THE MYTH OF THE HERMIT KINGDOM

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INTRODUCTION

In order to rebuild itself following the devastation wrought by the Korean War, South Korea wasted little time in concentrating its efforts and resources on heavy industries. Large scale steel production began little more than a decade after the 1953 armistice agreement; as planned, it laid the foundation for the later industries of ship building and automobile manufacturing, the former an industry in which South Korea now leads the world. More recently, South Korea has emerged as one of the world's major producers of consumer electronics and as a leader in the field of information technology. Finally, today it also stands as an equally important center of cultural production. South Korean music, television, and films are already popular across most of Asia, and are gaining critical mass in the West. Korean films, in particular, are receiving increasing critical acclaim at major international festivals such as Cannes, while actors are beginning to make significant inroads into Hollywood.

Of course, there are tremendous differences between the South Korea of the 1960s and that of today. In fact, by the late 1980s South Korea's economic transformation was already being rather commonly referred to as a "miracle." And I would argue that an equally large and significant cultural transformation has taken place from the 1980s. Today South Korea has largely outgrown its xenophobia of the late 20th century, and stands as a confident and increasingly heterogeneous and multi-racial/cultural society. Despite the enormous changes the country has undergone in the last

50 years, the one common denominator among the successes outlined above is that each requires an engagement with the outside world. More importantly, each is predicated upon both the ability of South Koreans to connect in a meaningful and constructive way with foreign countries and cultures, and the recognition by those "outsiders" that a relationship with South Korea is beneficial, either economically or culturally, or both.

Viewing these phenomena outside a larger historical context may give rise to the erroneous conclusion that present-day South Koreans have been forced by historical circumstances to do something otherwise "foreign" to their historical experience and "national character." Exacerbating the problem is North Korea's behavior over the last 50 years. But there is no real historical precedent for North Korea's society; actually, many scholars place the North Korean system closer to Japanese Imperialism and Protestant Christianity, both rather recent in Korean historical terms, than to any cultural or political practices that predate Korea's encounter with the West. In fact, and in keeping with one of the primary themes of this conference, however, Korea has long been integrated with the outside world.

As with any country, however, discussions of Korea often revolve around stereotypes. One of the most frequently appearing is that of the "hermit kingdom." According to conventional wisdom, Korea obstinately refused to open to the outside world for much of its existence. Historical and literary records, however, demonstrate that such was not always the case; on the contrary, sources reveal that periods in which Korea turned inward were both brief and infrequent. The unfounded designation of Korea as hermit, the motivations for which will be explored below, ultimately amounts to a gross distortion of fact and a facile reduction of Korean history.

Historical and literary materials both bear witness to Korea's long and meaningful interaction with the outside world, even prior to the twentieth century. What becomes striking, then, is the lack of scholarly attention devoted to exploring the images of those people and places beyond Korea's borders appearing in premodern texts. In addition, and more importantly for the present study, the

relationship between such early images and the later representations of the West has been completely ignored. In this study I will attempt to illuminate this little explored aspect of Korea's past.

DEFINING "THE FOREIGN"

To begin with, a careful definition of terms is in order. Among other things, this study argues for a plurality in Korean conceptions of selves and others that has been largely obscured in the various drives for homogenization since the end of the nineteenth century. As such, no single term exists to express perfectly the various conceptions of those people and places beyond Korea's geographical borders prior to the twentieth century; however, a process of elimination yielded "the foreign" as the best compromise. Originating from the Latin *foranus*, or "from beyond the doors," etymologically, it represents more spatial than psychological distance.

The term is admittedly vague and brought many constructive suggestions for alternatives from early readers and interlocutors. The two that merited closest consideration are "the exotic" and "the Other." I opted against the former because the present study posits a decidedly non-exotic outlook toward and experience of many of the people and spaces outside of Korea's physical borders, demarcations which were themselves rather amorphous, fluid, and open to contestation. Moreover, the present connotations of the term "exotic"—those of an almost salacious strangeness—make it even less appropriate here. The more modish term, "the Other," merited deeper consideration, but proved equally unfit. First, the radical division of the world into the binary categories of "Korea/self" and "foreign/Other" was not even attempted until the close of the nineteenth century, and even then with questionable success. [1] Second, the term is likely to conjure up images

[1] It was not until the late-nineteenth century that Korean writers such as Sin Ch'aeho used terms such as "ego/self" and "non-ego/self" to characterize Korea's relation to the outside world. And this was not a preexisting indigenous self-conception but a conscious construction in reaction to new external threats and pressures. See Sin Ch'aeho, "What is History? What Shall We Study in History?," in Yŏngho Ch'oe, et. al., eds., *Sources of*

reminiscent of those outlined in Edward Said's *Orientalism*[2]—images of unequal relations, domination, and exploitation between people or nations from two radically different world orders.[3] But, as will be demonstrated in this study, a considerable portion of Koreans' early historical experience of "the foreign" abroad was as a sort of participant observer, often on equal terms with the native inhabitants of the lands to which they ventured. While on the peninsula many of the interactions with "non-Koreans"—things such as trade and diplomatic exchanges—were also conducted on equal terms and for mutual benefit. There were, of course, exceptions; invasions from various peoples and states on Korea's northern borders and Japanese incursions of varying scales and objectives immediately come to mind. Many such incidents proved tragic to be sure; however, in a manner similar to Korea's depiction as hermit, certain histories of Korea attempt to reduce long, meaningful, and reciprocal contacts with the outside to a unidirectional and involuntary history of oppression. This was most certainly not the case, and even during those brief and anomalous periods, conflict took place among known entities in a well-defined and quite stable "East Asian world order."[4]

Korean Tradition Volume Two: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 317-319.

[2] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). From his Introduction, Said refers to the Orient as Europe's "cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other."

[3] The term and concept of "the Other," though not suitable for the first two chapters of this study, could be applied to those portions of the last two chapters that examine Korean relations to the West and Japan from the close of the nineteenth century.

[4] See Key-Hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 18ŏ0-1882* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 1-38.

Other scholars of Korea have noted the same phenomenon and order. Martina Deuchler, citing John Fairbank, refers to it as the "Sinic Zone." See Martina Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875-1885*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), p. 2. Deuchler is also careful to point out that "To the Koreans, China as a political entity and China as the source of Chinese culture were two different concepts." In other words, even during periods of political transition and turmoil, such as the period between the Manchu's seizure of political power and their eventual acculturation, the Koreans had an unwavering "China as the source of Chinese culture" as their lodestar.

Even when seemingly cataclysmic changes occurred, this order endured. The Manchus, for example, were able to topple the Ming dynasty, but, rather than imposing a new order on China and Northeast Asia, they became quite "Sinicized"—that is to say subsumed by rather than radically altering the existing order—in the process of ruling. And the Japanese, for their part, while certainly possessing at different times throughout history designs on the continent, did not espouse a break with the traditional order until the latter half of the nineteenth century, and even then the impetus for this proposed secession was not indigenous, but rather externally provided by their own forced opening by the West. Whether one begins with the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the subsequent imitation of the imperialistic practices of Western powers, or with the *Datsu-A ron* 脱亞論, or proposal to secede from Asia, of Fukuzawa Yukichi in published in March 1885, the fact remains that until the latter half of the nineteenth century Japan too was firmly ensconced in and bound by this East Asian world order. Fukuzawa himself testifies to this fact in a letter in which he wrote, "In the early part of this month, a number of Koreans arrived to observe conditions in Japan, and two of them are enrolled in our academy…. When I think about myself twenty-odd years ago, I cannot help feeling sympathy and compassion for them…. When I hear them talk, it is Japan of thirty years ago."[5] But Japan had embraced defeat and Western superiority much more rapidly and fully that would Korea. As such, Japan's initial efforts to "open" and "civilize" Korea met with failure. Ironically, what the Japanese held up so proudly as civilization and enlightenment, the Koreans viewed as a great leap backward. Odd costumes and manners notwithstanding, the Japanese, in the Koreans' eyes, had made no

[5] Kamigaito Kenichi , *Nihon ryūgakusei to kakumei undō, 7* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982) as quoted in Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 53.

escape from Asia. Not until Korea's contact with the West would a truly foreign other be encountered.[6]

The breadth of the term "the foreign" also lends itself well to the present study. Nothing tethers "the foreign" to a specific category; as such, it can embrace the many spaces, states, and people, both actual and imaginary, outside the strictly geographical borders of Korea. The quotation marks around the term "the foreign" serve a mitigating function, pointing to the fact that "the foreign" often denotes only a literal geographical position beyond Korean borders; it does not connote any strangeness or exoticism inherent in the foreign location. For many of these lands and peoples participated in a common cultural and religious heritage. And, particularly when compared to Korea's later encounters with the West, such peoples and places were often not so alien to Koreans. When Koreans actually traveled to other lands they often found themselves included, even integrated, in the highest echelons of official and religious authority. And they extended this same inclusive treatment to many from abroad.

Additionally, the inhabitants of the Korean peninsula themselves are not all composed of the same ethnic stock. At times throughout history there have been influxes of "non-Korean" individuals and groups, many of whom have been assimilated. At other times the inhabitants of the peninsula proper have gone

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[6] In the East Asian world order, Korea observed a policy of *sadae* 事大, or serving the great, toward China. Relations with Japan, however, fell under the Confucian rubric of *kyorin* 交隣, or neighborly relations. But even neighborly relations contained hierarchical concerns, and the Koreans definitely felt their position in this order was above that of Japan. Following the Meiji Restoration in 18ð8, Japan considered the relationship to have changed drastically. Korea, however, acknowledged neither the change in world order nor the Meiji emperor's parity with the Chinese emperor. Therefore, even eight years later, when Korea was forced by Japan to sign the Kanghwa Treaty in 187ð, the Koreans saw it not as an unequal treaty with an imperialist power, but as a reaffirmation of the traditional order and of their own superior position therein (This, of course, was a misunderstanding of both the form and intent of the treaty, but it serves well to illustrate the degree to which Korea still believed and operated in the East Asian world order). See Martina Deuchler, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-50, James B. Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea*, (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 252-271, and Kim Key-Hiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-25.

beyond their borders—both north into Manchuria[7] and south to Cheju Island[8]—to seize new territories and create, through a process of forced assimilation, new "Koreans." Thus, since exactly what constitutes "Korean" is open to contestation, the definition of "foreign" must by definition be quite nebulous as well.

Each of the above factors merits and was given careful consideration. Each should be kept in mind throughout this study. Most significant among them, however, is the existence of a common world order and civilization that rendered many geographically distant locales and racially heterogeneous peoples merely "beyond the doors," but not truly foreign. Korea's doors were open to a bidirectional flow of peoples and cultures.

DEFINING "KOREAN"

As briefly mentioned above, the attempt to problematize simplistic, dichotomous definitions of foreignness also necessitates

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[7] The encounter with the West also engendered contradictory views of Manchuria. Social Darwinism demanded that nations simultaneously expand the political nation and maintain the purity of the ethnic nation. Present-day South Korean historiography still suffers from this conundrum, extolling mutually contradictory views of the past, often in the same text. The "fact" that Koreans are a peace-loving people who have never invaded a neighboring country, despite the countless attacks launched against them, is often highlighted. Great satisfaction is also exhibited, however, when discussing the great martial spirit of Koguryŏ, which was exemplified by and personified in King Kwanggaet'o 廣開土王 (391-413), whose name itself means to "widely expand territory." There was a time, it is said, that Korean territory stretched far into Manchuria. And to this day there exist in South Korea certain irredentist sentiments concerning this once "Korean" territory. Neither narrative problematizes the myth of racial purity, despite the fact that either suffering countless invasions or engaging in broad colonial expansion would obviously lead to significant amounts of miscegenation.

[8] Cheju Island is situated off the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. Though it is now a favorite destination for honeymooners who lack the wherewithal required for Hawaii, it was, for much of "Korean" history, an independent island country called T'amna. Its foundation myths are quite different from those found on the mainland (see James Grayson, "Foundation Myths, Sacred Sites and Ritual: The Case of the Myth of the Three Clan Ancestors of Chejudo Island", *Korea Journal* vol. 38, no. 4 (1998), pp. 300-330.), and its language is to this day unintelligible to those on the peninsula proper. The various dynasties and regimes in power on the mainland have made repeated and forcible attempts to assimilate the island, the most recent instance of which was the Cheju Massacre of 1948.

subjecting to critical scrutiny and reevaluation exactly what constitutes "Korea" and "Korean." The terms are used broadly here to refer to those kingdoms and peoples historically located on what is presently known as the Korean peninsula over the last 2,000 years, particularly Paekche 百濟 (18 B.C.-660), Koguryŏ 高句麗 (37 B.C.-668), Silla 新羅 (57 B.C.-668), Unified Silla 統一新羅 (668-935), Koryŏ 高麗 (918-1392), and Chosŏn 朝鮮 (1392-1910).[9] The pure "Korean-ness" of certain other kingdoms, such as Kaya 加耶 (42-532)[10] and Parhae 渤海 (698-926), due to their more "foreign" origins and hybrid constituencies, is often the subject of debate. Such contestation only serves to strengthen the present assertions regarding the fluidity and heterogeneity both of what exactly constituted "Korea" and of premodern "Korean" international relations.

Finally, as briefly mentioned above, certain areas beyond the current boundaries of the Korean peninsula also merit investigation. In the case of certain portions of Manchuria, they may at one time have been "Korean" territory, but were ceded to China more than one thousand years ago. As for present-day Cheju Island, nearly the opposite is true. Today, at least administratively and in the popular imagination, it is firmly established as part of Korea. But for the majority of its history it was the independent island nation of T'amna 耽羅.[11] Centuries of successive forced occupations,

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[9] Going back much further risks venturing beyond the scope of the present study. When appropriate for illustrative purposes, however, some mention will be made of the foreign origins of earlier peninsular states such as Wiman Chosŏn 衛滿朝鮮. Though not examined in this study, states such as Puyŏ 夫餘 or the Han Chinese Commanderies that existed on the peninsula would only serve to strengthen the present argument. For a persuasive argument concerning these commanderies influence on early Korean state formation, see Hyung-Il Pai, *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[10] The inclusion of Kaya in records such as the *Samguk yusa* also does much to bolster its case for inclusion. And, to destabilize even further monolithic definitions of Korea, there were actually at least two different Kaya states: Pon Kaya 本加耶 (42-532) and Tae Kaya 大加耶 (ca. 42-5ð2).

[11] This is mentioned in Korean sources such as *Samguk sagi* 三國史記, or *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms*, written in 1145 by Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075-1151). In the entry for

colonizations, and assimilations have only succeeded in bludgeoning the island into a semblance of "Korean-ness." But the islanders' separate identity and sentiments have never been a secret on the mainland.[12] Even today, following decades of standardized education and centralized media, the natives' continued adherence to indigenous linguistic and cultural traditions, often truly foreign and unintelligible to those on the peninsula, serves as a stark reminder both of the tenuousness of their affiliation and of their continued resistance to it.[13]

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the second year of King Munmu 文武王 (661-681) of Silla we are told that T'amna was first made a vassal of Paekche, but, after Paekche's fall, later came under the governance of Silla. But in King Munmu's fifth year we learn of an official journey to T'ang China taken together by envoys from Silla, Paekche, T'amna, and Wae 倭, or Japan. From this we can ascertain that T'amna, though perhaps paying tribute to Silla, retained some form of sovereignty with regards to foreign relations. Ironically, the penultimate entry regarding T'amna, made for the second year of King Munju 文周王 (475-477) of Paekche, provides us with the earliest chronological glimpse into its history. In this entry we are told that King Munju received a gift of native products (方物) from T'amnaguk 耽羅國, and that he was so pleased he granted the envoy a high official rank and title. Again we see a certain tension here. The character *kuk* 國 implies a separate state, while the implications of the tribute are obvious. Just as many mainland Korean kingdoms retained domestic authority while paying tribute to those in power in China, T'amna appears to have had a similar relationship with certain of those states on the peninsula proper. That force was used to maintain this relationship against T'amna's will is also borne out in this work. In the entry for the twentieth year of King Tongsŏng 東城王 (479-501) we discover that a punitive force is to be sent to T'amna for having failed to pay tribute and taxes. Hearing of this, however, T'amna sends an envoy to make amends and the attack is called off.

T'amna's existence as a separate state can also be verified through foreign sources. The Japanese monk Ennin's diary mentions passing T'amna on the way back to Japan from China. See Ennin, *Ennin's Diary: A Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* [*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*] , trans. Edwin O. Reischauer (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), p. 401.

[12] In 1900 there was an uprising on the island. It was first rumored to be anti-Catholic and the French, as they were wont to do at the time, immediately dispatched two gunboats. It later turned out, however, that the killing of Christians was "accidental to the revolt." The rebellion started due to a combination of "the old local feeling of independence from Korea" and unjust taxation by an official from Seoul. See William Franklin Sands, *Undiplomatic Memories*, (New York: Whittlesey House, 1930), pp. 163-180. In a chapter titled, "The Amazons," Sands chronicles Cheju's matriarchical society and many other salient differences between it and the mainland.

[13] Here, as with Manchuria, conflicting sentiments give rise to contradictory conceptions of Cheju Island. To the outside it is represented as an integral part of a

Though a full treatment of the above examples lies beyond the scope of the present study, it should be clear that a simplistic and binary understanding of "Korea" versus "foreign" is fraught with problems. That said, these terms "Korea" and "foreign" will be employed here—much like the terms "premodern" and "early-modern"—for utility's sake. Whenever appropriate, the specific name of a state or kingdom (e.g. Chosŏn) will be used; however, in those cases where general discussion of trends and traditions that outlast or overshadow individual states occurs, the term "Korea" will be employed.

MYTH OF THE HERMIT KINGDOM

Given this tradition of awareness of and concern with "the foreign" in both historical records and literary accounts, one cannot help but puzzle over the conventional conception of Korea as hermit. The genealogy of the term and idea of Korea as "hermit kingdom" is fascinating, but the designation is ultimately fallacious. William Elliot Griffis' bluntly titled, *Corea: The Hermit Nation* ,[14] the first work to apply this label to Korea, appeared in 1882—ironically, the same year in which Korea signed a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States of America, its first treaty with a Western nation and its first official recognition of a new international order.[15] Equally ironic is the fact that Griffis never visited Korea. Rather, he gathered his ideas and formed his

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pure Korea. On the inside, however, it is studied by linguists and anthropologists as a rich source of language, customs, and beliefs found nowhere on the peninsula.

[14] William Elliot Griffis, *Corea: The Hermit Nation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882).

[15] As mentioned above, Korea had previously, in 187ŏ, signed a treaty with Japan on Kanghwa Island (江華島條約). This treaty, although it did usher in the so-called "opening of the ports," did not signify the beginning of international relations in the Western sense. Rather, the Koreans mistakenly believed it to be a means of reestablishing traditional East Asian international relations between Korea and Japan.

See Key-Huik Kim, *op. cit.*, pp. 253, 256, 258. See also Song Pyŏnggi, "Soegukki ŭi taemi insik" [Perceptions of America during the Period of National Isolation] in Ryu Yŏngik (Young-Ick Lew), ed., *Han'gugin ŭi taemi insik* [*Koreans Perceptions of America*] (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1994), p. 11.

opinions while in Japan. He was quite enamored of the new, Westernized Japan, and appears to have entertained a similar vision for Korea. His dedication at the outset of *Corea: The Hermit Nation* reads in part as follows: "To all Korean patriots who seek by the aid of *science, truth, and pure religion* to enlighten themselves and their fellow countrymen, to rid their land of superstition, bigotry, despotism, and priestcraft…."[16] Griffis' unreflective evocation and conflation of "science, truth, and pure religion" mirrors the later rhetoric of American missionaries, Japanese colonizers, and Korean reformers alike.[17] Griffis' labeling of Korea as a hermit nation appears merely to have been his way of saying Korea was unlike Japan. Korea was dedicated to preserving the East Asian world order.[18] And Griffis encountered Korea in the midst of a sustained military and epistemological attack on that order by the unreflective champions of "truth, science, and pure religion." To a writer uninformed of this historical context and disparaging of tradition, Korea may indeed have appeared reclusive.

It is certainly true that during the 1870s, when Griffis was researching and writing, the kingdom of Chosŏn was at or near the nadir of international relations, and perhaps just as close to the apogee of xenophobia, but only as defined by the West. According to a different logic and perspective, Chosŏn had survived, at times prospered, over nearly 500 years in a Sino-centric system of international relations that saw neither the advantage or necessity of remaking itself in the image and for the profit of the West.[19] And it

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[16] Emphasis added.

[17] Many Korean reformers such as Sŏ Chaep'il and Yun Ch'iho began under Japanese tutelage and sponsorship, but later turned to America and Christinity for political and spiritual guidance.

[18] Key-Hiuk Kim contextualizes Korea's reaction to the West rather succinctly, saying that Koreans were determined "to protect their own country and to save civilization in East Asia." See Key-Hiuk Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[19] The third chapter will attempt to display both the quite reasonable and strenuous objections of many Koreans to the West and the processes—often processes of coercion and deceit—by which those objections were silenced.

should be added that the majority of Koreans were finally convinced of this advantage and necessity much more by the "science" of superior firepower and the strategic usage and withholding of medicine and education than by "truth and pure religion."

For better or worse, however, the appellation stuck. In *The War in the East*, a 1895 volume written on the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) ―a somewhat misleading appellation itself as the war was precipitated by an indigenous Korean uprising and fought geographically on and for control over the Korean peninsula[20]―Korea is again referred to as "the hermit nation."[21] The misnomer resonates to this day.

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[20] China and Japan had already long been embroiled in a struggle for supremacy on the peninsula. A domestic rebellion with complex causes—though blame was then and is often now facilely assigned to the followers of a new religion/philosophy called Tonghak 東學, or Eastern Learning—broke out in 1894. The Korean government panicked and requested Chinese assistance in putting down the rebels. The Japanese, though no request was made, followed by sending troops of their own. The rebels were put down but the Sino-Japanese War, in which many of the casualties were obviously Korean, rapidly followed.

The effects of this war also registered in Korean fiction. Some eleven years later, *Hyŏl ŭi nu* 血의漏, Korea's first "new novel" 新小說, opens amidst the dizzying cannon fire and carnage of this conflict.

For extensive treatments in Korean see Ryu Yŏngik (Young Ick Lew), *Tonghak nongmin ponggi wa kabo kyŏngjang: Ch'ŏngil chŏnjaeng-ki (1894-1895) Chosŏnin chidoja ŭi sasang kwa undong* [The Tonghak Peasant Uprising and the Kabo Reform Movement: The thought and activities of its Korean leaders during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895)] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1998) and Kim Kihyŏk (Key-Hiuk Kim), et al., *Ch'ŏngil chŏnjaeng ŭi chaejomyŏng* [A reexamination of the Sino-Japanese War] (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 199ð). For briefer treatments in English see Susan S. Shin "The Tonghak Movement: From Enlightenment to Revolution" in *Korean Studies Forum* 5 (Winter-Spring 1978-1979), pp. 1-79, Cho Jae-gon "The Connection of the Sino-Japanese War and the Peasant War of 1894" in *Korea Journal* vol. 34, no. 4 (Winter 1994), pp. 45-58, Shin Yong-ha "Establishment of *Tonghak* and Ch'oe Che-u" in *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, Volume 3, 1990, pp. 83-102, and, for an analysis focusing specifically on the domestic political after effects, Young Ick Lew, "An Analysis of the Reform Documents of the Kabo Reform Movement, 1894" in *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, Number 40, December 1970, pp. 29-85.

[21] Trumbull White, *The War in the East. Japan, China, and Corea* (Philadelphia and Chicago: Imperial Publishing Company, 1895). White, a former correspondent for the *Kobe Herald*, appears to pick up where Griffis left off. In his introduction he calls China "invertebrate," while referring to Japan as "sprightly, absorbent, western-spirited…."

Over the last century many writers and scholars—and this includes Koreans—have continued to project this very subjective late nineteenth century snapshot of Korea, both backward into history and forward into the future. Whether they have done so having been ill informed themselves or attempting to lead others astray is certainly significant in terms of motive; in terms of effect, however, ignorance and obscurantism are largely the same. The simple fact is these writers have misrepresented as "hermit" a nation—meaning here both territory and people—that possesses a long and important tradition of intercourse with other nations. A wide variety of texts from historical documents to travelogues contain accounts of such relations; however, they have received little scholarly attention thus far.

Historical Examples

There are several fruitful ways in which to return discussion to the origins of Korean interaction with "the foreign." Though it is perhaps closer to legend than history, nevertheless, the pride taken by Koreans until relatively recently in the story of the "Chinese" Confucian sage Kija 箕子and his founding of the state of Kija Chosŏn 箕子朝鮮 on the Korean peninsula reveals much about Korean conceptions of their own beginnings.[22] Concerning those periods for which some historical materials are available, albeit

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[22] Though the rather more indigenous beginnings portrayed in the Tan'gun myth have, with increasing Korean nationalism, come to the fore of late, for many years Kija shared an equal stake in Korean beginnings. Following Japan's forcing of a protectorate treaty on Korea in 1905 a newspaper editorial read as follows:

Alas! What sorrow! O now enslaved twenty million countrymen of mine! Are we to live or are we to die? Our Korean nationhood, nurtured over four thousand years since Tan'gun and Kija—is it thus in a single night to be so abruptly extinguished, forever?

Chang Chiyŏn, "Today We Cry Out in Lamentation" Editorial from the *Capital Gazette* (*Hwangsŏng sinmun*) as quoted in Ki-baik Lee (Yi Kibaek), *New History of Korea* [*Han'guksa sillon*] trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1984), pp. 329-330.

The above quotation becomes even more significant when we note that this occurred relatively recently (1905) and during a time of national crisis in which all means to foster nationalism were being employed. Kija, a Chinese immigrant, was a rallying point for Korean independence.

lacking the sort of volume and precision demanded of later sources, it is largely agreed that some of the earliest rulers of states on the Korean peninsula came from abroad. Wiman 衛滿, the founder and first king of Wiman Chosŏn 衛滿朝鮮 was a refugee who fled war and turmoil in China. He brought with him upwards of 1,000 followers and was entrusted by the king of Old Chosŏn with the defense of that country's northwestern borders.[23] That he later betrayed the king is not so important to the present study as is the fact that he, a "foreigner," was assimilated and entrusted with high official responsibility.[24] Furthermore, historical records written and reproduced prior to the twentieth century do not characterize such situations as either abnormal or undesirable. Rather, such texts reveal a certain pride in establishing a concrete bond of both blood and culture between various Korean and Chinese kingdoms.

China was not the only source of a unifying transnational civilization in Asia. For a millennium kingdoms on the peninsula looked outward to India and Buddhism as their models. Textual and archaeological, as well as anecdotal, evidence suggests that, at the very latest, from the beginning of the Three Kingdoms Period (18 B.C.-668) material and cultural exchanges had gone beyond China and flourished with places as far off as the Middle East.[25] The

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[23] Ki-baek Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

[24] Nor can this betrayal/coup d'etat and founding of a new state be labeled "un-Korean". Rather it is part of a long tradition of such events by which the peninsula was first unified by Silla and T'ang China, the Chosŏn dynasty was established, and, more recently, the regimes of Park Chung-hee (Pak Chŏnghŭi) and Chun Doo-hwan (Chŏn Tuhwan) were begun.

More recent nationalist scholars, beginning with Sin Ch'aeho and Ch'oe Namsŏn in the early twentieth century, have sought to downplay the foreign origins of these early Korean leaders. For detailed discussion of the permutations over time of the reception and analysis of the (hi)stories of Kija, Wiman, and, of course, Tan'gun, see Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). Notice that Pai also employs quotation marks around "Korean" in much the same way that the present study uses "the foreign"—from different angles we both attempt to problematize notions of a hermetic Korea.

[25] See Kwŏn Yŏngp'il, *Silk'ŭ rodŭ misul: chungang asia esŏ han'guk kkaji* [*Silk Road Art: From Central Asia to Korea*] (Seoul: Yŏlhwadang, 1997) and Lee Hee-

foundation myth and subsequent history of the kingdom of Kaya, or Karakguk 駕洛國 as it is recorded in the *Samguk yusa*三國遺事, or *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*, which was compiled by the Koryŏ Buddhist monk Iryŏn 一然 (1206-1289) at the end of the thirteenth century, contains a noteworthy instance of such interactions. Suro 首露, king of Kaya, is said to be looking for a wife. But, as he is of heavenly descent, he will not take a bride from among his own people. He sends his courtiers out to sea in search of a fitting bride. Before long a ship is spotted, upon which rides a beautiful princess. She soon has an audience with the king from which the reader is provided with the following:

> *"I am a princess of Ayuta (in India)." the princess said. "My family name is Hŏ, my given name is Hwang-Ok (Yellow Jade), and I am sixteen years old. In May this year my royal father and mother said to me, 'Last night we had a dream, and in our dream we saw a god who said, "I have sent down Suro to be King of Karak, and Suro is a holy man. He is not yet married, so send your daughter do become his Queen."*
>
> ….

On the first day of the eighth month the King and his Queen entered the royal palace in colorful palanquins, accompanied by courtiers in carriages and on horseback and followed by a long train of wagons laden with the trousseau which the princess had brought with her from India.

….

She was a faithful and true helpmeet to the King, shining like a ruby or a sapphire—and indeed she was an Indian jewel….

Soo (Yi Hŭisu) "Early Korea-Arabic Maritime Relations Based on Muslim Sources" in *Korea Journal*, Volume 31, Number 2, Summer 1991, pp.21-32.

In the interest of authenticity, even the recent South Korean television miniseries "Wang Kŏn," which chronicles the events at the close of the Three Kingdoms Period, was careful to include many Arabic merchants plying their trade on Korean soil.

The royal couple lived happily for many years. In due time they both dreamed of seeing a bear, and sure enough the Queen conceived and bore a son. This was Crown Prince Kŏdŭng.[26]

Though much of the *Samguk yusa* is usually not taken as fact, the above passage bears further comment. The kingdom of Kaya was located at modern-day Kimhae 金海. To this day in South Korea, members of the Kimhae Kim 金海 金 clan and the Kimhae Hŏ 金海 許 clan are forbidden to marry under the law that prohibits marriages between people with the same surname and same geographical origin, or *tongsŏng tongbon* (同姓同本). Thus, the entirety of the events outlined in the passage quoted above can hardly be dismissed as merely being the stuff of legend.[27]

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[26] Iryŏn, tr. Tae-Hung Ha and Grafton K. Mintz, *Samguk yusa* [*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*] (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), pp. 162-164. On page 162 the translators also provide us with the following information regarding the princess' home of Ayuta: "It is interesting to note that the city of Ayuthia was at one time the capital of the kingdom of Thailand."

A more recent study, however, returns Hŏ Hwangok to India, specifically the city of Ayodhia. This study, though somewhat journalistic in nature, is quite thorough and provides a full account of the Hŏ clan's migration from India to Southern China, and, finally, to Korea. See Kim Pyŏngmo, *Kim Suro wangbi Hŏ Hwangok—Ssangŏ ŭi pimil* [*Kim Suro's Queen Hŏ Hwangok—The Secret of the Twin Fish*] (Seoul: Chosŏn ilbosa, 1994).

[27] This law does not forbid all people with the same *sŏng* 姓, or surname, from marrying, only those who also share both the same *sŏng* and the same *pon* 本, or clan seat. Thus, Kimhae Kims cannot intermarry, but they can wed Kyŏngju Kims 慶州 金, etc. This law is ostensibly in force to prevent marriages between close relatives. Unfortunately, however, it does not. Because it only applies to surnames, which are passed down patrilineally, and not to degree of kinship, maternal cousins can legally marry. Again, because degree of kinship is irrelevant, any and all who share the *tongsŏng tongbon*, no matter if they are 1,000 times removed, are forbidden to marry. The South Korean government is in an unenviable position with respect to this law. Styling itself a modern, rational democracy, it must acknowledge, however tacitly, the anachronistic nature of this statute. Yet bound by heavy pressure from a vociferous and powerful Confucianist interest group, the so-called *yurim* 儒林, it cannot abolish the law altogether. So a compromise is reached in which every several years an amnesty is declared so that all those who have been living together, functionally married but lacking the state's recognition, declare their marriages. The Confucian lobby then angrily descends on the capital with a host of banners flying slogans reminiscent of the Chosŏn dynasty, under which the government yields and puts the law back on the books. Everyone is satisfied, more or less.

This same section of the *Samguk yusa* provides additional examples of "the foreign." The first is a visit from a "foreign" prince, T'alhae 脫解. T'alhae challenges Suro for his throne but is defeated. The text provides his country of origin, Wanhaguk 玩夏國, but not its precise location. Upon his defeat, however, "he boarded a ship which had arrived from China and departed." This ship departed Kaya and headed toward Silla rather than returning home. Cross referencing this in both the *Samguk yusa* and the *Samguk sagi* it becomes clear that this same T'alhae, also born in a foreign land, decides to remain in Silla and eventually becomes its fourth king.[28] Such upward mobility, for lack of a better term, is hardly the sort of treatment accorded to those considered truly foreign.

One final and important clue to early relations with the outside world is provided by the following episode also taken from this same section: "One day the King said to his courtiers, 'The Kans are the chief government officials, but the pronunciation of their titles is vulgar and unaesthetic and their written titles in Chinese characters makes them a laughing-stock to foreigners.' He therefore changed the official titles…."[29] This is yet another concrete example of awareness of and concern with those outside one's borders. It should also be noted that this concern is not a hermit's defensive wariness regarding invasions and hostilities, but rather an insider's concern with such things as status and standing in a common civilization.

It has often been noted that the *Samguk yusa* was written during the Mongol invasions of Koryŏ in order to foster a sense of

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[28] See *Samguk yusa* chapter 2 part 1 (*che 2 kii-sang*) and *Samguk sagi* volume 1 part 1 (*kwŏn che 1 Silla pon'gi che 1*). The *Samguk yusa* does, however, take care to close the portrayal of T'alhae, Silla royalty, in the section on Kaya with the following caveat: "But the events recorded here are quite different from those of Silla."

[29] Iryŏn, *op. cit.*, p. 163. This translation is somewhat problematic. The character used is *oe* 外, but no mention is made of people. A better translation of the passage might read "If this fact were to be heard of beyond our borders…."

national awareness and solidarity.[30] It is worth noting, however, that the concept of Korean-ness contained therein was not narrowly circumscribed by myths of a common bloodline. Nowhere in this volume, or in any of the texts mentioned in this chapter, will one find references to anything resembling the unsupportable claims of racial purity, or *tanil minjok* 單一民族, put forth so freely until quite recently. Rather, as seen above, the *Samguk yusa* sought to set down a common record of past happenings on the peninsula, some of which included foreigners being naturalized to Korea, and others that included Koreans' leaving never to return.

The above also suggests, of course, that such exchanges were not unidirectional; Koreans often ventured abroad as well. Buddhism made its way to Korea from India via China, but that did not prevent Koreans from making pilgrimages to the birthplace of their religion. The Silla monk Hye Ch'o 慧超 (704-787) departed for China, never to return, when he was only twelve years old. He later wrote his *Wangoch'ŏnch'ukguk-chŏn* 往五天竺國傳, or *Memoir of a Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India*,[31] following a

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[30] The volume *A New History of Korea*, for example, reads as follows: "Of quite a different character are *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk yusa*) by the monk Iryŏn (1206-1289) and *Songs of Emperors and Kings* (*Chewang un'gi* / 帝王韻記) by Yi Sŭng-hyu 李承休 (1224-1300), both written during Ch'ungnyŏl's reign (1274-1308). The unique feature of both these is that they begin Korean history with Tan'gun. The suffering of the people of Koryŏ during the Mongol period, it would seem, strengthened their sense of identity as a distinct race and gave force to the concept of their descent from a common ancestor." Ki-baik Lee (Yi Kibaek), *op. cit*., p. 167. Although the *Samguk yusa* does give Tan'gun 檀君as the founder of Old Chosŏn 古朝鮮, he is not posited as some sort of Korean Adam. That is to say, the work in no way holds him up as the progenitor of each and every person on the Korean peninsula. Rather, it does everything possible to destabilize the idea, if it even existed in the premodern period, of common origins and ancestors for the various states and kingdoms that had inhabited the Korean peninsula.

For a detailed treatment of this period see Edward J. Shultz, *Generals and Scholars: Military Rule in Medieval Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000) and William E. Henthorn, *Korea: The Mongol Invasions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963).

[31] For a volume that includes a facsimile of the original handwritten manuscript, a typeset and annotated version of the manuscript, and an annotated English translation see Hye Ch'o, translation, text and editing by Han-Sung Yang, Yün-Hua Jan, Shotaro Iida, and Laurence W. Preston, *The Hye Ch'o Diary: Memoir of a Pilgrimage to the Five*

journey that began in southern China and took him through Indonesia into India and beyond through much of Central Asia. Prior to and following this pilgrimage, he resided in China and was the disciple of Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, celebrated masters of Tantric Buddhism.[32] Hye Ch'o's account was not discovered until 1908 when the French explorer Paul Pelliot found a handwritten copy of it in a cave at Tun-huang in western China. The account is not merely one of religious sites, rather it is of additional interest as it provides information on local laws, customs, and economies, and also includes examples of Hye Ch'o's poetry at the end of each major segment of his travels.[33] During his trek through South India he appears quite absorbed in recording prosaic details: "The king has eight hundred elephants. …. The products of this land are cotton cloth, elephants, water buffalo, and yellow cattle…. They do not have camels, mules and asses. They have rice fields but no sorghum or millet." Following such data, however, he provides the following poem:

> On a moonlit night I looked towards the homeward path,
>
> Floating clouds return by the wind.
>
> ….
>
> My country is in the northern horizon,
>
> Other lands lie at the western extremity.

Regions of India [Wangoch'ŏnch'ukguk-chŏn] (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1984).

[32] These teachers, while residing in T'ang China, were Indian. The Sino-Korean names given for them are Kŭmgangji 金剛智 and Pulgong samjang 不空三藏. Though Hye Ch'o had lived and studied in China from his teens, it was they, apparently, who inspired Hye Ch'o to embark on his eight-year (719-727) pilgrimage. This actual tripartite association through Buddhism of Koreans, Indians, and Chinese later finds a fictional equivalent in Kim Manjung's novel *Kuunmong*.

[33] Though this study is primarily concerned with prose fiction, both travel literature and poetry, in both premodern and early-modern Korean literature, often serve well to accentuate and bolster certain of its hypotheses. Furthermore, the three genres were not always so distinct as they are considered to be today. Hye Ch'o's work, a travelogue, contains poetry, while Pak Chiwŏn's 朴趾遠 (1737-1805) *Yŏrha Ilgi* 熱河日記, written in 1780 and also a travelogue, contains the work of prose fiction *Hŏ Saeng-chon* 許生傳.

….

Who will take my words to the homeland?[34]

Hye Ch'o appears to have multiple conceptions of himself. In this poem and others he is haunted by "the homeward path." He is a native of Silla and far from home. At the same time, however, he is the floating cloud, a typical metaphor used to represent a Buddhist monk on a pilgrimage.[35] Thus he is at once abroad and very much at home, this Buddhist world being the earlier incarnation of the transnational Confucian order to which Chosŏn belonged. He then returns to thoughts of home, of himself as a Sillan. Again, however, he immediately contrasts this with his other self, the self that is still heading west, away from his natal home, but toward his spiritual one. In the final and prophetic line he again turns toward home. The line is eerily prescient. His words never did make it to the place of his birth. Hye Ch'o elected to remain in China, and in so doing demonstrated that although the homeland was a matter of birth, home was a matter of choice. Korea made up a crucial part of a cosmopolitan and transnational Buddhist world in which Koreans were free to move about uncircumscribed by narrow conceptions based on blood or territory.

Though his particular memoir remained hidden for over one thousand years, Hye Ch'o, it should be remembered, was not alone. In the Japanese Buddhist monk Ennin's 圓仁 (793-864) diary we find accounts of a thriving community of Korean monks as well as laymen living, studying, and working in China.[36] As Edwin O. Reischauer writes, "In fact, although his diary recounts the travels of a Japanese in China, in its pages Koreans rival Chinese in

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[34] Hye Ch'o, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[35] This "cloud" is the same one that appears later in this study in discussions of Kim Manjung's novel *Kuunmong*. See Richard Rutt's Introduction to his translation (Kim Manjung, tr. Richard Rutt, *A Nine Cloud Dream* (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1980).

[36] The original title is *Nitto guho junrei gyoki* (入唐求法巡禮行記) and was translated by Edwin O. Reischauer as *The Record of a Pilgrimage to T'ang in Search of the Law*. The diary was kept by the Japanese Buddhist monk Ennin from 838-847 during his decade-long sojourn in China.

number and decidedly overshadow the Japanese."[37] Ennin's writings confirm what we already know from other sources of Korean monks in China. From there, however, they go on to provide additional information. We learn, for example, of Korean dominance of much of East Asian maritime commerce. "Men from Silla" handled a majority of the international trade among East China, Korea, and Japan.[38] Koreans, however, were not simply relegated to maritime areas. We discover that there were also many Koreans in the T'ang capital of Ch'ang-an. Reischauer gives us the following information:

> *It is not at all surprising that there were many Koreans among the foreigners thronging the streets of the Chinese capital. In fact, Ennin's diary and many other historical sources give the impression that Koreans were among the most numerous of the foreign peoples there and had worked their way into Chinese life more thoroughly than most. Many members of the conquered Paekche and Koguryŏ ruling families and courts had been transplanted to China, and the unification of the peninsula by Silla under the T'ang aegis led to a steady stream of embassies going from Korea to Ch'ang-an.* [39]

So well integrated were these Koreans, both merchants and monks, that at times they were even mistaken for native Chinese. Under the entry from Ennin's diary for the "TENTH MOON: 19th DAY" we find the following passage: "A notice from the Council of State arrived at Dazaifu for Ennin and the others, five [in all], to hasten to the capital and the Chinese, Kim Chin and the others, forty-four men [in all] to be given their payment by Dazaifu." To

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[37] This comment is made in a separate volume that provides, among other things, a treatment of Ennin's life and of the Koreans in T'ang China. See Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), p.272.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

[39] *Ibid*., p. 277.

which is added the following footnote: "This transformation upon arrival in Japan of a Korean resident of China into a regular Chinese suggests that many of the so-called Chinese traders and mariners who appear in Japanese records were actually Korean."[40] A more recent Japanese source sheds additional light on this phenomenon with regard to monks. In the Mishima Yukio novel *Spring Snow*, the tale of the Sillan monk Wŏn Hyo's 元曉 (617-686) drinking from a human skull—a story familiar to all those even roughly acquainted with Korean history—is recounted by the character Honda to his friend Kiyoaki.[41] But Honda seems to be under the impression that Wŏn Hyo, whom he refers to as Yuan Hsaio, was a T'ang Chinese monk.[42] Such a mistake is understandable, and only serves to reinforce the fact that Koreans were at times nearly seamlessly interwoven into the official, social, and religious fabrics of neighboring countries.

It should also be stated that Koreans were not unilaterally traveling abroad while hermetically sealing the borders of their own

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[40] *Ibid*., p. 405.

[41] The story, in its sparsest form, has the monk Wŏn Hyo traveling with Ŭisang. They are attempting for the second time to reach China in order to further their studies (the first attempt was thwarted by Koguryŏ border guards). On a particularly cold and windy night they elected to sleep among (or inside, according to some versions) burial mounds for shelter. During the night, Wŏn Hyo was overtaken by an unbearable thirst. He could see nothing in the pitch dark, but merely groped for water. To his delight, he found a gourd full of the sweetest water he had ever tasted. He slept peacefully. In the morning, when he searched for this gourd, he found nothing but human skulls filled with stagnant rainwater. He became nauseous and began to vomit. At that very moment, however, realizing that the only difference between the sweet water he had enjoyed the night before and the vile liquid he now saw lay in his mind, he achieved sudden enlightenment. Later in the morning, when Ŭisang asked him why he was not making preparations for departure, Wŏn Hyo asked the reason for their journey. When Ŭisang replied that they were going to China in search of the Way, Wŏn Hyo informed him that he had just found it, and sent Ŭisang to China alone. Wŏn Hyo returned to Silla and became one of its greatest Buddhist philosophers. His work was known and influential in both China and Japan, with one of his writings even said to have been brought to India for translation into Sanskrit. For English translations of Chinese and Korean accounts of his life, as well as some of his major commentaries, see Peter H. Lee, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization Volume I From Early Times to the Sixteenth Century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 135-159.

[42] Yukio Mishima (tr. Michael Gallagher), *Spring Snow* (New York: Knopf, 1972), pp. 30-31.

countries to outsiders. Works such as the *Haedong Kosŭng-chŏn* 海東高僧傳, or *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*, compiled in 1215 by the Koryŏ monk Kakhun 覺訓, and one of the primary sources used by Iryŏn in compiling his *Samguk yusa*, details the lives of several monks other than Hye Ch'o who also journeyed to China, India, and Central Asia.[43] Particularly noteworthy in this volume, however, is the fact that of the seven biographies contained within its first chapter, three concern monks of foreign origin.[44] Just as Korean monks traveled to China and India to deepen their knowledge, foreign-born monks ventured to Korea in order to teach. Their acceptance at the times and in the kingdoms of their arrival reveals to us much about the receptiveness to "foreign" people and ideas at the time. In fact, the very term Haedong 海東, or east of the sea, to refer to Korea, places Korea in a well-established international order and context.[45] While later canonization in these biographies under the general heading *Haedong kosŭng*, or eminent *Korean*[46] monks, also tells us much about the open attitude toward them during the Koryŏ dynasty as well.[47]

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[43] Kakhun, *Haedong kosŭng-chŏn* [*Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*] (Seoul: Ŭlyu munhwasa, 1975). This volume contains both the original classical Chinese version and a translation into modern Korean by Yi Pyŏnghun. For a critical study of the work, as well as facsimiles of three of the extant copies in classical Chinese, see Chang Hwiok, *Haedong kosŭng-chŏn yŏn'gu* [*A Study of* Haedong kosŭng-chŏn] (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1991). For an annotated English translation that includes a very informative Introduction, see Peter H. Lee, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks: The* Haedong Kosŭng Chŏn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 19ŏ9).

This work, somewhat like Hye Ch'o's, was lost for seven centuries. It was not rediscovered until the early years of the twentieth century by the abbot of Haein Temple 海印寺, Yi Hoegwang 李晦光 (1840-1911). Perhaps more tragic is the fact that only two chapters of this work were rediscovered. Additional chapters are mentioned by Kakhun, however, the total original number of chapters is open to conjecture. Some have posited as many as ten. For a complete discussions of these issues see the Introduction to Peter H. Lee's translation.

[44] This number could be increased to four depending on how one interprets the information given for the monk Ado.

[45] See Martina Deuchler, *op. cit*., pp. 1-5.

[46] Emphasis added.

[47] Like the *Samguk yusa*, also compiled by a monk during the Koryŏ dynasty, the *Haedong kosŭng-chŏn* also frustrates those who would draw a distinct demarcation

The first monk introduced in this work, Sundo 順道, was from abroad. He arrived in Koguryŏ from China in 372, though it is uncertain from which Chinese state he originally hailed. Tamsi 曇始, who in 395 also traveled to Koguryŏ, is the next foreign monk introduced in this work, though the fourth introduced overall.[48] The significance of the fact that the biographies of two Koguryŏ monks were interpolated between these two foreign-born masters should not be overlooked. That is to say, despite the fact that this was essentially a government publication compiled for the state under royal fiat, the foreign-born monks were not segregated into a separate section identifying them as such. Rather, they appear to be randomly interspersed with their counterparts from various Korean kingdoms.[49] The organizing principle here would appear to be a "foreign" religious and philosophical system that transcends national boundaries and undermines conventional notions of foreign-ness.

The work goes on to introduce two more monks who arrived from abroad: Mālānanda 摩羅難陀 and Ado 阿道. Mālānanda arrived in Paekche from Chin in 384, though he is alternately believed to have been born in India or Serindia. In Paekche he was received by the king himself, and in 385, only one year after his arrival, the first monastery was built and ten monks were ordained.

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between history and literature. As Peter H. Lee writes: "That Kakhun was a superb stylist in Chinese, especially parallel prose, is evident throughout the *Lives*. …. Even if he drew on existing materials, he always supplemented them, as in the case of Wŏn'gwang, with new materials written in a balanced, allusion-packed prose. (pp. 16-17). We are also told on the first page of the Introduction of his close association with the most esteemed writers of the day to include Yi Illo 李仁老 (1150-1220) and Yi Kyubo 李奎報 (1168-1241).

[48] Actually, Ado is mentioned in passing in the first biography. His own biography, however, is the sixth to appear.

[49] While being conscious of the possibility of charges of intentional or authorial fallacy, we still find this organization of materials uncanny, so much so that it would be disingenuous to pretend for the sake of certain academic trends to say that from it we can know nothing of the work's author, his intentions, or his society. Furthermore, we do not consider it overly presumptuous to say that almost anyone familiar with present-day North or South Korea would likely find such organization of materials quite surprising. And that many Koreans themselves, perennially concerned with issues of "us and them," might find it nearly inconceivable.

His success came considerably more rapidly than that of his brethren in Koguryŏ and Silla. As for Ado, he did indeed arrive in Silla from abroad. As for his origins, however, the *Haedong kosŭng-chŏn* gives us the following account: "Sŏk Ado 釋阿道 is said to be a native of India. Some say he came from Wu, while others hold that he went first to Wei from Koguryŏ and returned to Silla." Although the idea that Ado may have been born in one Korean state, Koguryŏ, ventured to China, then returned as a "foreigner" to another Korean state, Silla, is particularly intriguing and instructive, we can not be certain which account of Ado's origins is correct.[50] The fact is, however, that a definitive version is in no way essential to the present study. Each version in its own way displays the openness of borders and receptivity toward outsiders that dispel notions of a hermetically sealed Korea. As for the Korean monks chronicled in this work, Ŭiyŏn 義淵, Kaktŏk 覺德, Chimyŏng 智明, Wŏn'gwang 圓光, Anham 安含,[51] Āryavarman 阿離耶跋摩, Hyeŏp 惠(慧)業, Hyeryun 惠(慧)輪, Hyŏn'gak 玄恪, Hyŏnyu 玄遊, and Hyŏnt'ae 玄太—a full eleven out of fifteen—traveled and studied in either China, India, or both.[52]

Finally, no reckoning of Koreans from the Three Kingdoms Period who held sway abroad would be complete without mentioning Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn 崔致遠 (857-?) and Chang Pogo

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[50] Peter H. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

The surname Sŏk 釋 should not be taken literally here as a family name. Rather, it is the first Chinese character used in the compound to represent phonetically Sākyamuni, and was given to every monk in this work. The first line of Anham's biography, for example, reads, "Sŏk Anham's secular name was Kim." (p.83).

[51] Anham's biography is of particular interest as he not only travels to China but returns to Korea bringing with him Serindian and Chinese monks. See Peter H. Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-88.

[52] This number is even more remarkable in light of some additional facts. Ado was not counted among the Korean monks. Two of the Korean monks, Pŏpkong 法空and Pŏbun 法雲, were royalty. Pŏpkong ascended the Silla throne as King Pŏphŭng 法興王 (515-540) and Pŏbun was his brother—it is not surprising that they would not have gone abroad. And Mangmyŏng 亡名, a Koguryŏ monk who lived in the middle of the fourth century, was known in China and corresponded with his contemporaries there.

張保皐 (?-846). Lest the reader be given the mistaken impression that Buddhist devotees were the most famous and influential Koreans to travel abroad, neither Ch'oe nor Chang was a religious figure. Both wielded considerable power in the secular world. Ch'oe, a native of Silla and an aristocrat, was sent off to study in T'ang China at the age of twelve.[53] Tradition has it that his father's final words to him were, "If you are unable to pass the official government examinations within ten years, you are no longer my son." He passed at the age of eighteen. Following an official career in which he won renown as a civil official, military strategist, writer, and calligrapher, Ch'oe returned to his native Silla at the age of 29.[54]

Although he never enjoyed Ch'oe's renown as a civil official or man of letters, Chang Pogo did enjoy two successful military careers, while his exploits as a merchant were without parallel. He appears not only in Korean histories such as the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, but also in Chinese and Japanese histories.[55] Like Ch'oe, Chang at an early age also left Korea for China where he made a name for himself, literally. Unlike Ch'oe, however, he was a commoner and, as such, had no surname. His original name was Kungbok 弓福 or Kungp'a 弓巴, both Sino-Korean representations of the native Korean *hwalbo* 활보, or skilled archer. In China he

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[53] See the *Samguk sagi* for the details of Ch'oe's life. He is mentioned in many places throughout the work, and has his own biography in volume 46 biographies part ŏ (*kwŏn che 46 yŏlchŏn che 6*). For a thoroughly detailed biography and and analysis of Ch'oe's political, philosophical and religious views, see Yi Chaeun, *Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn yŏn'gu* [*A Study of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn*] (Seoul: Paeksan charyowŏn, 1999).

[54] Yi Hyŏnjae et al., eds., *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* [*Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*], vol. 22 (Seoul: Han'guk chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1991), p. 493.

[55] In the endnotes to Reischauer's *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, for example, we find that he is mentioned in chapter 220 of the *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書, or *New T'ang History*, and in the entries for the dates 840 XII 27, 841 II 27, and 842 I 10 of the *Shoku Nihon kōki* 續日本古記 , or *The Later Record of Japan Continued*.

took the rather prevalent surname Chang.[56] He made his fortune there, first as a military man and later as a merchant. When news spread to China of the depredations by pirates and slave traders on the southwestern coastline of Korea, Chang returned in 828. Setting up a base of operations at the Ch'ŏnghae Garrison 淸海鎭on the island of Wando 莞島in present-day South Chŏlla province, he was not only officially backed by the Silla king in his activities as protector of the Korean coasts, but also built a merchant empire that controlled much of the maritime trade and transportation for all points east of China.[57]

In any case, such travels and exchanges, in both directions, lasted long beyond the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods. When Wang Kŏn 王建 (877-943) founded the Koryŏ dynasty in 918, the peninsula had already been unified for 250 years. Though Silla itself fell, there were no major concomitant changes in terms of borders, languages, or cultures. Thus, a considerable amount of intra-dynastic continuity might reasonably be expected, and, indeed, during the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392) contact with other countries continued. Instances of forced interaction with those outside its borders, particularly the invasion and conquest by the Mongols (1231-1270), understandably receive much attention. They provide illustrative accounts of past national solidarity while also meshing quite nicely with more recent constructions of Korea as a sort of isolationist and pacifist nation, oft invaded but never

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[56] Here we have an example of a Korean who is known to posterity by a "foreign" surname. No information is available concerning how his given name, Pogo, was chosen. We are told, however, that it was alternately written 寶高.

[57] The majority of the biographical information on Chang is taken from the *Samguk sagi* where he is listed, among other places, in Volume 44, Biography 4 (*kwŏn che* 44, *yŏlchŏn che* 4). The *Samguk yusa*, where he is listed under his original name, Kungp'a, in part two of chapter two (*che* 2 *kii ha*), details only his entrance into court politics and his assassination. For detailed studies of Chang's life, as well as Silla maritime commerce and international relations, see Son Pogi, ed., *Chang Pogo wa Ch'ŏnghaejin* [*Chang Pogo and Ch'ŏnghaejin*] (Seoul: Hyean, 1996). For more information in English, see Chapter 8, "The Koreans in China," of Reischauer's *Ennin's Travels*, in which an entire subsection is devoted to Chang.

invading.[58] The fact, however, is that Koryŏ, though at times in conflict, was sovereign and unoccupied for the vast majority of its 474 years. And for these times, the *Koryŏsa* 高麗史, or *History of the Koryŏ Dynasty*, and the *Koryŏsa chŏryo* 高麗史節要, or *The Abridged Chronicle of Koryŏ*, record commercial and diplomatic visits between Korea and Arabia, Thailand, and the Ryukyus.[59] The first recorded instance of an Arab coming to Koryŏ was in 1024, and the *Koryŏsa* records some 300 Arabs arriving between the years of 1024-1040.[60] Arabs had established themselves in Sung China, first as itinerant merchants then later as permanent residents. Due to the close relations between the Sung and Koryŏ, it was only a matter of time before their ships reached Korean shores to trade mercury, myrrh, sapanwood, and spices for things such as Korean

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[58] At times entire volumes are dedicated to such a view of history. Take for example Sin Pŏmsik's work *Kungnan kŭkbok ŭi yŏksa* [*(Our) History (in Terms) of Overcoming National Crises*], (Seoul: Taesŏng munhwasa, 19ŏ3) the introduction to which begins: "We boast of a long history of 5,000 years and a resplendent culture. But the history of our ancestors, rather that a history of living in comfort and peace, is a continuous stream of wailing amidst the vicissitudes of war and poverty. Having undergone some 270-odd instances of foreign invasion, it would be no exaggeration to say that the history of our nation/people (*minjok*) is one of constant national crisis." And Yi Pyŏngdo, the so-called dean of modern Korean historians, reduced the history of Koryŏ to one of military "engagements with the peoples beyond the northern borders." (Yi Pyŏngdo, *Kuksa taegwan* [*A General History of Korea*] as quoted in William Henthorn, *Korea: The Mongol Invasions*, p.1.)

[59] The *Koryŏsa* presents its own complexities as a historical source. It was not written during the Koryŏ dynasty; rather the first rulers of the Chosŏn dynasty ordered it compiled. Thus, at certain junctures, it becomes quite difficult to sort out historical "fact" from Chosŏn social engineering. With respect to entries concerning foreign relations, however, there exists little reason to doubt the veracity of accounts.

For a detailed account of several key aspects of Koryŏ's foreign relations, see No Kyehyŏn, *Koryŏ oegyosa* [*A Diplomatic History of Koryŏ*] (Seoul: Kabin ch'ulp'ansa, 1994).

The majority of the contacts between Ryukyu and Korea occurred during the Chosŏn dynasty. In the later part of the Koryŏ, however, the first contacts were established. For specific information regarding these early meetings between Koryŏ and the Ryukyu Islands, see Atsushi Kobata and Mitsugu Matsuda, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries* (Kyoto: Published by Atsushi Kobata, 1969).

[60] These visitors are referred to using the name of their country of origin, Taesikguk 大食國, or, literally, the "country of big eaters". As to its exact location, the *Koryŏsa* merely provides the brief note that it was "located in the territory west of China" (taesikguk chae sŏyŏk). Current annotated versions of the *Koryŏsa* add that it was (in) the "Arabian Empire" (아라비아帝國).

gold, silver, and silk.[61] Later, as they had in China, some settled in Korea. Songs from the Koryŏ dynasty, such as "Ssanghwajŏm" 雙花店—translated by Peter H. Lee as "The Turkish Bakery"—give us a glimpse into the closeness of the contacts they established. The song begins with the following two lines: "I go to the Turkish shop, buy a bun / An old Turk grasps me by the hand."[62] Later in the dynasty, albeit under a strong Mongol influence, Tibetan lamas also came to practice and teach in Koryŏ.[63] There were, however, also monks from other countries who appear to have ventured to Korea without official patronage. The Indian monk Dhyānabhadra, known in Korea as Chigong 指空

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[61] Ch'oe Sang-su, "Relations Between Korea and Arabia" in *Korea Journal*, Volume 9, Number 7, July 1969, pp. 14-17, 20. In a separate portion of this article Ch'oe traces the lineage of the Tŏksu Chang family, whose progenitor was an Arab. His name was Samga, but he was naturalized by King Ch'ungyŏl 忠烈王 (1274-1308) in 1277 and given the name Chang Sunyong. The king granted him vast land at Tŏksu, which then became his clan seat, and an official post. Apparently he lived free from overt discrimination at the time and his descendants also were able to go on to successful military and official careers during the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties.

[62] Peter H. Lee, ed., *Anthology of Korean Literature: From Early Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), p. 43. In Ch'oe's article above there is a similar explanation, but more determined translation, provided for this poem: "When I [a Koryŏ girl] went into the Arab store, / To buy 'Ssang-hwa' / The Arab shook my hand there. / If this rumor should spread outside……"

The original is contained in the *Koryŏsa akji* 高麗史樂誌. This comprises the last two volumes of the *Koryŏsa*, in which many folk songs are preserved. The title of the song as translated above is somewhat overdetermined. The same may be said for the "Turk" or "Arab" in question, *Hoehoe abi* 回回아비 in the original. *Hoehoe* 回回was a common word for the religion of Islam and was in common use until the beginning of the twentieth century. *Abi* denotes a man. Thus, a direct translation of the original leaves us with "a Muslim man", rather than a specific country of origin. Strangely, certain Korean anthologies interpret it to mean a Mongolian man (See, for example, *Uri sidae ŭi han'guk munhak: kojŏn siga 1 [Korean Literature for Our Time: Premodern Songs, Volume 1*], (Seoul: Kyemongsa, 1996), pp. 42-44.). Perhaps this mistake arises from the fact that the anonymous song is dated to the reign of King Ch'ungnyŏl and its proximity to Mongol invasion and rule. The Mongols, however, did not arrive alone; they brought many Arabs with them to Korea. And we see a concrete example of an Arab settling in Korea during Ch'ungnyŏl's reign in the footnote above. Finally, the term *hoehoe* is unequivocal in its reference to the Muslim faith and the overwhelming majority of Mongols were Buddhists.

[63] See Henrik H. Sorensen, "Lamaism in Korea during the Late Koryŏ Dynasty" in *Korea Journal*, Volume 33, Number 3, Autumn 1993, pp. 67-81.

(1236-1363), provides one example.[64] While on the official diplomatic front, in 1391 Thailand sent the envoy Nai Gong and seven other men with an offering of native products and a letter. The letter, however, was suspected to be a forgery by members of the Koryŏ court and so no official action was taken to establish relations.[65] Koryŏ would fall the following year.

While the above serves well as a sort of general overview, a more focused approach can also be instructive. Examining the entries contained in a single year of the *Koryŏsa* provides a much sharper picture of Koryŏ foreign relations. Looking at 1024, the year in which the first Arabs arrived in Koryŏ, one quickly discovers that they were hardly alone.[66] Several other entries for this same year also describe "foreigners" coming to Koryŏ. In the entry for the first month of the year three Khitans, one Ma Sado 馬史刀 and two unnamed persons, arrive in Koryŏ to "surrender" and be naturalized.[67] In the third month Ko Turo 高豆老 of the

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[64] Chigong met the Koryŏ monk Naong 懶翁 (1320-1376)—yet another example of a Korean monk studying abroad—in the Yuan capital. He later came to Koryŏ and his relics (*śarīra*) are presently enshrined at Hoeam Temple in Yangju. At this same temple one can also find a fourteenth-century portrait of Chigong as well as a stele with an inscription written by the Koryŏ scholar Yi Saek 李穡 (1328-1396), who, coincidentally, also spent three years as a government official in Yuan China and later was present at the coronation fo the first Ming emperor. See Suh Ton-Kak and Lee Tae-Young, "Some Reflections on the Life of the Indian Buddhist Monk Chigong" in *Korean Journal*, Volume 29, Number 6, June 1989, pp. 29-32.

[65] Cho Hungguk, "Early Contacts between Korea and Thailand" in *Korea Journal*, Volume 35, Number 1, Spring 1995, pp. 107-118.

[66] This year, 1024, was chosen somewhat at random. The *Koryŏsa* was not scoured to find a year in which the instances of dealings with other nations were abnormally high. Rather, 1024 was the year given in the Ch'oe Sang-su article above, and, when confirming the information in that article, it was noticed that not only the Arabs were visiting Koryŏ.

[67] The original reads, literally, "came and surrendered" (來投). The South Korean translation has kept these characters, while the North Korean translation reads "surrendered and came to be naturalized." (歸順하여 왔다.). For the translations, South Korean "fidelity" to the original notwithstanding, it is difficult to say that one is somehow more accurate that the other. Sino-Korean lexical items often have a different meaning in modern Korean than they had in literary Chinese. To leave them intact is often as much about convenience as accuracy. The North Koreans appear to have opted for a modern Sino-Korean compound that may more accurately express actual events. The fact that no particular war or conflict is mentioned, combined with the cordial visits

West Jurchens and Sŭl Puldal 瑟弗達 of the East Jurchens, along with some 90 followers, also arrive with the same purpose.[68] In the fourth month we see that the Malgal Ko Tomae 古刀買 came to offer a tribute of local products.[69] During the fifth month, General A Alla 阿閼那 of the East Jurchen paid an official visit to the court. In the seventh month, the Khitan Ko Su 高壽 was dispatched to Koryŏ to congratulate the king on his birthday. Later that month, the West Jurchen chief To Ra 도羅, the East Jurchen No Ŭlgyŏn 奴乙堅, and others brought tribute in the form of horses. Again in that same month the chief of T'amna, Chu Mul 周物, and his son, Ko Mol 高沒, were appointed as military generals.[70] In the ninth month, the Malgal A Rigo 阿里古 came to Koryŏ.[71] Next we are given the full text of the coming of the Arabs: "In this month Yŏllaja 悅羅慈 of Taesikguk 大食國 came with 100 others and made an offering of local products (Taesikguk is located in the territory west of China)."[72] In the tenth month Yi Chŏngyun

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recorded for other Khitan and Jurchen officials and soldiers make actual military conflict quite unlikely and, thus, make the North Korean interpretation of this passage plausible. Additionally, throughout the *Koryŏsa*, and later in the official history of the Chosŏn dynasty as well, there are numerous references to the naturalization of both individuals and entire regions. This will be elaborated upon in the section below on Yi Chiran, who was originally naturalized during the Koryŏ dynasty, and the Chosŏn dynasty. For a detailed study of immigration and naturalization during the Koryŏ, see Pak Okkŏl, *Koryŏ sidae ŭi kwihwain yŏn'gu* [*A Study of Naturalization During the Koryŏ Period*] (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 1996). Finally, checking all of this against later sources shows that the character for "surrender" was commonly used to denote the act of becoming a Korean subject. As will be seen below, those Japanese officers who, during the Hideyoshi Invasions, surrendered, fought for Korea, and were made Korean subjects were referred to as *Hangwaejang* 降倭將, or, literally, "surrendered Japanese officers."

[68] Here, again, the original and the South Korean translation use the characters來投, while the North Korean translation uses 歸順.

[69] Actually, he is listed as a *Hŭksu Malgal* 黑水靺鞨, or Black Water Malgal. This was one of the Malgal tribes that later became Jurchen.

[70] In the North Korean version, the character *cha* 子, meaning son, is mistranslated as being part of Chu Mul's name, so that the entry reads: "Chu Mulja and Ko Mol were appointed as military generals." It gives no indication that the two were father and son. The entry itself is of additional interest as it provides still more information regarding T'amna's status. Here it is listed among several other foreign nations and peoples.

[71] Uncharacteristically, it is not specified for what purpose or for how long.

[72] Yŏllaja appears to be a Chinese character phonetic rendering of an Arabic name, most probably Elijah.

李正倫, a Khitan official, was sent to Koryŏ.[73] While such a year is impressive in terms of Koryŏ's influence abroad, it certainly also undermines conventional constructions of a pure Korean heritage and of constant conflict with neighboring nations. Koryŏ, as Silla before it, maintained active and important ties with its neighbors both near and far.

Koryŏ was followed by the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910). Much like that between Unified Silla and Koryŏ, the transition between Koryŏ and Chosŏn, though at times violent, was marked by considerable continuity.[74] It should not be surprising then to find that the official history of this dynasty, the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄, or *Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty,* also provides us with numerous examples of Korean interaction with "the foreign." Here, rather than repeating the process above of investigating the various entries for a single year, we will examine the entries over many years concerning a single person, Yi Chiran 李芝蘭 (1331-1402).[75]

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[73] The materials from the *Koryŏsa* were taken from the *Yŏkju Koryŏsa* [*Translated and Annotated Koryŏsa*], (Seoul: Tonga Taehakkyo kojŏn yŏn'gusil, 1987) 11 volumes, which contains both a facsimile of the original as well as an annotated version in modern Korean translation. The original was then checked against two translations: from North Korea, a version translated by the Academy of Science's Classics Research Institute in 1962 and later published in South Korea by Yŏgang ch'ulp'ansa in 1991; from the South, the version mentioned above done by Tong-a Unversity's Classics Research Center in 1987. The entries above are from the fifteenth year of King Hyŏnjong 顯宗 (1009-1031), and are contained in Volume Five (*Koryŏsa kwŏn o, se ga kwŏn che o, Hyŏnjong i*).

[74] For an in-depth study of certain aspects of the continuity between Koryŏ and Chosŏn, see John Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

[75] Actually, information concerning Yi's descendents will also be examined, as this reflects directly back on him. Though individual *yangban* could and did rise through their own efforts, the prerequisite ability to prove one's worth through official examination, what Edward Wagner has labeled "latent entitlement,"* derived solely from one's ancestors. In the case of Yi Chiran, since he was the progenitor of the Ch'ŏnghae Yi clan, it is safe to say that any and all *yangban* privileges enjoyed by his sons reflect directly back on him, his deeds, and the esteem in which he was held as a Chosŏn aristocrat. John Duncan's work, mentioned in the footnote above, takes this sort of continuity as one of the most concrete methods of ascertaining status during the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties.

Yi was a Jurchen. He was born with the family name T'ung 冬 and the given name K'urunt'urant'imurŭ 古論豆蘭帖木兒. His father, Arabuk'a 阿羅不花, was the sixth descendent of Namsong Akbi 岳飛[76] and a Jurchen military official. He inherited his father's position. In 1371 he took his men to Koryŏ where he applied for and was granted Korean nationality. He received the family name Yi 李 for which a new clan seat 本貫 was created at Ch'ŏnghae 淸海 in the Pukch'ŏng 北靑 district where he settled.[77]

Yi Sŏnggye 李成桂 (1335-1408), a Koryŏ general and, later, founder of Chosŏn, also lived near Koryŏ's northern border. Some of his most intimate friends were from among the Jurchens who lived rather harmoniously with the Koreans in that region. One of them was Yi Chiran. Yi Chiran had no trouble establishing himself as a Korean military officer, and served beside Yi Sŏnggye in his many military campaigns to combat the frequent raids made by Japanese marauders. He later played an integral role in the founding of Chosŏn, for which he was made a "Dynastic Foundation Merit Subject of the First Order" 開國一等功臣—the highest award bestowed by Yi Sŏnggye, now King T'aejo 太祖.[78] Furthermore, he married into the highest echelons of Chosŏn society; his wife was the niece of T'aejo's queen.[79] He is

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*See Edward W. Wagner, "Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century Korea: Some Observations from a 1663 Seoul Census Register," in *Occasional Papers on Korea* 1, April, 1974.

[76] No Chinese characters are given for the name Namsong.

[77] See *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn*, Volume 18, p. 255. Pukch'ŏng is located in present-day South Hamgyŏng province in North Korea.

[78] It is interesting to note that, despite the great reverence accorded him in contemporary historical sources such as the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, no mention is made of Yi Chiran in today's standard Korean history texts such as Yi Kibaek's *Han'guksa sillon*. It appears that even the most seemingly objective historians are unable to work Yi in to their narratives of sameness. A search of other sources brought up no true monographs and only a single article: Sŏ Pyŏngguk, "Yi Chiran yŏn'gu" [A Study of Yi Chiran], in *Paeksan hakbo*, (Seoul: October, 1971). There does exist one biography, however, it was published by Yi's own descendents. See *Ch'ŏnghaebaek Yi Chiran* [*Yi Chiran, Earl of Ch'ŏnghae*], (Ch'ŏnghae Yi Family Association, 1975).

[79] In customary fashion, no names are given for these women. We know them only by their titles and surnames. The *Han'guk minjok munhak taebaekkwa sajŏn* gives us the following information: "His wife was the niece, Hyean t'aekju of the Yun family

mentioned several times in the *Koryŏsa*, while the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* contains no fewer than 41 separate direct references to him, some of which will be examined below.[80] The first, entered for T'aejo 01/07/17, tells us that Yi was one of the officials charged with personally delivering the royal seal to T'aejo's residence following the abdication of Koryŏ's final king, Kongyang 恭讓王 (1389-1392). On the 28th day of that same month he was appointed Lord of Ch'ŏnghae 靑海君.[81] The following month, when assigning the various hierarchical gradations to his appointments for merit subject, T'aejo is quoted as having said of Yi Chiran and the other merit subjects of the first order:

> *They understood both the course of action dictated by the Mandate of Heaven and the disposition of the people's hearts. They decided upon their plan having discerned the great righteousness of both the common people and the guardian deities of the State. And, having taken this unworthy man as their ruler, together we accomplished our great undertaking. Their merit is of such magnitude that even were the Yellow River to trickle narrow as a belt, and Tai Shan Mountain wear down to a whetstone, it would be difficult to forget!*[82]

Though the language of official dynastic histories may be somewhat dry and formulaic, we should not let this obscure the fact that Yi Chiran, a "foreigner," was present at the creation of the Chosŏn dynasty. And he was not merely present as an observer, but as an active participant in the process of creating the latest, the

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惠安宅主 尹氏, of Taejo's queen, Sindŏk wanghu of the Kang family 神德王后 康氏." (Vol. 18, p. 255).

[80] All entries from the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* will be given in the following format: king and reign year/month/day, so that the entry T'aejo 01/07/17 denotes the first year of T'aejo's reign, seventh month, seventeenth day.

[81] The entry for T'aejo 01/07/27 provides a much longer and more detailed listing of the title(s) bestowed.

[82] T'aejo 01/08/20.

final, and the most enduring dynasty on the Korean peninsula. Equally worth noting, particularly from our present vantage point, is that he was publicly acknowledged and rewarded for his crucial role.[83]

Given Yi Chiran's conspicuous absence from current secondary sources, one might understandably wonder whether Yi quickly faded from official recognition and memory following the abdication of his friend and benefactor, T'aejo. This, however, was not the case. In the second year of King T'aejong (1400-1418)—T'aejo's fifth son, Chosŏn's third monarch, and a man not unwilling to rewrite history to his own liking[84]—we are given a report of Yi Chiran's death. From the beginning, the entry makes no attempt to disguise his foreign origins, explaining that his "original name was Turanch'ŏpmoga."[85] We are further informed that he was born with a pure-minded disposition and possessed great military talents. His assistance to T'aejo both before and after the founding of Chosŏn was invaluable, and for this he was rewarded generously and held a special place in T'aejo's heart. When Yi Chiran passed away, T'aejong was greatly saddened, suspending official audiences for three days.[86] In his grief, he even

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[83] The entry for T'aejo 01/09/16 details the various rewards bestowed upon merit subjects by the king. Yi Chiran was given the third largest award, 170 *kyŏl* of cultivated land and twenty slaves.

[84] King T'aejong, born Yi Pangwŏn 李芳遠 (1367-1422), was never averse to writing his own version of history, as it were. He began by assassinating Koryŏ statesman Chŏng Mongju 鄭夢周 (1337-1392), who had strenuously opposed T'aejo's usurpation of the throne. This was justified, by Yi Pangwŏn himself, as an act of filial piety in that he feared for his father's own life were Chŏng to remain alive. Less defensible in Confucian terms was the fratricide he later committed killing his youngest brother and designated heir in order to seize power for himself.

For details of both the political and literary dimensions of the conflict between Yi Pangwŏn and Chŏng Mongju, see David R. McCann, *Early Korean Literature: Selections and Introductions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 29-32; 38-40; 128; 144-147; 155-158.

[85] T'aejong 02/04/09. This name is the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese characters—豆蘭帖木兒(T'urant'imurŭ)—given above as part of Yi's original name, presumably in Jurchen pronunciation, K'urunt'urant'imurŭ 古論豆蘭帖木兒.

[86] T'aejong 02/04/09.

failed to appear at a banquet for the Ming Chinese envoy, Chu Mêng-hsien 祝孟獻. Not wanting to offend Chu, the king simply informed him that he was ill and, regretfully, could not (rush to) attend.[87]

A very accurate measure of Yi's continuing Korean status can be gained through the treatment accorded Yi and his descendents following his death. Suffice it to say that mentions of Yi Chiran and the official ceremonial respect accorded to him continue to appear through the reigns of Yŏngjo 英祖 (1724-1776) and Chŏngjo 正祖 (1776-1800). The final reference found in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* is for the tenth year of Sunjo's 純祖 (1800-1834) reign and records an order by the king to have memorial services performed by the state for Yi Chiran nearly 400 years after his death.

That the official recognition accorded Yi Chiran as an individual far outlasted T'aejo and his immediate successors, who would have been personally and directly indebted to Yi for his assistance, has been established. But what of Yi Chiran's status as a Korean, and a noble at that? Aristocratic status in the Chosŏn dynasty was hereditary, thus the true measure of Yi's status can only be accurately gauged by the treatment accorded to his progeny. Yi's second son, Hwami 李和美, was also a ranking Chosŏn military official. No change in the Ch'ŏnghae Yi family's Korean-ness or in their nobility had occurred. Hwami passed away during T'aejong's fourteenth year on the throne. The king sent 30 *sŏk* of rice and soybeans, 100 rolls of paper, and a coffin to aid in funeral expenses. The entry closes with the following lines: "Yi Hwami was the son of Yi Chiran, Earl of Ch'ŏnghae. His martial skills showed a bit of his father's greatness."[88] Ten years later, in the sixth year of King Sejong 世宗 (1418-1450), who was T'aejong's third son and successor, Yi Chiran's eldest son, Hwayŏng 李和英, passed away. He was also a high ranking Chosŏn military official. The entry begins with biographical

[87] T'aejong 02/04/11.
[88] T'aejong 14/04/28.

information, plainly stating first that he was a Jurchen and the son of Yi Chiran, dynastic foundation merit subject, Earl of Ch'ŏnghae, etc. It then goes on to enumerate this Jurchen's rise through the ranks of Chosŏn military officialdom. It appears he was given no special treatment as the son of Yi Chiran, save for the "latent entitlement" granted to all members of the *yangban* aristocracy—the ability to sit for official examinations. He passed these exams at age eighteen and quickly ascended through the ranks until he attained the rank of major general 上將軍. From there he was appointed to a variety of important posts in the military administration, and at least twice even to civilian official positions.[89] From the founding of Chosŏn, T'aejo declared him a merit subject, albeit of a somewhat lower order than his father, and provided him with a stipend of both land and slaves. The following three kings—Chŏngjong 定宗 (1398-1400), T'aejong, and Sejong—all recognized and further rewarded his dedication.[90]

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[89] In the fifteenth year of T'aejong's reign, Yi Hwayŏng was appointed to the State Council as an official of the second order, or *Ŭijŏngbu ch'amch'an* 議政府參贊. Prior to that, in T'aejong's ninth year, he was appointed *Chiŭijŏnbusa* 知議政府事.
As an interesting aside, the very first name brought up by a search of the *T'aejong sillok* to investigate whether the positions held by Yi Hwayŏng had also been held by other military officials was Sŏl Misu 楔眉壽 (1359-1415). Sŏl, however, was a civil official. That, however, does not mean that he and Yi Hwayŏng shared nothing other than the position of *Chiŭijŏngsa* in common. Looking up Sŏl in the *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* (Vol. 12) we discover the following: He was originally from Gaochang 高昌in Yuan dynasty China (Unfortunately, neither Chinese nor Korean sources clarify whether this Gaochang was in Shandong or Shinjiang, or whether Sŏl was of Han Chinese or Central Asian descent.) and had been naturalized to Koryŏ. Like Yi Chiran, his official career spanned both the end of the Koryŏ and beginning of the Chosŏn dynasties. Like Yi Hwayŏng, he also passed the official examinations at the age of eighteen and served in many top government positions. In particular, he was trusted on five separate occasions to serve as Chosŏn's official emissary to the Ming court. Though his unerring diplomacy and facility in the Chinese language are quoted as the reasons for his selection, this also suggests that, despite having come from China, his loyalty to Chosŏn was not in question. It should be stressed again that Sŏl was not sought out as another example of a naturalized Korean. Rather his serendipitous appearance and background suggest, as will the quotation from King Sejong below, that Yi Chiran's case is not anomaly, and that the practice of "foreign" immigration and naturalization was rather widespread.

[90] The final mention in the Sillok of the fortune of Yi's descendents comes in Yŏngjo 33/11/11, or 1757, a full 355 years after Yi's passing. Yŏngjo commands that Yi Yŏno be granted an official appointment on the grounds that he is a descendent of Yi Chiran.

None of this is to say that there were no problems or reservations concerning immigrants.[91] There most certainly were, but they were most often dealt with in a rational manner and eventually overcome. During Sejong's reign in particular we find several discussions of such concerns. One, at least, is worth quoting almost entirely for its quite honest and commonsensical approach to the issue. Sejong, speaking to two of his officials, provides us with the following:

> Ever since Yi Chiran, Ŭn Ari 殷阿里, Kim Kosich'ŏpmoga 金高時帖木兒, and others were naturalized,[92] the common people (under them)

More conclusive proof of Yi's enduring status as a Korean and as a *yangban* would be difficult to establish.

[91] Even the "immigrant" or "foreign" status of certain peoples can and should be problematized. We have already discussed T'amna to the south, but on certain northern portions of the peninsula as well, Koreans, strictly speaking, were the actual "foreigners." Their presumptions to "naturalize" the original inhabitants are tantamount to European settlers in North America granting citizenship or land to Native Americans. An excerpt from *Sejong 155 Chiriji* concerning Pukch'ŏng, Yi Chiran's home province, provides the following information: "Its original name is Samsan 蔘散. It was long occupied by northern barbarians 胡人, but the great Koryŏ general, Yun Kwan 尹瓘 (?-1111), drove them out and established nine commanderies…." Thus even the actual Koreanization of the peninsula was a continuous process of interaction with and assimilation of "the foreign."

[92] Sejong 19/08/07. Like Yi Chiran, Ŭn Ari and Kim Kosich'ŏpmoga appear to have been known well enough to be brought up by name and without any additional explanation. Though references to them in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* are fewer than for Yi, nine and three, respectively, we are able to gather that they were both Jurchen and given high positions in the military due to their combat skills.

The "and others" portion of the quotation points to many other, albeit perhaps less famous, foreigners having been naturalized. A different entry for the same day, Sejong 19/08/07, provides some additional information. This particular entry has Ŭn Ari reporting some statistics regarding immigration, naturalization, and relocation on the peninsula. The focus of the report appears to be keeping track of the movements and relocations of various foreign-born Koreans. In providing this information, however, the report also gives us the names of prominent foreign-born leaders and the numbers of households they brought with them to Korea as follows: Kim Kosich'ŏpmoga and 30-plus households (*ho* 戶); Hŏ Nandu 許難豆and ten-plus households; Yi Chiran and 500-plus households; Tong Poha 童甫下and 20-plus households; Myself (Ŭn Ari) and 300-plus households; Chu In 朱仁and 40-plus households; Chu Man 朱萬and 40-plus households; Yu Aranghap 劉阿郎哈 and 20-plus households; Kim P'aboha 金波寶下and ten-plus households; Yu Sora 劉所羅and 20-plus households; and Kang Ku 姜九and thirty-plus households. A highly conservative estimate of an average of two

followed only their individual leaders, and failed to comply with the State's requirements for corvee labor. Later, the State divided them up and entered them onto the census registers so that in terms of corvee labor and taxes they were no different from the natives of this country. But, soon thereafter, even when those people mentioned above again failed to fulfill their corvee labor duties, there was no shortage of commoners to perform these duties. And it is even more the case now, ***since we are now inviting several different Jurchen tribes to take refuge in our country***,[93] that we should protect and relieve these people. We should also properly reduce their tax and labor burdens, thereby opening for them the road to naturalization. What do you think of this? Discuss it with one another and give me your response. But also keep in mind that since these people are lazy by nature, and, out of concern for this, the State classified them as commoners and required them to perform corvee labor. Now if we were to excuse them from this duty, we are worried that they would become even lazier with the disastrous result that we would have difficulty using them in the future. *Furthermore, because they intermarry with the natives of this country, we are concerned not only that they will become difficult to distinguish, but also that the ill-mannered commoners of this country will go among them and give*

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children per household yields an approximate total of 4,200 people. This number is only for those of whom Ŭn was aware and who had moved. This report excluded those foreign-born Koreans who had remained in the places of their original settlement.

[93] Emphasis added.

> *naturalization a bad name.* Think well on this, make your decision, and reply.[94]

This particular entry is significant on many different levels. It begins with a recognition of immigration and naturalization as an established historical practice in Chosŏn. It then continues to concede that, at the time, Chosŏn would not only allow Jurchens to immigrate but also induce them to do so through economic incentives. And despite certain derisive remarks regarding Jurchen lack of diligence, intermarriage is also taken as a foregone conclusion. Rather, the concerns raised regard very practical matters. The first is one of demographics. Intermarriage would complicate the maintaining of census registers. The second concern is rather more interesting and unexpected: King Sejong the Great, perhaps modern Korea's greatest cultural hero, is concerned about the possibility of "ill-mannered (Korean) commoners" gaining access to Jurchen communities through intermarriage and giving the Jurchens second thoughts about adopting Korean citizenship! In any case, as evidenced through all of the examples above, the amorphousness and liminality of Korean bloodlines, citizenship, and borders—things that were until quite recently presented in monolithic terms—were apparent from the beginning of the Chosŏn.

That said, a certain amount of ethnocentrism, which at times may manifest itself as rude behavior or chauvinistic comments, has most likely been present in any society that finds itself in contact with "outsiders." So-called political correctness is not only a quite new concept but one that even now holds sway in a very narrow geographical and demographic range. Thus, that impolite behavior toward those members of a society who are perceived by some to be outsiders exists is unsurprising and tells us little about a given society. Whether or not such behavior is countenanced serves as a more accurate barometer of a society's attitude toward "the foreign." Returning to Sejong and Ŭn Ari, the *Chosŏn wangjo*

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[94] Sejong 19/08/07. Emphasis added.

sillok records an episode some 500 years old, yet eerily reminiscent of so many that this writer has witnessed or endured personally. This particular incident took place at the morning meeting of officials at the royal court.

> Ŭn Ari was a Jurchen and was unlearned and ignorant (不學無識), thus people looked down upon him. Ari was dining on rich meats but, even when offered, refused to partake of wine. This led Kim Yonggi 金龍奇 to joke: "You're a phony Tartar. Real Tartars never fail to imbibe when they are dining on fatty meats. As you are eating fatty meats but not having any wine, you are surely a phony Tartar." At this Sin Kae 申勘 went before the king and denounced Kim stating: "Ŭn Ari is a high-ranking official of the second order, but Yonggi, by looking down upon him and teasing him with the vulgar language of the streets, has shown that his own words and actions are haughty, and that he has no intention of strictly respecting the royal court." The king had this duly noted by the Royal Secretariat and reprimanded Yonggi saying, "You have behaved insolently toward a high-ranking official, for which you should rightly be punished according to the law. I will, however, forgive you this once, but see that it does not happen again.[95]

That a Korean, whether born on the peninsula or not, who possessed no education would have been disregarded in Chosŏn—a society that revered learning and despised, or, at least, mistrusted, the military arts—is of little surprise. Likewise, the stereotyping of

[95] Sejong 15/08/18

Ŭn according to his racial origins is also no great shock; similar essentializing comments are made today in all parts of the world. Noteworthy here, however, is the total refusal of both Sin Kae and Sejong to tolerate such behavior. And, in censuring Kim's misdeeds, it should be noted that neither Sin nor Sejong defend Ŭn by making recourse to some sort of honored foreign guest status. Rather Ŭn, questionable scholarly background notwithstanding, is a high-ranking Chosŏn official, and, as such, must be accorded proper respect. Failure to do so is not only a personal affront but also amounts to contempt of the royal court. Even today, in almost any country, one would be hard-pressed to find higher and more equal status accorded a foreign-born national.[96]

In addition to this great openness toward and push for naturalization of those on its northern borders, Chosŏn also maintained contacts with those across the seas. As was the case in late-Koryŏ, commercial and diplomatic visits to the Korean court from places such as the Ryukyus, Thailand, and Indonesia continued.[97]

Chosŏn-Ryukyuan relations were particularly numerous, and began immediately after T'aejo's coronation in 1392.[98] In later official correspondence, both sides bear witness to a system of international relations that, while perhaps appearing hermetic to the West, ran relatively smoothly and according to its own internal logic. In a 1409 letter King Shishō of Chūzan writes to T'aejong:

During the period of Hung-wu [1368-1398] we frequently received envoys of your country …. and we were able to establish friendly relations and share joy and sorrow with you.

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[96] The United States, for example, despite all of its "melting pot" and equality rhetoric, still puts various restrictions on the government positions that can be held by foreign-born nationals.

[97] See, for example, Ch'oe Sang-su, "Korea-Indonesian Relations: Visit of a Java Envoy in the 15th Century," in *Korea Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4, April 1983 and Hungguk Cho, "Early Contacts between Korea and Thailand." It should also be noted that this was not the first contact between Korea and Indonesia. Hye Ch'o passed through Indonesia on his way from China to India.

[98] Atsushi Kobata and Mitsugu Matsuda, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

Unfortunately, at a later time …. discord ensued …. Thus we have been estranged form you entirely and unable to return our appreciation. ….

Under the conciliatory policy of the Great Ming Emperor toward distant peoples …. we are ardently desirous of maintaining amicable relations with our neighboring countries by exchanging envoys and communications. It is our hope that all the seven seas shall become a common home for everyone.[99]

The message above clearly displays that a feeling of estrangement from those lands beyond one's borders was the exception and not the rule, not only for Korea but for much of East Asia. It would appear then that the Ming dynasty, rather than creating a new order, reestablished the cosmopolitan East Asian world order that had existed for Korea and her neighbors under the T'ang.

A letter from Sejong to the king of Ryukyu, though not a reply to the missive above, provides a good example of Korea's views on the subject: "Our country had for generations esteemed friendship with your country. …. Now Your Majesty, mindful of maintaining the good will shown by our predecessors, has sent us envoys with presents, further indicating your interest in [wish for] continued communication and intercourse. We accept these with deep gratitude and appreciation."[100] Notice, as did his Ryukyuan counterpart above, Sejong's stressing the normalcy of and historical precedent for such amicable relations conducted among nations that, though physically and politically separate, operated in a common cultural milieu.[101]

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[99] T'aejong 09/09/23 as quoted in Atsushi Kobata and Mitsugu Matsuda, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[100] Sejong 13/11/15 as quoted in Atsushi Kobata and Mitsugu Matsuda, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[101] The above letters and events were by no means isolated incidents; the volume from which the above letters were excerpted contains eighteen such cases from 1431-1638. And a full twelve of these cases took place after the Hideyoshi Invasions of 1592-1598.

A final, and particularly graphic in light of the prevailing historiography, example that includes both naturalization and the remarkably open attitude of Korea toward even its fiercest "enemies" from across the sea is embodied in the person of Kim Ch'ungsŏn 金忠善 (1571-1642). Kim was born Japanese. He first came to Korea in 1592 as a mortal enemy, leading Japanese troops as part of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's initial invasion. But before a year had passed, and despite overwhelming Japanese victories, he sought out the Korean military Commander-in-Chief of Kyŏngsang province Pak Chin 朴晉 (?-1597) and voluntarily surrendered. Contrary perhaps to contemporary expectations and conventional wisdom, he was not treated as a barbaric Japanese war criminal, but was welcomed, pardoned, and given a high position in the Korean military. And he was not alone. One biographical entry concerning his considerable exploits as a Korean military man reads as follows: "Following this (naturalization), he was granted an official position for his impressive victories in Kyŏngju, Ulsan, and the surrounding areas. During the second wave of the Hideyoshi Invasions in 1597, together with Son Siro 孫時老 and a number of other former Japanese officers, he fought in the Battle of Ŭiryŏng where he rendered much meritorious service."[102] This shows that he and other former Japanese fought as Koreans against their former countrymen almost immediately following their naturalization. Though this may appear nearly unconscionable, both to the Japanese who switched loyalties and to the Koreans who embraced them, when viewed through the contemporary prism of nationalism, it makes perfect sense in historical context. In fact, both acts were possible for the same reason—the Japanese who sought naturalization in and were willing to fight for Korea, and the great majority of Koreans themselves all subscribed to the same view of the world and of civilization. Furthermore, common and earnest participation and belief in this universal and transnational civilization was sufficient for absolution from all previous beliefs

[102] Yi Hyŏnjae et al., eds., *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* [*Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*], vol. 5 (Seoul: Han'guk chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1991), p. 10.

no matter how heterodox, and superceded racial and national differences.

For the valor he displayed in this battle, the Chosŏn court bestowed upon him the title of *Kasŏn taebu* 嘉善大夫. Later, on the recommendation of such notable figures as General-in-Chief Kwŏn Yul 權慄 (1537-1599) and Royal Inspector Han Chun'gyŏm 韓浚謙 (1557-1627), the King granted him a surname and a given name 姓名, and promoted him to the position of *Chahŏn taebu* 資憲大夫.[103] Korean sources give Kim's original name as Sayaga 沙也加, a random trio of Chinese characters, devoid of meaning and used only for their phonetic value. The characters comprising both his Korean given name, chosen by the King, and his pen name 號, chosen by Kim himself, stand in stark contrast to the purely phonetic Sayaga, their meaning signifying everything and their pronunciation an afterthought. Kim chose Mohadang 慕夏堂, or "the scholar who yearns for Hsia," for his pen name. Kim's choice of sobriquet also expresses his motivation for leaving Japan (barbarity) and joining Korea (civilization). Hsia represents not China as a present and mutable political entity, but China as an eternal and universal culture and civilization.[104] Although the barbarian Manchus would not topple the Ming for another 52 years,[105] Kim already believed that Korea was the true repository

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[103] Much of the above biographical and historical information is taken from Keith Pratt and Richard Rutt, *Korea, a Historical and Cultural Dictionary* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), p. 293, and Yi Hyŏnjae et al., eds., *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* [*Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*], vol. 5 (Seoul: Han'guk chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1991), p. 10.

The two titles, *Kasŏn taebu* 嘉善大夫 and *Chahŏn taebu* 資憲大夫, refer to official positions. The former denotes the second rank in the second order (從二品), while the latter denotes the second rank in the first order (正二品). This represents a great rise in official status and authority.

[104] The Hsia dynasty may be mythical and never have actually existed as a physical political and racial entity. This lack of a concrete geographical location and racial composition further facilitates its role both as a literal utopia and as a universal paragon.

[105] Kim enjoyed a long and illustrious career as a Korean military officer. He distinguished himself for another 40 years in defending Korea's northern borders from various Manchu invasions. Due to the protest of a Ching official, he was finally relieved of his official position in 1643, at the age of 72. Kim retired to Taegu where he continued

and conservator of this universal "Chinese" civilization and culture.[106] The name bestowed by the King affirms Kim's motivations and desires. His given name is composed of characters representing two of the primary and transnational Confucian values—忠loyalty and 善 goodness. As such, the name itself provides an enduring and salient badge of his unimpeachable qualifications for inclusion as a Korean. Subscribing to and sharing in these sorts of universal values, and not present notions of race and nation, were the prerequisites for membership in Korean society, and, by extension, in the "civilized world."[107]

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to work independently on village compacts and local education. His collected works, three volumes titled *Mohadang-chip* 慕夏堂集, were published posthumously in 1798. Yi Hyŏnjae et al., eds, *op*. *cit*.

[106] The names of the states involved in these negotiations also provide support for this view. Hsia 夏, literally meaning "summer," refers to a possibly mythical Chinese state. Korea at the time was called Chosŏn-guk, a name chosen by the Ming emperor, and one that harkens back to Kija, a naturalized Korean. And Japan was referred to as Ilbon(-guk) 日本, meaning "origin of the Sun," a name that itself geographically situates it solely vis-á-vis China, which, of course, occupies the geographical center of their world. The two common denominators among the three names are their inextricable origination in and relation to the premodern East Asian world order and their complete lack of racial connotations; they are states, not nation-states. Membership and hierarchy depend on a vision and level of civilization and humanity, not on race. China remains at the geographical center, but Korea is able, at times, to occupy the cultural center. Contemporary names like *Taehan min'guk* 大韓民國—which could mean either "Great Country of the Han People" or "Country of the Great Han People"—for South Korea, which conflate a nonexistent racial purity and singularity with a political state, did not come into being until quite recently. The same, of course, is true for the infusion of racial connotations into names such as Ilbon, which once denoted only geographical location relative to China.

[107] One of the largest and most important differences between premodern and early modern Korea lies in these criteria for inclusion. In premodern Korea, the divide was not made along racial or national lines. There was no discussion of Korean race versus foreign. Nor was there any discussion of a "yellow race" versus a "white" or "black" one. Rather, a single demarcation line was drawn between the categories of "civilized" and "barbarian." Thus, inclusion in Korea and in the "Chinese" civilized world was granted or withheld regardless of race or color and solely on the basis of correct belief and practice—orthodoxy and orthopraxis. This concept will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

CONCLUSION

Certainly the Hideyoshi Invasions, which spanned in different levels of intensity the years 1592-1598, from Japan, and the Manchu Invasions, which occurred in 1627 and again in 1636, did force Chosŏn into a relatively reclusive stance. To the east, the Japanese had violently displayed designs on the continent and a willingness to shed Korean blood in order to achieve them. The Koreans had little indication of whether or when the Japanese might come again. As for the Ming Chinese who had aided Korea against Japan, they had been toppled by the Manchu "barbarians" who established the Ch'ing dynasty. Thus China, which had been a center of both classical civilization and military aid, was now not only overseen by an uncivilized nomadic tribe but also posed a military threat.

Despite such difficulties, however, Chosŏn continued to participate in international relations. As seen above, there were numerous contacts with the Ryukyus. Lingering mistrust notwithstanding, relations with Japan were normalized a mere eight years later in 1606. Until the close of the nineteenth century there were no further hostilities between the two countries. Diplomatic missions and trade, albeit on a restricted basis, progressed smoothly.[108] This continued a long tradition of Korean cultural

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[108] For a full account of these missions see Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Also instructive is Toby's genealogy of the term and concept "*sakoku*" 鎖國, ("closed country" or "national seclusion"). Much like the misnomer "hermit kingdom," the term *sakoku* was not used by the Japanese to describe themselves or any national policy. Rather, Toby refers to it as "the mistranslated perception of a European visitor" (p. 11). The actual terms used at the time meant "prohibitions," particularly with respect to what and who could and could not enter and leave the country. The Korean situation, though decried by foreigners, was similar, and similarly reasonable to the Koreans. And, it should be noted, neither is so different from present-day America, for example, which designates both most favored nations and rogue states, and permits or restricts travel and trade accordingly.

influence on Japan.[109] As for the dynastic changes in China, following the humiliating, yet brief, invasions at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Chosŏn was left largely in peace, so long as it continued with traditional relations. As mentioned above, the Manchus, though they had conquered China, were not bent on revolutionizing the East Asian world order. Instead, they took a lead part in it and, in the process, were largely Sinicized. Most importantly, prior to all of these countries' encounters with the West, their relationships, and their concept and practice of international relations, remained essentially stable and peaceful.[110] Ironically, Korea did become something of a hermit for parts of the 19th and 20th centuries. But, overall, the "hermit nation" proved to be a short-lived fiction created more by extrinsic pressures and biases than by anything intrinsic. And—at least where South Korea is concerned—that fiction has come to an end, leaving us with a nation now operating in ways that would likely make previous inhabitants of the peninsula proud.

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[109] See Ronald P. Toby, "Carnival of the Aliens: Korean Embassies in Edo-Period Art and Popular Culture," in *Monumenta Nipponica*, Volume 41, Number 4, Winter 1986, pp. 415-45ŏ.

The Japanese and Koreans are also aware of this relationship, though they may see it from different perspectives. In a manner that directly contradicts assertions of isolationist non-interference, claims are sometimes made concerning the preponderant influence of Korea on Japan. While much influence and exchange can be documented, some claims border on the ridiculous. Such is the case with the Korean translation of a Japanese work titled simply *Chosen tsushinshi* 朝鮮通信使, or *Chosŏn Diplomatic Missions* (to Japan). The Korean title has been amended to read: *We Built Japan: Chosŏn Diplomatic Missions*. On the back cover of the same volume, ironically, it reads in bold red letters: "History Can Not Be Distorted!! (*Yŏksanŭn oegokdoel su ŏpdda*!!)" See Nakamura Hidetaka, *Chosen tsushinshi* [*Korean Diplomatic Missions*] tr. Kim Yongsŏn (Seoul: Tongho sŏgwan, 1982).

[110] Much of what Toby writes of Tokugawa Japan also holds true for Late Chosŏn. (The dynasty/period is often divided at the Hideyoshi Invasions into Early and Late Chosŏn.) He reminds us that the closure was selective, specifically to Christianity and to much of the West. It in no way removed the country from the East Asian world order. Rather it "anticipated ongoing, if carefully controlled, foreign relations with compatible foreign peoples." Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 12.

For a clear and persuasive account in Korean of Chosŏn's concepts of diplomacy and international relations see Tong Tŏkmo, *Chosŏnjo ŭi kukje kwan'gye* [*Chosŏn Dynasty International Relations*], (Seoul: Pagyŏngsa, 1990).