, we should distinguish a scholar’s ideals from practical alternatives. In case of Tasan, as we saw above on human nature and social hierarchy, his ideals are often cited by those who argue that he had modern ideas and wanted to reform the society, while the alternatives are cited by those who argue that he supported existing system of Chosŏn. I argue that there is discrepancy in his writings because he addressed both realities at that time and how they could be improved when the time came. Lastly, the inconsistency resulted from pursuing wide knowledge. Often his ideas were not fully developed and, thus, neither thorough nor systematically organized.

In this study I question how an exiled scholar perceived himself and Chosŏn society around the turn of the nineteenth century. To examine these, I put more weight on his personal writings, including letters, than his writings on statecraft. Exile in Tasan’s life may seem to be a mere biographical fact, but due to the significance of the charges against him Tasan had to adjust his strategies to survive the threat of death, to hope for amnesty, and to restore previous social status. And it showed in his writings. His voice in these sources is more about accepting the reality and adjusting the goals and strategies accordingly to survive as an exile and his family. Exile was also a challenge to Tasan’s

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sense of justice. Tasan’s vision of how a Confucian scholar ought to behave is consistently revealed when he admonishes his sons. Contrary to his sons, who attempted to reconcile with Tasan’s political rivals, Tasan refused to compromise his moral values. His career was blemished when he was charged with being a Catholic, but Tasan challenged to vindicate himself through his scholarship and kept writing as a way of recording his history.

In this study, I argue being an exile Tasan had to affirm Confucianism. In his study of Song China, which “was not followed by continued modernization nor by late modern developments,” James T.C. Liu argues that they “continued to grow, not by reaching out to new ideas and technologies but by modifying those within,” and refuses to evaluate it as conservative. As Liu aptly puts it, the Song Chinese people developed their culture “within accepted categories.” Reading his work as a practice of the nineteenth century we see that Tasan perceived himself as a civilized scholar and worked to be accepted as a member of elite of Chosŏn society. However, I must point out that Chosŏn elite developed their interests in various ways in their exile: Kim Chŏngbū (金正喜, 1786-1856) is famous for his study of epigraphy (kŭmsŏkhak) and calligraphy. Kim Manjung (金萬重, 1637-1692) is famous for his literary works, for example.

Although Tasan’s scholarship has been appreciated as a great synthesis of Practical Learning scholarship, and he is considered as a representative scholar of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it would be incorrect if we say that his exile represents Chosŏn exile. By examining his thought as that of an exile, this dissertation...

398 Ibid., 11.
explores his thought from a different perspective, and it would serve as a case study of Chosŏn exile.

For Chosŏn intellectuals social and familial networks were important not only to solidify their social status and achieve political goals, but also to academically advance. Chosŏn intellectuals socialized with other intellectuals and shared their ideas, and this was continued even when they were sent to exile. They might have more difficulties than before to keep in touch with each other and to acquire new materials, but the exchange of opinions and information never stopped. Before his exile, Tasan pursued scholarship under the influence of his faction, the Southerners, but he also associated with scholars affiliated with other factions. The Expediency group in the Patriarch faction, who also was the main leaders of Northern Learning, was interested in various topics and actively exchanged ideas across factional affiliation. Some of them visited Tasan while he was exiled, and continued their friendship when he was freed and returned to his hometown. Because the exchange of thought at that time was not only very active, but also influential, studying a group of scholars’ thought is necessary to better understand Tasan’s thought and the intellectual community in late Chosŏn period. Also research on other scholars’ view and experience of exile should be followed.
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