

Title	How had the status of "the people" been changed in Choson (朝鮮) period of Korea?
Sub Title	
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Publisher	Global Center of Excellence Center of Governance for Civil Society, Keio University
Publication year	2012
Jtitle	Journal of political science and sociology No.16 (2012. 5) ,p.33- 46
JaLC DOI	
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Notes	Special Issue on the EAP Tokyo Workshop
Genre	Journal article
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AA12117871-20120500-0033

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How Had the Status of “the People” been Changed in Choson (朝鮮) Period of Korea?

Hee-Tak Koh

Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the relativeness between the acceptance of Neo-Confucianism and the change of the status of “the people” in Korean history. My critical viewpoint is the question as follows: even though the minbon principle of “people as the basis” espoused by Neo-Confucian could be merely the ideology for rule, what result had the difference of existence or non-existence of that principle brought about? And even though that might be unintended consequences, what change had that principle including Neo-Confucianism brought about the noticeable one of their habitual mind on politics to not only Neo-Confucian scholars but also the people?

In order to clarify the change of the relativeness, I chose the historical approach and tried to trace the trajectory of the change in Choson period of Korea. Then, my study yielded the following result: the being-in-place of the principle itself and Confucian intellectuals’ efforts to practice the principle could have made a noticeable change into the people’s habitual mind on politics and could have affected the people’s social and political status over time. Especially, compared with the early period of state-building, a difference could not but appear during the mid-Choson period in which the minbon principle was taking roots among the people and the people experienced large scale wars, disasters, and widespread famines. In the case of the outbreaks of those country-wide calamities, what the political elite did could not meet the people’s expectation and the elite seemed unable to live up to their long-cherished principle of minbon, with the result that, despite the Neo-Confucians’ original intention, the principle of minbon began to be used against the elite themselves as the philosophical base of the people’s opposition against unreasonable rule. As a result, a most important change took place in the people’s own concepts, when they began to think of themselves as eligible as participants in the public sphere and their most possibly active participation as an obligation. They began to realize that the political order based on minbon principle should be not for the official but for the people, and for this

purpose, the order should be opened and administrated on the principle of public participation. This way they were motivated to study the ways for the people's participation. Despite expected differences in locality and social class, it would be reasonable to think that such an idea was gradually spreading and penetrating through the people's mind over time.

I. Introduction

The foundation of Choson dynasty on the principle of the idea of *minbon* (民本) simply "people as the basis" means that Choson was built as a strongly Confucian state. Most of "Founding Fathers", who were Neo-Confucian, espoused the proposition that people should be the basis of the state, and they justified the building of the new state on the *minbon* principle. Actually they had a strong self-consciousness that the ruling class of Koryo (高麗) dynasty had actually overthrown their state by their negligence of the principle of *minbon*.¹ In reality, the foundation of the state such as Choson was a historic event in the Korean history. Until then, "the people" had been rather likely to be invisible in the historical back alley. For the first time in the Korean history, however, the principle of *minbon* emerged as the pillar of the political philosophy for the new governance or as the symbol of the new state's "raison d'être".

In fact, Neo-Confucianism, with its emphasis on the principle of *minbon* was accepted by Koryo dynasty, but the true role of Neo-Confucianism was nothing but a tool for the reinforcement of royal authority. Nevertheless the acceptance of Neo-Confucianism and the imposing of state examination to recruit ranking officials from the end of the 11th century to the early 12th century in Koryo dynasty were key facts with reference to this paper. The seemingly nominal *minbon* principle, however, had played an important role unexpectedly in real terms, which was unimaginable without any such norm at all.

Although the principle of *minbon* was upheld high, however, it's clear that the people were merely the object of domination on the political arena in Koryo dynasty. The *minbon* principle functioned mainly as a tool to justify the rule by the king. Mainly in Koryo period, of course, there were two limitations to the realization of the principle of *minbon*: Confucianism may have been just a tool for (a) the reinforcement of royal authority and (b) the Confucian scholars' entrance into government posts.² Because Confucianism was never free from the power struggle between the king and the local family powers at that time, the acceptance of Neo-Confucianism and the imposing of state examination mean that the power of the king becomes superior to the local power families for the first time since the foundation of Koryo dynasty. The superior status of the king, however, was just unstable and the framework of power struggle continued until the end of Koryo dynasty. In such a condition, it is natural that we cannot expect the realization of the principle of *minbon*. For instance, the welfare system, which was established according to that principle in the late 10th century, was increasingly a nominal one. In particular, since the first half of 12th

century, the function of *euichang* (義倉) or “the granary for justice” started to lose its original role of relieving the people’s suffering. Sometimes the King ordered a direct aid to the poor, but the order was a no more and no less than a make-shift measure.

In addition, the rise of Confucian government officials was only possible under the king’s protection. For that reason, they could not support Confucianism with confidence without the protection from the political struggle. They did not have a strong will to defy any political opposition and put into practice Neo-Confucian ideas which demand “the administrating of the state to relieve the people’s suffering”. They were reluctant to take responsibility of the stabilization of the people’s everyday life. Although they may have felt sorry for the poor, that feeling could not develop into a special statesmanship.

At that time, the people were disregarded thoroughly by the ruling class including the king. They simply did not matter in politics. Although the slogan of “people are the roots of the state(民惟邦本)” was apparently claimed to advocate the principle of *minbon*,³ we cannot find any concrete policy in its support. Actually, because of the lack of political awareness about the people as important existence, the people were only exploited ceaselessly. Especially the rural areas were becoming desolated. There had been lots of drifting peoples, robbers and the strife against the ruling class since the late 12th century. As a result, revolts broke out frequently and the Koryo dynasty was helpless against external aggression. Finally, such a situation hastened its collapse.

Even though the principle of *minbon* could be merely the ideology for rule, however, the difference of existence or non-existence of that principle was never small. Moreover, although the practice was only paternalistic and very subjective, it should not be underestimated that the main participants in the state-building devoted sincerely their passion to practicing the *minbon* principle once they had built a Confucian state. I think the existence of the principle and the Confucian scholars’ and officials’ practicing of the principle in real life could have changed people’s habitual mind on politics, even though that might be unintended consequences, which influenced for a long time their social and political status. Especially, compared with the early period of state-building, a difference could not but appear since the mid-Choson period in which the *minbon* principle was taking roots among the people and the people experienced the large scale wars, disasters, and the widespread famines. In the case of the outbreaks of those country-wide calamities, however, what the political elite did could not meet the people’s expectation and the elite seemed unable to live up to their long-cherished principle of “people as the basis”, with the result that, despite the Neo-Confucians’ original intention, the principle of *minbon* now began to be used against the elite themselves as the philosophical base of the people’s opposition against unreasonable rule.

This paper, on the basis of above-mentioned critical viewpoint, aims to approach historically the way in which the king and the political elite thought of the people and the way in which the people’s self-consciousness on politics evolved in Choson dynasty. To clarify this feature, I will divide the period this study covers into four periods: (a) the mid-

Koryo dynasty when Neo-Confucianism was accepted and the examination system was introduced for the first time; (b) from the end of Koryo dynasty to state-building stage of Choson dynasty; (c) the mid-Choson dynasty, and; (d) the late Choson dynasty. I will also trace the changing views of the political elite and the people regarding the political status of the people.

II. The Status of the People in the End of the Koryo Dynasty to the Beginning of the Choson Dynasty

After a long period of social disorder and the domination by the Mongol Empire since the mid-13th century, a change took place in the group of the ruling class in their attitude toward the people. The leaders of the new group were mainly the rising Confucian government scholars and officials. They came to realize that the biggest problem of the state was the impoverishment of people and began to feel that they were largely responsible for the problem. Such a self-reflection was the expression of the new awakening of statecraft toward the need to stabilize the people's life through the practicing of the principle of *minbon*. For that reason, their attitude toward the people started to change gradually. As the Koryo dynasty came closer to the end, that principle was more often mentioned by the Neo-Confucians.

Chung Do-Jeon (鄭道傳, 1342-1398), who is the most famous politician among the "founding fathers" of Choson, had the most progressive awareness. He thought that the political title to the rule over the people is not given by Heaven (天), nor taken by themselves. The king is no exception. The relationship between people and the ruling class including the king is just complementary or reciprocal to each other. The new awareness of the people such as Chung's one marked a turning point in the Korean history of political thought. Until then, the relation between the ruling class and the people had been merely a one-sided domination-subordination relationship. The king who possessed boundless power had reigned over the country like Heaven. As notions such as "The king is Heaven of the people (君爲民天)" show well, even policies for the people were only paternalistic allowances by the good-willed king. Due to a change in the traditional relationship, however, the awareness of "The king is Heaven of the people" was changed into the one such as "The people is Heaven for the king (民爲君天)". Now the politics for the people became an obligation in exchange for taxation. It ceased to be the matter of the king's good will. The people began to appear as a political existence beyond any real political calculation.⁴

Finally, the Choson dynasty was founded and justified on the principle of *minbon* mainly by the Neo-Confucians. A dynastic revolution that Mencius mentioned took place for the first time in Korean history. With a view to realizing the idea fully, the founders had harboured such ideals as the politics for the people and the collaboration between the king and his vassals. Realizing the people into a genuine political existence, the *yangban*

(兩班) or the ruling class of Choson dynasty showed a trend of equating themselves with the people. They often used the concept of “companion (同胞)” or “the same class (同類)” as the collective name for both sides.⁵ It’s the vital change of awareness which had made them start to accept their relationship as not separate but all inclusive. In this way, the spread of Neo-Confucianism played a very important actual role in changing the status of people in Korean history.

In reality, however, the *yangban* class did not equate themselves with the people completely. The people as the lower class were still regarded as separate from the Confucian upper class. This separation was based on the people’s inferior moral ability. That is to say, the *yangban* regarded the people as still remaining in immaturity, unable to realize their potential. For the *yangban* Confucians, they were merely the object of moral reformation. Most of the Confucians, however, did not try to impart the morality to the people in the early Choson dynasty. It was the king that they tried to change morally, because they thought that if the top of man could be changed morally, as the typical sage king of ancient China shows, those who are under him would naturally follow his example.

Nevertheless, it was a very important fact that the people were recognized by the ruling class as a meaningful existence in politics. The rise of the people’s economic, social, and political influence enabled it. There was no place for the people, however, who were supposed to be morally inferior, as active participants in the country that is moving toward the moral politics of Confucianism. The people were still in the stage of being the political object. It took a long time for them to be recognized as a genuine political existence in Korean history.

III. The Status of the People in the Mid-Choson Dynasty

In reality, it was never easy to put into practice the ideals of the politics for the people and the collaboration between the king and his vassals, especially the realization of the collaboration between the king and his vassals. In order to realize the collaboration, a system of checks and balances was planned from the start. According to the plan of the early Choson dynasty, *euijeongbu* (議政府) was introduced as an agency to support the king and to necessitate his consultation with the vassals, but also other agencies such as *samsa* (三司) were established to check against the royal power. The tradition of the co-governance style has been called the politics by *gongron* (公論政治). When it started, especially, the Confucian government officials called *sarim* (士林) most of those who were from the southeast region of Korean Peninsula often took the initiate. However, the actual practice proved quite different from the initial plan.⁶ Without an appropriate and systematic institutionalization, the supposed system for checks and balances turned out to be a functional disorder. The problem of the structure would become very intensive from the end of 15th century onward. Over time, the Confucian ideals of the politics for the people and the collaboration between the king and his vassals proved to be a failure. The

bloody purge of the Confucian scholar-officials, which was called *sahwa* (士禍), was an extreme case, but it became a familiar scene since the first half of 16th century. More than a decade before the invasions by Japanese (1592-1598), *gongron* split over the judgement whether Japanese will invade or not, and as previously announced, Japanese army came thick and fast.

It was the distinctive feature exhibiting the typical structural problem of that time that the *gueon* (求言) began to decrease remarkably in frequency and the *eungji-sangsoh* (應之上疏) changed its nature and now began to demand only the morality on the side of the king unlike the previous one.⁷ Originally the *gueon* was supposed to demand the king to consult with his vassals, and the *eungji-sangsoh* was supposed to answer the king's questions regarding the reformation or organization of the political system and the recruitment of an unknown talented person for the stabilization of people's life with aid program for the poor by then, when there were serious natural disasters.⁸ However, *gueon*'s falling into diminishing usefulness and *eungji-sangsoh*'s changed nature show that the natural disaster could no longer an occasion for urging the king to practice the politics for people. And it also clearly shows that the principle of *minbon* began to be neglected.

The practice of the *gueon* and *eungji-sangsoh* originated from the well-known theory of the reprimand of Heaven which was asserted by Tung Chung-Shu (董仲舒), a chief minister to the emperor Wu (武) of the Han (漢) China. The theory is that the natural disaster must be the reprimand of Heaven for the maladministration before the collapse of the dynasty and the king should immediately remedy the injustices and govern well or he will see the collapse of his dynasty. Since the end of 15th century in Choson dynasty, however, their attention to the correlation of Heaven and man began to be given to only extraordinary natural phenomena supposed to be related to the safety of the royal authority. On the contrary, their attention to the people's life began to be weaker. For instance, with the decline of the principle of humane government, the institutions for relieving the poor such as *euichang* (義倉) became under-budgeted. Far from trying to relieve the poor, some of the governing elite began to just criticize the poor for their laziness.

In addition, the Confucian government officials of the *sarim* variety, who entered into central politics from the local backgrounds, also failed to pay enough attention to a humane government of relieving the poor. As mentioned above regarding the change in the *eungji-sangsoh*'s nature, most of those *sarim* officials were more concerned with the morality of king than the reformation of the system to solve the actual problems. It might be natural that the Confucian government officials emphasized the morality of king, but, the more they emphasized the morality of king, the more it led to a result that the pursuit of abstract virtue was regarded as prior in importance to the actual stabilizing of the people's livelihood. The paradox of irresponsible moralism just stood out at this time. The typical example was *The Paper of One outline and Ten Details* (一綱十目疏), which summarized the way of politics and was dedicated to king by Yi Eon-Jeok (李彦迪, 1491-1553), one of the leading Confucian officials at that time. This writing emphasized only the "right-

heartedness” (正心) of king, even though emphasis was put on the right attitude which would ultimately lead to the realization of humane government.⁹ The complaint by the royal annalist (who recorded nearly every word and act taking place in the royal court) that there was no concrete law-making proposal or measure to stabilize livelihoods of the people tells us about the Royal Court’s atmosphere of those years.¹⁰

As the absence or malfunctioning of humane government continued, the problems concerning public welfare were only getting worse and people’s protest was growing in intensity accordingly. The number of *jungsoh* (呈訴) (submitted petition) to government office, the *sangeon* (上言) of petition to the king, and *gyeogjaeng* (擊錚) of direct-to-king appeals by the people increased rapidly.¹¹ The cases of people accusing the government officials of taking bribe and looting their poverty increased in number and groups of thieves mushroomed on a country-wide scale at that time. For instance, Yim Ggeog-jung (林巨正) became widely known as a Robin Hood in Korean History.

It should be noted that the people’s protests of those years were different from the previous ones. Now the Confucian principle of *minbon* and the Confucian officials’ practicing of the principle had caused a change to the people’s habitual mind on politics with the result on the people’s actual socio-political status. Their changed attitude that they have a legitimate right to demand a relief effort from the governments is a proof of such a change. Their new self-awareness of the legitimate right shows that they began to know about the ruling class’ duty for the politics of *minbon*. Generally, it is Heaven (天) that had been a usual vehicle for people’s protest in the past, but now, the people began to claim their legitimate right to the government’s relief efforts without resorting to Heaven. It means that the people were now different from the previous time and were rising to a higher level in the 16th century. Consequentially, while the actual practice of politics for people on the side of the elite declined, the awareness that the government should exist for the people grew stronger on the side of the people by virtue of their familiarization with the Neo-Confucian ethics. This widening gap between the practice and the awareness was preparing for a coming socio-political showdown in Korean history.

IV. The Status of the People in the Late Choson Dynasty

After the invasions by Japanese (1592-1598) and Manchu (1627 and 1636), the Choson dynasty was confronted with a big change in society and politics. Especially, the most noticeable change was the fact that traditional relationship of domination and subordination based on the caste system was being obliterated in steps with a nation-wide economic and social devastation. This phenomenon was exactly the result of the collapse within the ruling class and political affairs had become further chaotic because of a strife between the parties for power (黨爭). On the other hand, the living conditions of many people except those who jumped well on a burgeoning market economy were becoming worse. And then, not only many illegal acts were rampant but also many complaints

against the privileged class had been building up towards the end of the dynasty like magma waiting to flow out.

In that circumstance, kings such as Yeongjo (英祖) and Jeongjo (正祖), who tried to solve the problems by reinforcing the royal authority and reforming the system itself, came on the stage in the 18th century.¹² The reinforcement of the royal authority was especially justified as the way of protecting the people from the privileged class who had been regarded until then as the ruling partner for humane government.¹³ To achieve this turncoat, the above-mentioned two kings tried not only to reform and organize the system for the people, but also to hear people's voice in person, creating many chances for contact with the people when they went out of the palace. It means that the tripartite relationship of king, his privileged vassals and people began to change and the king realized how much the people meant to him. The plan of two kings, however, could not be carried into execution consistently.

It is also mainly during this period that a group of scholars, so-called the pragmatic school of Confucianism (實學派) who tried to do research with a view to relieving the poor and stabilizing livelihood of the people, appeared on the scene. Most of them questioned the hereditary caste system and insisted on improving the government recruiting system which had resulted in the domination in officialdom by a closed group of *yangban*. They studied how to help people's livelihood practically. Chung Yak-Yong (丁若鏞, 1762-1836) whose pen name is Dasan (茶山), well-known as a great authority of this school, wrote a chapter on "The origin of king and government official (原牧)" in a similar vein to "The origin of king (原君)" written by Huang Tsung-his (黃宗羲) in the 17th century of China,¹⁴ and argued that the *raison d'être* of government official and law was not king but people. And in another chapter, "On the king Tang (湯論)", he justified the dynastic revolution by emphasizing that king exists through selection by people and the political order can be changed by people. Even though his whole idea was limited within the boundary of a written discourse, he regarded the people as an active principal agent on the political arena, not just an object of rule. These reformers, however, were merely a peripheral existence in the structure of political authority of those years.

It does not mean, however, that no substantial seed for change can be found from that period. On the contrary, we can find a change of perception or consciousness toward people in social aspects, especially in the change of management style of *hyangyak* (鄉約), independent organization for village autonomy under the *yangban*, which had been in place since the late 17th century. The village covenant re-written by Ahn Jeong-Bok (安鼎福, 1712-1791) whose penname is Soonam (順菴), who is classified as a leading thinker in the pragmatic school of Confucianism, is a typical one of them that shows a change in the *hyangyak* system of village governance. It was very important fact for the people and the *yangban* class of the village that they now began to agree on co-operation with each other and enact provisions that the decision and execution about the reward and penalty for people's action were to be consented by the representatives of the people, not to be decided

unilaterally by the *yangban*-leader’s alone.¹⁵ The reason why the upper reaches of the people began to take a part in the management of the organization is that not only pragmatic Confucians began to change their way of thinking on peoples’ social participation but also the people’s power and consciousness grew big and mature enough to take part in the decision-making process especially with regard to their own interests.

One of the most noticeable social characteristics of the late Choson dynasty is the sharp increase in the number of *yangban* up to as much as two-thirds of total population.¹⁶ The reason is that many people who prospered on a burgeoning market economy bought the status of *yangban* in order to be exempted from taxation, in spite of the presence of many destitute people and ruined *yangban*. By an urgent concern about the rapid increase of obligation-free class, the system reforms, the taxation scheme included, were carried out to finance the government budget. Well-known reforms such as the laws of *daedong* (大同法), *gyunyeok* (均役法) and gradual emancipation measures of slaves had the purposes of not only lightening the burden of tax and obligation on the people, but also securing government budget this way.

Such a change, swirling up everything and everybody, led to a change of people’s social status and consequently the growth of people’s own self-consciousness. As a result, a most important change took place in the people’s own consciousness, when they began to think that they could be an agent in public sphere and should be the one as actively as possible. They began to realize that the political order based on the *minbon* principle should exist not for the government officials but for the people, and for this purpose, the public sphere should be opened and administrated on the principle of public participation. They were motivated to study the ways for people’s own participation. Despite differences in terms of locality and social class, it would be reasonable to suppose that such an idea was gradually spreading and permeating through the people’s mind over time. It may be supported by the facts that the number of public and private educational institutes increased rapidly during the late Choson dynasty and the well-known people’s movement of Donghak (東學) in the late 19th century were led by the people themselves.

V. Conclusion

The principle of *minbon* was arguably nothing but an ideology for rule in Korean dynastic history, especially in the Choson dynasty history. But, whether that principle stands firm or not makes no small difference. And, despite its mere paternalistic and very subjective actuality, it should not be underestimated that Choson’s main actors during the state-building period had devoted their sincere passion to practicing and realizing their coveted *minbon* principle since the building of Chosen as a model Confucian state. Even though that might be unintended consequences, the being-in-place of the principle itself and Confucian intellectuals’ efforts to practice the principle could have made a change into the people’s habitual mind on politics and could have affected the people’s social and political

status over time.

Compared with the early period of state-building, a difference could not but appear during the mid-Choson period in which the *minbon* principle was taking roots among the people and the people experienced large scale wars, disasters, and widespread famines. In the case of the outbreaks of those country-wide calamities, however, what the political elite did could not meet the people's expectation and the elite seemed unable to live up to their long-cherished principle of *minbon*, with the result that, despite the Neo-Confucians' original intention, the principle of *minbon* now began to be used against the elite themselves as the philosophical base of the people's opposition against unreasonable rule.

Over time, this change, swirling up everything and everybody in it, led to a change in the people's social status, and consequently to the growth of the people's own self-consciousness. As a result, a most important change took place in the people's own concepts, when they began to think of themselves as eligible as participants in the public sphere and their most possibly active participation as an obligation. They began to realize that the political order based on *minbon* principle should be not for the official but for the people, and for this purpose, the order should be opened and administrated on the principle of public participation. This way they were motivated to study the ways for the people's participation. Despite expected differences in locality and social class, it would be reasonable to think that such an idea was gradually spreading and penetrating through the people's mind over time.

In relation to the change of the people's social and political status in Korean history, it is a very important fact that Neo-Confucianism was accepted as a dominant organizing principle by Choson's founding fathers. Once the acceptance was made into the political order, Choson's history could not be off a transformation brought by the people's gradual acceptance of that idea into their everyday life. More generally, however, this change can be also viewed as a part of the spread of Neo-Confucianism in East Asia. In that sense, I think, Neo-Confucianism and its transformative influence had played an important role as an ideational substructure in the change of the people's mind on the social and political status. And it may be an unavoidable fact that the ideas of state, politics, statesman and so on derived from Neo-Confucianism still have an influence —whether for worse or better— on our political and social concepts in the contemporary of East Asia.

Acknowledgement

This paper is based on the presentation of “East Asian perspectives on Politics Tokyo Workshop at Keio University” held on December 17 last year. I thank the organizers and participants of the workshop, and especially thank my Korean colleague translating for me, and make a polite apology to my discussant professor Leigh Jenco for my insufficient response and carelessness.

Notes

¹ In the following remark, we can see their posture to justify their revolutionary actions. 《太祖實錄》卷 1, 太祖元年(1392) 7月 17日條, “今王昏暗, 君道已失, 人心已去, 不可爲社稷生靈主, 請廢之”. The 3rd king Taejong (太宗) mentioned the principle of *minbon* directly. 《太宗實錄》卷 33, 太宗 17年 (1417) 4月 25日條, “訪問民瘼. 下旨吏曹曰: 民惟邦本, 本固邦寧, 民生疾苦, 宜當盡知”. And we can read the records of *the Annals of the Choson Dynasty* (朝鮮王朝實錄) in the original on the following website, <http://sillok.history.go.kr/>

² See the following articles written by Seock-Gyu Lee. (1999). “*Koryo sidae minbon sasang eui seonggyuk* (The characters of *minbon* principle in Koryo dynasty)”. *Kugsagwan-nonchong* (國史館論叢). No.87.

³ We can find the example of using “the people are the roots of the state (民惟邦本)” as follows, 《高麗史》卷 18, <世家>卷 18 毅宗二, 毅宗 18年 (1164) 7月壬辰條; 《高麗史》卷 19, <世家>卷 19 明宗一, 明宗 5年 (1175) 4月丙寅條, etc.

⁴ See Seock-Gyu Lee. (2004). “*Yeomal seoncho sinheung yusin eui min e daehan insik* (The awareness toward people of rising government officials of Confucian in the end of Koryo dynasty to the beginning of Choson dynasty)”. *The Journal of the Choson Dynasty Studies Association* (朝鮮時代史學報). No.31.

⁵ The concept of companions is the phrase of Neo-Confucian, Chang Tsai (張載) in Song (宋) China. “All people are from the same womb as I, all creatures are my companions”.

⁶ See Young Soo Kim. (2005). “*Choson gongron jungchi eui isang gwa hyunsil* (The idea and reality of co-governance in Choson dynasty)”. *Korean Political Science Review* (韓國政治學會報). Vol.39-5. and Young Soo Kim. (2008). “*Dong Asia eseoewi wang gwa sinryo e euihan hyupchi eui isang gwa hyunsil* (The idea and reality of co-governance by king and retainer in East Asia)”, *The Journal of Political Thoughts in East Asia* (東洋政治思想史), Vol. 7-2.

⁷ See Seock-Gyu Lee. (2009). “*Choson myungjong dae eui gueon gwa minbon inyum eui byunjil* (The corruption of *minbon* principle through the *gueon* in the period of king Myungjong (明宗)”. *The Journal of the Choson Dynasty Studies Association* (朝鮮時代史學報). No.41.

⁸ Its’ well-known fact that a convulsion of nature frequently occurred in 16th century because of the phenomena by the Little Ice Age from the beginning of the 16th century to the mid-18th century in the northern part of the earth. And see, GumSuk Kim. (1988). “A preliminary study on long term variation of unusual climate phenomena during the past 1000 years in Korea”. *The Climate of China and Global Climate : Proceedings of the Beijing International Symposium on Climate, October 1987*. Beijing: China Ocean Press.

⁹ We can read the records in the original on the following website,

http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=MM&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp?bizName=MM&seojiId=kc_mm_a125&gunchaid=av007&munchaid=01&finId=001&NodeId=&setid=347307&Pos=0&TotalCount=77&searchUrl=ok

¹⁰ 《明宗實錄》卷 7, 明宗 3 年 (1548) 3 月 17 日壬辰條, “民生飢餓切迫, 僵尸相望, 則爲大臣者, 所當啓以即遣御史, 賑救之不暇也。何必待懇惻之教乎? 是荃與政院大臣, 胥失之也。民填溝壑, 而略不動念, 惟以招權納賄, 斲喪國脈爲事, 大臣之道, 果若是乎? 言之誠可於悒”。

¹¹ See Seok-Jong Chung. (1990). *朝鮮後期 社會變動研究 (The Study of the Social Change in Late Choson Dynasty)*. Seoul: Iljogak.

¹² We can read an example of that case as following mention of king Yeongjo, 《英祖實錄》卷 3, 元年乙巳 (1725) 1 月 3 日壬寅條, “教曰: 朋黨之弊, 未有甚於近日。初以斯文起鬧, 今則一邊之人, 盡驅之於逆黨。三人行亦有賢, 不肖, 豈有一邊人同一套之理? 刻而又深, 流而復竄, 其中豈無抱冤之人乎? 一婦含冤, 五月飛霜。況一邊諸臣, 盡迸於諸道者耶? 如此而傾軋之言, 烏可已乎? 我國本偏小, 用人之道亦不廣, 而至於近日, 其所用人, 罔非黨目中人, 如此而合天理之公, 服一世之心乎? 向年共仕朝端, 今胡不如前耶?……”。

¹³ See Tae-Jin Lee. (2002). “Choson sidae minbon isiki eui byuncheon gwa 18 segi ‘minguk’ inyum eui daedu (The change of awareness for minbon and the rise of the principle of ‘nation-state (民國)’ in 18th century of Choson dynasty)”. *Gukka inyum gwa daewe insik: 17-19 segi (The Idea of the State and the Foreign Awareness: from 17th century to 19th century)*. The joint studies’ series of Korea and Japan. No.3. Seoul: the Press of Asian Studies Institute of Korea University.

¹⁴ Dasan started to write with a question in “The origin of king and government official” as follows: “牧爲民有乎, 民爲牧生乎”, and answered his own question as follows: “民爲牧生乎, 曰否, 否, 牧爲民有也, 遠古之初民而已, 豈有牧哉, ... 推而共尊之, 名曰里正, ... 推而共尊之, 名曰黨正, ... 數黨感服, 名之曰州長, 於是數州之長, 推一人以爲長, 名之曰國君, 數國之君, 推一人以爲長, 名之曰方伯, 四方之伯, 推一人以爲宗, 名之曰皇王, 皇王之本起於里正, 牧爲民有也”。《茶山詩文集》卷 10 〈原〉, 〈原牧〉. Also he began to write with a question in “On the king Tang” as follows: “湯放桀可乎, 臣伐君而可乎”, and answered his own question as follows: “曰古之道也, 非湯初爲之也, ... 天子者衆推之而成者也, 夫衆推之而成, 亦衆不推之而不成, ... 九候八伯議之, 改天子, 九候八伯之改天子, 猶五家之改隣長, 二十五家之改里長, 誰肯曰臣伐君哉”。《茶山詩文集》卷 11 〈論〉, 〈湯論〉. We can refer to the original on the following website,

http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=MK&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp%3FbizName=MK%26finId=007%26gunchaId=av010%26muncheId=01%26seojiId=kc_mk_c001

¹⁵ There were some rules in the hyang-yak written by Soonam as follows: “凡彰善糾惡等事, 當與三老并議, 若有治罪者, 依洞約五等罰, 三老與諸村長列坐, 使之治罪, 是與衆同之意也”。《順菴先生文集》卷 15 〈雜著〉, 〈廣州府慶安面二里洞約〉. We can refer to the original on the following website,

http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=MM&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp%3FbizName=MM%26finId=001%26gunchaId=av015%26muncheId=01%26seojiId=kc_mm_a534

¹⁶ See Seok-Jong Chung. (1990). *朝鮮後期 社會變動研究 (The Study of the Social Change in Late Choson Dynasty)*. Seoul: Iljogak. and Hiroshi Miyajima. (1995). *兩班 (The Yangban: The privileged class of Choson Dynasty)*. Tokyo: Chuokouronsha.

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